



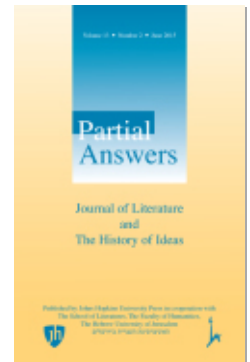
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Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas, Volume
10, Number 1, January 2012, pp. 11-28 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: [10.1353/pan.2012.0006](https://doi.org/10.1353/pan.2012.0006)



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"Glad Animal Movements": Motion in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and "The Two-Part Prelude"

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In perhaps the most famous Romantic account of self-development, William Wordsworth brackets and discards as beneath significance a primal moment of bodily motion. What most readers of "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" recall as a two-part narrative, divided between the "then" of 1793 when nature was to the speaker "all in all" (l. 76) and the "now" of 1798 when he hears in it "[t]he still, sad music of humanity" (l. 92), also includes a prior stage of "animal movements" hastily dispensed with in a quick parenthesis: "(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days, / And their glad animal movements all gone by)" (ll. 74–5). In a manner paralleling their syntactical bracketing, these movements, and the "coarser pleasures" associated with them, are left unspecified, ambiguous — not for the canonically Wordsworthian reason of lying too deep for explanation, but because they seem not to bear on the main drift of the narrative. Conventional associations with "coarse pleasure" and the "animal" might suggest early sexual activity,¹ but, regardless of specific referents, what is most notable about this parenthesis, inserted in a sentence describing the speaker's 1793 state of mind, is the way it stands outside the poem's broader project of conceiving change as an articulation of different stages, and the faith that however disruptive this change might seem there is "strength" (to borrow the terms of the Immortality Ode, l. 180) in "what remains behind." In contrast to the dialectical formula of "abundant recompense" ("Tintern Abbey," l. 89) by which 1793 is yoked to 1798 in a narrative of loss and gain, the primal moment of "glad animal movements" is "all gone by," lost in an absolute past, evacuated from the poem's account of development. The status of the parenthesis as an absolute construction, pushed out of the ongoing temporality of the sentence into an eternal past, syntactically replicates the marginalization of this primal stage in the poem's core biographical section.

¹ See, for instance, Kenneth R. Johnston's chapter on Wordsworth's "Young Love-Liking" and the poet's careful negotiation of early sexual feeling (133–54).

Why, though, should this dismissal of glad animal movements matter? A partial answer lies in the importance of motion in defining not just the life of non-human creatures or pre-reflective children but the principle of animation, of life itself. In distinction from current usage linking it largely to non-human beings, “animal” is defined in the 1797 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as “an organized and living body, which is also endowed with sensation,” and, as adjective, “denot[ing] any thing belonging to, or partaking of, the nature of animals. Thus, animal affections are those that are peculiar to animals; such are sensation and muscular motion” (qtd. in Kenyon-Jones 143). True to the word’s etymological connection to the Latin *animalis*, “having breath,” the encyclopedia entry is also true to Aristotle’s identification, in *De Anima*, of motility as one of the “two potentialities” (along with judgment) definitive of the animal soul (III. 9, 66). “Animal movements,” then, is in part a tautology, in that movement, animation, is the principle of animal life, but it also evokes a long tradition, continuing into Wordsworth’s day, of attempts to define and distinguish bodily life by relating it to motion. More broadly considered, motion characterizes the life not just of individual organisms but of the living cosmos itself, contributing to what Robert J. Richards has called, in the title of his comprehensive study of German *Naturphilosophie*, “the Romantic conception of life.” Whether Wordsworth gleaned this sense of cosmic dynamism from what Coleridge could pass on from the German school or from the native traditions of John Brown and Erasmus Darwin, he does, at this early stage, make a moving universe central to his stated beliefs.² The characterization in “Tintern Abbey” of the “something far more deeply interfused” as a “motion and a spirit, that impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things” (ll. 97, 101–3), finds fuller formulation in a fragment (intended for *The Recluse* and eventually used in *The Excursion*) written some months later:

There is an active principle alive
 In all things, in all natures, in the flowers
 And in the trees, in every pebbly stone
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks
 The moving waters, and the invisible air. (ll. 1–5)

²The master concept in Brown’s formulation of the living principle was excitability, whose expression in the animal organism included motion, in addition to sensation, thought, and passion (5). Disease, in Brown’s model, consisted of a disequilibrium between the body’s excitation and stimuli coming from the outside world, calling for a therapy of either increased or decreased stimuli, as the case required.

Although glad animal movement seems relegated by Wordsworth to a silenced past, it also seems related to the energy which infuses the universe and its inhabitants.

In addition to the grand movements of the universal "active principle," Wordsworth often invests himself in the more mundane movements of individual organisms. As Paul Youngquist has suggested, Wordsworth's theoretical vocabulary of "excitements" and "stimulations" in the 1800 Preface places him squarely in the emerging physiological discourse of the time (Brown is Youngquist's touchstone), with its emphasis on force and the irritability of bodily tissue as the hallmarks of animal life: "[U]se of the word 'excitement' ties Wordsworth's aesthetics directly to Brown's physiology, since excitement is the state that characterizes living tissue. To produce it through poetry is to enhance life, to advance vitality in unequivocally bodily ways" (33). The "pleasure" which, along with excitement, Wordsworth identifies as the "end of Poetry" (755) is also given, in the 1802 additions to the Preface, its broadly biological valence as "the grand elementary principle . . . by which [man] knows, and feels, and lives, and moves" (752). In keeping with this poetic credo, the self which Wordsworth depicts is often a moving, living self, or, more specifically, a self who lives (and knows) by moving. Among the almost innumerable examples of this focus on movement as the object of poetic representation one might mention the early "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches," both organized as pedestrian tours of a landscape; the "thrill of pleasure" roused by "the least motion" (15–16) of vernal birds in "Lines Written in Early Spring"; the opening "glad preamble" of *The Prelude*, with its depiction of a long-immured traveler seeking a line of escape from the city; the gradual unfoldings of mountains to their moving observer in the Simplon Pass and Snowdon episodes; and the simultaneous convergence of two moving bodies, lover and moon, in "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known." Each text (and many others) instances poetic structure and event as an outgrowth of motion. Closer to the pulse of the living Wordsworth, one might add Hazlitt's description of him composing while "walking up and down a straight gravel-walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption" (781).³ And, of course, motion (specifically animal motion) also finds its

³Milton Wilson (1983) considers the convergence of physics, physiology and psychology in Wordsworth, discussing the Stolen Boat episode and the Skating episode, among other texts. On the theme of walking in Wordsworth, see Liu (1989) and Jarvis (1997), as well as Toby R. Benis's 2000 *Romanticism on the Road*, which turns to the many peripa-

way back into the biographical narrative of “Tintern Abbey,” with the speaker describing his 1793 self as “like a roe . . . bound[ing] o’er the mountains by the sides / Of the deep rivers and the lonely streams” (ll. 68–70). Though depicted as “all gone by,” superseded by later stages of development, the animal movements characterizing a fundamental vitality, bare life in its muscular response to stimuli, remain a persistent undertone here and elsewhere in Wordsworth’s poetry.

Key to understanding how Wordsworth can simultaneously make motion a central element of his poetics of experience while also bracketing it is the recognition that, far from being a simple, unitary concept, motion finds several competing definitions and explanations in the period. Prominent among these treatments is a text which certainly influenced Wordsworth and which is arguably a source for the phrase “glad animal movements”: Erasmus Darwin’s *Zoonomia or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794–1796), particularly its first part, “Containing the Immediate Causes of Animal Motions Deduced From Their More Simple or Frequent Appearances in Health, and Applied to Explain Their More Intricate or Uncommon Occurrences in Diseases.” *Zoonomia*’s influence on *Lyrical Ballads* and other work of this period has long been noted,⁴ due in large part to Wordsworth’s urgent request by letter to Joseph Cottle (in February 1798) that he send the book “by the first carrier” (*Letters* I: 199). For the most part, critics have emphasized the poet’s use of Darwin’s colorful anecdotes of cognitive or sensory anomalies, as in the case of “Goody Blake and Harry Gill” echoing Darwin’s tale of a young farmer’s sensory hallucination of coldness after being cursed. Richard Matlak has convincingly suggested Darwin’s more general influence on “Wordsworth’s biological understanding of life” (76), including his sense of an embodied mind located in a natural world (a connection Alan Richardson develops), as well as the attribution of a common vitality to all material nature. What has not been duly noted is Darwin’s insistence on movement as the foundation of the living body, as evidenced by his pervasive

tetic vagrants as images of Wordsworth’s changing and nuanced response to thoughts and people existing beyond the bounds of respectability and the law. Celeste Langan’s *Romantic Vagrancy* considers the analogical relationship between representations of vagrancy/walking and an ideology of freedom which underwrites liberal ascendancy. My discussion, which opts for the use of a phenomenological framework for motion, takes into account the fact that motion was, at the time, a broadly contested term.

⁴ See Matlak (1990); Averill (1978, 1980); Piper (1962); Sheats (1973: 220); Jacobus (1976: 234–36); King-Hele (1986: 62–87); Richardson (2001: 71–3, 2002: 113–6).

use of the titular phrase "animal motion," or its possible influence on Wordsworth's dismissal of "glad animal movements."⁵ More important than any verbal echoes, however, is Darwin's careful typology of movements, his location of "animal motion" among other types of motion, and his suggestions of what this mode of motion implies for human subjectivity, imagination, and ideas. It is in such complicating of the concept of motion that Wordsworth's fullest encounter with Darwin, involving both admiration and ultimate rejection, can be traced.

Darwin begins *Zoonomia* by distinguishing animal motion, as a "primary motion," both from secondary motions, those "which are given to or received from other matter in motion" (1), and from the other primary motions, belonging to gravitation and chemistry (2). In excluding the category of secondary motion, Darwin explicitly exempts animal motion from mechanistic explanation, from the Newtonian categories of colliding bodies of inert matter and their communications of force. Excluding gravitational force with its engine of attraction and repulsion, as well as chemistry's account of the interaction of various substances, carves out a unique but elusive domain for animal motion. Darwin fills it by positing a "spirit of animation" which has "the power to commence or produce motion" (1), a spirit not equivalent to matter (all of nature being divided into spirit and matter), but which is not immaterial in any simple way either, given that it "resides throughout the body, without being cognizable to our senses, except by its effects" (9). While not wishing to reify the spirit of animation, Darwin locates it in the "sensorium," by which he means the nervous system and musculature, both voluntary and involuntary (including the senses); as such, the spirit "hath figure; namely, the figure of the nervous system, which is nearly the figure of the body" (151). Granting the spirit of animation a figural status (we might pause before saying "figurative" status, but the overtones are relevant) has several implications. For one thing, it underwrites Darwin's rejection

⁵ Darwin, of course, did not coin the phrase, which appears as the title of *De Motu Animalium*, now attributed to Aristotle, but is rather participating in a medical discourse which goes back at least as far as William Harvey's *Exercitatio de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus* (*An Anatomical Disquisition Concerning the Motion of the Heart and the Blood in Animals*, 1628) and Giovanni Borelli's *De Motu Animalium* (*On Animal Motion*, 1680), continuing in the physiology of sensibility of Albrecht von Haller and Robert Whytt. For a discussion of the role of these works in an ongoing debate about the principle of life and its relation to mechanical theories, see Porter 44–61. In the empiricist tradition, Locke and Hartley also employ a notion of animal motion to explain sensation, the latter describing sensation as external objects "impressing motion" (I, 12) on the nerves and brain.

of mechanical explanation, even in the mode most accepted by empiricist philosophy, the description of external objects “impressing” their form on the impressible senses. Darwin is no Berkleyan and does not wish to deny an external world which impinges on our bodies, but he does deny the adequation of external stimulus and organic response: “Animal motions are distinguished from the communicated motions . . . as they have no mechanical proportion to their cause; for the goad of a spur on the skin of a horse shall induce him to move a load of hay” (16). Instead of being mechanically caused, the organism’s response — whether in the form of action, perception or idea (all of them instances of animal motion in Darwin’s model) — emerges from a change, a motion, in the figure of the sensorium. Citing the light effects of pressing one’s closed eye and the sound effects of arteries near the auditory nerve, Darwin concludes that “it is not the presence of light or sound, but the motions of the organ, that are immediately necessary to constitute the perception or idea of light and sound” (25–26). As if to ward off the charge of idealism, Darwin specifies that ideas also are the product of sensorial motion rather than pictures of external objects: “Now the motions of an organ of sense are a succession of configurations of the organ; these configurations succeed each other quicker or slower; and whatever configuration of this organ of sense, that is, whatever portion of the motion of it is, or has usually been, attended to, constitutes an idea” (17). Figural in its constitution of a shape ever changing, figurative in its mediated relationship to an external stimulus, the sensorium and its spirit of animation renders living being a drama of motion, the animal a moving entity through and through.

Given the strangeness of the empiricist apparatus for our own modes of thought, and the differences between *Zoonomia*’s quasi-vitalism⁶ and current medical models, it is easy to lose sight of the phenomena which Darwin is striving to account for here. In part, he is trying to explain self-motion, the process by which a coordinated body responds to the signals of a nervous system and its brain (although he is also interested in the involuntary motions of glands and blood vessels which never reach the threshold of consciousness). While fully cognizant of the power of Newton’s explanations of mechanical and gravitational force, Darwin describes the body as having a different kind of object status, moved differently than the objects in Newton’s accounts.⁷ As such, Darwin’s

⁶Richardson accurately notes that, although Darwin was considered a materialist in his day, he might be characterized as a vitalist “of a sort” (2001: 30).

⁷This is not to say that Newton possessed no model for self-motion. As J. E. McGuire points out, the Newtonian concept of *vis insita* — innate force — exceeds simple mechanical

animal motion fills the same gap in knowledge as a phenomenological account, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty's, of the unique characteristics of embodiment and self-motion. Like Darwin's figural spirit of animation, which has "nearly the figure of the body," for Merleau-Ponty one's own body is experienced not primarily as a Newtonian object in space but as a virtual whole, not given to the senses but knowable in its effects: "[M]y whole body for me is not an assemblage of organs juxtaposed in space. I am in individual possession of it and I know where each of my limbs is through a *body image* in which all are included" (112–13). For Darwin, as for Merleau-Ponty, it is in motion and in the body's projects in the external world that this mode of being reveals itself: "[I]t is clearly in action that the spatiality of our body is brought into being, and an analysis of one's own movement should enable us to arrive at a better understanding of it" (117). While Darwin's physiological emphasis clearly differs from a phenomenological project, both accounts share a goal of circumscribing a sphere of animal (human, in Merleau-Ponty's case) movement amid a universe of inanimate matter and mechanical explanations.

For neither Darwin nor Merleau-Ponty, though, is movement comprehensible as the expression of a sovereign will standing behind the body, a crucial point for understanding Wordsworth's relation to this material. Rather, voluntary motion is only one mode of animal motion in Darwin's scheme (along with irritative, sensitive, and associate motions), and the effect of the entire account is to downplay its importance. Darwin achieves this modification of the voluntary by casting his account of the four kinds of motion not only as a typology, a spectrum of possibilities, but as a genealogy, a narrative of evolutionary unfolding. Irritative motion, the sensorium's figural response to external stimulus, comes first in this narrative, at a stage where consciousness plays no role, even if the response includes the contraction of muscles (as in reflex motion). Irritative motion may, but need not, inspire sensitive motion, which Darwin defines as "[t]hat exertion or change of the sensorium, which constitutes pleasure or pain" (44). This motion, in turn, which is still largely a bodily state, may simply subside or may be carried into conscious projects in the world, the stage of voluntary motion. Finally, as if to show that his description extends even to the world of the social and the cultural, Darwin suggests that once-voluntary motions can assume the character of involuntary habit, and thus become associate motions. The parallels with

notions of motion from external sources. The followers of Newton, though, McGuire notes, often leave out this element.

Wordsworth's developmental narrative are striking, although the latter consists of three rather than four stages: the "glad animal movements" of mere sensorial response give way to a response that the organism can characterize as pleasure or pain — "more like a man / Flying from something that he dreads than one / Who sought the thing he loved" (ll. 71–73) — with the sober will gradually assuming more control of response as one of the "other gifts" (87) that compensate for the loss of passion in maturity. Where Darwin's account crucially differs, apart from the social world of associate motion being placed at a distance from Wordsworth's speaker (as "[t]he dreary intercourse of daily life," l. 132), is in the fact that he does not position the voluntary as the climax of the story, and, more important still, suggests that the voluntary never leaves behind its grounding in the "glad animal movements" of primary sensorial response. The stage of voluntary motion here is not originaive, and the will is not the unmoved mover which can explain the onset of motion by a prior mental and immaterial act. Rather, the voluntary is figurative in Darwin, a story the mind tells about the body in order to reshape its prior movements.

One can get a fuller sense of Wordsworth's response to *Zoonomia*, the volumes which, as Dorothy informed Cottle, had "already answered the purpose for which William wrote for them" a few weeks after their receipt, by considering where the "Tintern Abbey" biographical narrative places its emphases. As noted above, the poem retains an interest in movement, in the speaker as a bounding roe, despite its bracketing of "glad animal movements," but the pathos of the narrative shifts from movement to an exchange between eye and mind.⁸ The nuanced negotiation between past and present for which the poem is best known, its affirmed faith in maturity nonetheless retaining an insuperable affection for earlier experiences, characterizes the turbulent world of 1793 as "a feeling and a love, / That had no need of a remoter charm, / By thought supplied, nor any interest / Unborrowed from the eye" (ll. 81–84). The participant in the natural scene, developing over the span of five years into a sad thinker, is then stilled, poised motionless in the tension between thought and vision, mind and eye. The synesthetic blur perceived by a moving body resolves

⁸ For an account of the poem which emphasizes Wordsworth's continued investment in sensation, in the terms of a poetics of "suggestion," see Jackson 30–33. Jackson's reading (72–75) of the "Blessed the infant babe" passage in Book 2 of *The Prelude* would also suggest a continuity between the stages of Wordsworth's developmental narrative where I am proposing disjunction.

itself into a visual prospect suitable for contemplation, the experiential world composed into a landscape.⁹ Moreover, by synecdochically reducing the body of 1793 to its eye, the stilling of the observer has already happened at that earlier stage, the bracketing of glad animal movement completed by an amputation of the non-visual body. But while Wordsworth's is a stationary eye already on its way to mind, Darwin's eye is the prime exemplum of conscious perception's foundation in animal movement.¹⁰ After initial definitions, Darwin's first example of animal motion in *Zoonomia* is "The Motions of the Retina Demonstrated by Experiments," as Section III is entitled. The compelling array of ocular experiments in this section (what could be called "optical illusions" if, unlike Darwin, one adopted a mechanical account of visual perception) such as the pressing of the eyeball serves to dispel the notion of the eye as a static beholder of an outside world, situating it instead as a moving organ connected to the moving network of the sensorium. In Darwin's terms, experiments demonstrating the eye's ability to see phenomena that are not strictly or simply "there" in the external world "shew, that neither mechanical impressions, nor chemical combinations of light, but . . . the animal activity of the retina constitutes vision" (21). By bracketing "glad animal movements" away from the mature interchange of eye and mind, Wordsworth deanimates Darwin's fibrous active eye, preferring "an eye made quiet" in order to "see into the life of things" (ll. 48, 50).

Placing "Tintern Abbey" beside *Zoonomia* also sheds a new light on another of the more cryptic ocular references in the poem, the speaker's affirmation that "[t]hough absent long, / These forms of beauty have not been to me, / As is a landscape to a blind man's eye" (ll. 23–25). When

⁹ In his discussion of Wordsworth's "motivation" for his passage between sites on the European tour of the early 1790s, Alan Liu suggests a similar "stopping" of the observer: "But how does the traveler move from one such point to the next? The point scene pictured in this passage [from the *Letters*] assumes the petrification of the perceiver: motion has to be projected outward into landscape itself as the 'travelling' of shadows" (6). Similarly, Robin Jarvis, in his account of Wordsworth's "pedestrian" poetics, suggests that "motion and stasis are projected into nature as workings of the one heavenly mind, rather than the one *human* mind in its oscillation between the restlessness of desire and the reassurance of stable identity" (123).

¹⁰ The eye is a privileged site for arguments about human and animal being as well as cosmology more generally, as evidenced by Charles Darwin's (Erasmus's grandson's) use of it as an example of natural selection (168–71) and intelligent design advocates' use of it as an example of irreducible complexity requiring an intelligent creator, going all the way back to William Paley's claim that there is no "plainer manifestation of design" (44) than the differences in eye structure of differently circumstanced species.

these rather awkward lines are glossed at all, they are usually related to the philosophical puzzle that has become known as “the Molyneux problem,” from William Molyneux’s letter to John Locke after having read the first edition of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (the letter was included by Locke in later editions):

Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a cube and a sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and the other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Suppose then the cube and sphere placed on a table, and the blind man to be made to see: Quære, Whether by his sight, before he touched them, he could now distinguish, and tell, which is the globe. (I, 204-5)

While not particularly relevant to Wordsworth in its focus on the relation between touch and sight, the Molyneux problem could seem to have some import for him as a meditation on the relation of sensation and perception, on the question of whether raw sensation needs further processing before it can be experienced as perception of a world. Wordsworth might thus be saying, in those complex lines, that the scene on the Wye, though unseen for five years, has not been a chaos of meaningless raw sensation, as it might be to a blind man on immediately receiving sight, but has been composed in his mind as a meaningful landscape, perceived rather than merely sensed. But what if the blind man were not Molyneux’s or Locke’s, but Darwin’s, from the section on the motions of the retina?

It rarely happens that the immediate organ of vision is perfectly destroyed. The most frequent causes of blindness are occasioned by defects of the external organ as in cataracts and obfuscations of the cornea. But I have had the opportunity of conversing with two men, who had been some years blind; one of them had a complete gutta serena, and the other had lost the whole substance of his eyes. They both told me that they did not remember to have ever dreamt of visible objects, since the total loss of their sight. (28)

The circumstances of the two cases are different — Molyneux’s hypothetical blind man who gains sight, Darwin’s two (supposedly) real sighted men who lose it — as are their purposes. Darwin uses his blind men as a point of evidence in support of the claim that the “animal motions or configurations of our organs of sense constitute our ideas” (25), since losing the entire visual apparatus and thus the motions of this part of the sensorium means that even in dreams sight is impossible. Read

in the light of this argument for the inescapable implication of ideas in bodily motion, Wordsworth's lines seem a kind of counter-affirmation, a statement of belief in ideas free of their grounding in body or world, in an inner vision not reliant on the vulnerable material resource of a "blind man's eye." Indeed, given Wordsworth's reading of these volumes just a few months before composing "Tintern Abbey," the poet's odd figure of speech can seem an indirect critique of Darwin's theory of sight and his submission of the visions of dream and memory to the shaky substrate of the animal eye.

Restoring the Darwinian echoes of "Tintern Abbey" can thus offer a fresh perspective on some of the more obscure elements of the poem, as well as sketch in the specific intellectual commitments of Wordsworth's account of the experiential development of a physical self. I have here emphasized the contrasts between Darwin's physiology of organisms in constant motion and the sedate composed self of meditative loco-descriptive verse, but the question of Darwin's relation to Wordsworth's scenes of formative motion remains. I have listed some of these scenes above, but for illustrative purposes will focus on two written only months after "Tintern Abbey," in the manuscript which has become known as "The Two-Part *Prelude*" for its inclusion of material that later appeared in the published *Prelude* of 1850. The lines l.81–129, commonly called "The Stolen Boat Episode," are familiar enough not to require extensive summary; suffice it to note that the drama is supplied by movement and its attendant visual experiences. In the adult's retelling, the boat taken by the boy "moved on / Just like a man who walks with stately step / Though bent on speed" (ll. 88–90). The vehicle's motion is also understood as the propulsive motion of its human engine: "twenty times / I dipped my oars into the silent lake, / And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat / Went heaving through the water, like a swan" (ll. 103–106). But as if it were Wordsworth's poetic version of a planetary orrery, motion comes to be described not as the property of a single object but in the relation between two bodies, since the broadening prospect of the backward-looking boy opens out to create the illusion of a moving cliff:

a huge Cliff,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Upreared its head: I struck, and struck again,
And, growing still in stature, the huge cliff
Rose up between me and the stars, and still
With measured motion, like a living thing
Strode after me. (ll. 108–14)

The terrified boy, turning and retreating to his starting point, is left with retrospective visions of a defamiliarized nature: “huge and mighty forms, that do not live / Like living men, moved slowly through my mind / By day, and were the trouble of my dreams” (ll. 127–29). As a “spot of time,” the episode, one of those chosen for their power to “nourish” and “invisibly repair” (l.294) the mind, would seem to suggest that, in spite of the earlier poem’s bracketing of glad animal movements, motion can indeed play a crucial role in Wordsworth’s developmental narrative.

In keeping with the physiological tradition of Darwin and John Brown, the issue of motion here centrally concerns the status of animation, of what it is to be a “living thing,” and the boundary that usually divides animate beings from inanimate things. The uncanniness of the cliff, and the lasting power of the memory, resides in the fact that, though it moves from the perspective of the boy, it does not seem to “live / Like living men,” but rather lurches into movement like a Frankenstein monster animated by some external force, a living *thing*. The reader, privy to the perspectival irony — the experiencing child’s perspective set off against the writing adult’s — is aware of the subjunctive character of the whole scene, the “as if” frame which distances us from the boy’s naïve responses. We know that the cliff’s motion is lent to it by the boy, that *his* life is the external force which allows the cliff to seem “a living thing.”¹¹ Yet the boy’s rowing motion under the Gothic cliff can also seem strange and discontinuous, “measured” like that of the cliff, parsed into lurching segments, as he “struck and struck again.” The cliff’s motions seem punctuated, jerky, not like those of living men, since the motions that give rise to them are also abrupt and discontinuous. In the terms of the phenomenology of movement, the motions of both the boy and the cliff resemble those of shell-shock victims, whose dysfunction allowed Merleau-Ponty to theorize “normal” human motion in terms of what he called “melodic flow”:

The patient tries to provide for himself a “kinaesthetic background” by means of preparatory movements, and is successful in thus “marking” the position of his body at the outset and in launching into the movement, yet this kinaesthetic background is precarious, and could not possibly equal the visual background in constantly relating motion to its points of departure and arrival throughout the movement’s duration. It is thrown out of

¹¹ For another discussion of “how deeply and subtly Wordsworth’s use of language may engage with the structure of perceptual, and . . . of physical processes” (30), see Joshua Wilner’s treatment (2006: 27–30) of the Snowdon episode in *The Prelude*.

gear by the movement itself and needs to be restored after each phase of the movement. That is why, as we might put it, [the patient] Schneider's abstract movements have lost their melodic flow, why they are made up of fragments placed end to end, and why they often "run off the rails" on the way. (133–34)

The "trouble" which names the outcome of this experience for the boy, and the guilt which is often identified at the heart of this scene and other spots of time, is usually traced back to the act of theft. Yet it might also be connected to this experience of motion as fundamentally broken, not only in the "forms that do not live / Like living men" but in the human who makes them move.

Seen in these terms, the episode's account of development is not primarily psychological, not, for instance, a version of an Oedipal crisis which establishes the self at the price of acknowledging a punishing father figure. Rather, it is a bodily shift in the experience of motion. In the shift from the initial movement of the boat "[l]eaving behind her still on either side / Small circles glittering idly in the moon / Until they melted all into one track / Of sparkling light" (ll. 93–96) to the sudden encounter with the rising cliff, the boy has undergone a shock which changes his relation to his own motion and to that of the world around him, burying the melodic flow of his earlier movements in a new hyper-consciousness of position and spatial confrontation. In the language of Darwin's introductory typology of motion in *Zoonomia*, the boy experiences a conflict between two concepts of motion: animal motion, the living body's expression of a spirit of animation, and mechanical causation, those "secondary motions . . . which are given to or received from other matter in motion" (1). The boy rows out a Darwinian and returns a Newtonian. More important, however, is the emergent emphasis on perspective, on positioning the self in relation to an exterior object in such a way that movement can seem to leach from the viewer to the viewed landscape.¹² The crisis of development, then, rather than being essentially different from the submergence of glad animal movement in the mature dialectic of eye and mind in "Tintern Abbey," here repeats the traumatic loss of animal motion as the price for entry into a world of counterposed objects,

¹² The two modes of motion described here might be glossed in entirely Newtonian terms, in his opposition between absolute motion (conceived in regard to both non-linear motion and acceleration) and relative motion (the motion of one body in relation to another). In the latter, the movement of any object is inessential to it and can be transferred to the reference object, just as the boy transfers his motion to the cliff.

stable in their identity but at risk of deanimation, of not living “like living men.” To put it another way, the episode records the shift from an emphasis on passage, on motion as a “moving on” — “my little boat moved on” (l. 88) — to an emphasis on position, on motion as a “moving towards” or a “moving away from.”¹³ Maturing into selfhood in this developmental narrative means submitting one’s power of movement to the laws of dead matter, the “turn” at the apex of the boy’s journey (114) a turn to a mechanical universe.¹⁴

The stakes of this developmental narrative for Wordsworth’s autobiographical project can be suggested by reference to one final illustration from “The Two-Part *Prelude*,” one which has a direct analogue in Darwin’s text. It is the passage commonly referred to as “The Skating Episode” (l. 151–86). More mundane than the “Stolen Boat,” the episode records a game of “crack the whip,” as the line of hand-holding skaters spins to increase the speed of its outermost members. Following on games specifically referring to an animal motion, “games / Confederate, imitative of the chace / And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn, / The pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare” (ll. 157–60), the climax comes with a moment of stillness:

and oftentimes
 When we had given our bodies to the wind
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round;
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a summer sea. (ll. 174–85)

¹³ I am borrowing the terms of “passage” and “position” from Brian Massumi’s *Parables for the Virtual*, passim.

¹⁴ Samuel R. Levin emphasizes the power of Newtonian cosmology as a framework during the Romantic period for understanding one’s bodily place in the world, particularly for its regulation of animal movement: “Animals, including men, enjoy a certain autonomy in respect to those laws [Newton’s laws of motion], in the sense that they may *will* when, where, and what to move” (163). I disagree with Levin’s assertion that Wordsworth’s emphasis on the “active, energizing powers” (169) of the mind places him in firm opposition to the Newtonian world-view, since that turn to mind seems to cede the territory of bodily motion rather than offer an alternative to Newton.

The similarities to the "Stolen Boat" episode — moving cliffs, an optical illusion triggered by the perceptions of a moving body, the "as if" framework which divides a reader's perspective from the boy's — emphasize the importance of primal scenes of motion in the Wordsworthian narrative of development. One might say that the perceived movement of the landscape is on more solid ground here than in the earlier episode, since the author, living in a Copernican universe, suggests that the scene serves to make "visible" a motion (the earth's "diurnal round") which objectively exists, even if it usually remains invisible. Indeed, the passage might be said to record the substitution of a cosmological Newtonian view for a phenomenological, experiential view, the illusions of the ordinary visible world temporarily suspended in favor of the larger motions of planets, now made visible for a brief while. Wordsworthian perspectival irony, the gap between author and boy, is here ratcheted up, and, in its undecided point of view, turns into a philosophical irony.

Echoes of Darwin in this passage have been traced, in Duncan Wu's reference in his popular anthology, to lines from *The Botanic Garden* ("Hang o'er the sliding steel, and hiss along the ice," Wu 452), but *Zoonomia* includes an even closer analogue to the optical phenomenon in question:

When any one turns round rapidly till he becomes dizzy, and falls upon the ground, the spectra of the ambient objects continue to present themselves in rotation, and he seems to behold the objects still in motion. Now if these spectra were impressions on a passive organ, they either must continue as they were received last, or not continue at all. (23)

Even if one sets aside differences in tone and register associated with genre, the divergence of these two treatments of a similar common experience is striking. For Wordsworth, vertigo is the occasion for movement to travel centrifugally to the horizon, leaving its center "stopped short," a stationary viewer of the surrounding motion. The animal motion of the earlier part of the passage is bracketed, just as "Tintern Abbey" invokes but brackets its "glad animal movements," but that very bracketing precipitates an "I," now separate from the "we" of the skating line, that positions itself as the unmoved mover of the scene (or, from the other side of the perspectival irony, as a speck whose motion is subsumed by the planetary motions of a Newtonian universe). The tranquility which closes this episode, so different from the trouble which ends the Stolen Boat episode, is the emotional residue of a process which has placed self-motion at a distance, sacrificed it in order to raise it to a higher level,

that of volition and stable identity. Darwin's passage, perhaps playing its part in moving Wordsworth to compose this scene, is comic in comparison, with its falling viewer lost in a swimming world. But if his dizzy viewer lacks the dignity of Wordsworth's, in his inability to stand on his own two feet, he keeps precisely what the poet's boyhood self loses: an animate eye, whose visions are the evidence that it is no "passive organ," but rather a single moving organ in a moving assemblage of parts. Oddly, Darwin's viewer falls only to show that it is always in motion, while Wordsworth's standing viewer suffers momentary confusion in order to purge itself of the indignity of movement.

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