

**EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AND DEATH IN POETRY OF WILLIAM
WORDSWORTH, PERCY BESSHE SHELLEY, AND IMRAN SHAHID: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to compare a budding Pakistani poet, Imran Shahid, with two renowned Romantic poets namely, William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The focus of the study is the concept of life and death in their poetry. Their poetry show that death is not the end of life rather it is a change from shorter to a longer and everlasting life named eternity. All the three poets have revealed the concept while addressing their near and dear ones. In case of William Wordsworth it is Lucy; in Shelley it is Adonais, and in case of Imran Shahid it is his own-self. This is a qualitative research, in which the primary data is taken from the poets' original works and the secondary data is taken from the research articles and books, available online and in libraries. Certain poems were selected from the three poets and the data was then analyzed through textual analysis. The results indicate that all the three poets have same opinion about the eternity of the soul. Research can be conducted on the poet through other perspectives such as stylistics analysis and postmodernist approach.

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The main founder of English Romantic poetry was William words worth in 1770 to 1850 and he was regarded as poet laureate from 1843 to 1850 (Dan,2022).William words worth is consider as the first and great modern poet of England (Mahameed and Abuhammam, 2024). According to Meena (2015) he started poetry writing from his childhood when he was admitted in the grammar school; on his trip to Europe we find his sympathy for common man. According to Doren (1951) William words worth speech and state in such a way that he need in the our world, and we need of him as we know that in modern age emotion and sensitivity have been lost in our generation so his poem show to teach him how to feel remember, and also showing him losing all power, it is clear that William wards worth poetry is full of emotional spontaneous and simplicity struggle that poetry should be spontaneous and pragmatics to know all the people enjoy the poetry and also feel the emotion of the poet.

William words worth focus on the nature and the fantastic impact on human temperament (mood and life), he attracts the people to enjoy the nature and the people of the nature (Ibid). Mahameed and Abuhammam (2024) conveys Wordsworth believed that poetry arises naturally from intense emotions, moreover he suggest that the poet just to speak to human and a deeper understanding of human nature and the environment in which he used to live. He emphasize that the poet must bring his feeling to those of the person whose live in that environment.

According to Miric and Vujnovic (2019) Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) is recognized as one of the most prolific poets and, at the same time, one of the most tragic figures of the English Romantic Movement. He belonged to the younger generation of Romantic poets, known for their deep sensitivity, strong emotions, political radicalism, and short but influential lives, which contributed to their lasting legacy. Shelley's life and works embody these qualities. His optimism, belief in humanity, vivid imagination, profound emotions, love, and pursuit of human perfection distinguished him from his peers. His poetic brilliance stemmed from his deep understanding of these themes and his uniquely philosophical approach to them. This was largely driven by his unwavering belief in poetry's transformative power to change the world.

Imran Shahid, a budding English poet from Pakistan, is a seasoned police officer with over 21 years of distinguished service. He holds a Master's degree in Human Rights Law from Melbourne, Australia, along with qualifications in International Relations, English Literature, and an LLB. Throughout his career, he has served with dedication and bravery, particularly in the terrorism-affected KhyberPakhtunkhwa province and the Federal Investigation Agency. Leading his team with determination, he has successfully conducted numerous critical operations.

Recently, He was a participant in the esteemed Hubert Humphrey Fellowship program at the American University Washington College of Law in Washington. DC. As a strong proponent of integrating human values into law enforcement, he emphasizes empathy and understanding in police work. Known for his adaptability and resilience, he maintains a positive attitude, even under pressure. With a talent for bridging cultural divides and excelling in deadline-driven environments, he also demonstrates exceptional leadership and team-building abilities. Regional Police Officer, Regional Police Office,Bannu, Pakistan. He served the province, holding key positions like: Deputy Inspector General of Police Counter Terrorism Department, District Police Officer, Deputy

Director Anti Human Trafficking Circle, Deputy Director Anti Corruption and Cyber Crime Circle, Deputy Director Interpol National Central Bureau to name few.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- To compare the poetry of Imran Shahid with William Wordsworth and Shelley.
- To explore the concept of life and death in the three poets.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research seeks to address the following questions.

- How certain ideas are shared in the poetry of Imran Shahid , Shelley, and Wordsworth?
- How is the concept of life and death presented in the poetry of Shelley, Wordsworth, and Imran Shahid?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The aim of the study is to compare a budding Pakistani poet, Imran Shahid, with two renowned Romantic poets namely, William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The focus of the study is the concept of death. Death is described by many poets in different ways, having different implications for them. It will be interesting to find out how and in what manner the idea of death in a modern poet like Imran Shahid coincide with those of the Romantic poets. The study will prove helpful in projecting the Pakistani literature in English and will make a valuable addition to literature.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help in promoting the local culture through a local poet. Projecting Pakistani literature in English involves showcasing and promoting the wide array of literary works originating from Pakistan, whether written in English or translated into the language, to an international audience. It highlights the nation's cultural richness, historical narratives, societal issues, and distinctive storytelling styles. The present study will serve the same purpose. The concept of "projecting" entails actively sharing and representing these works to enhance understanding, foster cultural exchange, and draw attention to Pakistan's literary heritage. This effort may include various initiatives to bring these works into global focus. By showcasing Pakistani literature in English, writers and publishers foster cross-cultural understanding, dispel stereotypes, and enrich global literary conversations. This comparative study will prove a valuable addition to existing bulk of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The comparative research method is a qualitative approach used to examine social phenomena across different cultures or countries. It often employs case study analysis to identify similarities and differences between various entities or nations. By combining theoretical frameworks with data collection, this method offers a thorough understanding of the subject being studied. (Given, 2008). Comparative research or analysis is a broad approach that includes both qualitative and quantitative comparisons. It typically involves studying social entities across different dimensions, such as political or geographical contexts, using cross-national or regional studies (Mills et al., 2006). This form of analysis can be divided into three categories: quantitative, qualitative, and fuzzy. Quantitative comparative analysis examines variables, qualitative comparative analysis focuses on individual cases, and fuzzy comparative analysis considers collections (Sa'ei, 2013). A comparative study is a research method used to examine phenomena by highlighting their similarities and differences (MokhtarianPour, 2016). Taking a comparative approach can

reveal weaknesses in research design and improve the study's overall quality. Comparative research primarily focuses on recognizing both similarities and differences between different units (Holt & Turner, 1970). Comparative analysis examines and interprets similarities and differences in situations or outcomes across large social units, including regions, nations, societies, and cultures. This method aligns with various academic traditions, such as cross-cultural studies in anthropology, cross-societal studies in sociology, cross-national research in political science, comparative historical analysis in history, and psychological studies (Smelser, 1973). Within comparative research, scholars examine how variables influence different cases by directly comparing the cases with each other. Rather than being a distinct research method, it is more of a viewpoint or approach to studying phenomena (Ragin and Robinson, 2009). Social research is fundamentally grounded in comparison (Lieberson, 1985).

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Ahluwalia and Chatterjee (2023) state that William Wordsworth described poetry as the spontaneous overflow of intense feeling and believed it should be seen as emotions recollected in tranquility. For him, composing poetry was a natural and unforced process, removed from societal norms. Romantic poets, including Wordsworth, emphasized the passionate and instinctive nature of poetry. He used his writing to represent the beauty of nature, often likening the characteristics of women to those of nature. Wordsworth idealized women and saw himself as a humble devotee of nature, portraying it as a spiritual force. The researchers believe that his works stood out for their simplicity, avoiding excessive vocabulary or ornamental language, and instead used plain, rustic language. He aimed to create a connection between individuals through his poetry, contrasting with the Neo-Classical and Classical poets who often presented themselves as intellectually superior through elaborate and ornate language. Wordsworth sought to break away from this tradition, positioning himself as a poet who celebrated nature's majesty. His approach marked the beginning of the Romantic era in England. Khan (2013) studies on Wordsworth reveal that he was a key literary figure and a multifaceted poet of his era. While humanity has always been a significant part of his poetry, critics have often questioned his affection for people. Some argue that his deep connection with nature made him indifferent to human emotions, or that he used nature as an escape from life's harsh realities, as noted by John Morley.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

According to Dupla and Pir (2016), Romantic poets, like Shelley, were deeply connected to the idea of revolution, both in poetry and politics. While revolution aimed to bring change and transformation in society, Romanticism sought to achieve similar innovation and renewal in art and literature. Percy Bysshe Shelley, often regarded as a rebel, remained committed to the revolutionary ideals inspired by the French Revolution, even though he disapproved of Napoleon's dictatorship. Influenced by thinkers like Rousseau and William Godwin, Shelley viewed the revolutionary spirit as a persistent force, surviving through turmoil and hardship. In his poem *In Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley portrays the West Wind as a symbol of transformation and revolution. Composed in iambic pentameter, the poem illustrates the wind's impact on the earth, air, and sea, emphasizing its dual role as both a destroyer and preserver. Shelley implores the wind to empower him, spread his ideas, and ignite a revolution in the hearts of people, especially the youth. He likens the West Wind's power to disperse dead leaves and renew nature to his own aspiration of spreading revolutionary ideas. Shelley views the wind as a force capable of inspiring

renewal in both nature and humanity. The poem concludes with a hopeful message, likening the cycle of seasons to the cycle of life. Just as winter gives way to spring, Shelley believes that difficult times will inevitably lead to better days, encapsulated in his famous line, If winter arrives, can spring be far away?

IMRAN SHAHID

Imran Shahid is a promising English poet from Pakistan with an extensive 21-year career in law enforcement departments. He holds a Master's degree in Human Rights Law from Melbourne, Australia, and has further qualifications in International Relations, English Literature, and an LLB. His career has been marked by dedication and bravery, particularly in the terrorism-affected KhyberPakhtunkhwa province and the Federal Investigation Agency, where he led numerous critical operations successfully.

Recently, Imran took part in the prestigious Hubert Humphrey Fellowship program at the American University Washington College of Law. He is a strong advocate for integrating human values into law enforcement, emphasizing empathy and understanding in police work. His adaptability, resilience, and positive attitude, even under pressure, are notable. Known for his ability to bridge cultural divides and excel in high-pressure environments, he demonstrates exceptional leadership and team-building skills. At present he is serving as Regional Police Officer for Bannu. Besides Imran has held key positions including Deputy Inspector General of Police Counter Terrorism Department, District Police Officer, Deputy Director Anti Human Trafficking Circle, Deputy Director Anti Corruption and Cyber Crime Circle, and Deputy Director Interpol National Central Bureau, among others.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilizes qualitative research methods, primarily because it involves an in-depth comparison of specific poets, making qualitative analysis the most suitable approach. Ugwu and Eze (2023) explain that qualitative research is centered on understanding emotions, ideas, and experiences. The primary objective of data collection in this research approach is to uncover insights that can lead to testable hypotheses, often gathered in narrative form. In the early exploratory stages of a study, educators use qualitative research to identify patterns or discover new perspectives. This method is designed to collect non-numerical data to provide deeper insights. Unlike statistical approaches, qualitative research can be either semi-structured or unstructured, focusing on answering the question of why rather than quantifying data. Their article explores various qualitative research approaches, data collection methods, the advantages and limitations of qualitative research, and the tools used for data analysis.

DATA TYPE

This study will require both primary and secondary data, with primary data, according to Ajayi (2017) primary data is original information collected directly by the researcher. It is real time data obtained through active involvement using method like survey, observations, experiments, interviews, and questionnaires, while its collection can be costly and time intensive. It is tailored to meet the specific objective of the research. Furthermore, primary data is typically unrefined and its initial, raw state.

Secondary data refer to data that has been previously gathered by another party. It is usually accessible quickly and easily, with sources including government's reports, website, book, academic journals, and internal records. This type of data is cost effective and generally available in an organized format. However, it may not always align perfectly with

the specific requirement of the researcher. (ibid). Primary data for this study will be obtained from the original text of three poets, while secondary data will be obtained from research article book journal etc.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

Data obtained will be analyzed through textual analysis. “Textual analysis” according to Mckee (2001) involves making informed interpretations of a text, which, while a simplified definition, serves as a useful foundation to build upon as you delve deeper into the subject. To understand how media influences our lives and shapes our worldview, it’s essential to examine the meanings audiences derive from various media forms, such as television shows, films, newspapers, magazines, and radio programs—collectively referred to as ‘texts.’ This approach is a research method used to collect and analyze information in academic contexts. While disciplines like the physical and social sciences often adhere to strict and well-established methodologies, Media Studies and Cultural Studies take a more flexible approach. Cultural Studies, in particular, recognizes that rigid methodologies can restrict research. Repeatedly asking the same questions in the same way tends to yield similar results. By contrast, exploring new questions and adopting fresh perspectives enables the discovery of different types of knowledge.

DATA ANALYSIS

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AND DEATH

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AND DEATH IN THE POETRY OF WORDS WORTH

William Wordsworth’s concept of life and death is very much clear in his poem, “The Lucy Poems”. This is a collection of poem about a small girl named Lucy. She died at the age of three. William Wordsworth never intended to create a collection of poems called the “Lucy poems”. In fact, he wrote these poems during his brief stay in Germany between 1798 to 1800, without any plan to group them together. It wasn’t until after his death in 1850 that critics noticed the similarities in themes and decided to name them after the mysterious “Lucy” who appeared in the poems. But here’s the thing: Lucy’s true identity remains a secret. Wordsworth never revealed who she was or even hinted at it. As a result, critics have been left to speculate, suggesting everyone from Wordsworth’s sister Dorothy to his future wife Mary Hutchinson, or even a fictional creation of the poet’s imagination. According to Geoffrey Durrant, it’s pointless to ask “Who is Lucy?” Because there’s simply no answer. And yet, the five poems: “Strange fits of passion have I known”, “She dwelt among the untrodden ways”, “I travelled among unknown men”, “Three she grew in sun and shower”, and “A slumber did my spirit seal”, have become famously known as the “Lucy poems”, forever tied to the enigmatic figure of Lucy. Whatever her identity was, he loved that girl very much. Wordsworth’s concept of life and death is shown in his poem, “Three Years she Grew in Sun and Shower”. Lucy was very much dear to him, but unfortunately Nature decided to take her to Himself. Nature decided that: “She shall be mine, and I will make, a lady of my own.” Here we find the Wordsworth concept of death. He believes that Lucy is not dead, William Wordsworth says that she is present everywhere “the girl in rock and plain, in earth and heaven, in glade and bower”. William Wordsworth says that she is able to see all round “shall feel overseeing power” He says that she is out of any kind of restriction just like a little child of a wide animal near the mountain “she shall be sportive as the fawn” According to William Wordsworth, she is enjoying happy and comfortable life “And her shall be the breathing balm” He says that she is spending noiseless life. She is not unaware to human distress, “Nor shall she fail to see”. She is living and shows great sympathy to fellow people in the stormy condition. He suggests that even in the difficult

and darkness of night there is a hope just like stars shining in the sky and show way to the passenger, "The star of midnight shall be dear". The poet says that she will be able to receive and attain the whispering and guidance of stars, as she is eager to her voice, "To her, and she shall lean her ear". He also says that her life is carefree, enjoying Nature, where stream flow and producing musical sound. "Where rivulets dance their wayward Round". He suggests that the sound of nature is also joyful and full of pleasure, it means that only visual things are not the source of pleasure and enjoyment, but the auditory is also the source of pleasure, just like the sound of flowing water of stream, "And beauty born of murmuring sound". He suggests that the beauty of nature is reflected and her continence and her face in lightened in peace and serenity. She has absorbed this thing from the gentle sound and sight of nature. The joy, she gets from the presence of Nature, "shall pass into her face". He says that her death is just like re-awakening and the company of Nature will fill "her virgin bosom swell". He says that the beauty, peace, and tranquility of nature is for Lucy. Nature expressed such feelings and announced that: "Lucy's race was run!". All this indicates that Lucy is still living, showing her presence in various forms.

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AND DEATH IN THE POETRY OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Shelley's concept of life and death is clarified in his famous pastoral elegy, "Adonais". Clutton-Brock observed that Adonais is less a personal lament for Keats and more a celebration of the greatness of poetry and the profound mysteries it explores. In the elegy, Keats appears as a faint, shadowy figure, revealing little about him personally. Shelley himself regarded Adonais as a highly refined work, perhaps his best in terms of composition. His view of the poem remain consistent, and in a letter dated November 11, 1821, sent along with Hellas to the London bookseller Ollier, he expressed particular interest in how Adonais would be received. Shelley admitted he would be surprised if the poem were destined to be forgotten. Keats is neither unconscious and nor gone forever, so we should stop grieving for him. The early years of life are like a brief dream, while death serves as a gateway to eternity. Keats has simply awakened from this fleeting illusion and entered a state of everlasting awareness. In contrast, we, who believe we are truly, are alive, are actually trapped in delusion and false hopes. Our existence is a constant battle against these illusions, but this struggle is ultimately meaningless and lead to no real fulfillment. The human soul is forever chasing after things that are temporary and insubstantial. In this endless pursuit, our bodies begin to decay, much like corpses in their graves. Fear and sorrow continually plague us, gradually wearing us down. Just as worms consume the dead; our crushed hopes eat away at our spirit, slowly destroying us. Shelley's concept of 'death' becomes clear in consolatory part of the poem "Adonais". In order to console himself, the poet cries:

"Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep

He has awakened from the dream of life

Tia we, who lost in stormy visions, keep

With phantoms an unprofitable strife,"

It is we, who are lying, "Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief, convulse us and consume us day by day". Keats was harshly criticized by the critics and, actually, "He has outsoared the shadow of our night; Envy and calumny and hate and pain," The harsh statements of critics, "Can touch him not and torture not again" He is not dead, rather, "He is secure, and now can never mourn, A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain" It is clear that we no longer need to grieve for Adonais because he has risen above the sorrow and sufferings of the world. He has moved beyond the darkness and despair that define human existence.

The negative force of life...such as slander, hatred, jealousy, and pain _mistakenly perceived by people as pleasure, can no longer affect or torment him. He is now completely free from the corrupting influence of the world, which gradually taints and weakens the soul's purity. The poet, who spent much of his life mourning his own struggles (as seen in Ode to a nightingale), will no longer have to grieve over lost love, human coldness, or the fear of growing old without respect or recognition. Furthermore, he need not worry that his death will go unnoticed _Shelley assures him that he will be remembered and mourned. The following stanza, further clarifies Shelley's concept of death:

He lives, he wakes _'tis death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais. _ Thou young dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye cavern and ye forest, cease to mourn !
Cease, ye faint flowe and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

Keats is not truly gone; he has awakened to eternal life. It is death itself that has perished, not Keats. There no need to mourn for him. The young dawn should not shed tears for him; instead, let her transform her dewdrops into radiant light, turning her sorrowful tears into gleaming pearls, for Keats has not truly left her. The poet call upon the caverns, forests, delicate flowers, and fountains to cease their mourning. Let the air, which has shrouded the earth in a dark veil of grief, remove it and leave the earth exposed, so the bright and joyful stars can smile at our foolish sorrow. Even the stars know that Keats is not dead; it is no wonder they laugh at our sadness and despair.

Shelley believes that Keats is now "A portion of Eternal, which must glow". He has become "one with Nature" and his presence can be felt in thunder, darkness, and light:

He has mingled with the beauties of Nature, "He is portion of the loveliness". Death cannot touch him now as, "death is a low mist which cannot blot the brightness".

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE AND DEATH IN THE POETRY OF IMRAN SHAHID

Just like the two other poets, Imran Shahid also does not believe in the concept of death, a common person has. He believes that a person does not die with physical death. One remains in the world, in different shapes, even after death. He asks his beloved not to find him in his grave as he is not there:

Do not stand
By my grave, and weep.
I am not there,
I am not sleep—

He is living and his presence can be felt in nature in its various manifestations. His beloved will find him in winds, snow, ripened grains, and autumn rain:

I am the thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glints in snow
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,
I am the gentle, autumn rain.

If she is eager to hunt him up, she should listen to the melodies of the birds, while they are circling in the sky:
As you awake with morning`s hush,

I am swift, up-flinging rush,
Of quiet birds in circling flight,

He reiterates that she will find him in different shapes of nature during day time:
One thing is clear and that is, he has not left the world in common sense of the concept:
I am the day transcending night.

Do not stand

By my grave, and cry

I am not there,

I did not die.

DISCUSSION

It is explored that all the three poets have same conception of life and death. But they differ so far as the people whom they loved are concerned. Words worth expresses his feelings about the concept of death, keeping in mind a small girl named Lucy. Percy beshee Shelley expresses his feelings about the concept of death keeping in mind john keats. Imran shahid differs from the two as he explains the concept through his own self.

Lucy was everything for Wordsworth, as he loved Lucy extremely. It means that Lucy was so dear to him that her death was unacceptable for him. When she grew three years old, nature decided to make her own and she died. As her death was not acceptable to him; he, very emotionally, declares her to be a living creature. That is the reason, he finds Lucy everywhere in Nature

In case of Shelley, he was very emotional for a fellow poet, John Keats. His death was a great set-back for Shelley. He was so much moved that he wrote a pastoral elegy for him. For Shelley, too, the death of John Keats was unacceptable. In consolatory part of the poem, he declares him to be living. Shelley says that the early life is like dream and the death is the gateway to endless life, so keats has awakened from this illusion and entered a state of over lasting awareness. Because the existent of human being is a continuous struggle against this false illusion and this struggle is meaningless, and lead to no real fluffiness. Human soul is forever chasing after things that are temporary and insubstantial and in this endless pursuit our bodies.

Imran shahid discussed the concept of death like the other poet. But he talks about himself, while presenting the concept of death. He loves his beloved very much and tries to ensure her that he will accompany her, even after his body is no longer there in the world. He explains that after the death his body is not present in the universe, but spiritually he is present in the form of sun, in the form snow, and also in the form of blowing wind. Therefore, she should not mourn his death, because, in his opinion, death is not the end of life. It is pertinent to mention that, though, Imran Shahid is a modern poet; but the very psyche of humans, not to accept the separation of one's near and dear ones, take him to match with Romantic poets. This transcendence of barriers of age, adds beauty to the poetry of budding modern poet.

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

William Words Worth explains the three years life of Lucy and her death, He explain that lucy is not a dead body, but her life is converted from one shape to another shape. She is continuously playing and enjoying her life as a living girl, So he means that death is not the end of life. Percy beshee Shelley also explains the concept of life and death through his beloved fellow poet named keast, He persuaded that keats is a living personality, enjoying his life in different shapes. He means that keats is not gone forever but he is a living

personality and his life has changed forever. Imran shahid, on the other hand, discussed his own self, while projecting the concept of life and death. He does so as he cannot see tears in the eyes of his beloved; even after his death.

CONCLUSION

It becomes evident from the comparison that all the three poets have same concept about life and death; though Imran Shahid is a modern poet and quite removed from the Romantic era. Death becomes unacceptable when the mind declines the harsh realities of life. It also becomes clear that feelings for someone very special in life; remains same, regardless of ages.

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