

Aesthetics and Violence in Romantic Poetry

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Abstract

Violence, as exhibited by some romantic poets, works as the dormant, and sometimes explicit, whim to think of and go for. Violence may not only be a temporal tendency but rather a philosophical trend embraced by romantics so that they can offset deep frustration generated by failure to create a better world. Shelley, Blake and Lord Byron do not mind conveying a tendency to go violent in order to bring about a better world, while E.A. Poe gives abnormal images, to define man's need to liberate himself from restrictions of time and place. Emotions, imaginations and the search for beauty that are, sometimes, seen embodied in their approach to liberty mark the touchstone that romantics felt attached to, which explains why the world needs a hero, a savior, the concept that romantics believed in.

This paper sets to investigate this issue of violence, its nature and how it functions in the works of selected romantic men of letters and how it can be affiliated to beauty and ethical and aesthetical values. Edgar Allan Poe will be dealt with along with fellow English romantic figures for, next to his romantic philosophy, he had a prominent tendency for functional violence coupled with aesthetical values.

Keywords: violence, imagination, hero, liberty, Shelley, Blake, Lord Byron, E.A. Poe

1. Introduction

This paper sets to look into the other side of romanticism. Violence is a feeling translated into action under certain circumstances and that is when generated feeling of anger and frustration bursts into different mood or action and hence violence, which could be verbal otherwise, is most likely to develop. The importance of this study lies in its casting a light on hidden aspect of romanticism and thus it relates to other studies by giving readers the opportunity to scan, briefly, this romantic tendency as exhibited by prominent romantic poets. This is not to suggest that romanticism introduces violence as an integral creed of its philosophy. However, there is no way readers of romantic poetry can escape coming across that tendency poets convey and advocate. Keats, Shelley and Lord Byron felt a strong passion against tyranny and dictatorships plagued Europe at that time. The objective of this paper is to introduce the way some romantic poets felt the need, sometimes, to make violence a means to offset frustration and failure.

Violence betrays a type of human behavior that tends to use brute force to harm others or even one's own self. Socially speaking, violence is condemned for being harmful to people and relations as well. However, if we presuppose the notion that the need could justify the means, then violence could serve a good end and eventually may acquire an aesthetic value; a conclusion that sounds rather ambivalent, especially when related to art in general and Romanticism in particular. Romanticism is the movement that came as a reaction to the failure to implement peace in Europe, thus to associate romanticism with violence may sound inconceivable and incomprehensible, and coining Romanticism as a violence affiliated literary movement that could breed, harbor or sanction violence-oriented tendencies or actions may seem far from reality. However, meticulous study of this seemingly controversial issue could tell a different story.

2. Romanticism; A Background

In early nineteenth century romanticism came into being at a time when Europe was in the grip of revolutions, violence and tumultuous events. Political, military and social developments paved the way for a comprehensively new era, on one hand, and literarily fermenting the literary scene for the emergence of a new movement departing from traditions, on the other. Art highlighted the changes taking place by alienating itself from classicism and opting for Romanticism which dominated the literary scenes on both sides of the Atlantic. Men of letters, however, had to deal with new, unexpected and unfavorable realities.

In the early nineteenth century, Europe was trying to come to terms with the collapse of the dreams woven and raised by the French Revolution. The mottoes of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, championed by the French Revolution, had not come into fruition. On the contrary, Europe had suffered some of its bloodiest conflicts in the period that followed the revolution in Paris. Social, political and cultural systems suffered as a result and henceforth: “A mounting tide of discontent and war weariness undermined the stability of the governments.” (Greshoy, 1964, p. 480)

3. Seeds of Violence in Romanticism

Violence and war gripped the continent and crept into the tissue of people’s mentalities as a way of life, detected and depicted by men of letters. Consequently literature felt the need to zoom to an entirely different realm in search of a new literary identity. Romanticism harbored men of letters and poets’ search for a peaceful retreat away from their disappointment and shattered dreams and in its philosophy emotions are projected as the true guide for man away from any rational dictates. Imagination spearheaded emotions’ search for a creative power. Shelley, the renowned Romantic poet has “faith in the realization of the ideals created by ...the human imagination.” (Robinson, 1976, p. 3)

The movement rejected the rational and the intellectual in favor of the intuitive and the emotional, the aspects that dominated the minds and ideas of the Romantics who argue that the intellectual and the didactic are good for sermons not for living. So in the nineteenth century, while materialism and industrialization wheeled man’s life into a cycle of ever rising cost, life seemed to have been impoverished of beauty that gives man a reason to search for aesthetics, described as the “philosophical study of beauty and taste.” (Alaka, 2002, p. 27) As a reaction, romantics deserted what they considered the troubled and troubling life in search of platforms for perfection and beauty seen and furnished by the imagination, the experience that presupposes a unified field of organic components: body, mind and soul. Feeling that oneness of being formulates a sublime sense of beauty that amounts to an aesthetical experience that is mystic in a sense helping man stay away from indoctrinated teachings, be they religious, political or cultural.

Appreciating aesthetic values helps shake off the heritage of enlightenment and classical rigidity in art and evolves to an untarnished sense of beauty seen as an aesthetic experience stressing counter intellectualism. Beauty and aesthetics underline Romantic values as preached by the “Strum & Drag” movement, considered the origin of the Romantic Movement which began in Germany and infiltrated into art in Europe and across Atlantic to America where Poe, Hawthorne and the celebrated transcendentalists: Whitman, Thoreau and Emerson championed the romantic ideals. They ostracized themselves from social circles in favor of full engagement with nature where they believed that their true realm lies, the one that offers peace and creativity. Their dreams wove an Arcadia, a world that puts confidence and dignity back into man who has been long denied them by the old enforced feelings of depravity and sinfulness.

However, and despite the romantic celebration of peace and tranquility, romantic poets and authors could not escape the whim for violence which is seen, read and even felt in their works. In their pro-violence tendency, they, i.e., the romantics, stress the strange, the unusual and the unexpected by weaving images conveying different connotations, like the almost Platonic ones which they believed to have found in nature which they considered as the power to which they pay allegiance as the mother and even as the deity an approach that looks ideals and out of the familiar and even surrealist in tone, as is the case with Edgar Allan Poe wild imagination, or as angry nature. Unfulfilled dreams of a better world coupled with their inability to cope with this frustrating reality made romantics try to reach idealism and fantasy by mixing reality with imagination and even calling for a sort of violence to bring about peace, which in its turn acquires an aesthetic dimension for the beauty it is supposed to harbor and promote. Since, according to Keats “Beauty is truth, truth beauty” realization of truth helps bring about Peace. Quoted in (Nagar & Prasad, 2005, p. 183)

4. Romantic Poets; Imagination and Images

Wordsworth, Coleridge and other fellow romantic poets sanctified nature, seen as the genuine shelter from a corrupt world to which they felt no belonging. Nature for them offers the medium to help reconstruct the image of a peaceful world where violence, as a last resort, may make implementable. Violence is not but a hidden tendency traceable in works of most romantics. Most if not all Romantics, it could be stated, have bottled up that tendency for active violence. However, some felt unable to deny themselves that need to activate that whim so they went for expressing it in their works in order to voice their accumulating pessimism as a reaction to frustration. Violence is seen as a means for an end to help give a space or a means to help counter frustration generated by bitter disappointment caused by the collapse of man’s cherished dreams nurtured by the French Revolution. Even when the “revolutionaries ...executed King Louis XVI in 1793, Wordsworth stood firm in the

in their defence.” (Pirie, 2003, p. 6) Likewise Coleridge believes that man should stand “Against the tyrant horde or murderers” (Quoted in Pirie, 1984, p. 6.) Other romantic figures, Like Shelley in his *Queen Mab* went radical and asked for “the axe” (Shelley, 1813) to “strike at the roots” (Shelley, 1813) and that is because “The glorious hope that the Revolution had represented...has in its very failure created a cynicism which could last for ever” (Pirie, 2003, p. 11)

Images of death, fear and even unnamed characters, reminiscent of Gothic elements, mark the style of Edgar Allan Poe. Horrific enough, Poe even goes for bizarre images. Live burials woven into literary texts are some of his terrifying images that take readers into unexpected fear, psychological violence, evil and Gothic milieu, “The premature burial is an item of human experience and a blue print of the human mind. Tearful indeed the suspicion—but more fearful than the doom.” (Ramon, 2005, p. 795)

Not only Poe in America, but fellow romantics in England like William Wordsworth (the godfather of Romanticism in England) and his fellow native poets: Shelley, Keats and Lord Byron all had their works scented, figuratively speaking, with an unmistakable tendency for violence that is implied and sometimes expressed.

In England, Shelley (2009) claims that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world”, a bid that ranks poets close to prophets who are, figuratively speaking, “the trumpets which sing to battle” he adds (2009). They, poets, are looking for a cause to celebrate the self- liberated man. Their first revolt came against neo-classicism and its adherence to the past. Breaking away from traditions won them the title of literary and social rebels on the continent and in America as well, and some of romanticism affiliated figures ventured into new territories, figuratively speaking, expressing their rebellious nature, as was the case with The Transcendentalists: Whitman, Thoreau and Emerson. Others like Poe made great jumps in art. He trod on the territory of the unexpected, the unknown and presented the horror and terror short story.

Unlike his fellow English romantics who generated that tendency to violence as a reaction to deadlocked situations Poe, known for horror, detective and mystery tales, has his works imbued with a fertile imagination releasing aspects of unprecedented scenes of fear and terror and violence traceable even in the titles of some of his works like: “Death on Rue Morgue” and “The Black Cat”, a literary trend expressed in his philosophy of writing or composition where he preached romantic feelings which he called “unity of effect.” He asserts that the death of a beautiful woman is the “most poetical topic in the world.” (Poe, 2004 p. 79) This dark and emotional tendency opened the way for Poe to evolve to a sort of beauty coupled with mystery, love and passion. His poem, “Annabel lee,” shows that death and beauty are akin to each other in the sense of being mysterious. Beauty has its own charm and mystery and so does death. Calling her “My beautiful Annabel Lee” she comes from the unknown past and Poe the poet disappears into unrecorded time that is sealed and confined to a tomb. “I lie down by the side of my darling / In the sepulcher ...” (Hobson, 1967, p. 254) Death and beauty mix the opposites and here lies the craftsmanship. In his poem “Helen”, he portrays a feeling that describes the significance of poetry where it is believed that “Pleasure is the end of poetry and this pleasure exists in pain.” (Ray, 2006)

The discovery of both time and death, helps man move to a state of oneness of being with super- natural forces to a feeling of absolute beauty and aesthetic values. In his writings Poe goes for the unexpected and the most horrifying. Nameless and buried alive characters are images of Poe’s art. They face and shock man by an air of the horrifying horror of prematurely buried people who found themselves forcibly committed to confront this terror. “The Fall of The House of Usher”, “The Cask of Amontillado” and “The Black Cat,” convey images of psychological, physical and emotional violence that men, sometimes, undergo. Poe’s art, so to speak, tends to read violence coupled with romantic and Gothic elements as the most effective aspect of man’s life. Beauty has its shock. It dazzles and sends man into a state of mysticism. Violence and beauty, in this sense, could be two faces for one coin.

Despite the fact that Romanticism came into being to counterbalance the deep feeling of resentment generated by wide- spread violence at a time when Europe was supposed to shake off evil and live in peace, violence seemed indispensable in life and in books as well. There seemed to be a full disengagement from social injustice, a move to foster a voluntary embracement of a Utopian world sponsored by imagination where art goes for the discovery of beauty in order to give life a credible and true meaning. Romanticism, in this sense could be seen as anticipating art for art’s sake in its quest for aesthetic evolvment away from art’s involvement in endless human squabbles and disputes. However, having witnessed massive disappointments of frustrated and aborted revolutions, romanticism retained seeds of unfulfilled violence; a tendency the romantics wished that it could bring about successful revolutions by one way or another. In his *War song to Englishmen* William Blake (2017) urges his fellow countrymen to prepare for war.

Prepare, prepare the iron helm of war,
 Bring forth the lots, cast in the spacious orb;
 Th' Angel of Fate turns them with mighty hands,
 And casts them out upon the darken'd earth!
 Prepare, prepare!

The romantic poets' push for violent whims can be seen as a reflection of their need to implement what could be called the myth of the hero who, despite the setbacks and his tortured mind, still has his own wishes lingering in the domain of awaited revolution, an energetic tumult with beauty at its core. Claiming beauty in revolution is not a jump into space because every driving force like revolution sets the creation of goodness as its motivating force. The Romantics' awareness of beauty derives its aesthetics from nature and its untarnished purity and chastity. Functional nature identifies man with its changing seasons and its rhythm and musicality to which emotions can dance. Going for nature tantalizes aesthetic values with beauty at the core. Peaceful and sometimes angry nature serves to illustrate moods of poets. Like a pendulum this appreciation of beauty, love and peace swings back to a dormant feeling for violence retained by the romantic men of letters.

They, whose escape to nature amounted to a silent revolution against social injustice where rough nature could match an exercise of an inward raging storm as is the case in Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* (2018) had their philosophy implemented whenever needed and wherever possible. In his *Ode*, Shelley synthesizes nature's beauty with its wrath which, as a medium for unfulfilled wishes, serving the aesthetic value of bringing about a world free from oppression. Angry nature and the approaching mighty west wind testify to his yearning identify the "Fierce spirit" (Shelley, 2018) of the wind with his "soul" so that the "unextinguish'd hearth" (Shelley, 2018) flares up into "sparks" (Shelley, 2018), As a result of having witnessed the suppression of European nationalist movements brought about by institutionalized oppressive conventions that were catastrophic and caused aborted dreams, Shelley and Byron "supported the struggle for independence of the Irish, the Italian, the Spaniards and the Greeks." (Rajmmwale, 2010, p. 94)

The freedom and the revolution Shelley preached in his poetry are, according to his philosophy, expected to bring about the awaited change. Violence which may be costly and possibly bloody still retains a positive and beautiful value that could amount to an aesthetic one. Beauty comes at a cost that is the search for it and freedom is attainable but at the price, where it could be bartered for blood. Revolting against the tyrannous postulate is conducive to the creation of beauty and aesthetics. *Ode to the West Wind* portrays a symbol of the awaited revolution set to free man. Shelley here commences with the ethical and moves to the aesthetic. Revolution possesses ethical value when man meets and achieves his dreams and objectives. Deliverance from oppression moves to the actuality of liberty and hence the evolvement of the aesthetics it conveys is substantiated in making man's life fit for human beings who and many of them have long been denied true their identity and dignity and eventually the essence of their humanity. Deliverance stipulates the arrival of the savior or the hero that is supposed to have global aspirations. Shelley wants the west wind to drive his "dead thoughts over the universe" <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45134/ode-to-the-west-wind>. Hence romantics believe in the cult of the hero whose coming is expected to bring about peace which is ideal and truthful, like beauty.

5. Romanticism and the Concept of the Hero

The cult of the hero, it has been argued, lingers and lies in the shadow of any revolution. He, Shelley, "showed [a] radical bent of mind quite early." (Rajmmwale, 2002, p. 19) Revolutionary by nature he rejected "tyrannical governments and sympathized with the oppressed people who suffered the ravages of fate and time." (Robinson, 1976, p. 87) His wish to stir and provoke revolution anticipated the philosophy of the super-man as advocated by the German philosopher Nietzsche where he, Shelley, "believed in supreme power beyond and above the world, a power that works from within the world." (Rajmmwale, 2002, p. 272) The wind, the mighty power of nature, has been personified to serve the cause of the awaited hero, the savior with whom he can feel oneness of being. In his *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley, seen as "the prophet of reform" (Kumar, 2002, p. 49) seeks to become one in spirit with the destroying and preserving power of the west wind.

His hero undergoes, figuratively speaking, a process of metamorphoses from an ordinary human being or even a divine figure to a savior in the full Biblical sense and association of the word and a savior, in Christian sense, is a prince and maker of peace. In his in his *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley, shows the mythological god championing "the cause of mankind" (Rajmwali, 2002, p. 25). by his act of defiance, which may not bear a direct act of violence, but it certainly implies disobedience. Shelley resurrects this mythological figure in order to screen his heroism against a background of man's frustration and need for someone to pave the way for the

freedom and the awaited change to man's life where liberty as a sublime and noble achievement helps beauty ascend to aesthetical values. Prometheus steals fire, and risks all the privileges reserved for a divine family member in order to help mankind make a better life by acquiring knowledge on one hand help free them and himself from the tyranny of Zeus on the other.

The drive for freedom is shared by another fellow Romantic poet who went for the same idol god, the iconic *Prometheus*. Lord Byron commences his *Prometheus* by highlighting the motive for the Greek god's defying action. Man "suffers the tyranny of fate" (Robinson, 1976, p. 3) that denies him the sense of beauty and love. He is also left to face "The ruling principles of hate" (Van Ghent, 1983, p. 20) imposed by the hand of Zeus and his self-appointed proxies. Kings believe they have a divine right to rule, simply for considering themselves the shadows of god on earth. The supreme god's unchallenged and unquestionable authority make a divine mandate over human destiny, a power claimed by oppressive European regimes to rule their people who, supported by men of letters revolted against such tyranny. Romantic poets spearheaded the escape to nature and the wish to revolt. The West Wind coupled with Prometheus' challenge to the authority of Zeus present images of rebel figures personified to usher in the coming of the wind of change and freedom championed by heroes ready to embark on a course of destruction in order to formulate and ferment revolution. For Shelley, the west wind is a "destroyer," a power tempered and baptized by fire stolen and presented to human beings. Restructuring life, romanticism wise, should sweep old repressive thinking and free man from bondage, physical, mental and emotional. In act three of his play *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley celebrates the freeing of the chained god and the reunification with his beloved Asia. That meant the fall of kings and the divine on one hand and rise of the power of man on the other. Joy "sweeter even than freedom long desired" (Van Ghent, 1983, p. 36) rewards man and the hero alike. Prometheus has ascended to the level of an ideal divine gifted with aesthetical value of appreciating the meanings of freedom, cooperation with man and above all love and unification with the beloved, a tantalizing effect idealized by Shelley and other fellow poets.

Shelley and Byron believe in the cult of the hero. They see Prometheus as the hero who is "a gifted young man reliable with an aspiring temperament, torn by conflicting emotions" (Van Ghent, 1983, p. 63) this symbolic development takes place when Jupiter, the symbol of tyranny, was overthrown by Demogorgon whose words on this occasion amount to "announcing the new world order." (Van Ghent, 1983, p. 16) The reunion with Asia in a forest cave serves to prepare the arena for more dramatic events. The Spirit of the Hour foretells the liberation of the universe from the tyranny of kings who lost thrones out to people claiming their confiscated liberty, as is the case with the French Revolution that stormed prisons and the self declared divine mandate claimed and practiced by the French King. Romantics who welcomed such changes hoped for an end to class division, discrimination and exploitation of human beings by fellow human beings. In the closing lines of act four of his play *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley epitomizes the message he wants to get across.

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
 To forgive wrongs darker than death and night
 To defy powers which seem omnipotent
 To love, and bear; to hope till hope create
 From its own wreck, the thing it contempts
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent
 This, like the glory, Titan, is to be;
 This is alone life, joy, Empire and Victory. (Shelley, 2009)

As seen, Shelley's poetry endorses romantic aspirations of representing the human spirit liberated of all dross. Shelley employs "beautiful idealism of moral excellence to purify man who is part divine" (Robinson, 1976, p. 10). For Shelley, Prometheus' divinity coupled with the powers of nature look bent on taking action no matter how violent it may seem. The objective lies not only in freeing man but in creating a new one. A new human being of great magnitude and stature is an objective of great ethical and aesthetical value achievable by mustering emotions and imagination to spearhead literary defiance of what may seem formidable powers, a move destined to bring about what another fellow romantic poet, Lord Byron, made conspicuous and clear. In his poem which bears the name of the same mythological god, *Prometheus*, Lord Byron highlights suffering of humanity stricken by oppressive institutionalized societies. To counter prejudice and injustice he calls for freeing man; a reality he believes to have engulfed all creatures. That is why he believes that man and divine are united by suffering and oppression. Prometheus, a divine family member is not immune from prosecution. Man or any divine being could have a similar and even united destiny and as a result could share similar qualities. He

addresses Prometheus: "Like thee, Man is in part divine." (Byron, 2013)

Byron's statement looks bent on releasing humanity out of the divine. Prometheus suffers like men. Zeus' sentence of Prometheus carries penalty causing great physical pain. Bounding Prometheus to a rock and exposing him to eagles and monsters inflicts immense violence against his physical being. His suffering as an immortal looks like "The suffering of mortality." (Byron, 2013) Lord Byron looks sanctioning violence or the "crime" of Prometheus on the grounds of serving freedom. Accepting pain for a good cause is reminiscent of Christ's sacrifice for his followers. Embracing pain coupled with self denial are objectives of great beauty and value if not the greatest of all values. Prometheus' crime "is justifiable because it is stated that "Thy Godlike crime was to be kind," (Byron, 2103) a sublime feeling supposed to "strengthen Man with his own mind" (Byron, 2013) so that man can temper his will to resist injustice. Lord Byron sounds like the revolutionary leader, the hero who frees the buried divinity in man so that he can only make "Death a Victory," (Byron, 2013) a conclusion that makes both man and the divine share the same taste of triumph. To hammer this idea home he, Lord Byron, demonstrates the superiority of human spirit over evil and frustration caused by successive ages that caged and repressed human will. Byron depicts "Prometheus in order to liberate himself from the vision of man's enslavement." (Robinson, 1976, p. 113)

The objective of Byron and Shelley in their reenactment of Prometheus' saga is to elicit freedom, joy and pleasure out of pain and suffering. When the mythological figure is united with his beloved, the aesthetical value and experience itself bring about sublimity and beauty accomplishable only through a sort of violence, no matter be it positive or passive. Shelley's *Prometheus* gives suffering a positive function "To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite" (Byron, 2013). He nevertheless wishes to see an end to pain. He says: "I wish no living thing to suffer pain" (Robinson, 1976, p. 118). Hope and deliverance from pain and suffering serve to formulate the targeted aesthetical value. These objectives would not have been possible without hardships sustained by the hero who is also the peace maker gifted with a unique personality and qualities that make him fit to lead and champion revolutions where violence is condoned. Shelley sees this hero as a "figure of universal power" (Robinson, 1976, p. 113). And so does Lord Byron where "The Byronic hero, from *Child Harold* onwards, is characteristic of an interest in the unusual and the heroic figure" (Leighton, 1984, p. 79)

This hero is the one who fights for individual freedom against the tyrannous indoctrination of man. Relieving man of the chain wound around his neck puts confidence back into his being for the purpose of "steering towards the principle of order." (Watson, 1992, p. 82) In English Poetry of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830, uniqueness of the hero strikes a resemblance to Jesus Christ who is credited with perfection. Byron sees that "Prometheus functions as the redeemer of mankind," (Sommerstien, 1971, p. 15) and is seen as a similar type of the "pro-human divine who is also credited with perfection" (Watson, 1992, p. 81) of a moral and intellectual nature. His refusal to hate reveals moral commitment. Likewise, Shelley's *Prometheus* "demonstrates superiority of human spirit over evil," (Robinson, 1976, p. 146) seen in Jupiter's act of vengeance. He symbolically "unites heaven and earth, the divine and the human." (Watson, 1992, p. 3) When freed by Hercules, Prometheus is "united with Asia, the spirit of beauty and love." (Watson, 1992, p. 311) Forgiveness highlights his reaction. He had no will to hate. Man's violent emotions are tempered by the power of the fire which Prometheus stole for mankind. By its power people could be purged from evil, and through hardships man, who is partly divine, evolves to an aesthetic status characterized by forgiveness which, aesthetically speaking, releases his mind and soul from the oppressing will to take revenge and extract the divine from man because to err is human to forgive divine.

Blake, the celebrated romantic poet, "defines forgiveness as a virtue along with the lines of a disposition based ethics." (Watson, 1992, p. 309) In his "Songs of innocence" protection and immunity from sin of man are almost guaranteed in state of childhood, an approach that synthesizes beauty of innocence of children with the feeling of aesthetics free from social corruption and violence. However, this may not apply to the Romantics' philosophy of condoning violence as the sole way to accomplish their prophesies and hence a sort of rising aestheticism. They employ nature as symbols that call for sweeping revolution. In his "*Ode to The West Wind*" Shelley, like the wind, breathes nostalgic yearning to the "inevitable" coming of the awaited revolution: "If winter comes can spring be far behind." (Shelley, 2017)

Verbal expression of such a dormant wish has been carried out to the actual participation in active rebellion by a fellow romantic poet. Lord Byron joined Greek freedom fighters in their war of independence. Greece was more than a country occupied by a foreign power. Greece is the birth place of art, of Plato and Homer, the isles where Burning Sappho "loved and sang." Byron believed in Greek civilization for which he was ready to fight and even die in order to save the cradle of European civilization from the oppression of Ottoman Turks. Active in action as he was, his Greek Odyssey substantiated love for freedom as a beautiful and aesthetical value for which he paid his life. Going for revolutionary violence describes the necessity to free liberty from confinement to narrow

scopes and authorize poets to grace it with the beauty of blood rites, so to speak, should that be necessary and thus endow it with full perceptibility and being. That is why Romantics felt entrenched against authoritarianism and that is why violence looks the legitimate alternative to help counter authoritarian institutions that camouflage their being by claiming a divine mandate to rule and thus conceal the need not only for freedom but for any beautiful and aesthetical form or value that people could entertain or cherish. The failure of regimes to buy people's silence rings alarm bells in their conscience, calling on them to search for such values. Revelation of failure is the touchstone that presses for the need for aesthetics to help counter the effect of losing beauty.

6. Conclusion

Violence is the means justified by the end for which any move is an endorsement of people's need for a world where freedom, beauty and aesthetical values prevail. Shelley hoped for "a world ...ruled by the light of love" (Robinson, 1976, p. 19), an opinion which is a great moral attitude motivated by "the spectacle of injustice, oppression and cruelty" (Robinson, 1976, p. 17) Siding with the poor, a basic morality of romantics, left poets and men of letters of the movement, with the inevitable challenge. That meant the "poet's role is to keep open a sense of alternative possibility" (James, 1963, p. 4) where man can retain oneness of being by keeping united with himself and that sense of beauty via nature, mother of the sense and the sublime where beauty is believed to reside. However, their poetic and romantic sentiment meant violence is not a whim to color their works but rather a credible value without which creating beauty and aesthetic would not have been possible. They, Romantics, embraced violence not as an end in itself but as a means to an end. Deliverance of beauty is not but a hard labor done and accomplished to get it exteriorized, an activity where peaceful approach may not be the only course for it. Violence does not look superfluous nor pejorative but rather an essential component of man's thinking and an indispensable profile of man's activities, and in the case of romantics it is the inevitable alternative to counter mounting frustration and even deadlocked "revolutions" which they, one day, celebrated. So violence serves the creation of peace and beauty which is associated with sublime and aesthetical values.

Such a noble objective can be achieved by a perfect hero who should be free from, "Vice, folly, wretchedness and fear" (Curran, 1993, p. 73) a man free from hatred. Shelley's Prometheus is: "the type of the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature." (James, 1963, p. 267) The hero who stood for mankind has met his own hidden powers of goodness and has purged himself from hatred. He "no longer has the will to hate" (Leighton, 1984, p. 79) Meeting Christ's values of self-dedication to love is an elevation to "sublime...linked to idealism" (Leighton, 1984, p. 83) Romantics' and adoration of nature and the peacefulness such an orientation implies were not the sole images they conveyed. Their wild spirit, figuratively speaking, drove their dead thoughts over the universe, as is the case with Shelley, whose revolutionary sentiment meant violence in disguise. However, he and other fellow romantics pushed for aesthetics of the violence, the nobleness of revolting against tyranny that is Shelley's "most consistently optimistic expression of the revolutionary purpose of writing." (Leighton, 1984, p. 73)

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