

Major Themes Of William Wordsworth's Poems

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Throughout Wordsworth's work, nature provides the ultimate good influence on the human mind. All manifestations of the natural world—from the highest mountain to the simplest flower—elicit noble, elevated thoughts and passionate emotions in the people who observe. Wordsworth repeatedly emphasizes the importance of nature to an individual's intellectual and spiritual development. A good relationship with nature helps individuals connect to both the spiritual and the physical worlds. As Wordsworth explains in *The Prelude*, a love of nature can lead to a love of humankind. In such poems as "The World Is Too Much with Us" (1807) and "London, 1802" (1807) people become selfish and immoral when they distance themselves from nature by living in cities.

In his poem "The World Is Too Much with Us" he says-

The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

Humanity's innate empathy and nobility of spirit becomes corrupted by artificial social conventions as well as by the squalor of city life. In contrast, people who spend a lot of time in nature, such as laborers and farmers, retain the purity and nobility of their souls.

Nature

"Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher."

No discussion on Wordsworth would be complete without mention the elements of nature. Nature and its connection to humanity makes an appearance in the vast majority of Wordsworth's poetry, often holding a poem's focus, and has become the cornerstone of the Romantic Movement primarily because of him. For Wordsworth, nature is a kind of religion in which he has the utmost faith. Nature fills two major roles in Wordsworth's poetry:

1. Even though it is intensely beautiful and peaceful, nature often causes Wordsworth to feel melancholy or sad. This is usually because, even as he relishes in his connection with nature, he worries about the rest of humanity, most of who live in cities completely apart from nature. Wordsworth wonders how they could possibly revive their spirits. In the end, however, he often decides that it is wrong to be sad while in nature:

"A poet could not but be gay,
In such jocund company."

2. Nature also gives Wordsworth hope for the future. From past experience Wordsworth knows that spending time in nature is a gift to his future self, because later, when he is alone, tired and frustrated in the busy, dirty city, he will be able to look back on a field of daffodils he once spent time in and be happy again. In Daffodils he says-

And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth is deeply mystical and nobly poetical, in his presentation of Nature. Wordsworth is very sensitive to every subtle change going on in the world. Joy of spring is to be felt by him:

"It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed, and yet the voice
Of waters which the river had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone."
He derives pleasure in a tranquil lake:

Memory

For Wordsworth, the power of the human mind is extremely important. In several of his poems he begins in a negative or depressed mood, and then slowly becomes more positive. The most important use of memory, however, is to maintain connections. For instance, in poems like "Line Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" and "I wandered lonely as a cloud" Wordsworth is in nature (his favorite place to be) and he is happy, but he becomes even happier when he realizes that he never actually has to leave his memories behind. Once he has returned to the daily gloom of the city, he will be able to remember the time he spent among nature and make himself happy again:

"And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils."

As Wordsworth begins to consider his own mortality memory is again a huge comfort, because he realizes that even after he has died he will be able to live on in the memory of his family and friends, just as those who have passed on before him are in his memory. Wordsworth is especially heartened to know that his sister Dorothy, with whom he spent countless hours, will remember him fondly, carrying him with her wherever she goes.

Mortality

Wordsworth's fascination with death frequently shows up in his poetry. The Lucy Poems, for instance, are a series of poems about a young girl who may or may not have been a figment of Wordsworth's imagination, and who ultimately dies. Wordsworth looks at the event from several angles. In "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways". He focuses on the unexpectedness of her death and the unpredictability of life and death in general. In "Three Years She Grew" Wordsworth creates a fanciful rationale for her death: Nature became entranced by her and promised to give her an incredible life, but once all of her promises were fulfilled Lucy had to die.

She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

In "We are Seven" Wordsworth looks at a young girl who had six siblings but now lives at home with only her mother, because two of her siblings have died and the others have moved away. The little girl seems not to understand death throughout the poem, but in the end the reader learns that she may have a clearer understanding than the speaker. In "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth is comforted by the thought that he will live on after his death, because his sister Dorothy will remember him lovingly.

Humanity

One of Wordsworth's greatest worries is the descent of humanity. As man moves further and further away from humanity he seems to be losing more and more of his soul. Often when Wordsworth is in nature he is saddened because he is forced to think about the people trapped in cities, unable or unwilling to commune with nature. In "London, 1802," for instance, Wordsworth makes a plea to the poet John Milton to return and teach humanity how to regain the morality and virtue it once had. Similarly, in "The World is too Much With Us" Wordsworth worries that the world is too full of people who have lost their connection to divinity, and more importantly, to nature:

"Getting and spending we lay waste our powers,
Little we see in Nature that is ours."

Transcendence and Connectivity

The idea of transcendence did not gain full speed until the Romantic Movement moved to America, but Wordsworth was certainly a fan of the idea long before then. "Transcendence" simply means "being without boundaries." For Wordsworth, this means being able to connect with people and things outside of oneself, especially in terms of nature. It was Wordsworth's supreme aspiration to metaphorically transcend the limitations of his body and connect

completely with nature. Mankind's difficulty accepting the beauty that nature has to offer saddened Wordsworth; he found the loss of such a gift difficult to accept.

Morality

In Wordsworth's poems, morality doesn't necessarily stem directly from religion, but rather from doing what is right by oneself, by humanity, and by nature. In "London, 1802" Wordsworth complains that man's morals are in a state of constant decline, but the morals he is talking about have more to do with following the natural process of life - being free and powerful, not tied down by city living or common thoughts. The most important lesson a person can learn, according to Wordsworth, is to be true to his own impulses and desires, but not greedy. A person should be available to help his fellow man, but should not be consumed by other peoples' needs. He should be in communion with nature, with humanity, and with himself.

Religion

Religion, while not as prevalent as in the poetry of the Enlightenment, does have a place in much of Wordsworth's poetry. Often religion is included simply to help Wordsworth's more pious readers understand the level of his commitment to and faith in nature. Wordsworth uses religious imagery and language in his poems in order to convey his ideas about the power of nature, the human mind, and global interconnectivity.

Conclusion

Thus we can say that Wordsworth has been known as the worshipper of nature and harbinger of nature. He dealt with common objects of nature in a divine form.

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