

Study of Experiences of Love of Nature in the Poems of Wordsworth

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Abstract: *One of the principal concerns of Wordsworth's poetry is nature he is known as the poet of nature. To Wordsworth's poetry, interacting with nature represents the forces of the natural world. Certainly he celebrates its beauty; it is also a source of delight and joy. The purpose of this study is to uncover his ideal in singing highly of the nature and how love and impact of nature on his creations. Wordsworth views nature and human beings as complementary rudiments of a sum of a whole, recognizing that humans are a sum of nature. Wordsworth is still comforted with the belief that all things happen by the hands of the mysticism and the just and divine order of nature, itself. Wordsworth is a master hand in depicting natural things. Quiet, beautiful, sweet, pleasures and so on are the most universally seen words in his poems.*

Keywords: *Love, Lyric, Nature, Beauty, Romanticism, Poems*

1 Introduction:

A majority of Wordsworth's poems expressed his obsession with nature. Most literature from this period was based on love, fascinations, obsessions, myths, and nature. Three poems in which express this obsession is "Composition upon Westminster Bridge," "My heart leaps up when I behold," and the most popular, "I wandered lonely as a Cloud." William Wordsworth, the representative poet of nature, whose poems took on greater significance, brought a totally new and fresh stream of air to the European literary field. Wordsworth, the glittering star, is always shining in English literature. His whole life had a close connection with nature—the permanent subject sung highly by human being. Wordsworth was called by Shelley "Poet of nature". He, too, called himself "A Worshiper of Nature". The sight of a rainbow and other natural beauty has kept him youthful through his adulthood. He also hopes that he will always be able to understand, appreciate, and experience the beauty of nature into his old years or he would rather die. He held a firm faith that nature could enlighten the kindheartedness and universal brotherhood of human being, and only exist in harmony with nature where man could get true happiness. Wordsworth believed that we can learn more of man and of moral evil and good from Nature than from all the philosophies. In his eyes, "Nature is a teacher whose wisdom we can learn, and without which any human life is vain and incomplete." He believed in the education of man by Nature. In this he was somewhat influenced by Rousseau. This inter-relation of Nature and man is very important in considering Wordsworth's view of both.

According to a commentary, Wordsworth believes it is rare to find a person who believes that they do not need materialistic items to live a happy life. Also, "People are concerned with earning and spending money". Wordsworth states, "Little we see in Nature that is ours". His poems often present an instant when nature

speaks to him and he responds by speaking for nature. The language of nature in such instances is, like the language Wordsworth uses to record such events, often cryptic and enigmatic. Wordsworth is at peace when surrounded by nature and its beauty.

2 Wordsworth's Life and Contribution in English Literature in Brief

William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in Cooker mouth, Cumberland, England, the second child of an attorney. Unlike the other major English romantic poets, he enjoyed a happy childhood under the loving care of his mother and was very close to his sister Dorothy. As a child he wandered happily through the lovely natural scenery of Cumberland. In grammar school, Wordsworth showed a keen interest in poetry. From 1787 to 1790 Wordsworth attended St. John's College at Cambridge University. He always returned to his home and to nature during his summer vacations. Before graduating from Cambridge, he took a walking tour through France, Switzerland, and Italy in 1790. The Alps made an impression on him that he did not recognize until fourteen years later. Revolutionary passion in France made a powerful impact on Wordsworth, who returned there in November 1791. He wanted to improve his knowledge of the French language. His experience in France just after the French Revolution (1789; the French overthrew the ruling monarchy) reinforced his sympathy for common people and his belief in political freedom. In December 1792, Wordsworth fell passionately in love with a French girl, Annette Vallon. She gave birth to their daughter. Wordsworth's first poems, *Descriptive Sketches* and *An Evening Walk*, were printed in 1793. He wrote several pieces over the next several years. The year 1797 marked the beginning of Wordsworth's long friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). Together they published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Wordsworth wanted to challenge "the gaudiness [unnecessarily flashy] and inane [foolish] phraseology [wording] of many modern writers." Most of his poems in this collection centered on the simple yet deeply human feelings of ordinary people, phrased in their own language. His views on this new kind of poetry were more fully described in the important "Preface" that he wrote for the second edition (1800). Wordsworth was granted honorary degrees from both Durham University and Oxford University. Later, he became the Poet Laureate and considered the most important author in England. He died in 1850 at the age of 80. Some related issues are given below;

1770 Wordsworth is born in the Lake District. **1778** Wordsworth's mother dies. **1779** Wordsworth is sent away to boarding school in Hawkshead. **1783** His father dies. **1787-1790** Wordsworth attends St. John's College, Cambridge, where he is an indifferent student. **1791-** Graduates from Cambridge. Travels to France, where he meets Annette Vallon with whom he has a daughter, Caroline. **1792-** Returns to England. **1795** Wordsworth comes into an inheritance of nine hundred pounds sterling. If we consider average earnings in 1795, that amount would be comparable to someone inheriting £872,000, or slightly over one million euro. Wordsworth's friend hoped that, by leaving him this money, he would encourage Wordsworth to spend his time writing poetry, rather than trying to earn a living. **1795** Wordsworth meets Coleridge, and they strike up a friendship. **1797** Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy move to Alfoxden House, close to Coleridge's home. **1798** Coleridge, William and Dorothy Wordsworth travel to Germany. Wordsworth is unhappy. **1798** *Lyrical Ballads collaboration* between Wordsworth and Coleridge - is published. **1799** The Wordsworth's return to England, and settle in Grasmere, in a house called Dove Cottage. **1802** The war between England and France ends, and Wordsworth goes to France to meet his daughter Caroline. **1802** Wordsworth marries Mary

Hutchinson. They have been friends since childhood. Wordsworth's sister, Dorothy, lives with the couple. **1803** The first of Wordsworth's five children by his wife Mary is born. **1843** Wordsworth is named Poet Laureate. He is reluctant to accept the honour, claiming he is too old, but the Prime Minister persuades him. Wordsworth becomes the only Poet Laureate to write no official poetry. **1850** Wordsworth dies of pleurisy. A few months after his death, his wife publishes *The Prelude*.

However, with the death of his daughter Dora in 1847, Wordsworth's writing ceased completely. He remains the only Poet Laureate to have written no official poetry during his time in office. Wordsworth died in 1850, and was buried in his beloved Grasmere. His widow, Mary, published *The Prelude* shortly after his death. It was not particularly well-received at the time, but is now recognized as one of the great masterpieces of poetry.

3 Experiences and Development of Love of Nature in Wordsworth Poems

Wordsworth poems of nature he printed beautiful pictures full of the creation by the mighty God—mountains, rocks, rivers and trees. Wordsworth's love of nature had been nurtured in his early childhood, when he swam in the local rivers and lakes and walked through woods and over hills. Wordsworth's childhood had been spent in Nature's lap. A nurse both stern and kindly, she had planted seeds of sympathy and understanding in that growing mind. Natural scenes like the grassy Derwent river bank or the monster shape of the night-shrouded mountain played a "needful part" in the development of his mind. In *The Prelude*, he records dozens of these natural scenes, not for themselves but for what his mind could learn through.

There are numerous sketches and portraits of nature's beauty in his work. In *To My Sister*, the poet celebrates the 'first mild day of March' which awakens in him the desire to leave the indoors and immerse himself in nature, to 'Come forth and feel the sun. In *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth traces the development of his love for Nature. In his boyhood Nature was simply a playground for him. In the *Immortality Ode* he tells us that as a boy his love for Nature was a thoughtless passion but that when he grew up, the objects of Nature took a sober colouring from his eyes and gave rise to profound thoughts in his mind. Wordsworth longs for a version of nature that will redeem him from the vagaries of passing moments, but he usually records those natural phenomena that promise only the passing of time and the cyclical transience of natural process. The Natural scenes and sounds gave his imagination wings and made him get to know the cottagers, shepherds, and solitary wanderers that then entered his dreams and even his later poems. At the age of 14, Wordsworth was sent to school at Hawkshead in the beautiful Lake District in northwestern England. There, the unroofed school of nature attracted him more than the classroom, and he learned more eagerly from flowers, hills and stars than from his books. The colors, scents, sounds, the blue of the sky, the sparkle of the sunlight on water, the sound and plumage of birds in nature deeply influenced Wordsworth's growth of genius. The great love for nature early cherished by the child was later expressed in his poetry. Just as De Quinley said, "Wordsworth had his passion for nature fixed in blood. It was a necessity. And through his commerce with nature did he live and breathe".

Cazamian says that "To Wordsworth, Nature appears as a formative influence superior to any other, the educator of senses and mind alike, the sower in our hearts of the deep-laden seeds of our feelings and beliefs. It speaks to the child in the fleeting emotions of early years, and stirs the young poet to an ecstasy, the glow of which illuminates all his work and dies of his life".

4 Nature Descriptions in Wordsworth Poems

Wordsworth believed that we can learn more of man and of moral evil and good from Nature than from all the philosophies. In his eyes, “Nature is a teacher whose wisdom we can learn, and without which any human life is vain and incomplete.” He believed in the education of man by Nature. In this he was somewhat influenced by Rousseau. This inter-relation of Nature and man is very important in considering Wordsworth’s view of both.

Wordsworth expresses the interconnectedness of his love of nature with his aim of writing *The Prelude*, particularly in his execution of creating “some philosophic song / of truth that cherishes our daily life, / with meditations passionate from deep / recesses in man’s heart” As the aim of the book in its totality is to convey verities of ‘daily life,’ the poet repeatedly rejects society for the quiet life lived in solitude with nature as his primary companion. Perhaps the most indicative excerpt of this notion is expressed in Wordsworth’s invocation of nature as an all-powerful entity:

Ye presence of Nature, in the sky
Or in the earth, ye visions of the hills
And the souls of lonely places, can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry – when ye through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills.
Impressed upon all forms the characters
of danger or desire, and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth
With triumph, and delight, and hope, and fear,
Work like a sea?

In the poem “Lines Written in Early Spring”, in this poem, Wordsworth was deeply impressed by the charming and fresh scenes in early spring. By colorfully describing typical objects in nature such as “tufts, bower, wreaths, flower, air, budding twins” etc., we admire a calm while prosperous natural world.

Wordsworth is sensitive to every subtle change in the world about him. He can give delicate and subtle expression to the sheer sensuous delight of the world of Nature. He can feel the elemental joy of spring:

It was an April morning, fresh and clear
The rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man’s speed, and yet the voice
Of waters which the river had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
He can take an equally keen pleasure in the tranquil lake:
The calm
And dead still water lay upon my mind
Even with a weight of pleasure

A brief study of his pictures of Nature reveals his peculiar power in actualizing sound and its converse, silence.

Wordsworth is saying that remembering the sensations that nature has had on him can be recalled, relived at other times and in other places and help him overcome things such as weariness and other detrimental sensations.

In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart –
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,

In 1802 Wordsworth returned at last to France to meet his daughter, Caroline, for the first time. They walked together on the beach in Calais, and that meeting was the inspiration for this poem. This poem opens with a description of the evening. It is a peaceful, calm, beautiful time, as the father and daughter watch the sun setting over the sea. Wordsworth always loved such serene times, as they allowed him to reflect on the spiritual world and appreciate the beauty of nature. He feels 'free' because he can, in this place and at this time, forget the concerns of the wider world, and lose himself in the moment. He feels that this is a 'holy' time, and that he should spend it in reverent thought. Wordsworth, though not an atheist, was not religious in the strict sense of the word. He felt that nature offered us a chance to see something of the divine, or the 'Presence' which exists beyond our understanding.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder – everlastingly.

The idea that nature is at once both awe-inspiring and also horrifying gives way to Wordsworth's homage he pays to his primary teacher,

“ye mountains and ye lakes...ye mists and winds
that dwell among the hills where I was born”.

He also presents the connectedness of religion with nature in the following lines:

“I am content
with my own modest pleasure, and have lived
with God and Nature communing, removed
from little enmities and low desires”.

Here, he introduces the relationship between God and nature and his religious surrender to God's creation of nature as His primary accomplishment.

By giving equal importance to both entities via their capitalization, Wordsworth further emphasizes his belief in the omnipotence of nature, as well as God. Prior to this piece, Wordsworth introduces the notion of nature as an educator by identifying a child's morality with the instructions and teaching of the natural world:

“many are the joys
of youth, but, oh, what happiness to live
when every hour brings palpable access

of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
and sorrow is not there”.

His frequent conveyance of the joy of nature and his exultance of it gives way to his expectation that nature teaches the child more adequately than formalized education can. In essence, Wordsworth’s relationship with nature is as complex as it is simple – while he attributes religious and educational capabilities to nature, he also recognizes coveted solitude and removal from civilization that he so desperately wants.

In ‘The Prelude’, Wordsworth explores the events in his life from childhood to adulthood, and looks at the way in which they made him the man he became. The poem opens with a description of a perfect winter wonderland. It is ‘the frosty season’ and the sun has set. The only lights are those of the cottage windows, shining through ‘the twilight gloom’. They may call to some, but Wordsworth ignores their summons. This is a time of joy for the young boy and his friends, but there is a sense that Wordsworth somehow appreciates it even more than his companions.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,

.....
And woodland pleasures, - the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,

.....
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

In the poem My Heart Leaps Up, Wordsworth also uses another concept that becomes a theme throughout his poetry; the importance of childhood. For many of the Romantics, the memories or visions of an idyllic childhood become a powerful emotive force as they aspired for life of greater harmony and simplicity

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

Wordsworth’s poetry does include passages of great hope, optimism and joy best summarised through his famous poem “Daffodils”

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Nature is like a foster parent of sorts. It can teach through 'beauty and by fear'. Its beauty can bring him great pleasure, but if he transgresses, it will reprimand him. It is worth noting that it was nature in the first place which led him.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.
The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

Wordsworth looked through the discernible panorama to what he calls its "ideal truth". He pored over objects till he fastened their images on his brain and brooded on these in memory till they acquired the liveliness of dreams. He had a keen ear too for all natural sounds, the calls of beasts and birds, and the sounds of winds and waters; and he composed thousands of lines wandering by the side of a stream. But he was not richly endowed in the less intellectual senses of touch, taste and temperature.

5 Conclusion

As a poet of Nature, Wordsworth stands supreme. He is a worshipper of Nature, Nature's devotee or high-priest. His love of Nature was probably truer, and tenderer, than that of any other English poet, before or since. Wordsworth's images and metaphors mix natural scenery, religious symbolism (as in the sonnet "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, in which the evening is described as being "quiet as a nun"), and the relics of the poet's rustic childhood--cottages, hedgerows, orchards, and other places where humanity intersects gently and easily with nature. Three points in his creed of Nature may be noted as a poet of nature;

- (i) He visualized of Nature as a living Personality, is a divine spirit pervading all the objects of Nature.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Wordsworth emphasized the moral influence of Nature, spiritualised Nature and regarded her as a great moral teacher, as the best mother, guardian and nurse of man, and as an elevating influence.

Wordsworth is a master hand in depicting natural things. Quiet, beautiful, sweet, pleasures and so on are the most universally seen words in his poems. These words stand out to reveal the poet's deep love and respect to nature. In addition to this, nature comes also as the source of energy, "And passing even into my purer mind, with tranquil restoration—feelings too of unremembered pleasure". "Even I'm tired of several years of social life, as soon as I return to nature, his quiet and peace power can make me restore my energy" (Averill,1980). He believed that between man and Nature there is mutual consciousness, spiritual communion or 'mystic intercourse'. He initiates his readers into the secret of the soul's communion with Nature. According to him, human beings who grow up in the lap of Nature are perfect in every respect.

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