



## William Wordsworth: An Ardent Lover of Nature

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### Abstract :-

A great nature poet William Wordsworth has been justly regarded as a pioneer of the Romantic movement in English poetry. According to Matthew Arnold, a great English critic, the position of William Wordsworth as a literateur stands only next to Shakespeare and John Milton. His “The Lyrical Ballads” which was published in 1798 played a very prominent role in the development of English romanticism. This great saint of nature, understood nature in all its aspects. Wordsworth understood and flourished nature intensely more than any other poet of any age. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Wordsworth’s entire life was devoted to nature. Nature was deeply rooted in the blood and bones of this poet. He considered himself to be an ardent lover of nature and a moral teacher. He started writing poetry, learnt to love man only because of his ardent love for nature. The present paper aims at reviewing Wordsworth’s love of nature expressed in his poetry. The purpose of this article is to reveal his poetic world in general and nature poetry in particular.

**Keywords :-** Romanticism, movement, critic, literature, lyric, ballads.

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### I. Introduction :-

Wordsworth’s personality had become one with nature. He employed nature in his poetry with top priority. Man is a social animal who lives in the society. Various factors like family, relatives, caste, religion affect life experiences. At the same time, man established unbreakable relationship with surrounding nature. Born in 1770, the poet had a very happy and delightful childhood. As a child he wandered through the beautiful nature, fields he loved. From childhood he was very fond of books and nature and his inclination to books and nature is reflected in many of his writings. “Wordsworth wrote of his experiences of composing poetry in the open fields. The echo is within the writer, it is thus his making his thinking audible to himself.”<sup>1</sup> This poet spent the last 50 years of his life in Dove Cottage and Rydal Mount. He was awarded by the poet Laureate in 1843 and passed away in 1850.

His “Ode on Intimations to Immortality” was the most notable poetic creation of the century. In his “Ode on Duty”, “The Happy Warrior Lines”, we can experience this poet’s unique and extraordinary poetic strength. His “The Excursion” is an autobiographical verse and this poem can be mentioned as the longest of all his poems. In this poem, Wordsworth’s contemplation about man, nature and human life are vividly described in extremely beautiful way. Wordsworth was a good sonneteer and wrote many sonnets during 1802-1835. He always felt that nature was the great source of solace and strength. After the failure of the French revolution, Wordsworth found himself in strange mental dilemma of despair and disillusionment. The horizons of his mind were darkened by doubt and disappointment. In such a sad environment, his mind and soul found peace and contentment in his peaceful and beautiful Lake District.

### II. As a Nature Poet :-

As a nature poet Wordsworth’s position in the poetic world is supreme as well as unshakable. He was a true worshipper of nature. “Wordsworth’s poetry expressed a new delight in simplicity of theme, feeling and expression in the worship of nature.”<sup>2</sup> He himself considered to be an ardent worshipper of nature. We can easily recognize that he has given an independent and different face to nature in his poetry. As an example, we

can mention the poem "Tintern Abbey" where nature is the main theme. Wordsworth was of the firm opinion that the urban people who were busy with material progress, completely ignored nature and thus had to face the wrath of nature. He always criticized modern man's tendency to ignore nature. He has revealed the blunting of our social consciousness and neglect of nature in a following famous sonnet:

"The world is too much with us  
Late and soon, Getting and spending  
We waste our powers  
Little we see in Nature that is ours."

This great poet deeply loved the outer form of nature. In his poetry, he expressed precisely and honestly the various colours of nature, the priceless beauty of nature, the magnificence and tranquility of nature etc. After reading his nature poetry, one reminds of the innocent joy of a child. This poet derives his spiritual joy from the external forms of nature like land, sea, blue sky, glittering stars, sun, moon, rivers, streams, fields, mountains, valleys etc. While unfolding the various layers of nature, he gets a sense of divinity in the proximity of nature. Nature provides meaning to human life and also provides spiritual energy to busy human society. Once Wordsworth said, "Even I am 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."<sup>3</sup> William Wordsworth loved nature in its original form and was a companion of humble humanity.

Wordsworth's picturisation of nature do not show the cruelty of nature. On the other hand it shows the grandeur and noble form of nature. He was not only a nature poet, but it is better to call him a poet who loves human beings, the poet of whole humanity. He has earned a commendable respect of mankind as a poet and a man for his sincere attempts to explore the deep emotions and the commonplace aspects of human life. In his poem "The Prelude", he accepted that he has achieved the alchemy of loving human beings only through the feeling of loving nature. The major characters of his poetry are humble people, simple villagers, cattle farmers, farm workers, shepherds, solitary reapers etc. While portraying such ordinary people of the society Wordsworth gives an emotional touch and this makes him 'a poet of humanity'. "The speakers of Wordsworth's poems are wanderers, solitary travelers who experience the vastness of the natural world."<sup>4</sup> While loving nature himself, this nature loving noble hearted poet produces magic spells on his readers to become one with nature.

In poems like "A Farewell", "A Thorn", "A Flower Garden", "Prelude", "Recluse", "The Solitary Reaper", "Daffodils" Wordsworth focused his attention on universal and general matters of human life. His poetry has always been criticized of lacking subtlety in it. It is clearly seen that throughout his life, this poet pursued pure, pious, permanent, unalloyed happiness through poetry.

William Wordsworth has used the language of the common people in his poetry. The common people's language in its simplicity is greatly charming and emotional. "The rustics are in communication every hour with the beauty and grandeur of nature, the best part of their language is derived from such communication and so it is notable and poetic. It is capable of giving the highest poetic pleasure."<sup>5</sup> Spontaneity is an intrinsic quality of simple men's language and so Wordsworth used the rustic or villager's language and so spontaneity has become an essential characteristic of his poetry. The common people's language comes from the heart and goes directly into the heart. According to Wordsworth common men's language is more philosophical, more aesthetic and more sublime. Through their language, harmonious communication is established more clearly, intensely and more effectively. Hence, for composing poetry Wordsworth used common people's language to make his poetry more harmonious and more interactive.

In his poetry, we can see the beautiful interweaving between man and nature. We find more influence of nature in the simple people of society than in urban people. "The contemporary social background serves as the second reason why Wordsworth's lyrical poems make so much room for nature. Living in the crowded and noisy society, Wordsworth felt greatly miserable. Only in nature, he can find beauty and purity going into his non thinking."<sup>6</sup> The language of the simple, ordinary people is more beautiful and pure because these people are constantly in close proximity to nature. In his poetry nature and man often appear to be one and the same.

It is clearly found that there is a very close connection between his poetic world and his personal experience. His "The Prelude" is a poem of introspection. This poet does not accept the concept of man apart from nature. Although nature is the main theme of his poetry, this poet does not ignore the quiet but sad music of human life. The effect of nature on the human mind is seemed to be at the centre of majority of his poems. As Dr. Samuel Johnson puts it: "Every person's life can be better written by the same person Wordsworth's "The Prelude" can be mentioned as the highest autobiographical poem in English poetic world. In this poem one can see the different facets of Wordsworth's personality. A revolutionary Wordsworth, humanist Wordsworth, poet Wordsworth and great worshipper of nature.

This great poet offered nature, the status of a moral teacher. His consideration as the moral teacher to nature is his greatest gift to the world of poetry. "Wordsworth as a teacher teaches us how to worship nature as we can have real pleasure only if we go to nature. Nature has the potentialities that can soothe our feelings. Mankind may learn lesson from nature - the lesson of nobility and morality."<sup>7</sup> Various miracles of nature are

displayed in his poetry. This is the fundamental purpose of his poetry. He has given a dual respect to nature as the best guide and a teacher. As he says:

“One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of a man  
Of moral evil and good  
Than all the sages can.”

He considers nature to be a moral teacher and human being to be a disciple as man learns a number of things from nature.

### **III. Conclusion :-**

Wordsworth nature poetry is an invaluable gift to the English literary world. He considered nature as a living entity with divine power. He worshipped nature wholeheartedly throughout his life and dedicated his poetry to nature. He looked upon nature as a friend, beloved, teacher, mother and protector. He was fully convinced that one could experience true spiritual bliss through the company of nature. He spiritualized nature. The relationship between nature and man has been mysterious and unique since ages. This relationship can never be broken. His entire childhood was spent in the splendid forest surrounded by natural beauty. Flowing rivers, springs, seas, vast mountain ranges, moon, stars, flowers of various colours and smells, deep forests, big waterfalls are frequently found in his poetry. Wordsworth never criticized the cruelty and mercilessness of nature and always looked at nature as a source of happiness and satisfaction. Contrary to the use of traditional poetic language and poetic style, the language used by the common people was used by Wordsworth for writing his literature. His poetry became the poetry of the common people rather than the poetry of a handful of intellectuals. Therefore William Wordsworth is given due respect in English Literary world only after Shakespeare.

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