

LYRICISM IS THE KEYNOTES OF P.B. SHELLEY

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Abstract

The Lyricism of great Romantic poet is generally deemed unsurpassable either by their illustrious predecessors or by their meritorious successors. "Shelley was the loftiest and most spontaneous Sign in our language" says Arthur Symons. The purpose of this paper is to show that most of Shelley's lyrical poetry consists of emotion, individual as well as private, sweeping imagery, musical diction, and melodious rhythms characterized by the qualities of sweet poetic music.

Introduction:

Shelley has been praised as one of the greatest lyric poets. England has ever produced. By virtue of his lyricism, he has acquired a very high niche in the temple of English poetry. Lyricism means his lyrical quality. It is dominated by a charming expression of his individual or private emotion. According to Shelly "this power arises from within, like the color of a flower, which fades and changes as it is developed, and conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic whether of its approach or if its departure.

It can be evident that Shelley's lyricism involves a lot of things. To say the same thing in other words, the nature of Shelley's lyricism consists of many and various elements.

Main Elements of Shelley 'lyricism-

Individual Emotion

Emotion is the most striking element of Shelley's lyricism. Many critics say that it is individual emotion. It means excited state of mind or a strong feeling of any kind. It arises in Shelley's mind from his meditations on philosophical, social and political questions. It also arises in him from his identifying himself with a fanciful image, a character, etc, of his poem. We can say that this emotion is called Individual emotion because it is not divisible without loss of Identity and it springs when Shelley identifies himself with the individual in the world. For example, in the following lines Shelley represents his individual emotion when a Voice sings

Life of life! thy lips enkindle

With their love the breath between them:

And thy smiles before they dwindle

Make the cold air fire.....

(Prometheus Unbound)

Private Emotion

Shelley the lyricist is at his best, when he sings of his private emotion. Sometimes his personal emotion belongs to a mood of delight, but at other times it emanates from a mood of gloom. In his lyric "To Spirit of Delight" he flows out his joy in the address to the spirit of Delight in the following lines:

Thou art love and life! O come
Make once more my heart thy Nome.

When he is in a mood of gloom, his emotion touches our soul, like anything. The most famous of them are To Night, A Lament, Song and Ode to the West Wind. In his 'Ode to the West Wind' the personal cry becomes very piercing, and the agony of the poet's heart comes out poignantly in the lines:

O life me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life I bleed.

Music

Shelley's lyrics are extremely melodious and the rapture of song enlivens each one of them. The Skylark is a triumph of musical harmony and the melody of the poem rings in our ears. Each stanza of this melodious lyric can be sung to perfection. It is because of the musical quality of the lyrics that Shelley has been called a 'perfect singing god' by Swinburne, who himself was a great master of song. His melody in verse:

We looke before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught,
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Simplicity

Rapture and Simplicity are the two essential qualities of a lyric. Shelley's lyrics have this quality of simplicity in a marked degree. In this respect no poet except Burns can stand in comparison to him. Other poets like Wordsworth also have simplicity. "But none have combined with these gifts the two others that have made Shelley's poetry uniquely beautiful.

"Shelley's lyricism is incomparable.... never was the soul of poet so spontaneously lyrical.... Everything has the gift of lending it the sweetest and most liquid harmonies."

Conclusion:

Spontaneity, Rush and impetuosity, Intensity and Prophetic note and touch of humanism, these are another remarkable qualities of lyric which we find in Shelley's poetry also. His songs are pure inspirational & melodious. Many critics of all the ages since his day praised him high. In the words of J.A. Symonds- "In none of Shelley's greatest contemporaries was the lyrical faculty so paramount: and whether we consider his minor songs, his odes, or his more complicated choral dramas, we acknowledge that he was the loftiest and the most spontaneous singer in our language."



References:

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