

A Sense of Loss and Nostalgic Feeling in Select Poems of Robert Browning

Ranjit Mandal

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Jain Vishva Bharti Institute, Ladnun, Rajasthan

Email-ranjit92.mandal@gmail.com

Mob-9851413614

Abstract: Nostalgia is a state which almost all people experience. People are daunted by many psychological forces such as loss, embarrassment, humiliation, annoying reminiscences, and the very fact of death. Therefore, they keep on searching 'Utopia', a perfect tomorrow in a sense to compensate the past, soothe the disturbing memories and polish the scurrilous. The term 'nostalgia' has been derived from a Homeric term 'nostos' which means homesickness to show Odysseus' homesickness in his epic 'Odyssey' when he was freed from war. Johannes Hofer coined this term in medical context to refer to patients' anxiety and mental agony or disorder. The 'Online Merriam-Webster Dictionary' defines nostalgia as, "pleasure and sadness that is caused by remembering something from the past and wishing that you could experience it again." Therefore, 'nostalgia' is not only sadness or sickness, but also taking interest of retaining the past. This paper attempts at analyzing how Browning reflects upon the pang of loss and reveals nostalgic feelings in his poetry.

Keywords: nostalgia, embarrassment, humiliation, utopia

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Robert Browning, a renowned poet of Victorian period of English literature, is much acclaimed for the depiction of empirical view of Victorian society. He is the prophet of struggling manhood and a religious teacher whose words enlighten the depressed, miserable souls. In this perspective, he, through his dramatic monologues, goes beyond Tennysonian melancholia and Arnoldian pessimism. "Dramatic monologue is a kind of poem in which a single fictional or historical character other than the poet speaks to a silent 'audience' of one and more persons"(Baldick,