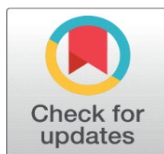
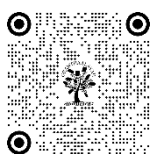


"WILLAM WORDSWORTH" AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH POETRY: ANALYSIS OF LUCY POEMS, THE PRELUDE AND LYRICAL BALLADS

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ABSTRACT

"Willam Wordsworth" is known as one of the most efficient poets of "English literature" whose contributions cannot be understated. This paper will explore the contributions made by "Willam Wordsworth" in English Poetry. Three famous works by "Willam Wordsworth" will be analysed here which includes "Lucy poems, The Prelude and Lyrical Ballads". The research will use a comparative, thematic and content analysis process to analyse the impact "Willam Wordsworth" had on nature. The Prelude shows the personal growth and opportunities for self-exploration of "Willam Wordsworth" while Lucy Poems explored the themes of "beauty, loss, and mortality". Lyrical Ballads has focused on simplifying language and also making poetry accessible for the masses. The research has found that there are common motifs in all the poems which are the "transformative power of nature, the transience of life, and human introspection". This shows the cohesive poetic vision of Wordsworth which was important in establishing Romanticism.

Keywords: Romanticism, Poetic Language, Nature, "Willam Wordsworth", Self-Reflection, Lyrical Ballads, the Prelude, Lucy Poems, Emotional Authenticity

1. INTRODUCTION

"Willam Wordsworth" is known as one of the most famous "romantic poets of English Literature". He is known as the founder of "English Romanticism" and one of its most father figures and important intellects (Karimov, 2024). He is known for his epistemological speculation and spirituality. Most of his poems are based on the eternal relationships of humans with nature. Also, he is known for his fierce advocacy of using the speech patterns of the common people in poetry and literature. Born as the son of "John and Ann Cookson Wordsworth" on "April 7, 1770 in Cockermouth, Cumberland", "Willam Wordsworth" was associated with English literature from a young age. Wordsworth is mostly known for his "Lyrical Ballads" which was co-written with "Samuel Taylor Coleridge", "The Prelude", which is a "Romantic epic poem" focusing on the chronicling the "growth of a poet's mind" and the Lucy Poems. The aim of the research here is to examine and analyse "Willam Wordsworth"'s poem and find out his contributions to English Literature and poetry. The major focus of the research will be "Lucy poems, The Prelude, and Lyrical Ballads" while elucidating how all these works embody as well as advance the core aspects of Romantic aesthetics. The study has an objective to explore the portrayal of "nature, memory, emotion, and the feminine ideal," by "Willam Wordsworth" and will thus find out how the poetic vision of him has contributed to the growth of Romantic literature. Also, a competitive

analysis will be drawn for understanding the interrelationships between all these texts while locating the common motifs and divergences which would help to articulate the poetic vision of "Willam Wordsworth".



Figure 1: "Willam Wordsworth"

Source: (Parrish, 2019)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

"Willam Wordsworth" and the contribution he made to "Romantic Poetry"

"Willam Wordsworth" is the name which instantly comes to mind when talking about "English Romantic poetry". This is because he was the first poet to openly express the love for nature and wrote poems such depicted the beauty of the nature. He started s new forms of writing which is known as "Romanticism" which was mainly focused on his feelings and imagination (Chetan, 2024, July 10). The poems by Wordsworth can instantly intrigue the readers and also ask them to connect with nature around. With his works, aims to explore the "depths of human experience" and thus find the "solace and inspiration" in the "power of imagination". He still has a wider impact on the new age writer which solidifies his position as a "cornerstone of English literature".

Romanticism, according to Ferber (2010) is a literacy and art movement which was started in the late "18th century in Europe" and there were artists from various genres. This romantic era also saw the birth of a completely "new genre" which later has been known as the "Romantic Poetry".

Romantic age in English literature is known to be the period between the late 1780s & till 1850s. The poets of the romantic age are often regarded as the "lake poets". There are also other poets from this age other than "Willam Wordsworth" which includes "William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Shelley, Walter Alva Scott, Robert Burns, and Lord Byron". The Romantic Age of English Literature actually emerged from a wide range of events which took place in Europe and these include the "Industrial Revolution (1760-1820)" and the "French Revolution (1789-1799)". Romanticism has a wider impact on Europe, and also in South America as the romantic thinkers have a wider impact on values like "liberalism, radicalism, conservatism, and patriotism". To discuss the history of "Romantic Poetry", it can be traced back to 1798 when ""Willam Wordsworth"" along with "Samuel Taylor Coleridge" published the famous poem collections known as the "Lyrical Ballads". Until the 1850s, this genre emerged and there were many great poets who contributed to the movement and Wordsworth was the most prominent one among them.

Through the genre of romanticism, "Willam Wordsworth" tried to demonstrate both "love and reverence" for nature. However, the observations and perceptions of "Willam Wordsworth" were in contrast to one of the famous "nature-

influenced poets" Alexander Pope (1688-1744). Pope chose to analyse and observe nature with objectivity and he came up with the concept of "Hyper-Individualism". Whereas, Wordsworth chose an "affectionate approach to depict nature". He also portrayed his "love for nature" in the "four stages" as mentioned below (Shaikh, 2020, May 28),

"Love for the Physical Appearance of Nature": In his poems, there are many times when Wordsworth expressed his eternal love for the "outer-appearance of nature" which include "colours, beauty, form" and many more. This can be seen in the last few lines of the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads", in "Tintern Abbey" where he states how the physical natural beauty mesmerizes him.

"Admiration and Affection Towards the Peacefulness of Nature"

The peace and tranquillity of nature are rightly analysed and depicted in the poems of "Willam Wordsworth". There are many works of Wordsworth where he discusses how much peace and tranquillity he actually gets from nature and how he lives observing it. One of the biggest examples is the poem "Daffodils" where he states that: -

"A poet could not be but gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed' and gazed' but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought"

Here, in these lines, Wordsworth depicts his never-ending love for nature and how it calms and satisfies his soul.

Considering Nature as a "Living Soul"

"Willam Wordsworth" is known to be a "nature worshipper". In most of his works, "Willam Wordsworth" has ensured to prove nature as a living soul. He tries to present in each of the atoms of the tangible universe like in the "mountains, forests, rivers, sky, human being, and animals". For example, in his work "Tintern Abbey" he has shown how powerful nature is in overcoming evil as a "dreary intercourse of life," as this was his expression against the city life of London.

Considering the Nature as one of the Great Teacher of Mankind

"Willam Wordsworth" has always believed in the concepts stated by "Socrates and Aristotle" which states that nature is one of the greatest teachers for mankind. He has always tried to promote this perspective in most of his works as well. For example, in one of his famous works, "The Table Turned", Wordsworth states that,

"And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.
One impulse from a vernal wood,
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

Through these verses it can be observed that "William Wordsworth" has put greater efforts in learning from nature. In his poems, there have been various instances where he mentioned that nature is one of the greatest teachers who can reach the difference between "good and bad".

3. METHODOLOGY

This analysis has used a content and thematic analysis where the poems and works of "Willam Wordsworth" have been analysed against various themes. Three major literary works of "Willam Wordsworth" have been analysed as a part of the research which includes "Lucy poems, The Prelude, and Lyrical Ballads". In the research, the content analysis approach has been used as the texts were scrutinized for finding out the linguistic aspects, imagery and stylistic features. A coding passage has been used to find out the recurring symbols and metaphors which helped to understand the vivid descriptions of nature and human emotion by "Willam Wordsworth". Along with this, thematic analysis has also been

used. This thematic analysis or coding has been of greater help as it contributed to the exploration of the personal experiences of the people and reflections of it on nature.

4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

ANALYSIS OF THE PRELUDE

Wordsworth had never approached or looked at "The Prelude" as his magnum opus. "The Prelude" was actually written as a "prelude or an introduction" to "The Recluse" which would happen to be a "great philosophical poem" by Wordsworth as he dreamed of writing it but never completed (Somervell, 2015, November 19). This poem is a true example of irony in English literature as Wordsworth has lamented in the verses of "The Prelude" about his own "inability to write a great poem", and in the process of writing "one of the greatest poems". Wordsworth, being extremely dissatisfied with his own work, continued to work, expand and revise "The Prelude" till his death in 1850. This is the main reason behind the several versions of the poem being available.

The Prelude is actually a seminal work which includes the story of "Willam Wordsworth" himself and his reverence for nature. This has been drawing the major aspect of the poetic narrative and also reflecting the required essence of Romantic literature. This is a "autobiographical epic" where the poet tends to recount the possible early encounters with the world around while also focusing on the formative experiences, he had which helped in shaping his "inner life" and creative spirit.

The most important aspect in the poem is how nature has been portrayed. In the poem, nature has not been considered as a mere backdrop but as an active and nurturing force which can act as introspection and lead to emotional growth. In the poem, for example, the lines,

"The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved"

This shows the description of the landscapes and also the reflection of the time which has passed and nature of life. This also acts as a catalyst for conducting a profound self-examination.

In the poem, he has used aspects like "memory, imagination, and observation" to demonstrate how the personal identity of the individuals is formed and transformed by the natural environment continuously. This interplay of the "external beauty" and "internal contemplation" acts as the "Romantic ideal" of merging the universal experience with the personal emotion and thus asking the readers to engage in his own journey of self-reflection. The "Prelude" is the best example where nature has been demonstrated as the mirror for the soul, which provides opportunities for solace and insight, and thus ensuring the enduring impact of personal encounters with the world around on the creative expression of the individuals. This reflective journey thus also inspires the readers' own deep self-discovery.

ANALYSIS OF THE LUCY POEMS

The Lucy Poems are a collection of five poems which was composed between the period of 1798-1801 by "Willam Wordsworth" (Read and Co, 2021, August 24). The major poems under the Lucy Poems includes -"Strange fits of passion have I known", "She dwelt among the untrodden ways", "I travelled among unknown men", "Three years she grew in sun and shower", and "A slumber did my spirit seal". Although, in the modern times, they are considered as modern anthologies, in the past, "Willam Wordsworth" did not consider them in series. Also, in various research the Lucy poems are considered to be "experimental works" of "Willam Wordsworth".

The Lucy poems by "Willam Wordsworth" are one of the finest combinations of the feminine figure and beauty while also binding together the themes of loss and mortality. In these poems specifically, Lucy is presented as "ethereal" and also an "otherworldly presence" and her beauty is also intertwined with the natural landscape.

As found in the poem, the depiction of the character Lucy is also subtle and enigmatic and she is also "present and elusive". Also, in the poems the connection of the character with the environment is ethereal as she has been depicted as an integral part of the natural world. Her character has been described as one of the purest, transient as well as deeply connected to the earth.

In the poem, Lucy has been described as,

“A violet by a mossy stone / Half hidden from the eye!”

This shows how "William Wordsworth" has used the "imagery of nature" in order to showcase the beauty of Lucy and compared it with "flowers, meadows, and gentle light". Through this, the poet actually aims to show the delicate, nurturing nature of Lucy. However, in the poem, it can be found that this beauty also has an undercurrent of melancholy. The poem has found that the life of Lucy, which is the "fleeting beauty of a blossom", is ephemeral. Also, her sudden demise leaves a cast of loss and mortality in the minds of the readers. This thus shows the "romantic preoccupation" with the transitory "nature of life and beauty". Thus, in this poem, "William Wordsworth" has tried to balance beauty and decay which would help the readers to meet the inevitability of loss, and how the environment around refers to beauty.

ANALYSIS OF LYRICAL BALLADS

"Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems" are a complete collection of poems by "William Wordsworth" and "Samuel Taylor Coleridge" which were published in the year 1798 and this also marked the "beginning of the romantic era" in English literature. Although there were immediate criticisms from the people, later it became a milestone or landmark in the course of "English literature and poetry". The 1800s period is mainly famous for "The Preface to the Lyrical Ballads" and this has been regarded as the "manifesto of Romanticism".

"Lyrical Ballads" actually brought the revolution on poetic language by breaking the "ornate diction" and "strict formal conventions" of "Neoclassical poetry". This means that for writing the poem, "Wordsworth and Coleridge" used the everyday famous and simple language which helped to have a profound emotional experience which made poetry easily available to the broader audience. They have beautifully displayed beauty and truth by tangling the lives of the people and nature together. Thus, through these poems, they tried to establish the idea that "beauty and truth" are actually the themes which can be found in everyday experiences and not just in "lofty, abstract themes". As found in the *"Lyrical Ballads"*, poetry has been considered as the notion which should follow the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," which is a "radical departure" from the resistance structure of the previous poetic traditions. Thus, there have been a focus on the "emotional authenticity, direct expression, and vivid imagery" that actually contributed to the growth of the Romantic movement. The innovative concepts and structure explored on the ballads where "lyrical introspection" has been combined with storytelling, provided opportunities for "organic, flexible form" which is ideal to capture the "dynamism of personal and natural experience". Thus, in the poem, the individual emotions and nature has been bound together to develop creative pieces of art. This also inspired various romantic poets such as "Byron, Shelley, and Keats". *"Lyrical Ballads"* are thus widely acclaimed as foundational texts which not only transformed the poetic language and form but has been considered to be reorienting the "entire trajectory of English literature toward Romanticism".

5. INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ALL THESE LITERATURE

"The Lucy poems, The Prelude, and Lyrical Ballads" showcases the cohesive poetic vision of "William Wordsworth" and also defines the intimate influence of nature on the human experience. As found in the Lucy poems, the beauty of nature and the "ephemerality" are personified with the help of "mysterious feminine figure" which actually showcases "purity and the inevitability of loss". On the other hand, "The Prelude" tends to expand this concept by bringing in "personal memory" with the "transformative power of nature" and thus considered the natural world as a positive aspect for "introspection and creative evolution". Thus, "Lyrical Ballads" are known to be redefining the poetic expression as they use the "simple, heartfelt language" which helps to capture the daily lives of the people along with their profound emotions. However, a common concept of motif can be found in all these three literacies works which is the interplay between "nature and the human spirit", the "transient beauty of life" and the "journey toward self-discovery". In contrast to the themes, the narrative approach of the poems differs as the "Lucy poems" are found to be evoking melancholic reflection while "The Prelude" is majorly based on an "autobiographical account". Thus, all these works by Wordsworth together provoke the belief in the natural world as the fine source of "inspiration, truth, and emotional renewal".

6. CONCLUSION

The poems by "Willam Wordsworth" have an essence of Romanticism which are intertwined with "nature, memory, human emotion, and poetic simplicity". Through the greater literacy works like "The Prelude, Lucy Poems, and Lyrical Ballads", "Willam Wordsworth" has not only depicted the physics and philosophical relationship between the nature and human but also revolutionized the English literature and the poetic forms. The Prelude has shown the role of nature in shaping identity and creativity whereas Lucy Poems transcends the connection between beauty and loss. The Lyrical Ballads has tried depicting the experiences of the normal people. Thus, all these works collectively show how "Willam Wordsworth" emerged as an efficient poet contributing poetry and human experience. This study has thus shown the lasting impact of the poetic vision of Wordsworth and thus positioned him as one of the emergent figures in the evolution of English Romanticism.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None .

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