

PDF - THEMES AND IMAGERY IN SELECTED ROMANTIC POEMS - researchcub.info "*The World is too Much with Us*", "*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*" and William Blake's "*London*" and "*The Garden of Love*".

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

The reason for embarking on this research work is to justify the thematic compositions and use of imagery by Romantic writers. These themes include nature, lure of the exotic and the supernatural. The images are conveyed through the use of literary elements such as metaphors, onomatopoeia, personification, similes, etc., to let the readers into a world of physical imagination which is what the Romantics make their works look like.

Also, is to justify the use of natural landscape to preach beauty, purity and goodness in nature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Romanticism as a very broad topic of study under poetry could be very strenuous in its generality; hence, the approach of this study confines the themes and imagery in selected Romantic poems. Though relevant references could be drawn from other Romantic poems, the data analysis would centre on William Blake's '*London*' and '*The Garden of Love*' as well as William Wordsworth's '*The World is Too Much With Us*' and "*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*".

An analytical method will be used in this research. Texts will be analyzed using the image-making, sound-making, and meaning making model which requires detailed explication of texts in terms of sound resources, diction and figurative components and the pattern of meanings generated.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In every research, problems arise and these problems pose a lot of questions to the researcher whose sole purpose is to make sure that the problems posed are solved to the best of his/ her findings. This research therefore, will endeavor to answer different questions bordering on the Romantic period for clarification of what the period is really all about. These questions include: What is Romanticism? What are the themes of the Romantic period? How are imageries conveyed by Romantics? Who are the major writers of the Romantic period?

In an attempt to give appropriate answers to these questions, the researcher will carry out thorough investigations on the Romantic period thereby making references to the works of other researchers and scholars who have worked on the Romantic age. Also few works of William Wordsworth and William Blake will be used in solving these questions so as to get information on the themes of the Romantic period and how best the Romantic writers use imageries to convey emotions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nature is not the ultimate reality, but it has a valuable role to play in the life of man. It is a real and not a deceptive

structure of forms and forces, it displays sublime order
and beauty in both action and being. (Wordsworth)

In a society where materialism rules, human beings are bound to explore every means in order to attain these material elements and in doing so, they devote their time and resources thereby having little or no time to appreciate nature. Thus, for man to appreciate nature again, the use of literature becomes very important as literature is seen as a weapon of change. During the Romantic era therefore, writers like William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, William Blake, Perry .B. Shelly and other romanticists used their works to clamor for a change in the society. The society they lived in was full of chaos as a result of the emergence of science and technology which gave birth to the invention of machines of all kinds. These inventions 'ate up' the society as they were filled with the glamour of this new technological breakthrough. Therefore there was little or no time for the indepth appreciation of the natural and the supernatural.

Religion to the people at the time of these inventions, was a disturbance and so they wanted little or nothing to do with it. Therefore, the appreciation of the supernatural was like a burden rather than a necessity just as the use of natural elements became a waste of time to them. Even though these natural elements help more in their lives than the machines that were used for the manufacturing of their products. These problems, and more were what the writers of this period viewed and were able to foresee that the future of Europe was not safe; therefore, in a bid to try and draw man back to nature, they decided to use their writings to preach the essence of nature and to negate the corrupt practices prevalent at that time. The Romantic era which lasted from 1780-1870, was preceded by the Neo-Classical Period. Bygrave (1996, pVII) describes Romanticism as a European movement which came to affect all the arts

in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is a very
generalized way of claiming coherence for a vast range
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The Romanticists believed in innovation and this is why they deviated from the norms of writing. They believed in change and not stagnancy because they believed that the only constant thing in life is change which can only be caused by the individual. They believed that change starts when the individual sees the chaos in the society, and tries to change it by all means. Romanticists negated the neo-classicists as the latter adhered strictly to their rules and regulations in writing. On this Bodunde states that:

Romanticism came as a direct negation of Neo-classicism.

While the Neo-classical poets emphasized adherence to a fixed format of artistic composition (artificial rules of poetry like, rhythm, rhymes, etc.) the Romanticists favoured a spontaneous and unforced creative strategy of production. (Bodunde, 2007, p235)

This deviation from the norms of writing brought about impeccable changes through the use of the theme of nature, the supernatural, and the vivid imageries discussed in the works of Romanticists. The focus on the natural and the supernatural is to emphasize on the beauty of life in which the Romanticists find themselves as imaginistic and visionary. The writings of the Romanticists was filled with spontaneous flow of emotions which are expressed in solitude as their writings center on the events they experienced in their lifetime right from their childhood to adulthood. Hopes for a better future was therefore expressed using imageries intensified by paying great attention to describing moments in their lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objective of this study are to examine the thematic focus of selected Romantic poems and evaluate the various images which are employed to develop the subject matter. In doing this, one needs to establish the nature of the Romantic aesthetic tradition.

The Romanticists believe in using the external to change the internal workings of man; these external elements are seen in natural landscape which is made of beauty and beauty is seen as good, pure and peaceful. However, due to the emergence of science and technology, man got separated from the use of natural elements and so, did not appreciate nature enough to see that nature is the only tool with which man can exist peacefully. In addition to the presentation of nature and its spiritual composition as the only way for peaceful co-existence, this research work will emphasize on the unfeeling nature of man towards natural elements and how insignificant they place nature despite the importance which these writers attach to nature.

Furthermore, the wide gap in social class which was caused by science and technology will be analysed (though not over-emphasized) as not only did the invention of machines cause man to deviate from nature, it also made the society segregated in terms of class. This is perhaps the early beginnings of what is now known as Marxism which the Modern period writers now adopts in their writings.

Finally, the aim and objective of this research is to make intended researchers appreciate the Romantic age and see it as, perhaps, an age of enlightenment which can be referred to as the soul and beginning of literary writings.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF STUDY

For so many years, so many writers at one point or the other have examined Romantic works in various ways, that is, the form, themes, techniques, and the use of imagery in Romanticism. This research shall however, be limited to the extensive appraisal of the themes and imagery used by Romantic writers.

Hence, "Themes and Imagery in Selected Romantic Poems" and the data which will be used for analyzing these two concepts are William Wordsworth's "***The World is too Much with Us***", "***I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud***" and William Blake's "***London***" and "***The Garden of Love***".

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