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Poetry and Painting: A Jungian Study of the "Sister Arts" in James Thomson's *The Seasons*

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Eighteenth century England witnessed a revival of the vogue for allegorical painting and pictorial poetry inspired by the sister arts theory. Dr. Samuel Johnson, the renowned critic, essayist, biographer and poet of the eighteenth century, insisted that poetry dealt with feelings of the human race, therefore he praised James Thomson's *The Seasons.* This four-books poem was not regarded as a descriptive poem, but as a poem wherein the images are reflected in every mind and in the sentiments of every heart (Johnson 72). The relationship between poetry and painting as 'sister arts' dates back to Simonides, the renowned Greek poet, noted for his lyric poetry, elegiacs, and epigrams (556-468 BCE) stated that "*Poema pictura loquens, pictura poema silens*," which translates into, "Poetry is a speaking picture, painting a silent poetry" (Beukes 155). Similar echoes of the principle appeared during the following centuries and many varied theories that tackle the same argument were generated. In his article "Education and the Sister Arts", M. G. Benton argues that much more is implied by the relation between poetry and painting than a simple reciprocity. He explains that "The twin notions of poetry as "word-painting" and of painting aspiring to be poetic were largely popular descriptions derived from an ongoing debate about contemporary understanding of what constitutes a work of art." (Benton 20)

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It is worth mentioning that an important aspect of art creation and criticism has been established by psychoanalysis. The Swiss psychiatrist and father of analytic psychology, Carl Jung attempted to create a theory of Aesthetics. Jung established an important aspect of art criticism in psychoanalysis. In his theory of aesthetics, Jung described the creativity process of art as structured in archetypes in the collective or personal unconscious and the artist expresses archetypes consciously or unconsciously *(Man and His Symbols* 21). This psychological creative process, according to Carl Jung, occurs due to "the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life" (Woolfson 226-27). Jungian psychology emphasizes how the psyche develops art and responds to it. Jung explains that the unconscious is responsible for the creative function as it provides the consciousness with the primordial images necessary for psychological health (*Letters* 283.) Both artists and individuals experience an irresistible human desire to integrate the unconscious mind and the conscious mind into one great unity. It is only through this process of individuation that one can achieve the wholeness that has been discussed by Aristotle, Plato and Carl Jung.

By examining James Thomson's description of nature in *The Seasons* and observing the painting techniques implemented, one can easily compare how the two seemingly different disciplines of poetry and painting share similarities that they were described as 'Sister Arts'. A close reading of *The Seasons*, especially "Winter" and "Summer" reveals Thomson's remarkable artistic capacity to organize his verse through the painting techniques by establishing a foreground a background and a middle distance for almost each scene. This process of artistic creativity, according to the renowned psychologist Carl Jung, takes place due to the unconscious activation of the archetypal images. By elaborating and giving shapes to these images, the artists translate them into the language of art, be it poetry or paintings, hence the finished artwork. The present study[1] will examine how poets and artists integrate the unconscious and the conscious minds into one great

[1] The present study is based on my MA thesis titled *Scene Structure in James Thomson's The Seasons* 1997. Most of the background information on the picturesque along with the literary analysis and commentary on the lines of verse are taken adapted from my MA thesis. The thesis focused on the four-volume poem as a transitional work rebelling against the Augustan conventions and traditions thus paving the way to the Romantic movement in English poetry. The study was not of a comparative nature, but rather a study of the Picturesque School and how poetry and painting were closely related.

unity through the process of individuation; an integration that informs and shapes the process of aesthetic appreciation and leads to the achievement of self-actualization.

The poet used those organizing principles of painting and relied on them in the rendering of natural scenery, namely that each scene should be built up like a painting with a definite background and varying foregrounds. The study also aims to highlight how the poet's aesthetic description of the changing beauty of nature during the different seasons together with the artists' creation of the paintings that portrayed the everchanging nature results in a mental and an emotional experience for both the reader and viewer, known as the process of creation. Using psychological theories of creativity, the study investigates how the comparative appreciation of both poetry and paintings results in a process of 'individuation'. This takes place by integrating the conscious which are the descriptive lines of verse and the paintings on one hand and the archetypal images, symbols and colours present in the collective unconscious.

James Thomson's childhood environment in the Borders had deeply influenced his artistic description of poetry, especially his masterpiece *The Seasons*. He was born in Scotland and spent half of his life there where, as a child, he was taught Border songs and ballads as well as religious literature, that his "poetry can perhaps best be seen in such qualities as religious and aesthetic sensitivity, benevolent, moral intuition, and vivid imagination—in a word, his sensibility" (Scott 19). The harsh climate portrayed in "Winter" had left a lasting impression on young Thomson and developed his religious philosophy as he grew to be aware of the power of nature and to believe in a controlling Providence working through it thus filling the young poet's unconscious with myriads of archetypal images and symbols. Most of the extended first-hand descriptions are the outcome of his solitary walks as Thomson seemed to have been happy in solitude. When he stood upon high places and turned his back on the hills, he would see a charming pastoral landscape laid open before him. The eye would move along a valley, see it widening, entering another till it was bounded by the horizon. The Cheviots surrounded the landscape and frame it, thus heightening the pictorial effect of the whole scene. The various tones of brown and green were the predominant colours. Not only that, but the poet was able to follow the interchange of sunlight and the shadow of the clouds. His descriptive verse is the product of communicating the symbols that "serve as a link between the archetype and consciousness and in a like manner between the artist, the work,

and the audience, and the unconscious." (Mayo 76). This poetic description of the landscape through the various archetypal symbols is influenced by and aligns with the seventeenth-century paintings of Salvator Rosa or Claude Lorraine that shaped Thomson's observation and description nature, and this is reflected in his poetry.

Conscious of his strength and confident in his powers, he moved to London in 1725 carrying with him a valuable literary and artistic cultural heritage that contributed to the course of English poetry. When he arrived in London, he wrote his first great poem "Winter" in 1726, followed by "Summer" in 1727, "Spring" in 1728 and his last season, "Autumn" completed the cycle in 1730. Though the delight in nature can be traced from the time of Virgil down to Thomson, but he was indeed original in his choice of subject and peculiar patterns of aesthetic description. His masterpiece *The Seasons* published in 1730 is a comparative study between painting and poetry. Being influenced by natural scenery as well as the descriptive scenes of Virgil, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, Thomson builds up his scenes beautifully as if they were meant to be transferred to canvas. The idealized evocative landscape paintings of artists such as Claude Lorraine, and Salvator Rosa appealed to Thomson who appreciated their free imaginative artistic style. Moreover, he collected prints of many masterpieces on his Grand Tour and was very knowledgeable about artistic theory. (Scott 259-60)

James Thomson's unique creativity lies in his ability to liberate himself from the rigid Restoration models and his innovation in developing new techniques. Indeed, Thomson was not the first to deal with Nature, "but he was working in a field that had never been intensely cultivated, and there were still opportunities for him to discover what was at once new and natural" (Sutherland 21). Thomson was in great measure an innovator; he did not use the natural world as a backcloth to human activities or a mere stage for human drama, but he portrayed a living universe where man is part and parcel and actively shares in the processes of creativity and appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of nature. In *The Seasons* he is "celebrating the divine benevolence or drawing a moral or giving a scientific explanation of some phenomena or telling a story or describing a scene, everything is equally part of a complex response to a world which delights him" (Lonsdale 145). Sir Isaac Newton was a great influential figure, admired by Thomson for his ability to prove in the fields of optics and cosmology that Nature operated by the means of graduated series. His

appreciation of the colour symbols of how the prism converts a seemingly unified beam of light into an array of separate colours was a phenomenon that affected how Thomson's unconscious complied a wide range of colours and lights that shaped his aesthetic experience and was keen to convey it in his poetry. Marjorie Hope Nicolson states that Thomson, among other poets, "did not believe that Newton had taken beauty from poetry; he added new beauty, because he had added new truth" (Nicolson 32). Though *The Seasons* was often criticized for its lack of method, the answer is that Thomson moves from natural description to moralizing, from meteorological explanation to geographical digression or from political tribute to rustic idyll without any narrative or temporal connections. Eric Rothstein explains this by pointing out that Descriptive poetry "may be equally 'encyclopedic' in trying to deal with a prospect from a hill, the process of growing hops, or the manifestations of a season… this kind of poetry has no traditional set body of topics and no built-in connections" (56). However, James Thomson's *The Seasons* continues to be a living beauty and is given a significant role in poetry mainly due to the use of archetypal symbols be it natural elements, colours, light that connect between the poet, the art and his audience.

This artistic novelty introduced a growing interest in the rural scenery closely connected with the eighteenth-century picturesque which covered "a set of attitudes towards landscape, both real and painted… It indicated an aesthetic approach that found pleasure in roughness and irregularity, and an attempt was made to establish it as a critical category between the beautiful and the 'sublime'" (Chilvers 480). The attitude to appreciating painting was closely linked to the attitude to natural scenery which involved comparing it to art through the numerous archetypal symbols that enabled poets, artists and audience to appreciate the interconnectedness between the natural scenery, the poems and the paintings. This collective unconsciousness led the works to be used as guides to what travelers should look for in nature. It also came to work in reverse: a scene was pictorially worthy to be transferred to canvas. Painters also sought natural compositions because there was a growing taste for them. The picturesque scenes tremendously varied in details: some were serene, reflecting the beautiful, and the awesome aspiring to the sublime that they can be compared to the pictures of the prominent French painter Claude Lorraine showing peaceful countryside were the material for those seeking the rural picturesque. On the other hand, 'the sublime picturesque' could be found in pictures with ruins and irregular trees such as those of Salvator Rosa, the renowned Italian painter. The diverse types are mentioned in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence:* "What'er

Lorraine light-touched with softening hue, / Or Savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew" (Sambrook 176). The developing cult of the picturesque led to such an aesthetic admiration and enthusiasm for the pictures of Salvator Rosa that his paintings became ideal for later painters and for travelers who developed an appreciation for the wild scenery of Lake District, Wales and Scotland.[2]

They represented the two different kinds of landscape: Claude painted the peaceful landscape with grazing flocks, calm waters, luminous skies and blue distances reflecting a perfect harmony between man and nature whereas Salvator Rosa depicted paintings that portrayed scenes of destruction, ruined buildings and broken bridges. His best-known pictures were landscapes containing cliffs, mountains, torrents, wolves and brigands. Much of the appeal of Claude and Rosa was due to their close connection with literary landscape as in Milton's description of Eden in Book IV of *Paradise Lost,* at a time when poetry and painting were thought of as the sister arts. Comparing the paintings and the descriptive verse pinpoints how much they are both intertwined to the extent that an interest in painting developed as part of the educational process. Picturesque travellers and landscape gardeners were guided by their aesthetic experience found in both poetry and paintings. What they have in their collective unconscious and what they experience in their personal conscious combine to produce a unique individuated aesthetic experience that take place in the two arts.

Like many of his contemporaries, Thomson had a keen awareness of the emerging interest in the landscape and in the artistic creation and appreciation. They all showed the particulars of the countryside, be it a brook, a coppice or a handful of primroses; but a movement was evolving toward scene structuring that is similar in both the poetry and paintings. If a poet approached nature through such particulars, "in the Borders", Grant reminds us, "these particulars lose their identity in the panorama" (10). As Carl Jung explains: "the individual is not just a single, separate being, but by his very existence presupposes a collective relationship, it follows that the process of

[2] One of the main factors that contributed to the emergence of the picturesque is the Grand Tour which was an extensive journey to Europe, mainly to France, the Netherlands, and above all Italy, sometimes in the company of a tutor. It became an established tradition, to the point of becoming a part of a young gentleman's education. The typical traveller had a notebook in which he recorded his impressions and wealthier travellers bought paintings signed by the artists themselves who were mostly imitators of the most popular painters in Britain: Claude Lorraine (1600-82) and Salvator Rosa (1615-73).

individuation must lead to more intense and broader collective relationships and not to isolation." (Jung, *Collected Works* vi) Hence, in a process of individuation, Thomson's descriptive scenes are a blend of all the primordial archetypal images embedded in his unconscious and the fascination with the art of the landscape gardening which began during the first half of his life in Scotland. In his youth he developed an appreciation of the art of gardening, which would later be exhibited in his poetry.

Thomson's first poem "Winter" includes detailed descriptive passages based on the poet's personal observation and appreciation of nature. It offers a clear picture of the literary tradition of natural description that the poet adapted. The gloomy description manifests the nature of the season as well as the poet's mood when he wrote it as his mother had recently died in Scotland and he was homesick. Thus, the two modes of Jung's artistic creation occur: the 'psychological' (collective) and the 'visionary' (personal). Imagery in "Winter" is dominated, just like paintings, by pale colours that are embedded in the collective unconscious as symbols to imply deceptiveness and sometimes deformity. The dull colours are typical of the landscape in the Scottish Border region whose nature influenced poems as well as artists and are eventually conveyed to recipients of both arts. The season is naturally destructive and "man is at the mercy of elemental forces which he is unable to understand or control" (Watson, *Pre-romanticism* 123). Salvator Rosa (1615-73) the brilliant Italian painter was the most predominant influence in Thomson's "Winter". His awareness of his own genius established Rosa as one of the main contributors to the eighteenth century's concept of the 'sublime' in the landscape. Rosa painted various subjects including battle pieces, macabre subjects -notably of witches- but is best known for his tempestuous landscapes. The dark skies and the craggy landscapes were the normal setting for his romantic figures; they are parallel symbols of Thomson's gloomy poetic descriptions. The significance of the background is what establishes the mood of the picture. Rosa's landscape portrayed savage mountain scenes, which reminded the travelers of the Alps or the Apennines. He was charmed with destructive images and ruins; thus, his paintings were full of precipices, torrents, broken bridges and dead trees. With the growing fascination with ruins, his landscapes began to appear about 1636-37. Rosa's landscape was "infused with the Pathetic Fallacy, thus having a 'poetic' – in fact, a picturesque quality- that appeared greatly to the Age of Reason, so that he was immensely popular in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Murray 364).

The painting "Rocky Landscape with Waterfall" (Fig. 1) is an impressive work that shows Salvator Rosa's ability to create dramatic and detailed landscapes. The painting's details, composition and colors make it a fascinating work of art to admire.

Figure 1: "Rocky Landscape with Waterfall"

"Rocky Landscape with Waterfall" is a detailed composition typical of the 17th century Italian Baroque style. The painting features a scene of a waterfall falling into a river surrounded by rocks and rugged mountains. The wild rugged landscape creates a sense of tension and danger in the air. The sky is loaded with dark and stormy clouds. The remarkable use of color with the varied shades of brown, green, blue, and dark red create an atmosphere of mystery and drama. The portrayal of details whether the textures of the rocks, the trees, the leaves or the drops of water that splash in the waterfall are in the very same manner of Thomson's descriptive passages. In poetry, Thomson describes his "Winter" through sharp chiaroscuro effects (the use of areas of light and darkness in painting). His diction easily differentiates the seasons with great accuracy. In this 'season' the language enacts the process of nature that each scene is "a visual melodrama of deluges and tempests" (Rogers 127). The living landscape symbols in the poem and the painting establishes an archetypal formation that provides a collective universal meaning to the artists' aesthetic creation as well as the audience appreciation. Although each one of them seems to undergo a process of

individuation, the archetypal symbols of the tempest, dark stormy clouds, gloomy colours, bind their psyches together. The following descriptive scene from "Winter" echoes the savageness of Salvator Rosa's paintings. The poet's description appeals to the sense of sight by the use of terms like 'vast' and 'huge', 'wide' and 'far-distant'. In the following passage, Thomson gives a description of the rainstorm, a major winter event with which Thomson was familiar:

> Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
> Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storm;
> And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
> And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
> And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
> Resounding long in listening Fancy's ear.
> Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
> Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure.
> Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul;
> Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
> That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
> Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
> Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
> Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
> The day's fair face. ("Winter", Lines 66-80)

Using painting techniques, Thomson's verbal picture paves the way for the coming storm. The personification of the 'sad' 'coming storm' and the verb 'sighs' establish the mood for the whole scene and makes the scene more visual. The structure of the poetic scene and the painting techniques heightens the tension: when the 'brawling brook' sends a 'hollow moan' among the 'cliffs', 'mountains and 'cave'. Then the tempest comes forth. The skies, blurred with mingled mist and rain are found in the background of the scene. The 'fractured mountains' and the 'presageful' cave are in the middle of the scene. Moving to the foreground of the poetic scene or rather picture, the plain and woods which are 'unexhausted', the clouds pour a 'brown deluge' and keep on pouring 'flood' after 'flood'. When the clouds gather, they darken the scene and 'shut up/

The day's fair face'. This scene of wretchedness is contrasted to the ploughman rejoicing by the red fire of his cottage hearth, reckless of the storm—the central paradox of the 'season'. Although there are different colours in the scene, it is a gloomy one. The whole scene with its various symbolic archetypes of the 'disjointed cliffs', 'wild fractured mountains' brings to the reader's mind a savage mountainous painting by Salvator Rosa like "Rocky Landscape with Three Figures" (Fig. 2). This drawing has been identified as the largest sheet within a group of imagined landscapes from the mid-seventeenth century.

Figure 2: Rocky Landscape with Three Figures

In Salvator Rosa's wild mountain landscape Nature is presented as wild and dangerous. The landscape is filled with striking effects of broken light, cliffs and jagged trees. The human presence seems to be ephemeral. In the foreground, Rosa paints a sharp rock formation that comes in contrast with minute figures in the back. They have no details, but are rather reduced to mere shadows in the brightly lit rocks and hills.

The eighteenth century witnessed a shift of emphasis where Nature was given a less prominent place and human figures were placed in the landscape. Sometimes this figure is almost paralyzed by the immensity of the primitive landscape:

> Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
> She sweeps the howling margin of the main;
> Where undissolving, from the first of time,
> Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky;
> And icy mountains high on mountains piled,
> Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
> Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
> Projected huge, and horrid o'er the surge,
> Alps frown on Alps; or rushing hideous down,
> As if old Chaos was again return'd,
> Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole. (“Winter” Lines 902-12)

The accumulating snow and the high icy mountains appear to the sailor as ‘shapeless’ clouds. The ‘frowning’ Alps seem to be in a state of chaos in the background. Again, the aesthetic appreciation is achieved when the conscious is incorporated with the unconscious in the process of individuation. Dividing the landscape into background, middle ground and foreground though consistent, does not always mean that the pattern of the movement is the same. In most cases, as has been shown, the movement is from the background to the foreground, but sometimes the order is reversed. It is worth mentioning that the order of the movement relies on the individual perception of the poem and the painting because according to Jung, “all paths and all steps lead to a single point- the centre of the mandala. The centre for Jung was individuation” (Lagana 2). The scenes from “Winter” discussed above show that Thomson, for all the influences of landscape painters on him, had the ability to vary his painting techniques and change the angle of vision to suit his individual poetic mood. The surviving Spenserian strain combines with the original interest in natural scenery to produce an innovative descriptive style. His interest in colour and shape is balanced by his sensitive consciousness of movement so that each scene has its peculiar design and original structure creating a new aesthetic experience that results from the process of

individuation. The human struggle with nature is similarly portrayed in Salvator Rosa's "Rocky Landscape with a Hunter" (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: "Rocky Landscape with a Hunter"

The painting "Rocky Landscape with a Huntsman" combines elements of nature with human action. It presents a dramatic scene of a hunter in action with nature in a rocky landscape. The figure of the hunter is in the foreground of the painting, foreshadowing the romantic movement. The dark earthy tone palette of colors plays a vital role in creating a sense of drama and mystery. The various shades of green and brown in the vegetation and rocks overlap with the skin tones of the human figure thus creating a sense of harmony between man and nature; a concept that transitional poets like Thomson introduced to pave the way to romanticism. Thomson and Rosa bind together the sister arts through their individuation process as they not only access their own individual consciousness, but also the collective unconscious of the whole human race.

Thomson was not inspired by the short cool Scottish summer as much as he was inspired by the season of winter that had to rely on the classical Miltonic pastoral conventions. Thomson used second-hand sources and imaginative first-hand description, which made "Summer" more abstract

and less personal season. In his portrayal of a typical summer day, Thomson focused on imagery of light, heat, water and colour. The sun is the central paradox in "Summer"; it stands for a beneficial but terrible power. Thomson "gives an account of the influence of the Sun upon animate and inanimate Nature" (Watson, *Pre-romanticism* 142). The pathetic fallacy is used to demonstrate "Summer" as a powerfully destructive and hostile season. Thomson illustrates the horrors of the tropics: beast, storms, violence and heat causing dizziness, sweating, shivering and ringing ears. Despite the fact that the tropical scenes are not part of England, the aesthetic appreciation still takes place as the poet and the reader relied on the integration of the conscious and the unconscious that result in individuation. Sir Isaac Newton- Thomson's hero- had explained how the prism converts a unified beam into separate hues. Thomson's understanding of the Newtonian spectrum and his own aesthetic appreciation of the colours come to the surface in the Spectrum passage:

> The unfruitful rock itself, impregn'd by thee,
> In dark retirement forms the lucid stone.
> The lively diamond drinks thy purest rays,
> Collected light, compact; that, polish'd bright,
> And all its native lustre let abroad,
> Dares, as it sparkles on the fair-one's breast,
> With vain ambition emulate her eyes.
> At thee the ruby lights its deepening glow,
> And with a waving radiance inward flames. ("Summer" Lines 140-48)

In "Summer" the predominant influence is of Claude Lorraine (1600-82), who was probably the most influential of Italian landscape painters, especially in the early part of the eighteenth century. He found his subject matter "by wandering about the countryside around Rome, whose ruins dot his landscapes" (Simmons 121). Claude's scenes are derived from the romanticized poetic landscapes of the later Mannerists[3]. The term Mannerism derives from the Italian *maneria*, meaning style or stylishness; used to "describe the schematic quality of much of the work

[3] The Mannerist work is characterized by elongated human figures. Their colours are employed to heighten the emotional effect rather than describe the forms; that is to say, the viewer is part of the process of creativity. They are mainly 'shot' colours: red blending into orange, yellow into green.

produced, based on intellectual preconceptions rather than direct visual perceptions" (Murray 235). Claude borrowed an important element of the Mannerists tradition, namely the division of the picture into dark greenish brown areas in the foreground, light green in the middle and blue in the background, creating a sense of infinite distance. He used colours skillfully to achieve spatial depth. Claude looks "at landscape by gradations of tone rather than colouristically, and his poetic rather than formal vision" (Murray 81).

The painting "A Pastoral River Landscape with Fishermen" by Claude Lorrain is a masterpiece of 17th century French Baroque art (Fig. 4). It is considered an embodiment of Lorrain's artistic style manifesting his serene, idyllic landscapes that evoke a peaceful tranquil scene like the peaceful descriptive passages of Thomson's "Summer". The structure of the painting gives a perfect perspective that takes the viewer on a tour across the river and towards the horizon. The fishermen, an everyday romantic figure is in the foreground thus adding a touch of life and movement to the static scene, while the trees in the background gives the viewer a sense of depth and distance. Lorraine's use of soft warm tones of color adds serenity and tranquility. The combination of green and blue tones of the water and the sky with the earthy tones of the vegetation and the clothing of the fishermen is harmonious.

Figure 4: A Pastoral River Landscape with Fishermen

The link between Thomson's lines of verse and Claude's paintings is obvious. Despite the seemingly different artistic creation of the two works of art, reading the poem and examining the painting leaves one recognizing the similarities and even relating to his own appreciation. The experiences of the three are derived from the realm of human consciousness. The arts are created from the psychological mode by which the artist tries to express the content of his individual unconsciousness. This is complemented by the higher mode of creation, namely the visionary mode where the artist not only reaches his personal unconscious, but he accesses the collective unconscious of all humanity.

In the later years of his life, Claude Lorraine's colours turned into silvery tones of grey, green and blue, but the division of the scene remained constant; a vivid example is his "Landscape near Rome" (Fig. 5):

Figure 5: Landscape near Rome

The painting shows a mass of trees is always on one side of the painting, and a smaller one on the other with a bridge or a small farm in the middle. The background has a far distance of mountains

reaching the sky. In his composition of port scenes, he adds details of shipping which do not really change. The focus is on the effect of sunlight on water. The human figure in Claude's paintings becomes tiny in the vast distance. His use of figures is "not for themselves, but as part of Nature, the drama of their action absorbed into immensities of light and space" (Murray 81). All the natural elements (trees, water, sky, sun, mountains…etc.), shades of colours, human figures are, as Jung pinpoints symbols that "serve as a link between the archetype and consciousness and in a like manner between the artist, the work, and the audience, and the unconscious" (Mayo 76).

Not only was Thomson influenced by Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorraine, but his fine sense of movement was in turn highly appreciated by John Constable and J.M.W. Turner. Their painting techniques were similar, and must have been influenced by him: "The effect of glitter and gleam describes very well the result of Constable's technique of using flecks of white, and Turner's skill in painting sea and waves" (Watson, *Picturesque* 30). In his Lectures on *Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres*, Hugh Blair pinpoints the comparison or rather the link between poetry and painting when he tells that in verbally painting a scene, "a true poet makes us imagine that we see it before our eyes; he catches the distinguishing features, he gives it the colour of life and reality; he places it in such a light that a painter could copy after him" (Blair 548). Thomson does not, however, confine himself to detailed description of the natural scenery, but it is also an invitation to 'meditation' which is supposed to be suggested by the scene. In Buddhist 'meditation' the mandala symbolizes the union (Jaffè 240). In psychological terms it represents wholeness as the practice of mental concentration that leads ultimately through a sequence of stages to the final goal of spiritual freedom. Meditation provides a sense of serenity, peace and balance. The aesthetic experience offered by the poetry and/or painting enables one to unify elements of consciousness and the unconscious, thus achieve psychic wholeness. Jung argues that all individuals have a creative potential to discover their psychic wholeness, but to achieve it one has to eliminate the conflicts between the conscious and the unconscious (Lagana 2).

Whether constructing the scene in the strict traditions of the picturesque school or infusing it with pre-romantic individual meditations, the poet as well as the readers undergo an individuation process as part of the aesthetic creativity. To show the magnificence of nature is a worthy aim, according to later romanticists; the following is a fine specimen. The eye is taken from the

foreground to the middle distance then to the background. The following lines show Thomson's ability to make the abstract take on life and movement; this will thus invite the reader to give life or at least a different meaning to the scene, as Jung explains that the unconscious is intentionally trying to communicate through consciousness, in order to add meaning to our lives.

> The very dead creation, from thy touch,
> Assumes a mimic life. By thee refined,
> In brighter mazes the relucent stream
> Plays o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
> Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
> Softens at thy return. The desert joys,
> Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
> Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
> Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
> Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge, ("Summer" Lines160-69)

The power of the sun gives life to the 'very dead creation' as it moves from the brightening the 'reluctant stream' in the foreground to softening the 'precipice' and ruins which project 'horror' in the middle. The 'promontory's top' and the blue horizon in the background reflect a floating gleam. It may be tempting to compare this view of creation with Wordsworth's insistence that all creation is alive, that the whole mass lay with a quickening soul'. Poetry as well as painting seem to be taking us through the mandala, which is found in nature and its various elements: plants, elements of matter, and the animal.

John Constable was delighted in Thomson's feeling for movement so he used the above lines in connection with his painting "Hadleigh Castle" (Fig. 6) which is considered as Constable's prominent painting (Watson, Picturesque 30). Whereas *The Seasons* is an iconic departure from neoclassicism to romanticism, Constable's Hadleigh Castle marks the transition from the idyllic serene country scenes to ruined landscapes with thundering clouds. There was a shift of focus from the picturesque scene of the countryside to the ruins and destruction of nature thus paving the way to the romantic movement.

Figure 6: Hadleigh Castle

The masterful use of colours had skillfully highlighted the details of the swirling clouds that meet the whirling sea that it is difficult to see the border that separates the two. The scene is painted using the short brushstrokes and the warm shades of gray colours hence creating a melancholic mood. Constable admired the movement between the different parts to reach unity. By integrating the different elements of nature and the readers/ viewers emotions, the conscious and the unconscious, wholeness is achieved and the process of aesthetic appreciation is accomplished. When the painting was exhibited, the following lines from Thomson's "Summer" were added:

> …The desert joys
> Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds
> Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep
> Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
> Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
> Restless, reflects a floating gleam. ("Summer" ll.165-170)

Adjoining the above lines to the painting illustrates how the two sister arts namely poetry and painting share the same feelings and attitude towards the same archetypal symbols. Jung explained that "the creative act, being rooted in the immensity of the unconscious, will forever elude our attempts at understanding. It describes itself only in its manifestations; it can be guessed at, but never wholly grasped." (Jung, "The Spirit in Man" 87) The description of the various natural elements and symbols "serve as a link between the archetype and consciousness and in a like manner between the artist, the work, and the audience, and the unconscious." (Mayo 76) Thomson's landscape painting in verse includes the vivid use of colour, light and shade. As an adept landscape painter, he cares more for the general impression, created by the skillful use of details, where contours are sometimes deliberately blurred. By doing so, he is following the paths and steps that will lead to a single point –the centre of the mandala; the centre for Jung was individuation.

To sum up, a comparative study of the descriptive passages in Thomson's *The Seasons* and the various paintings of different artists results in a mental and an emotional process of creativity. The comparison does not only incorporate the process of creation, but also unites the mutual effects of the two arts. The creative process, according to Carl Jung, "consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life" (Jung, "The Spirit in Man" 82-3). Jungian psychology emphasizes how the psyche of the artist be it a poet or a painter creates art; in turn, the psyche of the recipient whether a reader or a viewer responds to it. Jung explains that the unconscious is responsible for the creative function as it provides the consciousness with the primordial images necessary for psychological health (Jung, *Letters* 283). Both artists and individuals experience an irresistible human desire of integrating the unconscious mind and the conscious mind into one great unity. It is only through this process of individuation can one achieve the wholeness that has been discussed earlier by Aristotle, Plato and later by Carl Jung.

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