

Abstract

In the Bildungsroman development history, Goethe is generally accredited for having introduced Bildung, making formation or becoming a fictional reality with regard to character representation strategies, in his Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, but the importance of romanticism is no less significant. Romantics in their literary concern with the development of an individual subject already had thematically treated the formative principle and used it in a very similar to the Bildungsroman way of thematic representation. Tintern Abbey by William Wordsworth shows an individual in his early adulthood corresponding to the moment in the Bildungsroman of the character entering upon maturity. The principle of formation here is conceived as interrelated with nature and rural setting, and nature, in particular, is the source of formation and of becoming not simply of a mature personality but of a poet. In the process of development of a poetic mind from youth to maturity, concerning the formation as a poet, nature co-participates – in matters of “emotion recollected in tranquillity” – in the process of literary composition. As a result, in a kind of co-authorship, the poem is being written by the assistance of nature which means that the poet achieves formation. To disclose this interpretative aspect is the aim of our study as it is out attempt to show how the poem deconstructs its own process of composition, the way in which it is actually being written, and hence the Tintern Abbey, besides being a Bildungsgedicht or Lehrgedicht, is also a self-reflexive poem, a metapoem.

Keywords: Romanticism, nature, formation, Bildungsroman, Bildungsgedicht.

Özet

Bildungsroman’ın gelişim tarihinde Goethe Bildung terimini ilk ortaya atan kişi olarak kabul edilir ve Wilhelm Meister’in Çıraklık Yılları adlı eserinde gelişim veya olgunlaşma olgusunu bir kurgusal gerçeklik yoluyla yansıtır; yine de Romantik akımın varlığı ve önemi inkâr edilemez. Romantiklerin bireyin kişisel gelişimine olan edebi yaklaşımları zaten önceden beri “olgunlaşma” temeli üzerine kuruluydu ve bu temayı Bildungsroman geleneğine çok benzer bir şekilde kullandılar. William Wordsworth Tintern Abbey adlı şiirinde kişinin ilk gençlik yıllarını bir Bildungsroman karakterinin olgunluğa geçiş süreciyle eşdeğer bir biçimde anlatır. Buradaki olgunlaşma teması doğa ve kırsal yaşamla iç içedir ve özellikle doğa bu olgunlaşmanın ve şairliğin kaynağı olarak yansıtılır. Şairin gençlikten olgunluğa geçiş ve edebi yapıtı

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oluşturma sürecinde doğa önemli bir destekçidir. Neticede, bir çeşit ortak çalışma içerisinde doğa şiirin ortaya çıkış sürecinde şairin yardımcı rolündedir. Bu da şairin gelişimini tamamladığı anlamına gelir. Çalışmamızın amacı, bu şiirin kendi oluşum ve yazım aşamasını nasıl tersyüz ettiğini ve doğa temasının şairin gelişim sürecindeki önemli rolünü ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Romantizm, doğa, olgunlaşma, Bildungsroman, Bildungsgedicht

Introduction

The neoclassical period in English literature which dominated the eighteenth century had settled a literary atmosphere of strict order ruled by didactic and political writings to establish an authority based on reason. In the second part of the eighteenth century, which is also called as pre-romantic period, a reaction against neoclassical mentality emerged by offering new approach to literature which diverted the focus from prose writing to poetry while at the same time foregrounding the theme of nature and sentimentalism. The concern with nature and countryside consisted of the physical world of nature being a matter of poetic contemplation and description, as well as a mirror of human life and a spiritual healer. The writers of pre-romanticism are thus poets of transition, expressing in their writings characteristics of both neoclassicism (which was coming to its end) and romanticism (which was coming to its beginnings), and in this transition, nature springs as a concern to flourish in all its complexity.

Romanticism as a movement is essentially considered to have flourished with Goethe and his “Sturm und Drang” movement, which expressed a strong inclination toward individualism, emotions, and nature. With other prominent German writers and theorists including Schiller, Herder, Schlegel, Kant, Schleiermacher, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, who contributed with their own distinct ideas about subjectivity, idealism, consciousness, nature and art, the movement gained its influential power through all Europe, especially in England. The notions of individual experience, feelings, nature and landscape were adopted by the eminent English poets such as Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Byron, Blake and others, and they became the founders and the leaders of the Romantic Movement in English literature. Their poems reflected their own emotional and individual states co-existing with nature and its inspirational power. William Blake in his famous collection of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794) brings together the concepts of childhood and individual experience in which he stands against certain restrictive social institutions while emphasizing the innocence of childhood, imagination, and individualism in a pastoral atmosphere. With its strong references to nature and supernatural elements, Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is another representative romantic text of the period. The intense description of the natural environment consisting of storms, sea, ice, and the albatross reveals romantic ideas along with the spiritual and melancholic nature of the poem.

The romantic endeavours of expressing individual experience and the poet’s sentimental condition always go hand in hand with the existence of nature. Natural environment becomes the source of inspiration for the poet by opening a passage for his feelings to come out. Thus, although individualism and sentimentalism seem to be the major components of the romantic literature, nature by itself stands as the main provider behind all other romantic elements. Above all, nature depicts and expounds the construction of the *dualism of existence* in romantic literature, which is another essential feature of the movement, particularly with regards to the romantic self-indulging experience of escapism, which represents a defining aspect of the romantic rise of individualism. Dualism of existence refers to binary oppositions within the thematic context of the poem such as soul – body, reality – non-reality, or individual – society, which is related to the idea of individual experience. In *To a Skylark*, Shelley juxtaposes reality and non-reality by referring to skylark’s song and skylark’s divine existence which is unreal and dominates the real world of human beings. As well as the dualism of

existence, the idea of escapism manifests itself with the co-existence of nature, in which the romantic person avoids reality and attempts to find an alternative *topos*. Romantic escapism is possible by means of imagination and inspiration into a non-real world that displays a complex typology (dream, art, myth, past, nature, etc.), where non-reality itself, or rather some of its elements, especially nature, is actually the main source of inspiration. Nature has a generating role in the emergence of individual experience as a source of emotions, knowledge, escapism, and so on, and even assists the poet in the creative process of the poem by which nature also receives the role of a co-author.

The romantic period did not end at any specific point and its influences on Victorian period's realistic disposition survived. Especially with the decline of poetry and the development of the novel genre, romanticism appeared to lose power; however, the leading romantic poets continued to produce their works during this transition period. The novels of Jane Austen, Henry Fielding, Dickens or Bronte sisters manifested social realism while they were embedded with certain romantic principles and impulses such as the focus on individual experience, the theme of childhood, and individual psychology. Particularly, the *Bildungsroman* tradition, or the novel of formation which has been perceived as the substantial representative of the realist fiction of the nineteenth century, maintains a number of thematic elements of romanticism. The English novels which are classified as *Bildungsroman* or novel of formation, embody especially the theme of childhood by presenting the child protagonist's physical and internal development until he reaches adulthood. The tradition of the *Bildungsroman* roots back to the end of the eighteenth century which coincides with the emergence of the Romantic Movement, and Goethe's notable novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* is accepted as the first representative of the *Bildungsroman* tradition with its demonstration of the protagonist's personality formation. By sharing the same source of emergence with the Romantic Movement, the *Bildungsroman* tradition undeniably preserves peculiar aspects of romanticism, or vice versa, and this interrelation provides us in this study the starting point to analyse William Wordsworth's famous poem *Tintern Abbey* as the manifestation of romantic principles, which at the same time reveals the poet's formation and maturation process by making it a "poem of formation" or *Bildungsgedicht*.

1. The *Bildungsroman* and Its Thematic Pattern

"*Bildungsroman*" as a literary term labels a novel type that exposes the development of the hero both physically and mentally starting from his childhood to his adulthood while depicting the social background which has an impact on the formation of the character, where "the image of man in the process of becoming" (Bakhtin, 1986) constitutes the thematic essence of the *Bildungsroman* tradition.

The evolution and emergence of this literary pattern and its acceptance by the English authors occurred within a long process; for, if the diachronic analysis of the pattern is needed to mention, one should refer to other types of fiction that influenced the *Bildungsroman* tradition as well as the Romantic influence. Bakhtin claims that three types of fiction basically lead up to the emergence of the *Bildungsroman* and the hero, which are the travel novel, the novel of ordeal, and the biographical novel, by stating that "all these principles for the formulation of the hero paved the way for the development of synthetic forms of the novel in the nineteenth century, and above all for the realistic novel. (...) But of special importance for the realistic novel (and to some extent for the historical novel) is the *Bildungsroman*, which appeared in Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century" (1986).

The term *Bildungsroman* was introduced and used by scholars such as Karl Morgenstern and Wilhelm Dilthey in the nineteenth century, who critically analysed Goethe's second novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795) in which the young protagonist Wilhelm

accomplishes his self-education and development within an adventurous journey, and completes his apprenticeship by experiencing and learning through painful stages of formation. The reception of the tradition by the English writers was first initiated by Thomas Carlyle who translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in 1827. Carlyle was a great admirer of Goethe, and he became very influential in changing the perspective of the English intellectuals toward German literature and introducing Goethe and the Bildungsroman tradition into English literature. His own novel *Sartor Resartus* that he wrote in 1831 also represents the beginnings of a new literary tradition in England, which would later be called as the Victorian Bildungsroman. *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, *Pendennis*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and other prominent novels written in the Victorian era are the major representatives of the Victorian Bildungsroman, which reveal the maturation and formation process of the protagonist's identity.

The Bildungsroman tradition was re-shaped by the Victorian writers who adopted realism as their major way of representation of the individual and society. Thus, thematic patterns of the Victorian Bildungsroman are generally considered within a realistic and social context. The story usually starts with a child protagonist's leaving his limited environment for a bigger one, triggered by an educational intention, search for a profession or a social conflict. The hero is mostly a male orphan and reflects the certain points of the author's life and identity, which reveals the autobiographical aspect of the Bildungsroman. The first steps of the development of the protagonist are taken when he receives education, generally institutionalized, such as a boarding school education. As he grows up, he develops social relationships and seeks for a social accomplishment. He is tested through social ordeals, as well as through an emotional one which will determine his success or fail in developing a socially and individually accomplished identity. Upon sufferings and pains caused by these ordeals, he reaches a self-realization which again accompanies him towards his complete formation or failure.

The concept of formation constitutes the basic part of the thematic structure of the Bildungsroman, as the term *bildung* means formation. By focusing on the psychology and inner life of the hero, the Victorian Bildungsroman reveals the stages of his personality formation. This formation paves the way for "becoming a new person" as Bakhtin asserts:

He [the hero] emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. (1986)

Although it became popular among realists, one should not forget that Bildungsroman has also romantic or pre-romantic origins and that its thematic elements can be detected in the literature of the romantic period standing between Goethe's canonical Bildungsroman and later Victorian authors of the Bildungsromane. Among such romantic texts would be William Wordsworth's magnum opus *The Prelude* and its shorter version which is *Tintern Abbey*.

2. Tintern Abbey and the Concern with Nature and the Formation of a Poetic Mind

Though Wordsworth claimed that poetry's concern should be simple, rustic existence, his best literary production centres on the development and workings of his own mind, the complexity of his own personality, with pregnant autobiographical allusions, rendering the principles governing the formation of individuality, especially as in *The Prelude*, which is actually the major concern in the Bildungsromane.

The Prelude, like *Tintern Abbey*, could be considered as a proto-Bildungsroman, or rather *Bildungsgedicht* or *Lehrgedicht*, of the age of romanticism just like *Tom Jones* is in the context of the rise of the English novel in the eighteenth century. The poem, written between 1798 and 1805, representing the first major version that Wordsworth refused to publish, was continually revised during several decades, culminating in the 1850 version, published posthumously. It is viewed as a surviving fragment of imposing magnitude of a *magnum opus* that was to be *The Recluse*, which Wordsworth started planning in 1798, along with the first book, called *The Recluse* (1800), and *The Excursion* (composed between 1797 and 1814). *The Recluse*, “a philosophical poem containing views of Man, Nature and society (...) having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement”, and with admiration anticipated by Coleridge as “the great philosophical poem in existence”, was to employ Wordsworth’s energies for the next 17 years, but it was never completed.

The Prelude renders the growth of the poet’s own consciousness, and its subtitle clearly indicates this: *Growth of a Poet’s Mind. An Autobiographical Poem*. One can say that Wordsworth began modern poetry, the poetry of the growing inner self, for after him, the poets’ main subject was their own subjectivity.

Wordsworth himself, speaking of *The Prelude* on its completion in a letter of May 1, 1805, declared that it was “a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should talk so much about himself. It is not self-conceit that has induced me to do this, but real humility. I began the work because I was unprepared to treat any more arduous subject, and diffident of my own powers”. The introduction to Book I probes the diffidence in some detail, the ambition to produce a great epic, the fear of confusing the grand and the grandiose, and the too easy rationalizing of inactivity; also the object of the poem is soon made explicit: “to fix the wavering balance of my mind” by reviewing the whole past, its defeats and merits, disappointments and moments of exaltation. By the end of Book XII in the earliest version, Wordsworth had achieved, partly in the actual process of writing, the “healthy” imagination of his maturity and was ready to begin his epic. That is at the time he could hardly have suspected that *The Prelude* was actually already that major work, not merely a preliminary exercise but itself a deed accomplished.

The poem follows the main events of the poet’s life: Book First and Second describe his childhood and school-time, and the next books successively trace his residence at Cambridge, a Summer Vacation, the return to Cambridge and his Alpine tour, his residence in London, his stay in France and his experience of the French Revolution, the disillusionment and final restoration.

The poem is thus a highly personal work, an extended confession or apologia, and as such indeed “a thing unprecedented” in English poetry. *The Prelude* contains most of the romantic thematic concerns and characteristic features, including individualism, emotional experience, imaginative flight, focus on nature and countryside, and so on.

The concern with nature in romantic poetry receives a very complex thematic expression also in Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey*, a poem whose representation of natural world transforms the tradition of the topographical and locodescriptive genres, and is also quite different from modern ecological perspectives on physical nature. Wordsworth “is, on the whole, far more interested in the relationship of non-human nature to the human mind than he is in nature in and for itself. (...) Wordsworth spends rather little time describing nature, and rather a lot reflecting upon his own and other people’s response to it” (Garrard, 2012).

Nature is here neither linked to an elegiac sense, nor alluded to classical values, nor personified, nor presented as “a token of the social values of order and prosperity”, but

“the presentation of nature is structured according to the inward motions and transitions of the observing consciousness” (Day, 1995). Following an established critical tradition, *Tintern Abbey* is regarded as dealing with the theme of nature, memory and the growing human/poetic mind; it is accepted that the main theme and subject are the individual subjectivity, the poet’s mind with all its range of thoughts and memories, and the nature is a token of all these abstract manifestations of the mind; but a more attentive consideration of the expression of nature in the poem along with Wordsworth’s theory of the origin of poetry from his “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* would provide alternative interpretations to the poem.

In the poem, nature is not just a token but becomes a source of feelings in youth (“sensations sweet, / Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart”); a source of knowledge (“the burthen of the mystery” and “the heavy and the weary weight / Of all this unintelligible world” are “lightened”) and at the same time of spiritual existence as a distinct version of romantic escapism or Descartes’s dualist theory of the separation of body and spirit (when “the breath of this corporeal frame / And even the motion of our human blood” are “Almost suspended” and “we are laid asleep / In body, and become a living soul”) as to be able to “see into the life of things”. In childhood, the human being is a part of nature discovering the world through senses. Five years ago, in his youth, when the poet first visited the place, nature and all its elements, such as “the tall rock, / The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, / Their colours and their forms”, were then to him “An appetite; a feeling and a love”.

That time has passed; the poet is now – in the present of this poem’s moment of composition – in his stage of maturity and realizes that all those feelings “are now no more”, they can be only remembered or recollected, as the “picture of the mind revives again”. But for this loss he neither faints, nor mourns nor murmurs, since other gifts have followed offering “Abundant recompense”, namely the joy of “elevated thoughts”, for he has learned “To look on nature, not as in the hour / Of thoughtless youth”. The idea that in maturity the mind is “lord and power” responsible for the process of thinking and nature is the source of elevated thoughts is emphasised a few lines later by the use of alliteration regarding the sound “th” alluding to “thought” and “thinking”: “All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things”. The notion of formation which has resulted with maturity of the poet along with his reflected emotions, subjective condition, and individual experience reveal the reciprocal relation between the idea of self-development of the Bildungsroman tradition and the romantic idea of subjectivity. Thus, the poem gains a different dimension by foregrounding two levels of maturation process, which are youth and adulthood, and evolves into a “poem of formation” or *Bildungsgedicht*, besides its romantic manifestation.

For the reason of nature being the origin of so many “gifts”, the lyrical I declares that he remains a lover of “the meadows and the woods”, which is increased by the idea of nature being the source of moral improvement (nature is “The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, / The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul / Of all my moral being”), and ultimately a “worshiper of nature”, where nature is now ranked to divinity as expression of pantheism. Spinoza coexists in Wordsworth’s poem with Descartes, and, given the expression of the stages of human development through sense in childhood, feeling in youth, and thought in maturity, also with Locke.

Tintern Abbey refers explicitly to youth and maturity, whereas childhood is only mentioned in two lines (“The coarser pleasures of my boyish days, / And their glad animal movements all gone by”) pointing to the idea that in childhood the human being is part of nature given the sensory experience which precedes emotional and rational responses that denote the often painful to the poet separation between man and nature.

The Prelude dedicates its first two books to the happy season of childhood, recollections of which begin the tracing of the growth of a poet's mind from infantile phase through adolescence and youth to maturity. In his poetry, Wordsworth recurrently alludes to nature as "she", and nature's role "sounds like that of the pre-Oedipal phase called 'primary narcissism', the first differentiation from the mother" (Chase, 1993) and "the effect and function of the topos of the sublime or the 'analogy' between 'the mind' and 'nature' is to establish a coherent image of the mind or the self, one that can be invested in, loved" (Chase, 1993).

Keats truly calls Wordsworth's poetry "egotistical sublime", for he writes constantly himself into it and his apprehension of the universe is purely subjective, based on the assumption that "The Child is father of the Man", where a return through memory to childhood experience would link present and past, natural world and individual experience, keep the balance of the insight, and provide stability to the troubled process of maturation. Likewise, the anxious to be a part of nature lyrical I in *Ode to the West Wind*, apart from claiming escapism and immortality by entering the natural cycle, nostalgically wishes a return to childhood as a period of inseparability between man and nature: "If even / I were as in my boyhood, and could be / The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven".

The lyrical I in *Tintern Abbey* is a mature subject accompanied in his tour by his sister who is what he was five years ago, that is, a young person. The poet, as a worshiper of nature, prays nature to be his sister's friend, guide and supporter, as it has been his, in the turbulent process of maturation of the individual mind. As in *The Prelude*, here Wordsworth encompasses lyrically his individual experience but makes it representative for the human condition in general, offers to it universal resonance; moreover, both individual subjectivity and nature are "transcendentalized: they are attributed a spiritual dimension that is greater than the merely individual and the material" (Day, 1995).

As poetically treated in the text of *Tintern Abbey*, nature is a formative principle in the process of growing of an individual's mind, but nature is also a creative principle in the process of becoming of a poet, because nature is also a source of tranquillity that represents a distinct poetic mood, a state necessary to the process of poetic creation. In this process, nature is a kind of co-author, since it is responsible for the two out of the three elements in Wordsworth's theory of the origin of poetry from the "Preface", namely "emotion recollected in tranquillity". Nature is the source of (1) the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", of emerging in youth emotion, and (2) of the tranquillity in which they are later recollected.

Tintern Abbey materializes the idea of "emotion recollected in tranquillity" by expressing this instance of literary theory rather than nature, memory and the growing human/poetic mind as a major theme, and the poem emerges as a text that discloses or deconstructs its own process of composition. In the process of reading, the poem reveals, or rather represents in itself, the poetic activity in progress, and can be called a self-reflexive poem or a poem about writing a poem.

Five years ago, the poet visited for the first time the beautiful place near Tintern Abbey, where he experienced those powerful feelings because he was in his youth in which everything was to him "an appetite; a feeling and a love". Now, revisiting the place after five years, which is the moment of the composition of the poem, the poet is in his maturity in which "mind is lord and master" and he has lost the ability to experience powerful feelings but has acquired the one of thinking. At the present moment, governed by mind and thoughts not emotions, and receiving from nature and countryside that special poetic state of tranquillity, the poet's "picture of the mind revives again" and the emotion experienced five years ago is now recollected, remembered, re-experienced,

leading to the act of poetic creation, that is, to the actual composition of the poem during a tour in countryside. Memory serves as a bridge between the stages of maturation, is an agent of integration of past and present experiences, where a past emotion intensely remembered works for a present purpose.

Nature is for that reason and above all the poet's co-author, and the idea of co-authorship emerges from the poem materializing in literary practice the theory of the origin of poetry as developed by the author in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. Its full title – "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798" – apart from its content, clearly points to the poem being a kind of metapoem, a self-reflexive text, a discourse disclosing its own process of composition, a type of writing about the ways in which it is being written.

The truth in the poem and in Wordsworth's poetry in general "is not a truth about objects in nature but a truth about the self" (De Man, 1993), the self of an individual in the process of formation and acquiring of the authority of authorship, the process of self-discovery and self-knowledge through imagination, memory, and natural world. In this process, the individual is an isolated subject, despite being accompanied by his sister, as Wordsworth himself, "the most isolated figure among the great English poets", "can turn to no one in his desire to save nature for the human imagination" (Hartman, 1970).

Conclusion

In the history of literature, in general, the importance of romanticism emerges from breaking the linearity of literary development dominated by classical principles, and from reviving the spirit of originality in literature, which resulted in the co-existence of both innovative and traditional trends in Victorian age, the twentieth century, and contemporary period.

In the Bildungsroman development history, the importance of romanticism is no less significant. Although Goethe is generally accredited for having introduced *Bildung*, making formation or becoming a fictional reality with regard to character representation strategies, romantics in their literary concern with the development of an individual subject introduced the formative principle and used it in a very similar to the Bildungsroman way of thematic representation. *Tintern Abbey* shows an individual in his early adulthood corresponding to the moment in the Bildungsroman of the character entering upon maturity. Wordsworth poem can be therefore viewed as a short proto-Bildungsroman in verse form, or even can be called as a *Bildungsgedicht* or *Lehrgedicht*. The principle of formation here is conceived as interrelated with nature and rural setting, and nature, in particular, is the source of formation and of becoming not simply of a mature personality but of a poet. In the process of development of a poetic mind from youth to maturity, concerning the formation as a poet, nature co-participates – in matters of "emotion recollected in tranquillity" – in the process of literary composition. As a result, in a kind of co-authorship, the poem is being written by the assistance of nature which means that the poet achieves formation, and the poem deconstructs its own process of composition, the way in which it is actually being written, and hence the poem, besides being a proto-Bildungsroman or rather *Bildungsgedicht* or *Lehrgedicht*, is also a self-reflexive poem, a metapoem.

Nature is a parental figure, a formative principle offering, to be more precise, a *guided formation*, which in romanticism, besides nature, could be offered by the experience of childhood or a particular type of relationship with reality and human community. Such a guided formation is common to the Bildungsroman in general and could be of other various kinds, as in the Victorian realist Bildungsroman, for instance, in which society

rather than nature is a formative principle providing a special type of guided formation which we may call as *determined formation*.

Nurturing the rise of the literary system of the Bildungsroman in the nineteenth century English literature, romanticism contributes to this process by its both fiction and poetry. Above all, the romantic contribution encapsulates its concern with personal, private, inner, individual experience and all its related thematic perspectives – including childhood, nature, rustic life, pantheism, dualism of existence, escapism, rebelliousness, and a certain social attitude – which the Victorian writer of the novel of formation will add to those – social concern, moral didacticism, picaresque elements, and others – already provided by the rise of the eighteenth century English novel.

A Victorian novel of formation such as *Sartor Resartus*, claimed to be the first English Bildungsroman, relies heavily on these romantic aspects; others, like the more avant-garde *Marius the Epicurean*, reshape them; but more often they are incorporated to a greater and lesser extent in various realist novels such as in *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, and *The Mill on the Floss*.

As a final remark with regard to *Tintern Abbey*, and as revealed in the process of our thematological approach to its text, the poem, through its materialization of the theory of “emotions recollected in tranquillity” as the origin of poetry, discloses the process of maturation of the poet in that this particular act of poetic creation signifies by its accomplishment (i.e. the text of *Tintern Abbey*), the becoming, *Bildung*, formation of a mature poetic subject. Likewise important is to see that both the materialization of a theory and the process of formation are textualized in a discourse representing a metapoem, a self-reflexive poem, a poem deconstructing its own process of composition. Therefore, we would be entitled to label *Tintern Abbey* as a Bildungsgedicht focused in romantic terms on an individual experience, the complex range of personal emotional and psychological states, the concern with nature and its relation to the human being, the human subjective response to external phenomena, and so on, where these thematic perspectives are to be found in later, Victorian Bildungsromane, even if of realist essence.

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