



Research Paper

Importance of Romantic Period in Modern Day English

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Abstract: The aim of this research paper is to analyse the significance of romantic era in English Literature. This era brought a revolutionary change in English Literature and transformed English Literature to a vast extent. Romanticism era began spanning approximately 1800-1850. This was totally in contrast to existing idea of English literature and it emphasised individual heroism that changed the overall concept of humanity. It stressed upon human emotions and individual feelings instead of stressing upon cultural artificiality. This study has provided a constructive overview on ways this era influenced area of English Literature. It is based upon a secondary research method that aided in finding relevant literature on romantic era. By reviewing those articles this research paper has been developed to provide a clear concept of ways romanticism marks a milestone for starting a new era in English Literature.

Keywords: Romanticism, Modern era, Cultural artificiality, Human emotions, Individual feelings

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Romanticism in English Literature was a revolutionary movement that originated towards the end of the 18th century in Europe. Romanticism is considered as a ballad or tale of an adventurous movement, which stresses individual heroism. Romantic Movement is in contrast to elegant formality and it is marked as a revolution in literary style and content creation. This paper has described the importance of Romantic period in English literature. A literature review has been provided that includes orientalism, industrial and agricultural revolution, blue-culture studies, influence of modern English on romance, discussion about Walter Scott's influence, and "Echo" in literature. Using secondary data, this research has been done and it reached its findings. A brief discussion about all findings has been shared in this research paper.

1.2 Background

Romantic period in English Literature is considered a revolutionary time. It brought Artistic, intellectual, literary as well as musical movement started across Europe. Many renowned poets, novelists, dramatists, writers came out of their shells and contributed their masterpieces in English literature to enrich it. However, romantic period is mostly influenced by poetry that is called "Age of Poetry". In this period, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Byron have significant contributions that English Literature still perishes in modern time. Blake was the pioneer of the Romantic period, who wrote "*Songs of Innocence and Experience*". After 10 years of this poetry, Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote "*Lyrical Ballads*" (Canli, 2019). All poets from this era believed in individualism and personal experience that they showed in their literary pieces.

1.3 Aim

The present study aims at analysing the significance of romantic era in the English Literature.

1.4 Objectives

- To analyse diverse phases and different cultural-phenomenon of romantic period
- To evaluate major changes in English literature after romantic period started.
- To find literary benefits of romantic period in English literature.

1.5 Research questions

- To what extent Romantic period has changed English literature
- What are the ways to differentiate Romantic period in English literature.

1.6 Rationale

The Romantic period was influenced by French revolution. Social issues can be found in Blake's poetry. Thereafter, all poets, novelists, and writers started living in an imaginary world where they lost connection with reality. Most writers used Nature as their theme of poetry to reveal their imaginary feelings (Abd Allah, 2021). Therefore, most writings were based on their imagination and feelings, which influenced their next generation too. Even in today's time poets are influenced by their writing style, though a mixture of different themes can be found now.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Orientalism

Poets in Romantic period adopted various themes and one of them was Orientalism. Here, they mentioned some recognisable elements beyond their British culture, such as Arabian and African culture. It included art, philosophy, costume, religion, legendary people, and so on. They used Orientalism as an exotic setting in poetry. For instance, Shelley elaborated on "Safie", an Arabian maiden who was a liberated character in "*Frankenstein*". Egyptian furniture was used in the drama, which was from the romantic era. A major reason behind the influence of Orientalism in the Romantic period is French translation of oriental tales "*The Arabic Nights's Entertainment*" (Mamarasulova, 2020). An orientalist translated twelve volumes that influenced English literature incredibly. Byron also presented a keen interest in orientalism that can be found in his "Turkish Tales" series. In that period this piece of writing won maximum heart and was named "Literary Lion". Introducing orientalism in romantic poetry was accepted by most of the romantic poets as their imagination could be formed in exotic pictures and through word explanations. Romanticism in their writing was enriched by the usage of Orientalism (Mamarasulova and Mamarasulova, 2020). Coleridge was famous for supernatural writing where he has mentioned orientalism, such as Abyssinian "*damsel with a dulcimer*" in "*Kubla Khan*". He used strange names, surroundings, irregular stanzas, and tippie sound effects in his writing. This emphasized Orientalism more effectively.

2.2 Industrial and agricultural revolution, and Romanticism

In the romantic era, poets were influenced by the Industrial and Agricultural revolutions. However, the major impact of this revolution can be found in Blake's poetry. His "*Songs of Innocence and Experience*" was based on the industrial revolution where he mentioned a brutal picture of society (CANLI, M., 2019). The part of "Innocence" was a description of the situation before industrial revolution and "Experience" described post effect of the revolution where children were punished in society and forced to work at lower wages than adults. In that era, children were found working at the age of 4. Here, Blake's poetry expressed the innocence of childhood that was compared to lamb, a sign of Jesus Christ.

However, later on, he wrote another part of poetry where he mentioned about evil and fears of a human life that they faced, which is symbolised as the tiger. In this section, he introduced the corrupted face of the world and their evil activities with innocent people. These explanations are based on people's experiences after the industrial and agricultural revolutions (CANLI, M., 2019). It showed the brutal side of humans and their fierce activities. His explanation was evaluated in Romanticism form; however, it was affected by the revolution and a clear picture was shown in every sentence.

2.3 Blue cultural studies and Romanticism as a revolutionary movement

In the 15th century "Blue cultural study" was introduced. At that time poets used sea as different meanings, which symbolised it as powerful and serene at the same time, it was also categorized as beautiful, yet dangerous. In Plato and Causer's literature, they had used sea as a cultural theory to bring romanticism in writing. However, in the romantic era, poets use Sea in their writing, where they compared it to land and sea (Mentz, 2009). In their comparison, land was defined as elderly and human, and sea was elaborated as chaotic and divine. In Byron's poetry, the sea can be found as symbolized in the mentioned manner. Poets from the romantic era lived in their imagery world. They used 'personification' to symbolise characters that were emotional in nature.

2.4 Modern English writing and influence of Romanticism

Romanticism in English literature has changed the entire thought of people. In old English realism was preferred and in the romantic era entire thought was shifted to an imaginary world. In this period, poets celebrated individualism in their work. Their feelings, emotions, and intuitions were prioritized in writing. As an example, Keats's poetry and letters can be presented. They used to cherish childhood to bring nostalgia in writing where they could celebrate their pasts. These features were completely ignored in old English. A common figure of romantic poets was Nature, where they personified natural elements and expressed their feelings. For example, Wordsworth's poetries were based on nature only. He described nature to some other

level than other poets in Romanticism. Supernaturalism was another feature of Romanticism that was developed broadly in Coleridge's poetry. Place and space theory was used in Romanticism, which was mentioned in Modern poetry also (Rycroft, 2017). Later on, many features of Romanticism influenced Modern literature effectively that writers used these features in autobiography too. This made their writing livelier.

2.5 Walter Scott's influence on Jane Austen's literature

Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen had a common ground in their novels. They both maintained social class in their novels. Considering "**Pride and Prejudice**" and "**Emma**", a similarity could be found, which their high-class society was. In Walter Scott's "**Waverley**" he introduced high standard society to elaborate their plots. However, apart from this, they both used fiction in their novel that was another common feature (Bujak, 2014). Though a controversy could be found about these two novelists, they had many similarities in their writings. Jane expressed her opinion about Walter Scott that she did not like him.

However, Walter gave a positive review on her novel, where he paused about their writing style and sense. In the Romantic era, contribution of Jane Austen was remarkable. Reason behind her usage of high-class society was, she used to write from her knowledge rather than exploring. It was one of her characteristics (Wilkes, 2019). Her novels were based on her experience; therefore, it made the novel more realistic. Romanticism was evaluated through her novels.

2.6 Echo, meaning of early Modern English

Echo in English literature has been used in several ways to make the drama more effective. It impacted mostly in the Early Modern period. It highlights arbitrary sonic-properties of language and also reveals an alternative meaning within a word. This feature can reveal unsaid words. Therefore, it is mostly used on stage to perform drama. In modern literature, echo was used to explore ways to make a sound or music performance more effective, even if it cannot be heard (Anderson, 2017). While reading dramas, readers can feel those words through this feature of writing.

Echo was used for entertainment purposes that were performed on the stage for Queen Elizabeth. Ben Jonson used Echo as a character in his "**Cynthia's Revels**". In the same book, Jonson introduced Echo in a dance genre. Dramatists involved echo in their writings in various forms to make their drama more effective (van der Miesen, 2020). This feature brought romanticism with a realistic effect. However, Echo was featured in such a way that could be felt while reading those dramas.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology can be called a particular procedure or technique which is used by a researcher to identify and select materials, and process and analysis of that information on a particular topic. In this section of a research paper, a researcher allows a reader to understand and critically evaluate the overall validity as well as reliability of a study.

3.2 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is an important part of research as research is based on that research philosophy. It is a belief about in which way data is gathered and analyzed. In this research work, interpretivism philosophy is chosen. In this philosophy, values and beliefs of a person are emphasized. Writers of the romantic age had different values and beliefs, they used various symbols also in their pieces of works. Hence, to analyse as well as evaluate those, interpretivism philosophy will be appropriate (Ryan, 2018). This will be applicable as in this research, research will analyze the literature of the romantic period and interpret its influence on literature of the modern era.

3.3 Research approach

A research approach is considered to be a plan which helps to collect, analyse and interpret data step by step. In this research, an inductive approach is chosen which will be appropriate for interpretivism research philosophy. This approach is helpful for advancement of one's knowledge as well as to develop some new theories. This needs qualitative research methods and case studies, ethnography, and so on (Woiceshyn et al. 2018).

3.4 Research design

Research design is considered to be proper planning or a blueprint that guides researchers to progress in their research properly, maintaining each and every step: constructing questions related to research, collecting data or information to answer those questions, and delivering those answers as outcomes (Abutabenjeh et al. 2018). This research will also follow this guidance.

3.5 Data collection method

The data collection process is an important part of research work. For this research work, secondary data collection methods will be applicable. This method will help in research on a literary topic, as this method approaches case study, grounded theory study, ethnography, and so on (Abutabenjehet *al.* 2018). Hence, this secondary data will help to progress a researcher of literature.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is another important part of research work. After collecting data, it is important to interpret and analyze those collected data, so that the researcher can conclude. This analysis part is important as the researcher explains his/her analysis as well as the importance of that analysis, the way this research can be useful for future generations (Abutabenjehet *al.* 2018). Thematic data-analysis approach has been undertaken in current research.

3.7 Sampling

The purposive-sampling strategy has been selected in this current study for choosing relevant kinds of literature regarding the Romantic era. This sampling method will be quite effective for a qualitative research approach, as this provides a deep understanding of various complex issues. Literature is closely connected to different complexities of human beings and their lives. Hence, this sampling method will be effective enough in this research (Ames *et al.* 2019).

3.8 Summary

A research method is quite important and effective for every research. When it comes to research on literary contexts, qualitative research methods will be fruitful enough to conclude. This qualitative research method is flexible as well as participant-oriented and helps researcher to accomplish his/her work lively. Hence, in the case of literature, this research approach can be applicable (Alase, 2017). Interpretivism philosophy, deductive approach, proper research design, secondary data collection method, thematic data-analysis and purposive-sampling strategy will be applicable here to understand the influence of romantic literature on modern era.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

Orientalism- A positive cultural phenomenon

Orientalism combined the eastern and western cultures which proved to be helpful enough for some researchers. This influences the literature of the eighteenth as well as the nineteenth century, Orientalism had a positive influence on the Romantic era to some extent (Mamarasulova, 2019).

Orientalism- A negative cultural phenomenon

Like positive attitudes, there are negative attitudes also towards orientalism. This is thought to be a philosophy, with which western people are taking advantage of western people. There was a prejudice that orientalism enriched only British culture, not any of eastern culture. Hence, some eastern writers went against this (Mamarasulova, 2019).

Integration of Romantic literature and cultural politics

The romantic period started in a time of instability and restlessness due to industrial and agricultural revolution. In that time, poets and writers wrote against the artificiality of industrialism and for nature. This affected networks and their political implications (Parker, 2019).

Religious prophecy and romantic literature

Romantic literature is closely related to human life, which itself relates to religion as well as its prophecy. Poets of this romantic age, especially William Blake, used to put this matter in his poems (CANLI, 2019).

Relation to early modern English literature and new thalassology

A sense of sensibility was introduced for the sea in the Romantic Age, however, early modern literature presented the sea as a source of both happiness and sorrow. According to new thalassology, the sea is related to connectivity between humanity and the world (Mentz, 2009).

Romantic revolution in the 18th century was in contrast to early ages

Plato and other writers of the early ages mentioned the sea as a source of fear and sorrow, whereas, 18th century focused on the love for nature as well as natural elements including the sea (Mentz, 2009).

Romanticism Influenced political ideology, sense of individualism and echo aroused

Political ideology was influenced by literature of the Romantic age.

A new sense regarding individualism occurred, despite focus on group. Another important thing is an echo, found in Romantic Literature.

4.2 Discussion

Orientation is fundamentally considered to be a connection between eastern and western cultures. Every culture has an inevitable impact on the culture of that area, at that time. When a connection was made between these two cultures, this also affected literature, especially of the western countries. Writers as well as researchers and scholars of western countries, especially Britain, started to study literature of eastern world. To understand, interpret, and analyse, they started to learn the alphabets of many languages, such as Arabic, which were popular in the eastern world. Learning those alphabets helped them to understand and interpret literature. Understanding the importance of that literature, a new tendency was introduced to the world. Literary texts were translated into different languages (Mamarasulova, 2019).

Translation of literary texts in various languages helped people all over the world to know other regions of the world. Apart from this, this translation and knowledge of other literary habits influence English literature to a great extent. It influences British literature in the eighteenth as well as nineteenth-century literary texts. The industrial and agricultural revolution influenced the literature of that particular time. Some writers wrote against industry, and for nature. This love for nature, an important feature of the romantic age, was influenced by orientalism.

“*Oxford English Dictionary*” suggested that orientalism focuses on the research on eastern language, alphabets as well as pronunciation and vocabulary. Hence, it was said by some scholars that orientation, the study of eastern culture and literature, was especially based on Islamic culture. The science, religion, culture of Islamic religion was especially studied and analysed (Mamarasulova, 2019). Hence, only Islamic religion has affected romantic age literature. On the other hand, it was also said that orientation influenced especially the British or western culture, not that of eastern areas.

Study of Mee (2005), focused on dangerous enthusiasm through which a relationship between romanticism in the 18th century and cultural politics in that era had been established. Romantic literature has focused on the love of human beings for nature. Despite the instability and restlessness of the industrial and agricultural revolution, the lives of people become insatiable. They started to move from the countryside and rural areas to the main parts of towns in search of jobs (CANLI, 2019). This was closely related to power and politics as well as religion. Rebel against the system of slavery, power and politics was the main cause of restlessness in the society. Poets, as well as writers of this era, started to write against these political factors and artificiality regarding this. This affected networks and their political implications (Parker, 2019). Their writings emphasized, again and again, nature, its beauty, and love for nature, which is considered to be the main feature or characteristic of this romantic era.

Besides the againstism of artificiality, romantic literature focused on religious factors also. They combined these. William Blake's famous literary pieces “*Songs of Innocence*” and “*Songs of Experience*”, focus on these religious factors where human beings and lives are closely related to innocence as well as experience. These creations were considered as verses for children; however, further research enlightened the deeper meaning of those poems, that these are much related to human life and their incidents of joy as well as sorrow. The happy and comfortable life of human beings can be symbolised as innocence, whereas, this life, when disrupted by some cruel incidents like death or any other evil things or incidents, is also related to experience.

All of these are closely related to religious issues as well as prophecy.

Blue culture related to the marine world is closely connected to the theme of new thalassology, which especially discusses human relation with sea. From the very beginning of human existence, sea proved to be an element of much interest, and it is evident in the English literature of different ages, and writings of different writers. When human beings did not know anything about the sea, for them it was a mystery, and also a source of sorrow. This can be observed in various pieces of art, such as “*The Seafarers*” and so on. In the writing of Plato also this was evident. In this aspect, new thalassology was introduced to highlight the importance of the sea and its effect on human culture, and this is called Blue Culture. However, the fathers of the term 'new thalassology', Peregrine Purcell and Nicholas Horden focused on Mediterranean culture regarding this. They, in their book, “*The Corrupting Sea*” (2000), renewed Plato's conception of fear regarding sea (Mentz, 2009).

It was observed that sea was not mentioned too much in literature after the Elizabethan age, and reintroduced in the romantic age as well as early modern age, including the modern age also. In the Elizabethan age, Shakespeare mentioned sea in his tragic comedy “*The Tempest*”. This tragi-comedy also presented sea as a reason for the exile of the protagonist. However, the Romantic age introduced a new sensibility toward the sea. As this age presented love for nature, writers also loved sea as it is also a part of nature. On the other hand, history reveals that due to industrial revolution, new countries were discovered through sea-ways. Hence, in the Romantic age sea was presented as a source of happiness instead of sorrow.

However, early-modern as well as modern age shows both sorrow and happiness with sea. In an early-modern era, the sea was presented as chaotic as well as divine (Mentz, 2009); in modern era, sea was considered to be source of sorrow in many literary pieces, such as John Millington Synge's “*Riders to the Sea*”.

According to researchers, the Romantic age is timed between 1798 to 1837. This was a time of revolution against monarchy, system of slavery. On the other hand, industrial as well as the agricultural revolution had brought many changes in human lives. Mostly, this age and literary pieces of this age influenced the political environment very much. The network became politically infected. The sense of power and politics has been reduced. This affected the writings of this age. Writers started to mention political implications as well as the effect on communication also (Parker, 2019).

Apart from this, romantic literature and the writers influenced other ages or periods and the writers of that time also. Jane Austen is one of the novelists in late Romantic or early Victorian age. Her writings were much influenced by the literary pieces of the Romantic age. She did not follow the common matters of this age, she had sometimes criticised the nature of literature of that time also. However, Walter Scott also influenced her writing. According to Miller, Austen followed the antithesis, found in Scott's arts, between character and author, and more often, her literary pieces were observed as a prose or narrative version of the poetries of Scott (Bujak, 2014).

Another important influence of this era was to emphasize an individual first. In previous periods, human beings were observed as a whole. However, Romantic literature introduced human beings for their individuality. The sense of Individualism, instead of whole, flourished in this era, which affected later periods also, especially early modern as well as the modern era. The term 'autobiography' was not known in the 16th and 17th. This was introduced in the 18th century, the Romantic period, which can be counted as an obvious influence of individualism (Eckerle, 2008). Echo was a literary technique used by romantic writers, which invoked an idea of abstracts, hollowness. It is associated with memorizing something. This also can be found in modern literature, which highlights "*arbitrary sonic properties of language*" which seems to be similar to any previous comment or idea (Anderson, 2017).

4.3 Conclusion

Like all other ages or periods in the history of English literature, the Romantic age is also a very important age that influences all other periods, followed by it. However, this period also was influenced by its previous ages, to some contexts. Literature is being considered as an expression of culture, style and life of human beings of a particular place, in a particular era. Romantic age also is no exception. This was also influenced by the social and political environment of that time. The industrial, as well as agricultural revolution, influenced this period along with its literature the most. There were some other factors also influencing romantic literature as well as characterising this.

In the era of industrial and agricultural revolution, human life in Britain was disrupted, loss of hope, instability was found then. This era made people think about old days as a golden era, especially the writers as well as disillusioned, as a result, the importance of individualism came in, followed by the importance of personal experience. This introduction of personal experience and individualism had brought a huge change in literature of the following periods or ages, and especially early modern and modern age.

The features of this age, which especially influenced modern literature, are orientalism, blue culture, individualism, and so on. Orientalism is considered to be the most important feature of this era. This feature introduced the combination of eastern and western culture, which influenced English literature very much. Apart from this, translation of any literary piece was also introduced in this era. For this reason, human beings all over the world can know as well as learn about other cultures by reading the literary pieces of that era, in a translated language. These features of orientation are widely accepted in the modern era. Hence, this influences the literary pieces of present days also.

This age presented the sea and its relation with human life in a new sphere. As literature expresses contemporary life, literary pieces of this era also expressed that. The influence of industrial as well as agricultural revolution can be observed clearly. Love for nature, which is the most important feature of this period, was influenced by this revolution as the poets as well as writers focused on the natural beauty and wrote against the artificially introduced by those revolutions.

On the other hand, exploration of new countries, regarding these revolutions, introduced the sea in a new form. The sense of fear and sorrow regarding the sea was changed in this Romantic period, and this sea-based life was introduced as blue culture.

Last, but not least is the sense of individualism as well as personal interest. This is also related to diminishing of power and politics, as a person and his/her personal interest are emphasized more than a group. This resulted in the creation and introduction of the term 'autobiography' with the world. Sense of echo is also another influence of the Romantic age. All of these things or characteristics of the Romantic era influenced this modern era, which is well evident to all.

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