

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

Nature-As explored in the poetry of William Wordsworth With Special
Reference to "Ode to the Intimation of Immortality and "Tintern Abbey"

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Introduction:

The human environment- air, water, soil and vegetation, which comprises the basic life support system on earth is practically under danger by human beings themselves. In the mad race of 'material development' made arrogant by technological achievements, mankind is out to exploit "nature "and its creations and establish a false sense of victory over it. Nature has already started to retaliate. Ironically all environmental problems, be it pollution, deforestation, global warming, acid rains directly or indirectly are the result of the progress of industrialization, motorization, and urbanization.(Rajiv K Sinha, Preface, Environmental Crisis and Humans at Risk: Priorities for Action)

Moreover, environment, according to our Hindu tradition, is considered to be divine. Various natural forces are considered to be the gods. The same spiritual feelings toward nature we find in the poems of the great English poet William Wordsworth too. He has not only explored nature but spiritualized it and he finds remedies for most of his problems of life from nature. In a way, his poems have the power to change our outlook to look at the things.

Why do we call Wordsworth a high priest of nature? It would be better to answer this question in his own words. For him, nature is-

***The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul,
Of all my moral being***

Completely spell bound, he not only paints but also perceives a spirit in nature, which governs him, and his thoughts, and his very soul. The focus of all his poems is nature, but treated differently: sometimes passionately, sometimes mysteriously, or sometimes humanly. Nature is an inseparable force in him, which constitutes not only his poetry, but also his soul. Wordsworth's delight in nature was not confined like the pre -romantic poets to mere external manifestation of the varied charms of nature, but he went a step higher than them to represent nature as a mystical force capable of enlightening and ennobling the human soul and mind. He elevated nature to the heights of spiritual glory and made himself a worshipper of nature. He pictures the world- as it is- with all its natural elements: stream, earth, rose, sun, moon-just as they are to let them speak their own message. He had not only sight but insight. He always penetrates to the heart of the things and always finds some exquisite meaning that is not written on the surface.

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His restlessness in the absence of the complete identification with the nature:

His pathos, gloominess and a feeling of restlessness we can feel in the opening stanzas of *The Ode to the Intimation of Immortality*. When he does not find the complete identification with the objects of the nature, a kind of aloofness puzzles him, and he can't see the scene "Appareled in celestial light" as he used to see in the childhood. Here the poet feels himself separate from the nature which creates the tone of pain and sorrow. However, through a mental process, he gets reconciled with the situation, and finally gets a consolation that like embers, something is there still alive-deep in our heart through which we can get our identification in the nature. Here nature is, as usual, the expression and part of a divine spirit. After the emotional upheaval caused by this poem, the reconciled and satisfied Wordsworth is going to show his full devotion to the nature in "Tin tern Abbey"

"Tin tern Abbey"-A Tribute to Nature:

Tin tern Abbey- a beautiful place where, amid the beautiful and pious scene of nature, he remembers the four stages of his love to nature. He confesses to himself how he was when he first came among the hills-

When like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

As a young man his love for the nature was for mere pleasure, like animals. It was rather a *passion* or *appetite* to enjoy the beauty of nature. That was a sensuous love for color and form. But now this aching joy is replaced by a mature love-in a deeper, purer, spiritual context. so there is a marked change in outlook to look at the nature. Both these poems are written in the last stage-the stage of maturity in which he looks at the nature with its spiritual glory. Thus here we have a complete picture of the evolution of the various stages of his appreciation of nature beginning with the physical plan and ending with the mystical and spiritualistic interpretation of nature. His conception of nature, thus, advanced and developed as he grew in the years. According to critics, this attitude towards nature can be classified as-

- (1) Period of Blood
- (2) Period of Senses
- (3) Period of Imagination
- (4) Period of Soul

Here, he seems to awaken, rather than create an image of paradise –peaceful and harmonious with the 'stiff' cliffs which aspire seclude thoughts in us, and which relates the landscape with the sky. The picture given is seen by the mental eyes, rather than physical. He stirs our imagination deeply so that in reading him, we share his own experience. Essentially the poem deals with the change in the perception of

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a landscape during a period of five years. So the poem traces the inner transformation of a highly sensitive and poetic mind during the period of five years.

Conclusion:

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Keats-all are the poets of nature, but in what different ways! Wordsworth and Shelley have this point in common, unlike their contemporaries, they intellectualized nature. They are not merely poets of nature, but they are prophets of nature. They are concerned less to depict than to explain, less to marvel at her beauty than to exult at her inner significance. They are ever moving from external fact to the idea.

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