

# PROMETHEUS UNBOUND: SHELLY'S SPIRIT ON NATURE PERSONIFIED

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## **Abstract:**

History and historical events play a crucial part on the overall outcome of an era. One of the most striking examples of this is the French Revolution or what we commonly call "Renaissance". To illustrate in depth, this revolutionary phenomenon not only created havoc on the industrial, socio-economic aspects of Continental Europe, at the same time produced a bang on the English Romantic literature as a whole. "Renaissance" dented a significant point on the body of English Romantic poetry as well. The principle criteria of the poems after French Revolution were to challenge the traditional thought processes of that era through a rapid impulse and action. Parsley Byshe Shelley was one of the stalwarts of this concept of the younger generation of poets during that very era. Prometheus Unbound (1820) is a mind-blowing success of Shelley's deep conviction that moral reconstruction is an outcome of revolt subjected to social and political changes. In this particular essay, we would like to stress on how Shelley looked upon nature and its outcome in a realistic but intriguingly opportunistic way. Moreover, this work is focused on a fact that how much a poet can believe in human abilities to transform a world upside down by means of rapid impulse, courage and off course, sacrifice. In order to emphasize our points we have categorized the work into as many as three different sections. The first section comprises of the life and thoughts of the young poet like Shelley. It also includes the overall poetic works of the poet. The second portion contains the poem "Prometheus unbound" which not to mention, our potential resource and the essay is revolved around this. This is the weapon used by Shelley to see the Romance of nature and natural outcome differently. We concluded the essay by sharing the points how Shelley emerged as a new viewer of nature using a myth like Prometheus.

**Keywords:** Renaissance, Continental Europe, Myth, Historical event, Prometheus

## Introduction

### Overview on Shelley and his exemplary works

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born in Sussex, England in the year 1792. He was extremely rich both from parental and maternal descent in terms of culture, attitude and political points as well. From the very beginning he was engrossed with literary values in his surroundings.

Shelley's true spirit of nature, which always attracts us from the serene wind and the cloud, the beautiful sunset and moonrise, appears to be always with him. More often than not, he is a true poet and his work is without a doubt overwhelming.

If we can divide his poetic works, we would find two distinct modes as we have in our lives. The foremost is the one where he is a drastic transformer of the world, pertains always to throw away the traditional customs and beliefs and to make the millennium out of the slow track into the gallop. This very facet of his, produced poems like *Queen Mab*, *Revolt of Islam*, *Hellas*, and *the Witch of Atlas*. All these poems contributed to the rebel outlook of the young poet against all the old customs, traditional beliefs, and rigidity of religion.

On the contrary, in the second facet Shelley is the perfect dreamer of dreams where he possesses the beautiful vision to see the splendid offerings of nature. Like a child he is amazed by the overall beauty that Mother Nature has provided. The poems like *Alastor*, *Adonais* are some of the beautiful lyrics of this category.

### Prometheus Unbound: A piece of revolutionary enthusiasm

Shelley selected Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* as a framework for his lyrical drama, in which he managed to reconstruct creatively a popular Greek myth by blending it with the Romantic vigor of his time. In the famous myth, Prometheus is shackled to a rock and an eagle repeatedly tears at his liver, a punishment imposed by Zeus on Prometheus for stealing fire and arts from Gods and offering them to man.

Here, Shelley's hero Prometheus is the virtual image of mankind itself, whereas, Jove, the other character is the representative of rigid beliefs and thoughts. However, Demogorgon, who according to Shelley is necessity, overthrows Jove later on and eventually releases Prometheus, who already been represented as the face of mankind.

The poem goes on, as Prometheus is now set to unite Aisa, having the love and goodness in nature, while the mother earth and the moon join a chorus of wedding song. Everything is promised to be good in all respects and they shall remain happy forever afterwards.

**Concept of Golden Age:** Shelley's adherence to the concept of imaginary thinking in writing poetry is vastly evaluated in this poem. It is wrong to say that Shelley intends poetry to be a mere reproduction of previous great works; in fact, he contends that poetry is a recreation of old patterns, formats, signs and themes which are given new dimensions if they are creatively re-presented in new models of art. Wellek

quoted as "Shelley is a symbolist and mythologist" [1]. This very fact is also considered by Shelley, as the main refinery of Golden Age, and to say the least, the amalgamation of science and evolution.

In *Prometheus Unbound*, Prometheus's endurance of the repeated agony and pain, oppression indented on him by Jupiter continues, but the main agenda is Prometheus's apprehension that for three thousand years he has been not only physically but also spiritually restricted; he believes that attaining freedom cannot be achieved only by breaking the jinks of Jupiter, which bind him to the precipice, but also by overthrow the shekels of evil that tighten their grip on his soul and mind. Prometheus here demonstrates internal heroism of mankind. Bowra admirably quoted "evil must be defeated by itself" [2].

Another striking aspect of this passage is Shelley's atheism. Christianity is a form of tyranny, especially owing to the crimes committed in its name; he uses Christ as a metaphor for his hero. The reader can clearly identify the portrayal of Prometheus as a figure of Christ who sacrifices his life and endures pain for the betterment of mankind. According to Christian theology, man can reach salvation by the simulation of Christ's morality and ethics. By the same token, Shelley caters that ideal man whose example humans must follow in order to reach salvation. Shelley explains and claims that Prometheus represents a commendable heroism.

However, what Shelley wants to enlighten time and again in the poem is that acquiescence to tyranny is a partaking of its evil. Prometheus insists persistently on the freedom through his tremendous will power and is being

referred by Shelley to all those who give into Jupiter's power as "self-despising slaves of Heaven".

The principle Romantic essence, however, is revolved around the fulcrum of an apocalyptic tone which is again the definite concept of the poem as well. It promises the reconstruction or revival through an exaggerated and violent termination of existing rigid beliefs.

## Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that, although Shelley possessed two distinct facets of his poetic excellence but to be honest, the second phase is more worth reading.

In the present poem of *Prometheus Unbound*, it manifests Shelley's optimistic, intriguing, and apocalyptic view of the future. The work invariably reflects the author's supreme confidence in man and his ability to make tremendous transformation in the world; however, he is equally aware that such a transformation requires great courage, wisdom and sacrifice. In this work, Shelley has made an attempt to reinter vein the fallen state of man; Prometheus's rise from the state of complete despair into hopefulness—from death or death-in-life into life, from captivity into freedom—suggests Shelley's insistence on man's metaphorical reclaiming of paradise.

## Acknowledgement

Authors render their heartily thanks to respective organizations; Lincoln University College and Islamic Azadi University to allow us to go through the studies in conducive environment. To say the least, the authors are thoroughly grateful to the respective parent bodies for providing

continuous support and cooperation to carry forward the concerned works.

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