

Study of Romantic poem of Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The Flight of Love" from Formalism Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Percy Bysshe Shelley was a great Romantic poet, who was born in 1792, so he was at that era which the formalism was formed newly and had its basic rule. He was using two dominant rule for composing his poems. He uses love as a subject matter, and then has a special outlook on formalist theory. According to the fundamental rules and categories of formalism, Shelley composed his works. The Flight of Love was a strong poem which mourned for lost love and the situation which beloved couples have to tolerate. He criticize the selfish love, which choose such a frail place like heart, and suddenly abandon their and makes it to fall apart. This study looks at this poem from formalism perspective and considers its thinkers theories.

Keywords: Percy Bysshe Shelley, the poem of "The Flight of Love", Romanticism, Formalistic theory, and Formalism literary school.

1. Introduction

1.1. Percy Bysshe Shelley's biography

Percy Bysshe Shelley (/ˈpɜrsi ˈbɪʃ ˈʃɛli/) was born in 1792, and was the main poet of English Romantic era and is considered as a lyrical poet of English language by the great thinkers and critics. "A radical in his poetry as well as his political and social views, Shelley did not achieve fame during his lifetime, but recognition for his poetry grew steadily following his death. Shelley

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

was a key member of a close circle of visionary poets and writers that included Lord Byron; Leigh Hunt; Thomas Love Peacock; and his own second wife, Mary Shelley, the author of "Frankenstein" (Wikipedia, 2014).

Percy Bysshe Shelley is well known for his classical poem such as Ode to the West Wind, Ozymandias, Music, The Masque of Anarchy, When Soft Voices Die, To a Skylark, The Cloud. Shelley's main works contain poems such as Alastor, The Revolt of Islam, Queen Mab (later worked as The Daemon of the World), Adonais, and the unfinished The Triumph of Life; and The Cenci (1819) and Prometheus Unbound (1820) are the examples of verse dramas.

Shelley has the special view about beauty and he expresses his viewpoint about it in poems like "To a Skylark" and "Ode to the West Wind", that in them he uses such a metaphors from nature and makes connection between his feeling and art. "A Defence of Poetry" is an important essay in which he characterizes his philosophy about aesthetic and argues about poetry, brought about moral concepts. In his idea, poetry is an appropriate means of expanding imagination and fancy, and imagination is the real source of compassion, affection, love, and sympathy, which is dependent on the ability of someone for inspiring another's one. Shelley, himself argues that: "A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others. The pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void forever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb".

Shelley was the great thinker whose poems are challenged the sentimentality, wild fancy of his lyrics, and mostly about life and its fundamental needs and questions about the hidden power behind the nature, purposes of morality, experience. He was harshly against the orthodox beliefs, and in order to explain the universe, always use his own reason and myth. His thinking was developing rapidly and in his poetic skills, during twelve years, his thought became matured and passed from materialism to Platonic idealism and resigned from sadness and despair. Instead of his experiences, Shelley insisted on those beliefs which are based on logical situation. At first, the materialistic led him to be against the dominant religion, but he has the special faith to human imagination which lasted all his lifetime. There is some visual evidence in his early writings that

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

he perturbs such a free expressions, self-rule, vegetarianism, and liberality. He adopted Godwin's Necessitarianism, a belief that reason will undo the tyranny of class and wealth, ushering in an age of perfection.

The central subject matter for Shelley is the same as those for Romanticism, and those themes which are so common among younger poets of his era, like nature, liberty of politics, beauty, creativity, passion, affection, fancy, and imagination. "What makes Shelley's treatment of these themes unique is his philosophical relationship to his subject matter—which was better developed and articulated than that of any other Romantic poet with the possible exception of Wordsworth—and his temperament, which was extraordinarily sensitive and responsive even for a Romantic poet, and which possessed an extraordinary capacity for joy, love, and hope" (Wikipedia, 2014). In his opinion the concept of happiness in human life is directly related to the notion of beauty and his perception of despair, darkness, and his beliefs to them, and he has some poems, in them he points to the stem of disappointment which is in the weakness of human mind and thought.

According to Sepideh Kamarzadeh in her essay about "Formal Study of the Greatest Poem of Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Music, when soft voices die'" (2014), mentions that Shelley "has such a masterpieces in poetry that never repeat again in the history. He composed Queen Mab (1813); Alastor (1816); Hymn to Intellectual Beauty (1816); Song to the Men of England (1819); The Masque of Anarchy (1819); Ode to Naples (1820); Ode to Liberty (1820); Epipsychidion (1821); and Adonias (1821)".

2. Discussion

2.1. Analysis of "The Flight of Love" from formalism perspective

Perhaps the most influential and dominant form of criticism, is actually the formalist thought which remains so widely during the twentieth century. Of course New Criticism is a branch of formalism, which is by the politics and forces of Anglo-American cannot be disregarded, and it has some special strategy apart from formalism, while it categorized as a part of formalism and has a number of similarities. Gerald Graff in *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (1987), Gerald Graff mentions while contemporary "defenders of theory tend to equate the New Criticism itself with unreflective empiricism . . . in its time the movement stood for theoretical reflection against the primitive accumulation of data". In Ransom's idea literary criticism requires to be "more scientific, or precise and systematic" levels apart from a simple and naïve

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

attitude that interpretation, translation, and reading are considered as natural states. Unfortunately, Ransom's thesis contains some demands which should happen out of colleges and universities and was not appropriate for there. But it noteworthy that all of his desire for shifting power from interpretation and reading to the academic places didnot perform by New Critics and its thinkers.

By using some philosophical notion from Kant and aesthetic relationship between English Romantic poets and this literary school, formalism suggests that literature is fundamentally different from history, science, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Formalist theory tries to fi and a new way in which identify a new branch of knowledge, by which art can communicate differently. Cleanth Brooks, John Purser, and Robert Penn Warren in "An Approach to Literature" (1964) contends that "literature gives us a picture of life – not the picture that science gives and not a picture that is actually (historically) true, but a picture that has its own kind of truth – a 'truth' that includes important elements that science, from its very nature, is forced to leave out".

The Flight of Love contains a number of similes. The sad songs of heart as the love departed from it, which is like mournful sound of wind as blowing across the destroyed cell (line 14), and like the sorrowful sound of sea as it waves and the poor sailor has sank under its wave. The hidden passion of heart will be rocked the love as a storm, and the reason makes fun of love actually like the hot sun which ridicules the cold winter. Love is a resident of human heart, and as the poet composed in the line 13, it is the "eagle home" for love.

J. C. Ransom in his book entitled "The World's Body" (1938) contends about literary criticism and declares, critisiam should be means which is formed and developed by universities and academician. In his words "criticism must become more scientific, or precise and systematic, and this means that it must be developed by the collective and sustained effort of learned persons – which means that its proper seat is in the universities... Theory, which is expectation, always determines criticism, and never more than when it is unconscious. The reputed condition of no theory in the critic's mind is illusory" (Ransom, 1938).

Rene Wellek was the great thinker of that era, declared in his "The New Criticism: Pro and Contra" (1978) about scientific process and cosidered science as "the villain of history which had destroyed the community of man, broken up the old organic way of life, paved the way to industrialism, and made man the alienated, rootless, godless creature he has become in this

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

century. Science encourages Utopian thinking, the false idea of the perfectibility of man, the whole illusion of endless progress" (Wellek, 1978).

As the title of the poem represents, this poem is about temporariness of love, as a lamp when it is hide, its light will dies. When a cloud is disappeared from the sky, the rainbow will be vanished. When a lute of a musical instrument is torn, the sound and the noted of it will be lost. When the love is finished, the heart just sings hopeless songs. The heart of human is not a firm and fixed place for love; the human love and the human passion is bound to reason which has a direct relationship with human heart.

This poem has some intense situation, some critics are attacking it and the others are against criticizing it. Dr F. R. Leavis and Allen Tate have extended and destructive analysis of Frederick A. Pottle is in the poem's side and refers to it as a "respectable poem". Desmond King Hele named it as "trite and trivial" and declares about it that "this poem has been exhibited to the public eye in far too many anthologies, and , if such over exposure was not embarrassing enough for so shy an object, it has in recent years also become a battle ground for rival schools of critics". In this poem, target is to analyze the poem stanza by stanza and line by line by using the great thinker's attitudes.

When the lamp is shatter'd
The light in the dust lies dead-
When the cloud is scatter'd,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remember'd not;
When the lips have spoken,
Love accents are soon forgot.

When the lamp is shattered and became small pieces, its light is faded away and extinguished. When the collude suddenly disappeared and there is no trace of it left in the sky, the magnificent rainbow will disappear too. When the lute is broken, its notes and marvelous sounds are dissolved. When the love is finished and its end came, the pleasant and lovely words that lover always say to each other will be forgotten and finished.

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

The poem is full of imagery and pictures that are so important and noteworthy. Except of the lamp pictured, the cloud scattered, the glory of rainbow, the ruined lute, there is the representation of love which has too fragile home, human heart, and when it leaves its home, the home will be destroyed. It is notable that the love has been personified and it acts like a person in the poem.

Mikhail Bakhtin is a well known theorist and a great thinker of twentieth century, whose fame was mostly because of his philosophy of language, his unique assert action about novel, some literary concepts such as "polyphony", "carnival", and "dialogism" which all are resting on the shed of a remarkable concept of "heteroglossia". Bakhtin wrote so many books in his lifelong, but he in "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics" (1929), points about form and meaning that: "There can be neither a first nor last meaning; it always exists among other meanings as a link in the chain of meaning, which in its totality is the only thing that can be real. In historical life, this chain continues infinitely, and therefore each individual link in it is renewed again and again, as though it were reborn" (Bakhtin, 1929).

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute-
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruin'd cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When the lute and lamp are broken, neither the notes and musical sounds of lute remain, nor the light of the lamp. It happens for human being as the love has secreted from his or her heart, the heart have been so mute and doesnot sing the happiness songs. At that time the only sound that it can produce, is the mournful or melancholy song. The poet compared this song to the sound of wind, when it is blowing under the ruined cell or like the sound of sorrowful waves which want to make aware the poor sailor, who was drowned and suffocated in the water of ocean.

The main subject matter and theme of the poem is so common, but it is expressed here expertly. The first stanza included some points to represents the love passion. The second stanza is the depiction of destruction of heart when is taking apart from it. The third stanza is pointing to the

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

situation of human heart, when the love departed from it and love finished. The last stanza depicts the fragileness and weakness of love when faced to some heavy obstacles and it mentions that it has no chance to be survive again.

In "Rabelais and His World" (1984) M. M. Bakhtin contends about formalism "as opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions'. 'Carnival was the true feast of time,' he adds, 'the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed'".

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! Who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

When two human beings fall in love and thinks that they have to love each other endlessly, the time will come that their love for each other will be died. Even though they used this love in order to feel secure, but in reality thir love is a short-lived one and come to its end. The weaker partners opposed to stronger one, feel difficulties of losing their love and bearing the torture and torment of lost love, but the stronger couples might be so powerful and overcome the bad feeling of misery of their lost love. For weaken couples, the toleration of this lost love is so difficult.

The poet asks from the Love the reason of selecting the fragile place for living as the human heart and dwelling place. He asks the reason of choosing human heart and the leaving reason of it, if it wants to be in this place, why it leaved it and pour it full of sadness. Love is the fragile and short- lived habitant of heart. Love chooses the frailest place which is human heart and goes away from it soon.

Also Bakhtin points to some points about form and content again in his "Discourse in the Novel" () that "form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

social phenomenon – social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning".

In *Poetic Presence and Illusion: Essays in Critical History and Theory*(1979), M. Krieger placed himself in a line equal to Matthew Arnold who was a modernist humanism and contends that, "if we share Arnold's loss of faith, we can go either of two ways: we can view poetry as a human triumph made out of darkness, as the creation of verbal meaning in a blank universe to serve as a visionary substitute for a defunct religion; or we can – in our negation – extend our faithlessness, the blankness of our universe, to our poetry. . . . Stubbornly humanistic as I am, I must choose that first alternative: I want to remain responsive to the promise of the filled and centered word, a signifier replete with an inseparable signified which it has created within itself. But I am aware also that my demythologizing habit, as modern man, must make me wary of the grounds on which I dare claim verbal presence and fullness".

J. H. Fowler notes on the poem of "The Flight of Love": "It would be difficult to find, either in earlier or in later English poetry, a dirge so full of music as this, where the sound not merely helps the sense, but seems even fuller or meaning than the actual words".

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

This lines are addressed to Love, again. Love selects heart as a living place and after some times leaves there and considers there as an unsafe place. The affections and passions of human heart give it a rude shaking to love like a flying in the sky. Love is the main aim of rational man, but his reason cannot bear it and mocks it in the same way, when the sun shines in the sky and mocks the clouds and sky in the cold winter. Love maybe built its nest in the highest place like eagle, but by coming the autumn and winter, it has to leave there and ridicules there.

International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

Literary Criticism: A Short History(1978), was written by Brooks and Wimsatt in order to explain about the differences between science and art and offer poetry and criticism as a bridge for decreasing the differences; "We can have our universals in the full conceptualized discourse of science and philosophy. We can have specific detail lavishly in the newspapers and in records of trials. . . . But it is only in metaphor, and hence it is par excellence in poetry, that we encounter the most radically and relevantly fused union of the detail and the universal idea".

3. Conclusion

By looking at the whole of article, it is obvious that the formalism has special outlook on form and they considered content and meaning at the second importance. So they have attention to meaning but thought the form catches the reader's eye and stands at the primary importance. Most of the Romantic poems are based on formalism attitudes, because they were written during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the dominant literary school was formalism. The poem of "The Flight of Love" has two dimensions: first love, which is the popular theme of Romantic era, second formal outlook, which is dominant because of its root which was in that time. This articles study this poem line by line from formalistic perspective and acts like a critical view on this poem. According to Empson, "The business of the critic is simply to show how the machine is meant to work, and therefore to show all its working parts in turn" (Empson, 1930).

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International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management (IJCEM)
Volume 1, Issue 12, March 2015

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