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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S POETRY: THE ROLE OF
PLEASANT MEMORIES OF NATURE IN TRANSFORMING INTO
A SAINTLY PERSONALITY

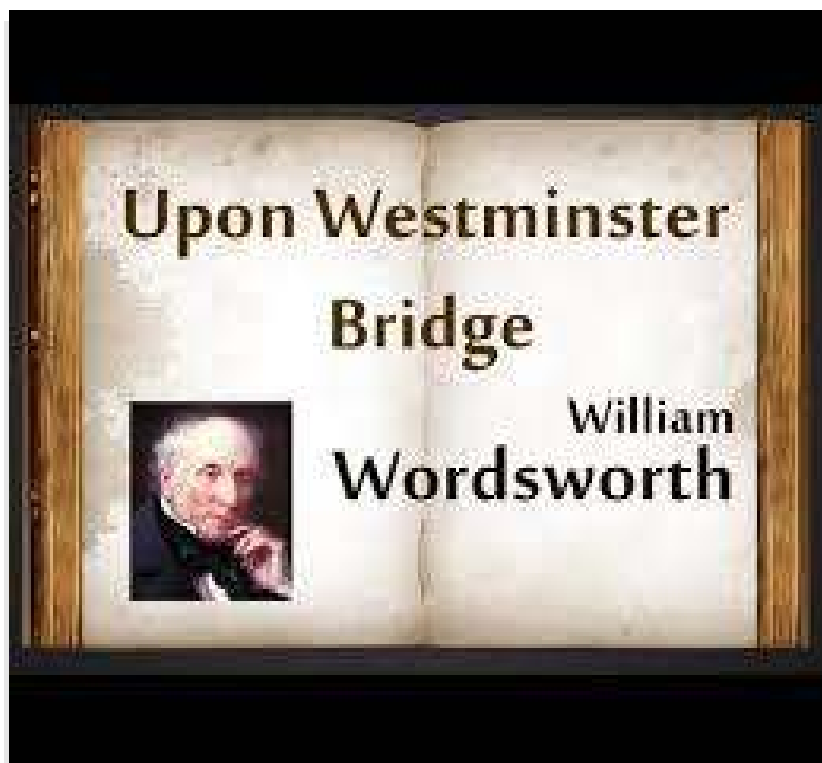


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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

It is well known and accepted fact that William Wordsworth is considered as one of the best nature poets of the entire world. He borrows the imagery from nature in his poetry. Nature is used in his poetry to express and describe human feelings. He affirms that nature is guardian, teacher, and all in all of his moral being. But apart from this his theory and love for nature teaches us transforming our personalities into a saintly one as well.

KEYWORDS

Romanticism, imagery, nature, serene mood, lyrical ballads.

INTRODUCTION:

William Wordsworth is the high priest of Nature. He possessed and put forth the new and original philosophy of Nature. He developed a new and individual view of nature. Wordsworth's love for nature can be seen in in different phases.

Firstly, he loved the outward appearance of nature. Through his poetry we see him experiencing a childlike and immature joy in simply describing the physical beauty of nature.

Secondly, these joys and pleasures derived from the physical beauty, external features provided him a greater joy in presence of calm and tranquil hours. Thus he found a divine beauty- at this phase he began believing that the Nature possesses a soul, a conscious existence, the same way famous Marathi Nature Poet Thombare alias Balkavi.

Thirdly, the nature has an ability to provide joy and love and that the nature communicates to him. Even he believes that nature has taught him lot things and that the nature never betrays the heart loves her.

Lastly, he has obtained much treasure from nature. He affirms that the nature has been the guide, the teacher, the guardian, the parent, and all in all of his moral being.

DISCUSSION –

Wordsworth's philosophy of life, his philosophy of nature, and his political ideas can be seen internally woven and built up together. He had been associated with William Godwin, who had been a philosopher, who criticized the roll of emptions and claimed salvation through the practice of reason perfected by education. Wordsworth read and followed Godwin for a few years and got in a way in to a dilemma, and suffered a lot from within, His condition was the same of a person under education in developing countries- fit for nothing. He lived in a confused state of mind for a certain period. His poetry also suffered during these days. Finally it was by 1798 he returned to his original philosophy and nature and the boons of nature. Wordsworth was in search of satisfactory psychology and he found it with David Hartley the founder of associantist school of psychology. Wordsworth here learnt and practiced bringing his simple ideas in association with framing it in to theory building, and hence the emotional sensation became the base of all knowledge.

Wordsworth describes poetry as spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquility. Poetry according to him is not dependent upon and bound by the rhetorical and literary devices such as figurative language and rhyme and rhythm and so on, as these are the decorative items to beautify the poem; rather poetry is the free expression of the thought and feeling of the poet. The poet always will speak of the truth, but not the way the scientist does it by the use of reason; but through the poetic way, the imaginative way reconstructing the experiences. For him language of prose and language of verse make no difference, rather he advocates for the use of prose language in poetry. In his Preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads Wordsworth explains in detail his new poetic theories. The immediate purpose of the preface was to defend his poems against the charges of lowness and unpoeticalness; and thus to exemplify his poetic theories through the poems he put forth. In the words of Graham Hough the overall intention of Wordsworth was to relate poetry as closely as possible to common man and his life by removing it from the fantasy and by converting it to a serious art. According to him poetry should be the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions and not mere satisfaction of a taste for imagery and other ornaments.

Accordingly, Wordsworth in his Preface advocates choosing incidents and events from common life and he prefers to relate and describe them using a language really used by common man, the

language that doesn't differentiate between the language of prose and the language of verse. He also advocates for the use of imagination to add some beauty of language and colours to present the ordinary things to the mind in an unusual aspect. Wordsworth, thus, saw the things in a new way. Through his poetry he not only did exemplify his poetic philosophy but also he puts forth some philosophy of life that is happy and miles away from worries and vacant and pensive mood. The reading of between the lines in his most of the poetry presents a great philosophy guiding us today also to lead towards really calm quiet and peaceful life that is full of happiness- a dwelling mansion for all beauty and happiness that is the bliss of life. The ideas we come across these poetic lines can be seen as universal ideas that are applicable for all people of all the world and of all the ages in past, present, and future as well.

We find in many poems of William Wordsworth that he talks about making your mind as the dwelling place, the mansion of all beautiful things so that whenever the things of weariness, of the worldly life occupy your mind, the memories of beautiful things will remove them away and the mind thus will be the mansion for only beautiful things, hence the life will become happy and full of pleasant things. But by the end of the poem we realize how a thing of simple beauty can be a source for pleasure forever

"For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

In another poem 'The Solitary Reaper' Wordsworth again talks of the memories of pleasure that remove the 'weariness' and 'vacant mood' and provide the pleasure and happiness forever. In the earlier part of the poem he talks about the immediate effect of the song of the girl over his mind that he is compelled to listen to her song in a way. That's why he asks the passersby to listen to her song or to pass gently. Moreover he compares the song of the girl with the songs in nature; he feels that the song of the girl is sweeter than the song sung by any cuckoo or nightingale ever. But in the latter part of the poem he talks about the permanent effect of the song of the girl over his mind. The permanent effect is that the song of the girl is born over his heart and inner mind, hence the song is 'unending' song, the song that he remember forever even though he doesn't know the theme and subject matter and even the language of the song. Such is the effect of beauty over the human mind. Here also we find that the simplest thing of beauty, if stored and preserved in mind properly can be the source of pleasure whenever needed in future- 'the food for future'

"Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more"

He goes on explaining the process of how to become an element of nature and how to make the mind the 'mansion' of all the beautiful things in the world. One has to love the nature and the objects of beauty and pleasure. All these are before our eyes, but we don't see or feel them, as being common human beings we see and hear only the things that we want to see and here, otherwise there are thousands of things to see and hear. But when we learn to see these and preserve the memories in mind then these things begin providing pleasures to us. The frequent visits to things of beauty might be in physical form or in the form of idea definitely develop the maturity and sense of seriousness.

"Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,"

Wordsworth's definition of poetry emphasizes upon the feelings 'recollected in tranquility'. He in his theory of poetry as well as in many of his poems talks about the tranquility. According to him tranquility is the bliss; this type of bliss activates the inward eye. The 'Inward eye' is the quality of the poets that makes them able to look at the things differently, they can feel the inwardness of the things in the world and nature consequently.

"With tranquil restoration:--feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,"

He further claims that it is this maturity and sense of seriousness to which he calls the as a 'serene mood' that enables to look into the life of the things. This serene mood develops one in to a person that never will be destructive in any sense, because such person has learnt that all the things and plants and animals do have life in them, the life which is a part of everybody and everything in and all over the world. We are an element of the world and nature, therefore it gives one a sense of brotherhood and fraternity.

"Is lightened:--that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,--
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things"

All these great changes as a person and personality occur there only because of the love for and love of nature, is the belief of Wordsworth. He strongly believes that when one loves nature, receives a lot of things in return. For this one has to enjoy the sunlight, the moon beams, and has to take the winds and the rain showers on body. He claims and affirms that nature never betrays the heart that loves her. He affirms that the nature plays a great role in human life. The nature not only provides the human beings with food, shelter, and clothing and medicines only; the nature teaches the wisdom, and makes one a perfect human being. He calls nature the guardian, the teacher, the and anchor of purest thoughts.

"Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye, and ear,--both what they half create,
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.
 Nor perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay: "

Finally he claims that this process of love for nature results in developing the person in more serious, a person having saintly qualities in all sense. Such a person is never ever affected by earthly things good or bad. He is not touched either by praise or abuses or the rash judgment of the worldly trifle things or the trifle people, because after such a process and transformation the mind becomes a dwelling place for only the beautiful things, ideas, and senses, and such mind never ever allows the evil and bad things enter it; on the contrary the bad and ugly and the evil thoughts and feelings are run away by the memories of the beauty in the mind and the life becomes a journey from joy to joy.

"-----and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free
 To blow against thee: and, in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember -----"

CONCLUSION -

Wordsworth's philosophy is of universal quality and level, hence it is applicable to all ages in past present and future to all the societies and its people. Wordsworth's love for nature is not only for borrowing images and expressing feelings in poetry only, but there is a great and sublime use of nature in his poetry in the form of that the reading of between the lines of his poetry gets us closer to his philosophy of nature that bridges between human beings and the worldly life; when understood properly his love and philosophy of nature as exemplified in his poetry, is very useful in transforming ourselves into a saintly personality that will keep us always happy, pleasant, and saved from all evils of the worldly life.

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