

UNIT -3 S.T.COLERIDGE

The primary imagination is merely the power of receiving impressions of the external world through the senses. It's the power of perceiving objects of sense, both in their parts and as a whole. The primary imagination is a normal perception that produces the usual world of the sense, the world of motor buses, beef-steaks and acquaintances, the world of the routine, the world of the routine satisfaction is a normal perception that produces the usual world of the sense, the world of motor buses, beef-steaks and acquaintances, the world of the routine, the world of the routing satisfaction of our minimum exigencies. It is an involuntary act of the mind; the human mind receives impressions and sensations from the outside world, unconsciously and involuntarily; it imposes some sort of order on those impressions, reduces them to shape and size so that the mind is able to form a clear image of the outside world. It's a great ordering principle or rather, an agency which enables us both to discriminate' and to 'order', to 'separate', and to 'synthesize' and thus makes perception possible. If the act of creation is conceived as being essentially and perpetually the bringing of order out of chaos, destroying chaos by making its parts intelligible by the assertion of the identity of the designer, as it were. then the primary imagination is essentially creative.

The primary imagination is universal, it is possessed by all. The secondary on the contrary may be possessed by others also, but it is the peculiar and distinctive attribute of the artist. Art is possible only with it. It is more active and conscious in its working. It requires an effort of the will, volition, and conscious effort. It works upon what is perceived by the primary one; its raw material is the sensations and impressions supplied to it by the primary imagination. By an effort of the will and the intellect, the secondary imagination selects and orders the raw material and reshapes and remodels it into objects of beauty. It is esemplastic, i.e. "a shaping and modifying power" which, by its plastic stress, reshapes objects of the external world and steeps them with glory and dream that never was on land and sea. It is an active agent which "*dissolves, diffuses, dissipates. in order to recreate*"

The secondary imagination is at the root of all poetic activity. It harmonizes and reconciles the opposites, and hence Coleridge calls it a "magical synthetic power" This unifying power of the imagination is best seen in the fact that it synthesizes or fuses the various faculties of the soul – perception, intellect, will, emotion- and fuses the internal with the external, the subjective with the objective, the human mind with the external nature, the spiritual with the physical and material. It is through the play of this unifying power that nature is colored by the soul of the poet, and the soul of the poet is steeped in nature. The identity which the poet discovers in man and nature results from the synthesizing activity of the secondary imagination.

Oddly enough, Coleridge considers these two imaginations as differing not in kind, but only in degree, although he considers fancy and imagination as to differ in both. But isn't it true that the normal power of perception in human beings and the special power with which poets and artists create images of beauty cannot differ in degree alone? The difference certainly is one of kind also.

UNIT-4 WALTER PATER

Pater is the greatest critic of the romantic-impressionistic school. He imparted new dimensions and a new dignity to impressionistic criticism. The charge of intellectual pleasure-seeking or Hedonism has been repeatedly brought against him. But the conclusion of his essay on style is alone sufficient to disprove such a charge.

He does not divorce art from life, rather he would have art serve the purposes of life. "Good art" becomes "great art" only when it is devoted to noble ends, to the amelioration and elevation of the lot of humanity. This makes him the noblest of the aesthetes, one who imparted dignity, sanity and balance to the cult of Beauty in England. Worship Beauty by all means but remember that Beauty of the highest kind is moral Beauty. That is Pater's attitude.

While critics like Paul Elmer More are critical of Pater's methods and regard him as no critic at all, for he had, "no fixed point of view of his own", nor could he enter sympathetically into the point of view of others, Logouts and Canadian take a more balanced view of his greatness as a critic, when they say that Pater may lack completeness or conviction, but he gives us a kind of insight into the work he studies, and few critics can do that. A. C. Benson also praises his extraordinary sensibility and says that in his appreciations he moves like a bee from flower to flower gathering particles of sweet honey.

Pater was a romantic impressionistic critic who did not judge literature according to rules and principles, but who responded to a work of art, reacted to it, enjoyed it, and recorded his own pleasure in it for the benefit of his readers.

He relied on his own impressions. As R. A. Scott James points out, "his way is experimental, tentative, bringing the trained sensibility of a keenly alert into contact with an author's work. "His method was intuitive, impressionistic, and hence it is useless to expect from him any principles or canons of criticism.

Imagination is given the topmost place for the creation and judgment of poetry. Great works of art are the products of imagination. Shakespeare is great because his works are the products of his imagination. Pope is not great as he has no imagination. The critic is also expected to possess the gift of imagination, which enables him to appreciate the beauty of a work of art.

Rules and regulations of poetic diction and versification are given a go-by. Simplicity becomes the watchword both in the theme and in the treatment of poetry.

The *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* becomes the Magna Carta of the Romantic movement, which lays great emphasis on the creative rather than instructive aspect of poetry. Delight is the object, imagination is the soul, and style is the body of literature. The treatment of a subject becomes more important than the subject - matter.

A critic must first be capable of receiving impressions and then be able to express them.

PREFACE TO THE LYRICAL BALLADS

By
William Wordsworth

Wordsworth's *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* is a compendium of Romantic Criticism. The creation of a taste for reading and enjoying his poems is the aim of Wordsworth's *Preface*. Making a systematic defence of his point of view or giving an elaborate account of his theory of poetry is certainly not his aim. The *Preface* marks the beginning of a new age.

Critical Synopsis

Wordsworth's *Preface* indicates his strong desire to write poetry in a selection of the real language of men when (they are) in a state of emotional excitement. His poems are a revolt against the artificial poetic diction popular in his times.

Wordsworth's *Preface* is intended to be an introduction to his poems rather than serve as a systematic defence of his theory of poetry. His purpose is to warn his readers that

the poems are of a new kind, radically different from the conventional poetry to which they are accustomed. They should not expect conventional pleasure from his poems.

Wordsworth's aim has been to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate them in a selection of language really used by men. At the same time, he wants to throw over them a colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things would be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.

He has chosen the various aspects of humble and rustic life for a number of reasons. In humble and rustic life, feelings are more simple and they are expressed freely, frankly, forcefully and more accurately. Their simple life enables him to understand human nature better and human passions are noble and permanent there.

He has also used the language of the humble and rustic life after purifying it of all coarse and disgusting features. The rustics convey their feelings and emotions in a simple language and they hourly communicate with the best objects of Nature.

His poems have a worthy purpose; they enlighten the readers and purify their emotions. They are a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings tempered and modified by thought. They are enriched with feelings and emotions rather than situations.

Different is the theme of his poems and different in his language. He has selected natural themes and has employed a natural language. He has looked at his subject steadily and so his portrayal of it is true to nature. He has varied his language according to the needs of character and sentiment.

Wordsworth categorically states that there neither is nor can there ever be any essential difference between the language of prose and that of verse, excepting that metre is used in poetry even though it is not essential to it. When a poet speaks through his characters, the language used must be appropriate to the character and situations. When he speaks in his own person he should speak in a natural way.

Passions and emotions are primary in a poem. The language of the poet must be suitable to express the different kinds of passions. The past communicates not only emotions felt

by him but also those which he has not experienced. So his language is expected to be more lively and vivid.)

A poet is a man speaking to men and differs from them only in degree and not in nature. He is a man who is endowed with a greater power of imagination, greater knowledge of human nature, greater zest for life and greater powers of communication.)

Poetry aims at truth to nature, giving, at the same time, pleasure; poetic pleasure is nobler. Poetic truth is much higher than the truth of philosophy and history.)

Poetry gives us pleasure by imitating nature beautifully; by increasing our understanding of the primary nature of man, by arousing our sympathy and by enabling us to perceive the essential identity of man and Nature.

Poetry, Wordsworth asserts, is superior to science. The truths of science are particular and individual while those of poetry are universal and can be shared by all. The knowledge acquired by the scientist is superficial whereas the poet learns of the soul of things. The scientist appeals to the intellect while the poet speaks to the heart and soul of his readers.)

Wordsworth justifies the use of metre and condemns the use of Poetic Diction, which is arbitrary and capricious. Metre is traditional, regular and uniform. Wordsworth himself has used metre for a number of reasons. Metre gives pleasure and it softens and tempers the painful emotions. It imparts grace and dignity to higher emotions.)

Poetic composition, according to Wordsworth, takes place through observation, recollection, contemplation and imaginative excitement of the emotions experienced earlier. Poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, emotions recollected in tranquility; the most philosophical of all writings; the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; the impassioned

expression that is the countenance of all science; the of man and Nature; the first and last of all knowledge; immortal as the heart of man.)

Wordsworth has written poems "to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous." Every great poet is a teacher, concludes Wordsworth.