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Nature as Mother and Nurse of Man

(A Study in Wordsworth's Poetry)

MS. KARUNA RATHORE

Teacher (English)

Government School, Pokaran

Abstract

Nature has been a recurring theme in poetry through the ages. Its various landscapes, its changing seasons, its creative as well as destructive power, its beautiful phenomena; have fascinated poets of every generation stimulating them to create verses on it. Romanticism was an influential artistic and literary movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and peaked in the first half of the 19th century. Among other things, glorification of nature was an integral part of Romanticism. Among the best known nature poets William Wordsworth.

Introduction

Wordsworth had his passion for nature fixed in his blood. It was a necessity of his being, like that of a mulberry leaf to the silkworm and through his commerce with Nature did he live and breathe.¹ He regarded as a poet and prophet of Nature. He was passionately absorbed in Nature. It has been said that he was drunk with God and Nature. His love for nature was probably truer and more tender than that of any other English poet, before or since. Nature comes to occupy in his poems a separate or independent status and is not treated in a casual or passing manner as by poets before him. He had a full-fledged philosophy a new and original view of Nature.²

He believes that company of Nature gives joy to human heart and he looked upon Nature as exercising a healing influence on sorry stricken hearts. He regarded, Nature as the best mother, guardian and nurse of man and as an elevating influence. He believed that between man and nature there is mutual consciousness. According to him human beings who grow up in the lap of nature are perfect in every respect.

Wordsworth's first love of Nature was a healthy boy's delight in outdoor life. Whatever he learns through the transition, ultimately leads to his childhood communion with nature, is the healing power of nature. He gains the healing power from nature through his memory that recompensates him for his loss of childhood immediacy. Rosenfiled claims, memory is not a set of stored images that can be remembered by and independent 'I' : memory is a set of ever evolving procedures.³

Memory is reputedly reconstructed through our ethical relationship with others because it continues to act upon the relationship for Wordsworth, memory Michael Vander Wheeled Suggests, is an ethical construction in that it operates as "a kind of ground for the everyday moral life that Wordsworth desired" Wordsworth connects his present consciousness (the 'I') with his past consciousness (the other 'I') and thereby he recognizes a moral power the healing power of nature that "is only one gift of memory".

Tintery Abbey shows how human being and nature build up their relationship. The poem describes the state of Wordsworth's Childhood communion with Nature. The communion creates the power of harmony, but it is past.

Hunter Davies deals chiefly with one aspect of poet's genius, namely the effect of Nature upon his mind, and the growth of his love for Nature from his boyhood manhood. At first Nature was merely a background for his boyish games. As he grew up, he developed a love for Nature. He dwells upon the moral influence of Nature as a great teacher.⁴

The Prelude shows that Wordsworth received the best part of his education from nature. In the first two books of Prelude he finds that Nature has been acting as a sort of glorified parent or school mistress. The poet gives thanks to the means which nature designed to employ the discipline of fear and joy through which its beginning Hartleian curriculum has been fulfilled. With the help of nature Wordsworth's hears the music of humanity.

He also expresses his deep affection for his sister, paying a growing tribute to her and advising her to cultivate the friendship of Nature. He has regarded Nature as the best friend of a man. According to him in this materialistic world where people are busy in getting and spending money, only nature can become a trustworthy friend who guides a man towards the right path. In his very early poems he tells us some natural aspects that struck him in boyhood

He thinks that love of nature came first, by expressing his deep rooted love for Nature. The stories which he tells in his poems are of the nature. Nothing he has written is more full of incident or more rapid in movement, than his song at the Feast of Brogham castle but the purpose of the whole poem lies in its quiet ending. This is a life, which led him to love rivers, woods and fields. His passion for nature was at that time in its infancy and was automatically nourished by his surrounding without his having to make any deliberate efforts to nourish it his daily games and his noisy routine continued from week to week and month to month.

Nature nourishes him as a mother she played with him by providing daily games as a friend and guided him and provided him soothing influence as a nurse does. He sang of pleasure, joy, glee, blitheness, love whatever in nature of humanity they asset their indisputable power; and turning to pain and wrong, and gazing at them steadfastly and setting himself to present the facts with a quiet but unsparing truthfulness, he yet endeavored to show what he had seen.

Meditating upon the years of his boyhood, he becomes conscious of a two existence the life that he had led as a boy and the life that he is leading as a man. He recalls the rough piece of rock around which he used to play with other boys on starry nights, and he recalls the old woman after whom they had named that piece of rocks and who used to earn her livelihood by selling her wares. He goes on to describe his rowing excursions over the Windermere lake. He and his companions would row sometimes to an island sometimes to sister island where oak trees grew in plenty and sometime to a third small island where stood the ruins of an old church once dedicated to virgin Mary. The rowing competition was marvelous, formed the basis of the diffidence and modesty which in his later years became a part of his Nature. He also learnt to value the self sufficing power of solitude. He has beautifully described the solitary things and scenes, figures in his poetry.

Nature works here as a guide, who promotes goodness and virtue in human being. He conveys to us the moral influence of dear such incidents becoming a part of the memory influence a man's subsequent thinking and conduct.

According to psychology, a boy brought up among the works of Nature will have nobler character than one reared among the "mean and Vulgar works of man."

Even the simple pleasures of Wordsworth's boyhood days contributed to the formation of his character. Simple games like netting, fishing, skating all exerted their influence. The milk white clusters of the hazel nuts were the tokens of desire, the unsuccessful rod and the paper kite; all were anticipations of experience in the larger world and helped to prepare for that experience. Even the home amusements of the boy Wordsworth were associated with nature. While playing indoor games he was always aware of the power of nature's keen and silent tooth and of protracted sound of Esthwaite's splitting fields of ice. He describes about a little solitary child in his small lyric "Lucy Gray". She does not have any other companion except Nature. Nature became companion of that girl and provided her shelter like a mother. The soothing and nourishing impact provided by nature was marvelous. Nature is shown as a companion of man in the poem entitled.

Wordsworth tells how nature works as a guide, for Lucy's wretched parents in the storm. He has beautifully shown how they tracked small footmarks through the broken hawthorn hedge and how they crossed the open field. He expresses his gratitude to the various objects of nature, the mountains, the lakes, the sounding of waterfalls, the mists and the winds. It is due to the influence of nature that he has, in his youth, been pure in heart, and has always kept aloof from little enmities and low desires referring to the disillusionment that French revolution ultimately brought he says that he did not allow his mind to

fall into a state of despair but retained a more than Roman confidence, a faith that does not fail. This capacity was derived from nature which has fed his lofty ideas.

Wordsworth believed that the company of Nature gives joy to the human heart and he looked upon nature as, exercising a healing influence on sorrow stricken hearts, in this poem 'farewell' wordsworth describes how garden provides soothe as a friend after industrious hours.

Wordsworth depicts Nature as a friend. His poem Green Linnet illustrates this point of view. He sits beneath the shade of fruit tree which protects him from sunshine, birds and flowers greet him.

Wordsworth is a prominent leader of Romantic Movement. He is better known for his short poems like Tintern Abbey and immortality Ode than for his long and ambitious works. Tintern Abbey recounts three stages in the development of the poet's love of nature ; (1) sensuous animal passion (2) moral influence, and (3) mystical communion. Michael deals with the sturdiness of character and nature's healing power. The five Lucy poems are also popular. In Ode on Intimations of Immortality. He attributes a child's wisdom and glory to the unconscious memory of previous life. Resolution and independence is yet another memorable poem. Wordsworth influenced modern thinking on the natural goodness of childhood, the moral value of simple living and the inspiring and healing powers of nature. Wordsworth seems to have attempted to translate into action both of his life and in his work the principle : simple living and high thinking.

Wordsworth's observations prefixed to lyrical Ballads, generally called his manifesto in which he discusses a number of issues related to the art of poetry. These issues include the nature of poetry, the creation of poetry, the impact of the poem on the reader, and the difference between the language of prose poem on the reader and the difference between the language of prose and the language of poetry. Wordsworth finds a moral justification for poetry. The aim of the poet, in his view, it to correct men's feeling to render these feelings more consonant with eternal nature. A poet provides us with spiritual exercises in order to give us new feelings and make our feeling more sane and pure.

Wordsworth's childhood days were spent in the midst of beautiful sights and sounds of nature. The child Wordsworth looked upon Nature as source of inspiration and scene for animals pleasure like skating and riding. Wordsworth's first love for nature was a healthy boy's delight in outdoor life. Thus nature nourished him as a mother helped him as a friend, guided him and provided him healing influence as a nurse.

"People thank word Worth as a poet of nature and rightly for though the concordance shows that nature was less often his theme than man. It was by his poetry of nature that he is unique. It was his love of Nature that led him to love human being."

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