



THE MOVEMENT OF ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH AND MARATHI POETRY: A COMPARISON

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ABSTRACT:

As a literary tradition, romanticism is a reaction against classicism. It evokes notions of adventures, novelty, excitement, energy, restlessness, spirituality, curiosity, inspiration. The movement of romanticism which dominated both English and Marathi poetry during the nineteenth centuries was not a sudden outburst but the result of a long and gradual growth and development. However, the publication of 'The Lyrical Ballads' in 1798 marked the inauguration of romanticism which dominated English poetry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The tradition of romanticism in Marathi poetry was an outcome of the contact with English language and the influence of the English romantic poets through Palgrave's Golden-Treasury. The present research article is an attempt to compare romantic movement in English and Marathi poetry.



KEYWORDS: *literary tradition, romanticism , spirituality, curiosity.*

INTRODUCTION:

As a literary tradition, romanticism is a reaction against classicism. It evokes notions of adventures, novelty, excitement, energy, restlessness, spirituality, curiosity, inspiration. It is defined as the expression of sharpened sensibilities and heightened imaginative feelings. The movement of romanticism which dominated both English and Marathi poetry during the nineteenth centuries was not a sudden outburst but the result of a long and gradual growth and development. It was started in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the publication of "Lyrical Ballads" (1798) by Wordsworth and Coleridge. When Wordsworth took to writing, the neo classical trend was prevalent and popular in England. The English poetry was judged and interpreted on the basis of classical rules devised by the classic writers and critics. Wordsworth is the first poet who discarded the classical rules and built up a new trend of creative and critical process known as Romantic Movement through his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads". So his "Preface" is regarded as the manifesto of romanticism. Like Wordsworth, the other poets such as Coleridge, Byron, Keats Shelley and others developed this romantic trend in English poetry. The Romantic Movement started in English poetry influenced the writings of the poets in Indian poetry through Palgrave's *Golden-Treasury*.

ROMANTICISM: MEANING AND FEATURES:

The term 'romanticism' is not only a literary tradition; it is a way of looking at life. It has come to mean so many things that it is hardly possible to give the exact meaning of it. "As a literary tradition", says B. V. Potdar," it could be better understood if we set it beside classicism" (Potdar, 75). He further says: "Ideas like seeking the golden mean, motions of fitness, propriety measure, restraint, conservatism, calm, authority, comeliness, and balance can be associated with classicism. Romanticism evokes notions of adventures, novelty, excitement, energy, restlessness, spirituality, curiosity, inspiration" (Potdar, 75). In his book *Romanticism* Lilian R. Furst has also quoted the several meaning of the word 'romantic'. They are "attractive', 'unselfish', 'exuberant', 'Ornamental', 'unreal', 'irrational', 'materialistic', 'futile', 'heroic', 'mysterious', 'Conservative,' 'revolutionary', 'emotional', 'Fanciful', 'formless', 'Picturesque', etc" (Furst,02). However, these words cannot explain the exact nature and meaning of the term 'romanticism'. In order to explain the precise nature of the term 'romanticism', Morse Peckham points out: Although the word 'romanticism' refers to any number of things, it has two primary referents: (1) A general and permanent characteristic of mind, art and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures; (2) A specific historical movement in art and ideas which occurred in Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Peckham, 01)

The term 'romanticism' has been defined in different manners by various writers and scholars. Lilian R. Frust has quoted some of the well-known definitions of it. Here we are going to note some of these definitions to know the meaning and features of romanticism. They are:

- i) 'Romanticism is disease, classicism is health' – Goethe.
- ii) 'The opposite, not of classicism, but of Realism the withdrawal from outer experience to concentrate upon inner' – Abercrombie.
- iii) 'Liberalism in literature. Mingling the grotesque with the tragic or sublime (forbidden by classicism) : the complete truth of life' – Victor Hugo
- iv) 'The return to nature' – Rousseau.
- v) 'An effort to escape from actuality' – Walterhouse.
- vi) 'Extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility' –Herford.
- vii) 'The addition of strangeness to beauty'- Pater.
- viii) 'Sentimental Melancholy' – Phelps
- ix) 'The fairy way of writing' - Ker
- x) 'The renaissance of wonder'- Watts Dunton" (Furst, 04)

In short, Romanticism is the revolution in the European mind against thinking in terms of static mechanism and the redirection of the mind to thinking in terms of dynamic organism. Its values are change, imperfection, growth, diversity, the creative imagination the unconscious.

The Movement of Romanticism in English and Marathi Poetry:-

The movement of romanticism which dominated English poetry during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, i. e. from 1798 to 1832, was not a sudden outburst but the result of a long and gradual growth and development. So the poets of the romantic school – Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats and Shelley – were not even the first romantics of England, for the Elizabethan literature and the poetry during the mid-eighteenth century are essentially romantic. During the Elizabeth age the dramatists and poets cast off the shackles of rules and regulations and were greatly stirred by emotion and imagination. However, this romantic spirit was replaced by intellectual spirit during the puritan Age. In the eighteenth century, too, poetry was governed by the intellectual spirit, reason and good sense and the rules and regulations laid down by the classic writers. Towards the close of the eighteenth century there set in a reaction against the principles of neo-classical school of the eighteenth century and there was seen a tendency to revive those of romantic poetry of spontaneity and imagination. In this connection V. B. Potdar points out:

The Elizabethan dramatists cast off the shackles and asserted freedom from rules with an exuberance that wearied the fastidious. Ben Johnson sounded the warning note, and then for a time Boileau's neo-classic

vigour swept all before it, until again the Romantic Revival set in. Thus, in the history of taste we can continuously see classicism and romanticism rise and fall (Potdar.77).

In the book *Romanticism* L. R. Furst points out: "The roots of the Romantic movement lies in the eighteenth century in a series of interlocking trends of cumulative effects; the decline of the neo-classical system led to the questionings of the enlightenment, which in turn was conducive to the infiltration of the new notions current in the later half of the century" (Furst, 15). Here we find that the poets such as James Thomas, William Collins, Thomas Gray, Robert Burns, William Blake and others paved the way from classical to the romantic tradition. "Their emphasis", says L. R. Furst, "was mainly on the natural in contrast to the rational, the spontaneous in place of the calculated, freedom instead of regimentation"¹⁴ (Furst, 26). In short, the Romantic Movement in English poetry was not a sudden outburst but a continuation of pre-romanticism. In this sense Furst says, "The Romantic movement was the outcome and the culmination of a long process of evolution" (Furst, 39).

In his "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", William Wordsworth criticized the artificial diction of the contemporary poetry and explained the nature and function of poetry. According to him a poet is essentially a man speaking to men; so the poet should choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate them in a selection of language really used by men. Wordsworth believed that 'poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings that emotions recollected in tranquility'. Like Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge and P. B. Shelly also gave importance romantic ideology. In short, romanticism in English poetry is the result of a long process of evolution, but it was strengthened by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats and Shelley who composed their poetry under the tremendous influence of the doctrine of romanticism.

In his essay 'Romanticism and Marathi poetry from 1885 to 1950' B. V. Potdar has explained the reason of the decline of classicism and rise of romanticism in the late eighteenth century. He says: "we can easily see why at a certain stage classicism declines. The forms of beauty and the conventions which had been successfully used by great poets and now come to be used in a stereotyped manner by later and lesser poets. The balance between qualities of the heart and the head is lost, and intellect gets dogmatic. Simplicity turns into banalism and conventions are used for their own sake" (Potdar.78). He further points out that this happened in the case of Sanskrit poetry, too. The rules and principles laid down by the classic Sanskrit poets were used by the later and lesser Marathi poets without making any change. As a result of this the writing of poetry became a mechanical process. However, contact with the English language and literature brought an awakening in Marathi poets so sudden that they styled their poetry under the influence of the English romantic poets. Regarding the movement of romanticism in Marathi poetry, contact with English literature produced a Renaissance of Romantic nature. This does not mean that romantic qualities cannot be found in Marathi poetry before the British period. Much of the imagery of *Dnyaneshwari* is romantic; and the attitudes of *Shahir* poets under *Peshwai* here romantic, though the range of their attitudes was very limited. But the poets wrote during the last decades of the nineteenth century came under the influence of the English romantic poets through Palgrave's *Golden-Treasury* which was a popular text book in those days" (Potdar.79). Here we can say that the poets such as Keshavsut, Rev. Tilak, Govindagraj, Balkavi, etc. composed poems under the influence of the doctrine of romanticism as well as the influence of the English romantic poets. In short the tradition of romanticism in Marathi poetry in which the Marathi romantic poets were brought up was an outcome of the contact with English language and literature.

According to B. V. Potdar, the romantic revival in England was the product of a variety of literary, social, economic and political causes. Rousseau's cry for liberty in every walk of life was mainly responsible for awakening the spirit of man. Here we also find that French Revolution and the writings of the makers of the revolution fired the imagination of the English romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron. The return to Nature and the democratic spirit were nourished and to steered by the revolution in the hands of these romantic poets. A re-awakening of love for real and wild nature had been there even before the revolution, but it acquired the philosophical basis and gained a fresh stimulus in the hands of the romantic poets. For instance, In Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind' we can see such a picture of nature. The romantic

poets also sought liberty in the expression of their thoughts and feelings. Their poetry laid emphasis upon liberty and freedom.

Like English romantic poets, liberty, equality and fraternity were the slogans of Marathi poets. In this sense Potdar points out: "Within a few decades after the fall of Peshwai, the Marathi poets for the first time awakened to the sense of individual liberty and right of self-expression. Thus, after 1885, the Marathi poet's struggle has three aspects among other things: (1) a longing for nation's Political freedom and for the amelioration of the wrongs of the suppressed, (2) a longing to express one's innermost thoughts as an individual, and (3) an urge to try new ways of expression" (Potdar.78). He further says "we can also notice an extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility in the authors of these romantic periods. Philosophical ideas as well as outward objects seemed to increase in their content and meaning, and acquired a new power to enrich the intense life of the human spirit. Mountains and lakes, the dignity of the peasant, the terror of the supernatural, scenes of history, the art and Mythology of far off days, all became springs of poetic inspiration and poetic joy" (Potdar.81).

CONCLUSION:

By the way of conclusion it can be stated the poet Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley in English poetry and Keshavsut, Rev. Tilak, Govindagraj, Balkavi etc in Marathi poetry composed their poetry under the influence of the movement of romanticism. A parallel study of both English and Marathi romantic poetry shows that they were highly influence and inspired by the romantic spirit and the movement of romanticism proved the major source of inspiration to English and Marathi romantic poets.

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