

The Darkling Thrush: An Evaluation

The Darkling Thrush : The Poem

The Darkling Thrush is a beautiful poem which has been composed by the one of the best poet of his time Thomas Hardy, in this poem he is talking about the beauty of nature. Though the darkling thrush is very small but has its own contribution in this world.

The Darkling Thrush is a fine example of a poem which engages with a recurrent theme present across a bulk of Victorian Literature and visible throughout Hardy's oeuvre: the interplay between Hope and Despair. The element of Nature is masterfully handled in this poem to bring out the contrasting forces of Hope and Despair and its significance to humanity. Composed in four rhymed stanzas of ababcdcd rhyme scheme, the poem also captures a moment of transition whether it pertains to the that of the Victorian Age or the personal life of the poet himself.

The Darkling : Summary and Analysis

The poet persona finds himself leaning against a wooden gate in a sombre mood, perfectly complemented by the harsh wintry weather. The landscape, the bare trees, the cold wind and everything around him seem to have come under the spell of a dreary desolate winter. Piercing through this lifeless state comes a voice from the "*bleak twigs overhead*" : An aged thrush, no better off than his surroundings – "*frail, gaunt and small*" sings a joyful song under such a gloomy condition. The poet sees no immediate cause that could trigger such fervour in the bird. He can't

help but think there might be some great mysterious hope of which the little bird understands and he did doesn't.

Originally titled "*The Century's End*", Hardy composed the poem towards the end of the 19th Century when he was in his late sixties. He had given up writing novels and switched to poetry, partly owing to the harsh criticism of his novels *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D'ubervilles*. He had seen the rapid industrialization of England and the slow decline of his beloved countryside. He had witnessed the "glory" of the Empire and had intensely hated its colonial mindset and its involvement in the Boers War. Also, his Christian faith was accosted with the theories of Darwin and Mill, as a result of which the idea of an afterlife turned a blurry fiction at a time when his aged self was rapidly advancing towards the inevitable. Naturally, he was apprehensive of all that was to come and the cloud of uncertainty hung heavy on his mind. And he was not alone. Victorian society, whose precepts and suppositions had been challenged by new findings in natural sciences could no longer blindly rely on the tenets of religion and had become engulfed in an age of uncertainty. With this context in mind, *The Darkling Thrush* becomes a significant poem which doesn't merely project the perception and feelings of one person but is representative of the mood of an age.

Conclusion

This poem is describing the essence of every creature which is found in this world. As we human beings feel something dull, boredom, unease and discomfort in complex condition but this is not with weak and fragile darkling thrush. It is continuously producing soothing sounds and message us to be happy even in a bitter condition.