

# An Interpretation on the Symbolism in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind"

Jin Wang <sup>1,a</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luohe Medical College, Luohe City, Henan Province, China, 462000

<sup>a</sup> email

**Keywords:** Shelley, Ode to the West Wind, Symbol, Romanticism

**Abstract.** Symbolism is a kind of special writing technique, and it can convey the author's inner feelings by means of euphemism, so it needs the readers to think deeply in order to understand the purpose of the author's suggestion. Based on the author's study and practical experience, this paper first analyzes the "Ode to the West Wind" and the creating background, and then interpretes the spirit of the "Ode to the West Wind", finally, makes a detailed analysis for the application of symbolism in the text.

## Introduction

Percy Bysshe Shelley is one of the representatives of the British Romantic poet in nineteenth Century, and he has entered into the University of Oxford and received the higher education, and thus he has the idea of democracy and freedom. Shelley wrote many famous poems, and "Ode to the West Wind" is a typical representative. We first start from the creating background of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", which has a promotion effect for us to understand more deeply on the "Ode to the West Wind"

## "Ode to the West Wind" and the Background of Its Creation

Because of far-reaching influence, Ode to the West Wind has a variety of versions in China. These translated versions of the "Ode to the West Wind" are presented to the Chinese readers in a beautiful form. There are five sections in "Ode to the West Wind", including fourteen lines. Each section can be independent as a chapter, but also can constitute a entirety. In the first three sections of the poem, it describes the changes brought by the by of the west wind to the sea, the land and the sky. Here, the west is ferocious hysteric, and it has a new power that can blow all the rotten stuff and that also can seed a new hope of spring

"Ode to the West Wind" was published in 1819, at that time, European countries were in the stage of the workers' movement and the storm of revolution. In order to safeguard their own interests and to fight for their own freedom and rights, the British working class and the proletariat launched a lot of struggle with the bourgeoisie movement, and the strike is also staged. The bourgeois rulers carried out a brutal and bloody crackdown on the working class and the proletariat, in August 1819, there occurred a brutal massacre in Manchester. At that time, Shelley experienced the incident, he conceal his inner grief and pain, wrote the famous poem "The Mask of Anarchy", in which he expressed his solemn protest and criticism for the outrage. Subsequently, The national liberation movement and the revolutionary movement in Italy and other countries like Greece and Spain got a strenuous development, which made Shelley feel more revolutionary passion and valor. In the fall of 1819, Shelley was in a small town in Florence, in the afternoon, he was walking in the woods, suddenly the sky was full of dark clouds and wind, and the storm went on for a long time

until it came to the end of the evening. Natural scenery has inspired Shelley's mind with the fire of the revolutionary enthusiasm, in the face of the grand and magnificent of the nature, Shelley wrote the song "Ode to the West Wind" which is still far from profound.

### **The Symbolism spirit in "Ode to the West Wind"**

The first three chapters of the poem directly describe the west wind, telling the great changes brought by the land, sky and sea, and the last two chapters expresses the poet's feelings. In the first half, the poet's "west wind" is intense and spirited, so the whole world is trembling in its deterrent, as is depicted in the work: "Look! That frenetic like witch's hair ... enough to destroy all the power." "West wind" with irresistible momentum, wrecked all violent things, using legions of power to eliminate the loss of vitality of the leaves. However, it is so full of vitality, and it did not hurt any living. It is to put the seeds of hope in the deep land in the deep winter, where the seeds sprout, grow, bury the hope of spring. Then, it began to wake up the spring, making the green and fragrant lay on the earth. So they followed the pace of the west wind to spread everywhere, after its cultivation, all kinds of life began to quietly. That kind of scene, the kind of fascinating fragrance spread quickly, and the turbidity, old things linger, restless in the depths of the sea shudder. With the help of burning passionate emotions, wanton wandering imagination, the poet injects the strong, speed, without fear of the character into the image of the west wind.

In the second half, the poet begins to describe the west wind from the human perspective. He said: "I fell in the life of the road covered with thorns, flowing blood! I will not seem so urgent, to beg you". The author mercilessly exposes the inner scars, although very painful, but he still wants to be the west wind blowing. He is eager to every creature to feel their soul's verve and connotation in fades. The poet believes that after all raids after cleaning, it is eligible to receive the coming spring. At the end of the poem, he morphed into a prophet, declared to the people: "If winter has come, the west wind, will spring be far away?". Readers can see that the west wind has become a symbol of the spirit, it represents the spirit of breaking the old world and the pursuit of the new order.

### **The Symbolism Meaning Resided in the Scenery**

The west wind is not only the wind in nature, but also embodies the revolutionary storm, which represents the irresistible force of the spirit. The poet once said: "If the image of life performs in the eternal truth, the only carrier is poetry." So he used poetry to convey the spirit of the west wind. "Oh, wild west wind, autumn fruit flavor", the poet pointed out that the west wind indicates "the breath of autumn fruit" at the opening, the performance of this symbolism is both implicit and reasonable. He also uses association to reflect the symbol, for example "ghost encounter Wizard". In order to set off the original rotten breath, the poet also used many unique image in this work, such as winged clock, winter bed, dark black rain dead twigs and withered leaves, etc. Poets also used the "west wind" to compare to himself, such as "Like it like you, proud, unruly" "hope the brave spirit, unexpectedly is my soul, I can become of you have the courage!" The author used beautiful words which is full of rich symbolic images to describe the unique flowers and wild west. Readers will find that the first symbolism of the west wind has got a great distillation. He proudly declared: "Winter comes, can spring be far behind?". Here, the poet has put himself into the image of the west wind. "He sounded the clarion call, poet's energy, can not to be controlled by others, but can control other people", the strength of the west wind is so strong, and it is also a symbolism of the revolutionary spirit of tenacious vitality. "Winter comes, can spring be far behind?", the poet uses natural alternating of seasons to hint the wining of the revolution. The symbolism of this sentence

was so strong that the it has been using for a long time." The people in the pain please do not be afraid, the most difficult time is now, the bright sunlight is in front of us." This symbolism is vivid and profound, indicating that the poet saw the progress of the society in the passage of time, masking his heart of joy. To sum up, the poet is good at using symbolism means to clarify the philosophy and emotion.

### **Placing the Thoughts and Feelings in Poetry**

The structure of this poem is very delicate, and the rhyme is very special. The poet high positive emotions are determined in this work. This kind of special "format" makes the work to be able to rise, let a person taste infinite. The conventional fourteen elements are suitable to be used to reflect the integrity, a single point of view or a state of mind. So it is usually alone, or into poems and there are still outstanding independent characteristics between the various parts. The poem is composed of fourteen parts and five elements and each part cannot be separated from each other, and this form of work has not appeared in the past. Study of the poet's notes finds that he used a non rhyme poem at the beginning, after finishing many times, it eventually became the present form. This change may be due to the author thought that no rhyme body can show the quality of the emotion, but this form of poetry is very loose structure, which does not conform to the structure of the authors wish to close this standard, so he chose the Fourteen Elements of the body to meet his requirements. A fourteen element carry too little content, and it can not reflect the poet's charm and emotion. In the appreciation of the works, readers can feel that the "format" and "meaning" is closely related in the work. In the appreciation of the works, readers can feel that the "format" and "meaning" is closely related to the work.

The three line is a kind of poetic metrical form, which first created by Dante, and Shelley used this metrical form in this poem. Taking this format, this poem will remind the westerly grandeur. Because this form has continuous lock rhyme, and thus it can strengthen the rhythm of the whole poem. This work is full of high cadence, which can bring the reader a lot grand momentum of the west wind. This way reflects his firm confidence in the future of the revolution. In reading the poem, due to the friction of alliteration, vowels and diphthongs sonorous is widely used in the works, people can feel the image of the west wind is very real. Around this image, each section used a word corresponding to the alliteration, deepening the beauty of music rhythm.

### **Conclusion**

Of course, the use of symbolism in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is not just the examples the author mentioned, but no matter what kind of symbolism, its expression and significance can not escape the three ranges: first, a symbolism of the infinite power of the revolution; Second, a symbolism of the end of the new world; Third, a symbolism of the infinite power of the working class and the proletariat. It is the use of these symbols that makes the "Ode to the West Wind has been" be talked about and never forget by the readers. To understand these symbolism Has an important role for our comprehensive dialysis for the "Ode to the West Wind".

### **References**

- [1] Zhu Fei. Interpretation of the symbolic language in Ode to the West Wind [J]. Chinese construction, 2016,08:43-44.
- [2] Xu Qing. On the application of symbolism in the Ode to the West Wind [J]. Brand (lower half), 2014,11:278.

- [3] Wang Yongbin. An interpretation of the symbolic meaning of "Ode to the West Wind" [J]. Chinese Journal of 2013,14:74-75.
- [4] Han Hui. Interpretation of the symbolic use of "Ode to the West Wind"[J]. writer, 2013,18:115-116.
- [5] Gong ting. The interpretation of "Ode to the West Wind" from the perspective of symbolism[J]. Short Stories (original edition), 2014,28:125-126.
- [6] Chen Shaoping, Zhong Shuicai. Interpretation of the symbolic meaning of "Ode to the West Wind" [J]. literary world (theoretical Edition), 2012,11:17+19.