O Listen how Romanticism has shaped itself in the Modern Ballad!

By Camille Velasquez

There is something most people never notice when listening to one of Bon Jovi's best songs —one that's also perhaps the most raw love song ever— and that is the influence a certain literary movement born in the early nineteenth century had on the amazing lyrics of this song. I could even dare to say that the 1988 hit is one of the best modern representations of the classic literature movement with a twist of hard rock— and I will. The hints of romanticism in this song make a strong foundation that serves as a lay out for the rich emotions, and top notes to merge together in heartbreak and hope.

I know, this is quite the declaration, that I can link an over a century old literary movement to a song written in the eighties. I am, in fact, daring too much, but do trust me when I say, "you will see just how right I am". These eight words I swear to you, really I do. Let's begin with the basic bits, I'll ease you into my craze with the most important characteristics of romanticism in this song. Just like that, nice and easy.

One of the most important characteristics of romanticism lies in its emphasis on the human as an imperfect individual with emotions, strengths, and weaknesses in search of themself. This characteristic is seen as soon as the song opens with a heartbreaking tune and the main character's words, and it lingers as long as the voice sings and hums. We listen to the music, and in its words we hear the tale of a man overcome by his weakness and fighting against the weight of his mistakes to make it right. Much like Hester Prynne and Jane Eyre, he fights against regret and sorrow, to find himself through the redemption he so desperately needs to breathe again.

In its lyrics, this song holds the pieces of a story, the story of a raw human making mistakes, trying to fix them and feeling deeply to his very core in every step of the way. Can it get more gorgeously imperfect than that?

The portrayal of a human being guided by fantasies and passions is as essential a characteristic as the lack of perfection in romanticism. With a broken, bleeding heart, the voice of the song does this, all while displaying the bitter nostalgia of what he held so carelessly, the awful melancholy as he hears the suitcase, and the poignant regret for all he missed. Passion is all that drives him through heartache to get his love back. His one passion, his one fantasy and desire, are to bring back the love he himself killed.

I'll be there for you shatters us with as much hope as pain, all the way to its fading tune that never breaks the promise of change, desperately making its words worth much like William did (pun intended) in "The Solitary Reaper" back in 1807. Saying "O listen" and "I'll be there for you" is all our flawed, regretful, and human selves can do, and keep on doing until the song fades to its final tune.