

Romanticism: Lunacy or Revolt? Exploring Percy Bysshe Shelley's Political Prose through the Analysis of Public and Hidden Transcripts: A James Scott Neo Marxist Approach

By

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Abstract:

The world is moving towards advancement with each passing day therefore, adjusting to the overall strategy for living infers that the craftsmen need to work more, peril more, and, subsequently, persevere through more in view of existing different parts in making valuable academic workmanship. So how do artists and scholars restrict their harsh conditions? This paper manages this request by taking a gander at the courses where the nineteenth century British artist Percy Bysshe Shelley decays to thoroughly offer into their oppression. Especially, this paper will discuss those strategies that may look negative or frail yet are serious. These techniques could be around encompassed under what James Scott calls "Hidden transcripts." Therefore, this paper tries to examine the utilization of public and hidden transcripts in the political discourse of PB Shelley and infers that Shelley has every now and again utilized public transcripts, hence censuring the state, the administration and the ills of society in an immediate way. In any case, the utilization of hidden transcripts in Shelley's political discourse is less in relative terms. In this way, this paper fills a twofold need; firstly, it expects to feature the scholarly works of a progressive artist Percy Shelley with a totally new investigation through the reasonable structure of James Scott's "public and hidden transcripts". Furthermore, the paper looks to recognize and investigate the role of culture in the life of the artists and creators upon

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their utilization of either public or hidden transcripts. The paper concludes that Shelley being the child of a parliamentarian was not uneasy to utilize public transcripts in his artistic works. This may be his significant reason for being a radical writer in its beautiful substance and structure.

Keywords: PB Shelley's Political Prose, James Scott Neo Marxist Approach, Public and Hidden transcripts.

Introduction:

James Scott (1985) is a neo-Marxist who explains that hidden transcripts suggest a legislative issue of mask and namelessness among subordinate social events that is deficiently purified, questionable, and coded. He says this is much of the time conveyed in gossips, snitch, folktales, jokes, songs, functions, codes, and euphuisms that regularly begin from society. These, according to Scott (1985), do not contain simply talk acts, notwithstanding, a whole extent of practices that repudiate individuals in public transcript of the dominant. Scott's idea of "transcripts" (hidden and public) are solidly associated with the plausibility of opposition, which are built up strategies for carrying on and talking that fit explicit entertainers in explicit social settings, regardless of whether dominating or abused. Opposition is an unpretentious type of challenging 'public transcripts' by utilizing recommended jobs and language to oppose the maltreatment of intensity – including things like 'humor, tattle, masks, etymological stunts, illustrations, code words, folktales, ceremonial signals, obscurity' (Scott, 1985, p. 137).

These procedures are particularly viable in conditions where brutality is used to keep up business as usual, allowing "a hidden talk of pride and self-declaration inside the public transcript... in which ideological obstruction is camouflaged, quieted and hidden for the wellbeing of safety" (p. 137). These kinds of opposition require little coordination or arranging and are used by the two individuals and social events to restrict without explicitly testing first class standards (Scott, 1977).

Literature Review:

Percy Shelley was a nineteenth century poet who is famous as "Mad Shelley" due to his cynical attacks on the unjust system of society. He was a pioneer of social religious reform in the nineteenth century England. Religious reform was the most important principle of reform in Shelley's writings (Guertin, 1977). In his earlier essay "The Necessity of Atheism",

which was his first step to the new concept of reform in which he argued the three kinds of proofs that may be given and required for the existence of a thing in general, subsequently for the presence of God: (1) through the senses; (2) through reason; (3) through testimony (Guertin, 1977). Rational reform was also an important principle of reform in Shelley's writings. Webb, (1977) investigated PB Shelley's concept of rational reform in England. This concept is depicted to account for the aspects of writing and his addresses to the people of Ireland and England. Through his writings, Shelley was able to spread the ideas and thoughts to the people of England and Ireland. This mission was conducted by him through his skeptic, revolutionary essays, prose and poetry (Webb, 1977).

Shelley was a staunch believer of the principle of rational reform. His principle of rational reform could be seen in his reform struggle in Ireland and England. George (1977) acknowledges that Shelley's significant contribution to rational reform can be traced through his criticism over traditional religious societies, cruel governments and the Irish campaign. All the characteristics of a rational reformer exist in his works (George, 1977).

Peace and unity among people were another important principle of reform in Shelley's writings (Guertin, 1977). The distinctiveness of Shelley to reform the society lies in his views on peace and unity among people, which was obvious in the Irish Campaign. The main purpose of the campaign was to provoke unity among people and provide food, shelter, education and due rights to the oppressed Irish people.

Shelley was an advocate of self-reform and society. Wasserman (1971) in his study of the contributions made by Shelley, has explained that Shelley was a strong believer in bringing a positive change in oneself first and then in society. His political essays such as A philosophical view of reform, An address to the philanthropists and An address to the Irish people seek to provide answers to a positive change in human life and social issues (Wasserman, 1971).

Besides the above mentioned principles of reform, Shelley also gave remarkable contributions to the principle of reform through his use of figurative language. In this context Wasserman (1964) and Whatley (1990) expressed the elegant use of symbols that depict the reform struggle in Shelley's writings. This is very much agreed by O'Neill (1980) and Sandy (1997) who explained Shelley's contribution to symbolism and imagery. Their research found that Shelley has contributed significantly to

the principle of reform through the production of his earlier poem *Queen Mab* in which Shelley has used remarkable symbols to describe the injustice of the monarchs over the common masses and an appeal to the people to stand against such injustices.

In this context, Gilmour (2002) also studied Shelley's contribution to the principle of reform. In his study, he described one of the revolutionary poems of Shelley namely "The Devil's Walk". The poem was composed in 1812 by Shelley to dispute the actions of the British government and to highlight the critical financial conditions in the country at that time.

The poem appeared after the food riots in Devon where Shelley lived at that time. Prices for grain were at their peak level in 1812, there were scarcities of food, and prices were inflated (Gilmour, 2002). Shelley criticized "a brainless King" and the "princely paunch" and "each brawny haunch" of the Prince Regent (Gilmour, p. 334-336). The members of both the house of Parliament and the Church were also attacked. The political leaders and the rich were also condemned. The British war in Spain was likewise criticized.

Shelley frequently described the fall of empires and the decay of the rulers in his poems to show reform and change. This is very much agreed by MacEachen (2011) who discussed Shelley's poem "Ozymandias" in which the central theme of the poem encircles around the inescapable decay of all rulers and empires that they had built with their pretensions to greatness. Shelley's poems were written with the aim to reform the world into a new order. For Bean (1974) Shelley's poetry is a kind of prophecy and with the help of his arguments, Shelley makes the effort to reform people and society and to make this world a better place to live in.

In this context Winckles (2009) focused on Shelley's contribution to the principle of reform through his prophetic imagination. He compared the style of Shelley's writing with the style of the Old Testament prophetic poetry. The study showed Shelley as a prophetic reformer. Likewise, Reider (1981) discussed Shelley's principle of reform with his study of Shelley's poem *Mont Blanc*. He explained that the poem's association with the mountain became a symbol for the poet's association with history. The poet was fortunate because he could comprehend the truth that exists in nature, and the poet was then capable to use that truth to enlighten humanity and lead reform.

Similarly, Liberto (2010, p. 56) explained Shelley's principle of reform through his poetry and quoted Shelley's own words from his famous essay "A defense of poetry". For Shelley, "poets ... are not only the authors of

language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society..." Social and linguistic order are not the sole products of the rational faculty, as language is "arbitrarily produced by the imagination" and reveals "the before apprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension" of a higher beauty and truth. Shelley's conclusive remark that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" suggests his awareness of "the profound ambiguity inherent in linguistic means, which he considers at once as an instrument of intellectual freedom and a vehicle for political and social subjugation" (Liberto, 2010, p. 56).

Shelley's principle of reform and his revolutionary thoughts still contribute to the world, even after many years of his death (Burns, 2004; Miller, 2013; Scrivener, 2014). Apart from the above mentioned past studies, the study by Barnefield (1925) also shows Shelley's themes of love. His study described Shelley as a poet of discontented love. However, Shelley's practicability of love was pointed out by Peck (2003) whereby he claimed that Shelley's idealism and skepticism dragged him to the practicability of love and passion.

Kurtz (1933) has explained the development of the theme of death in Shelley's writings. He described that this development of the theme of death in his writings was the result of his French revolution and its drastic effects; even then, Shelley was able to hide the ugliness of death by the beauty of life (Kurtz, 1933). Shelley's thoughts on science and religion are discussed by Weaver (1966). He has described that many of Shelley's thoughts in his literary writings are parallel to Christ's teachings. Hence Shelley can be regarded as a religious teacher (Weaver, 1966). Stovall (1931) pointed out the effectiveness of Shelley's philosophical ideas. He asserts that Shelley was indeed a vigorous teacher and an advocate for institutional reform. Thus, majority of the critics agree that there is a rational and scholarly concept of reform underlying Shelley's most subtle fancies.

Use of Public and Hidden Transcripts in Shelley's Prose:

Other than poetry, Shelley's prose works such as "An Address to the Irish People" (1812), "Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists" (1812), and "Declaration of Rights" (1812), all contains public transcripts, thus manifesting his straightforward approach. Another production of 1812, "A Letter to Lord Ellenborough", also expressed Shelley's support for freedom of the press with such passionate eloquence that it was quickly suppressed.

In “An Address to the Irish People” (1812) Shelley has publicly addressed the Irish people to fight for their rights. He composed this pamphlet and published it in Dublin in 1812. For centuries, the Catholics in Ireland had been second-class. Although in 1800 the Act of Union was passed, that addressed some of their objections, even then, they were given negligible representation in Parliament.

“An Address to the Irish People” calls for campaigning to abolish the Act of Union. Between February and April 1812, Shelley went to Ireland became aware of the condition of Irish Catholics. The Irish Parliament’s independence was confirmed by the Constitution of 1782, but Catholics, who were the vast majority of the Irish population, were denied to be MPs.

They had a negligible right to vote by 1798, but a revolt that year, reinforced by the French, led the British Government to combine the two parliaments to resolve the situation. But, the King continued to refuse to sanction Catholic MPs. Shelley continued to encourage the Irish people to fight for their rights. An excerpt from “An Address to the Irish people” shows how Shelley publicly motivated the Irish Catholics,

“I wish you, O Irish men, to be as careful and thoughtful of your interests as are your real friends, do not drink, do not play, do not spend any idle time, and do not take everything that other people say, for granted. There are numbers who will tell you lie to make their own fortunes, you cannot more certainly do well to your own cause, than by defeating the intentions of these men.” (Shepherd, 1906, p. 184)

Shelley followed this pamphlet with another, “Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists”, which analyses straightforwardly as to, where the French revolution turned unsuccessful, and suggested a more idealistic notion of change. He says, ‘We are in a state of continually progressive improvement’. In his prose work Shelley also gives a solution to injustices and human misery. He explains that philanthropy was the best solution to all evils since,

“None are more interesting to philanthropy than those which excite the benevolent passions, that generalize and expand private into public feelings, and make the hearts of individuals vibrate not merely for themselves, their families, and their friends, but for posterity, for a people; till their country becomes the world, and their family the sensitive creation” (Shepherd, 1906, p. 200)

Here also, Shelley uses a milder tone, but gives a direct solution to the evils of society.

“Declaration of Rights” (1812), is also another work based on Shelley’s clear approach towards people, society and evils of society. Shelley uses straightforward language to explain the duty of a common man and the obligations of law to protect common people if they are truthful.

“A man has not only a right to express his thoughts, but it is his duty to do so” (Shepherd, 1906, p. 215).

“No law has a right to discourage the practice of truth. A man ought to speak the truth on every occasion; a duty can never be criminal, what is not criminal cannot be injurious” (Shepherd, 1906, p. 215).

Conclusion:

The universe, for Shelley, possesses an extraordinary congruity and solidarity, and is not an association of parts. The conspicuous detachments in things are near particularizations of what is at first homogeneous, one, unbreakable, and steady. By revealing characteristic cracks and instabilities in the redoubts of the dominating conviction framework, the artist Shelley shows the shortcomings of the framework. Step by step instructions to accomplish serene and enduring change in present day social orders stays an unanswered inquiry, and one that is ready for motivation. Perilous thoughts from writers are exactly what a truly open society ought to have the option to include and talk about, not disguise, overlook or stifle. Henceforth, Shelley's Romanticism, Lunacy, or revolt is, in this way, one of compromise, or blend of whatever is partitioned, contradicted and clashing. He has accomplished this get-together of the numerous into the One and affirms, like Pope does with telling certainty in *Essay on Man*, that “All discord” is “harmony not understood”.

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