

An Analysis of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Romanticism

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Abstract: Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the important English romantic lyric poets. He remains a central role in English Romanticism. The theme in his work includes religious fervor, nature, Ancient Greek aesthetics, and emotional response to beauty. These are components of Romanticism. His major works are considered as challenging beliefs of revolutionary philosophy, and his odes and shorter lyrics are widely known for their stylistic mastery.

Keywords: Percy Bysshe Shelley, Romanticism, Poem.

INTRODUCTION

Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the important English romantic lyric poets. He remains a central role in English Romanticism. The doctrine of free love and sexual equality have particularly attracted commentary on the poet are super romantic. Romanticism's original thoughts are expressed clearly in his work. The poets have a lifetime of setbacks and frustrations. They make constant resistance to injustice, tyranny and darkness of society. But Shelley adopts poetical works as arms and horns to scatter his revolutionary ideas and appeal to the populace to rise up against the sordid life and predicts the ideal future of mankind. His revolutionary spirit and optimism impress me a lot. The imagery of Shelley's works gives reader a chance to experience the unique experience of his life. When I firstly met Shelley's poem, I tried to figure out what are contained in his lyrics, but without any progress.

So I read a lot of his works and book about his life experience and then I have some ideas about him.

In my opinion, Shelley's works are full of romance and the revolutionary spirit and optimism impress me a lot. Through extensive and meticulous research, I find that the craft of Shelley's romanticism is a combination of romanticism and realism. For example, he described things with the approaching of reality and tell us the cruel of truth at the same time. In another words, the central of imagination and vision comes from the reality. After this fact is established, it helps us to understand his intention and the social significance of his artistic creation better.

To catch Shelley's romanticism in his work, first, I choose to explain the origin of romanticism. Then, I discuss the revolutionary spirit presented in his poetry when romantic imagination and symbolism are combined with the reality. Finally to illustrate the meaning of the using of romanticism in his poetry.

Percy Bysshe was born on 4 August 1792 at Field Place was. Shelley did not concentrate himself on pursuing fame during his lifetime, but recognition for his poetry grew steadily following his death. His poetry expressed his political and social views which could be clearly seen everywhere in his poetry. Shelley was a

one of the most significant member in the circle of visionary poets and writers which included Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Love Peacock, and his own second wife, Mary Shelley, the author of Frankenstein. Shelley is perhaps best known for such classic poems as Ozymandias, Ode to the West Wind, To a Skylark, Music. And as we know the masterpiece of Shelley is Prometheus Unbound. Shelley's close circle of friends included some of the most important progressive thinkers of the day, including his father-in-law, the philosopher William Godwin and Leigh Hunt. Though Shelley's poetry and prose output remained steady throughout his life, most publishers and journals declined to publish his work for fear of being arrested for either blasphemy or sedition. Shelley's poetry sometimes had only an underground readership during his day, but his poetic achievements are widely recognized today, and his advanced political and social thought impacted the Chartist and other movements in England, and reach down to the present day [1]. Shelley's theories of economics and morality, for example, had great influence on Karl Marx; Actually, Shelley influenced three or four generations of poets, including important Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite poets such as Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He was admired by Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, W. B. Yeats, Upton Sinclair and Isadora Duncan. Henry David

Thoreau's civil disobedience was apparently influenced by Shelley's non-violence in protest and political action. It could be seen that Shelley's influence and popularity have continued to spread in nowadays's poetry circles.

After the recognition of Shelley and his ideas, let's go on to romanticism. Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe from the end of the 18th century to 19th century. And from 1800 to 1850 romanticism was at its top in most areas. Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature. It was medieval rather than the classical [2]. To some degree, it was a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific rationalization of nature. It was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature, but had a major influence on historiography, education, and the natural sciences. romanticism had a significant and complex effects on politics, and while for much of the Romantic period it was connected to liberalism and radicalism, its long-term effect on the growth of nationalism was perhaps more significant. Romanticism is a style in the fine arts and literature. It emphasizes passion rather than reason, and imagination and intuition rather than logic. Romanticism favors full expression of the emotions, and free, spontaneous action rather than restraint and order. Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that typified Classicism in general and late 18th-century Neoclassicism in particular.

Romanticism in literature. During the Romantic Movement, most writers were discontented with their world. It seemed commercial, inhuman, and standardized. To escape from modern life, the Romantics turned their interest to remote and faraway places, for example the country. The medieval past, folklore and legends, and nature and the common people. The Romantics were also drawn to the supernatural.

Romantic literature has experienced a process of development, and to reflect on the English and American literature in this period. From the U.S. and British romantic writers, combined with the historical background, discusses the romantic literature. But Romanticism expressed an unending revolt against classical form, conservative morality, authoritarian government, personal insincerity, and human moderation. These idea for those people do not have their clear idea about this things will be harmful. Influence their social values. When people totally pursue the fresh and brand new things that will be have complain to society. When citizens are not satisfied with society there must be problem [3]. So, actually

Romanticism as a trend of new things also challenged society. Everything has two faces.

Now move on to understand the Romanticism from Shelley's masterpiece *Prometheus Unbound*. It was written on in 1820. In *Prometheus Unbound*, many natural objects such as the Sun, the Moon or the mountains have been endowed with human feelings and emotions. Shelley considers them as equal. Actually, in his mind, everything is equal to each other and stands the same position. In this poem, Prometheus is the perfect symbol of ideal human being. It is a kind of symbol that human respects our nature. Because in this poem Shelley shows that the Earth is Prometheus's mother. This is also a metaphor. This metaphor of mother manifest Shelley's deep feeling and emotion to the nature. A mother not only gives birth to a child but also to feed child. As a parent mother has to afford the responsibility of nurturing child. Feed him, warm and shelter him. When she does all this she also need protect him from danger. It indicates the role played by nature during the process of human being's growth. In this poem, as the mother of human being, nature is rich in all kinds of resources and never fails to be the treasury of mankind's living necessities unless it is absurd. Though this poem, nature should be undoubtedly acknowledged as the provider of the foundation of human being's living condition as well as other livings in nature. At the same time, Shelley puts forward that plants, animals and human beings are all the children of the earth that is nature. Human being is part of nature, and man is brother of other species of nature instead of being the master of all. Nature will be an efficient supporter of mankind's living necessities if the established laws do not be violated; so, it will go on strike or even show its defiance. The natural world comes to the forefront of the poetic imagination. Nature is not only the major source of poetic imagery but also provides the dominant subject matter [4]. According to the ideas above, different treatments are given back different results. Shelley sticks with the the rule that human should be good to nature. We can know he associate all this elements with love which deeply exist in his mind. Especially the female counterpart of Prometheus and the embodiment of love and nature. The attitude of respecting nature but not just asking for nature is a revolutionary point. At that time there are few people to turn their sight or thought to consider about the nature. I think it is full of philosophy in romanticism[5].

From another example of Shelley's work, *Ode to the West Wind* employs natural imagery and symbolism to foretell not only a change in the physical but in the political climate. Writing in a special way, terza rima to suggest the force and pace of the wind. Shelley addresses the wind as a "Wild Spirit" that is both "Destroyer and Preserver." Shelley asks the wind to drive him forth as it does the leaves, the clouds, and

the waves so that his poetic song will have the same irresistible power for change to awaken Earth. It is the most representative work for Shelley's thoughts during that period. But this poem is the combination of death and rebirth. From this point I think it is not as romantic as Prometheus Unbound.

In Shelley's works, natural elements and image are vividly expressed. That is one reason that I am totally addict into them. When I was reading Prometheus Unbound I did any effort to recognise the deep meaning of it. But after I finally finished it I just feel it is useless to think so much about its meaning. All the scenery and the emotion of every word give me profound imagination of it. As we know, Shelley's works are characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, preferring the medieval rather than the classical. That way he so addicted to the nature. He thought earth is a "mother", this view gives a huge development to the social thought of that time.

All in all, as a younger generation of English Romantic poet, he thinks poetry combines nature and love, also wisdom with delight. In my thesis I am more concentrated on the beauty of nature. It is the positive side of romanticism. It makes me imagine a country life which totally lives with nature. Also the emotion consists in them.

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