

DH Lawrence's Piano

A Critical Analysis

Introducing DH Lawrence

- David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) was an English writer and poet. His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialisation.
- The present poem, “Piano” is an expression of the unalloyed simplicity and innocence to which Lawrence wants to go back to and which he misses in the modern civilisation.

Critical Summary

- In this poem, the poet presents the whole chain of reactions set in motion in his personality by his listening to the song of a woman which comes down to him in the dusk. This poem is a psychological exposition of the flood of memories let loose in the poet by this song coming to him over the quiet setting.
- **Stanza 1:** A woman is singing over the piano and as the song reaches the poet he is suddenly taken back down the corridors of time to the past, and he visualises himself sitting under the piano while his mother smiles and sings.

Critical Summary

- **Stanza 2:** The 2nd stanza further builds upon this recollection of the past. Now the poet is taken away emotionally by the artfully treacherous control of the song. His heart now begins to cry to once again be there at home on those Sunday evenings, listening to the religious songs being sung over the piano by his mother, with winter outside.
- **Stanza 3:** The 3rd stanza brings the poet's reaction to the song to an emotional climax. He has been fully possessed now by the glory of his childhood days. His adulthood has been completely overshadowed by the recollections of the past and he weeps like a child for the past that has disappeared.

Conclusion

- The note of yearning for the past gives to this poem an air of nostalgia. The wish to remember the past with such a passionate intensity makes the poem fundamentally romantic.
- The multiple consciousness that Lawrence presents can be noticed in the poet here being taken from the present to the past and this flashback technique with which the focus of the poem shifts from one time level to another makes it a brilliant study in human psychology.

Conclusion continued

- The style of the poem is made up of many soft descriptions. The “dusk”, “vista of years”, “boom of the tingling strings”, “insidious mastery”, “tinkling piano”, “cosy parlour” - convey the tender thoughts of the poet in an artistic manner. The “old Sunday evenings at home” is an apt presentation of the domestic warmth to which Lawrence wants to return and which he terribly misses in the modern world. The poem is indeed a touching expression of the desire of the poet to go back to the uncorrupted, domestic bliss of the past.