



Tintern Abbey: A Study on Nature and Aesthetics

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Abstract

Wordsworth is one of the most loving, penetrative, and thoughtful poet of nature. His love of nature probably truer and more tender than that of any other English poet before or since. In the poetry of Wordsworth the most dominant factor is Nature. Nature for Wordsworth is a living presence, the highest and the best of all teachers. For Wordsworth, nature is endowed with personality the mighty being. He declares that nature is a teacher whose wisdom we can learn if we will, and vain and incomplete. He teaches us that between man and nature there is mutual consciousness and mystic relationship. *Tintern Abbey* sums up the achievement of Wordsworth as a poet and priest of nature during the first important phase of his poetic career. In *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth reveals his pantheistic vision by viewing nature as a reflection of God. He draws attention to the immanence of God within all the forms of nature. He believes that nature should be treated attentively as a living entity that should be cultivated.

Keywords: Nature, Humanity, Mysticism, Tranquility, Harmony

Introduction

Wordsworth is considered as one of the most important poets in the history of English literature and in English romantic poetry covering a long stretch of time beginning from the last decade of the eighteenth century to the nineteenth mid-century. *Tintern Abbey*, whose emphasis on the importance of nature for humanity was an eminent contribution to the Romantic literary movement, was in the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, with a Few Other Poems. Written in blank verse, the poem is divided into five stanzas, each of which talks about a different phase of the poet. The title tells us when, where and how the poem was composed. The word “revisiting” suggests that this is not the poet’s first visit. He composed it in three days’ time



after the rest of the book he wrote in collaboration with Coleridge was at the printers while returning from Tintern along with Dorothy. He rushed it to the printers without making any alterations; therefore, *Tintern Abbey* became the concluding poem of the book. In line with his notion of poetry as the spontaneous expression of feelings, Wordsworth reflected his particular feelings about how he was suddenly inspired by the environments of the Tintern Abbey.

Tintern Abbey is one of Wordsworth's most famous poems and is quite personal in nature, giving a record of his spiritual growth over time. The poem presents a record of different stages of the poet's life in relation with the different roles that nature played in moulding his person at that time. It tells how at every step, the company of nature by its presence or absence provided him with a new insight and blessing. In the beginning when nature was an "appetite" to the boy-poet, it gave him coarser pleasures. Later, when he moved away from nature, the memories of the same interfused in him a "sublime sense" and "blessed mood". In the final stage, the poet returns to nature as a worshipper, who knows that it is the "anchor" of his purest thoughts. The composition of the poem follows the creative pattern suggested by Wordsworth in his theory of poetry— emotions invoked through direct experience, recollections of the experience in tranquillity and evoking the same level of emotions through these recollections and the final expression. According to Wordsworth, a poem grows out of an "observation or perception to some object, character or event which sets up powerful emotions." *Tintern Abbey* was composed at the poet's visit to the river Wye after a gap of full five years, "five summers, with the length/ Of five long winters!" He observes the calm and serene rural landscape full of harmony clad in one green hue. The harmony of the scene sets a series of powerful emotions. The poem is in line with Wordsworth's democratic principle of poetry, the subject here is rural life merged with the natural setting.

Major Thrust

This poem of Wordsworth was published as the last piece of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. It was composed soon after he and Dorothy returned from their second visit to the banks of the river Wye, on July 13, 1798. The emotion aroused by the familiar scenes visited five years back, thus, gave birth to this poem. No interval for meditation and cooling down of emotions was allowed to intervene between the experience and its recording. Thus, this poem cannot be produced as an example of the famous Wordsworthian dictum that poetry is born out of emotions recollected



in tranquillity. It is rather an instance of the second part of that definition that poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings aroused by some human event or natural scene. This poem traces the development of the poet's love of nature which has been first a sensuous animal passion for her scenic beauty, then a moral influence, and finally a mystical communion. This poem has a special place in the whole body of Wordsworth poetry. It is also one of the few poems where we find a clear exposition of his view of nature as a moral and spiritual guide of man. It also contains the famous phrase used for Wordsworth that he is a worshipper of nature.

Tintern Abbey, one of William Wordsworth's most celebrated poems, is an ode to the beauty and power of nature. The poem reflects the nature in Wordsworth's own experiences and explores the theme of memory, imagination, and the transformative power of nature. The poem begins with the poet revisiting *Tintern Abbey* after a five-year absence. In his youth, the poet appreciated nature in the most innocent and tactile ways, and although it was a purely physical experience, it, nonetheless, provided him with joy. The sound of the cataract hunted him like a passion; the tall rock, the colours and forms were then to him an appetite, a feeling and a love. But in his grown-up man he gazes upon the natural beauty surrounding him, he reflects on how this landscape has changed over time. He notes that while the physical landscape has not remained the same, the emotional and spiritual connection he feels to it has endured. He writes;

These beauteous forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye

But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart

Wordsworth's view of nature in *Tintern Abbey* is rooted in his belief that nature is not just a physical presence but also a spiritual and emotional one. He writes that nature has the power to transform us, to help us see the world in a new way. He notes that the beauty of nature has



the power to heal and renew us. Interestingly he talks about three specific roles that nature plays, each with its unique power of restoration. First, nature provides sweet sensations that help revive one's senses even when surrounded by clamorous city noises, Secondly, nature cultivates human kindness through inspiring blessed mood where Man reaches a higher level of awareness and tranquillity through imagination. It is with reference to these factors that Wordsworth reflects on how his experiences with nature have affected him various stages. The poem is divided into five stanzas, and each stanza, Wordsworth presents a different aspect of his view on nature.

Conclusion

Tintern Abbey meets the requirements of the new kind of poetry that Wordsworth proposed in his theory of poetry given in Preface to Lyrical Ballads. The poem gives expression to intense personal emotions in the simplest of words and expressions. The poet recollects the past experiences and evokes a series of emotions in the present moment, emotions purged and purified in the hours of absence. when Wordsworth revisits the Tintern Abbey and the Wye valley five years later, and witnesses the beauty of this nature, he discovers that the distinction between these two perceptions of nature stems from the difference of the three stages in human life, namely childhood, youth and adulthood. When people are in the childhood stage, they are innocent and wild. They perceive nature with all its beauties without thinking deeply on what they observe, and they have a pure relationship with nature. As they grow up, this relationship is dissipated, and they begin to act wild and restless. In *Tintern Abbey* the poet has reached his main purpose which is to transform his own imagination to that of his readers; when reading the poem one can feel that everything in it is real. Wordsworth's view of nature in *Tintern Abbey* is one of deep appreciation and reverence. He sees nature as a source of inspiration, renewal, and spiritual enlightenment. For Wordsworth, nature has the power to transform and enrich the human soul, and it is a gift that should be cherished and protected. Wordsworth has shown a way to established a better world and a better life, and has teach how a close relationship with nature could be created in order to give birth to a peaceful and harmonious life in the world.



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