

A Comparative Study of Wordsworth, Frost, and Balkavi Thombre

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Abstract:

William Wordsworth, Robert Frost and Balkavi Thombre are well known as the nature poets. The poems written by them show that they were extraordinarily tempted by the beauty of nature and they admired it greatly; but they looked at the same with some different points of view. The paper attempts to seek their similar and dissimilar views about nature from their selected poems.

Keywords: Wordsworth, Frost, Balkavi, View of Nature, Romantic, Realistic etc.

Introduction: Experience of life influences the view of the writer. If we see the kind of life the poets lived, makes it clear that their views are influenced by their lives. Wordsworth, compared to Frost, never took family responsibilities on his shoulder. He liked to enjoy the life by passing time in wandering through the valleys, hills, rivers and forests. His parents died in his childhood and he was brought up by his uncles. When grown up, he was asked by the uncles to join some job, but he disappointed them. He went to London and idly passed time. Further, he wandered through various countries like Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands, Scotland, Wales etc. But the great point on his side was that he was very passionate to read the literature of his choice; and the same created expertise in him as a great writer. The nature of his life seems to have made him to contemplate about the mystic things, to be humanistic with romantic attitude and not the practical one. For his one sided (romantic) view, Wordsworth was criticized. Frost does not close his eyes towards the other side (harsh realities) of nature. It's not that Wordsworth's life was fully happy. He was greatly impressed by the principles (equality, freedom, fraternity) of the French revolution; but was disappointed after the experience of inhumanity in the war between France

and England. He also became gloomy due to domestic reasons. But the same made him to go to nature to seek resort(peace).

On the other hand, unlike Wordsworth and Balkavi, Frost was a man of duty. Through his life, he readily took responsibility of the family; and he did various professions to maintain it. Frost had great passion for the farming. Eventhough, he became a successful poet, he liked to live in countryside area. He took care of his farm; and building a bungalow, he spent there his last days. Through his poems like *After Apple Picking*, *Birches*, *Mending Wall*, *The Pasture*, we find the pictures related to the farm and the natural rustic life. Though he loved nature, the responsibilities made him realistic and to look at the nature with the same view.

Very different from that of Frost, Balkavi couldn't embrace the mundane life satisfactorily. Like Wordsworth, Balkavi was also disappointed with the human life; so, he sought peace in nature. Finding practical life disturbed and imperfect, he urges to be integrated with the nature which seems to him undisturbed and perfect.

Comparison in the Context of Poems: Wordsworth is so much influenced by the beauty and power of nature, that even in the absence of nature, the recollections makes him enthusiastic as in *Tintern Abbey*, *Solitary Reaper*, *Daffodils* etc. Following lines from *Tintern Abbey* show the poet in enthusiastic mood just by the recollections of the past memories:

*These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to blind man's eye;
But oft in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,*

(Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey)

Unlike Wordsworth, Balkavi's enjoyment in nature doesn't persist throughout the poem. It is disturbed by his recollection of imperfect human life and he regrets that he(or the humans) can't be/do like the forms of nature. In his poem 'तडाग असतो तर' (Tadag Asato Tar), Balkavi describes the loving, beautiful and peaceful scene of nature; but, at the end of the poem, he realizes that he can't do as Tadag. Regretfully, he says—

या समर्थीं जर तडाग असतो,
रम्य दिव्य तें रेखित बसतो,
हीच शांतता अशीच धरितो,
शुभ्र जलाच्या हृदयात.

(बालकवी, तडाग असतो तर)

(Meaning: If I were Tadag (a tree) at this time, I would have been watching the grandeur and beauty of nature and bearing the same peace as in the clean and calm water.)

Wordsworth's poetry gives only positive side of nature. As a romantic poet he portrays only spring-time beauty of nature. For him, nature is just healing power. Like Wordsworth, Frost portrays the beautiful scenery of nature. But, for Frost, nature has both sides— negative as well as positive. He shows how nature has also harsh, ugly side, how it becomes destructive when imbalance happens in it. In 'Fire and Ice', Frost gives the destructive characteristics of the forms (fire, ice etc.) of the nature which prevails in human mind as desire and hate.

*From what I have tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.....
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great.....*

(Frost, Fire and Ice)

Frost's terrifying sense of loneliness is conveyed as in his poem *Desert Places-*

*And lonely as it is that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less-
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.*

(Frost, Desert Places)

Like Frost, Balkavi also expresses his loneliness in his 'शुन्य मनाच्या घुमटांत' (Shunya Manachya Ghumat).

शुन्य मनाच्या घुमटांत
कसलें तरि घुमतें गीत;
अर्थ कळेना कसलाही,
विश्रांती परि त्या नाही;

(बालकवी, शुन्य मनाच्या घुमटांत)

(Meaning: In the dome of the void mind some kind of song resounds. The poet can't understand the meaning of it, and his mind can't have rest.)

Like Wordsworth, Balkavi doesn't portray the the destructive side of nature; but like frost he presents the ugly and gloomy scene of nature. In 'खेड्यातील एक रात्र' (Khedyatil Ek Ratra), he portrays the natural forms as—

त्या उजाड माळावरती
बुरूजाच्या पडल्या भिंती;

ओसाळ देवळापुढतीं

वडाचा पार-अंधार दाटला येथ भरे भरपुर.

(बालकवी, खेड्यातील एक रात्र)

(Meaning: On the deserted upland, the walls of the bastion are fallen. Before the deserted temple, there is a banyan tree with the terrace around it; and, the place is full of darkness there.)

For Wordsworth, nature is kind as a mother to child. He says, that nature is such a divine power that, if one believes in it's spirit, it offers one blessings with which one would never be unhappy in life. So, when one does not feel well, one should go to nature to be glad in the company of it as Wordsworth addresses to his sister in *Tintern Abbey*-

*My dear, dear sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy:*

(Wordsworth, Tintern Abbey)

Like Wordsworth, Balkavi also feels that nature offers the blessings to human beings. But, Balkavi gives it in different style. On the one hand, in 'Tintern Abbey', Wordsworth goes to the forms(streams, trees etc.) of nature to be blessed with them. In 'तारकांचे गाणे' (TarkancheGane), Balkavi presents the stars which are personified in such extension that the stars become the speakers in the poem. They speak to their companion stars of playing together happily and make the humankind also happy with their ecstatic presence.

अनेक असले खेळ करू प्रेमाशा विश्वात भरूं,
सोडुनिया अपुले श्वास खेळवुं नाचवुं उल्हास
प्रभातकाळीं नामनिराळीं
होऊनिया आपण राहूं लोकांच्या मौजा पाहूं

(बालकवी, तारकांचे गाणे)

(Meaning: Let's play such a many games and spread love in the universe. Let's breathe out exhilaration in the early morning. Being unknown to the mankind, let's see people making merry.)

Harmonizing with the spirit of nature, Wordsworth experiences the peace of mind. He advises also his sister in this concern as in *Tintern Abbey*-

*Thy memory be as a dwelling place
For all sweet and sounds and harmonies;*

Frost never feels such spirit of nature. His philosophy of nature is different from that of Wordsworth and Balkavi. In his opinion, nature is indifferent towards us. He says of nature as hostile and alien against which man has to struggle for survival. In ‘The Mountain’, Frost symbolizes the mountain as a barrier and challenge.

*The mountain held town as in a shadow
I saw so much before I slept there once:
I noticed that I missed stars in the west,
Where its black body cut into the sky.*

(Frost, The mountain)

Like Wordsworth and Balkavi, Frost also speaks to the objects of nature; but, there is just fancy and humor in his address. He does not feel a kind of brotherhood for the objects of nature. Nature is not a nurse, teacher or healer for him. Where Wordsworth and Balkavi say of harmonizing with nature for the good of human being, Frost says to conquer wilderness of nature for the same. Where Wordsworth says to worship nature to acquire the grace of it, Frost says to subdue nature to man’s use. Like Wordsworth and Balkavi, Frost also personifies the objects of nature; but, he does not think about harmony between man and nature. He just suggests, that man has the qualities in him as of nature— animal-like, vegetable-like.

The poetry of Wordsworth and Balkavi is characterized with subjectivity. They express their personal feelings through the poems. On the other hand, we find artistic detachment in the poetry of Frost. Frost realistically gives the pictures of rustic life like mowing, apple picking, birch swinging wall mending etc.

Both, Wordsworth and Balkavi think that, the unnatural life of the cities perverts the natural life, weakens humanity; and the remedy for this is only to turn to nature. Frost does not think so. Frost also finds delight in the company of nature; but, he does not think of nature’s company as a remedy for the wretched human life. To make the life bearable, Frost believes in continuous devotedness towards work/duty. So, while enjoying the company of nature, thought of duty immediately comes to his mind which leads him to give up the nature’s company.

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

(Frost, Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening)

Unmindful of material life, Wordsworth and Balkavi get delight in the power and beauty of nature from the start to the end of the poem. Frost would get delight, but, at the end of the poem, we find him with wisdom that needs to ease the material life. Wordsworth is a mystic who thinks of nature as supreme power in which company one’s life would be ecstatic. Though, the beauty of nature lures Frost, he considers nature as soulless, mechanic. In Frost’s opinion, one must attend duties with wisdom for the steady life. Wordsworth is mystic and romantic who

meditates feeling great divine spirit of nature. What Wordsworth and Balkavi feel about nature, does not seem ordinary for common man. Frost is a man of work, duty and social obligation.

With his imaginative power, Wordsworth makes ordinary forms of nature look supernatural. On the other hand, like Frost, Balkavi makes supernatural forms of nature look ordinary as In 'फुलराणी'.

पुरा विनोदी संध्यावात	-डोलडोलवी हिरवें शेत;
तोच एकदा हासत आला	-चुंबून म्हणे फुलराणीला:-
"छानी माझी सोनुकली ती	-कुणाकडे ग पाहत होती?
कोण बरे त्या संध्येतून	-हळुचपाहते डोकावून?
तो रविकर का गोजिरवाणा	-आवडला आमुच्या राणीना?

(बालकवी, फुलराणी)

[**Meaning:** Being humorous the Evening Wind makes the greenfield swing. Once he came; and kissing Phulrani (a flower), he (the wind) asked her that whom his lovely child (Phulrani) was looking to. He further asks that who was peeping at Phulrani through the evening. Further the wind asks whether Phulrani liked (or was attracted to) fairly looking Ravikar (the sun).]

Like Wordsworth, Balkavi is also considered as a romantic poet. With a great ecstasy and fancy, Balkavi makes the description of the beautiful scenery in the month of 'Shravan' in his poem 'श्रावणमास' (Shravanmas).

श्रावणमासीं हर्ष मानसीं हिरवळ दाटे चोहिकडे,
क्षणांत येतें सरसर शिरवें, क्षणांत फिरुनी ऊनपडे.

(बालकवी, श्रावणमास)

(**Meaning:** In the month of Shravan, the mind is gleeful and there is greenery everywhere. (Due to a little cloudy climate) There comes the shade for a moment and in another moment comes the sunlight again.)

Wordsworth's use of language is a reaction against the excessive use of artificial language in the 18th century. He says, that there should not be the essential difference between the language of prose and poetry. He was of the opinion that the poet should use the simple language spoken by the simple rustic people. Not fully, but mostly, the language used by Wordsworth is simple. Like Wordsworth, the language of Frost and Balkavi is also characterized with the simplicity and clarity. Frost was well learned poet; but, with the exception of the few learned references or allusions, his language is not obscure and difficult to understand. Like Wordsworth, he also uses colloquial (but purified) language used by the rustic people.

Conclusion: Whatever the contrasts are among Wordsworth, Frost and Balkavi, there is a great point that seems similar in a sense. All the three of them admire the beauty of nature by which they are fascinated greatly. What god is for Frost, nature is of that kind for Wordsworth and Balkavi. Though, Frost asserts the superiority of man over nature, he believes in some supreme power i.e. god. Here, Frost says to believe in god who cares for man; there, Wordsworth says to believe in nature's spirit for the same. Like Wordsworth, but a little differently, Balkavi thinks that life of nature is beautiful, peaceful and perfect; whereas, man's is profane, disturbed and imperfect. Unlike Frost, Balkavi doesn't find any way to make human life steady, but an escape to nature. Here, I would humbly argue that, though, Frost is considered as realist for he treats the real happenings of real life in his poetry, he believes in the spirit of inconceivable, intangible, invisible god, and considers the visible and tangible nature as spiritless. In the concern of this point, Wordsworth seems more realist(though, romantic) for feeling spirit (life) in nature.

References:

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