



Exploring Philosophical Expressions In The Writings Of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Pioneer Of Romantic Revival

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ABSTRACT

Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth possessed corresponding interest in nature through their intellectual artistic foundations. The ambition of this paper is to elaborate the magnitude of S.T. Coleridge in field of English Literature and definitely beyond from any comparison with William Wordsworth. Moreover, S.T. Coleridge's unmatched linguistic mastery, visionary imagination and legacy are remarkable. Both of them had their own way of presenting their ideas, philosophy theories, imagination process and creation in their literary works. It will look through their texts in relation to historical as well as critical background. Both of them touched the hearts of a common man as Coleridge, undoubtedly, created a standard through his intellectual mind. Henceforth, the readers will perceive in a new direction whereby S.T. Coleridge alone can illuminate the whole literary arena with his own excellences and potential skills.

Keywords: magnitude, unmatched linguistic mastery, visionary imagination, philosophical ideas, legacy

Introduction

The realm of English Literature has been blessed with numerous luminaries and two towering figures that stand tall are S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth. While both poets contributed significantly to the Romantic movement, this paper argues that S.T. Coleridge's literary genius surpasses that of Wordsworth. Coleridge's unique mastery of language, his visionary imagination and his profound philosophical depth make him a standout figure in the literary canon, overshadowing even the esteemed Wordsworth. A poet is a product of his age through his literary works reflects his creativity and ability those circumstances around him which actually helped him in writing career. He cannot survive without getting influenced by his society. That's why a poet becomes the perceiver, the conceiver and the speaker. In accordance with his experiences he visualizes the inner and outer world, collects all details of his era, blends it, mould it and after that transformed these with his own sense of perception to the world. His own creation becomes the voice of his time. Subsequently he uses the hard realities, experiences of the universe and all shades of life. These elements made his works a milestone. For making it possible on ground level the inputs of his excitement with imagination, reaction with sensation and above all he pours out his whole personality in his works to make it real. Then the higher form of poetic expression is to cherish the experience as the deviser of realization, universal consciousness that sensitize and prophesize the savvy as the poet. Despite this fact his style, the way of imagination, dream sequences, journey from Britain to other countries in quest, meeting with literary personalities of the time and above all getting influenced by them without any hesitation that developed his critical mind. World also had witnessed that how a great poet had become a world class critic which seems fertile field for speculation and guessing, when he realized that a heart of a poet is on the way of dying he picked up the criticism field and once again tested his capability. One question just puzzles is the there any actual comparison on the basis of merit of both these poets? Throughout his life, he faced the comparison with Wordsworth that actually haunted him. However, it should now reach at its edge from where a new direction about him should turn in new era to touch the new horizon, where he would be alone with all his strengths and weaknesses.

One of the foremost reasons for Coleridge's superiority lies in his unmatched linguistic mastery. His poetry is characterized by richly evocative language, intricate wordplay, and a keen attention to sonic qualities. Coleridge's

poetic style marked by an exquisite blend of vivid imagery, metaphors, and a lyrical flow of that transcends the boundaries of ordinary expression. His famous poem *Kubla Khan* is a prime example of his linguistic virtuosity, with its enchanting descriptions and musical rhythm that mesmerizes the readers even today. A long span of his life journey also taught him the real nature of literature which became a platform where in Bristol he met to William Wordsworth and rest is history. This bond of friendship influenced each other and laid a foundation of new beginning with *Lyrical Ballad* in 1798. Coleridge best works also came into existence during this period like *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan* and *Dejection an ode* so forth. Through his *Biographia Literaria* during July 1817 had opened a new horizon for him. These coincide with his personal feelings, memories and dreams with a subconscious mind. His personal thought had become universal perspective. Even the readers surrender their power of imagination and inner sense. No one can better imagine then him. This was his creative power through this quality of him enthusiastically moved the readers in his grip and had ability to convince them. His sense of imagination based on logical thinking developed the negativity as real. This had persuaded him and derived the readers through his intellectual skills. The immeasurable image of dome in *Kubla Khan* which was constructed in Orient's style at Xanadu has been described by Coleridge as magnificent castle whereby real identity of nature left immense impact on the audiences.

In a normal way it can be said a shifting from verse to the world of criticism. Definitely, if a writer had an experience of poetic field he would be quite confident at the time of critic. It would be easy for him to judge and evaluate the diction, language, style so on a good poetry. Coleridge endured his own thoughts where the poetry departed, after composing a series of poetry like *The Rime of the Ancient-Mariner* (1797), *Kubla Khan* (1798), *The Nightingale* (1798) and *Dejection an ode* (1802). He had grit in facing the truth advocated to Godwin in 1801 that genuine poetry departed him and turned towards prose with ease. Indeed, it is particular trait in Coleridge's criticism that debilitates a lot of his critical arguments and inevitably arouses apprehensions as regards their objectively. Fichte prepared a foundation for further critics to do their works as he put a high standard. However, he undertakes to fulfil a hard task.

As a theorist, S.T. Coleridge's marginalia, notes, lectures, published works, leaving *Biography Literaria*, studies of Shakespeare's present a huge variety and cover various topics such as nature, mind, imagination, world of fancy, words and its power, and how it affects the common man. Through his works he also describes reason and balance an important aspect in life of a writer. Basically the principal of imagination and nature of mind are the part of Coleridge's critical theory. Coleridge's criticism actually prepared a ground for 20th century criticism. His various formulations and rubrics of this field capitalize his theory. Somewhere he used them intensely but various places he was not aware about them. For modern aesthetics, Coleridge prepared a ground to build a structure and set high standard for others. He has clear notion about his objective as stated, "the object of science is the communication of truth while the object of poetry is the communication of pleasure..." (Apple yard 33)

The strong idea and philosophy had attracted the modern critics such as I. A. Richards who had adopted his principles for critical studies. He conceptualized the literary theory based on imagination is a significant contribution. This way makes him different from Aristotle and neo classicists. Within the concept of imagination deals a large area of philosophy and psychology so on. He makes it clear the difference between imagination and word of fancy:

"The imagination then, I consider, either as primary or secondary..."

Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with but fixities and definite. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the which we express by word CHOICE..." (Hoffman 43)

This makes clear about his priority of imagination. In conformity with Apple yard there is a diversification on the subject of imagination. It is the fanciful of agglomeration rather than such power.

Truly his main philosophy is not based on sensual reality and hedonistic world. Coleridge in real sense started a new trend and formula for criticism. That is new critics and psychological criticism with healthy motif. His command on language and diction with normal flow with clear vision made him Coleridge. He in his criticism tries to understand the both the creator and the reader and how they both leave impact on each other. His attempt of writing and vision towards others can be considered as a pioneering attempt that had attracted the future writers. He raised many thorny issues through his creativity and proved his power of his authenticity. Coleridge's works delve into extreme philosophical concepts exploring the complexities of human existence and nature of reality. His engagement with philosophical dogmas such as transcendentalism, idealism, and the nature of consciousness demonstrates his intellectual depth and adds a layer of his academics sophistication to his poetry. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* is a testament to his philosophical acumen providing insightful reflections on nature of poetry, imagination and creative process. In contrast, to William Wordsworth poetry often lacks the same philosophical rigor, focusing more on the simplicity of everyday life.

The poet through his words, power created a picture and convinced us about its construction amidst the greatness of spring where the natural surrounding can be seen and felt. He romanticizes its beauty and through his words emerges out in world of illusion. The poem presents its originality and no one could write like this after passing on centuries. He constructs an incredible bridge between vision and observation, between common and extra-ordinary situation and above all seems real. This had crossed a step ahead from art and filled the gap

between reality and art, between diction and thought process between romanticism and reality and between poet's world and ground reality. His poetry crossed all boundaries and rooted out be the

part of our life. He also had attachment towards supernatural elements. His *Frost at Midnight* expresses child expectations that come from pictorial experience and sights. His capability of observation can be seen in these lines where he expresses his emotions clearly animate and inanimate objects around him. He observes all of them and expresses his philosophical envision in the following verses:

*But thou, my babe! Shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores... (Coleridge 66)*

S.T. Coleridge a name was associated with the new wave of romanticism, a trend against to neo-classical era. He in his poems raises several critical questions, nature of imagination, dream sequences and his selfintrospection. This nature of introspection does not end here but we can notice in *Kubla Khan* a poem totally based on his dream. This is a stage where a writer or a poet survives in a mix order conscious or half-conscious mood of what is he doing and this is a roundabout way of expressing or creating where the poet is very curious to say and ready to introspect for understanding him and his surroundings. The same we can perceive and admire the philosophy of life in these lines of *Kubla Khan: His flashing eyes, his floating hair!*

*Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes under holy dread,
For he no honey-drew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise (Coleridge and Jackson, 121)*

Another example of *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1800) well describes his nature of introspection and reveals out the poetic process later on had become the foundation of his further poetic growth. We can notice the philosophical elements of further explicating in these lines:

*From the black shapeless accidents of size
In unctuous cones of kindling coal,
Or smoke up wreathing from the pipe's trim bole, His gifted ken can see... (Coleridge 140)*

From where he gets the source of inspiration is beyond any understanding. The interaction between his creative world and his voice seems unseen and he successfully achieves his final goal through powerful writing. That may be the reason for keeping himself from any particular boundaries and crossed the field of poetry successfully achieved a higher place in field of criticism.

Coleridge divides his imagination on the ground of primary and secondary level. In details he explained in *Biographia Literaria*, Chapter XIII. Though primarily he describes the surrounding of Ancient Mariner in his ballad where realistic and vivid description of nature evaporated it immortal. Even good and bad sight of nature is described here where he keeps away from any deep philosophy. Healthy surrounding, pleasant nature, slimy creatures, sea water and over all ancient mariner's own condition before and after killing of Albatross are the part of Coleridge's skill of presenting the scene, mood and mind setup. Even death is faced by Mariner and through confession gets relief from it. Their language like a revolutionary of new era breaks the established dogmas by crossing boundaries and created a atmosphere of bliss and ecstasy in readers. They had chosen musical language as romantic atmosphere itself reflects the impact of music on its each element. Their language was poetic or language which was very close to common human beings. This was their techniques which helped them to unveil the hidden beauty of nature. While maintaining silence they could communicate through their silence as their language communicated a lot beyond any imagination.

The enduring influence and legacy of S.T. Coleridge further cement his superiority over Wordsworth. Coleridge's ideas and theories particularly his concept of the cognitive estrangement had an intense impact on subsequent generations of writers and thinkers. His association with the influential *Lyrical Ballads* coauthored with Wordsworth serves to highlight his significance in shaping romantic literary movement:

*O reader! Had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle reader! You would find
A tale in everything... (Butler and Green, 19)*

Moreover, Coleridge's critical and theoretical writings continue to be studied and admired by scholars attesting to the enduring relevance of his contributions. As it was a guide, a friend and a nurse in Wordsworth poetry but nature's beauty inform of wonder and enigma were the part of Coleridge works. They both were sensitive person and extracted lessons from nature in their own way, in fact human consciousness; collective alertness and universal awareness had played a vital role in lifting their aesthetics sense in literary art. But this could only happen due to high-flown sensibility, logical reasoning and talent of imagination. These also constructed a platform for them to pursue on. Language could coordinate with them to maintain harmony in their works.

As we observe the philosophical expression of Romantic Movement in Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper: A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard*

*In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides...* (Hutchinson 230)

However, we dig out the same reflections in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*:
*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea...* (Coleridge 51)

On the ground of friendship, they had strong bonding. But on ground of opinion they differ to each other. Coleridge's insight eyes were sharpened due to vast reading of German philosopher like Schlegel and Fichte Kant. Definitely both had their own ideological and methodological base views. In accordance with Wordsworth, he writes to Southey suggesting criticism from *Lyrical Ballads*:

"Many of the stanzas are laboriously beautiful; he wrote, but in connection they are absurd or unintelligible...We do not sufficiently understand the story to analyse it. It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity. Genius has here been employed in producing a poem of little merit." (Brett and Jones, xxxix) He had his own strong notion. This also affected them apart from each other. Both the poets with their own poetic capacity contributed significantly in a new-fangled to design the poetic art and truth.

Coleridge can't be categorized in any way. His frustration and agony were the part of his dreams sequence. Although opium eating was the main reason behind his dream sequence which helped him in imagination. As physically he faced a lot and on personal life again he suffered a lot. These had broken him but he never diverted an idea to leave the writing field. His creativity later on made him aesthetic, a person who has artistic, approach towards life. His creativity constructed the path to move on with more creativity and fill the literary world with more works. These are the part of his writing which made him different from others. His works at one place show the world of fancy and imagination, on other hand we can witness the broken childhood with agony and sadness. Coleridge's visionary imagination sets him apart from Wordsworth and elevates him to a higher literacy plane. While Wordsworth poetry often revolves around nature and the ordinary experiences of life. Coleridge ventures into the realms of fantasy the supernatural and metaphysical through *The Rime of Ancient Mariner* we observe: *The ice was here, the ice was there, The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled and roared and howled.....* (Coleridge 45)

His magnum opus, *The Rime of Ancient Mariner* stands as a testament to his imaginative prowess weaving together elements of adventure spiritualism and symbolism into a profound narrative. Coleridge's ability to transport readers to otherworldly realms evokes a sense of apprehension that is unrivalled solidifying his place as a literary giant.

To conclude, Coleridge's works maintain a bridge between man and nature. Poetry has such a capability to express and later maintain such a relation in world. He had firm believed regarding work of art should be "organic unity" or "romantic organism" of course his all work represent an artistic approach with the above mentioned qualities. The highest stage where readers through reading or hearing the work turns pleasure which gives solace to their hearts. For mass appeal he had to pick out the musical and metaphoric language to create an aesthetic pleasure for all. Coleridge always presents his moral lessons in a clear and straight way so that it can involve the audiences. He successfully could maintain harmony and balance. He never copied to anything but represent something that resembles to through real world. Each poet has its own glory and existence beyond any dualities. Comparison only creates limitation as sky has no limit. That's why birds fly across the boundaries. S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth, both emblaze the readers with their own brightness that constructed different path to their followers to choose and move on any one for further journey in hope to gain more which created a new wave of direction.

Additionally, both of them made inedible contributions to English Literature; it is clear that Coleridge's philosophical genius outshines that of William Wordsworth. Coleridge pushes the boundaries of poetic expression and offers a more profound and intellectually stimulating reading experience. His enduring influence and legacy solidify his status as a literary luminary placing him in a league of his own. S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth as both emblaze the readers with their own brightness and constructed different path to their followers to choose and move on any one for further journey in hope to gain more. Thence upon, it created a new wave of direction in the field of English Literature.

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