

USE OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS IN THE POETRY OF ENGLISH ROMANTIC ERA

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ABSTRACT

*It is clear that the English Romantic poets were preoccupied with the mysterious, the sublime, and the transcendental elements of existence, as shown by the fact that their work is replete with supernatural forces. Romantic poets such as John Keats, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge incorporated supernatural elements into their works not only for dramatic effect but also to challenge the rationalism of the Enlightenment and to evoke spiritual introspection, emotional depth, and imaginative freedom. This was done in multiple ways. In Romantic poetry, the supernatural often makes a presence in the form of visions, enchanted landscapes, ghosts, divine interventions, and metaphysical forces. These supernatural occurrences are symbolic of the enigmatic energies that affect both human experience and the natural world. With these instruments at their disposal, poets are able to investigate issues that are universal, such as suffering, guilt, atonement, creativity, and the boundaries of human cognition. The purpose of this paper is to examine fundamental poems written by Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley. These poems include *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and *Prometheus Unbound*. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate how these poets use the supernatural as a philosophical and narrative device that goes beyond pure fantasy. This analysis sheds light on the profound connection that these poets have with nature, mortality, and the metaphysical. In conclusion, the findings of this study demonstrate that supernatural powers had a significant role in shaping the emotional and imaginative world of the English Romantic poets.*

Keywords:- omanticism, Modern era, Cultural artificiality, Human emotions, Individual feelings

INTRODUCTION

The Romantic Era in England was characterised by a substantial shift in literary preferences that took place throughout the latter half of the 18th century and the early 19th century. Romanticism was a response to the severe rationalism of the Enlightenment and the organised forms of Neoclassicism. Romantic poets put an emphasis on emotion, creativity, personal experience, and a strong connection with the natural world. During this time period, one of the distinguishing characteristics was a fascination with the mystical, magical, and metaphysical, which are features that extend beyond the material world. The exploration of the mind, the expression of complex human emotions, and the confronting of existential questions were often accomplished via the use of these otherworldly powers as a symbolic vehicle.

There were a number of writers, like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, Lord Byron, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, who exploited supernatural themes for more than simply theatrical effect. These

poets also aimed to challenge accepted views about religion, morality, and reality. Through the use of ghostly appearances, visionary experiences, enchanted characters, and connections to mythology, the fantastic acted as a conduit between the familiar and the strange in Romantic poetry. This was the case regardless of the manifestation of the fantastic. This thesis, which seeks to form the literary legacy of England, focusses on the employment of supernatural powers by Romantic poets in order to enrich their poetic vision and reveal profound emotional and intellectual truths. The thesis's goal is to shape the literary heritage of England.

Themes in Romantic Gothic Literature

The rich web of issues that are addressed by romantic gothic literature continues to interest readers in the contemporary time. This kind of writing blends the Gothic's fascination with the mystical and the supernatural with Romanticism's emphasis on emotion and individuality. The writings of a number of authors, including Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe, share a number of themes, including the following:

1. Isolation and alienation: - In Romantic Gothic literature, themes of alienation and solitude are prevalent across the majority of the works. Most of the time, the characters experience feelings of isolation or of being excluded from society. Mary Shelley's monster from "Frankenstein" is a perfect illustration of this issue because of the tremendous isolation it experiences as a result of being rejected by both its creator and by society as a whole. The anguish that the creature is experiencing is a powerful reflection of the human longing for connection as well as the effects of social isolation to individuals.
2. Human Nature's Duality: - In Romantic Gothic literature, recurring themes include the duality of human nature, the contrast between rationality and lunacy, and the contrast between good and evil. In particular, the characters in Edgar Allan Poe's works struggle with their own internal issues. The novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" written by Robert Louis Stevenson explores the idea of duality via the depiction of a figure who is capable of morphing into a terrifying alter ego. The Romantics were interested in exploring a number of topics, one of which was the complexity of individual minds.
3. The Influence of Nature: - A dedication to nature, which is the distinguishing quality of the Romantic Movement, is something that is at the heart of Romantic Gothic literature. Landscapes captured in photographs of nature often reveal vistas that are both breathtaking and disturbing. Examples of authors that show the duality aspect of nature in Romantic Gothic literature include Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe. Poe was able to include the astounding beauty of nature into his poems, while Shelley focused on depicting the emotional states of individuals in natural settings.
4. The Paranormal and the Strange: - Gothic literature is characterised by its frequent use of gruesome and otherworldly themes in its writings. Two examples of the numerous supernatural elements that are prevalent in Romantic Gothic literature are the reanimated monster in "Frankenstein" and the ghostly apparitions that appear in Poe's works. These are only two instances and there are many more. The purpose of creating these supernatural happenings is to make people feel more uncomfortable, afraid, and confused about what is genuine and what is paranormal. This is the objective of the staging.
5. Seeking out forbidden information: - Gothic literature is characterised by a recurrent motif that is connected to the macabre and forbidden, and that motif is the search for forbidden knowledge. In Mary

Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, the main character, Victor Frankenstein, sets out on a risky voyage into the world of forbidden scientific study in an effort to achieve his goal of overcoming death. Through the use of this topic, the ethical repercussions that result from going beyond the limits of human curiosity and the limitations of nature are brought into harsh relief.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have been interested in the fantastical components of English Romantic poetry for a considerable amount of time. This is due to the significant significance that these characteristics had in articulating the aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional concerns of the period. Some of the ways in which the supernatural has been interpreted as a prominent subject include the following: as a symbol of the Romantic movement's rejection of Enlightenment reason; as an artistic tool for conjuring up pictures of the sublime; and as a gateway into contemplation of one's own mental or spiritual condition.

M.H. Abrams, in his seminal work *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953), the transition that took place throughout the Romantic period from images of the outside world that were mimetic to portrayals of the internal experience that were expressive is brought to light here. It is Abrams' contention that the bizarre in Romantic literature often reflects the inner sentiments, worries, and wishes of the poet behind the work. In his book *"The Visionary Company,"* published in 1961, Harold Bloom repeats this attitude by defining Romantic authors as "visionary prophets" who attempted to explain the cosmos and mankind via the supernatural. In other words, Romantic writers were not only involved in the creation of pure fiction.

Research on Daniel Defoe Coleridge often emphasises the philosophical and intentional use of the supernatural in his work. According to Richard Holmes's analysis in *Coleridge: Early Visions* (1989), the supernatural in poems such as *Christabel* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* reflects both theological anxiety and poetic experimentation because of the way Coleridge blended gothic horror, Christian symbolism, and German idealism. According to Kathleen Coburn, Coleridge's investigations into the divine and the imagination form the basis of his supernaturalism, which is not an escape but rather a philosophical pursuit.

In contrast, Percy Bysshe Shelley's supernaturalism is often viewed through the lens of political and metaphysical radicalism. Critics like James Bieri, in *Percy Bysshe Shelley: According to A Biography* (2012), Shelley used supernatural talents as metaphors for personal and political development in her writing. The clearest examples of this pattern may be seen in works such as *Queen Mab* and *Prometheus Unbound*, in which supernatural beings serve as metaphors for utopian ideals, revolutionary ideas, and the possibility that people might go beyond their own limitations.

It is general knowledge that aesthetic and existential problems are related with John Keats's use of the supernatural in his writing. In his book titled *"The Hoodwinking of Madeline and Other Essays on Keats' Poems,"* which was published in 1971, Jack Stillinger asserts that Keats combines elements of mythology, fantasy, and the supernatural in order to contemplate beauty, death, and the transience of life. The employment of otherworldly beings in poems such as *"La Belle Dame sans Merci"* and *"Lamia"* serves not only to capture the reader but also to investigate the associated costs of artistic preoccupation and emotional vulnerability.

Even William Wordsworth, who is often linked with natural spirituality and realism, makes references to the supernatural at significant points in his writing. Geoffrey Hartman and Jonathan Wordsworth are two among the critics who have pointed out that in both *The Prelude* and *The Lucy Poems*, supernatural or mystical energies emerge as symbolic representations of awe, loss, and divine immanence in nature. Despite the fact that they are not as obvious as they are in Coleridge or Shelley's works, these components contribute to Wordsworth's broader picture of the connection that exists between the human spirit and the natural world.

Recent academic research has also explored Romantic supernaturalism from the viewpoints of psychoanalysis, feminism, and ecocritical theory. *Romanticism and Gender*, written by Anne K. Mellor in 1993, investigates the ways in which masculine fears and idealisations of femininity are reflected in the supernatural ladies who appear in Romantic poetry. In the meanwhile, more contemporary ecocritical views see the supernatural as a metaphor for forces in nature that are beyond the grasp of humans. This reinforces the Romantic respect for the sublime and the unknown.

The existing body of academic research is in agreement that the supernatural in English Romantic poetry is not decorative in any way; rather, it serves as a powerful instrument for expressiveness. Poets are able to question the conventional reality, investigate the underlying psychological and spiritual aspects, and describe the conflicts that exist between the limited human experience and the limitless metaphysical possibilities.

SUPERNATURAL THEMES IN MAJOR ROMANTIC POETS

The Romantic poets used supernatural elements not alone for amusement or intrigue, but as significant tools for philosophical exploration, emotional depth, and socio-political commentary. Every prominent poet of the period interacted with the supernatural in unique, although thematically linked ways. This section analyses the function and depiction of supernatural forces in the writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Lord Byron.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Gothic Sublime and Moral Imagination

Coleridge is possibly the most emblematic Romantic poet when it comes to the supernatural as it is discussed in his writing. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, supernatural forces like the albatross, the curse, the ghost ship, and the reanimated dead sailors are used to weave a moral and spiritual metaphor throughout the story. This metaphor is woven throughout the whole literary work. Rather than being only clichés associated with horror, these elements are more than just references to shame, atonement, and celestial justice. The journey of the mariner through death and redemption, which is helped by mysterious and divine forces, is an embodiment of the Romantic ideal of human development through the experience of hardship.

The naïve Christabel in *Christabel* is affected by the nefarious Geraldine in a manner similar to that of a vampire. Through the medium of this hazy heavenly experience, Coleridge investigates topics such as sexual power, concepts of purity, and ethical grey zones. In order to elicit feelings of psychological discomfort, the poem makes use of supernatural suggestion rather than establishing a definitive moral judgement. There is a coherent philosophical foundation for the supernaturalism that may be found in

Coleridge's writings. His interpretation of the supernatural, which was influenced by both German idealism and Christian mysticism, was that it was not a way to escape reality but rather a gateway to more profound realities. In his well-known book, *Biographia Literaria*, he emphasises the need of having a "willing suspension of disbelief" in order to comprehend the reality of poetry, particularly when it comes to dealing with the extraordinary.

William Wordsworth: Nature's Mysticism and Subtle Supernaturalism

Wordsworth's writings include elements that are mystical and even supernatural, and the natural world takes on these characteristics. However, Wordsworth is not as clear about his usage of supernatural powers. The transcendental moments of visionary knowledge that he recounts in *The Prelude* include his sensations of amazement during the boat-stealing episode, which is only one example of these times. With the current state of affairs, nature seems to be a powerful and nearly sentient force that shapes one's mind and soul.

As stated in the poem "A slumber did my spirit seal" as well as other poems included within *The Lucy Poems*, Lucy seems to transform into a supernatural being upon her passing, as if she were "rolled round in earth's diurnal course." When seen in this light, death is not the conclusion but rather the coming together with the eternal essence. The supernaturalism that is being discussed here is a subtle but undeniable reflection of Wordsworth's belief in the everlasting spiritual oneness of all things. According to Wordsworth, the supernatural is often internalised, meaning that it exists inside an individual's own emotional and psychological experiences. This is in contrast to the phenomenon of visual apparitions. As a result of this understated mysticism, his Romanticism is distinguished from that of Coleridge and Shelley.

Percy Bysshe Shelley: Revolutionary Spirits and Metaphysical Abstractions

Shelley's idea of the supernatural is of an abstract nature and is founded on visions. In the early poem *Queen Mab*, which he wrote, a spirit that resembles a fairy guides the soul through space and time. In this poem, the poet criticises the injustices of society and imagines a future that is utopian. *Prometheus Unbound* is a reimagining of the Greek myth of Prometheus from a philosophical point of view. In this reimagining, gods, spirits, and elemental elements are used to symbolise freedom, resistance, and moral awakening.

In the poem "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley views the wind as a celestial spirit that has the ability to both destroy and regenerate, in addition to being a natural force. The phrase "Make me thy lyre" is the poet's entreaty to the wind, which demonstrates his desire to become one with the divine force in order to bring about lyrical and social transformation. There are several instances in which Shelley's use of supernatural talents reflects the political and intellectual radicalism that he had. In his view, spiritual forces exemplified revolutionary change and the boundless potential of the human mind when it was liberated from the constraints of authority people and institutions.

John Keats: Fatal Beauty and Mythical Enchantment

The ethereal components that Keats creates are immensely sensual and beautiful, and they often symbolise the conflict that the Romantic movement had between beauty and death. A supernatural femme fatale, a peculiar fairy lady, is portrayed in the film *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. She is the one who seduces the protagonist and then deserts him. What kind of a mystery character is the woman? Is she a ghost, a physical

embodiment of the knight's inner conflict, or something else entirely? The poem is filled with connotations that are not quite evident.

Keats paints a picture of a serpent-woman in Lamia who, in order to win over a mortal lover, transforms into a gorgeous lady. This is done in order to win over the mortal lover. Due to the fact that the philosopher Apollonius has exposed her, she vanishes, and her lover passes away. Through its contrast between imaginative enchantment and analytical dissection, the poem demonstrates Keats's mistrust of the limits of reason as well as his support of creative mystery. One of the most important aspects of Keats's idea of negative capacity, which is intimately connected to his supernaturalism, is the need of accepting ambiguity and mystery without making any attempt to resolve them. His supernatural figures, rather than being straightforward moral archetypes, are examples of the intense emotion and existential conflict that are inherent in the human condition.

Lord Byron: Supernatural Melancholy and Byronic Alienation

Compared to his contemporaries, Byron's connection with the supernatural is characterised by a greater degree of scepticism and irony. Over the course of his search for oblivion and transcendence, the protagonist of poems such as "Manfred" engages in conversations with transcendental entities and elemental spirits. The presence of the supernatural in this instance acts as an extension of the psychological pain and alienation experienced by the Romantic hero.

In contrast to the idealism of Shelley and the spiritualism of Coleridge, the supernaturalism of Byron is often characterised by nihilism and disillusionment. Instead of providing salvation or serenity, the spirits that Manfred calls are merely a further mirror of the inner turmoil that he is experiencing. The existential predicaments of a man who chooses to defy both God and society are dramatised by Byron via the employment of supernatural elements.

FUNCTIONS OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS IN ROMANTIC POETRY

When it comes to Romantic poetry, the employment of supernatural talents often serves the purpose of amplifying the expression of feelings and delving deeper into the battles that lie inside. Among the Romantic poets, Coleridge and Keats were among those who employed spectres, enchantments, and ghosts to signify the complexity of the human conscience, as well as inner agony, remorse, unrealised goals, and other similar emotions. In the play "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," for instance, the inner battle that the mariner experiences between feelings of guilt and the desire to be saved is reflected by supernatural forces. Using these topics allowed poets to go deeper into the human condition, examining secret desires, dreams, and obsessions. This was made possible by the usage of these subjects. As a consequence of this, their writings have a psychological depth that served as a precursor to contemporary literary styles such as psychoanalytic fiction and symbolism.

In a way that was both subtle and powerful, supernaturalism was a critique of the rationality of the Enlightenment and the customs of society. Many romantic authors, in order to defy rationalism and industrialisation, turned to the esoteric and the unintelligible in their writing. Images of strange landscapes and animals became to symbolise freedom, ambiguity, and the completion of tasks that were previously insurmountable. Further, poets such as Shelley and Wordsworth conveyed awe, dread, and devotion to the

natural world by integrating supernatural components with their representations of it. Consequently, the supernatural contributed to the enhancement of the philosophical and spiritual components of nature, demonstrating that it is more than only a backdrop but rather an active and powerful force that has the potential to either mirror or influence human destiny.

Comparison with Earlier and Later Literary Periods

When compared to the neoclassical ideals that had been in place before to the advent of Romantic poetry, the use of the supernatural constituted a significant departure. Neoclassical literature, which was marked by severe formalism and logical thinking, put a focus on moderation, order, and reason. Drawing largely on ancient mythology, neoclassical writing was distinguished by these characteristics. Whenever paranormal occurrences did take place, they were often confined to symbolic or metaphorical interpretations that were determined by tradition and appropriateness. On the other hand, Romantic poets were notorious for their willingness to embrace the irrational, the cryptic, and the emotional in their writing. These tales were able to serve as potent analogies for the human intellect, creativity, and the sublime because the writers were able to deftly weave supernatural talents into their narratives. The embrace of the mysterious, chaotic, and mystical as genuine and powerful components of the human experience, as opposed to the prior belief in a logical and ordered cosmos, is an example of a significant philosophical shift that has occurred as a result of this difference in view.

The obsession with the supernatural that was prevalent throughout the Romantic period is largely responsible for the development of Victorian Gothic and following modern fantasy. Romantic authors such as Bram Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe, and Mary Shelley brought psychological depth and moral complexity to the themes of horror, the occult, and death. These themes were all associated with the Romantic period. The Romantic tradition is still present in contemporary fantasy genres, ranging from the fantastical worlds created by Tolkien to the magical realism and supernatural thrillers that are popular during this time period. The pioneering use of free verse by Romantic poets helped to establish a literary legacy that explores fanciful realms and supernatural powers. This heritage is a reflection of our universal urge to exist in a reality that is beyond this one.

CONCLUSION

The employment of supernatural abilities in the poetry of the English Romantic period functioned as a potent literary weapon to explore the depths of human passion, imagination, and existential inquiry. In conclusion, this was all accomplished via the use of supernatural powers. Romantic poets, in contrast to the rationality of the Neoclassical age, embraced the strange and the metaphysical. They used aspects of the supernatural in order to transcend ordinary experience and question traditional beliefs. Not only did these components contribute to the enhancement of their poetic expression, but they also served as the basis for succeeding literary trends such as the Victorian Gothic and the contemporary fantasy. In the end, the supernatural in Romantic poetry is a reflection of an eternal human curiosity with the unknown and the unseen, which is why it is an essential and everlasting component of literary research.

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