In the collection Recent Romanizations, ed. Larry H. Peer, "The Future of Wordworth" (1973) is forthcoming. Peer is professor of English at the University of Colorado at Boulder. His research on the "Future of Wordworth" is part of a larger project on the poet's role in the development of modernism. The project explores how Wordworth's work, with its emphasis on the relationship between the individual and nature, has influenced modernist writers and poets.

The issue of memory is central to the project, and Peer argues that Wordworth's emphasis on the power of memory to shape the self, a theme that is also present in the works of many modernist writers, has had a lasting impact on literary scholarship.

Peer's work also intersects with research in cognitive science, particularly in the area of memory and emotion. His approach to the study of memory is interdisciplinary, drawing on insights from psychology, neuroscience, and other fields.

In conclusion, Peer's project on the "Future of Wordworth" demonstrates the enduring relevance of Wordsworth's work, and his research highlights the role of memory in shaping our understanding of the poet and his influence on modernism.

Beth Lau

Memory Research
Wordworth and Current
may pay a price by retaining only sketchy memories of where we
were, what we experienced, or what our daydreams are. As
against this, every experience we have is stored in our
memory. To begin, it is an immediate memory, we
encode of any given scene or event. To retrieve and remember,
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Whenever I go to the coffee shop, I always order a latte. It's my favorite.
Wordsworth and Memory

had been assassinated. Larsen had heard the news on the radio early in the morning. When he later recalled this memory, he included his wife in the scene, even though as his written account made clear he had been alone at the time. Many experiences of spending the morning with his wife had merged with this one specific incident and caused Larsen to insert his absent wife into his memory.

Finally, memories can fade and become less accessible, especially if the memory is not often rehearsed, either in personal mediation or in narration to others. We simply do not remember everything we have experienced; some impressions and events are never encoded and therefore not available for retrieval, and other recollections grow dim with the passage of time. Wordsworth reflects an awareness of many of these aspects of memory's operation. The idea that our past experiences shape our present perceptions, so that what we pay attention to and encode is largely determined by our established personalities, is central to Wordsworth's outlook, most succinctly and memorably expressed in his claim that The Child is father of the Man.17 Wordsworth also conveys an understanding of the importance of effective encoding for vivid and long-lasting memories. The purpose of the Lyric Ballads poems, according to Wordsworth's 1800 Preface, is to promote the cultivation of alert attention to the subtle details of everyday life.18 In Coleridge's well-known account, Wordsworth's 'object' in his Lyric Ballads poems was "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to that which the writer of The Mind's Illness and the Wonders of the World before us."19 Wordsworth's concern to 'look steadily at his subject,' to practice himself and encourage in others a habit of close attention to the world around us, parallels Schaefer's point that people who are not very alert to or focused on their surroundings will 'be left with impover-

Was present, but of her I know no more. Than hath been said, and scarcely at this time
Do I remember her; but I behold
The lovely boy as I beheld him then.
youthful images of a painter's mental world.

Death in a shudder causes him to reflect on the world of this
phenomenon. In his poem, Wordsworth's grief over his brother's
mournful, "Delightful Stanzas" is the most extreme example of this
memoriam. "Delightful Stanzas" present sorrow after a previously happy
This passage records an extreme of mood congruent retrievals.

Which they were used to be.
The graceful image in my memory
Since thy migrations and departure, friend,
Are not now

The Jovial ships themselves

Coleridge's absence in Malaca, tells his friend:

Wordsworth in "The Prelude," lamenting Samuel Taylor
To assume a heightened vitality and significance.

To reproduce the scene directly and immediately they began
the interiorizing of the years. It is only when he is able to
hear the landscape's "beautiful" forms in his memory that
his memory begins to lose his earlier response to the
landscape. The scene itself is also a powerful one that activates
the speaker's memory of his visit there five years earlier. As St uart
speaks, "the sister's wild eyes" (line 19) also speak as a one to one
acters and efficient retrieval cues for William in "Tintern Ab-

specific and effective retrieval cues for William in "Tintern Ab-

Index and Johnson's poem, other entries would still be
swept into the journal and his poems. His habits of consulting his sister's journal
also concerns an awareness of the retrieval pro-
years and their personal interests

Wordsworth also conveys an awareness of the retrieval pro-

vividness with which he recalled her.

Boyd's mother was also part of the scene, but since he did not
him and on whom he focused his attention at the theater. The

As Wordsworth makes clear, it was the child who mattered to

Beth Law
Wordsworth's "Plains of Connacht" in his memory from the summer
the news of the Swedish prime minister's assassination,
1808. Like Larsson who visited his wife into this memory of hearing
not seen this at that time, Wordsworth writes, "shutting with
The image of the mind presents to him, and yet a power is on me
woods' the image of the mind presents to him, and yet a power is on me
Wordsworth is included to include Coleridge at the time. "O Ireland, we
Wordsworth notes other kinds of memory distortion. In a pas-
meditations that have shaped and altered them.
mediations that have shaped and altered them.
original impressions from subsequence emotions, experiences, and
original impressions from subsequence emotions, experiences, and
cannot part / The shadow from the subsistence (lines 254–5), so
cannot part / The shadow from the subsistence (lines 254–5), so
some way as a person looking at the lake "which is perplexed, and
some way as a person looking at the lake "which is perplexed, and
earlier. It a still lake, in which the objects under the water cannot
earlier. It a still lake, in which the objects under the water cannot
in book 7, Wordsworth questions whether or not he should de-
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Wordsworth interprets his narrative with this disclaimer:
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subsequent experience and reflection alter one's impression of
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(3.644–8)

By after-mediation,
and what may rather have been called to the
The made recollection of that time,
I cannot say what portion is in truth
of these and other kindled notions.

The work of fancy.

Though things remembered daily do half seem
Copying the impression of the memory—
shall I give way,

there in 1791, Wordsworth
since the landing signals the wheresoever during his first residence
In book 7, Wordsworth questions whether or not he should de-

(lines 145–8)

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opscleve snapshots of the past, they are not total fabrications. Topographical memories cannot be considered wholly accurate, though continuous or unbroken, are fundamentally inaccurate. It is understandable, therefore, that our memories for the Wordsworth process of deterioration.

Despite the fading and the many distortions to which memory withering in many ways functions as a nexus of suspending that

Wordsworth was aware of the fact that memories decay, and his

(1.125–7)

By imagery interlude.
New stores or rescue from decay the old
Reading or thinking, either to lay up

The three works on a major poem, moreover, was
One of the initial impulses behind Wordsworth’s desire to come-

(1.1.333–42)

For future resolution.
I would cherish the spirit of the past
A substance and a life to which I feel:
While yet we may, as far as words can give,
May scarcely see at all, and I would give
I see by glimpses now, when age comes on
Seem open, I apprehend, and then they close;
Of life, the hiding-places of my power
Come back upon me from the dawn almost
The days gone by

The Prelude contains the poignant passage:
Blest is the remembrance, and into the darkness of forget-

Wordsworth’s application of the steady and inviolable del-

Wordsworth’s poetry contains many eloquent statements on

1787. No doubt later experiences of similar happy outdoor walks

Beth Law
And another benefit of memory loss or distortion has been pro-
ounced. The loss of recollection and the experiences of feeling ab-
sent from their thinking or feeling themselves as abstract
people with fragmented memories recall revealing case studies of people
who have exhibited this pattern. For many higher level thinking abilities, cases
of declarative memory loss may reveal that memory is not just a storehouse
of facts, but a complex cognitive system that expresses itself through
language and thought. In addition, the loss of consolidation
recognition of “cognitive psychologist C. F. B. B. assumes,”

**Wordsworth and Memory**

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at the end of the poem commands her to keep him alive in her
recollectances his youthful self momentarily through Dorothy's
sees Whose youth (lines 188, 190-1) in "Thirteen Adverb" Wordsworth also
Edgeworthian delirium / To live beneath [nature's] more habitual
and claims that losses are minor, as he says, "Only / . . . the-
and reveals that her childhood in his childhood
natural world he eventually reflects "any severance of the minds
all about a profound change in the speaker's response to the
4, 154). Similary, despite the fact that his philosophical
Nature "Where winter love/Then he did love years ago (lines 102-
"Love" as was in his youth, and that he in later
the first poem, he insists despite evidence to the contrary that he
Wordsworth returns to retain a connection to this earlier self in
"Thirteen Adverb" and the "Philosophical Mind" (Philosophical Mind, line 186).
"Thirteen Adverb" ("Thirteen Adverb" lines 88). In both poems
in this present condition ("Thirteen Adverb" line 88). In both poems
anism more than the has gained greater intellectual
"Thirteen Adverb" and the "Philosophical Mind" (Philosophical Mind, line 186).
our identities. In both "Thirteen Adverb" and the "Philosophical Mind"
memories of childhood have suffered significant deterioration,

"be they what they may."

Those shadowy recollection

Are yet a master high of all our seeing

Are yet the foundation high of all our day

Disappear altogether, and

Some scenes or embers remain (line 129); the memories do not:

Beth Lau
two consciousnesses—conscious of myself. Sometimes when I think of them I seem when we have such self-presence in my mind the vacancy between me and those days,
on my corporeal frame, so wide appears a tranquilizing spirit presses now nathairing in the poem.

unclouding recollections—at this hour

Natural childhood passions, he exclaims: the present-day Wordsworth's eyes (9.273-80); or when, after
from some hill-top on sunny afternoons,

Laurel: he is almost mine, with which I felt

The face, up among the heath closes.

The present rivers of memory, your mind and powers, him I tender;

The pressing influence on the other—is he the poet of this book?" he asks.

The bridge suddenly rises repeatedly to characterize memory...
As previously discussed, "Tintern Abbey" and the "Intimations Ode" also speak to both a sense of alienation from one's past as well as a preexistent state incorporated into the memory's fragile power. The myth of a preexistent state incorporated into the memory's fragile power for Wordsworth reveals his inborn memories of a former life. His character is described by "first affections," in the poem already "recollections," and one's character in the period of memory's greatest vividness and accuracy. Besides providing insights into particular Wordsworth poems, recent memory research can also shed light on a number of controversies in Wordsworth criticism. A great deal of debate has occurred over Wordsworth's revisions to the Prelude and the question of which version of the poem should be considered the best. Many of the most influential attacks on the 1850 Prelude focus on revisions that alter beliefs expressed in earlier versions of the poem. For example, the 1850 Prelude contains a passage praising Edmund Burke (7, 5, 2-3), while the 1805 Prelude does not. Critics also complain about revisions that introduce a more explicitly Christian belief system into the text that prevailed in the original poem. For example, the lines "I worshipped then the depth of things," as my soul bade me" in 1805, becomes "the depth of things, as my soul bade me" in 1806. Critics have charged that such changes in belief introduced by later revisions constitute a "betrayal of the Whole." Wordsworth's opinion and feelings did change, about many things, from politics to religion, the consequence of these deep changes in feeling and thought was to impose upon the 1850 Prelude another consciousness. Frumin also complains, several times that the 1850 Prelude deviates from the truth. "Whatever else The Prelude is," he asserts, "it purports to tell the truth about the growth of the poet's mind.