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ROBERT BROWNING AND HIS LITERARY WORLD

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Abstract

Robert Browning held a very distinct place among the writers of the Victorian age. He was born on 7th May 1812 in Camberwell, on the outskirts of London. He was capable of writing melodiously with noble simplicity. Of all the poets in our literature, Robert Browning had deliberately or splendidly become a teacher of men. His influence upon our life is positive and remarkable. Brownian's poems are noted for good characterization, sarcasm and a social commentary with a challenging lexicon. He supported the emancipation of women. He was against slavery, which was very common in those days. Robert was awarded with honorary degrees by Oxford University and University of Edinburgh. His Monologues have been very prominent. Today, his Monologues are often considered by the teachers as the best examples of the Monologue forms. He had a good command on other languages like Latin, Greek and French. His exemplary use of diction and rhythm are regarded as his most important contribution to poetry. He got inspired with the poems of Elizabeth Barrett and married her in 1846. The married couple moved to Pisa and Florence,

where they continued their work. Robert's collection of poems 'Men and women' in 1855, was dedicated to his wife, Elizabeth Barrett. Psychological insight with delicacy and power of dramatic elucidation are the main features of Browning's poetry. He was said to be a Moralist and a religious teacher. He was an uncompromising opponent of scientific materialism. He preached God and immorality as the central truths of his philosophy as he was assured of their reality. He started writing at an early age. The critics of all schools recognized the supreme strength, beauty and enduring poetic value in his work. His characteristic art-form was unmatched, as it was never used effectively by other poets. The aim of the paper is intended to look for Robert Browning's strength, his joy of life, his strong faith, his invincible optimism to get imbibed into us, making us different and better people, after reading his works.

Keywords: Dramatic Monologue, Philosophy, Mental Acrobatics, Social Commentary, Dark Humour.

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Literary Background of Victorian era

The literary product was inevitably affected by the new ideas in science, religion and politics. The Education Acts made education obligatory. The printing and paper became inexpensive, which amplified the demand for books. The most popular form of literature was the Novel. It was specified by the proficient critics that the middle years of 19th century were the richest in the whole history of the literature. It was an age of commodious intellectual perspectives, noble endeavors and bright aspirations. The progress in the field of arts had influenced literature. It was an incredible rise in the literary works. It was an Age of Newspaper, Magazine and Modern Novel. The number of readers had increased far more than a thousand fold with the spread of popular education. Novels which appeared in large numbers and with perfection were never witnessed in other ages. Victorian age can be called as an Age of Realism.

His life:

Robert Browning was a prolific Victorian era poet and playwright. He was born on 07thMay1812 in Camberwell on the outskirts of London. He was born to Sr. Robert Browning and Sarah Anna Wiedemann. His father was a senior clerk in the Bank of England and also a literary collector. He maintained a library of around 6,000 books and passed on love of art and literature to Robert. Robert's mother, Sarah was an excellent professional Pianist.

Robert interpreted the musical temperament in his poems, than any other poet in our literature. As a child, he was an exceptional and began to write poetry at an age of twelve. Robert was raised in a household of significant literary resources. He was educated at home by a tutor with the resources of his father's extensive library. By fourteen years, he was fluent in French, Greek, Italian and Latin. From fourteen to sixteen years, he was taught music, drawing, dancing, riding, fencing, boxing and other basics, by various tutors. He was sent to West Indies to make his fortune, but he was not happy with the slave economy so he returned, hoping for a career in arts and literature. He wanted to be a poet and he never seriously attempted any other profession.

In 1883, he travelled to Russia, and then he lived in London, where he became acquainted with some of the leaders of the literary and theatrical world. His first published work was 'Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession' in 1833, was considered as an accolade to P.B Shelley as he was influenced by his writings. His poetic development was manifested with his next long poems 'Paracelsus' in 1835, in which the spirit of his whole life was expressed. He turned to write dramas. His first play, 'Strafford' in 1837, then 'Sordello' in 1840, were published. 'Bells and Pomegranates' were published between 1841 and 1846.

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Robert turned to the Dramatic Monologues. He wrote 'Pippa Passes' in 1841, 'Dramatic Lyrics' in 1842, 'Dramatic Romances and Lyrics' in 1845. He met Elizabeth Barrett, the poetess in 1845, whose poems had strongly attracted him. They loved each other and got married against her father's consent. They moved to France, Italy and pursued their poetical activity. Fifteen happy years of his married life were spent in Italy. During that period, he wrote 'Christmas- Eve and Easter- day' in 1850. He wrote 'Men and Women' in 1855, which was dedicated to his wife.

Mrs. Browning passed away in Florence in 1861. Browning fled with his son to England, after his wife's death. Browning's 'Saul' in 1864, brought him recognition and popularity. He was capable of writing melodiously and with noble simplicity. He mingled with the loving crowd and received appreciations from them. With the publication of 'The Ring and the Book' in 1868, he was recognized as one of the greatest English poets. He earned a lot of fame and respect in his career. He had completely captured the minds of the readers with his incredible work. His popularity was as great as Alfred Tennyson. He gained a lot of reputation in the field of literature. Even the Critics of all schools, witnessed beauty in his writings.

Other works:

- Colombe's Birthday: A play in five acts (1844)
- Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came (1852)
- Fra Lippo Lippi (1855)
- Dramatic Personae (1864)
- Prince Hohenstiel – Schwangau, Saviour of Society(1871)
- Fifine at the Fair (1872)
- The Inn Album (1875)
- Jocaseria (1883)
- Ferishtah's Fancies(1884)

Recognitions:

In Oscar Wilde's dialogue 'The Critic as Artist', he regarded Robert Browning as Shakespearean creature. Browning's use of diction, rhythm and symbol are regarded as his most important contribution to poetry, influencing major poets of 20th century.

Robert Browning was awarded honorary degrees by Oxford University in 1882 and The University of Edinburgh in 1884.

Conclusion: Browning's writings comprised of love, philosophy, religious or lighter themes. His poems had a challenging vocabulary. His works were divided into three categories such as pure dramas, dramatic narratives and dramatic lyrics. His works contained strong emotions. His dramatic power portrayed the history of a soul. His works dealt with the crisis between good and evil, in the

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thoughts of a speaker. His dramatic poems reflected the noblest expression of his poetic genius.

Browning gave a message those individual triumphs over all obstacles of life. "Self" is not a subordinate but a supreme. Due to invulnerable will and optimism, he is regarded as the greatest poet.

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