

**NATURE AS A STRESS RELIEVER IN WORDSWORTH'S
*TINTERN ABBEY***

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Abstract

“*Tintern Abbey*” is a nature poem written by William Wordsworth. The poet envisages and appreciates the beauty and divinity of nature. He revisits ‘*Tintern Abbey*’ which has made him to realize the importance and ecstasy of nature and to give vent to his matured thoughts. He speaks of the unconditional love of nature towards human being. He believes firmly that turning to nature or submission to nature is the only means to get rid of worldly and materialistic stress. He metaphorically thinks the splashing of water from cliffs to the splashing of human sins. So it definitely transforms every one’s life. Peace is loved the most, especially when man needs an escape from the monotonous life. The world of ‘*Tintern Abbey*’ is a world of nature. The speaker has spent his time in cities and towns, and has missed the enjoyment of beauty in nature. The flow of water sounds musical to his ears even amidst the hustle and bustle of the city life. The poet greatly realizes that nature strengthens the body, mind and soul. Thus turning to nature is the best as it serves as a natural stress reliever of the day-to-day pressure and insecurities of life.

Nature as a Stress Reliever in Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey*

Tintern Abbey is a nature poem written by William Wordsworth. The poet envisages and appreciates the beauty and divinity of Nature. This poem reflects an experience in Wordsworth’s life. He believes that nature has a magical power which influences man. He has a transformation in him after he has visited the river WYE in *Tintern Abbey*. He has realized the change in him after his visit to that river. He first visited *Tintern Abbey* on 1793 and he revisits the wonderful place with his sister to bring a change in his sister’s mind. Nature can help and inspire every human being in all ways. Nature can also strengthen the body, mind and soul. Thus the poet greatly realizes that turning to nature is the best as it serves as a natural Stress Reliever of the day-to-day pressure and insecurities of life. The poet just walks down his memory lane in the visit of river Wye whenever he feels bad temper.

William Wordsworth was a major English Romantic poet, who was born on 7th April, 1770 in Wordsworth House at Cocker mouth, Cumberland, part of the scenic region in northwest England, the Lake District. He was the second of five children born to John Wordsworth and Ann Cookson. He married a childhood friend, Mary Hutchinson. [He has five children: John Wordsworth, Dora Wordsworth, Thomas Wordsworth, Catherine Wordsworth, and Willy Wordsworth.] He loves his sister Dorothy very much. He did his schoolings in Hawkshead Grammar school in Lancashire and his Degree in St. John's College, Cambridge. He received an honorary Doctor of Civil Law Degree in 1838 from Durham University and the same year he was honoured from Oxford University. He made his debut as a writer in 1787, when he published a sonnet in the European Magazine. He was a major English Romantic poet who, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped to launch the Romantic Age in English Literature with the 1798 joint publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807), *The Solitary Reaper*, London (1802), *Guide to the Lakes* (1810), *The Prelude* (1850), and *Lines written in Early Spring* and so on. In 1842 the government awarded him a civil list pension amount to £ 300 a year. Wordsworth became the poet Laureate, after the death of Robert Southey in 1843. He died by re-aggravating a case of pleurisy on 23rd April 1850 and was buried at St. Oswald's Church in Grasmere.

Tintern Abbey was founded by Walter de Clare, Lord of Chepstow, on 9th May 1131. It is situated in the village of Tintern in Monmouthshire, on the Welsh bank of the river Wye which forms the border between Monmouthshire in Wales and Gloucestershire in England. It was only the Second Cistercian foundation in Britain, and the first in Wales. It inspired William Wordsworth and got reflected in his poem "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey". Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* has been described as a tourist poem in which the centre of attraction, on its natural beauty. Like all great poems, *Tintern Abbey* is also a texture of contradictions from beginning to end. The full title of the poem is on revisiting the Banks of the WYE during a Tour, July 13th 1798. The poem is divided into five sections. In the first two sections he established the setting and started with the Meditation. The third section with his dilemma that whether nature is capable of rejuvenating man kind or not. The fourth section deals with the man and natural world. The last section continues with the same Meditation with his sister. Then he concludes that the poet has expressed his honest and natural feelings to nature's superiority.

The poem opens with the speaker revisiting 'Tintern Abbey' on the banks of the river Wye. He was visited it before five years. He remembered almost every detail; the sound of the mountain springs, the dark sycamore and the hedge-rows. He looks back on the past five years that have gone by since his first visit to the place, and remembers how much the memory of this scene meant to him when he was cooped up in the city. In fact, he practically relied on his memories of the beauty of the place to keep him sane while he was living in the din of towns and cities. Now he is finally back in the same spot again, he finds himself looking out at the landscape and experiencing an odd combination of his present impressions, the memory of what he felt before, and the thought of how he will look back on this moment in the future. He imagines that he'll change as time goes by from what he was during his first visit; a kid with a whole lot of energy to bound over the mountains. Back in the day, nature meant everything to him.

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He has learned to look at nature with a broader perspective of life. He doesn't just look and say, Holy cow, the view from up here is pretty awesome! And then run bounding over the mountains again. In other words, he used to enjoy nature, but he didn't fully understand it. Now he looks and is able to sense a deeper, wider meaning to the beauty in nature. He sees that everything in nature is interconnected. It turns out Wordsworth's sister is with him during his present visit to 'Tintern Abbey', and he says that she still looks at nature in the same way that he did when he was a kid. He imagines how his sister will go through the same especially development and transformation that he did. One day she'll be able to look out at nature and imagine the interconnectedness of things, too. Then he imagines her coming back to the same spot years in the future, after he has died, and remembering the time she came here with her brother.

Tintern Abbey is a nature poem based on the relationship between man and nature. The poet expresses his perception of nature through this poem. He gives a clear idea about the importance of river Wye which is a symbol of peace. As A youth, the poet enjoys the physical beauty of nature and the sense of pleasure stimulated by them. But when he visits Tintern Abbey, he realises that his idea of nature as a youth was shallow. Visiting the same place after five years, he ruminated that five years had passed since he last visited the location, encountered its calmness, rustic scenery and heard the murmuring waters of the river.

*Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.(5-8)*

He looked at the "steep and lofty cliffs" which impressed on his thoughts of deeper seclusion. He leaned against the dark Sycamore tree whose fruit was unripe. He saw the "wreaths of smoke" rising up from the cottage chimney between the trees and imagined that they might rise from vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, or from the cave of a hermit in the deep forest.

*that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:(37-41)*

Then the poet moved to the river Wye which gave a blessed mood to him. He explained about the landscape from the bank of the river. He said that it was mysterious and incomprehensible and praised the blessed mood created by recalling the beautiful forms of the river. He was already in a state in which the weary weight of the world had been lightened. His love and affection deepened towards nature and took him a step further in his life. He spoke about the soul and not the physical body now. He really felt that it was a magical river which had brought a change of opinion in his mind, from the hurry burry life in London, filled with 'fret and fever'. Then he looked at nature as the sense of unity which connected everything. It was referred to as a divine power, Mother Nature present in the world. After this drastic change only

he attained spiritual maturity. The poet came up with this idea in *Tintern Abbey* and then really explores and develops it at length in his much longer 'The prelude'.

When the poet came across a bad situation in his life, which made him sad was able to immediately close his eyes and turn over the pages of the mental scrapbook of all his most amazing experience of nature. He was able to see the beautiful picture of the river Wye with the jaw-dropping, breathtaking and almost indescribable beautiful scenery. Once he has this epiphany about the divine presence in all of nature and awe was turned to a kind of piety. Then he became a devout worshipper of Mother Nature. These divine experiences of nature would help everyone to recover from their sad moods. The process of maturing into a mind that can sense the divine presence in nature by knowing when and how to access their memory is clearly seen.

*Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses.(12-14)*

Tintern Abbey is a nature poem and nature is always full of Transformation. As a fruit ripens, a season change, fall and growth in plants cycle, the poet describes the transformation between the young boyish William Wordsworth and the more mature Romantic poet and the speaker of this poem. The river Wye brought a great transformation in the poet both mentally and physically and even in his career also. He strongly believes that the future transformation will be made to his sister Dorothy who accompanies with the poet this time. Because she was also affected by the stress and from amidst the hustle and bustle of the city life. We always love and appreciate peace and quiet the mot when we have just escaped from a lot of noise. The world of *Tintern Abbey* is no different from that. The poet had spent his time in cities and towns and he will easily be able to recover and relax when he was in the natural world.

In today's world we all are burdened with lots of work and problems which cause disturbance to our minds and cause mental tension and this results in stress and even a rise in blood pressure. In some cases people who have low confidence are also affected by this stress. We can come out from this stress only by relaxing our mind. There is his medicine to bring peace and calm, which are loved by all, and it definitely relaxes our mind and brings us happiness. So (water body) a river is one of the best stress relievers of the world. Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* inspired by the flowing water of river Wye is a solid confirmation of this fact that nature is the best cure for all the ills of the world.

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