

8/5/2020
Leahure No-22
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English (Hons.)

DI / Paper II (Poetry)

Topic: Wordsworth's "To The Skylark"

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Wordsworth and Shelley, both the leading lights of the Romantic poetry, have wielded their magical pen on the subject "Skylark". If Shelley's poem "To a Skylark" presents before us "a spirit" and an "unbodied joy" without the shadow of sorrow, Wordsworth's "To the Skylark", on the other hand, tells about the specimen of the truly wise man who is alive to the duties both to God and to man.

The skylark of Wordsworth flies up to the clouds and goes on singing there while it builds its nest on the ground. No doubt it flaps its wings very rapidly but it stops singing as soon as it swoops down to its nest folding its wings. Sometimes it soars so high that it becomes invisible. It sings because of its love for the young ones and sings all the year round unlike the nightingale. The lark is like a wise man who soars in high thoughts and always keeps on to the path of virtue.

Wordsworth penned this poem while living at Rydal Mount with no said bird in sight. But as a poet is endowed with the power to be omni-present, he could very well reproduce with faithful acc-

(2) - wary, the flight of skylark as well as the delightful notes of its song.

The music of Wordsworth's skylark is divine, in as much as it makes a pilgrimage to the Heaven every morning. It may have a contempt for this world but also has an affection towards her young ones, as is seen in her coming down to her nest in the evening. The skylark being a daring warbler, it can soar so high as to become invisible. It is unique for the fact that, unlike other birds, it has the proud privilege to sing all the year round. Even the famous bird of song nightingale does prove to be deficient when compared to the divine intoned which the skylark possesses.

Paraphrase:-

Stanza-1 O skylark, you are a heavenly singer and a pilgrim of the sky, since you daily soar up to heaven on pilgrimage. Do you soar up because you despise our care-worn earth, or it is, while you rise up with your wings, your heart and eyes are centred upon your young ones in your nest upon the ground where the dew of the morning is still there? you can, whenever you like, drop into your nest by ~~pulling~~^{folding} your rapidly vibrating wing and by stopping your

divine music.

Stanza-2

O Skylark! you are a bold singer in as much as you go up to the height which other birds can never mount and where you become completely invisible. All the same the music of love that you pour forth is the indissoluble tie of affection that binds you with your young ones. Your music not only thrills the mind of your kith and kin but also those of the people who stand on the ground and listen to your love songs. It is your proud privilege that unlike other birds you sing on throughout the year without being concerned with whether it is Spring or not.

Stanza-3

Let the nightingale sing from her shady corner in the garden. Your lot is different one. You are meant for a higher atmosphere where you become invisible to your eyes on account of the intensity of sunlight. The music of peace that you pour down upon the world from the sky without being seen teaches us peace of mind. In fact your instinct is diviner than that of the nightingale in as much as nightingale cannot soar ~~up~~ up and sing there. You are a type of the wise man who aspires towards heaven, but never wanders away from the world. In other words, you are like the truly wise man who is true to his duty to God as well as to his duty to man.

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Critical Comments

It seems prudent here to dwell upon the comment of Mr. Fowler as he observes: "The five poems in praise of birds written by Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats will help the reader to compare the very different genius, character and method of these authors. Wordsworth's song never soars so far as to be oblivious of the earth and the common life of men. Like his own skylark he is true to the kindred points of heaven and home, rising to the splendid heights at times but always to bring some lesson down. In every aspect of nature, in every bird and flower, he finds thoughts that lie deep; and everywhere he hears 'the still sad music of humanity'". Shelley's song is as different from Wordsworth as his skylark is different... Keats once more is like the nightingale of his imagining — pouring forth his soul abroad in a ecstasy that wears out his frail body prematurely."

As a matter of fact the present poem was composed after reading "To A Skylark" of Shelley. Though it is a poem of imagination, it does not contain a vision. Here the words of Prof. Herford is very illuminating as he compares the three stalwarts: "Where Wordsworth's imagination isolates and focusses, and Keats fills ~~with~~ in and enriches, Shelley's dissolves and transcends."

(concluded)
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