

**MURSHIDABAD ADARSHA MAHAVIDYALAYA**

**ACADEMIC YEAR-2023-24**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

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**Study materials provided to CLASS: 4<sup>TH</sup> SEM DATE: 11/08/2024**

**Topic of Discussion: Wordsworth's TINTERN ABBEY**

- **TINTERN ABBEY AS A BILDUNGSROMAN**
- **AS A BILDUNGSGEDICHT**
- **AS A SELF-REFLEXIVE POEM**
- **AS A METAPOEM**
- **AS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM**

**MARKS-10/SEM-4/CC-9**

“**Tintern Abbey**” by Wordsworth shows an individual in his early adulthood corresponding to the moment in the Bildungsroman of the character entering upon maturity. In the process of development of a poetic mind from youth to maturity, concerning the formation as a poet, nature co-participates in the process of literary composition. As a result, in a kind of co-authorship, the poem is being written by the assistance of nature which means that the poet achieves formation. Hence, “Tintern Abbey”, is a Bildungsgedicht or Lehrgedicht. It is also a self-reflexive poem, or an autobiographical poem or a metapoem.

“**Bildungsroman**” as a literary term labels a novel type that exposes the development of the hero both physically and mentally starting from his childhood to his adulthood till the formation of his character. It is a kind of autobiographical narrative.

Wordsworth's “**Tintern Abbey**” centres on the development and workings of his own mind, the complexity of his own personality, with pregnant autobiographical allusions. It records the growth of a poet's mind.

“**Tintern Abbey**” transforms the tradition of the topographical and locodescriptive and ecological genres. Wordsworth is rather far more interested in the relationship of non-human nature to the human mind.

Critic called A. Day recalls that in **“Tintern Abbey”** **“the presentation of nature is structured according to the inward motions and transitions of the observing consciousness”** of the poet.

In the poem, nature is not just a token but becomes a source of feelings in youth (**“sensations sweet, / Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart”**); a source of knowledge (**“the burthen of the mystery”** and **“the heavy and the weary weight / Of all this unintelligible world”** are **“lightened”**) and at the same time of spiritual existence (when **“the breath of this corporeal frame / And even the motion of our human blood”** are **“Almost suspended”** and **“we are laid asleep / In body, and become a living soul”**) as to be able to **“see into the life of things”**.

In childhood, the human being is a part of nature discovering the world through senses. Five years ago, in his youth, when the poet first visited the place, nature and all its elements were then to him **“An appetite; a feeling and a love”**. That time has passed; the poet is now in his stage of maturity and realizes that all those feelings **“are now no more”**, they can be only remembered or recollected, as the **“picture of the mind revives again”**.

The notion of formation which has resulted with maturity of the poet along with his reflected emotions, subjective condition, and individual experience reveal the reciprocal relation between the idea of self-development of the **Bildungsroman** tradition and the romantic idea of subjectivity. Thus, the poem gains a different dimension by foregrounding two levels of maturation process, which are youth and adulthood, and evolves into a **“poem of formation”** or **Bildungsgedicht**, besides its romantic manifestation.

The poet declares that he remains a lover of **“the meadows and the woods”**, which is increased by the idea of nature being the source of moral improvement, and ultimately a **“worshiper of nature”**, where nature is now ranked to divinity as expression of pantheism. Spinoza coexists in Wordsworth’s poem with Descartes, and, given the expression of the stages of human development through sense in childhood, feeling in youth, and thought in maturity, also with Locke.

**“Tintern Abbey”** refers explicitly to youth and maturity, whereas childhood is only mentioned in two lines (**“The coarser pleasures of my boyish days, / And their glad animal movements all gone by”**).

The poet in **“Tintern Abbey”** is a mature subject accompanied in his tour by his sister who is what he was five years ago, a young person. The poet, as a worshiper of nature, prays nature to be his sister’s friend, guide and supporter, as it has been his, in the turbulent process of maturation of the individual mind. Thus in **“Tintern Abbey”**, a spiritual dimension that is greater than the merely individual and the material is achieved.

In **“Tintern Abbey”**, nature is a formative principle in the process of growing of an individual’s mind, but nature is also a creative principle in the process of becoming of a poet, because nature is also a source of tranquility that represents a distinct poetic mood, a state necessary to the process of poetic creation.

Thus **“Tintern Abbey”** is a kind of metapoem, a self-reflexive poem, and an autobiographical poem. In general, the truth **“Tintern Abbey”**, says Paul D. Mann, **“is not a truth about objects in nature but a truth about the self”**.