

## Book Reviews

*Nature Imagery of the Major Romantic Poets*, Rajnath, Delhi : Doaba House. 2014 . Pages: 79+.

First published in 1965 and out of print as well as attention of readers ever since, Rajnath's *Nature Imagery of the Major Romantic Poets* has been deservedly resurrected after five decades by Doaba House Publishers. As the morning star of the author's illustrious academic journey, spanning over fifty years, the book was, surprisingly, written by him in his early twenties. It is noteworthy that the book has been republished at such a crucial juncture when practical criticism is not only a spent force but a vanished literary feat. A highly abstract understanding of literature under the rubrics of theory and cultural studies has eclipsed the reader's focussed grasp of the text. Its publication becomes more relevant when Eliot's warning apropos of Matthew Arnold's tendency of keeping literature in a corner for extra-literary concerns seems to have come true in contemporary times. The book with its focus on textual analysis based on the use of imagery demonstrates 'literariness' in an excellent way.

Hence, Rajnath's book offers a powerful insight into understanding the poetic technique of exploiting images from nature in the works of five representative British Romantic poets namely Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron Shelley and Keats. This also serves as the basis for dividing the book into seven chapters where the fulcrum of this literary endeavour has been stated in the very first chapter, "The Poetic image".

Thus, the introductory chapter throws light on various nuances of the term 'image'. By referring to a dazzling array of critics e.g. Beach, Fogle, Foakes, Marsh and Kermode, Rajnath has taken pains to illuminate the understanding of 'image' excellently. It offers a wide survey of deliberations on the technique and composition of imagery in classical as well as British literature and defines image a complex blend of simile, metaphor and symbol with the aim of comparing two or more entities. So, Romantic poetry is distinct from neo-classical and modern poetry in its attitude to nature and imagery.

The second chapter deals with Wordsworth's attitude towards nature and his extraction of images from the same. Various aspects of Wordsworth's poetry, including his views on fancy and imagination, along with limitations of his poetic art have been discussed with fine examples from his poems. Rajnath maintains that Wordsworth coins images in a symbolic way to fuse together the opposites. The author excellently encourages the readers to focus on various sources like star, flowers, light, mountain and stream which supply nature imagery to Wordsworth.

The next chapter on Coleridge is particularly illuminating for many reasons. Rajnath has done an exceptional task by giving Coleridge the largest space, probably next to Shelley only to discuss the former's creative works and critical precepts. He has not given a short-shrift to the creative talent of Coleridge which is usually done by critics. Rajnath's approach to Coleridge is extraordinarily sound in the sense that he has given excellent illustrations from Coleridge's poetry to clarify his theory of imagination and fancy as well as the synthetic nature of his imagination. Coleridge's images are predominantly symbols drawn largely from the spectacle of his wide range of readings about nature.

Further, Byron, a half-hearted Romantic, has been given a due place in the subsequent chapter. Rajnath points out that for Byron nature is “an escape from the society of man”. Unlike Wordsworth and Coleridge, Byron focuses on gloomy tempestuous and agitated aspects of nature and extracts images primarily for the sake of decoration. This is why he drifts towards the neo-classicists. Thus, Rajnath delineates the limited imaginative range of Byron.

However, Shelley has been accorded the largest space amongst all in the fifth chapter. The more plausible reason for this may not be the dexterity of Shelley in coining flawless images but his kaleidoscopic interest in various aspects of nature. Rajnath, referring to the insight of other critics like F.A. Pottle and Wimsatt, lays emphasis on the complex nature of Shelley’s imagery where “at times the tenor gets almost crushed under the heavy burden of vehicle”. Shelley has been aptly assessed as an erratic genius who expands horizontally to showcase a variety than attaining perfection in a circumscribed sphere of art. Shelley’s imagination is rich in mythopoeic and anthropomorphic shades.

Rajnath’s commentary on Keats is commendable. He is of the view that the organic nature of Keats’ imagery has a very intense and overpowering sensory appeal. His capacity to convey the most abstract of thoughts in a tangibly concrete manner is remarkable. The comparison of vertical and horizontal imaginations of Shelley and Keats through illustrations from “To a Skylark” and “Ode to a Nightingale” respectively is a fascinating example of textual comparison. Keats synthetic imagination enables him to reconcile polarities of human life and nature. This chapter, I think, on Keats could have been supplied with some more textual references. The book is concluded with summing up the major ideas and delineating differences among the major Romantic poets. Lucidity of expression and a- posteriori approach of the author to the subject matter make it a fabulous book.

The book is reasonably priced and must be acquired by each and every reader and teacher of the Romantic poetry who wish to have a thorough understanding of the attitude of these poets toward nature.

**Ashish Kumar Pathak**

*Two Minute Silence*, C. L. Khatri, New Delhi : Authorpress. 2014. ISBN : 978-81-7273-920-1. Pp.81 , Price – RS. 195.00

*2 two –minute silence* is a wonderful collection of poetry written by an Indian poet in English shedding light upon India’s glorious cultural heritage and its crises -ridden present . This anthology of poetry contains 34 poems and 55 short poems written in traditional Japanese style . This book deals with contemporary issues like the abuse of sex, deterioration in quality in education in government schools , acute poverty driving the mother to sell the baby , the clash between two classes: *Aam Adami* (common people) and *Khash Adami* (the elites), the devastation by Tsunami and so on . What lends beauty to the poetry is Khatri’s concern for a better humanity and his silent meditation over the futility , miasma and anarchy of life . The title of the book written in small letters : *two minute silence* provokes thinking and rethinking when the last line of that poem reads as follows: ‘Can’t we do with one minute....?’(68) . Now-a-days the