

# Reflections of Nature in the Poems of William Wordsworth.

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## **Abstract:**

William Wordsworth, one of the greatest poets in England, is known as the poet of nature. His poems took on greater significance in English literature. The purpose of this study is to cram his source of forming and the process he expressed his ideal in singing highly of the nature. Wordsworth sought to bring a more individualistic approach and his poetry avoided high flown language however the poetry of Wordsworth is best characterized by its strong affinity with nature. Wordsworth was often dismayed by what he saw and he sought solace in the grandeur and beauty of nature. Wordsworth offered not just a beautiful picture of nature but also illustrated the healing power of nature on the spirit of man. William Wordsworth was deeply interested in the interaction between nature and humanities and their influence on each other. Having been inspired by many cases reported by Erasmus Darwin, he composed his great poems. He wrote this relationship in the Preface to Lyrical Ballads: stimulate and enlarge that inherent capability of the human mind and so become to believe in that human power and devote himself to fostering it. Wordsworth's poetry "Begins in delight and ends in delight" Wordsworth recognized here the capability of the human mind, so he repeated the words "inherent and indestructible qualities".

**Keywords:** Nature, Human Relationship, Romanticism, Optimistic, Love and Beauty etc.

## **Introduction:**

William Wordsworth was one of the key figures in the Romantic Movement, his early poems helping to define the new movement of Romanticism and Naturalism. At the turn of the 18th and the 19th centuries, romanticism and naturalism came to be the new trend in English literature. 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 Shelly —Poet of nature. He, too, called himself —A Worshiper of Nature. 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 sought to bring a more individualistic approach, his poetry avoided high flown language however the poetry of Wordsworth is best characterized by its strong affinity with nature and in particular the Lake District where he lived. The early nineteenth century was a time of rapid change and industrialization, but like his contemporaries, Blake and Coleridge, Wordsworth was often dismayed by what he saw and he sought solace in the grandeur and beauty of nature. Wordsworth offered not just a beautiful picture of nature but also illustrated the healing power of nature on the spirit of man. Wordsworth's nature, referring to such external things of beauty as hill and vale, stream and

lake, forest and sky, flower and bird, and other things living with or in them, is God's primary creation and is said to be conducive to the growth of the poet's mind. On the other hand, Wordsworth's society as exemplified in the Prelude, referring to such man-made places or institutes as city and town, school and church, and such human activities as party and fair, government and revolution, is a —Parliament of Monsters and —blank confusion, something fearfully destructive to the poet's soul. Accordingly, it is only natural that we feel a certain tension in the poet's account of his life with man in nature and society. The tension may not rise to the pitch of an epic war or inducement affecting the entire civilization or moral future of mankind. It, nonetheless, lends itself easily to epic treatment.

### Life and Works of William Wordsworth:

William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth, Cumbria, the Lake District, part of the scenic region in northwest England, on April 7, 1770. Wordsworth's mother died when he was eight—this experience shapes much of his later work. Wordsworth attended Hawkshead Grammar School, where his love of poetry was firmly established and, it is believed, where he made his first attempts at verse. After the death of his mother, in 1778, Wordsworth was sent to a boarding school and Dorothy to live with relatives. After the Cockermouth school, he was sent to a school in Penrith for the children of upper-class families. It was at the school that Wordsworth was to meet the Mary Hutchinson who would be his future wife. While he was at Hawkshead, Wordsworth's father died leaving him and his four siblings orphans. After Hawkshead, Wordsworth made his debut as a writer in 1787 when he published a sonnet in *The European Magazine*. In the same year he began attending St John's College, Cambridge, and received his B.A. degree in 1791. In November 1791, Wordsworth visited Revolutionary France and became enthralled with the Republican movement. While living in France he fell in love with a French woman, Annette Vallon, who in 1792 gave birth to their child, Caroline out of wedlock and he left France, however, before she was born. Because of lack of money and Britain's tensions with France, he returned alone to England in the next year, but supported her and his daughter as best he could. 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. In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson, a childhood friend, and they had five children together. In 1812, he returned to France with his sister on a four-week visit to meet Caroline. Later that year, he in Grasmere, two of their children—Catherine and John—died. On a walking tour of Europe an experience that influenced both his poetry. This experience, as well as a subsequent period living in France, brought about Wordsworth's interest and sympathy for the life, troubles, and speech of the "common man." These issues proved to be of the utmost importance to Wordsworth's work. Wordsworth's earliest poetry was published in 1793 in the collections *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*.

The poetic life of Wordsworth was his 1795 meeting with the poet Samuel, Taylor and Coleridge. It was with Coleridge that Wordsworth published the famous *Lyrical Ballads* (J. & A. Arch) in 1798. While the poems themselves are some of the most influential in Western literature, it is the preface to the second edition that remains one of the most important testaments to a poet's views on both his craft and his place in the world. In the preface Wordsworth writes on the need for "common speech" within poems and argues against the hierarchy of the period which valued epic poetry above the lyric. Wordsworth's most famous work, *The Prelude* (Edward Moxon, 1850), is considered by many to be the crowning achievement of English Romanticism. The poem, revised numerous times, chronicles the spiritual life of the poet and marks the birth of a new genre of poetry. Although Wordsworth worked

on *The Prelude* throughout his life, the poem was published posthumously. Wordsworth spent his final years settled at Rydal Mount in England, traveling, and continuing his outdoor excursions. Devastated by the death of his daughter, Dora, in 1847, Wordsworth seemingly lost his will to compose poems. William Wordsworth died at Rydal Mount on April 23, 1850, at the age of 80 leaving his wife, Mary, to publish *The Prelude* three months later.

### Nature and William Wordsworth:

He was a strong and passionate of nature, which he was fortunate enough to be able to harness in the pursuit of poetry later in his life. As a student at St. John's College, Cambridge, Wordsworth hardly felt remote excelled. He from his peers, and said of his time there:

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roamed  
Delighted with the motley spectacle:  
Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,  
Courts, cloisters, flock of churches, gateways, towers:  
Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,  
A northern villager.

In his poems of nature he printed beautiful pictures full of the creation by the mighty God—mountains, rocks, rivers and trees. All of them revealed the poets genuine love towards the nature, the fervent enthusiasm of pursuing the truth of life. His source of forming such a lyrical style and the process he expressed his ideal in singing highly of the nature. Wordsworth's birth place was near to nature. Born in Cockermouth, just on the northern fringe of the English Lake district, he spent his childhood there. As a child, he often wandered among the fields and woods. At the age of 8, he was fed by one of his relatives who gave him simple food and shelter, but freedom of enjoying the nature. The Natural scenes and sounds gave his imagination wings and made him get to know the cottagers, shepherds, and solitary wanders 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. 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. 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.

In the poem —Lines Written in Early Spring, on an early spring morning, the poet walked in small woods. Birds sang sweetly on the trees and groups of primrose blossom. The periwinkle climbed here and there coming into wreaths form.

“ Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,  
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths,  
And 'tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes...  
The budding twigs spread out their fun,  
To catch the breezy air:  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there”.

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. 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.

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 tranquility;  
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.

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 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).

Living in the crowded and noisy society, Wordsworth felt greatly miserable. Only in nature, 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. 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 can he find beauty and purity going into his own thinking. Natural world is his ideal word.

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.

This poem and ‘The Stolen Boat’ are taken from the much longer work, ‘The Prelude’. 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.

In another poem Wordsworth said; One summer evening (led by her) I found

A little boat tied to a willow tree

Within a rocky cave, its usual home...

Remained, no pleasant images of trees,

Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;

But huge and mighty forms, that do not live

Like living men, moved slowly through the mind

By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Like *'Skating'*, this poem is about a moment in Wordsworth's young life when he was moved by the beauty and splendour of the natural world. This love of nature and realization that even as a child, he had poetic sensibilities. The poem tells of a time in the poet's life when, while walking alone by a lake, he comes upon a boat tied to a tree. The evening is beautiful, and Wordsworth is soon swept up in its loveliness. There is a sense of tranquility as he rows across the lake, hearing the sound of the oars echoing off the mountain. The ripples caused by the oars shimmer in the moonlight and the boat glides through the water *'like a swan'*.

The poet enjoys the act of rowing, and is proud of his ability to steer the boat in a straight line. The stars have begun to appear in the sky, and the only sound is of the oars dipping into the water. However, this tranquility does not last. As the poet rows on, a huge mountain peak appears behind the crag. The boy is terrified of this *'grim shape'*. It seems to loom above him in a menacing fashion, and appears to grow larger and larger. His mind and heart became pure and free from the bitterness and the trouble of the human society. Only can nature purify human's mind. Let's come into his spiritual world and share his enjoyment of nature in such a lonely state Wordsworth got close to the nature. In *'Tintern Abbey'*:

Five years have past; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again Do I behold these steep and lofty cliff,

Which on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

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

### Conclusion:

Perhaps no poet and no poem epitomize Romanticism's mystical view of nature more than William Wordsworth and his poem. Wordsworth based his poetry on the idea that it should be written in a natural language that speaks to and reflects common human emotions. Those emotions are most readily called forth by our experiences in nature. Wordsworth recalls how his memories of this setting have renewed his life when he has lived in the city, but he also begins to realize that it is his more adult relationship to nature – rather than his youthful one when he unconsciously felt at one with it – that is more significant, for it provides him with a moral connection to humanity and to some spiritual essence greater than humanity. As important, he stresses that it is not simply nature's influence on him, but equally his perception of nature – the role his consciousness and his imagination play in producing this experience. Here is the first complication in the romantic worship of nature. As we can see, though Wordsworth's poems including "Tintern Abbey" which are called "nature poetry" didn't describe the nature for its own sake. As Wordsworth said in his prospectus to "The Prelude", not only nature, but "the Mind of man" is "my haunt and the main region of my song". In "Composed Upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty", the poet was obviously struck by the unusual sight of an evening glow which so impressed him with its rare splendor and beauty. Wordsworth also is much more than a mere reporter of surface beauties. Though Wordsworth's poems were imbued with the harmony, the sweetness and the peace of the nature, we can still find the great reflection of the tremendous social renovation. Wordsworth loves nature as well as human being. He made the most proper combination between his love of man and love of nature in his works. He entrusted his love of man on the love of nature and in return, his love of natural scenery and the life of the people living in nature. His poems and

his theory of poetry have great significance in English literature. The lyrical style not only set a fresh example for the later poets, such as Byron, Shelley, Keats, but also influenced them greatly.

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