

Comparison of daffodils and the prelude by wordsworth essay



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Comparison of Daffodils and The Prelude by Wordsworth To Ode to the West Wind by Shelly. ' Romanticism as a literary movement lasted from about 1789 to 1832 and marked a time when rigid ideas about the structure and purpose of society and the universe were breaking down.

During this period, emphasis shifted to the importance of the individual's experience in the world and his interpretation of that experience, rather than interpretations handed down by the church or tradition. Romantic literature is characterized by several features. It emphasized the dream, or inner, world of the individual. The use of imagery was prevalent.

There was a growing suspicion of the established church, and a turn toward pantheism Romantic literature emphasized the individual self and the value of the individual's experience. The concept of " the sublime" was introduced. Feeling and emotion were viewed as superior to logic and analysis. All the Romantics were idealist and had yearning for liberty . For the romantics; poetry was believed to be the highest form of literature. This period saw the flowering of some of the greatest poets in English Language, including William Blake, Samuel Taylor, Coleridge, Percy Byssi Shelly and William Wordsworth.

William Wordsworth and Shelly are most often described as a " nature" writer. What the word " nature" meant to Wordsworth is, however, a complex issue. On the one hand, Wordsworth was the quintessential poet as naturalist, always paying close attention to details of the physical environment around him (plants, animals, geography, and weather). At the same time, Wordsworth was a self-consciously literary artist. This tension

between objective describer of the natural scene and subjective shaper of sensory experience is partly the result of Wordsworth's view of the mind as "creator and receiver both.

Wordsworth consistently describes his own mind as the recipient of external sensations which are then rendered into its own mental creations. Such an alliance of the inner life with the outer world is at the heart of Wordsworth's descriptions of nature. Wordsworth's ideas about memory as in Daffodils For oft, when on my couch I lie, In vacant or in passive mood, They flash upon that inward eye This is the bliss of solitude: And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the Daffodils. Wordsworth poems often present an instant when nature speaks to him and he responds by speaking for nature. He has given the most emotional and most impressive account of man's relation to nature. Thomas Quincey an English essayist and critic rightly say " his passion for nature is fixed in his blood".

If nature is both ' law and impulse' for Shelly, it is ' impulse' alone for Wordsworth. He conceived, as poet, that nature is alive. It had, he imagined, one living soul which, entering into flower, stream, or mountain, give them a soul of their own as in Daffodils. Wordsworth found in the clouds, hills lakes, and meadows the spiritual stimulus that sough in purely imagery visions. The central theme of opening lines of ' The Prelude' is record of that inner life out of which Wordsworth poetry grew. It is a long poem conveying high imagination on the basis of personal experience.

The greatest contribution of Wordsworth to the poetry of nature is his unqualified Mysticism. Pantheism, which is the belief that there is no

difference between the creator and creation, holds that God is not separate from the world, but manifested in it. This idea was popular among romantics. For example, Wordsworth writes in his poem "The Prelude" "Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze, A Visitant that while it fans my cheek. In these lines soft and mild breeze is a divine gift to make Wordsworth happy.

It is a holy visitor that caresses his cheeks. In Daffodils for example, "a host" of daffodils, suggests perhaps a congregation of angels. Such description creates a feeling of nature as a Utopia. All Romantics were idealist and they had yearning for freedom. They believed in the worth, potential, and freedom of the individual, and exalted this freedom over the then traditional acceptance of social hierarchy and political repression. Wordsworth in his poem "The Prelude" says: From the vast city, where e I long had pined A discontented sojourner: now free, Free as a bird to settle where I will.

These lines show that vast city of London had a very busy life and Wordsworth had to live and suffer there for a long time as an unhappy resident and he feels at liberty now and as free as a bird, to settle down where ever he like. At another place Wordsworth recalls his memory and says in The Prelude: The burthen of my own unnatural self, The heavy weight of many a weary days Not mine and such as were not made for me. To the poet, life in that vast city was like that of a captive. He was never quite at home there. Deep discontentment lay on his soul like a heavy load.

Wordsworth uses number of figurative devices to communicate this idea, e. g. Daffodils and The Prelude. 'Daffodils' is essentially a lyric poem which is expressive of the feelings of joy the poet encounters when seeing the

multitude of daffodils. For example, in the first line of the poem he uses reverse personification in representing himself metaphorically "as a cloud". Wordsworth then proceeds to personify the daffodils as humans, "dancing" and "tossing their heads".

He also personifies the daffodils as a "jocund company" suggesting the flowers have feelings just as humans do. Again, there is the suggestion of unity between man and nature when Wordsworth describes himself as feeling 'gay' in the company of the daffodils. The fact Wordsworth shows himself and nature as interchangeable, signifies the close relationship there is between man and nature in the Wordsworthian world. The poetic diction Wordsworth uses depicts nature in a positive, almost heavenly light; In *The Prelude* Wordsworth uses figurative language in order to communicate his ideas, *A discontented sojourner: now free, Free as a bird to settle where I will.* Here he wants to convey an idea that when he is away from busy life he is just like a Bird to settle down wherever he wants and his heart is full of joy. Nothing in Wordsworth is simple or singular; like Milton, he is a poet who almost resists the possibility of final or definitive interpretation. His view of nonhuman nature is likewise open-ended.

In his work *The Prelude*, he shares some of his childhood experiences that ultimately shaped the man he became as he matured. These experiences share many common elements: a predominantly natural setting, a feeling of the sublime in ordinary occurrences, a natural self-consciousness, and the subsequent personal reflection on the series of events. Wordsworth presents a remarkable contrast in style, for his style ranges from the sublime to the ridiculous. Shelly in his poem *Ode to the West Wind* uses abundance of <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-daffodils-and-the-prelude-by-wordsworth-essay/>

natural imagery like Wordsworth. For Shelly West Wind is a symbol of Destruction as well as preservation.

It destroys the dead leaves and preserves the living seeds. Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, Shelly loved the indefinite changeful nature. In Ode to the West Wind, West Wind is first seen driving the dead leaves before it and scattering the living seeds, then bearing the clouds on it, next awakening the Mediterranean from his sleep, and finally making its force felt by the sea plants at the bottom of the Atlantic. Abstractness is found in Shelly's imagery.

The picture of blue Mediterranean, lulled to sleep by the coil of his crystalline streams is remarkable. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams, Like Wordsworth, Shelly had the power of conceiving each separate object of Nature as possessing a distinct individuality of its own. Shelly designates the first three stanzas to describe the nature of divine force . The metaphor of the Wind as representative of an intangible, divine force much greater than true wind, similarly Mediterranean and the Atlantic are conceived of as a separate existence. This capacity for individualizing the separate forces of nature is called Shelly's myth making power. Shelly is pantheist in this poem as Wordsworth in Daffodils and The Prelude.

Shelly speaks of scientific attitude towards the object of nature. Whatever he says in Ode to the West Wind is scientifically true in every detail. The West Wind drives the dead leaves before it and scatters the seeds: The surface of

Mediterranean Sea is rudely disturbed by the West Wind; the vegetation at the bottom of the Atlantic feels the destructive effects of the West Wind. So the first three stanzas contain the effects of West Wind on land, sky and sea, through leaves, clouds and waves. The Setting of the first three stanzas give equal emphasis to the three states of matter i. e.

solid, gaseous and liquid. Furthermore, each of the four seasons gets its appointed place, and there is a full range of colours . Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, This scientific approach to nature distinguishes Shelly from most other poets. Unlike Wordsworth poetry concrete abstract dualism is present in Shelly's poetry.

The secret being the West Wind cannot be penetrated because it is an "unseen presence" . In the visible world the West Wind is objectified by the leaves , the clouds ' and the water upon which it acts . Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear The sapless foliage of the ocean, know Unlike Wordsworth, Shelly's lyrics are surpassingly musical and sweet. He has effect of bird Song pouring and pouring out.

e. g. The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, Each like a corpse within its grave, until Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow Shelly's great masterpiece Ode to the West Wind is marred by his sentimentality and morbidity. Like Other Romantics, he also yearns for freedom.

His Self-portray in IV stanza expresses profound despair. We have here the lament, the cry of sorrows, of a supersensitive individual. Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud! I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! A heavy weight of <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-daffodils-and-the-prelude-by-wordsworth-essay/>

hours has chain'd and bow'd One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud. These lines show a complete abandonment of self on the part of poet.

The intensity of feeling has here been carried to the point which seems to threaten the balance of personality. The final line the poem solidifies the subtle optimism present throughout the poem. If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? This line follows up on the dual nature of the spirit presented in the first stanza which acknowledges that the spirit can be both a destroyer and a preserver. Thus, Shelly here appears as an idealist, a dreamer and a visionary. He was a pessimist with regards to the present of mankind but a radiant optimist about the future of world.

In light of above mentioned details we could easily compare Daffodils and The Prelude by Wordsworth with Ode to the West Wind by Shelly. Written by: Hira Ali Department of English. Pakistan.