

Wordsworth's views on the language and of poetry and poets in his preface to the Lyrical Ballads. Sender N.M.G.

It has been generally supposed that Wordsworth's theory of poetic language is merely a reaction against, and a criticism of, the 'pseudo-classical' theory of poetic diction. But such a view is true only partially. His first impulse was less a revolt against neo-classical diction, than a desire to find a suitable language for the territory of human life which he was conquering for poetic treatment.

Wordsworth's aim was to deal in his poetry with rustic and humble life and it is quite natural that he advocated simplicity of language to ~~the~~ suit the simplicity of theme. Moreover, he believed that the poet is essentially a man speaking to men and so he must make use of such a language as is used by men. Unlike pseudo-classical writers, Wordsworth believes that there is no essential difference between the language of prose and that of poetry. He condemns the artificial language of the school of Pope.

As Wordsworth tells us in the Preface, a poet was to deal with humble and rustic life and so it was essential for a poet to use the language of the rustics, farmers, shepherds who were to be subject of his poetry. The language of these men, however, must be purified of all that is painful and disgusting in that language. It was to be purified of all that is vulgar and coarse in such a language. A true poet should give pleasure to his readers by selecting the language of real men.

The rustic language, in its simplicity is highly emotional and passionate. This is more so the case when the humble people are in a state of emotional excitement. It is charged with the emotions of the human heart which are expressed without any reservations and inhibitions resulting from social vanity. Through the use of such a humbly emotional language essential truth about human life and nature can be more easily and clearly communicated. The rustics are in communication every hour with the beauty and grandeur of nature, the best part of their language is derived from such poetic communication, and so it is noble and

Figures, metaphors, similes and other such decorations, must not be used unnecessarily, as was the case with the 18th century poet & diction. The poet should avoid the use of such artificial diction both when he speaks in his own person, and when he speaks through his characters.

Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction is of immense value when considered as a corrective to the artificial imagery and unnatural phraseology current at the time. But this theory suffers from a number of limitations. For one thing, Wordsworth does not clarify what he exactly means by 'language'. Coleridge defied Wordsworth's theory of the same language of poetry and prose. He objected to Wordsworth's use of 'real' language varies, according to the extent of his knowledge, the faculty of his faculties and the depth of his feelings. 'Real' therefore, must be substituted by 'ordinary' or 'language communis'. Coleridge also pointed out that it is not correct that the best parts of our language are derived

from nature. language is matter-moulded.