

## WORDSWORTH THEORY OF POETRY

The literary criticism of **Wordsworth** is confined to a small quantity of **essays prefaces and letters**, but in them, he has propounded ideas of great significance and far-reaching impact. For the first time, one might say, an English critic attempted to educate on the nature of poetry and the poetic process his **Lyrical Ballads** which published in collaboration with **Coleridge** proved to be a landmark in the history of English literature, though it was not recognized as such at the time of publication. Wordsworth enunciates his history in the **preface to Lyrical Ballads**. Further, his theory and practice served to change the direction of English literature in the 19th century. He heralded what is new called **English literature**.

### **Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings**

Wordsworth's definition of the nature of poetry as propounded in the 1802 preface is important and has to be quoted of length that "**Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings**" it takes its origin from "**emotion recollected in tranquility**".

When Wordsworth says that poetry is the "**spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings**" it is clear that poetry is a matter of mood and inspiration. Poetry evolves from the feeling of the poet. There is spontaneity in the expression of the feelings. Powerful feelings and emotions are fundamental, without them great poetry cannot be written. The insistence on Spontaneity, however, should not blind as to the fact that Wordsworth doesn't advocate a chaotic or uncontrolled crazy of emotional outpouring. **Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings** but Wordsworth adds a corollary that the origin of poetry is from "**Emotion recollected in tranquility**" at first glance the two contentions seem contradictory. But **Wordsworth's theory of poetry** involved the reconciliation of the two statements. Powerful feelings and profound thoughts collapse in Poetry.

## WORDSWORTH POETIC PROCESS

The poetic process has four-stage for the successful composition to take place. It is not an easy process. **The four-stage of the process are recollection, contemplation, recrudescence or renewal of the original emotion and composition.**

**In tranquility**, he recalls his emotions. The emotions are made into a poem with the help of images of those things in nature which aroused the poet's emotion in the first phase, the poet observes or perceives some objects, character or situation. It sets up powerful emotions in his mind. The poet does not react to impress immediately. He allows it to sink into his mind along with the feeling which it has excited. Then the **recollection** of the emotion at a later moment in time. The emotions are recollected in tranquility, contemplate upon. After contemplation comes to the gradual revival of the emotion. This is felt by the poet originally. The poet does not, however, remember the original experience in cold blood as it were. In the poet's mind, the emotion which accompanied the original is recalled. This, at the moment of creation, the "**Tranquility**" is no longer there. It has been replaced by emotional excitement. The poet's function is to share the joy with his readers, to communicate this overbalance of pleasure to his audience. The poet is able to do this precisely because he possesses the power of communication to a higher degree than other men. He is able to communicate his emotions in such a way that the readers feel pleasure. The end of poetry is to impart pleasure. It says Wordsworth firmly, is not be considered as degradation of the poet's art. Pleasure is the grand elementary principle which makes a man feel, live moves and gain knowledge, we feel sympathy because through sympathy we get pleasure even the painful and pathetic elements of life must be so communicated that it would be productive of pleasure. Poetic pleasure is of a deeper and more beautiful kind, for poetry "it is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge", He impassioned expression that is in the continuance of all science". Poetry aims of winning "the valiant and the vain to Noble Rapture" it aims at evoking a feeling of love for human nature.

Wordsworth's conception of poetic pleasure is an exalted one. Equally exalted is his conception of the poet, who is to communicate, the joy, and the 'overbalance' of pleasure, through **poetry**. However, Wordsworth, stresses on the fact that the poet degree of sensibility, passion and power of expression. A poet must have sensibility as well as powerful feelings, which, however, are not enough, he must also be or who has thought long and

deeply. Further, he is able to communicate his feeling and joy. He is blessed with the ability to express himself. Having more than average capacity to perceive and felt it is his business to try and make his readers increase their ability in the spheres the poet. According to Wordsworth, it should not sit at a superior height. He is a man among, and he speaks to his fellow men. The Lyrical Ballads was written with the purpose of showing how the common objects or characters could be made to appear in an unusual light, by throwing over them a coloring of the imagination Wordsworth felt that the subject of Poetry had been too long restricted to the upper society. He wanted to extend the range of poetic subjects. He felt that the universal elements of human nature, which a poet sought to express in his poetry were found in a purer and simpler state in the rustic and common people. The advocacy of going to the common and rustic folk for the subject matter of poetry naturally gave rise to the preference for a language used by these people.

## POETIC DICTION ACCORDING TO WORDSWORTH

The term diction refers to the kind of words, phrases, sentences, and sometimes figurative language that constitute any work of literature. When it comes to poetry writing, the question related to the diction always arises. The question of diction is considered as primary because the feelings of the poet must be easily conceived by the readers. The poets of all ages have used distinctive poetic diction.

The Neo-classical poetic diction was mainly derived from the classical poets such as Virgil, Spenser, and Milton. These poets used to write poetry by using embellished language and particular decorum. Other prominent features of that period were the extensive use of difficult words, allusions, the personification of abstracts, and avoidance of things considered as low or base. The poetry of that time was treated as something sacred. It was only subjected to the people with high intellect and of high status in the society.

Wordsworth prime concern was to denounce such superficial and over-embellished language. Wordsworth's aim was to write poetry which symbolizes the life in its simple and rustic state. The poetry, for Wordsworth, must be like the part of daily life speech. It should be written in such language that anyone who wants to read it could comprehend it easily. Wordsworth believes that all such ornamented poetry clocks the genuine and passionate feelings of the poets. He only justifies the use of an embellished language of poetry when it is naturally suggested by the feelings or the subject matter of the poetry. The poetry, for Wordsworth, is the expression of natural feelings and these feelings cannot be communicated with the help of fake and version of upper-class speech but with the actual speech of "humble and rustic life".

He defines poetic diction as a language of common men. It is not the language of the poet as a class but the language of mankind. It is the simple expression of pure passions by men living close to nature. The poetic

language is the natural language; therefore, it must be spontaneous and instinctive. The real poetic diction, in the view of the Wordsworth, is the natural overflow of the feelings, therefore, it is immune to the deliberate decoration of the language.

Wordsworth also attributes the quality of giving pleasure to the natural poetic diction. It must not contain any vulgarity and disgusting element. The poet must, through his language, elevate the nature and human feelings.