

The Mystic Nature, Spiritualism and Flow of Life - A Comparative aspect of Romanticism and Chhayawad with respect to Pant and Wordsworth

¹Harish Yadav, ²Dr. A. K. Singh, ³Dr. Savitri Tripathi

¹Scholar, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur

²Professor (English Dept.) Govt College Pali, Korba (C.G.)

³Professor & Head Dept. of English Govt. J.P. Verma P.G. Arts & Commerce College, Bilaspur (C.G.)

Abstract

Chhayawad, literally means '*a reflection in the mirror*' was a literary movement in the era of Hindi literature in between 1920-30. Romanticism and Mysticism were its chief aspects along with which it also became a cradle of artistic freedom to connect poetry with life experiences of common people. It was rich in themes of love and nature, the idea of human existence, meaning of life and themes of mystic and spiritual significance. Romanticism, on the other hand emerged in Europe in the latter half of 18th century and was at the zenith between 1800-1850. Like Chhayawad, Romanticism's main focus was on subjectivity, individualism, asceticism, and a liberty from rules that restricted expression of human thoughts and experiences. It regarded imagination assuming a much higher status than realism and reflected a love for nature, beauty and devotion towards the divine spiritual forces. William Wordsworth and Sumitranandan Pant were the representative poets of Romanticism and Chhayawad respectively and in their verses one can identify a seeker of truth and beauty with the curiosity and inquisitiveness of a child, reflections of innocent, pure and sanctified aspects of nature building a bridge between man and nature as one. The paper attempts to contrast and discuss specifically the aspects of mysticism, liberalism and love for beauty and nature reflected in the poetries of Pant and Wordsworth and the brilliance of its poetic power.

keywords: Mysticism, Spiritualism, Flow of Life, liberalism, nature

In Poetic compositions the poets often use the metaphor of a flowing river or stream to represent the continuous, dynamic nature of life. Basically found in the poems of nature the flowing stream emphasizes the idea of accepting change, adapting to circumstances, and finding one's own path amidst the currents of experience. The imagery highlights both the

beauty and challenges inherent in the journey of life. On the other hand Mysticism has close connection with spiritualism as it refers to a an ecstasy or 'altered state of consciousness' which conveys a meaning of spiritual significance. It is an act of developing an insight into the absolute, ultimate and hidden truths mostly of spiritual significance. With its reference to the Greek origin the term Mysticism shows a close affinity with the medieval Christianity, however in the modern context the term refers to 'extraordinary experiences and states of mind'. The term encompasses various mystical experiences of the mind that are extraordinary and transcendental.

In the age of Romanticism, Mysticism became an important aspect of the romantic poetry and according to UK Essays 2013, Mysticism formed a large part of romantic poetry and with poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge who have been credited with the title of being the pioneers of the English Romantic poetry. Their use of mysticism in poetry revived the older poetic form and developed a perceptive imaginative vision and insight not only in literature but also in life. William Wordsworth was one of the major poets of the Romantic era due to his distinguished poetic form and style .

Wordsworth was one of the major imaginative poets of the Romantic era due to the fact his works were always distinguished from other Romantic poets because of his illumined spiritual vision as a mystic as he had a fantastic ability to express his personal beliefs and thoughts through his work. Mysticism could be viewed as the heart of Wordsworth's poetry and the source of its inspiration. (UK Essays 2013).

William Wordsworth is popularly known as a pantheist who through his mysticism believed that man can have a confrontation with the divine through nature because it was the divine spirit that pervades in all living beings and objects of nature. This is the reason that his poetry is the appreciation of nature or in other words appreciation of the divine that defined his vision of life. He defined peace pervading in human life only through a life lead in harmony with nature, therefore man must consider nature has his part and should never try to subdue the nature. Wordsworth emphasized the importance of imagination as he felt that imagination was the most idealistic way to perceive the one in many. The idea is expressed well in the following lines of Prelude where he expresses as under:

“Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And reason in her most exalted mood.”

(Prelude, Book IV)

Wordsworth is unique and one of its own kind as drifted from normal mysticism it is nature mysticism. The mystical experiences of Wordsworth were embedded in his treatment of nature wherein they transcended the five human senses and were beyond that as he focuses upon the attainment of unearthly and divine experiences. The mysticism of Wordsworth is different from that of Neo Platonic mysticism or the Christian mysticism as it contains in itself the sublime expressions of Blake. In his work Ode on Intimations of Immortality Wordsworth talks about the human life as something sprouting from the divine origin and finally meeting its divine destiny.

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life’s star
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar;
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From Gold, who is our home”

In his works Wordsworth regards man as a child of God and many a times he has used phrases like 'pilgrims of eternity', 'child of immortality' which clearly conveys his idea that he felt man not as a separate entity existing on the planet but one of the creations of God just like nature and other objects in the nature. His utter belief in infinity is confirmed when he speaks " : “Our destiny, our being’s heart and home, I Is with infinitude, and only there”; and that “the great thought by which we live” is “infinity and God.”

Sumitranandan Pant is regarded as one of the pillars of Chhayawad in Hindi literature. The motto with which Romanticism emerged in the west, Chhayawad emerged in Hindi literature. It was the time when the poets were striving to revive the old existing poetic form with its difficult language structure particularly the Khadi boli and Braj. The use of simpler language conveying the thoughts of a common man, his day to day life experiences was emphasized rather than composing literary forms exclusively related to heaven, hell and God. The simplicity of the language led to better forms and styles of expression and nature was considered omnipresent like God , that had divine significance like that of a mother who gives, feeds and nurtures her children. Life and death were regarded as the two absolute truths on the earth and nature was considered as an important medium to feel oneself nearer to God and divinity.

In the context Pant's *Pallav Pravesh* emerged as a masterpiece that conveyed all the representative thoughts of Chhayawad. Mahadevi Verma, one of the eminent poet of

Chhayawad expressed her fortune to have been born in a liberal family as the birth of a girl child at that time was considered burdensome. Pant expressed that the literary figures of his times was after idealism and idealistic thoughts who believed firmly in the present according to which they wished to mould the human life and its ways, and this according to Pant was one of the greatest satire and sarcasm on humanity.

Pant's first phase of Chhayawad poems was from 1916- 35 in which some of his eminent works include *Veena*, *Jyotsana*, *Pallav*. Among these *Pallav* is regarded as the zenith of creative forces and energy within him and this work is positioned as a masterpiece among all his compositions. His second phase of Chhayawad was of the progressive ideas wherein he was occupied and deeply influenced by the philosophies of Karl Marx and Freud. During this phase he made an exit from the conscious beauty and tried to analyze various aspects of human life in the light of reality. Some of the noteworthy works of this phase included *Yugant*, *Gun- Vaani* and *Gramya*. The third phase in Pant's literary career was of Mysticism and Spiritualism when he was influenced by the Arvind Dhara and his works of those times reflect the ponderings of a poet's mind in hyper imaginative world of mysticism and spirituality. Some of the eminent works of this time include *Suvarna Dhuli*, *Atima*, and *Rajat Shikhar*.

Pant is one of the representative poets of Romanticism in Hindi literature and his verses reflect his love for beauty, nature and human. Even he accepts the silence of the nature as a mute invitation. In his work *Granthi* he expresses the feelings of a young poet and his hyper imaginative dreamy vision. *Granthi* is all about the shattered dreams of a young heart, a pathetic love story of a young lover who had been defeated in his love life. This poetic composition presents a picture to show that a society and social mindset resting upon the foundation of medieval age idealisms is unable to recognize the worth of true love and happiness.

The voices in the poetries of Pant are the revolutionary voices that express dissatisfaction towards the older orthodox values existing in the social platform but at the same time the mind is puzzled and dismayed over the introduction of new idealisms, its development and acceptance in future. The poetic mind seems to be suspended between the old and the new, between the traditional and the modern, thus a very sensitive phase of transition becomes the subject of Pant's poetic style.

The idea is justified in Pant's *Parivartan* where on one hand he appreciates the grandeur of majestic golden age and on the other hand talks about the impermanency of things in life as an important aspect. He expresses that what exists today will not be forever, therefore change is an inevitable phenomenon ruling life on earth. The poet is unhappy about the present condition of his nation as it is enslaved by the Britishers and to impart happiness to his mind he returns back to the golden past of his India and remembers the grandeur of magnificent past. His depressed mind is looking for the change to happen, he wishes his country to be free and independent but having no choice at that time he is left with no other alternative but just to live in the imaginative grand past of nation.

Pant's Romanticism like that of Wordsworth is pining for liberty, happiness and positive changes. His expectations have a tint of positive change and shaping of a new world which is the main subject of his poetic consciousness. Revolutionary voices for freedom echoed in the verses of Wordsworth during 17th century when both in his verses and prose he favoured agrarian independence. However there has been detected a radical strain in the historical sensibilities in Wordsworth when during his time in France he developed a sympathetic attitude towards the English Republican traditions. He had also composed sonnets in 1802 that favoured British Freedom and individual liberty quite opposed to the despotic Napoleonic regime. The sonnets composed by Wordsworth during those times are expressing his aspirations in accordance with a true Commonwealth. Wordsworth's attitude towards the socio political scenario were greatly shaped by the views of John Milton by whom he was much influenced in those times. In 1802 when Dorothy Wordsworth had read Milton's sonnets to William, he claimed that he 'took fire' from it and felt sad for Bonaparte. His earliest sonnets thus became remarkable as *Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty*. Wordsworth has always been regarded as a poet for the cause of freedom in all respects. He had a moderate temperament and state of mind due to which all sorts of restrictions were intolerable for him. Wordsworth's liberty was a positive expectation for change in society to create harmony.

Pant had composed revived literary forms and to understand it one could not employ the older perspectives and outlook, therefore a new vision and outlook was needed to understand the deeper concepts of his poetries. In his work *Pallav* Pant has employed a matured poetic diction as compared to other contemporary poets of his time. In *Pallav* Pant has symbolically reflected the prospects of change and newness in life that brings forth lot of unseen prospects.

Pant expresses that when one looks at the fresh saplings and new leaves he can think about the prospective bright future with lot of promises.

The emergence of the new and fresh leaves also signifies the departure of the old and worn out, therefore there is a dual significance of change and unless the older departs newer cannot come, therefore it is the inevitable change that acts as a gateway for the older to depart and newer to arrive. Pant expects his readers to accept change as a mandatory fact of life and then he carries his readers to the much deeper concepts of change where he talks about birth and death as cycle to continue till the world exists. He connects the idea with the law of nature that itself is no less than the divine spiritual power showing the simplicity of accepting change as ruling factor of life.

The main inspiration behind Romanticism in the west was love for nature and beauty and to signify the idea that art is for art's sake, but the ruling factors behind emergence of Chhayawad in Hindi literature were the socio political conditions of the country and the British rule in India. Chhayawadis on the one hand reacted against the rigid rules of poetic composition and also in the other hand they reacted against the rigid British power, hence they not only looked for artistic freedom but also the freedom of their nation. The Chhayawadis favoured the free flow of artistic expressions through which they wished to bring forth the disillusionment and problems of the individuals existing in the world.

Individualism was an important aspect of Romanticism and Chhayawad and its basic idea pointed the fact that all values were human centred and therefore the individual was of supreme importance. Individualism emphasized self reliance, self respect and respect for other entities of nature. The theory merged with Romanticism in the respect that it included the celebration and cherishing of inspirational powers of the nature, a glorification of individuality and passions, emotions. It also stressed upon revolting against set traditions, questioning its authority in rational way and infusion of spiritual and supernatural. The idea of juxtaposing Individualism in Romanticism as well as Chhayawad asserted the individuality of artistic expressions, cultivating relationship with nature to be in its close proximity and developing a trust in subjective experiences.

Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* is an epic of individualism which is an account of his personal experiences richly laden with flowery language and fantastic imageries. In this poem Wordsworth not only describes the beauty of the place but also his experiences as a thinker and an individual. While appreciating the beauty of the place it is his personal and individual

experience that speaks to another individual: *for nature can so inform/ the mind that is within us, so impress/ With quietness and beauty...that all which we behold/ is full of blessings.*(125-134) .

Through his personal experiences he describes the place beautifully and requests his sis Dorothy to come and visit the place by showing the strong connection of its beauty with an individual mind. Thus the value of a place does not come from its mere description but from the individual experiences, therefore the individual is centred at all human experiences. The poem has been composed not with the motto of describing the *Tintern Abbey* but with the idea of reflecting that how individual experiences make a memory everlasting. The idea of copying a single experience is impossible even if the place has been described with all its details unless one gets an individual experience. The experience is therefore unique and everlasting to him.

Pant's collection of poems like Vaani, Pallav and Gunjan represent individualism in the light of Chhayawad poetic compositions as they are all the wanderings of a lonely soul and his artistic expressions in seeking the meaning of life and individual experiences by presenting man as a divine immortal spirit. Pant's *Aansu* and *Uchchawaas* are the representative poems of individual experiences of life talking about happiness and sorrows. The poems are not self centred to the poet's personal experiences, in fact the language used and the emotions expressed point to the universal feelings experienced by all, therefore the motto of Chhayawad related to Individualism reflects the idea "*Swa me Sarvanihit*" meaning that the "Self contains the Absolute".

In Chhayawad almost all the poets have presented their personal experiences as 'my experiences' in their works. The main motive behind this expression is an intention of the modern man to attain social freedom to express himself honestly. It was felt that through characters, characterization and their experiences it was not possible to express the personal experiences and feelings therefore it was felt that individual freedom was closely in relationship with expression of self. This expression of self was an honest expression free from any kind of traditional and religious veils as it was seen during the Bhaktikaal. In *Uchchawaas* and *Aansu* Pant has openly accepted his honest thoughts to get connected with the female character where he expresses, "The girl was my fascinating friend". At this point Pant totally rejects the so called feudal morality and openly proposes the girl. Similarly

Nirala had also composed some mournful verses on the death of his daughter. In *Vanbela* Nirala attacked the social orthodoxy and modern capitalists.

Wordsworth's poetic consciousness worked fairly in the portrayal of self and so he used the language very meticulously to stabilize his identity in a transitional world and at the same time how identity was a problem. In his work *The Prelude* there is a confused vision of a fragmented self as his self formed and presented is two dimensional; one that lives in changing relationships and the other self that lives moments of life. Wordsworth project his idea of looking into the self right from he beginning of his childhood for which he travels back into those times. The search for his identity and notion of self makes him explore his childhood that was in constant companionship with nature aspiring him to make some philosophic compositions. Wordsworth also talks about other external factors that influenced his identity and there he takes into account his confrontation with the French revolution. He supported the revolution at the initial stage

The prelude reflects Wordsworth's attempt to establish his self identity by recalling the recollections of his past. Time to time he switches into some past moments of his life, correlates the present and reconstructs his identity. There is a different between his poetic identity and his self. He wishes to establish his stable self between the unstable past and present travel.

Self realization and expression of the honest self were the main focus of the life as per the Romantics. The self in the romantics was a kind of seed which was destined to develop with their own initiative. The Romantic writers were inward in which they valued the individual experiences above all. As individualism says that that all values are human centred therefore it opposes any kind of authority and various manners of the society to control the individual interest. The same principles formed the basis of Chhayawad the era of personal freedom of expression in Hindi literature that became a turning point in the history of Hindi literature. Poets like Pant, Nirala and Mahadevi Verma that were the eminent figures of Chhayawad stressed more upon the expression and reflection of self and personal experiences that not only presented the poetic identity of the poet but the self reflection. Thus to a great extent the idea of juxtaposing Romanticism and Chhayawad with respect to the honest interpretations of the poets Pant and William Wordsworth is a successful attempt to analyze the impact of the new poetic age and its impact on the society and mindset of those times. It was a trend to revive the traditional existing form of poetry to make it reachable and

accessible to the common people as their subjects and as a mirror in which they could see their reflection. Thus in a true sense both the poetic eras in the field of English and Hindi literature truly signified the idea that Literature is a mirror of the society.

Citations

Dixit, Gaurav. A Study of Mysticism in William Wordsworth Poetry. 2021

Lee, Chia Jung. Locating the Self in Temporality: The Wordsworthian Self and The Prelude.

The Wenshan Review of Literature and Culture. Vol 10.2 June 2017

Romanticism thinks of growth as self realization. Lancaster University UK.
www.lancaster.ac.uk

Chhayawad. Wikipedia

Samad, Dr Haybat Abdul. Liberty in Wordsworth's sonnets. European Scientific Journal.
August 2018

