
The Last Journey with Ladylove: 'A Critical and Romantic Analysis of Robert Browning's The Last Ride Together.'

Utkarsh Kumar Rai, MA English, Amity School of Languages ,Amity University Lucknow Campus, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract:

This research paper not only romantically and emotionally but philosophically and psychologically analyzes and observes the nature of this lyrical 'dramatic monologue' poem because Browning is not just a romantic poet but also a believer in the Theory of Optimism. With romantic analysis, focusing on his philosophical beliefs is essential to profoundly understanding his emotions and pain in this poem. This paper will explore the poet's emotions during his last carriage ride with his beloved. Love and loved ones cannot be bound to stay forever. This harsh reality will be prospected further in this paper through the views of Robert Browning. Betrayal from love, a ray of hope, faith, heartbreak, and raucous reality are the various emotional stages of the fictional character (Speaker) created by Browning.

Keywords: Beloved, Ride, Robert Browning, Love, Pain, Life Nature, Metaphysical.

Introduction:

Whenever there is a discussion of romantic poetries, the first name that lights up is "Robert Browning." He was a great poet from the Victorian era. In the 19th century (Victorian era), he wrote many dramatic monologues, and in the 21st century, he is still known as the 'father of the human psyche' poet. He was an expert in revealing the internal conflicts of emotions in the human mind. Born on May 7, 1812, in Walworth, London, United Kingdom, he grew up in Camberwell. He studied at the University of London. In the Bank of England, his father worked as a clerk. His mom was a music lover. It is an admirable coincidence that a poet who was a genius in lyrical poetry (dramatic monologue), his mother was too fond of music lyrics. Browning's father also had a hobby of reading novels/books. He started developing his interest in art and music at a young age. In childhood, he visited his father's library

to analyze literature. Anyone who became a memorable literary expert had an ideal in mind through which he/she got inspiration.

William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelly were ideal poets for Browning to recognize the romance and love for nature in literature. Through imagery and metaphors in speeches, Browning was an expert in exploring and portraying emotions without artificialness. 1833 was a life-changing year for Robert Browning. In this year, Browning's first creative work achieved fame and success. Browning's first magazine, "Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession," was published in 1833. Browning's wife, Elizabeth Barrett, was also a poet. In 1835, "Paracelsus" was also the second major work of Robert Browning. Both these two dramatic monologues were successful works of Robert Browning. In 1855, Browning's third creative work was published.

A collection of poems named "Men and Women" was published in 1855. These collections of poems shared a common form of "dramatic monologue." Robert Browning is often called the father of dramatic monologue because, through his dramatic monologue poems, he was always successful in portraying the Speaker's unsaid words evolved inside the Speaker's mind. This form of poetry (dramatic monologue) enabled the poem's lyrics to portray the poet's feelings, emotions, and thoughts to the audience. The names of the poems included in this collection were "Love Among the Ruins," "A Toccata of Galuppi's," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Andrea del Sarto," "A Grammarian's Funeral," and "The Last Ride Together," which is the subject of discussion in this paper. "The Last Ride Together" is a man's heart speech. This speech in the form of lyrical poetry (dramatic monologue) is a heart-touching elaboration of emotions through metaphors, vivid imagery, and metaphysical reference. This poem truly justifies the title of this collection of poems, "Men & Women," because it portrays the relationship between a man and a woman. This research paper will try to convey to readers a moral message that the love of a couple is nature's gift, not any materialistic task. It has a lot of metaphors, vivid imagery, and metaphysical talks to portray the feelings of a lover whose relationship has now ended.

Further, as this paper proceeds, it will be understood that any individual cannot bind love. Neither one can bind anyone to stay in his or her life. One needs to positively acknowledge nature for what he has got, and if a thing or a person moves away from his life, then he should accept it as the decision of fate. This poem is a beautiful expression of Browning's moral philosophies. He used a fictional character in the poem who goes through all these life circumstances to signify life's morality. The Theory of optimism, hidden in the poem, guides the readers to understand the immortality of the soul and the love of a man.

Critical & Romantic analysis of the poem.

When the poem starts with the despairing decision of the Speaker's beloved, whom she wants to break up with, it is assumed that Browning must have written this poem on grief and sadness after listening. Fortunately, as this paper proceeds further, it is analyzed that this poem is a speech from the heart that reflects feelings of hope, faith, regret, and acknowledgment for the Speaker's beloved. 'Stream of Consciousness' is present in various thoughts and emotions of the Speaker because the Speaker is dealing with inner conflict in the poem. The Speaker handles the sorrowful situation gracefully with a positive thinking approach. There is a solo speaker in the poem; her beloved is quiet in the poem because it is completely a reflection of the feelings of a broken heart. The Speaker's heart is surely broken, but the faith and confidence of a lover are constant and confident in their place. This statement is said because, after the first two lines of sorrows, the Speaker positively handles the situation in the third- & fourth. He accepts the situation as fate's decision and acknowledges his ladylove for her being with him and awakening him about true love. The Speaker further says that he returns all hopes and memories to her because now those hopes and memories of his relationship are passed to her, and he wants to forget them. Browning, through the Speaker, wants to clarify that when the relationship is over, then one should not think about the past, hope, or memories because it will just give him anxiety, sadness, and grief. Further, the Speaker asks his ladylove for one last horseback ride. The Speaker wholeheartedly loved his beloved, so he asked for this last proposal from her. He wanted to live his further life with the memories of his last horseback ride with his ladylove. In the next lines, the Speaker personifies his nervousness by saying that while waiting for his ladylove's answer, he was hanging between life and death. When his beloved answered yes to the last ride, he said his blood had started moving in his blood vessels. He used personification to signify his nervousness. He wonders if thmaybeld will end today after sunset because he wants to enormously enjoy and experience the last horseback ride with his beloved, leaving the world behind. He wanted this horseback ride to be the last ride experience of his life because, at that point, as a lover, nothing was visible to him other than his beloved. Browning uses a narrative technique in his poem called 'internal monologue'. 'All the above feelings of a speaker run inside his mind; he does not speak it verbally, but his mind forms emotions into words.

Similarly, further in the poem, he metaphorically refers to the western sky. Through this, he was referring to the sunset. By sunset, he meant that his relationship with his beloved was shaded away like the sun. Then he mentioned a cloud in his mind, which he called 'blessed' by nature. The Speaker metaphorically compared the cloud to a woman's breast to portray a woman's sweetness, beauty, and polite nature.

The Speaker further said that the beauty of the cloud is that the sun's rays, the moon's light, and Venus's radiant rays make the cloud more attractive by increasing its brightness. When he saw the cloud then, all the beautiful elements of the cloud were attracting him towards it, and he felt like he reached heaven, leaving his body on earth. He was comparing his feelings when his beloved touched and hugged him before the horseback ride. He felt like he had reached heaven, leaving everything behind on earth. He used the western sky and blessed cloud as metaphors to portray his feelings of the moment. In the fourth stanza, they begin their horseback ride. When the ride started, the Speaker felt a kind of freedom and relaxation from his soul. He elaborated that he felt like someone had tied his soul up by a rope, but during the ride, he felt free by his soul.

The Speaker signified further that all his past hopes from his relationship are now diminished. He meant now that he was no longer bound by the responsibilities and hopes of his romantic relationship. He metaphorically compares his emotional freedom to an imaginary fluttering flag whose motion has no constant direction. It is just waving with freedom without any instructions or directions. Through this comparison, it is quite apparent that a lover in love is always bound with many hopes, expectations, and responsibilities. However, he can feel mentally and emotionally free when it is over. Aside from sorrowfulness, there is also the elimination of emotional pressure, which the Speaker felt.

Further, he states he is not the only one who failed in a relationship. Several people fail in anything, but they should learn from their failures. The Speaker is trying to say that failure is a part of life, and one should take a motivational lesson from it. Moreover, he adds that every human on earth works hard to achieve any goal in his life. If anyone compares intention with the result, many examples on earth have achieved greatness. Finally, he says that he expected the same positive result for him because he made every possible effort for his beloved, but today, he is riding a final ride with her. All these are the Speaker's metaphysical thoughts in his mind. Through these metaphysical thoughts, a lover's psychology is reflected in whose relationship has now ended. He also tries to explain the uncertainty and misery of human life. Nothing is fixed or predictable in this dynamic world. Stream of Consciousness's shade is visible, too, in these metaphysical thoughts. These metaphysical thoughts are continued in the next stanza, too. The Speaker satisfies himself in the next stanza by using various examples to show that it is not essential that hard work can guarantee success and that it will satisfy our heart's desire. He still thinks about hard work, failure, success, and fate. A metaphorical question arises in his mind: what is the definition of success and achievement? He asks his metaphorical doubt to himself how one can define his actions as perfect to achieve his aim. Will a person's power

be so strong that it can face the harsh reality? A human body also decomposes after the lifespan; there is a limit to life, too. He tried to convey that he thinks further that every person on earth works hard for a particular intent; he wants to achieve his dream by working day and night for it. Hard work is baseless without a goal; he meant it. Every life has a particular aim.

He took great examples further. He took the example of a leader of any country and a soldier. Through their examples, he is metaphorically saying that he is not the only one who wants honor and experience with his last ride, but many people get honor in different ways. The leader said in his mind that a leader sacrifices his whole life for his nation and people, So historical books gave them credit in ten lines by mentioning their deeds. Whereas a soldier who fought for his country, his bones are now under the grave, and above that, a flag was swinging. He also briefly referenced the Abbey walls, where few people wrote their names for the want of honor. These three above-mentioned metaphorical examples are ways of honoring and respecting them. However, according to the Speaker, his way of honor was his last ride with his ladylove. Somewhere in his mind, he assumed his life was better than that of a leader and soldier. The reason behind this assumption was that at least the Speaker (fictional character) could experience his last ride with his beloved, unlike the soldier and leader, who are not even alive to experience their honor. All these are the philosophies of the Speaker; he expresses them because he experienced sudden heartbreak from his beloved.

These thoughts are metaphysical, too, because they describe the Speaker's positive mentality. Using metaphors as examples enabled a lover (Speaker) to freely and deeply express his thoughts. As the poem proceeds further, there is again a metaphorical comparison by the Speaker with a poet. Browning was a literary critic of the Victorian era rather than just a romantic poet. He criticized a few poetry writing styles that could not portray the poet's emotions and inner thoughts. Similarly, in this poem, he criticized a few poets and their writing style through this fictional character whose relationship has ended. In this section, the Speaker thinks poets pertain in narrating artistic beauty in their poetry. Although they grasp and narrate the pleasure of beauty in their poetry, the poet themselves lack the feeling of experiencing the artistic beauty of nature in their poetry. They write diamonds and pearls, but it is a grating reality that they cannot feel their words, which they deliver in poetry. So, through this limitation of poets, the Speaker proves his life healthier. He narrates that he can truly feel and experience his feelings and happiness with his beloved on his final ride. He thinks he is more successful in observing his emotions on his horseback ride with his ladylove than those poets. Symptoms of vivid imagery can be observed here because active reading with all senses can help readers grasp the inner conflict

in the Speaker's mind. This is not the end of the metaphorical comparison at all. He will prove his life and experience better than two more people through his metaphorical thoughts. In the next stanza, the Speaker metaphorically compares his life with that of a sculptor and a musician. Firstly, a sculptor thinks he creates an idol and gives his name to it. He adds more in his thoughts that a sculptor compares his creation with the Roman goddess Venus (the goddess of art, beauty, and creativity) for praising his creation. A sculptor's creation is very close to his heart.

For many viewers, his idol is just a showpiece for them, not any nature's miracle. Many people will view it commonly, but they will not view it from his vision. Similarly, he thinks for the musicians. He narrates that a musician spends all his life making notes for his music lyrics, and his lyrics get out of trend at a point in time. He is not able to enjoy and experience his music emotionally. Through these two examples, the Speaker thinks he was so fortunate to receive the value of love from his beloved. He knows what actual love and experience are, unlike them. He even satisfies himself by experiencing and analyzing the value of the ride with his beloved, which is not felt by many. Like the above-mentioned metaphorical examples, many people surely perform their duties, but they are unaware that they lack observation and experience. The Speaker proves himself wealthy by fate by making himself superior through these metaphorical examples. All these comparisons by the Speaker in his conscious mind are performed just because this last horseback ride is valuable for him, like his life. These few moments of the horseback ride may be casual and common for various readers, but for the Speaker as a one-sided lover, it is even more important than other long years of his life. In this poem, Browning beautifully narrates through metaphors that a lover is dealing with psychological conflict due to heartbreak. However, he took everything positively through metaphorical and vivid imagery on his last ride. In the next two stanzas, the poet's thoughts are completely metaphysical. Firstly, in the second last stanza, he thinks metaphysically that one person may achieve everything in life, but it is a reality that there is nothing left to get in the next life. The Speaker believes something should be left for the afterlife so their soul can experience it in heaven. If everything is achieved in this present birth, then nothing will be left for happiness in the next birth. The Speaker here metaphysically tried to say that he might be united with his beloved in his next birth. Through heaven, he stated that he thinks he will surely meet his ladylove in heaven because it is the house of god where every soul unites. He thinks in this stanza that heaven is the only place where he can be one with his beloved forever after the earth. The Theory of optimism is visible here, enabling readers to understand the Speaker's emotions.

As a true lover, Speaker is not greedy for love in return from his beloved, but no doubt he wants her in the next life or heaven. He narrates this indirectly in his metaphysical thoughts. In the last stanza, when the Speaker comes out of his metaphysical thoughts, he notices that his beloved is quiet from the start of the horseback ride till the end. He wishes metaphysically again that this ride never ends and that this earth will be the only heaven for him. Here, this poem comes to an end.

Browning beautifully narrates the feelings and emotions of a true lover through metaphysical and metaphorical thoughts. This poem may be just a ride with thoughts for many people, but Browning has portrayed the romanticism of a lover and his thoughts to deliver a moral message that love may end on earth due to any reason, but love never dies in the heart of a lover.

Conclusion:

At the end of this paper, it is concluded that psychological fiction occurs in our minds when something unusual occurs. Handling them in a positive spirit is a lesson from the Speaker. The same event happened with the fictional character of the poem. In the starting, when he got the news of separation, he was filled with sorrow and grief. Since his love was pure and faithful to his beloved, he still felt lucky enough to feel true love and experience the last ride with his beloved, which is a dream for many. He metaphorically compares himself with several people and assumes himself superior in his mind. The last ride was his reward, and many people still need to experience it. Finally, metaphysically, he wishes to be united with his beloved in heaven or at his next birth. This signifies a moral lesson that one should accept fate's decision and learn to accept the miseries of human life.

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