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Soundscapes

Listening to British and American Languages and Cultures

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Ear Perception as a Poetic Device: The Aesthetics of Sound in William Wordsworth's Poetry

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ABSTRACT – Wordsworth's romantic approach to poetry manifests itself through a rich array of writing techniques. His reliance on the five senses in his poetic depictions constitutes an aesthetics that swerves from a mimetic representation of reality and embraces reliance on personal experiences and subjective impressions. Among other senses, Wordsworth gives particular attention to the ear. Some important poems of his feature sound and music as stylistic devices illustrating a few theoretical concepts already developed in "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" (1802). In selected passages from *The Prelude* and "The Solitary Reaper" Wordsworth uses sound and hearing as metaphors for his principle of poetic creation in tranquillity, while in poems like "The Power of Sound" and "The Power of Music" the motive of music distinctively reveals Wordsworth's differentiation between the poet and the ordinary man as plainly exposed in his "Preface".

KEYWORDS – William Wordsworth; Romanticism; Imagination; Poetry; Poetics; Music and Literature; Hearing; Sound Aesthetics; Ear perception; Musical metaphors.

1. INTRODUCTION

In his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", William Wordsworth defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth and Coleridge [1798 and 1800] 2003, 8). Embracing a poetry that promotes imagination, emotions and subjectivity, Wordsworth adopts different writing strategies as core foundations for his aesthetics. Among a rich array of techniques inherent to his poetry, the use of the five senses plays an eminent role in conveying Wordsworth's poetics of imagination and spontaneity. As the cognitive activity of sensing undoubtedly permits the poet to communicate his personal impressions, Wordsworth seems to give particular interest to sound-

scape, music, and auditory perceptions. Dedicating some poems to music, along with his frequent exploration of the acoustic setting of featured natural scenes, Wordsworth's attention to sound is undoubtedly deliberate and consciously measured. If critics have recognized in Wordsworth's soundscape explorations the poetic expression of the leading role of imagination and transcendence, a closer look to such recurrent aesthetic tendencies may offer further thematic connotations. From this perspective, this article interprets soundscape, music, and ear perception as formal techniques expressing the poetic principles Wordsworth developed in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads". In poems such as *The Prelude* and "The Solitary Reaper" musical metaphors illustrate Wordsworth's creative exercise of poetry as raw material transformed and "recollected in tranquillity" (*ibid.*), whereas poems like "The Power of Sound" and "The Power of Music" illustrate his sharp differentiation between the poet and the ordinary man.

2. WORDSWORTH'S POETICS OF THE SENSES: COGNITION AND EAR PERCEPTION AS THE ESSENCE OF POETRY

In his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", Wordsworth defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (*ibid.*). This brief definition dismisses mimesis and chooses a personal and subjective approach in writing. For that purpose, Wordsworth adopts many techniques that constitute his poetic style. Among them, senses and sensual imagery play an eminent role at conveying Wordsworth's poetics of imagination and spontaneity. Relying on his cognitive abilities, Wordsworth recommends a poetry that communicates his personal impressions, and subjective experiences. On this concern, Lilian R. Furst asserts that the romantic poet "is above all an interpreting reader. Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting, he is always engaged not just in noting the physiognomy of the season, but simultaneously in interpreting it" (Furst 2002, 14). In this unpublished passage from *The Prelude*, Wordsworth explicitly refers to the senses as "godlike" powers that allow him to create poetry out of external perception:

There is creation in the eye
Nor less in all the other senses: powers
They are that colour, model, and combine
The things perceived with such as absolute

Essential energy that we may say
That those most like godlike faculties of ours
At one and the same moment are the mind
And the mind's minister. (Warnock 1978, 118)

Comparable to other significant passages, the five senses emerge here as central aesthetic and thematic concerns for the poet. The eyes and all other sensory organs can combine perceived scenes that enable him to create new entities from different associations. As asserted in "Tintern Abbey", Wordsworth is "Well pleased to recognize / In nature and the language of the sense / The anchor of [his] purest thoughts" (Wordsworth 1837, 160). Accordingly, via the use of the senses, Wordsworth interacts with the external world and turns his cognitive abilities into powerful tools for poetic creation.

Among the five human senses, Wordsworth pays particular attention to auditory perceptions. In the poems he dedicates to music and in his frequent exploration of the acoustic setting of featured natural scenes, soundscape becomes a fundamental element in the making of his poetic style. Many critics say that Wordsworth's reliance on auditory perceptions express the poet's joy, transcendence, and self-realization in celebrating the beauty of natural scenes. In *Poetry and the Romantic Musical Aesthetics*, James H. Donelan associates Wordsworth's evocation of nature's sounds to the poet's satisfaction at contemplating the order of nature and its seasons: "Wordsworth turns natural sound into voice and music of nature, and finds his ability to rejoice restored by a change in season. As in 'The Solitary Reaper,' the poet finds that nature's sounds have order and meaning, as do the seasons, and that his ability to find joy returns with this realization" (Donelan 2008, 134). In the line of thought, Donelan interprets Wordsworth's sound metaphors as expressing the poet's ideal state of transcendence and self-consciousness:

Although Wordsworth lacked the specifically philosophical (or poetological) project of the kind that Hölderlin pursued, he nevertheless understood the materiality of poetry through metaphors of music, and his descriptions of listening to music represent self-consciousness through metaphors based on the phenomenal encounter of the listener's mind with sound. (98)

The celebration of nature's beauty, joy, and transcendence are common in romantic poetry, and associating ear perception to them is part of the critical tradition about nineteenth-century poetry. Fiona Stafford even relates the Romantics' inner desire for personal expression and transcendence to

their recurrent use of sound, musical metaphors, and their general interest in soundscape and ear perception:

Sounds spoke to poets, long before they recognized their own calling, and many of the poems written in maturity reflect a life-long delight in the music of the everyday. The unflinching quality of aural enjoyment meant that familiar sounds often provided a reassuring sense of continuity in a world where so much pleasure seemed transient. The natural music of streams, breezes and birds or the regular ringing of church bells not only awakened immediate delight, but also recollections of pleasures past and therefore hope for similar experience in the future. (Stafford 2012, 162)

Most critics associate the Romantics' interest in soundscape to their recurrent solipsist tendencies, but we need to consider that each poet treats sound and music in his or her own way and uses different strategies. Saying that most Romantics adore nature and transcendence might be hasty and imprecise. As Ryan Haas assumes it in the following lines: "For Wordsworth, Blake, and Clare, poetic self-presentation through sound differs as widely as each poet's engagement with sound does. Only a detailed account of how each poet thinks with sound through the medium of poetic language can reveal these differences" (Haas 2016, 13).

However closely Romantic poets might share the same interest in nature, imagination, and transcendence, one may link their respective aesthetics of sound and music to many other ideas and connotations. In line with this argument, J. C. Smith in *A Study of Wordsworth* recognizes music and sound experiences as stimuli to Wordsworth's poetic mood. Though he admits that sight is dominant, he concludes that Wordsworth's visual perceptions emerge beforehand in his ear. He therefore confirms the significant importance of soundscape aesthetics:

Wordsworth's ear [...] was [...] very sensitive to a certain order of sounds, namely to natural sounds, especially the sounds of wind and water [...] In one respect, I believe, the poet's ear was even more important to him than his eye. Sounds did not feed his imagination as sights did, but they were singularly potent to stimulate it, to induce the poetic mood [...]. (Smith 1944, 7)

Besides referring to Wordsworth's solipsism, the aesthetics of sound and music also engage at connoting other significant ideas related to his poetics. Considering the theoretical concepts he formulated in "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", we can notice a continual parallelism between Wordsworth's theory

of poetry and his use of soundscape, and musical metaphors. In this perspective, I think that the study of this musical analogy is in line with the critical tradition on Wordsworth.

3. RECOLLECTING SOUNDS IN TRANQUILLITY: MUSIC AND LISTENING AS A METAPHOR FOR POETIC CREATION

I would like to shed light on Wordsworth's use of music and ear perception as aesthetic devices exemplifying his poetic principle of "emotion recollected in tranquillity" (Wordsworth and Coleridge [1798 and 1800] 2003, 8). In his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", Wordsworth sequences a strategy, pointing at the different steps involved in the process of poetic composition:

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins. (*ibid.*)

Emotions and spontaneity constitute the main focus in Wordsworth's aesthetics, but poetic creation originates from contemplation and analysis of such prevailing emotions and observations in tranquillity. Such emotions represent the raw material that, "by a species of reaction" (*ibid.*), the poet's mind sequences and organizes according to different sets of associations that gradually give birth to the form of the poem. While spontaneity and powerful feelings stand as key ingredients for creating poetry, the recollection and synthesis of those elements into a coherent whole majorly contribute to give a final form to the poem. In "It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free", Wordsworth's synthetic process of poetic creation is plainly exposed as the poet associates London's evening to the quietude and peacefulness of a nun praising the creator:

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
[...] (Wordsworth 1837, 184)

The dual imagery associating the quiet evening in London and the nun spiritual prayer have suggested the same emotional state of peace and tranquillity to the poet's mind. Both scenes represent two distinct and different experiences that the poet can relate to each other according to the similar emotional reactions they both provoked in him. By analogy and association, the poet synthesizes those two similar experiences and conveys his state of mind and "overflow of powerful feelings" (Wordsworth and Coleridge [1798 and 1800] 2003, 8) to the reader. Through association and synthesis, Wordsworth communicates a world constructed out of his intellect, emotional response and imagination in his poems.

In line with this understanding, Coleridge refers to Wordsworth as a poet with the modifying power of imagination, capable of combining thought, feelings and poetic forms:

Wordsworth is [...] the only man who has effected a complete and constant synthesis of Thought and Feeling and combined them with Poetic Forms, with the music of pleasurable passion and with imagination or the modifying power in that highest sense of the word in which I have ventured to oppose it to Fancy, or the aggregating power. (in Roe *et al.* 2006, 35)

Coleridge explicitly associates Wordsworth's poetics to a process of transformation and synthesis of material that he describes as the creative power of imagination. While he recognizes in imagination a process that "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate" (Coleridge 1907, 202), he considers fanciness a passive reproduction of observed scenes. By describing the work of Wordsworth as the product of powerful imagination instead of mere fanciness, Coleridge implies that Wordsworth's poetry is the result of a whole process of intellectual transformation, association and synthesis.

In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth recurs to sound as one of the senses that illustrate the poetic principles he exposes in the "Preface", where the speaker evokes the effect of nature over his senses, and makes reference to his poem as to a song composed in "measured strains":

For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
Was blowing on my body, felt within
A correspondent breeze, that gently moved
With quickening virtue, but is now become
A tempest, a redundant energy,
Vexing its own creation [...] (Book I, 33-38)

Thus, O Friend! did I, not used to make
A present joy the matter of a song,
Pour forth that day my soul in measured strains
That would not be forgotten, and are here
Recorded [...] (Book I, 46-50) (Wordsworth [1805] 1970, 2)

Wordsworth starts by evoking the effect of heavenly nature on his body as “the sweet breath of heaven” generates in his inner self a “correspondent breeze”. While such statement reveals an immediate sensory interaction between the poet and nature, the use of the past tense indicates that the verses result from poetic recollection. Here, the speaker in the same passage informs us that such scene and emotions drive him to write “a song [...] in measured strains”. At the precise moment of composition, the inner breeze of inspiration becomes a “tempest”, a natural force, shifting the present moment “not” to be the subject of his song: “Thus far, O friend, did I, not used to make present joy the matter of my song” (Book I, 46-47) (2). Thus, if the lines evoke the immediate effect of nature on the poet’s senses, they also imply a delay between the immediate moment of contemplation and the poetic creation and organization of the perceived scenes.

Matching his poetic principle of “emotion recollected in tranquillity” (Wordsworth and Coleridge [1798 and 1800] 2003, 8), Wordsworth here makes a difference between the spontaneous recollection of genuine sounds produced in the natural world and the synthesis, organization, and transformation of those auditory experiences to achieve poetic lines. On that account, the process of composition described here matches the poetic steps illustrated in “Preface to Lyrical Ballads”, as the process distinctively involves here an initial moment of inspiration, in which the poet collects the material for his song, and the crafting of that same material into metrical form. Hence, using sound and ear perception, the poet figuratively represents his principle of recollection and synthesis of “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings [...] recollected in tranquillity” (*ibid.*).

As Wordsworth compares his *Prelude* to a song, music and sound aesthetics become motifs that illustrate the principles of his poetics. In the following passage, poetic creation is compared to harmonic organization of isolated notes in music:

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles

Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have bourne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end! (Book I, 340-50) (10)

As the speaker refers to the external world as mere dust, he suggests that those “Discordant elements” (*ibid.*) might be reconciled into a unified whole. Just like dissonance and harmony in music, the external world full of “terrors, pains, and early miseries” could turn into harmonious meaning once imagination and craft are put at work. In the same way as musical harmony emerges from the association of the otherwise meaningless notes of a scale, poetic construction involves a similar recollection of raw material that can be harmonized into a whole. When the poet perceives the internal “echo” of the imperfect sound of reality, he draws the confidence that this process of recollection and organization will lead him to greater self-consciousness: “Internal echo of the imperfect sound; / To both I listened, drawing from them both / A cheerful confidence in things to come” (Book I, 56-58) (2). The term “echo” emphasizes the acoustic and metaphorical representation of Wordsworth’s theory of poetry in this poem. As an echo reflects and reproduces a sound, “the mind’s internal echo” recalls scenes and sounds perceived in the past.

In “The Solitary Reaper”, this same delayed process between recollection and synthesis is exemplified through the singing of a solitary woman: “Alone she cuts and binds the grain, / And sings a melancholy strain;” (Wordsworth 1837, 200). As the woman’s singing is compared to some other sounds perceived in nature, her chant is described as fusing in harmony with the setting: “O listen! for the Vale profound / Is overflowing with the sound” (*ibid.*). In the closing lines of the poem, the speaker affirms that such harmonious auditory experience is kept in his heart long after it is no more heard:

I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more. (*ibid.*)

Auditory experiences, like other perceptions in the mind of the poet, are stored to be turned into transcendental experiences later. Like his theory of

poetry, Wordsworth's poetry presents a first moment of contemplation, when the mind captures nature's sounds, and a second transformational step when those sounds are rearranged and reorganized in tranquillity "Long after it was heard no more" (*ibid.*).

4. MUSIC AND POETIC SENSIBILITY: THE ORDINARY MAN VS. THE POET IN "THE POWER OF MUSIC"

In *The Prelude* and "The Solitary Reaper", Wordsworth shows a subtle use of sound and music metaphors to illustrate his poetic process of recollecting raw material and its transformation in tranquillity. Conversely, in "The Power of Music" he distinctly formulates a more explicit musical statement to demonstrate a poetic differentiation between the poet and the ordinary man. In his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", Wordsworth defines the poet as "endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind" (Wordsworth and Coleridge [1798 and 1800] 2003, 13). Therefore, although the romantic poet is recognized as a "man speaking to a man" (*ibid.*), he nevertheless holds a superior sense of observation that enables him to capture what ordinary people cannot grasp. In "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", the speaker compares the view of the city from London Bridge to "a garment wear[ing] the beauty of the morning" (Wordsworth 1837, 191). Thanks to his imaginative sense of contemplation, the poet has the power to capture what the ordinary man cannot perceive, as Ralph Henry Talkin states: "both Wordsworth and the ordinary man saw London on the same morning. They saw the same ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples. Yet to the non-poet, to the ordinary man, London was the same dirty city it had always been" (Talkin 1954, 60).

In "The Power of Music", Wordsworth illustrates this sharp contrast between the poet and the ordinary man by the metaphor of music. Music can please the general audience, but it can also send messages that only those endowed with higher power of observation and sense of contemplation can understand. Implicitly, in this poem the ear becomes a sensory receptor through which the gifted listener can capture hidden murmurs coming from the musical performance. Realizing the deep sense of music requires the higher poetic sensitivity of the poet as described in Wordsworth's "Preface".

The poem opens on a street musician in the city of Oxford, who is associated to Orpheus, the pre-Homeric musician-poet Horace evokes in *Ars Poetica*:

An Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old; –
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same I
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name. (Wordsworth 1807, 90)

In Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Orpheus is endowed with the extraordinary power to domesticate animals and civilize humans when he plays on his lyre: "While men still roamed the woods, Orpheus, the holy prophet of the gods, made them shrink from bloodshed and brutal living; hence the fable that he tamed tigers and ravening lions; hence too the fable that Amphion, builder of Thebes's citadel, moved stones by the sound of his lyre" (Horace 1926, 391; 391-96 of the Latin text).

By mentioning Orpheus, Wordsworth chooses to ascribe the musician a superior power, far beyond entertaining an audience on a street in London. Orpheus' song can unite the members of the community, but also bring rest to the anxious, salvation to the guilty, and bliss to the hungry: "What an eager assembly! what an empire is this! / The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss; / The mourner is cheared, and the anxious have rest; / And the guilt-burthened Soul is no longer opprest" (Wordsworth 1837, 136). The image of the poor boy parting with his last coin highlights the music's power to relieve the community members, momentarily, from the financial pressure of living in the city: "From the Old and the Young, / from the Poorest; and there! / The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare" (*ibid.*).

The speaker ends his poem lamenting the superficial attitude of the audience. While manifestly charmed by the musical performance, the audience cannot capture some deep murmurs Orpheus communicates: "Here are twenty souls happy as Souls in a dream; / They are deaf to your murmurs – they care not for you, / Nor what ye are flying, or what ye pursue!" (*ibid.*). Wordsworth depicts here the audience as souls listening to some delightful melodies, visibly charmed, and captured into a short interval of cheerful happiness, yet they are unconcerned and completely deaf to the Orpheus' deep murmurs.

The audience's lack of deep perceptive abilities causes distortion and discontinuity in their appreciation. Some of the passers-by are described as running out in "haste", their time rushing "to waste". Even if the News-man

stops to give ear to the beautiful melodies, he too seems breathless and in a hurry:

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste
What matter! He's caught – and his time runs to waste –
The News-man is stopped, though he stops on the fret
And the half-breathless Lamp-lighter he's in the net! (*ibid.*)

One may interpret the people's temporary trance to the music as a conventional civic reunion without any possibility of transcendence. The closing lines of the poem metaphorically resume this contrast as the poet juxtaposes the Orpheus music to "coaches and chariots! Roar" (*ibid.*) of the city, implicitly emphasizing the negative effect of the urban lifestyle on people's sensibility. Through this musical representation, Wordsworth communicates his sharp distinction between the poet and the ordinary man. The poet's "lively sensibility [...] enthusiasm and tenderness" (Wordsworth and Coleridge [1798 and 1800] 2003, 13) is represented in "The Power of Music" as an auditory contemplative quality that a regular audience seems to lack. While poetry requires an active intellectual imaginative effort to capture the essence of things, Orpheus' hidden murmurs require an active contemplative ear to be recognized.

5. THE EAR AS AN ORGAN OF VISION: SYNTHESIS AND POETIC CREATION IN "THE POWER OF SOUND"

This concept of the active ear capable to perceive, transform and create out of external auditory exploration is furthermore explored in "The Power of Sound". Here, Wordsworth considers music and Orpheus' mythological tunes as part of a larger category of sounds that includes the murmurs of streams, fountains, oceans, bird singing, and echoes. If we assume that listening requires an intellectual process to seize the hidden connotations of different acoustic phenomena, both the sounds coming from the natural world and the musical performances could be considered within a harmonious whole for an active interpretive ear.

The poem opens by evoking a spirit inhabiting the organ of the ear, to which the sounds of the world are subservient. Thanks to the interpreting power of the spirit, the ear becomes "an organ of vision". The power of sound

throws light on the entire intricate labyrinth in the human mind:

Organ of vision! And a Spirit aerial
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave;
[...] (Wordsworth 1837, 177)

Because the human's ear works along with the power of the aerial spirit, the sounds of the external world are all open to interpretation, for they hold thoughts when entering the "oracular cave" (*ibid.*). Most of the lines throughout the poem can be read as a representation of the great efficacy of auditory stimulation. In line with this understanding, the speaker in the second stanza introduces us to a range of auditory experiences varying from natural sounds to human made music:

The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That' roar, the prowling lion's 'Here I am',
How fearful to the desert wide!
That bleat, how tender! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo! – let the vernal soul
Go with thee to the frozen zone;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll!
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow's cottage-lullaby. (*ibid.*)

This auditory exposition conveys the idea that contemplating every single noise, echo, or vibration, no matter how many and different from each other, can serve the spirit that inhabits the human ear. In this concern, the rush of streams and fountains, the lion's roar, the sheep's bleat, or the cuckoo's call belong to the same category of sounds as performed music, the nun's throb, the sailor's prayer, and the cottage-widow's lullaby. Either produced by nature or by individuals, all sounds can serve the inner "invisible spirit" of the human ear.

All sounds of the external world are open for interpretation, but the speaker in the poem demands an active interpreting ear to fully capture hidden murmurs and connotations. On that matter, the speaker informs us that each emotion has its own auditory equivalence for “terror, joy, or pity, / Vast is the compass and the swell of notes” (178). Accordingly, the sounds and the mind remain interconnected: they work in collaboration to discern such harmony and associations. The utterances of sounds have “no scheme”, nor do they represent “moral music”, but the listener has to “stoop to bear chains” (*ibid.*) and make connections that may lead him to meaningful revelations:

Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no scheme,
No scale of moral music – to unite
Powers that survive but in the faintest dream
Of memory? – O that ye might stoop to bear
Chains, such precious chains of sight
As laboured minstrelsies through ages wear!
O for a balance fit the truth to tell
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well! (*ibid.*)

Like Orpheus’ performance in “The Power of Music”, both nature’s sounds and performed music require an active contemplative ear. By referring to “laboured minstrelsies” (*ibid.*), the active listener is compared here to those medieval singers who recited lyrics or heroic poetry over a musical accompaniment. Once interpreted in the mind, sounds have something to tell and require an active mind to capture and interpret connotations. In the “Argument” section that opens the poem, Wordsworth clearly affirms that sounds and mind can unite to form a system of moral interest and intellectual contemplation (177). Because it is the interpretive power of the mind that makes sound experiences meaningful or cacophonous, neither natural nor human sounds are perfect on their own. In the following lines from “The Prelude”, the speaker puts emphasis on the power of the mind and imagination to construct harmony from discordant elements in nature:

The mind of man is framed even like the breath
And harmony of music. There is a dark
Invisible workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, and makes them move
In one society. (Wordsworth [1805] 1970, 10)

In view of this assertion, it is in the mind that discordant elements are reunited harmonically in one society. Thus, through such intellectual process of

association and synthesis of external materials, the poet is capable to craft and convey his ideal imaginative visions in his poetry. Like images and personal experiences that are perceived, stored and re-interpreted in the mind, the variety of sounds heard from the external world require the same creative process before they can be interpreted into harmonious melodies telling truths.

6. CONCLUSION

If Wordsworth's concept of 'recollecting emotions in tranquillity' is represented in *The Prelude* through a delayed process of capturing auditory material from the external world, his distinct differentiation between the poet and the ordinary man is illustrated in "The Power of Music" through the sharp contrast between the speaker's ability to capture Orpheus' murmurs, and the incapacity of the remaining audience to transcend a superficial listening experience. If the act of listening opens the doors for interpretation, Wordsworth in "The Power of Sound" extends his auditory exploration beyond music to consider the acoustic sounds coming from the natural world as subservient to the inner spirit inhabiting the ear. Like creative imagination in poetic creation, the ear can transform external sounds into a coherent whole that gives access to superior truth. Through his creative use of sound, music, and the motif of hearing, we come to understand that Wordsworth exhibits some of his poetic principles and ideas originally developed in his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", which apparently constitutes a keystone to his poetry, writing style, and aesthetics.

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