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TREATMENT OF LOVE AND SIN IN PORPHYRIA' LOVER

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Abstract

Robert Browning is a great romantic poet. He sees love as a basic need for the human soul. His love poetry springs out from the love of Man and woman. He is of the opinion that love is in itself a fulfillment. Even death cannot dim the certainty of love's fulfilment. He does not discard the physical aspect of love. In his poems, the physical and spiritual elements are mingled together. It is often said that for Browning, the brightest and the purest truth in the universe often 'lies in the kiss of a girl'. He does not consider body and physical passion as an obstacle in the development of human soul. His love poetry deals with countless phases and varieties of love in all strata of society. For Browning, love is the central principle of the universe. He considers love as the highest attributes of God and man. He believes that love emancipates man from all the limitations of the physical world. It has the capacity to purify even the beast and the man with most wicked and corrupt heart. According to Browning, a true lover need not despair because love is its own reward and God is mighty to create and mighty to grant. His optimism is the fruit of his unflinching faith in the immortality and triumph of love. The theme of the Porphyria' Lover is love and sin. The persona loves Porphyria so much that he is willing to kill her. Yet he also recognizes that this is a sin because he questions why God hasn't responded at the end.

Keywords: Emancipates, despair, persona, respond and attributes

Robert Browning is one of the greatest love poets in English love poetry. He is not concerned with divine love or the love of God, country, family but the love between man and woman. His love poetry is intensely realistic in character. A man loves a woman not for her spiritual qualities but for her physical charm and passion- her curls, dented chin, little tricks of speech, all the causeless laughter's, the little private jokes and common memories that are the stuff of intimacy. That is the real thing, and that kind of love poetry, Browning is master. He intellectualizes the passion of love. The lovers of Browning provide a psychological analysis of their love, and it is clearly reflected in his poem like "Porphyria's Lover. He does not emphasize the

physical charms of his women, nor does he introduce like Keats 'light feet and creamy breasts' but he lays stress on the power of women to transform and transfigure man's life This aspect of Browning's women is well brought out in Porphyria's Lover. The research paper focuses on treatment of love in Porphyria's Lover.

The story is very romantic. On a stormy night Porphyria enters the room where her lover is sitting alone by a burnt-out fire. She shuts the door, kneels by the grate and makes a cheerful blaze. She takes off her wet cloak, lets down her damp hair, sits beside her lover, speaks to him, puts her arm around him, places his head on her shoulder and murmurs her love for him.

She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and Shawl,

At last then, he knows that she returns his love. His heart is filled with joy. He realizes that Porphyria in all her purity belongs to him for the moment.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me:

Fearing that the moment will pass and that she will leave him, the lover decides to kill her. So, he takes her golden hair in a cord and winds it thrice round her little throat. She is strangled, but dies painlessly. And God, he says has not said a word all through the night.

Happy and proud; at last, I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair
Perfectly pure and good; I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her.

The murder comes as a dramatic climax when the reader least expects it. Nothing before it actually prepares us for murder. The situation as the lover says,

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good,

"Why did the lover murder his beloved?" It is a baffling question. Porphyria has admitted her love, and the situation had made the lover happy and proud and yet he kills her. Different critics gave different answers.

Someone says that the crime "might be committed in a momentary aberration, or even intense excitement, of feeling. "Someone says that the lover murders her for her soul's salvation even though he risks damnation himself. Some critics say that the lover wanted to preserve that moment of her surrender to him.

The language of the poem is entirely free of obscurity. The opening lines are beautifully evocative of a fierce and malicious natural force. Rain and storm are personified as agents of destruction. The sullen wind has been given a life of its own as it tears down the elm-top "for spite" and did its worst to vex the lake. The storm outside is aptly reflective of the despair and gloom in the heart of the lover which is "fit to break". The cold bleakness of the opening lines contrast vividly with the warm cosiness. The cottage and the lover's heart gain warmth with the entrance of Porphyria, who shuts the door and kindles a fire at the cheerless grate. Her actions as she sits by her lover, placing his arm round her waist and drawing down his head to rest on her bare shoulder, speak of intense passion and tender love.

The rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
And did its worst to vex the lake:

Thus, the poem Porphyria's lover is undoubtedly, elusive and baffling, but this very mysterious quality is its special charm. After all there is no need to worry over the motive of a murder- so often the murderer himself is unable to tell. The poem presents a striking view of a human soul, though an abnormal one. The strange horror has an appeal of its own.

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