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Abstract Title:
Wordsworth's Epistemology of Orphanhood

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The paper will begin by noting connections in Cavell's work between the experience of philosophical disorientation, the perfectionist narrative of individuation, and aesthetic enactments of reading as dislocation and emergence. It will consider, in relation to these, recurrent scenarios of wandering, grief and misrecognition in early Wordsworth.

The second part of the paper will briefly develop these themes in relation to Wordsworth's early autobiographical writing, referring to the ways in which Wordsworth's subjective drama of restitution can be read as informed by childhood experiences of loss and self-obscurity.

The closing part of the paper will touch on some divergences between the reading of Wordsworth indicated here and the deconstructive work of Paul de Man.