

John Clare's "The Peasant Poet,"

"The Peasant Poet," of John Clare is another well-known poem by John Clare. During his lifetime, Clare was referred to as "the peasant poet," because, unlike the other authors during the Romantic Era, he did not have a full and formal education. He was born into an illiterate, barren family of laborers. His education allowed him the ability to read and write, but ended at age twelve. His growth as a poet was a very slow process during his lifetime and beyond it. "The Peasant Poet," reflects Clare's status in both the literary and working worlds. He made it clear that poetry was an outlet for him, proving to society that he was more than just a "peasant".

Analysis

Lines 1-4: Clare describes nature as it exists, exulting a high appreciation for the organic aesthetic it creates. The admiration of nature and the surrounding world was a key component of Romanticism and can be seen in this poem and several others written by Clare. The poet employs not one of the senses, but several in an attempt to enhance the aesthetic experience of the reader. An emphasis on aesthetic stimulation was also a key component of Romanticism.

Lines 5-12: God and religion are now introduced in an attempt to enhance and legitimize the ideas and imagery that were expressed in the lines prior. Everything around him, the clouds and insects, are all created by God, and it is for that reason that Clare loves nature. One can also infer that the narrator or Clare himself was among "everything his eyes surveyed" which would mean that Clare too was "God Almighty made" and he too should be loved. Given this context, one might inquire about the poet's self-perception and feelings of acceptance.

Lines 13-16: In the final four lines Clare presents four aspects that make up the bulk of his personality. The manner in which he does this is meant to radiate the first four lines regarding nature. Clare presents nature in its many differing forms just how he presents himself in varying forms. The intent of this is to show the reader that Clare, like nature, comes in many different forms, all of them derived from God, and therefore should be accepted and loved just the same.

John Clare experienced a childhood very different than a majority of the people represented in the Romantics. It is for this reason, that Clare is perhaps expressing a longing for acceptance, either of himself or his peers' acceptance of him. Additionally, Clare was said to have composed this poem while locked in an insane asylum where his friends and family chose not to visit.

Citation? This perhaps was the most influential factor towards his feelings of self-denial and loneliness. It is interesting to note whether Clare created this poem as a means of self-therapy, to show to himself that he had worth, or if he did it in an attempt convey his worth to his peers. The former is more difficult to justify as only the creator of such a message knows its intent. As for the latter, one could point towards the poem's themes of Romanticism as evidence of Clare's desire to be accepted by his public. The fact that Clare equates himself with nature, a very popular theme during the Romantics, could be seen as an attempt to associate himself with an already established norm. Whatever the intent, the poet expresses a sense of individualism that is reinforced by relevant themes of Romanticism.

From the title, it is evident that this poem was written during the Romantic Era being that Romantic authors often wrote about subjects that outsiders, or peasants, can relate to. Interestingly enough, Clare represents both the audience and speaker as he himself was considered a peasant. Clare also equates nature to religion, saying that everything from clouds to insects are here because God created them. It is in this exclamation that Clare is attempting to connect with this audience of Romanticism. Talking about nature and relating nature to God are both traits of Romantic literature. Clare even often more so than a lot of romantic poets utilizes his senses in describing the environment around him. Also most of his poem are in a way a homage to God, his creator, and the creator of everything he sees and feels.