

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN COLERIDGE'S POETRY

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Abstract

S.T. Coleridge as a poet has immense reputation in the Romantic Revival of England, even though he has penned a few numbers of poems in his life. Wordsworth's role in Romanticism was to extend the boundaries of thought and remove the veil of formality between Man and Nature. Coleridge, however, gave its music and concrete beauty to the intellectual side of the movement. The simplicity of language, flight of imagination and love for nature are the major characteristics of Romanticism, and Coleridge possesses all these qualities in abundance. There is no doubt that Coleridge's poetry represents the culmination of Romanticism in its present form. He is famous not only for his poetry but also for his work as a literary critic. His poetry manifests all the features for which Romanticism stands. He is most famous for his poems 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', 'Kubla Khan', 'Dejection: An Ode', and 'Frost at Midnight'. He has described the role of nature in these poems vividly and interestingly.

Key Words: Romantic Revival, Culmination, Romanticism, Flight, Abundance

Introduction:

Love for nature is one of the prominent features of all the romantic poets. The poetry of the age to which Coleridge belongs to is marked by a unique sensitiveness to the features of external nature. Like other romantic poets, Coleridge, a keen lover of nature has dated a new era in the history of English literature. When we access his description of nature, we feel we are in the lap of nature, His works, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', 'Dejection: An Ode', 'Kubla Khan', and 'Frost at Midnight' are packed with the colourful images of nature.

He does not depart from his contemporaries, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, P. B. Shelly, and John Keats, in his love for external nature. His poetry is more exclusively devoted to the theme of nature than that of the others. There is no full and direct description of nature in his poetry. He does not give any concrete portrayal of the form of object in the external world. Even some eminent critics have failed to see him as a true lover of nature. The subtle charm of nature is not associated with his literary works. It is also marked by some critics that his poetic genius reaches its highest and fullest expression in connection with the depiction of the supernatural elements but among his works there are also some exquisite poems on nature.

Treatment of Nature in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'

The different moods of the poet are reflected in different poems. His poem 'The Rime of Ancient Mariner' is packed with a huge number of beautiful natural images. The depiction of the sun shining, the mist, the fog surroundings, the ship, and the ice bergs are incomparable. He says:

“The fair breeze blew the, white foam fled,
The furrow follow free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.” (Part-II, Lines: 21-24)

Different colours of nature become the centre of attraction and make the poet to be in love with nature. S. T. Coleridge is found very sensitive, when old mariner is attracted by the beautiful colours of water snakes. He says:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.”

Treatment of Nature in 'Kubla Khan'

The interaction between man and nature has been pointed all over his poem 'Kubla Khan'. The poet uses extended metaphor to show how nature and the imagination are parts of reality which is deeper and more alive than the reality of everyday. He depicts Kubla Khan's "Stately pleasure-doom" (Line 2) as a wonderful place, but it pales beside the power of nature.

"A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!" (Lines: 14-16)

Here the pleasure-doom is a metaphor for men's desire to control nature. Nature is the other major image in this poem. It stands either for itself or it can be seen as an extended metaphor for the darker and deeper part of the human mind or human imagination.

The scenery of this poem is supernatural to a great extent. But the poet's subtle observation of nature makes it more natural. He describes the romantic chasm that touches the heart of all its readers.

“But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!” (Lines: 12 and 13)

Treatment of Nature in 'Dejection: An Ode'

In "Dejection: An Ode", we notice a great change in Coleridge's attitude towards nature. He reveals his philosophy of nature which is total contradictory to his earlier philosophy. In this poem Coleridge denies his earlier belief and asserts in this poem that in herself nature is cold and inanimate and takes whatever colour human fancy gives to her.

Here the external nature is very chaotic. The poet thinks after a few moments a thunder storm in the ocean. But it has got no effect in his mind. Wordsworth says:

"The anchor of my purest thoughts, the music, the guide,
The guide of my heart and soul
Of all my moral being."

Treatment of Nature in ' Frost at Midnight'

In ' Frost at Midnight, S. T. Coleridge describes nature as a source of wisdom. Human beings have made everything in the city, but God has made everything in nature. Even if something in nature seems unpleasant or hostile to life, it is still testifying to God's creative power.

Here Coleridge gives voice to his most intimate feelings and expresses his beliefs about nature. He also dwells upon the effect of the beauty of nature on poetic imagination and the role of Mother Nature in nourishing a child. The poet's love for nature is reflected in the opening line of the poem.

"The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before."(Lines: 1-3)

The first 23 lines of the poem set the mood for the poet's ' abstruse musing ' that makes him dwell on the mystery of Mother Nature. The 'Strange and extreme silentness ' allows Coleridge's mind to wander freely seeking its own reflection in the objects of nature.

Conclusion:

For Coleridge, nature has the capacity to teach joy, love, freedom and piety crucial characteristics for a worthy individual. His poetry is not the poetry of reasoning. Some poems are packed with immense morality. Like other poets of the romantic age, he writes poetry for the sake of poetry. In estimation, we say that Coleridge is a great poet of nature. His description of nature demonstrates that Coleridge is a great romantic poet, and a unique lover of nature.

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