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A stylometric reading of William Wordsworth and W. B. Yeats's poetry: Ambivalent cravings in romantic and modernist consciousness

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Abstract

What is peculiar about William Wordsworth and William Butler Yeats is that they represent two variants of the same type of consciousness. Their awareness of the world is linked to aesthetic appreciations. This paper explores this aesthetics with emphasis on the poets' believe that art, specifically poetry, is an instrument of vision through which nature and humanity, can be appreciated and made perfect. While it is observed that very little has been written comparing Wordsworth and Yeats, this comparative critical assessment juxtaposes these self-seeking poets focusing on their ambivalent romantic yearnings. Stylometric methods with *Voyant tools* and "*R-Style*" are applied for quantitative and qualitative analyses of the poets' ambivalent cravings. The question that runs through the paper is how both poets, in the context of periodization do, transcend their eras to establish visionary dimensions of the romantic quest. The results found in the analysis of both poets's sublime consciousness display to a certain extent the representation of the artists' contrasting moods. Such moods, however, reveal them as literary connoisseurs who transcended the boundaries of periodization and concentrated on cultural, historical, ideological and philosophical realities as means to rescue mankind from prolong affliction and psychological strain.

Keywords: ambivalence, cravings, criticism, modernist, periodization, r-stylo, romantic discourse, stylistics voyant

Public Interest Statement

This paper is a product of many Digital Humanities Workshops attended from 2018 to build capacities in computational criticism. This trend of literary studies is conceived to demonstrate computer-assisted literary analysis and how it can enhance professionalization and help to solve concrete human problems affecting our societies as authorship attribution. Wordsworth and Yeats' poetry is used for practical illustrations with the aim of ascertaining the need to adopt Digital technologies as added value in literary studies in order to inspire curriculum revision. Stylometric methods with *Voyant tools* and "*R-Style*" are applied for quantitative and qualitative analyses of the poets' ambivalent cravings.

Introduction

According to Savoy (2020) in the "Preface" to *Machine Learning Methods for Stylometry: Authorship Attribution and Author Profiling*, scientific practice evolves towards a more data-based methodology today. This is because recent progress made in network and computing technology go along with the ubiquity of data, and textual repositories freely available. Thus, numerous domains consider machine learning models as pertinent tools to verify hypotheses or to improve their knowledge by discovering significant patterns hidden in datasets. To the critic, "stylometry, or more generally, digital humanities, follows this new research trend" (p.vii). Gomez-Adorno et al. (2018, p. 50) state that stylometry is the analysis of style features that can be statistically quantified, such as sentence length, vocabulary diversity, and frequencies (of words, word forms, etc.). They quote authorship attribution as one of the most popular of the many practical applications of stylometric approaches where stylometric features are used as stylistic fingerprints for finding the author of anonymous or disputed documents. Applying stylometric approaches in the analyses of the poetry under study is, therefore, an attempt to solve the most complex questions related to reading large linguistic or literary corpora. While stylometry is specifically concerned with solving authorship attribution questions, assuming that each author has his/her specific style, other computer-based models like *Voyant tools* and "*R-Style*" are also applied to determine word frequency, and linguistic connotations in context for critical interpretation and evaluation as the case in this paper with Wordsworth and Yeats. Savoy (2020, p. 6) says that the linguistic items defining a particular style can be found at the lexical, syntactical, grammatical, and semantical level, as well as in the text layout, and that to determine a stylistic element, "the notion of choice or freedom is essential". Savoy's further explanation clarifies this model. To the critic,

Before describing different models and approaches, a precise definition of the term *word* must be provided. For example, how many words do you count in the sentence "I saw a man with a saw."? Various possible answers can be provided. The first answer counts the number of *word-tokens* (or simply tokens) that refer to an occurrence or instance of a word. In this case, the answer is seven, or even eight when considering the punctuation as a token. The second answer counts the number of distinct words or *word-types*. This corresponds to the vocabulary present in the sentence. In this case, the answer is five because one can see two occurrences of *a* and two of *saw*. As the third answer, one can consider that the two instances of *saw* do not correspond to the same lemma (headword or entry in the dictionary). Therefore, this sentence contains six *lemmas* (I, (to) see, a, man, with, saw), without taking account of the punctuation symbol. (p. 20).

Therefore, syntactic and semantic features derived from *Voyant tools* and “*R-Style*” help to determine hidden attributes related to Wordsworth and Yeats’ romantic inclinations. The multiple computational displays in word clouds, linking words, tree diagrams, charts, stream flow diagram, and word frequencies in context, provide particular attribute about the authors. These stylistic attributes are analysed to predict or show the strong correlation or difference between them.

Reviewing the concept of periodization

The origin of periodization is very old and first became part of the western tradition in the myths of Ancient Greece and *The Bible* as Jameson (1975) stipulates in “Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre” (135). However, it was not until the nineteenth century that scholars took an interest in analyzing the aesthetic qualities of the arts of the ancient Americas. Summit et al. (2007) in “Rethinking Periodisation”, further states that an early system of periodization was designed by Bennett and Bird to classify the great variety of artifacts from the central Andean region of South America. Bennett and Bird, according to Summit, consciously addressed theoretical issues involved with the creation and application of periods in artistic traditions outside Western, literate society. They noted that the choice of features by which a culture was identified was in some respects an arbitrary outcome of historical preservation and archaeological recovery. They further recognized that the problem of determining general periods was compounded by the absence of absolute dates and by the use of differing relative systems of dating employed in local regions. These relative systems included dating by the use of stratigraphy, surface collections of ceramics, sampling pits, and trade pieces. In addition, Bennett and Bird realized that a single system of periodization risked obscuring regional cultural variation within the central Andean region (Summit, p. 40).

That notwithstanding, the application of periods to art and visual culture was extended in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when philosophers, historians, and critics of the arts searched for objective ways to explore their world. Their search for objectivity resulted in their conceptualization of periods as a meta-language rooted in empiricism through which ideas could be communicated. Centuries of scholarship have, according to Fredric Jameson, produced a multiplicity of periods underscoring diverse perspectives and serving diverse ends. For some observers, the study of periodization is an exercise in disillusionment. Hence, the absence of any single, consistent system of periodization is construed as a symptom of the failure of the intellectual disciplines surrounding the arts. For other observers, the study of periodization is an affirmative endeavor. The existence of alternative schemas for periodization indicates that intellectual discourse about the arts is open to debate, reconsideration, reorganization, and reinterpretation (Jameson, p. 87).

Nonetheless, as the concept evolved, some theorists objected to the idea of periods as a contradiction against the very nature of the art. According to this viewpoint, periodization merges the individuality of the artist and the uniqueness of artworks into homogeneity that is inherently the antithesis of creativity. Other theorists object to the utilization of periods as a distortion of the historical process. According to this viewpoint, periodization falsely divides the continuity of history. Critics of periodization argue that history should be written as a continuous chronicle of occurrences and their interrelations and that the principal purpose in writing art history should be to enhance our appreciation of the uniqueness of individual works of art.

One such critic was Roger Fry (1866–1934). While employing period names in his critical writings, Fry applied an overall approach that is essentially timeless. In his analysis of early-twentieth-century art, Fry denied that modern art was the next element in a cycle or sequence

of periods. Artworks, in Fry's view, should be construed as the fruitions of independent creative acts, and hence as fundamentally unhistorical. Instead, unlike Bennett and Bird, Fry postulated a great tradition whose representatives can belong to any age (Summit, p. 56).

Despite objections, most art historians and critics have used systems of periodization. Wölfflin (1864–1945), in Summit's opinion, both recognized that time can be convincingly presented as an uninterrupted flow and asserted that systems of periodization were crucial apparatuses to intellectual understanding. While acknowledging that, at some level, the concept of periods is invented, Wölfflin felt that periodization was necessary for the self-preservation of the scholar. He pragmatically observed that the infinity of images and events was overwhelming unless structured in some way (Summit, p. 45).

However, there is a widespread consensus that periodization is a convenient and utilitarian schema. At the same time, debate persists over whether periodization is an arbitrary system that segments historical continuity or an embedded structure that reveals historical meaning. Proponents of the second viewpoint argue that, without periodization, observations about artworks would consist of little more than masses of unrelated visual observations and historical incidents. With periodization, it is suggested, not only is visual data collected and organized but relevant comparisons about artworks over time and space can be discerned; the past visual traditions can be described in a meaningful way; and the present imagery can be interpreted as a logical outcome of the past (Summit p. 37). Summit ascertains that some critics argue that periodization is defended as being embedded in history because with it intentions, patterns, and purposes can be revealed, and without it some types of visual analysis and interpretation become impossible (p. 38).

In as much as periodization can be regarded as beneficial rather than chaotic when it permits data to be organized by different principles and to yield different insights as Bennett, Bird and Summit uphold, Wellek (1994) however thinks that periodization is an arbitrary imposition on an otherwise dynamic system of human culture and, at worst, as Foucault has argued, a means of controlling knowledge and consolidating power (p. 87). Wellek's opinion is indicative in the sense that the periodization for example of Romantic poetry may be misappropriated and restricted to dates and historical time and as a result, may obscure the concept of Romanticism by superimposing a predetermined schema that is inescapably reductive. Periodization can therefore be regarded as intellectually restrictive if it is accepted as the inevitable foundation of art history and theory rather than as a trigger for critical analysis and debate.

Transcending Periodic Limitation

Wordsworth and Yeats dismissed the schema of ideological restrictions in their poetry by concentrating on extant cultural values that can be identified in all epochs; they deployed sustainable creative abilities which enabled them to exhume cultural and historical realities about human existence; they demonstrated that apart from concentrating only on the realities of the periods, the human mind is capable of capturing extra-terrestrial realities which the concept of periodization misappropriates. It is this central paradox and failure in establishing a clear system of periodization that the poetry of vision is found wanting. That is why because of insistence in the nineteenth century on periodization by critics like Bowra and Knight (Nkengasong, p. 66), there is failure to see that even though Wordsworth belongs to the Romantic period and Yeats to the modern period, both are constantly in a quest of some ideal existence. According to Berker et al. (2020), just like Wordsworth, Yeats's romantic poetry is a source of happiness and inspiration (p. 6) even though in later poetry, Yeats's style and tone becomes more complex because "interaction with nature and individual emotions... yield to

Abrams (1968) looks at both poets as major Romantic “questers” and visionaries whose poems are all engaged in the extraordinary enterprise of seeking to re-beget themselves, as though through the imagination a man might hope to become his own father, or at least his own heroic precursor (p.4). This therefore means that romantic poetry does not end with the young unhappy poets of the 1820s (Clare, Beddoes, Darley) but continues its complex course through Victorian and Modern poetry. Yeats is perhaps not less Romantic than Blake or Hardy than Shelley. However, Bowra and Knight who may have perhaps been influenced by the concept of periodization, underlooked this subtle link by not including Yeats in their list of Romantic poets (Nkengasong p.72). Though a modernist poet, Yeats exhibits romantic qualities in terms of his visionary exaltations. In Yeats’s early poetry the quest symbol is perceived as a romantic ideal attainable through the poetics of ambivalence as captured in **figure 1** below.



Figure 1: word cloud of most frequently used words

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Figure 2:



Figure 2 with linking clusters

We can affirm from this bubble link visualization diagram that while Yeats in his early life was more concerned about *man's* situation in a changing world in which war and political strife had taken hold of the mind and had shaped human behaviors, he adopted a dualistic attitude towards life and dedicated his poetry for the ailing soul in constant search for meaning. He sought meaning in his quest for true *love* with Maud Gonne which he never had and this made him sorrowful. The sorrow is constantly evoked in his recourse to Celtic myths where he envisions the sages as a source of inspiration not only to him but to the world at large. He believes that it is only at old age that one rethinks youthfulness and comes to terms with reality. This is similar to Wordsworth's vision of child as father of the man in "My Heart Leaps Up" when he says "The Child Is Father of the Man" / And I could wish my days to be / Bound each to each by natural piety". Yeats' constant mentioning of the adjective *Old* as in old age, old man, old and gay, in poems like "When you are Old" and "A Faery Song" is expressive of regret and a recourse to the sages in Gaelic folkloric stories like "Aengus" in "The Song of Wondering Aengus" which is the product of Yeats' unconscious desire and imagination. The quest for love and beauty in this poem is unattainable despite the poets' transmigration into the world of the fairies. While he perceives old age as a moment to recast a pensive mood on lost love, the invocation of the Druids in "A Faery Song" is an invitation to teach humanity true love, "Give to these children, new from the world, / Silence and love..." (Yeats p.10). In this ambivalent mood, the poet is not only defeatist in his love affair but also attains growth in artistic creation where his unrequited love experiences enable him to invest in the quest for truth, love and peace in extra-terrestrial realms. He is no longer lamenting unrequited love affairs. He is rather self-assertive and visionary. Therefore, Yeats's early poems that are based on the characters from "Celtic mythology and the ones about the desire to enter in/ or to avoid fairyland illustrate one's continuous search for wisdom, happiness, love, fulfilment, or simply the desire to perceive the unknown which would compensate for what one has lost" (Hande p. 68).

In addition, in both collections, Yeats focuses on Irish peasants' lives and traditions by making reference to folkloric tales where he captures dimensions of ethereal beauty and the meaning of life. The frequent use of the word *old* collocates with *man*, *years*, *white*, *love* and *sorrow*. The tree diagrams below also illustrate the close connection between *Old* and the actions, words or context preceding or following it.

Figure 3

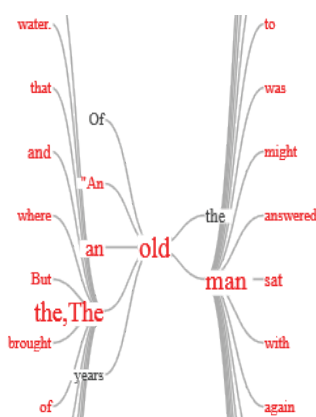


Figure 4

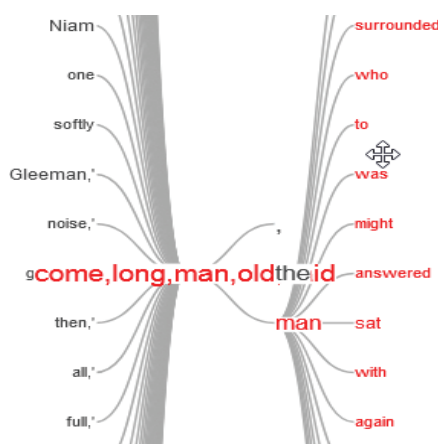


Figure 3 and Figure 4 linking words in context related to Old
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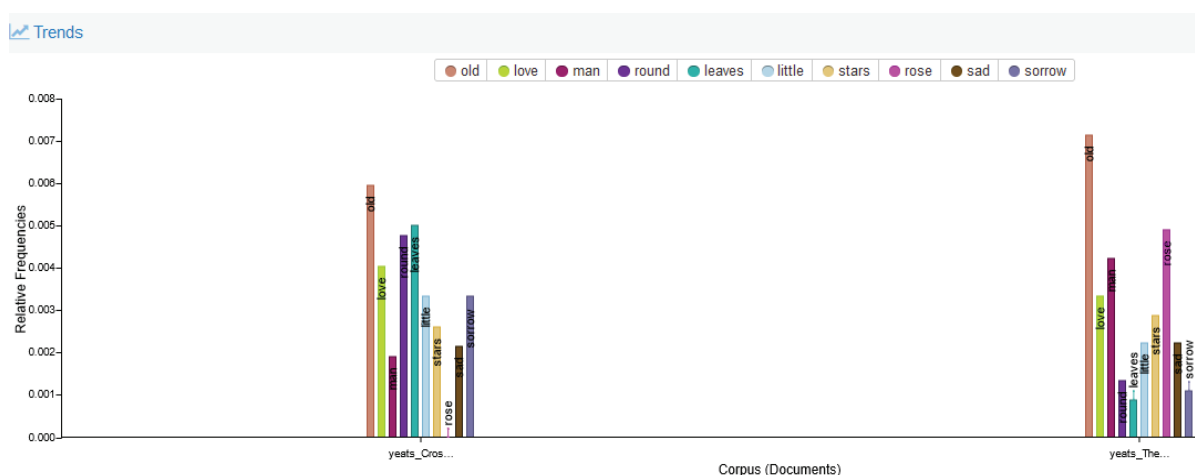
In figure 3, we notice that most conjunctions, correlatives, determiners, and lexical items like “years” precede *old*, meanwhile the clustered branches in front of *old* indicate mostly verbs or action words and prepositions. Although the tree diagram is not completely represented here, the broad spectrum view from the *Voyant tool* used for this analysis reveals Yeats as a poet with an inert spirit of the quests like most romantics. His recourse to nature was his desire to distance man from the disillusionment that characterised the 20th century. This is what we get in his poem “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” in which the poet wishes to “arise and go now, and go to Innisfree.../And live alone in the bee-loud glad” (Yeats p. 39). In “The Stolen Child”, it is a similar invitation for a child to leave the complex world to the world of nature where there is love, joy, celebration and no sadness as in the human world full of cares. He says:

*Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.* (Yeats p. 39)

The poet here attempts to separate the real world from the world of innocence inhabited by the fairies. Though the wood is rife with uncertainty as indicated in the dual invitation of the human child, there is a serious dowsy sense of evil that will consume the child caught between two worlds; the world of the spirits and the real world full of weeping.

Figure 4 above clearly outlines these connection in the words like come, surround, softly in the tree diagram. Names like *Niamh* and *Gleeman* take us to the Gaelic tradition and history. The *Sihd* or *Niamh* are from Celtic mythology and had characterized Yeats's folkloric and romantic sources of inspiration. In most of these poems in *Crossways* and *The Rose*, *Niamh* is a goddess of Tír na nÓg, the land of eternal youth, “calling Away, come away.” The goddess beckons often not just to the land of eternal youth and immortality, but also invites an escape from the realm of the real into the unreal and from sadness to bliss.

Figure 5.



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The relative frequency in **figure 5** simply reveals Yeats' dualistic style and changing moods in both collections. While in *Crossways*, *sorrow*, *love* and the desire to *leave* is intense, while in the *The Rose*, on the left of the graph, the poet's passionate intensity for love drops. He is no longer too sorrowful but is concerned about aging. That is why the frequency of the word *old*

is higher in *The Rose* than in *Crossways*. Unlike in *Crossways* where his focus is more on the desires of the flesh and ideal reality, the poet in *The Rose* begins to realize that he must merge the desires of the flesh, the spirit and reality in his art. Therefore, Yeats's steady growth as an ambivalent romantic poet is perceptible in this frequency vacillating with a lot of sensibilities in his quest for ideal love, truth and a vision and philosophy for his art.

Mathew Arnold, who believed that the Romantics had "failed" for not knowing enough, was himself confused about the right philosophy to adopt. This is indicative in that he received his psychological education from Romantic poetry, and could not go on as a creator when he became anti-romantic. Besides, a student of Wordsworth would notice in *The Prelude* that his poetry inspired mystical experiences, which enriched the imagination of a modern poet like Yeats. Both moralist and seer, Wordsworth was romantic in his transcendental view of the poetic imagination, classic in his stern rectitude. Arnold therefore declares that Wordsworth with his massive turn to the subjective, changed Western poetry as decisively as Homer did, or as Freud with his Romantic rationalism, was to change Western psychology.

In terms of mytho-poetic creation, Abrams observes that Wordsworth chose another way, not a personal mythology, but a de-mythologizing one so radical that it enabled him to create modern poetry. Conversely, Yeats inherited his mythical vision from classical, occidental, oriental and religious myths. Nevertheless, he demonstrates profound creativity when he chooses a system of thought in which he engages in myth-making. This startling point and other deviations signal the poets' attempts to use the realities of their immediate environment to project historical and cultural facts inherent in the human mind. The aesthetic and spiritual attempt to transcend ordinary human experience is what Teke (2004) perceives as a means to revoke originality and novelty, which simply implies bringing to consciousness an awareness of what is, but originally difficult to perceive and express. Teke, in this regard, avows that the imagination is the divine faculty closer to the human psyche; that it is a regenerative force compelling the power of recalling to mind and the fostering of the search for a self-sufficing mystical and spiritual energy (p.19). That notwithstanding, imagination is the visionary power that controls Wordsworth's and Yeats's adventure in the realms of the extra-terrestrial where they uphold eternal moods of everlasting joy and lasting beauty.

Sublime Ecstasies

Wordsworth's Sublime ecstasies were his constant flights and transportation of the soul to fits of passion and constant meditation of nature. These phantasies manifested in pantheistic sublimation of the self through philosophical ideas of life and death. Reporting "On the Living Poets", Hazlitt (1932) quotes Lyall amongst others, who comments plausibly on poems by Wordsworth. According to Lyall, Wordsworth's poetry should, however, be entertained because it exhibits a mind richly stored with all the materials from which poetry is formed. It exhibits elevation of sentiment and tenderness of heart. It is the truest sensibility for the beauties of nature, combined with the extraordinary fervour of imagination and a most praiseworthy love of simplicity both in language and thought (p. 792). As it may appear, the poet has by no means turned these valuable endowments to his greatest advantage. For this reason, if the business of the poet is to please, then, Wordsworth's endeavours have not hitherto met with the most flattering success.

This contention is, however, established because there is a raciness about Wordsworth's language, and occasional eloquence in manner which serve to keep the readers' attention alive. But, these advantages are more than counteracted by that same intellectual straining after something beyond plain good sense, which is so unpleasant in much of his poetry.

Instead of that graceful softness of manner, which forms the principal charm in his poetic effusions, his “prose”, is distinguished by a tone, which any other person should feel oneself called upon to treat with some little severity. Lyall even ascertains that it is impossible to take up the works of Wordsworth without remarking that, instead of employing his pen upon subjects of durable and general interest, he devotes himself almost exclusively to the delineation of himself and his own peculiar feelings, as called forth by objects incidental to the particular kind of life he leads (p. 793). In all these, the poet entertains no doubt that he is the elected organ of divine truth and persuasion.

However, if such are the common hazards of seeking inspiration from those potent fountains (the “elementary feelings of low and rustic life” and “primary laws of our nature”), it may easily be conceived what chance Wordsworth had of escaping their enchantment. He manifested natural propensities to wordiness and his unlucky habit of debasing pathos with vulgarity. The fact, accordingly, is that in this creation, he is, in the words of Francis Jeffrey, more obscure and at times even more ambivalent than a Pindaric poet of the seventeenth century; and more verbose “than even himself of more” (p. 789). In line with Lyall’s opinion, whenever Wordsworth’s own flights are through “the region” of truth and nature and sober sense, we accompany him with pleasure; but when he penetrates into the “terra Australis” beyond, then, indeed, our ability, leaves us (Hazlitt p. 794). These attempts towards a far-reaching world of pleasure, harmony and beauty account for Wordsworth’s irresistible quest for the “pleasure-dome” (kusi 2005, p. 3).

The pictures of virtue and the happiness of man which Wordsworth renders more creative to our imagination are worth stating. Through visionary contemplation, the poet delineates great elementary laws of our nature, which in Wilson’s review elevates human nature to an ethereal power of enchantment. Unlike Byron and Scott, Wilson notes that Wordsworth, with all the great and essential faculties of the poet, possesses the calm and self-commanding powers of the philosophers. He looks over human life with a steady and serene eye. He listens with a fine ear “to the still sad music of humanity”. His faith is unshaken in the prevalence of virtue over vice and, in spite of transitory defeats, always visibly triumphant in the grand field of human warfare (Hazlitt, p. 796). However, even though Wordsworth looks over the world, and man, with sublime benignity, his transitory defeats mar his delight in the gracious dispensation of God, which his great mind wholly delivers itself. His love of nature, which is to him the fruit of wisdom and experience, remains the purest and most delightful fancies and affections of the human heart; but his fluctuating gaze at ethereal purity remains the most ambivalent impulse in his psychical strain for self-integration. In Figure 6 below, the frequencies in the graphs indicate this romantic effusions and ideal experiences.

Figure 6

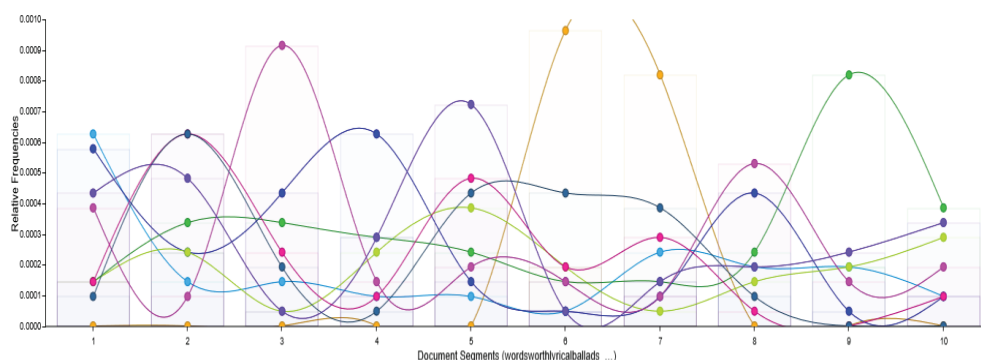


Figure 6: Romantic Effusions

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The rise and fall trend in the most frequently used words as plotted in the graph reveals Wordsworth's pantheistic idealism as compared to Yeats's dualistic quest for ideal realism even though both had subscribed to the same school of romantic questers. While we note the effects of the Industrial Revolution on man in the 19th century, Wordsworth, nevertheless, persistently reveals a decadent metropolis whose environment caused a lot of pain on man and on his psychological well-being. Throughout his poetry as illustrated in the graph, he is concerned about man (blue) and his or her state of being and welfare. Adopting a child's mind-set, showing recourse to the natural landscape, and other cosmic entities which embodied supernatural powers, were the only means through which man could find solace. The philosophical thoughts are carefully captured in poems in this collection like "Expostulation and Reply" and "The Tables Turned". In the graph we notice that in the entire corpus, the poet's use of the word "little" (used 59 times) is often correlated with "boy", "child", "little joy", "little pride", or a persona like "little Jane". In most circumstance in the corpus, the simile "like" (use 64 times) helps to comprehend the poet's choice of words and his quest for simplicity, purity and truth embodied in symbolic archetypes like the child figure. In the graph above, the most frequently used words in the corpus are used in varying degrees and if examined independently, correlations, contexts, collocations will easily determine the degree in which these words are used. It is from this stylistic analysis of Wordsworth's diction that we perceive the poets ambivalent quest for ideal reality. The unstable, nonlinear, and stream-like flow of these words in the corpus as revealed in **figure 7** below demonstrate this ambiguity in his visionary sensibilities.

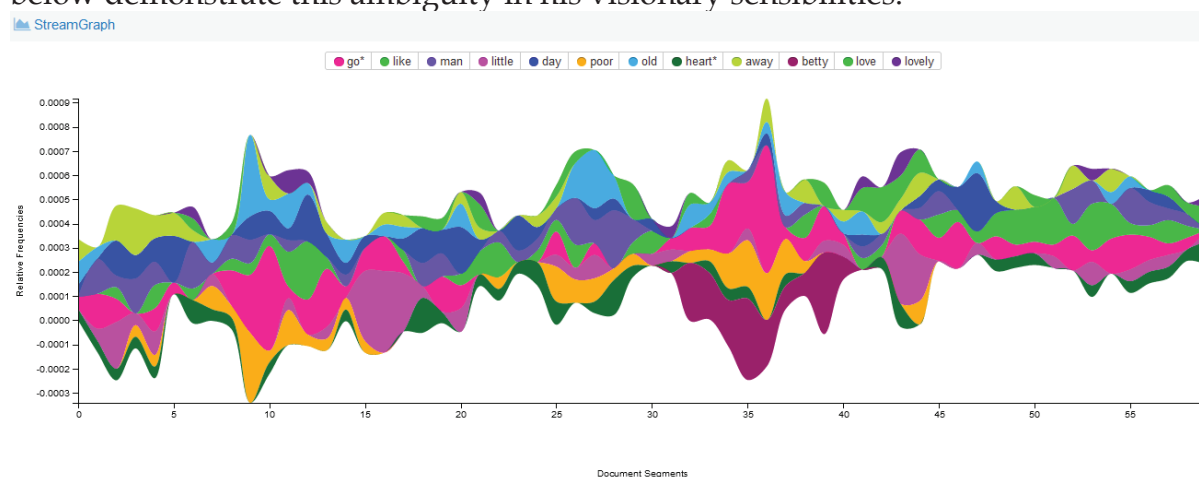


Figure 7: Ambiguity in visionary sensibilities

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The concentration of words in the entire corpus are determined by the colour thickness in the stream graph as they meander from poem to poem. Conger (nd), in an online article, provides several critical views contending Wordsworth's attempts to censure the prevalence of female sensibility in his artistic creation. The result, as will be realised, is the poet's ambiguous, yet powerful projection of this female power repellent in this corpus above as seen in words like "love" (green), "Betty" (brown). In other words, it is the dominant creative spirit in the poet's visionary sensibility. Conger ascertains critics' view that the female character represents a particular concern for Wordsworth. He quotes Susan Wolfson who points out the anxiety produced by the poet's reliance on sensibility. Although she tends to privilege the masculine in her focus on patriarchal constructions, Wolfson quite convincingly argues that Romantic poems "contain an uneasy sense that 'femininity' is not just female, but may claim men of feeling" (4).

From a historical tack, Spivak (1998) on her part advocates that Wordsworth's distress over abandoning Annette Vallon and their child was the primary concern for Books IX through XII of *The Prelude*. She reminds us at the end of her essay that in the texts of the *Great Tradition*, the most remotely and transparently mediating figure is a woman.

Another deep-seated opinion is echoed in Hough's (1961) delineation of Wordsworth's failure to savour the emotional experiences of his manhood as a creative agent. He is different from Yeats whose stifling love experiences with Maud Gonne enhanced his creative exuberance. Hough points out that one of the things that accounts for Wordsworth's "fifty years' decay" is his deliberately cutting off himself from the emotional springs of his young manhood (p.35). Yet, many critics have submitted that Wordsworth fell in love with the French girl, Annette Vallon, had a daughter by her, but parted from her on his eventual return to England in 1792 (Watson 1983: 4). The affair between Annette and Wordsworth was not clandestine because even after his return to England, he still corresponded with her. Wordsworth's wife, Mary Hutchinson, and her family, also seem to have known of the facts. Unfortunately, no direct reference to it appears in his writings.

Hough (1961), in *The Romantic Poets*, quotes Read who argues that Wordsworth's creative period is simply the after-glow of this one patch of intense emotional experience (35). This may seem an overstatement but it is evident that Wordsworth's "fifty years' decay" as stated above, accounts for a period of real mental strain and torment that besieged his creative impulse. This psychical strain also suggests the poet's attempts to free himself from his improper feelings for his sister (Dorothy) to safeguard his love relationship with Mary Hutchinson. This emotional instability is a glaring point of departure between Wordsworth and Yeats whose poetry reveals a stable emotional development and conveys a sense of oneness inextricably related to the poet's emotional experiences. A holistic integration of Romantic sensibilities in favour of artistic ingenuity demonstrates a visionary endowment in Yeats, faintly realised in Wordsworth.

The foregoing argument is supported by Arnold's opinion that Wordsworth's greatest strength was in his power of making us feel "the simple primary human affections and duties" (Hough, p. 45) and it is noticeable that the poems of rural life generally deal with the simplest and most primary of all the bond between parents and children. Wordsworth, therefore, rarely writes much about love between man and woman, and when he does, it is often broken and unhappy.

The contending views resurfacing in Frye's (1968) *Romanticism Reconsidered* show to what degree critics with a post-Romantic, post-modernist vision like Abrams, Trilling and Wellek contribute in reviewing Romantic feelings as "a datum of literary experience" (p. 3). The literary experience of oversimplification characterising the Romantic poets around the period 1790 – 1830 prompts Frye to speak of localizing Romanticism to a spatial projection of reality. A propos, if a Romantic poet, therefore, wishes to write of God, Frye declares, he has more difficulty in finding a place to put him, than Dante or even Milton had. On the whole, he would prefer to do without a place, or find "within" metaphors more reassuring than "up there" metaphors (p. 8). Hence, when Wordsworth in *The Prelude* and elsewhere speaks of feeling the presence of deity through a sense of interpenetration of the human mind and natural powers, one feels that his perception of huge and mighty forms, like the spirits of Yeats have come to bring him the right metaphors for his poetry. In the second book of *The Excursion*, we have a remarkable vision of what has been called the heavenly city of the eighteenth-century philosophers cast in the form of an ascent up a mountain, where the city is seen at the top. The symbolism, Frye thinks, is modelled on the vision of Cleopolis in the first book of *The Faerie Queene*, and its technique is admirably controlled and precise. Yet,

surely, this is not the real Wordsworth. The spirits have brought him the wrong metaphors; metaphors that Yeats like Spenser used with full imaginative conviction, but which affect only the surface of Wordsworth's mind (Frye, p. 8).

From a different perspective, Abrams quotes Hazlitt (1973) in his article "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age", who captures the French Revolution as the major occurrence for his generation. In the event with its political, intellectual, imaginative, and the resulting waves of hope and gloom, Hazlitt saw both the promise and the failures of his violent and contradictory era. Hazlitt's main exhibit is Wordsworth whose poetry, like his contemporaries', took its shape from the form and pressure of revolution and reaction. He declares that Wordsworth's "genius is a pure emanation of the spirit of the Age". The poetry of Wordsworth in the period of *Lyrical Ballads* was "one of innovations of the time": "[The] political changes of the day were the model on which he formed and conducted his poetical experiments. His muse (it cannot be denied, and without this we cannot explain its character at all) is a levelling one" (qtd. in Abrams 1968, p. 27).

It is worth pointing out that this spirit of rebellion and change fashioned Wordsworth's vision. He held the conviction "that the times are pregnant with change" a condition "of which the first overt manifestation was the breaking out of the French Revolution". His prophecy in *The Excursion*, no doubt, reflects an aspect of the poet's own temperament. Wordsworth evokes from the unbounded and impossible hopes in the French Revolution a central Romantic doctrine; one which reverses the cardinal neoclassic ideal of setting only accessible goals, into a specific glory and triumph (Abrams, p. 57). The construct, however, projects severe feelings and stifling experiences that permit the imagination to distance the poet from the world of mundane reality to an ethereal realm of nature through visionary contemplation. Abrams thus reveals that Wordsworth's real revolution was a literary one, a "levelling" revolution in diction and in the location of archetypes in common rather than heroic life (p. VII).

The pattern of an outburst of enthusiasm followed by disillusionment is picked up again, and greatly extended, in Trilling's (1968) essay, "The Fate of Pleasure: Wordsworth to Dostoevsky". The attitude of Wordsworth and Keats towards pleasure in this essay is presented as an element in the new consciousness towards the central importance of the arts and of what they can yet do for man. The sense of the goodness of pleasure, even of a frankly luxurious kind, is part of the exuberance of individuality, which is present in both poets. Nevertheless, the same thing happens to Romanticism that happens to Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*; the separation of consciousness from what supports it is exhilarating at first, and then restrictive. The individual becomes the ego, and the ego turns to a kind of perversion of Puritanism, seeking the principle of its own being in a pure detachment, which rebuffs everything that it might come to depend on or be indebted to, especially pleasure. The undying ego, whose rasping, garrulous monologue enters literature is a parody of what used to be called an immortal soul; and pleasure, so often thought of as threat to that soul, turns out to be the most dangerous enemy of the ego. As such, Wordsworth's conception of pleasure, "the naked and native dignity of man," is rejected but not refuted (Trilling, p. 73).

Winkler (1957), in his article "Wordsworth's Poetry", gives a thorough account of Wordsworth's poetry by re-examining some outstanding features that have caused a lot of uneasiness in contemporary criticism. The simple reason that Wordsworth was a "worshipper of Nature" provokes suspicion arising from the idea that a taste for his verse may have less to do with the appreciation of poetry as such than with a sentimental interest in his characteristic subject matter. Winkler tells us that these misgivings, are not automatically dispelled when we turn to the verse itself. We find not only that a self-conscious attitude towards nature is very much one of Wordsworth's preoccupation, but that there is a readiness to moralize about, to draw moral conclusions from this attitude, and to press them upon the reader. But nature, Hartman declares, is indistinguishably blended with the imagination, which in itself is paradoxical: "the Imagination experienced as a power distinct from Nature opens the poet's eyes by putting them out" (Wellek 1994, p.26).

Much of these criticisms achieve on the greater part, a fair account of Wordsworth's misgivings in his attempt to grapple with man's precarious existence. Hazlitt's reviews of Wordsworth's "Excursion" in *The Examiner* evoke a man whose sympathy is rooted in self: A man whose interest lies in those elemental forms of feeling, which immediately become part of his own person and experience, or "mingle with the stream of general humanity". His interest in others is primarily an interest in the self, and in self-definition. In shunning the hustle of an external world, Wordsworth's power is that of a "busy solitude" of the heart (Davies, 1975 p. XIV).

Nevertheless, the fluctuation of the poet's mind is still a subtle and fertile ground to dwell on. The poet had set goals to project the "essential feelings of [his] heart" and to capture through nature a living paradise. His desperation, his constant enactment through visionary contemplation shows his longing to be incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. These feelings have been enigmatic in setting a better world of ideal reality for the poet. How then could man live happily in a world Wordsworth could not fully understand or embrace with absolute faith? The poet's ambivalent feeling towards man with regard to nature prompts an irreconcilable philosophy of life that does not console man desperately in need of salvation in the twentieth century. These criticisms are, however, in-exhaustive but reveal the slipperiness involved in one's attempt to grapple with the poet's ideologies. It would be of interest to find out if Yeats's exhibition of similar contradictions, paradoxes or yearnings were entirely romantic, modernist, or both.

Some critics have made vain attempts to demystify Yeats's endearing interest in the supernatural. This criticism can be justified based on the fragmentary nature of the human mind at the time when Yeats wrote. Thus, writing from the same background in the twentieth century period, a renowned critic like Eliot could not but think that Yeats's spiritual world of "Symbolic Phantasmagoria" could not help humanity on the verge of collapse. This was, of course, a naïve confession since Eliot's recommendation for salvation could only be possible through cosmic specifics. Yeats's spiritual quest, even though ambivalent, reconciles mankind in the realm of eternity by way of truth and spiritual conviction.

Yeats's early loss of interest in describing outward things forecasts his quest for ethereal beauty. Nonetheless, this quest has more foundation than that deployed in Wordsworth's poetry because throughout his work, he hardly used material objects except as symbols of something else. Towards the end of his life, he expressed to Lady Gerald Wellesley his impatience with English poetic habit of talking about flowers. For long, perhaps always, he loved the world of William Morris, with its naïve joy in physical things, its un-disturbing passions, its tranquil faces like the joys captured in Wordsworth's nostalgic and childhood experiences. However, this was not his world because to live in it is the way to be happy. Yeats therefore contrasts the poetry of Morris with that of Rossetti in which desire can never be stilled, or satisfied by its simple bodily objects. Instead,

[he] listens to the cry of the flesh till it becomes proud, and passes beyond the world, where some immense desire that the intellect cannot understand mixes with the desire for a body's warmth and softness. His genius, like Shelley's can hardly stir but to the rejection of nature, whose delight is profusion. (qtd. in Hough, p. 223)

The idea of the rejection of nature haunted Yeats for the rest of his life until he declared dispassionately in "Byzantium" that, "once out of nature I shall never take my bodily form from any natural thing" (Yeats p. 46). In the clustered graph below, a distance stylometric view of Wordsworth and Yeats' differing poetic visions can be deduced. While we conclude from the clustered tree that both were engaged in romantic discourses, but with overwhelming differences, it can also be observed that the multi-colour in Yeats's collections reveal his divergent interest in the affairs of the world. According to Toit (2015) in "W.B. Yeats's Aesthetic Philosophy in his Earlier Works",

Yeats becomes involved with the nationalist cause of Ireland as a young man, and finds himself attracted to the prospect of contributing to Ireland's struggle for independence on a cultural front. He chooses to apply his Romantic principles to art which draws on the shared folkloric tradition of Ireland in an effort to inspire cultural, rather than purely political, rejuvenation amongst his Irish audience. (p. II)

As a young man, Yeats was already concerned about the future of Ireland but his poetic visions reveal inconsistencies which stem from his love affairs to his spiritual quests. He approach towards the political uprisings in Ireland, his concern about art and the need to uphold the folkloric traditions of the Celtic Twilight were some of the divergent yearning create better worlds and with an established order which valorised peace, justice and true love.

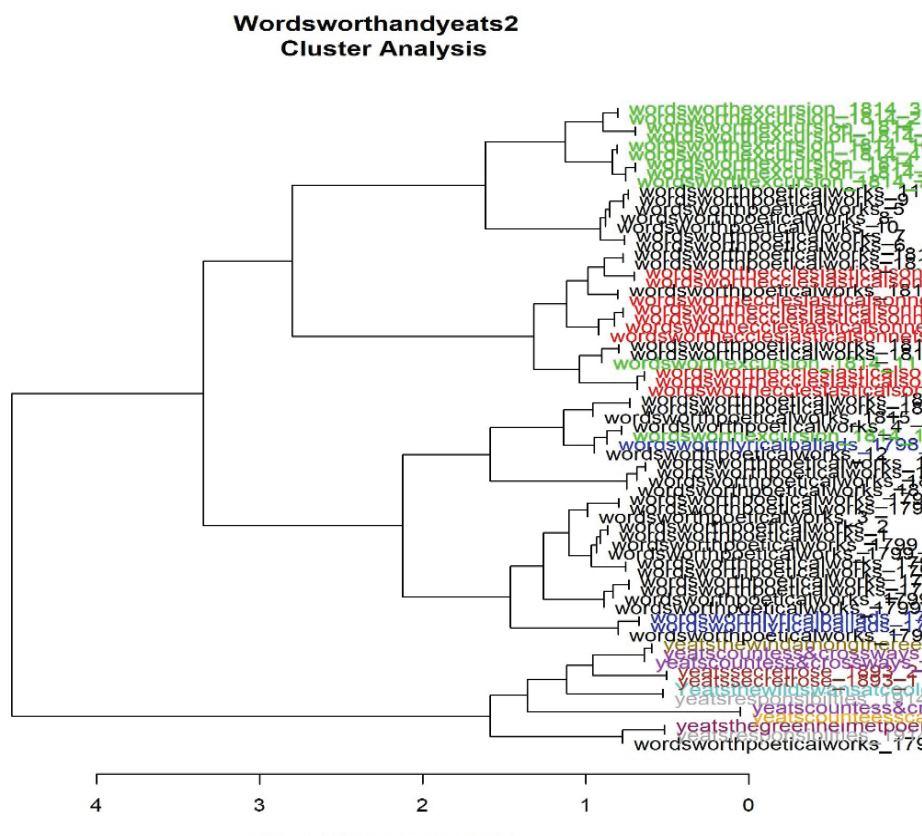


Figure 8: Clustered differences in the poets
Tool used for analysis- "R-Styleo"

This clustered reading is a combination of almost all of Wordsworth and Yeats' collected poems and some dramatic verses. We can perceive from the clustered graph that the groupings are revealing of the poetics of ambivalence. However, in Wordsworth's collections, the colouring in groups **green**, **black** and **red** reveal the relative stability in subject matter and style which seem to characterise each of the collections. In Yeats's grouping, no collection resembles the other. This simply suggests that Yeats was more eclectic in style and subject matter than Wordsworth. Yeats's work is, therefore, a variation to the work of nature. For this very reason, he thinks he should not steep himself in reminiscence of what nature has already done. The images drawn from the natural world in Yeats poetry are used as symbols, as intellectual counters but never as objects for gentle rumination in the manner of Wordsworth. He thought of poetry that would reach the heart of people. He was certain that:

there are many who are not moved as they would be by the solitary light burning in the tower of Prince Anthanase, because it has not entered into men's prayers, nor lighted any through the sacred dark of religious contemplation. (qtd. in Hough p. 226)

Therefore, poetry, having been emptied of impurities and miscellaneous rubbish, is filled again, not by images excogitated in the study but by a new mythology that could be valid in a wide world attainable only by the help of visionary contemplation. In the diagram below some contrastive linguistic analyses have been made to show the kind of words which as a Romantic, Yeats avoided as an attempt to empty his poetry of impurities. These linguistic choices are in opposition to those that Wordsworth cherished and frequently used in his poetry as a romantic poet.

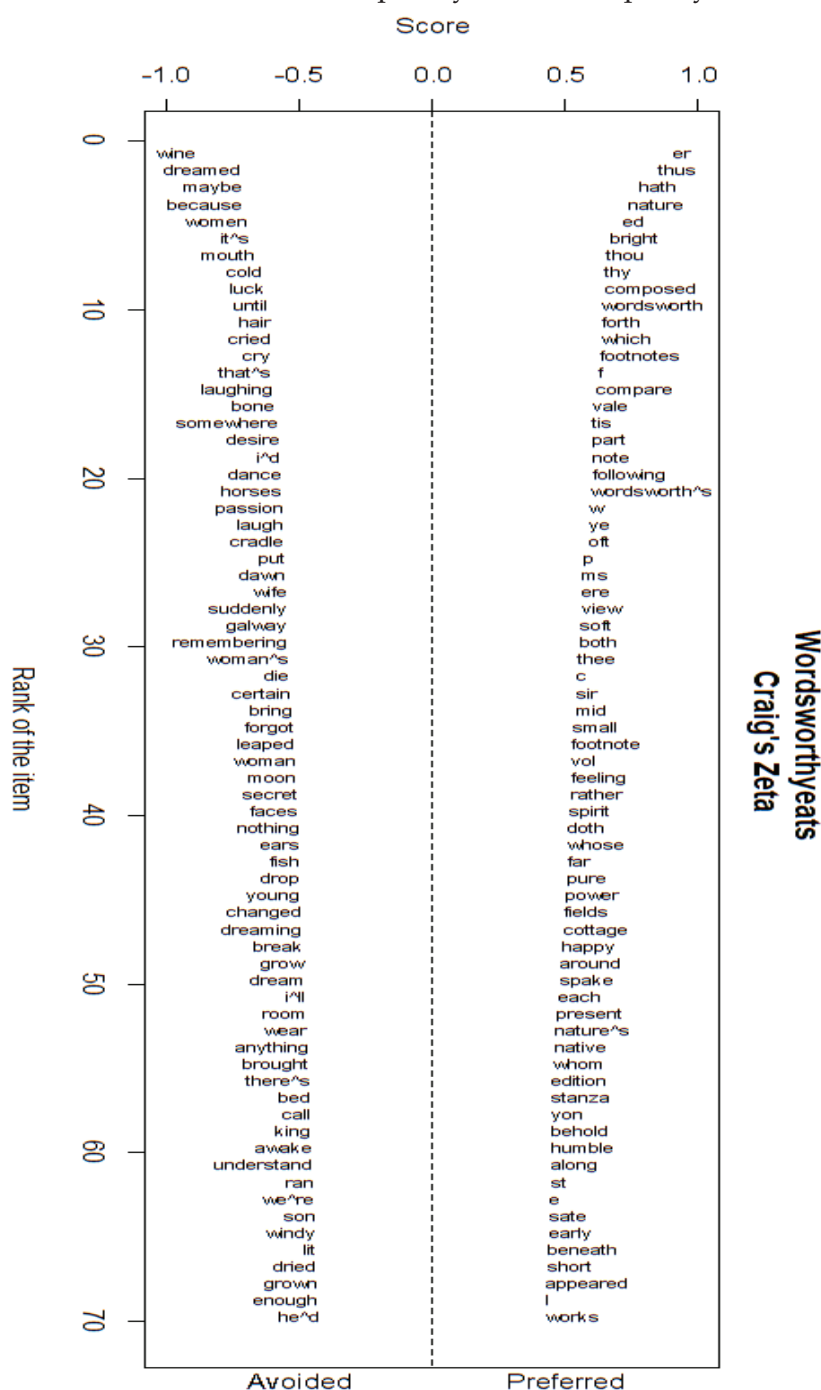


Figure 8: opposition of Wordsworth and Yeats' linguistic preferences
Tool used for analysis- "R-Style"

This stylometric visualisation provides a broad picture of both poets' romantic inclinations. On the left of the classification table, *words avoided*, the ranking of the words are compared from Yeats's collections (corpora) and on the right, *words preferred*, the words are generated from Wordsworth's collection. It is worth stating that Yeats only started avoiding most of these words when he became conscious of the role a poet must play in society. This was precisely from 1917 when he showed recourse to Celtic literature and gained consciousness of himself as a poet. To him, political, literary, and artistic controversies had revealed that neither religion, nor politics can create minds with enough receptivity to become wise, or just and generous to make a nation. He avoided words on this list as "dream", "wandering", "remembering", "moon", "passion", "horses" which to him did not provide the right answers to human worries. However, as stated earlier, these same images drawn from the natural world in Yeats's poetry were used as symbols, as intellectual counters but never as objects for gentle rumination in the manner of Wordsworth. In Merrit's words as Toit puts it, the "youthful Yeats was particularly attracted to Shelley's "faith that poets are the true legislators of the world" who "offer hope to activists intent on bringing on a glorious future" (20).

The eccentricity that follows Yeats's training and practices, as observed in his poetry, demonstrates an upsurge in the poet's quest for a permanent ideal reality. His arcane solemnities, though ambiguous, seek to provide him with assured belief in personal immortality, which is of absolute and central importance to human existence. But, it should be mentioned that the mixed feelings that accompany critical opinions on this matter only justify the poet's claim in 1901.

Writing in 1901, Yeats talks of the bloodlessness and etiolation of literature "unless it is constantly flooded with the passions and beliefs of ancient times" (Hough p.236). But in a footnote he adds: "I should have added as an alternative that the supernatural may at any moment create new myths, but I was timid" (p.236). Ensuing from this claim is the observation that like most people whose beliefs are violently opposed to the whole contemporary climate of opinion, Yeats tends to express them in veiled form, or in a deliberately provocative way which enables his audience or critics to take them as amiable eccentricities.

The preceding critical views handle pertinent issues and demonstrate the fluidity involved in dealing with a highly imaginative poet like Yeats. The general idea that runs through these criticisms is that his poetry exalts him from the level of an artist to a world beyond ours through contrasting moods. His images of a Byzantine heaven in which he would be transformed into a golden bird (the artist becoming an eternal work of art) symbolises his desire to escape from the disorder, the irony and the failure of life. His aesthetic ideal for beauty sustains his craving for the "pleasure-dome". The horrendous feelings he nurtures towards civilisation exalts his yearning for life at any level especially when he says he would like to live again, even in a "foul ditch, as a blind man battering blind men" (Scott-Kilvert). Briefly, life to him is a compendium of abstruse fantasies and dominating spirits of which only profound contemplation can stand its challenges.

Conclusion

This critical and stylometric assessment of Wordsworth's and Yeats's ambivalent cravings in romantic and modernist discourses is in-exhaustive, but reveals that much has been written on Wordsworth and Yeats in terms of the poets' antithetical, philosophical, spiritual, and psychological strains. Though critics have contributed substantially in projecting important areas in the poets' lives as reflected in their creative works, most of the criticism has been subjective. None of the critics reviewed on this paper approached the authors with mixed methods of data analysis which enhance the digitisation, data modelling and visualisation

with analytic tools like *Voyant* and *R-Stlyo*. From the analyses, it has been revealed that both Wordsworth and Yeats had romantic inclinations as demonstrated in their prolonged quest for ideal reality. This paper also examined both poets, not only from the obvious point of comparison, but as literary connoisseurs who transcended the boundaries of periodization and concentrate on cultural, historical, ideological and philosophical realities as means to rescue humanity from prolong affliction, spiritual hypnotisation and psychical strain. The concepts of the “quest” and “visionary contemplation” are qualities of cognitive spiritual experiences and are expressed in poetry as the poets’ basic aesthetic philosophy aimed at achieving the romantic ideal as illustrated in this paper. However, there is a subtle suggestion that the mixture of sorrows and joys, frustrations and hopes, psychical strain, stifling relationship and death deployed in the poetry in question renders humans desolate and neurotic. Amidst these tragic circumstances, Wordsworth as Romantic and Yeats as quasi-romantic and modernist, think that the imagination remains the most powerful spiritual force because it harmonises their romantic sensibilities into a unified whole in a civilisation where they are disenchanted, dissatisfied, yet hopeful.

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