International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Vol. 25, Issue 01, 2021
ISSN: 1475-7192

The People's Poet: A Marxist Reading of Pablo Neruda

Marieta Jagdalla

Assistant Professor, Department of Arts and Humanities,

Kalinga University, Raipur.

E-mail ID: marieta.jagdalla@kalingauniversity.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda was known chiefly for his bold poetical imagery and his very flippant political affinities. However, a fact that is irrefutable is that the bard was a communist to the core. Choosing to work for his people and to live with them as one of them, the Nobel laureate gathered adequate experiences to form his own Philosophy of Life. His poems speak of pain, loss, shock, betrayal and a tumultuous history of political stake-placing. The poet took to writing not only to express himself and his soul, but also to escape the horrors of the path leading to a large dream, however momentarily.

The very eventful journey of a loveless child into the hearts of millions of people, through his recklessly charming way with words, is a mystery to one and all. The approaches adopted to make extensive studies of Neruda's psyche, his ideological bearings, and his impromptu choices in life, too, have yielded little. The Marxist ideological influence upon the poet, however, remains unchallenged and clear as day. Neruda wrote not just as a proletariat, but also lent his voice to those who seemed to have surrendered theirs to one higher. The absolute unattainability of unity, togetherness and universality of brotherhood among the Americas was what kept the poet unrelenting in his path.

This paper proposes to invite attention to the role of Marxism in the making of a poet who learnt to love not just his people, but also his earth, his air, his water and his fire. Neruda's portrayal of power dynamics, sexuality and fraternity, in his poetry, will be analyzed here through a Marxist reading of his work. The paper also employs a Biographical Approach of study for a better understanding of what made the poet bleed.

INTRODUCTION

A poet was not welcome in Aristotle's Republic and the philosopher gave ample reasons for the verdict delivered quite ruthlessly to the poor artists who knew nothing better than to breathe and sing. The major reason for the bards being banished from the thinking man's ideal kingdom, was that he did not trust them to produce anything of substance. Any work of art, as say most of the theories by the literary critics, must serve two purposes; to instruct and to delight. However, ardent worshippers of a people's poet such as Neruda, may beg to differ.

Poetry offers an almost Dionysian intoxication which was frowned upon by the idealists in even Shakespearean era. In order to shed further light upon the reasons of the warm welcome that poetry received upon its return to the world of the civilized and learned, a centripetal concept needs to be explored: the aspect of unfettered creativity arising out of desire and the idea of a revolution for justice and togetherness. A reader of Neruda may readily perceive struggle in terms of the thought of flight, creativity and constant wandering – both psychological and physical and so offer a strategy of how the battle of words may be won. A new vocabulary – war-machine is made available for insurrection against the Established Order.

The contemporary celebration of chaos as a form and practice of provocation and disruption is attacked because of its failure to understand the nature of the poet's thought process, which ultimately aims at bringing about a social transformation. It is interesting to think ourselves as inhabiting a cramped world. We are welcome guests in this world but congestion and poor ventilation results in the inhalation of bad air and results in ill health. What is required, to combat claustrophobia, is a relationship with the Outside.

It would be too bold to assume that every Neruda reader is much influenced by both Neruda as well as Marx. But since the two men were not quite unlike each other, it would be natural to focus upon the concept of the binary oppositions too, while attempting to decode them. They are interested in what escapes from social cleavages. Instead of East-West they look for the ruptures and breakthroughs that are occurring elsewhere. Normal identities, binary-molar apparatuses (male/female; normal/pervert; straight/homosexual; rich/poor) are contrasted with the provisional identities of becoming a single whole. System-building, the will to totality, striving for stability and Unity are rejected in the contemporary psychological analyses of Neruda's poetry, for these regularize the "play of differences" with no fixed identities.

A Book is a "coupling device" with exteriority, it connects one with the Outside. "There are in fact two ways of reading a book: either we consider it a box which refers us to an inside, and in that case we look for the signified... if we are still more perverse or corrupted, we search for the signifier... Or the other way is to consider the book a small a-signifying machine... This other way of reading is based on intensities: something happens or doesn't happen. There is nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It can be compared to an electrical connection." (Olson).

A political identity is established traditionally in an autonomous stable subjectivity. Neruda appears to take up arms against the abstract rationalism of capitalism. Abstract rationalism is the death of Desire. What needs to be accounted for are the forces of desire which do away with the spirit of belonging and conforming and which seeks out instead new forms of sexuality and experimentation. For as great many popular artists – better known for their indifference to human plight - have demonstrated with their own lives- only when one leaves home, when one steps out of his cocoon, to face the challenges of the very emotional journey of life, does he achieve what he set out for – freedom of thought.

In Neruda's work, Capitalism is treated as a process of decoding and recoding of desires. Yet desire is essentially revolutionary and social (collective). It carries a box of bombs to be hurled against totalitarian organizations. The study of the flow of thought guided by the chaos of the rationally yet naïvely fragmented visions that one carries in the unconscious are what give birth to the imagery which speaks of the basics of human life – hunger, nudity, lust and the bond of love. The study of the influence of political ideologies merging into the human creative mind, hence becomes an integral part of this thesis; with the focus upon the poetical imagery of the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda.

This thesis is a humble attempt at making a study of the poetic imagery generated by the Chilean poet, in general, but by the method of reading him as a Marxist, a Communist who treads into the unknown, bearing in mind that the act of creation is produced by the mind which attempts to establish as concrete – by employing words to record the attempt – what is but abstract.

TURNING TO COMMUNISM FOR SOLACE

Neruda is regarded as the emblem of the engaged poet, an artist whose heart was consumed by passion -- for people and politics. GarcíaMárquez called him "the greatest poet of the 20th century, in any language." While the homage has been considered overinflated by critics, there is little doubt that Neruda is among the most enduring voices of the last, tumultuous (in his own words, "the saddest") century. From his romantic *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924) to his masterpiece, *The Heights of MacchuPicchu*, published as part of the epic *Canto General* (1950), and his five-volume *Memorial de Isla Negra*, released on the occasion of his 60th birthday, his works have millions of worshippers all over the world; especially since his works have been translated into diverse languages.

Even before his death in Santiago on September 23, 1973, at the age of 69, Neruda had become an icon of the young: at once eternally idealistic and impossibly unrestrainable. Among his own idols was Walt Whitman, whom he called an "essential brother". The concept might have arisen from another which urges the communist to address fellow worker as "comrade", which in turn alludes to the concept of brotherhood. Whitman personified for Neruda the crossroads, where poetry and politics could meet and the commitment, to use the pen to celebrate one's era. *Canto General*, a sweeping history of a people, written over a decade (1938-49) and including myriad poetic forms, justly made him famous. "It offered an almost Cinema-scopic portrait of the Americas, the United States included that is still incomparable. Everything is there: mineral structure, flora and fauna, the pre-Columbian past, the sweeping swords of conquistadors and liberators, factory workers on strike." (Eagleton, Milne).

Neruda attempted to capture the universe - or at least a universe - in a single book. Poetry, since, appears to have lost that ambition, supplanting it with an endless emphasis on the autobiographical. In accepting the Nobel Prize, Neruda said: "I did not learn from books any recipe for writing a poem, and I, in my turn, will avoid giving any advice on mode or style

which might give the new poets even a drop of supposed insight." (Fried 14) Nevertheless, his own array displays a clear intent: to unite poetry and history. Neruda wanted to capture the horrors of the Spanish Civil war and the plight of those who "owned" nothing save their names, in a world which regarded men higher or lower based on their "ownership".

Neruda's ideological odyssey took him from apathy to Communism, turning him into the spokesman for the enslaved. From the remoteness of his childhood he heard the echo of the guns of the Great War; his poetry was published in Spain in the 1930s, where he witnessed the Spanish Civil War and befriended Federico García Lorca; he traveled through the Soviet Union, saw the rise and demise of Hitler, visited Cuba after 1959, opposed the U.S. invasion of Vietnam and Cambodia, and was in Chile when Gen. Augusto Pinochet orchestrated a coup, on September 11, 1973, against the elected socialist president Salvador Allende. Throughout, Neruda was an observer and a chronicler of the events of his day. He served as a Chilean senator and diplomat and was a presidential hopeful.

All of which didn't manage to cure his naïveté. He was a staunch supporter of Stalin, which prompted him to write some cheap propaganda. He unquestioningly embraced Castro. "Fidel, Fidel, the people are grateful/for word in action and deeds that sing," he wrote. (International Archives). In 1973 he hastily released a book called, not surprisingly, *Incitación al Nixonicidio y alabanza de la revolucióchilena - - A Call for the Destruction of Nixon and Praise for the Chilean Revolution*.

Still, Neruda was -and continues to be -a torchbearer. The beatniks made him a role model. On campus in the 1970s he was a favourite. If the neoliberalism of the 1980s seemed to turn the idea of his being into an anachronism, Michael Radford's 1994 film *Il Postino*, based on a novella that included Neruda, by his compatriot Antonio Skármeta, renewed his appeal. Students everywhere embrace Neruda because he sought justice and didn't back off of a good fight. The Communism he so fervently embraced seems to have lost its gravitas. His poems, though, continue to urge us into become thinking beings, with their indictment of careless corporate globalism and anger at limitations on freedom of the press.

Neruda's Buddhist-like concentration on the mundane, insignificant objects surrounding us also speaks to us today: a stamp album, an artichoke, a watermelon, a bee, a village movie theatre. The well-adored *Ode to the Dictionary* says:

You are not a
tomb, sepulcher, grave
tumulus, mausoleum,
but guard and keeper,
hidden fire. (Neruda)

Throughout his life, he made sure to distinguish between the people of the United States and its government. He paid homage to the American masses but reacted irritably when they were

tricked by politicians. In the poem *I Wish the Woodcutter Would Wake Up* (1948), he wrote: "What we love is your peace, not your mask."

While the translation by Robert Bly says:

You come, like a washerwoman, from
a simple cradle, near your rivers, pale.
Built up from the unknown,
what is sweet in you is your hivelike peace.
We love the man with his hands red
from the Oregon clay, your Negro boy
who brought you the music born
in his country of tusks: we love
your city, your substance,
your light, your machines, the energy (Bly)

Over time we also learn to understand another aspect of Neruda: his humour. After reading dozens of his poems at a single stretch, it would not be completely wrong to declare that Neruda means to convey that a life experienced only through the heart is nothing but tragedy; one approached solely through the mind is comedy; and one seen through Neruda's eyes is sheer drama- poignant and droll. The Chilean bard seems to have resisted the traps of cynicism. He took human behaviour seriously but also knew how to laugh. Latin American poets obsessed with recognition, for example, became "Europhile cadavers in fashion." (Olson)

THE TRAUMA OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

As death approached, Neruda's humour was sometimes tinged with sarcasm. In *The Great Urinator*, a poem left unpublished, now part of the posthumous *Selected Failings* (1974), he portrayed God's urine falling on factories, cemeteries, gardens, and churches, eroding all it touched. "And from on high the great urinator," the poem says, "was silent and urinated." (Felstiner)

True to form, he didn't try to tell us what it meant. He appears to have had immense faith in his readers to interpret his vague word assemblage. The last stanza reads:

I am a pale and artless poet
not here to work out riddles
or recommend special umbrellas.
Hasta la vista! I greet you and go off

to a country where they won't ask me questions.

Happy birthday, SeñorPoeta! (Neruda)

We can say with conviction that the poet of *Espanaen el corazon* (1937) was the Neruda we read today, the bard who spoke truth to power, the poet of devotion to the revolutionary ideals of the oppressed but insurgent community of peasants, workers, indigenous communities, and middle elements. It was a meeting of comrades engaged in a common struggle. Poetry became a mode of social action and communication, achieving Neruda's desire to "write with your life and my own." (Milne) Neruda himself attested to what his engagement in the Spanish Civil War contributed to his growth: it helped him understand more, be more natural, and above all "live more near the people" (The Archives 16).

Our enjoyment of Neruda's art, then, has been strategic, for educational and logical reasons. "This education of the senses – a production of social existence", as Marx stressed in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (1964), "was mediated by the practices of everyday resistance, condensed in art, love, scientific inquiry and political mobilization. In this way, the sensory faculties become practical 'theoreticians,' debunkers of ideologies. We find the entire history of feelings crystallized in every phantasy or intuition that condenses the whole society's dream of release, fulfillment and happiness amid hunger, torture, exploitation and death, the dream of freedom through the ordeal of physical and historical necessities" (Caudwell 153).

We find a confirmation of this thesis in Neruda's project for an antipoetic strategy, "Toward an Impure Poetry," targeting the elite aestheticism of Wallace Stevens, Juan Ramon Jimenez, Octavio Paz, and others: "Let that be the poetry we search for: worn with the hand's obligations, as by acids, steeped in sweat and in smoke, smelling of lilies and urine, spattered diversely by the trades that we live by, inside the law or beyond it" (Neruda 39). But this is not naive empiricism or vulgar pragmatism. What Neruda accomplished in this 'impure' craft is the discovery of "anticipatory illumination", or, in Ernst Bloch's words, the Marxist poet "makes the world become aware of an accelerated flow of action, an elucidated waking dream of the essential" (Bloch 88). In the artistic dream-work, absence and presence are articulated in a productive synthesis.

When Neruda became a Communist senator in the Chilean parliament, he had to disavow sectarian ultra-leftism and fight for the democratic rights of all the people – not just workers or peasants. He knew the lessons of Lenin's warning against 'left-wing infantilism.' Amado V. Hernandez, one of the few Filipino writers of the pre-war generation, not only translated Neruda but also imitated his materialist approach to ordinary things. Hernandez drew inspiration from Neruda's love for quotidian reality: watermelon, artichoke, dictionary, onions, animals, and so on. It was this homage to the sensuous texture of worldly life that appealed to the young rebellious spirits of the First Quarter Storm and the nationalist movement that preceded it. It was not so much the melancholy aestheticism of the *Veinte poem as* and the early *Residencia* that fascinated; rather, it was the works that defied the

inexplicable solitude of Latin America and, from the heights of *Macchu Picchu*, sought to recover the indigenous, aboriginal creativity of the millions subjugated by the ruthless glories of the European, Anglo-Saxon "civilizing mission".

In February 1948, Neruda escaped from military violence, crossing the Andes mountains with the manuscript of his masterpiece, *Canto General*, rescued in his saddlebag. He had lived an underground life from 1947 to 1949, only to emerge into exile until 1952. Countless 'third world' writers' lives – one recalls here the Kenyan NgugiWaThiong'o, the Indonesian Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the Turkish Nazim Hikmet, and many others – find an allegorical mirror in Neruda's vocation and its articulations. For our part, we found in Neruda of the polemical Incitation *A Call for the Destruction of Nixon* a logistical toolkit for the simple art of speaking the truth in defence of humanity, a calling that Robert Bly (1971), amid anti-communist hysteria, regards as Neruda's lasting virtue. His relentless attack on U.S. imperialism was a vow of solidarity with the struggle against that Cold War behemoth which supplied weapons and diplomatic support to the state terror of the Marcos regime whose blood-debts are still unsettled up to now. Neruda took sides, a protagonist in the drama of the continuing class struggle of his time – he chose life and the creative vitality of the people, all the subjugated and dispossessed, as well as the indigenous survivors of imperial conquest.

Even in the darkest days of terror, we find neoconservative scholars and even postcolonial critics praising Neruda the surrealist, the sophisticated humanist, the lover in the 1994 film *Il Postino*.

Every persona or mask assumed by Neruda, no matter how tactical or expedient, becomes aggrandized. Today, almost every quality of the poet who changes sides frequently becomes praiseworthy – except the communist militant enamoured of a classless future. Indeed the Marxist-Leninist Neruda, winner of the Stalin Prize, is demonized, stigmatized. He is a curse to be exorcized by distraction and trivialization. In his erudite volume on Neruda, Rene de Costa (1979) would summon the figure of Neruda the flamboyant trickster, the verbal magician, whose performance eludes discursive critique. (Milne).

But these reactionary arbiters of taste cannot wholly suppress the truth distilled in the homage paid by the Nobel Prize committee that, in 1971, singled out Neruda's art whose "elemental force brings alive a continent's destiny and dream." (Costa) "The all-encompassing mythopoeic reach of *Canto general* cannot be deflected nor deconstructed into mystical aporias. Nor can the voice of the 1948 classic ode, *I wish the woodcutter would wake up* (1982) – read by generations of American students – be silenced, a Whitmanesque hymn that resurrected the seemingly eclipsed presences of the multiethnic proletariat, of the African slave 'who brought you the music born in his country,' and the Native American warriors" (Costa).

COMMUNISM EXPLAINED THROUGH ELEMENTS OF NATURE

In his addressing the heterogeneous multi-ethnic 'peoples' of both north and south hemispheres of the American continent, Neruda seemed to have successfully translated into practice Kenneth Burke's wise but ignored counsel to the 1935 American Writers' Congress. In the spirit of the Popular Front, Burke proposed correctly that instead of the worker, the symbol of the "people" be used for an effective "propaganda by inclusion" that would engage the full allegiance of the vast majority of citizens, including factory workers. Mindful of sectarian dogmatism and the profoundly seductive forms of alienation pervading bourgeois life, Burke's reason coincides with Neruda's concern for inclusiveness, transitions, mediations, linkages: "And since the symbol of 'the people' contains connotations both of oppression and of unity, it seems better than the exclusively proletarian one as a psychological bridge for linking the two conflicting aspects of a transitional, revolutionary era, which is Janus-faced, looking both forward and back" (Burke 280).

Looking backward and forward, Neruda prophesied at the end of that utopian but realistic epic, Canto general:

And this word shall be born again,

perhaps in another time without suffering,

without the impure offshoots

that dark vegetation adhered to my canto,

and once again in the heights

my impassioned heart

will be burning and starry. (Costa 177)

Cynical academics today dismiss communism as something that has allegedly lost all seriousness (Stavans 29). Neruda's communism, one may readily believe, is what underlies his protean, versatile and metamorphic art that Belitt, Costa and others celebrate. It is identical to his fidelity to the vision of freedom and social liberation from natural and man-made historical necessity. It is not dictatorship nor totalitarian domination of the multitude condemned by liberal democrats worshipping the free market, private property of productive means, consumerism and 'free play' of the ego-centered individual. "It is equivalent to Neruda's vision of solidarity with the builders of *Macchu Picchu*, with the toiling masses of the three continents that produced the accumulated wealth of modern society. In effect, it is emblematic of revolutionary hope. This signifier and its concept needs to be distinguished from the straw-figure or caricature fabricated by the apologists of U.S. imperial hubris." (Olson)

We may appeal to the poet Roque Dalton's testimony to situate Neruda's fundamental vocation: "The revolutionary is, among other things, the person most useful to his epoch because he lives to bring about ends that signify the highest interests of humanity. This holds true for the revolutionary poet – as revolutionary and as poet – in that, from the publication of his first word, he is addressing all people in defence of their own highest longings" (Dalton

9). And so it is precisely Neruda's fidelity to "the socialist goal of emancipation of the larger part of humanity from the tyranny of profit and commodity fetishism – of which Marx had warned the world – from exploitation by alienated and alienating structures of class and race that makes Neruda's work permanently useful and valuable to Filipinos and 'third world' peoples. This, I think, is the kernel of the essential Neruda" (San Juan).

Caught in the second front of the U.S. war of terror against its victims, one may find this combative Neruda a comrade in the anti-globalization battle-front. He provides weapons that enlighten and sustain necessary and pleasurable instruments for the common good. "On the whole, Neruda's art represents a subtle and passionate dialectical grappling with the sensuous richness of nature and the built environment" (Dalton). The power of his poetic intuition derives from his political and civic responsibility, not only to Chileans but also to all humans sharing the same intent of fighting for justice and popular liberation, with all its attendant dangers and opportunities. As he affirmed in his Nobel Prize speech: "All paths lead to the same goal: to convey to others what we are. And we must pass through solitude and difficulty, isolation and silence, in order to reach forth to the enchanted place where we can dance our clumsy dance and sing our sorrowful song.... For I believe that my duties as a poet involve friendship not only with the rose and with symmetry, with exalted love and endless longing, but also with unrelenting human occupations which I have incorporated into my poetry" (San Juan16).

Seen from this angle, Neruda's historicizing and far-sighted imagination does not contradict the Marxist stance of moral realism; in fact, it reinforces it. "We can see this prophetic and critical realism extending its universal reach in the anti-globalization movement today, as well as in traditional revolutionary movements – from the Zapatistas of Mexico, the Palestinians in the occupied territory, to the Nepali and Peruvian Maoists, to the black and brown militants in the United States, and of course the combatants of the New People's Army in our midst" (Caudwell). In one of his late poems, *El Pueblo*, Neruda revitalized his popular-democratic inclusiveness, that combination of presence and absence we may have noted earlier:

So let no one worry when I seem to be alone and am not alone,

I am not with nobody and I speak for all –

Someone is listening to me and,

although they do not know it, those I sing of,

those who know go on being born and will fill up the world. (Neruda)

It has always been known that Pablo Neruda wrote poetry as a cry against the lonely condition of humanity—isolated from nature. For him, Communism, among many other things, also meant an escape from loneliness; a chance to forge bonds of companionship and camaraderie. But he also attempted to forge such bonds with nature – for he believed that any revolution must be based on the virtue of love; love for the motherland; love for fellow

humans; and love for nature and all its elements. His desire to connect with the essence of the natural world, which represents a great and spiritual force, may be perceived as an ideological manifestation of the Communist doctrine; which in turn manifests itself through nature metaphors. In Neruda's writing, earth, air, water and fire permeate the sadness ironically – the elements that represent wholesomeness ultimately become symbols of loneliness.

Earth, the all-encompassing symbol of nature, represents unattainable purity in the poetry of Neruda. In *Alturas de Macchu Picchu*, Neruda uses an extensive earth metaphor, to demonstrate how he longs to penetrate purity:

Beneath all those leaves the color of hoarse sulfur:

and deeper still, into geologic gold

like a sword sheathed in meteors,

I plunged my turbulent and tender hand

into the most genital of earthly places. (Neruda)

Neruda combines nature with human passion throughout the poem and conveys a feeling of desperate separation from the earth. Neruda seeks connection with nature so intensely that every phrase of this stanza contains a powerful, almost violent, sensuality.

"Neruda wants to become a part of the beautiful deep interior of the earth, of "the most genital." Neruda's ardent effort to connect fails; he concludes the poem with the line "the exhausted springtime of humanity." The "human spring," like the Garden of Eden, has wasted away. Neruda presents sensual earth metaphors, but concludes that human life cannot fuse with the earth. Neruda cannot penetrate the life-giving earth - except, perhaps, through death". (Belitt).

Like earth, air has an expansive nature that can convey wholeness, but remains impenetrable. Neruda's *Alturas de Macchu Picchu* begins with the line "*Del aire al aire*;" he drags this phrase along, the same way the narrator meanders through the air in search of meaning. Air has an emptiness that speaks like the silent openness of Neruda's solitude; the all-encompassing meaninglessness of the air pervades the poem.

"As Neruda's poem *Barcarola* progresses, wind shows how his sense of despondency increases: "blow into my heart of cold fear". Neruda's cold heart craves the touch of soft wind; the wind, perhaps, of a woman. Neruda writes that with touch his heart "would call like a pipe full of wind or crying". The wind carries the pure force of passion and pain. Towards the end he repeats his desperate hope: "alguienvendria, sopla con furia" (someone might come, and blow with fury). Neruda longs for "someone" to blow forcefully into his solitude-but he continues to use the conditional "vendria" and his loneliness remains impermeable in the still air". (Belitt).

Water has the same dual emotional significance as air: it has an all-encompassing potential to create connection, but it can, and ultimately does, represent an impossible emptiness. "The symbol of water, like earth and air, has no fixed meaning, but is fluid and carries emotional weight. In *Barcarola*, Neruda places the imagined possibility of connection "around the sea" and references the "empty waters" of the sea. The ocean represents a beautiful and powerful spirit, like the woman Neruda calls to". (Burke).

"The violent side of water begins to swell towards the end of the poem, when Neruda refers to "red waters" and "the foam and the blood". His feelings are as violent as red water, floating amid the surf and blood. Water is a symbolic life force that moves through the poem from hope to pain. He is unable to connect with his lover or nature – his longing is both physical and spiritual. Neruda ends on the image of the "lone ocean". The water is like the solitude of the lonely man - and Neruda reflects onto it, unable to connect". (Belitt).

Neruda uses fire symbols to convey the burning force of loneliness and the strength of passion. In *Barcarola*, "a noise of humid flames burns the sky". The moist flames are powerful and passionate, but also noisy and fleeting. Flame burns truth, however painful, into the poetry. (Burke).

By using the four elements as metaphors, Neruda intensifies the sadness of separation from nature, yet also moves closer to the so-called primordial essence of being - through words. Neruda recognizes the intrinsic value of nature and strives sensually towards wholeness through poetry. Earth, air, fire and water are the basis of our sensual existence - they are passionate and powerful, yet these very strengths are the source of suffering because humanity is divided from them.

Neruda translates the elements of the earth into ironic words of wholeness and loneliness, of passion and pain, hope and despondency. His poetic language conveys a perception of life based on primitive images and sensations - our melancholy separation from nature stimulates creative thought.

CONCLUSION

Neruda's concept of the primitive as the essential man would not be easy to refute. For the primitive man was dark and desperate but also fearless and fertile. The other notion of fertility may be easily explained by citing the example of a new-born whose mind is the soil upon which soon grow crops of human experiences which would, in turn, determine the fertility of the soil and the ability of the earth to feed its sons and daughters.

Neruda's communism, one may readily believe, is what underlies his protean, versatile and metamorphic art that has been much celebrated. It is identical to his fidelity to the vision of freedom and social liberation from natural and man-made historical necessity. It is not dictatorship nor totalitarian domination of the multitude condemned by liberal democrats

worshipping the free market, private property of productive means, consumerism and 'free play' of the ego-centered individual.

It has always been known that Pablo Neruda wrote poetry as a cry against the loneliness of humanity- isolated from nature. For him, Communism, among many other things, also meant an escape from loneliness; a chance to forge bonds of companionship and camaraderie. But he also attempted to forge such bonds with nature – for he believed that any revolution must be based on the virtue of love; love for the motherland; love for fellow humans; and love for nature and all its elements. His desire to connect with the essence of the natural world, which represents a great and spiritual force, may be perceived as an ideological manifestation of the Communist doctrine; which in turn manifests itself through nature metaphors. In Neruda's writing, earth, air, water and fire permeate the sadness ironically – the elements that represent wholesomeness ultimately become symbols of loneliness.

Neruda believed in filling the cup of life to the brim and sipping slowly, leisurely from it- and after the last drop has reached the recesses of the ever-craving throat- peering into the dregs to see what the future might hold if one believes in foresight.

And so I think that maybe

At last we could be just

Or at last we could be just

Or at last we could simply be.

We have this final moment,

And then forever

for not being, for not coming back. (Neruda, *Maybe We Have Time*).

Works Cited

Neruda, Pablo. (1969). *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (bilingual edition). London, JC: Trans. W.S. Merwin. Print.

Neruda, Pablo. (1982). *IslaNegra* (bilingual edition). London, Souveir Press Ltd. Trans. Alastair Reid. Print.

Neruda, Pablo. (1974). *Five Decades: Poems 1925-1970* (bilingual edition). New York, Grove Press, Inc. Trans. Ben Belitt

Abrams, M.H. (2009). *A Handbook of Literary Terms*. New Delhi, Cengage Learnig India Pvt. Ltd. Print.

References

Bulfinch, Thomas. (2004). *Bulfinch's Mythology*. Whitefish: Kessinger. Web.

Neruda, Pablo. (2001). *The Book of Questions*. London, Copper Canyon Press. Trans. William O'Daly.

Neruda, Pablo. (2004). *On The Blue Shore of Silence: Poems of the Sea, Rayo*. London, Harper Collins. Trans. Alastair Reid.

Neruda, Pablo. (1972). *The Captain's Verses* (bilingual edition). London, Copper Canyon Press. Trans. Donald D. Walsh.

Neruda, Pablo. (1986). *100 Love Sonnets* (bilingual edition). Texas, University of Texas Press. Trans. Stephen Tapscott.

Neruda, Pablo. (1974). *Extravagaria* (bilingual edition). New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux. Trans.Alastair Reid.

Neruda, Pablo. (2008). *Intimacies: Poems of Love* (bilingual edition). New York, Harper Collins. Trans. Alastair Reid.

Neruda, Pablo. (2004). *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems and Critiques*. Nevada, City Lights, Trans. Robert Hass, Jack Hirschman, Mark Eisner, Forrest Gender, Stephen Mitchell, Stephen Kessler and John Felstiner.