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## **Individualism and the Symbolic Language of Imagination (Pablo Neruda as an Example)**

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### **Abstract**

Pablo Neruda's artistic distinctiveness can be considered in two ideas or attitudes of romanticism. First, the imagination, which is the result of conduct and spirituality, and second, the individualism, which is a collection of mysterious mysteries from the texts of individuality based on philosophical sonnets. His works point out the ethereality and indescribability of life, employing the reality of life at the level of human perception in a rich and symbolic language. This symbolic language often represents the inner world of the poet, his thoughts, and his unique perspective as an individual. This study seeks to explore how Pablo Neruda's poetry treats imagination with a more individualistic character. He recreates the meanings in poetry through the three ideas of reduction, interpretation, and analysis. The dialectical relationship between these elements, influenced by historical and philosophical ideas, plays a crucial role in this transformation. It's an examination of how an artist's work reflects their personal and intellectual journey, ultimately contributing to the richness and depth of their creative expression.

**Keywords:** Imagination, Individualism, Pablo Neruda, Romanticism, The dialectical relationships.

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Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) believed in many components of romantic poetry and art. He put new, active and dynamic literary capacities to the experience, and the reason for this can be seen in the skills and techniques that have been noted in literary poems. Assembling personal feelings and experiences along with the intense emotions and upheavals which is one of the common and main beliefs among all romantics, can easily be traced in Pablo Neruda's early collections of poetry. However, Pablo Neruda's use of the experiences and knowledge of the romantic art was, to a certain extent, different from that of those pillars who lived at the beginning of the movement. It is said that Pablo Neruda was one of the leaders of this movement. Pablo Neruda comes from the next century; a century in which the capacities of romanticism seem to have come to an end and have been replaced by other schools of art and literature (Coupe, 2000, pp. 46-51).

The school of romanticism in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a revolutionary school that stood against the main beliefs of classicism (Conway, 2008, p. 277). The wide range of components, attitudes, themes, artistic and literary themes, theories and views gradually became a great legacy that later inspired and encouraged not only the artists and writers of romanticism but also the artistic and literary schools. In other words, even more than two centuries after romanticism, geographies, and cultures that were far more distant in time and space of the rise and end of this school were greatly affected by it (Devries, 2016, p. 87).

Actually, opposing the theory of structuralism and accepting another view that regards content as the most essential element of the poem is distinct. Structuralism is a theoretical approach in various fields, including linguistics, anthropology, and literary theory. In literature, it often focuses on analyzing the underlying structure and systems of a text, emphasizing elements like language, symbols, and recurring patterns. Darius, the Assyrian in the book of poetry and thought, criticizes the structuralism theory in the definition of a poem. But the most important poetical works of the first and foremost of everything before it becomes language are poetic experiences of being and it is not a special experience of poets (Neruda, 1950, p. 91). He also notices the gem, whose strong feelings are found. Pablo Neruda is a poet who has attracted attention from the beginning of his work with a strong intelligence and sense of the essence of the poem, which is not a prescribed

toy, and he has searched it as a poet, and in some of his works is an unusual gem.

The theory of structuralism proposes that interpretation cannot pass through the technical complications that the language produces. It should be said that it does not accept such an explanation of poetry and it is possible to explain the interpretation into the poem as possible. The analysis of all skills and capacities of the source language is conducted to the target language (Neruda , 1973, p. 15). It was possible to deal with specific constrictions resulting from the interpretation of Pablo Neruda, the method and how to direct and conduct such a subject is one of the most challenging issues which always exists in comparative literature because the writer has to interpret the poem of a poet into another language and explains the meaning from it, and then compare it with another poet. This meaning can only be explained and understood by another poet. It is said that it is easier to do such thing in novels or short stories or even in cinema and drama because the aspect of these symbols is not as varied as in poetry. Certainly, in poetry, it is possible through analysis and deconstruction referring to the meaning, i.e. in the society and the world. We have to accept the possibility of regeneration of a poem in the structure of the poem itself exists, unlike most structuralists, who say that everything in a poem refers to the poem itself and the words of poetry and it cannot be realistic (Neruda , 1973, p. 15).

Romantic artists and thinkers revolted against the old-fashioned main beliefs and value of the classical art. This is not to remark that classicism was a school without achievement, but it was the teachings and values of classical art and literature in modernity that did not answer the new requests, needs, and aspirations that now found on the intellectual perception of history with the industrial and political revolution of modern periods (Neruda, 1921, pp. 1-4). They also had their conformation about cultural, political, and social situations. In other words, the revolutionary character of this school against the experiences and the traditions of the first class also move in their other social and political affairs and made them militant figures in all dimensions. In this century, many consistent trends and developments have arisen leading to complicated effects. The decline of the neoclassical formation led to the questions and doubts of the illumination and enlightenment, and this situation gradually provided a good chance for the perception and spread of new ideas, which became widespread in the second

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half of the century. A reconsideration or rethinking of serious principles, values and practices was a fundamental requirement for the flourishing of romanticism and this is what happened during the eighteenth century. Consequently, it is clear that although the romantic movement, in its first influential step, created a literary revolution, it was the product of a long and continuous evolutionary progression. The course of this progression and its form and method can indicate the nature of the romantic revolution (Neruda, 1921, p. 6).

However, the special common features and components of romantics are the long list. They are, in short, individuality (sentimentality, individual conscience, romantic heroism), the blackness of life (sorrow and approach to the darkness of the night and the graveyard, death and suicide, narcissism, evil, obsession, addiction, and ruthless beauty), community-oriented tendencies (revivalist, fascist, revolutionary and utopian romanticism, identification with the revolutionary developments, bright future prospect, freedom, support for the oppressed and even criminals, hatred and compassion for women, hatred, and sympathy) with capitalism, preference of the Bible and Christianity, return to nature and identification with it, mention of myths, primitivism (pastoral praise, popular culture, informal poems, songs and myths, return to modernity, evaluation of civilization, idealism, childhood, memories of love and romance, memories of homeland). George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel also sheds light to the characteristics of romanticism, i.e., return to nature, nonconformity to reason, belief in the subconscious and self-analysis, freedom, enthusiasm and emotions, escape and travel, innovation and contemplation (Neruda, 1921, p. 7).

Significantly enough, imagination and individualism have been considered and even compared since they are not only the common components in romantic art and thought, but many of these conceptions are not unrelated elements in the general history of art and thought; rather there are various relationships between them, some of which can sometimes be concentrated on the title of Hegel's dialectical method. It is concluded that imagination is something that makes sense in relation to another. An important point in this regard is to point out the fact that these viewpoints of the romantics and the literary and artistic components of this school are very demonstrative and more than the study of the components in the works of our remaining poets and artists, in addition to the conceptual ambiguity and

contradiction between the two romantic components in the poet's work. The point of significance of this new view is the deep, historical and philosophical conception which is called "dialectic". It is the basis of the comparative work in the field of poetry without accepting the definition of a poem. The word dialectic is a kind of process of a philosophical analysis that is based on opposition and contradiction. It was first known as the method of Socrates' philosophical debates and discourses, and then manifested in Plato's philosophy; but what presented it as modern was a particular philosophical and conceptual use made by the famous German philosopher Wilhelm Hegel (Karmakar, 2015, pp. 1-6). It should be said that according to Plato, dialectic had a complete meaning and was considered a way to reach the undeniable essence of beings.

Since the school of romanticism is based on imagination and emotion, it is important to refer that they sometimes denote the personal and social themes. Imagination is, in fact, the notion of unconventionality. This means that the poet tries to correlate his artistic representation of the political, social, and cultural condition and affair of his time by planning and introducing an alternatives (Duran & Safir , 1981, p. 129). For the Romantics, imagination is not out of the usual material and ordinary situations. It can be more appropriate alternative to the relations of this world. In other words, the essence of all arts is imagination, and poetry, by some definitions, is nothing but forms of imagination (Duran & Safir , 1981, p. 131). Although the Romantics believed in imagination or emotion and ultimate sensitivity in itself more than others, this tendency remains within the range of the poet's mentality and the mental configurations. The unique literary works can only be confirmed by the imagination, which is derived from one or more psychological complexes and which is derived from the state of those complexes at the same time as plurality, coherence, and unity (Kellert & Farnham, 2002, p. 73). These terms describe the characteristics of a distinct imagination:

- Plurality: Imagination should be multifaceted, offering a wide array of ideas and possibilities. It shouldn't be limited to a single perspective or theme.
- Coherence: Despite its diversity, the imaginative process should have a sense of order and logic. The various elements should fit together in a meaningful way.

- Unity: There should be a harmonious integration of the imaginative components, resulting in a coherent and holistic creative work.

Being superior over reason, imagination is one of the basic principles of romantics, especially English romantics as they believe that without imagination, poetry cannot exist. According to romanticism, the poet is the creator, he expresses his feelings, thoughts, and experiences, which are remarkably considered in lyrical poetry (Khosravi, Vengadasamy, & Raihanah, 2016, pp. 95-101). The romantic poet makes the world not as it is but as he knows and recognizes creating images throughout his method. All the counterparts of nature and art, poetry and prose, seriousness and lightness, remembrance and prediction, the originality of meaning and the originality of feeling, the earthly and the heavenly, and life and death are deeply interconnected in the romantic imagination. (Khosravi, Vengadasamy, & Raihanah, 2016, pp. 97-101).

On the other hand, the second component of romantics is individualism. The romantics were the product of industrial revolutions and they no longer had the full authority of the church leading to a new age of individuality in the sense that the man in this age recognizes his individual self carefully and with special reflection (Kellert & Farnham, 2002, p. 98). Individual goals, unique features, individual beliefs, self-control, individual needs while respecting the individuality of others with consideration to social issues are among the characteristics of this type. The common view is that what is true in culture is often thought to be true of every individual in that culture as well. In other words, people within an individualistic culture are all individual-centered and those who live in a communist culture are all communists (Khosravi, Vengadasamy, & Raihanah, 2016, p. 99). Every human being has a perception of his existence that can be called personal identity or himself. These ideas unite and form the self-concept of the individual. Self-concept is a set of human perceptions about one's inner and outer characteristics (Marchant, 1999, pp. 49-66).

In fact, this is very well seen in Pablo Neruda's works. He had a characteristic genius and a distinctive talent that his imagination and his artistic expressions are astonishing. In his imagination, man wants his situation to be different, in the sense that imagination means imagining oneself, the other, the world, and relationships subjectively. Accordingly,

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romantic individualism is produced precisely from the heart of the mysterious, deep, and unconscious collectivism that was hidden behind their colorful thoughts and imaginations (Devries, 2016, p. 63). In this dialectical relationship, individualism and imagination are not unrelated, but it can be concluded that individualism is the result of the retreat of the poet or artist from the field of social oppositions and confrontations to inner solitude (Khosravi, Vengadasamy, & Raihanah, 2016, p. 102).

Neruda has been called the poet of life because he reflected life in every sense of the word in his works. The readers identify that writing poetry is not something he idly does in his spare time. Instead, like a moth to a flame, he seems to have a very strong compulsion to write. He ends each line with a word that is the central point of that line in order to get the idea to the reader. In addition, he uses the first-person point of view when writing the poems since he is relating a personal experience (Karmakar, 2015, pp. 4-6). Without a first-person point of view, the following lines of Neruda's Stanza II (1964) would not make much sense. But with them, the reader can get involved and relate their own experience with the material.

pure wisdom  
of someone who knows nothing,  
and suddenly I saw  
the heavens  
unfastened and open,

(lines 13-17)

Definitely, Neruda has different visions and opinions on love, happiness, sadness, and life in general and what encouraged him in writing poetry was the reform of society and the perfection of man. He strongly believes that his poetry and writings are the only presented attitude to the people and they were written for their life and happiness. Pablo's passion for poetry was truly outstanding. He believes that a poet realizes all the suffering and he can observe and reflect all the issues of society creating a healthy air for the soul of humanity. In such style, he tries to show the spiritual direction of the people of his society and on a large scale of the world and the universe in his works.

Being a poet all around, Neruda sings so lovingly that the words do not make the poet drunk and speak of the pains of his land so much that every word becomes a beat on the attacker's face. Sometimes, his poem says

simply that major expressions and interpretations are formed, and sometimes it is so wisely and philosophically confronting with the world that the long poem is a book of questions or so many names. But what is definite and confirmed is that Neruda is the poet of his time and above all the man of his time. His delicate and poetic aspect reflects the essence shared by poets, whether they are constantly evolving or remaining unchanged (Handley, 2007, p. 24).

A clear example of this viewpoint is the basic expressions that the poet challenges with his poem "Ode to the Tomato" using tomatoes, lemons, wine, corn, and even fish. Such things that perhaps only a poet like Neruda should remark on so that they do not become vulgar and each of them looks at deep wisdom behind their simple form and presence. The first perception and intelligence may be that in all creatures of the universe a thousand words are not spoken, a thousand hidden interpretations and a thousand lessons can be learned if your eyes and ears are prepared and sensitive and not under the attitudes and habits (Karmakar, 2015, p. 5). Neruda's language is simple and is less likely to be misunderstood. The poet's images are also quite objective, in the sense that he is one of the great poets who have something to say and he does not motivate himself into the depth of indefinite doubts and mysterious or melancholy mentality.

According to love, he is direct and true ,being truly a high-ranking poet in the romantic expression of words. He has given another meaning to love. Contrary to popular belief, he deals with love that is sometimes divine and sometimes human (Conway, 2008, pp. 234-239). Neruda's poems rejected the traditional attitudes toward love, individualism, and poetry itself. His most popular poetry collection "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair" in (1924), at age of nineteen, is the best example to be contemplated. The poet breaks the predictable and expected idea of love in this collection. In the first poem of the volume, "The Body of a Woman", he refers to the sensual and erotic love, neglecting the pattern of a virtuous 'virginal' love that has to remain constant. He captures a still picture of a naked woman, essentially representing her to create sensual and erotic images filled with ecstasy and delight. The personal connection between individuals in love translates into physical intimacy, transcending the specifics and foundations of moral and ethical norms in both literature and society.



Body of woman, white hills, white thighs,  
 you look like the world in your posture of surrender.  
 My savage peasant body digs through you  
 and makes the son leap from the depth of the earth

(lines 1-4)

In the concluding love song of the volume, "Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines", the poet's misery and suffering is associated with the 'night', 'sky' and the 'blue stars'.

Write, for example, 'The night is shattered  
 and the blue stars shiver in the distance.'

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

(lines 2-4)

Under the pain of the poet's misery, even the night seems to be shattered, a force of nature that humans cannot displace, is crushed by the force of personal individualism. Actually, Neruda is not presenting a principal importance to individualism itself. This repeated imagery of the night sky and the stars give the poem a sense of universality. Traditionally, love poetry has equated woman with nature. Neruda offered this well-known approach and style of comparison and raised it to a universal level, presenting woman into a true and real force of the universe (Karmakar, 2015, p. 7). Neruda's idea of love goes beyond the personal love to unite all human feelings and experiences without restrictions. Here, universality does not stand for European/English literature that assigns its cultural power as universal human qualities. Neruda's world denotes the human mental escape exceeding race, class, nation, and other distinctions.

Similarly, we find the same technique reflected in "One Hundred Love Sonnets" (1958) written by Neruda in his later years for his third wife, Matilde Urutia (Duran & Safir, 1981, p. 125). In Sonnet XVII, the poet refuses to denote the nature of love, starting to describe and explain, paradoxically, how he does not love:

I don't love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,  
 or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:  
 I love you as one loves certain obscure things,  
 secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

(lines 1-4)

The nature of love cannot be cleared and defined under strict categories or orderings. It is an incomprehensible and unintelligible in existence. 'Between the Shadow and the Soul', this poem further goes into details connecting love with nature and how love can break down the restrictions (Handley, 2007, p. 25). Individualism cannot be definite, but they are ample in the collective consciousness of people. Love, for Neruda, is an individualism experienced by all humanity and a common denominator that unites all people.

Another feature of Neruda's poetry is how he occupies the reader's mind directly with the poem. He does not represent his love or individualism, using multiple similes, metaphors, or other figures of speech. Unlike the poets who presented their love or pain in exaggerated and extreme expressions, Neruda simply tells the reader what he wants and what he feels. He attempts to make the readers understand and sympathize with the poet's pain, making them go in retreat to their places of memory to dig out their individual personal feelings. The concept of universality develops and expands as readers are not provided with an assigned set of individualism previously. They have to develop a temporary understanding and acceptance of the poem that varies from reader to reader, colored by individual experiences and individualism. Poetry improves this characteristic in images, rather than in words (Johnson, 2015, pp. 229-233). Through the use of distinct and clear images, Neruda in his poem "(If You Forget Me" from *The Captain's Verses* (1962) distinctly presents and expresses his idea of love; which is universal and can be revealed in all elements of nature.

Everything carries me to you,  
as if everything that exists,  
aromas, light, metals,  
were little boats  
that sail  
toward those isles of yours that wait for me

(lines 9-14)

Thus, individualism is not dominant in Neruda's poetry and his poetry is not full of imagination and excessive descriptions of individualism, but it is an honest expression of universal feelings. Neruda recognizes and accepts love as an important force to inspire human being and to unit them.

He is also very materialistic that if his beloved does not return his feelings, he will stop loving her.

Well now,  
if little by little you stop loving me  
I shall stop loving you little by little.

(lines 15-17)

Compared to Neruda's European or American contemporaries, whose poetry reflected their imagination of the lost culture of their glorious nations and their inability to hold and control the modern society, Neruda is different. His imagery is more delicate, gentle and aesthetic, trying to represent a deeper expression of pain and exploitation through pure images of art. The vivid individualism in Neruda is curiously connected to one thing that is poetry (Duran & Safir , 1981, p. 146). Again in his poem, "Tonight I Can Write", the poet starts with a message that he is skilful to write this poem, creating a concept of love that goes beyond an individual's individualism because this night is the most painful time of his sorrow and suffering. His skill to write is confirmed here when he uses the word 'can'. The first line of the poem also acts as a refrain, constantly pointing out the poet's ability to write the 'saddest lines', which incidentally make the poem itself.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.  
Write, for example, 'The night is starry and the stars are  
blue and shiver in the distance'.  
The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

(lines 1-4)

The poem ends as the poet concludes his love affair and forgets the individualism of love for his beloved who has abandoned him (Conway, 2008, p. 257).

my soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.  
Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer  
(lines 30-32)

Consequently, individualism has been employed wonderfully and vividly in Neruda's poetry. His misery is what enables him to write these

‘verses’, the pain working as a medium of poetic inspiration. The troubled relationship between the beloved and the poet morphs into the struggle between the act of writing poetry and the poet. Individualism dissolves into the background and only acts as an origin point for poetry itself. The poem is instead dominated by Neruda’s talent to write poetry, rather than the images that seem to appear on the surface (Neruda, 1950, p. 75).

Neruda observes poetry as a duty, an obligation that arises from the act of witnessing reality (Neruda , 1973, p. 22). In “Ars Poetica”, from *Residence on the Earth* (1933), the poet captures the moment of poetic inspiration as originating from reality. He creates binary between images to capture the imperceptible existence of poetry, for example, he contrasts ‘young girls and garrisons’ and in a brilliant use of metaphor, describes drunken men craving for flowers in a stupor. He also creates splendid and sound images by contrasting funeral songs and labor pains. He believes that the work of art and the statement of thought are inseparable from a historical and political context. Commonly, Neruda was known as the people’s poet introducing his politics into his poetry and the art of writing poetry for him is inseparable from the predicaments of the people, it is the source that fuels his poetry (Johnson, 2015, p. 234).

## Conclusion

Pablo Neruda's poetry is a dominant depiction to Romanticism in the 20th century. His unique blend of imagination, individualism, and a deep connection between personal experiences and universal themes set him apart as a poet of profound significance. His exploration of love, politics, and the human condition resonates with readers across cultures and generations, making him a literary figure whose impact endures. His ability to use clear and vivid imagery allows readers to connect with his work on a deeply emotional level. His portrayal of love, both sensual and complex, challenges traditional norms and invites readers to contemplate the multifaceted nature of human relationships. Moreover, his commitment to social and political causes, evident in his poetry, underscores the idea that poetry is not merely an artistic pursuit but a powerful tool for social change.

Throughout his poems, Neruda displays a profound individualism, portraying his own experiences and emotions with honesty and vulnerability. However, his individualism transcends the personal; it becomes a lens

through which readers can view the broader human experience. In this way, his poetry becomes a bridge between the intensely personal and the universally relatable. Ultimately, his work is a testament to the enduring relevance of Romanticism in the modern world. His ability to blend imagination, individualism, and universal themes creates a body of work that continues to inspire and resonate with readers, making him a poet whose impact will endure for generations to come.

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## الفردية واللغة الرمزية للخيال (بابلو نيرودا أنموذجاً)

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### الملخص

يكمن التميز الفني لبابلو نيرودا في فكرتين : أولهما الخيال وهو نتيجة السلوك والروحانية وثانيهما الفردية وهي مجموعة من الألغاز الغامضة من نصوص الفردية القائمة على السونيتات الفلسفية وتشير مجموعته الشعرية إلى الأثيرية مستخدماً واقع الحياة على مستوى الإدراك البشري بلغة رمزية. بعبارة أخرى ، يعيد بابلو نيرودا خلق المعاني في الشعر من خلال الأفكار الثلاثة وهي الاختزال والتفسير والتحليل. غالباً ما تمثل هذه اللغة الرمزية العالم الداخلي للشاعر وافكاره ومنظوره الفريد كفرد.

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى توضيح كيفية تعامل شعر بابلو نيرودا مع الخيال بطابع اكثر فردية, اذ يعيد خلق المعاني في الشعر بشكل ملحوظ. تلعب العلاقة الجدلية المتأثرة بالأفكار التاريخية والفلسفية دوراً هاماً في عكس رحلة الشاعر الشخصية والفكرية مما يساهم في إثراء وعمق تعبيره الابداعي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الخيال ، الفردية ، بابلو نيرودا ، الرومانسية ، العلاقات الجدلية.