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Complete opposites, or not? At just a glance William Shakespeare's "The Seven Ages of Man" a joke about the structure of life put into a poem, and William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," a poem sharing a happy experience with nature, appear to be as different as they could possibly be. But upon further examination it is clear that there are quite a few similarities. "The Seven Ages of Man" by William Shakespeare and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth are similar in meter and alliteration but very different in rhyme and personification.

First off, the writers use personification differently. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" uses long fluid personifications that give the poem a very relaxed feel and a song like impression which helps emphasise the meter (13) "The waves beside them danced." Whereas "The Seven Ages of Man" uses short quick personifications that don't draw a lot of attention but keep the poem conversational (22) "youthful hose". Basically Wordsworth makes the personifications an important line of the poem and Shakespeare makes them blend in.

Secondly the meter of these poems is similar in different ways. The meter of both poems is iambic and meter is used in both poems to give a happy tone. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is given a distinctly frolicking, song like sound by the iambic meter (1) "I wandered lonely as a cloud." As for "The Seven Ages of Man" meter is extremely important to it, without the happy iambic meter, this poem would be somber and depressing "And all the men and women merely players" (2) with the iambic meter, it sounds like a joke making it a funny and

happy poem.

Though the iambic meter is happy and fun to read it can get a bit monotonous after a while. Thankfully both Shakespeare and Wordsworth use alliteration to help break the dull repetition without truly breaking the meter. Wordsworth uses another repetition to cancel out the overall repetition of the iambic meter (17)“I gazed- and gazed.” And Shakespeare uses an alliteration that makes a sharp sound when read aloud (23) “shrunk shank” Which can make some people stumble on the words therefore breaking the repetition and adding to the joke of his poem.

One difference that is clear to see is rhyme. “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” uses rhyme to emphasise the iambic meter “shine/line” (7-9) and it seems to imply that the poem could be sung. However “The Seven Ages of Man” doesn’t have any rhyme at all giving it a less formal and more conversational feel that adds to it’s joking and happy tone.

The second item that is similar in different ways is tone. “The Seven Ages of Man” is happy because it’s funny, a joke about humanity, the different parts of life and the slight pointlessness of it (27-28) “Is second childishness and mere oblivion,/Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.” “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” is happy because it sounds and feels joyful, the words suggest someone sharing a profound experience with nature perhaps even singing about it.

In Conclusion William Shakespeare’s “The Seven Ages of Man” and William Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” are both similar and different, often at the same time. The personification is short and concise in “The Seven Ages of Man” but long and song like in “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud. Wordsworth’s poem frolics with the iambic meter and

Shakespeare's poem would be depressing without it. The iambic meter would get monotonous in both poems if the writers hadn't used alliteration to break it up. "The Seven Ages of Man" doesn't use any rhyme to keep the poem conversational but "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" uses lots of rhyme making it formal and implying that the narrator could be singing. Both poems are happy, "The Seven Ages of Man" for its joking impression and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" because it uses distinctly happy imagery. The result is two poems that are very different but in ways that, when analyzed, are shockingly similar.

## Works Cited

Shakespeare, William. "The Seven Ages of Man." *Elements of Literature: Third Course*.

Ed. Kathleen Daniel. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2003.

Wordsworth, William. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." *Elements of Literature: Third Course*.

Ed. Kathleen Daniel. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2003.

elements	Seven ages of man	I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud	Similarities	Differences
simile	"bearded like the pard" (12) "creeping like snail" (8)	"I wandered lonely as a cloud"(1)		The Seven Ages of Man uses similes to make fun of human life whereas I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud is making a more serious comparison while still being happy
metaphor	"All the worlds a stage,"(1) "And all the men and women are merely players" (2)	"Which is bliss of solitude"(22)	They have a positive/ happy comparison. I wondered lonely as a cloud because the whole poem is sharing a joyful experience whereas The seven ages of man because it's making a a joke.	
personification	"youthful hose" (22)	"beneath the trees, fluttering and dancing in the breeze."(5-6) "The waves beside them danced."(13)		The seven ages of man uses short funny personifications giving a very conversational and joking feel Whereas I Wandered lonely as a cloud gives slightly longer personifications giving a more song like impression

imagery	"Sighing like furnace" (10)	"a host of golden daffodils."(4)		The seven ages of man has imagery of human life, while the poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is showing nature.
meter = stressed = unstressed	iambic pentameter "And all the men and women merely players" (2)	iambic quadrameter "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (1)	They are both iambic. The effect is that they both have a very conversational tone. I wandered lonely as a cloud sounds like someone sharing a profound experience whereas The Seven Ages of Man sounds like kind of a joke without the iambic it would sound quite somber.	
free verse				
rhyme		"shine/line" (7-9)		The many rhymes in I wandered lonely as a cloud gives the poem a more a more frolicking sound that emphasises the iambic qualities The Seven ages of man with it's lack of rhyme gives off a more conversational sound

approximate rhyme	"lover" (9) "soldier" (11)	"gay-company" (15 and 16)	They both use approximate rhyme to break the monotony of their meter	
alliteration	"plays his part" (19) "shrunk shank" (23)	"I gazed- and gazed"(17)	They both use alliteration to emphasise the word's meanings	
onomatopoeia	"whistles"(25) "mewling"(6) "puking"(6)	"twinkle"(8)		The Seven ages of man uses multiple onomatopoeia in quick succession to create funny sounds during the part where he describes the infant I Wandered lonely as a cloud uses very few onomatopoeia because it is a happy poem not a funny poem
tone	slightly mournful but in a joking way "Is second childishness and mere oblivion, Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." (27-28)	Happy "And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils." (23-24)		The Seven Ages of Man gives off a kind of sad defeated tone when you just read the words but when you add the meter it sounds more like someone making a joke so it is really a happy/funny tone in disguise On the other hand I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud is straight forward Happy

				like someone sharing a wonderful experience nature but in almost a singing way
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Thesis: "The Seven Ages of Man" by William Shakespeare and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth are similar in meter and alliteration but very different in rhyme and personification.