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Title: Preface to The Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth

Good morning my name is Shakila banu Today we will be discussing about literary criticism within the major aspects of literary criticism let us talk about romantic critics that's two major poets William Wordsworth and Coleridge let us begin with a brief introduction about William Wordsworth William Wordsworth was born in 1770 at Cockermouth Cumberland and spend much office After his education at Cambridge he visited France twice he devoted himself to poetry his friendship with Coleridge stimulated his genius together they brought out the lyrical ballads in the year 1798 with the publication of the apple making book the lyrical ballads by Wordsworth and Coleridge a new taste in literature and art setting this new taste is called the romanticism or liberalism.

Wordsworth theory and practise of poetic diction

Wordsworth Theory :it's Causes :

Nothing that Wordsworth ever wrote has given rise to such hot controversy has his theory of poetic diction initiated at length in the preface to the 80 knot edition to off the lyrical ballots in part the Thierry resulted RC a revolt against the evening artificial and gaudy phraseology of hope and what Wordsworth called the Pope Ian's he felt that all conventions and affectations of pedantry must be disregarded to ever wear true poetic style which would speak to the heart of men in fact it is also resulted from the poet's attempt to extended the domain quietly the new poetry was not to be confined to the upper classes of London but was to take in its stride the entire humanity nay the entire external world because that is no essential difference between one form of life and another even the vegetable world has life. His poetry was to be democratic in tone it was to deal with the life and feelings of homely and humble rusty and as such his poetic diction must also be equally simple. knew poetry required knew diction keeping this background in mind we would first examine his theory of poetic diction and then try to evaluate its significance.

The theory

in the 1802 preface Wordsworth stated his programme in detail he affirmed that the language of poetry is a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation and that of course it must be fitted to metrical arrangement. getting bolder and we should say rasher he added the wider generalisation it may be safely affirmed that there neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.

Critical Examination of It

A brief examination of this theory brings out the following points:

- The language used by the poet must be real not false. it must be the language suggest men really use by men the poet mean humble rustic of Cumberland whose life and feelings he had chosen as the theme of his poetry it must be the language truly and actually used by such simple men and not that of sophisticated Londoners.
- Wordsworth uses the word language but he does not explain what he actually means by this term or Elton is the opinion that by language he primarily means vocabulary, the actual and single words admitted into verse. he says nothing about figures and inversions. such figures of speech an inversions are imperative for he permits the use of metre rally shoes they do exist even where Wordsworth follows his theory as regards vocabulary for example metre and rhythm dictate the use of such inverted construction as the woods among see there goes few months of life has he installed has he too you will tell even in poems which are essentially worse version in tone metre medicates the whole atmosphere and his theory therefore cannot be considered as applicable to grammar and syntax.
- **Coleridge 'Criticism**

he insists on selection. the language used by the poet must be purified from provincialism colloquialism an from all else likely to cause disgust and dislike Coleridge at once seized upon what he said off selection and pointed out that the language of rustic is not yet separate primitive speech but is derived from the language of scholars poets and philosophers through the agencies of education and religion. When freed from all that he's gross and disgusting it differs in no way from their language of any other man of common sense.

Garret's view

such criticism is based on misunderstanding and later criticism has blindly followed Coleridge and propagate these spots Garrett rightly points out that all this misunderstanding arises from the failure to ask how on by home the selection is to be made and adds the language of poetry like the stuff of poetry comes from the imagination the language of poetry is the language really spoken by men exactly as the objects which the imagination visualises or to their go relates in the sphere of sense in both cases the imagination renders back purified a dignified what comes to the ice yes confused and ignoble in plain words the real language of men becomes fit for poetry only when it has undergone a process of imaginative selection the power to write poetry comes from nature and it's this power which enables a poet to make the right selection.

State of Vivid Sensation

- Wordsworth added a further Qualification when he said that the language of poetry was to be the language of men in a "State of Vivid Sensation " when men are emotionally excited, when they are animated, they use dignified and emotional language which is suited for poetic purposes. It is a matter of common experience that when we are emotionally agitated, all of us, even the most prosaic,tend to use a poetic language, surcharged with our emotions. The poet should colour this emotionalised language with his own imagination and thus make it a fit instrument of poetic expression .

Language of prose and poetry: "No Essential Difference "

There is nothing basically wrong in this part of Wordsworth's theory. Says Herbert Read in this connection, " such was Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction and as the theory of a poetic

diction, I do not think that any subsequent criticism, including that of Coleridge, has succeeded in refuting it. But Wordsworth committed a mistake when he rashly and unthinkingly declared, that there neither is nor can be any "essentials" difference between the language of prose and poetry it was this part of Wordsworth's creed which Coleridge could so effectively refute by saying that there is, and there should be essential difference between the language of prose and poetry. It is a mistake to suppose that any theory of poetic diction or metre can be all inclusive or universal in scope. A poet is not bound to use at all times a particular kind of language. Just as he is not bound to use a particular metre. It is all a matter of mood. As Herbert Read further points out your poet speaks in the language under the rhythm addicted to his team and no definition can limit his variety. However it should be added in defence of Wordsworth that in the 1790-1800 edition he did not take such an extreme position he simply offered the book as an experiment to test the suitability or otherwise of the real language of common man for poetry. It was an unmerited criticism that hardened his attitude and pushed him to make the extreme statement under discussion. Moreover, it should also be noted that he adds the qualifying word essential and thus softens and sees a great deal the security of his statement it would also not be out of place to mention that in modern literature the difference between prose and poetry tends to disappear. It is being realised that prose may also have an emotional appeal and so may be in its essence poetical.

Defence of Metre: It's Weakness

A greater weakness of Wordsworth's position is his defence of metre in the preface he defended the use of metre because first it gives added pleasure second the loss of metre or well established while those of fighting diction or not on generation of poets have used it third it serves to control emotion and keep it within limits 4th it casts an air of unreality over the poem and so makes even painful description tolerable. We need not go into all the intricacies of the arguments for and against his defence of metre but this much can be safely asserted that metre is an ornament just as poetic diction is and it is illogical to differentiate the one and reject the other as Herbert Reed puts it it is not only inconsistent with any adequate conception of poetry which words were persisted in full degree but it is also inconsistent with his own theory of poetic diction.

Wordsworth's Practice

Critics have also condemned Wordsworth for his failure to put his theories into practice. Raleigh sums up the whole criticism and says it has been argued that when he writes well, he breaks his own rules, and when he writes in it has been implied he keeps them. But the fact is he hardly ever observes his own rules and his poems in which he most nearly observes them are often among his best. As has been shown the poet observes his theory even when he does observe it, only as far as the vocabulary is concerned. Moreover it is entirely wrong to say that he writes well only when he throws his principle to the winds. As a matter of fact there are scores of poems and this among his best poems like Lucy grey, solitary Reaper, Michael, The education of nature all their Lucy group of Williams in fact which rampantly vindicate his theory there are also others in which he has kept his principle but has become dull ridiculous ugly and hopelessly prosaic. Poems like the thorn idiot boy seemingly etc represent the extreme of banality and imbecility. There are still others like in turn away and immorality or or to duty Lumia et cetera in which he puts his theory into his pockets but it's still grand magnificent and sublime it is all a

question of modern inspiration when the mood is upon him and he is genuinely inspired he can raise to the heights of poetic grandeur and laughed in as and the mood is lacking he is hopelessly dull and flat. Freeze have little to do with the quality of office production the real fault was that he continued to produce even when the inspiration was wanting. Hudson too agrees with this view and remarks, Wordsworth often wrote superbly And he often wrote in a stiff heavy pedestrian style. but neither in the one case nor in the other had doctrine anything to do with the quality of his work.

His achievement

What maybe the merits and the merits of words for Thierry he certainly succeeded in his aim. he dealt here knock out blow to the artificial diction of the Augustans, a diction that held sway for nearly a century, and thus rid English Quietly of much that was artificial and affected. His Theory served to purify the language of English poetry and make it natural and simple. In this way he could break a vicious tradition and evolve your true poetic style which speaks to the hearts of men. He's one of the great reformers of the English tongue. He impacted vigour and expressiveness to the language of poetry by bringing it closer to the language of everyday use.