

The Anglo-American Elements in Jose Rizal's Poem Education Gives Luster to the Motherland

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Abstract

There is no known study made about the Anglo-American ideas found in Jose Rizal's poems. Hence, this study looks into Rizal's poem Education gives luster to the motherland and identify the Anglo-American ideas that are found in it. The study assumed that since England and the United States are politically and economically powerful, they have great influence to states that are less powerful like the Philippines. The study found out through descriptive textual analysis that Rizal's poem is romanticist in character. Since romanticism originated in England, his poem contains English ideas and he is influenced by English thought. Rizal is a proponent of education as shown by the poem. His advocacy for education as a means by which the nation can develop is shared by the Americans because education is one of the major contributions and legacy of America to Philippine history. Rizal's desire to liberate his countrymen from ignorance which in turn will liberate the people from oppression is parallel to America's advocacy for liberation, freedom and democracy. Therefore, Rizal's poem contains American ideas and he is influenced by American thought. This study recommends that another analysis must be made to see if Rizal's other poems contain Anglo-American ideas.

Keywords: Anglo-American Literary Studies, Jose Rizal, Jose Rizal's poem

1.0 Introduction

Jose Rizal is known to be Spanish educated that is why there is not much discussion or there is even no discussion and literature about the Anglo-American influences on his poems. Thus, this paper aims to expound the Anglo-American ideas in his poem Education gives Luster to the Motherland (Por la Educacion Recibe Lustre la Patria) through a descriptive textual analysis. Specifically, the study employs formalism and mimeses as methods or approaches in the analysis. It utilizes formalism because it analyzes words, verses and stanzas of the poem that reflect Anglo-American ideas. It makes use of

mimesis for it looks into the political, cultural and historical background of Rizal that will explain the influence of Anglo-American thoughts on his poem.

The original version of the poem was written in Spanish. However, this study would like to use the English version of the poem considering that the authors have limited knowledge on the Spanish language. The use of the English translation would facilitate the analysis. The analysis of this study is limited only to one poem. Thus, this study does not present and guarantee that the other poems of Rizal or all his poems contain Anglo-American ideas. For a more

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comprehensive analysis of Rizal's poetry, an in depth study of his others poems must be done.

This study is significant because it provides additional information to the existing studies and analysis on Rizal's poetry particularly on the Anglo-American influences on his poems. This is also an additional text to the exiting literature of Anglo-America literary studies in general. This will show that Anglo American literature is not only limited to Anglo -American authors and poetry. Even among non American and non-English authors and literature there exists the influence and the presence of Anglo-American ideas. This broadens the readers understanding of the coverage of Anglo-American literary analysis and study.

Understanding Rizal's thought and influences through literary analysis like this one is actually an alternative if not a novel approach in the teaching and learning of Rizal's life and works which has been commonly and conventionally taught in Philippine schools merely through a chronological presentation of persons, places, dates and events in other words trivia that transpired in Rizal's lifetime wherein students most of the time if not all the time simply memorize. The literary analysis as an approach is also aligned with the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which the Philippines will adopt as a consequence of ASEAN Integration in 2015. The OBE approach requires higher order thinking skills and outcomes like analysis.

2.0 Theoretical Background

The 18th and 19th centuries were dominated by the movement and revival known as Romanticism. Romanticism is a movement in art, literature and philosophy which was actually a reaction to the rationalism of the Neoclassicism of the Enlightenment. Rationalism emphasized reason, logic, order, decorum among others,.

Romanticism on the other hand emphasizes feelings, emotions, imagination, creativity, nature worship, love for the past, freedom, liberation, the individual and it is humanistic (Morner and Rausch, 1997).

A.O. Lovejoy, an American scholar said that the word romance, from which romanticism is derived, actually denoted something contrary to Latin. Latin since the middle ages was actually the language of the academia and science which is rigid, objective, and structured and intellectual. Romance is the opposite, it speaks of gentleness, freedom, subjectivity and individualism, creative, dynamic, and emotional. It meant the use of emotion in a creative and imaginative way. It was in Britain that romanticism as movement and as a rival started. Among its proponents are Keats, Coleridge and Wordsworth. It is interested in nature, in the natural, it has a growing interest in scenery , the human moods, the moods of nature, subjectivity , childhood, human passions, the poet, the sublime, and it emphasizes the primacy of human imagination over reason (Cuddon and Habbib, 2013), 622-623.

Julien D. Bonn (2004) affirms that romanticism is indeed an intellectual and artistic movement of the late 18th century and 19th century which called for the freedom of personal expression contrary to the strict rubrics and logic of the 18ht century neoclassicism and the classicism of previous centuries. Romanticism prefers imaginative expressions than rational analysis. It puts the individual as the center of art and it arrives and captures the truth better than scientific investigation and explanation.

Neil King and Sarah king (2002) also assert that romanticism is interested in idealism, in the supernatural, political and social revolution, physical sensation and passion and it is opposed to established institutions such as monarchy and the Church.

Many hold that it was in Britain that the Romantic Movement began. The term has many definitions and in fact it is really evasive of definition because essentially romanticism wants to be indefinite and boundless not limited by strict structures of rationalism. It thinks outside the box. According to Wordsworth the opposite of poetry is not prose but science which is rationalistic and scientific. Science regards nature and the world as an object which is dead and static, an object of scientific investigation and study. Romanticism regards nature as living thing that mirrors life to the soul (Drabble, 2000), 872-873).

Yes, Romanticism is believed to have begun in England during the time of the Industrial Revolution when machines replaced human labor. As a consequence, many lost their jobs poverty and unemployment escalated so high. The world started to become consumeristic, materialistic and morality declined. Man and nature became subordinate to machines. Man lost his original position in nature; he was reified or reduced to level of things and objects. For this reason, romanticism emerged as reaction to Industrial revolution. As the industrial revolution emerged many people from rural communities migrated to urban areas. Community life in the rural areas was lost and people became strangers, aloof and lonely. Life became boring, mechanical and a routine.

Childs and Fowler (2005, 209) explains that romanticism is not just an idea or an ideology but it is a very heavy historical phenomenon which transpired around 1770-1830. The unique characteristic of romanticism is to reconcile inner and outer visions and experiences of man through the expression of his creative faculties and synthetic imagination. During the neoclassical and classical times, man and nature were indeed set apart. It is during the period of

romanticism that the barrier between man and nature was removed and the two were reunited. In other words, romanticism provided the synthetic vision that man and nature are one.

Romanticism started with English literature in the late 1790's with the lyrical ballads of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Blake. In Germany, it began with Friedrich Holderlin, Von Goethe, Jean Paul Novalis, Ludwig Tiech A.W. and Friedrich Von Schlegel, William Heinrich Wackenroder. In France, it started with the Viscount de Chateaubriand and Mme de Stael (Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature, (1995), 354-355).

Indeed romanticism started in 1790's in England and Germany and in the 1820's in France and elsewhere. It known as the romantic period or the Romantic Movement. It stresses the liberty of the individual, self expression, spontaneity. It rejects rationality as mechanical, impersonal and artificial (Baldick, 2001, 222-223).

Romanticism did not only spread in England, Germany and France but also in America, in fact the American Revolution (1776) and the French revolution (1779) coincided with its birth. Romanticism elevated imagination as the superior faculty replacing reason. Nature is being worshipped and is considered in itself as an art. Symbolism and myths are used to express the inexpressibility of reality as infinite and boundless. Intuition and feelings are given greater emphasis. (A Guide to the Study of Literature).

3.0 Results and Discussions

The poem *Education Gives Luster* to the Motherland from the book Jose Rizal Poems published by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines in 2011 has nine stanzas and each stanza has eight verses. It does not have a

fixed, uniform and clear rhyme scheme. It does not also have a fixed meter.

First stanza:

Wise education, vital breath
Inspires an enchanting virtue;
She puts the Country in the lofty seat
Of endless glory, of dazzling glow,
And just as the gentle aura's puff
Do brighten the perfumed flower's hue:
So education with a wise, guiding hand,
A benefactress, exalts the human band
(Jose Rizal Poems, 2011).

Speaking of education as wise is personification. It is an imaginative and creative way of describing education which is a quality or characteristic of romanticism. Speaking of vital breath and perfumed flower's hue describes nature, its beauty and mood. This is another quality and characteristic of romanticism which is the praise of nature or nature worship. The first stanza basically speaks of how education raises a country to glory, development and fame. Education inspires virtue. Being a guiding hand, education makes man more human and humane by exalting the human band which is another quality of romanticism because Romanticism is interested in the individual, in subjectivity, and in humanity.

Second Stanza:

Man's placid repose and earthly life
To education he dedicates Because
of her, art and science are born
Man; and as from the high mount above
The pure rivulet flows, undulates,
So education beyond measure
Gives the Country tranquility secure
(2011).

The third verse distinguishes art from science. The distinction is very romanticist because what separates art from science is that art uses creative imagination while science uses logic and rational analysis. Art belongs to romanticism, while science belongs to classicism and neoclassicism of the Enlightenment. The fourth verse which speaks of man; and as from the high mount above actually is a unification of man and nature which is a characteristic of romanticism. This also is a description of natural scenery. The fifth verse speaks of pure rivulet flows, undulates, is another praise or worship of nature, looking at nature as art. The sixth verse speaks of education beyond measure which is a characteristic of romanticism that escapes definition, because romanticism essentially believes that reality is beyond measure, it is infinite and boundless.

Third stanza:

Where wise education raises a throne
Sprightly youth are invigorated,
Who with firm stand error they subdue
And with noble ideas are exalted;
It breaks immortality's neck,
Contemptible crime before it is halted:
It humbles barbarous nations
And it makes of savages champions
(2011).

This stanza speaks of education being a source of inspiration among the youth. This explains education at the emotional level and not at the rational level. Therefore, this expresses the character of romanticism which emphasizes on feeling and emotion. The third verse speaks of education as liberation or freedom from error. It has to be noted that freedom and liberation are actually characteristics or interests of romanticism. The fourth verse speaks of education breaking immortality's neck. This is another personification which is a creative and imaginative way of

describing education. The sixth verse speaks of education as means to halt crime that is a means to achieve peace. Peace is a goal of humanity and romanticism is interested with humanity.

Fourth Stanza

And like the spring that nourishes
The plants, the bushes of the meads,
She goes on spilling her placid wealth,
And with kind eagerness she
constantly feeds, The river
banks through which she slips,
And to beautiful nature all she concedes,
So whoever procures education wise
Until the height of honor may rise(2011).

From the first verse down to the sixth verse it speaks of nature, its beauty and mood. The verse identifies education with nature and the sceneries of nature. This is a creative and imaginative way of describing education, a romantic way of describing or knowing reality.

Fifth Stanza

From her lips the waters crystalline
Gush forth without end, of divine virtue,
And prudent doctrines of her faith
The forces weak of evil subdued,
That break apart like the whitish waves
That lash upon the motionless shoreline:
And to climb the heavenly ways the people
Do learn with her noble example (2011).

The first verse is another personification of education. It describes education as if it had lips. The waters crystalline, the whitish waves, the motionless shorelines and the climb of heavenly ways are praise and worship of nature and the identification of education with nature.

Sixth Stanza:

In the wretched human beings' breast
The living flame of good she lights
The hands of criminal fierce she ties,
And fill the faithful hearts with delights,
Which seeks her secrets beneficent
And in the love for the
good her breast she incites,
And it's th' education noble and pure
Of human life the balsam sure(2011)..

The whole stanza speaks of the personification of education describing education as a woman with breasts. Education diffuses the good and prevents criminality. Again, personification is a creative and imaginative expression of reality which is art contrary to rational analysis of science. Art is romanticism while science is rationalism. The prevention of criminality is the goal of humanity and humanity and human concerns as mentioned previously are the focus and the concern of romanticism.

Seventh Stanza:

And like a rock that rises with pride
In the middle of the turbulent waves
When hurricane and fierce Notus roar
She disregards their fury and raves,
That weary of the horror great
So frightened calmly off they stave;
Such is one by wise education steered
He holds the Country's reins
unconquered(2011)..

The nation that is educated has the tolerance and fortitude to endure tests and sacrifices that may come. Speaking of rocks, turbulent waves, and hurricanes is nature worship. It portrays natural scenery that identifies education with nature.

Eighth stanza:

His achievements on sapphires
are engraved; The Country
pays him a thousand honors;
For in the noble breasts of her sons
Virtue transplanted luxuriant flow'rs;
And in the love of good e'er disposed
Will see the lords and governors
The noble people with loyal venture
Christian education always procure (2011)..

Mentioning sapphires, noble breasts, luxuriant flower's speaks again of personification and nature worship. The fifth verse speaks of the love of good emphasizing feelings, emotion and of humanity.

Ninth Stanza:

And like the golden sun of the morn
Whose rays resplendent shedding gold,
And like fair aurora of gold and red
She overspreads her colors bold;
Such true education proudly gives
The pleasure of virtue to young and old
And she enlightens out Motherland dear
As she offers endless glow and
luster (2011)..

This stanza equates and compares education with the rising sun. This is an identification of education with nature. This depicts scenery of nature. It sees nature as living, dynamic, as art.

The whole poem is an idealization of education because it puts education in the pedestal describing it superlatively with glow and luster, and as source of illumination and inspiration to young as well as to the old and that it brings a country to fame and glory. It also speaks ideally of education as the liberator of humanity from ignorance, barbarism, crimes, evils and errors. It has to be remembered that idealism is one of characteristics of romanticism. It is evident that the entire poems

identified education with nature. And nature is described in the poem creatively and imaginatively through emotions and feelings which are the main characteristics of romanticism. Having all these romanticist qualities in Rizal's poem, shows that he is a romanticist. Since romanticism's origin can be traced back to England or Britain. Therefore, Rizal's poem reflects Anglo or English ideas and this would also mean that he has to some extent English influence as well.

According to Austin Coates (1968), the poem explains how education becomes the cause of the development of the nation to its highest glory. Education strengthens and empowers the youth; corrects errors and faults and it makes the Filipino people love noble ideas.

Rizal believed that the very foundation of the nation's development rests in the people's acquisition of knowledge. It will make the people aware of their situation/condition of being oppressed. Thus, they will work their way to change or reform (1968).

The use of poetry in expressing, describing and knowing reality is actually romantic or romanticist. In other words, poetry is the language of romanticism. Wordsworth said that poetry is romantic while science which is its opposite is classical or neoclassical (Drabble, 2000). Since Rizal described education through poetry, hence, he is a romanticist. Considering that Rizal is a poet as evidenced by the many poems that he wrote in his entire lifetime; shows that he is indeed a romanticist. Since romanticism originated in England; therefore Rizal is influenced by English thought and culture.

Rizal was introduced and exposed to poetry at a very young age with his mother as his first mentor and editor. His teacher in Ateneo Municipal Fr. Francisco de Paula Sanchez awakened his passion for literature and rhetoric even more as he was advised to join the society of the muses.

Rizal considered poetry as extremely exciting and considered prosaic positivism of gold-hardened hearts as depressing (Guerrero, 1963). This manifests Rizal bias for poetry which is the language of romanticism against prose and science during his schooling in the Ateneo. Therefore, he was inclined to romanticism.

The poem *Education gives Luster to the Mother Land* was written when Jose Rizal was still studying in Ateneo municipal, a catholic institution administered by the Jesuits. While a student in the Ateneo around 1874, Rizal's favorite novelist is Alexander Dumas who authored his favorite novel *the Count of Monte Cristo* (Zaide and Zaide, 2008). Alexander Dumas is actually a French romanticist who is also a playwright (Drabble, 2000). In other words, Rizal was enamored with the romanticism of Dumas. Therefore, he was influenced by romanticism. And since romanticism originated in England or Britain before it became widespread in France. Therefore, Rizal is influenced by English thought and culture.

Aside from Alexander Dumas, Rizal, while he was in the Ateneo, was interested with Feodor Jagor's book *Travels in the Philippine Islands*. He read this book in 1874 which prophesied the coming of the Americans to the Philippines. This gave Rizal an interest to American life, culture and ideas. In fact he was really inspired by Jagor's work that later in his life he wrote an essay entitled *the Philippines a Century Hence*. It also speaks of the coming of the Americans to the Philippines. Jagor's prophecy made a deep impression on Rizal and led the direction of his life work. Hence, Rizal's goal was to make his countrymen prepared for a free state. As early as 1876, Rizal was already convinced of the changes that would come as consequences of the American's arrival. So, he laid down the foundation

for these would be changes (Craig, 2003).

Yes, Rizal wrote the poem in 1876 while he was in Ateneo Municipal (Zaide and Zaide, 2008). This means that Rizal was already influenced by Jagor and his American prophecy before he composed the poem.

Another proof that Rizal became interested with America and the Americans is that he really traveled to America during his second travel abroad. He moved from one state to another and crossed the American continent. Rizal's interest in America and American life and culture is manifested also in his interest in the lives of American presidents. Rizal himself acquired a book on the lives of the American presidents (Craig, 2013).

Rizal was favored by the Americans as the national hero of the Philippines because Rizal was a proponent of education. In other words, Rizal's major advocacy was the education of the Indio. Sonia Zaide (1994) mentioned that one of the major contributions of the Americans during their occupation of the Philippines was education particularly the public school system. Thus, with education, the Americans were able to identify themselves with Rizal.

The Americans also were afraid that the Filipinos will revolt or stage another revolution. So what they did to suppress the desire for insurrection was to use Rizal as an inspiration and model to all Filipinos. Rizal is known for his peaceful approach to change being a reformist. Rizal did not resort to revolt or revolution but initiated change through the propaganda movement (Ocampo, 2001).

Rizal's love and advocacy for education is not only evidenced by this poem *Education Gives Luster to the Mother Land*. He has another work on education that would support his advocacy. He wrote a poem *the intimate alliance between*

religion and Good education (Alianza Intima Entre la Religion y la Buena Educacion) (Zaide and Zaide, 2008).

It has to be noted that during Rizal's childhood, he was influenced by three uncles, Manuel, Jose and Gregorio. His uncle Jose Alberto was educated in British India for about eleven years in a missionary school in Calcutta. Jose Alberto has played a considerable part in Rizal's political education by introducing liberalism to him (Craig, 2003). Therefore, He shared or at least introduced and exposed Rizal to British/English ideas, culture and politics when Rizal stayed in the Alberto house during his school days in Binan, Laguna, prior to his writing of the poem.

Liberalism had a deep association with England. Many liberal thinkers are English political thinkers like Bentham, Stuart Mill, Burke, and John Locke (Mehta, 1999). If Rizal was exposed to liberalism by his uncle Jose Alberto, then he was actually exposed to English thoughts and ideas.

Jose Rizal's brother Paciano was a very close friend of Fr. Burgos, one of the martyrs of Cavite. Paciano was actually a messenger and a go between of father Burgos and the propaganda campaign. He even stayed in Fr. Burgos house during his school days in the Colegio de San Jose. Fr. Burgo's dying advice to the Filipinos was to be educated outside Spain if possible. He passionately advised that education is the nation's hope for development. He further suggested that the Philippines would be better off if she will be under a freer state like England rather than Spain (Craig, 2003). These ideas of Fr. Burgos must have been shared by Paciano to the young Jose Rizal considering that they were not only close, but the young Jose Rizal considered his brother as his second father.

Conclusion

Rizal's poem reflects romanticist characteristics and ideas. Since romanticism originated in England,

therefore, Rizal's poem contains Anglo- or English ideas.

Rizal's' poem advocates education in which the Americans identify themselves with him. Thus, the advocacy for education is what Rizal and the Americans share in common and therefore it is the parallel contribution of Rizal and the Americans to Philippine history, life and culture.

The study affirms that powerful nations like England and the United States have a great influence on Jose Rizal and his poem.

Recommendation

The study recommends that another study must be made to look into the Anglo-American ideas found in Rizal's other poems and works.

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