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English 2

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“The World Is Too Much With Us”: Works Cited

Cummings, Michael J. "Wordsworth's The World Is Too Much With Us: A Study Guide." *Wordsworth's The World Is Too Much With Us: A Study Guide*. Cummings Study Guides, 2007. Web. 02 Dec. 2012. <<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides3/WorldIsTooMuch.html>>.

This site provides an alternate site for study guides and offers much of the same information that can be found on Shmoop. Easybib flags this site as “not reliable”, probably because it feels more like the work of one person than a complete guide created by a research team. A biography of the writer is not available on the site. Nevertheless, this site is stocked with great information about the poem, including some things not available on Shmoop. Cummings organizes his site with the following tabs: Composition, Type of Work, Theme, Tone, Point of View, Meter, Summary, Text with Notes, Figures of Speech, Study Questions, Writing Topics, Biography. There is more than enough support information from these sources to help us understand the poem, even if we understand little of the original text. The information about meter, where he describes Wordsworth's variations on iambic pentameter is especially helpful.

Goodman, Russell. "Transcendentalism." (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Spring 2011. Web. 02 Dec. 2012. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/transcendentalism/>>.

This site provides an introduction to the 19th century American philosophy known as Transcendentalism, which is thought to take many ideas from the English Romantic poets. Transcendentalism argued that long held religious and political ideas, including the ideas of Christianity, had grown rigid and that each person should cast off their spiritual traditions and reestablish his own connection with the universe. Transcendentalism also believed in the spiritual power of nature to provide insight into the divine. Some of the great thinkers cited in this article include the American essayists Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Alcott, Hedge and Parker, the Philosophers, Kant, Hume and Locke, and the poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle. The article goes into great depth describing variations of the philosophy and offers more than a general introduction to the subject. Many of the ideas described can be found in Wordsworth's, "The World is Too Much With Us", which can also be read as a critique of spiritual conformity and an invitation to renew our covenant with God through our direct observations of nature.

"William Wordsworth." *Wikipedia*. Ed. Wikipedia Contributors. Wikimedia Foundation, 12 Feb. 2012.

Web. 02 Dec. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wordsworth>.

Wikipedia is a tough source because the authors do not always give their names. This makes it difficult for us to verify information. However, because the site is peer edited and the History Page gives a complete, open discussion of edits, we can assume that most of the information has been vetted. This page on Wordsworth is a typical encyclopedia entry on the poet with basic biographical information from early life to his death, and numerous links to other Wikipedia entries relevant to our search. Here we can access

basic information about English Romanticism or The Lyrical Ballads, Major Works and many other subjects that may shed light on our poem. There is even an entry on the poem itself, which gives historical information and a critical review. This site is a great jumping off point for our research.

Wordsworth, William. "Preface to Lyrical Ballads. William Wordsworth (1800). 1909-14. Famous Prefaces. The Harvard Classics." Preface. *Preface To Lyrical Ballads*. 1st ed. London: J.A. Grace-Church, 1800. N. pag. *Preface to Lyrical Ballads. William Wordsworth (1800). 1909-14. Famous Prefaces. The Harvard Classics*. Bartleby, 2001. Web. 02 Dec. 2012. <<http://www.bartleby.com/39/36.html>>.

This is the preface to the volume of poetry that Wordsworth and Coleridge published in 1800 to explain his new type of poetry to the English-speaking world. This is a primary source in that it gives us Wordsworth's own words about poetry and the role of literature in our spiritual lives. In it Wordsworth says that the poems in Lyrical Ballads were an experiment and that he expected some people to like them and many to hate them. The Preface is to a second edition so he already knows that many people liked his poems. The purpose of the Preface is not to argue for the greatness of the poetry--which he calls a foolish and selfish exercise-- but to explain his use of common language and ordinary experiences in poetry, something that was considered daring and strange. Basically, Wordsworth wanted his poetry to speak to the regular person, to describe everyday life in regular language and to act as a guide to those who felt that the lofty, difficult language of the epic traditions had lost their power to influence people. This was a new type of poetry meant to uplift the quiet seeker, the questioner, the modern man or woman who sought a renewed relationship with the natural world.

"The World Is Too Much with Us." *Shmoop*. Ed. Editorial Team Shmoop. Shmoop University, 11 Nov. 2008. Web. 02 Dec. 2012. <<http://www.shmoop.com/world-is-too-much-with-us/>>.

This is a great site for students and provides a complete guide to the poem. It is broken up into tabs that include summaries, critiques and analysis, biographical information and lists of resources found on the web or elsewhere. The "In a Nutshell" Section tells us that the poem's central concern is that the poor slobs of the Industrial Revolution have become consumers of modern life and have lost contact with the nature. The "Why We Should Care" section argues that the same issues about our alienation from nature and our obsessions with "getting and spending" raised by Wordsworth exist today in even more dire forms. It suggests that the poem provides an antidote, an alternative way of thinking about our universe that may allow us to reconsider the path of our lives. The "Summary" section give us the poem in modern language and the "Analysis" section takes us word by word, helping us understand the author's choices. All in all this site is an incredible resource to support our understanding.