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ENG 124

30 March 2016

Darkness is like Pain

Many people have enjoyed poems of love and happiness for thousands of years, but there still remains others who love poems that tell the other side of the spectrum, the darkside. Poems have many different tones, styles, and different hidden or clearly stated themes and messages. Poems by Lord Byron and Samuel Coleridge were loved by many during the Romantic Period and are still loved today. Lord Byron and Samuel Coleridge have similarities and differences when it comes to who they are and how they were as poets during the Romantic Period. “Darkness” by Lord Byron and “The Pains of Sleep” by Samuel Coleridge also contain pieces and parts that can show similarities and differences not only in writing style but who these two men truly are.

Lord Byron came into the world right before the French Revolution. He was only one year old when the revolution began. He was against all sorts of tyranny and oppression and did not believe in privileges. He often idolized the common man in his poetry and work. Throughout the nineteenth century, Lord Byron continued to be rated as one of the greatest English poets (Lynch 612). His influence was felt among the great poets, novelist, painters, and composers at the time such as, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Eugène Delacroix, and Ludwig van Beethoven. Readers were warned by Victorian critics, who were the men that labeled the Romantic Period as a literary period, of the immorality of Lord Byron’s poetry such as his voluptuous imagination and

and aristocratic disdain for the commonplace (Lynch 612). Lord Byron memorialized many poets from the Romantic period in his writing such as William Wordsworth and John Keats. One of Byron's great works was "Darkness" published in June of 1814.

Lord Byron's poem "Darkness" uses many different literary pieces and hidden meanings and messages throughout the poem. In lines 1-4 of "Darkness" it talks about the sky changing from day to night:

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.

The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars

Did wander darkling in eternal space,

Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth (quoted in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*, page 618).

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In this stanza it is explaining that the sun was not really extinguished but has only dipped below the earth and the night has come full of stars that take up the sky like "eternal space" with no path. It feels like a dream but it is not really a dream because possibly he had never seen anything that beautiful or extravagant except only in dream. Personification is used because the stars can not wander. Wandering is trait given to humans.

In the next few lines, lines 5-9, in "Darkness" Lord Byron says:

Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;

Morn came and went—and came, and brought no day,

And men forgot their passions in the dread

Of this their desolation; and all hearts

Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light: (quoted in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*, page 618).

In these lines it is talking about the night came and brought cold weather and then left and turned back into day, but there was no feeling of the day because the sun did not shine enough to warm the earth and get rid of the cold weather. The “men” stand for more than just men but for all people and in line 7 the people cannot see past the cold and the dread of the day. Lord Byron says, “Were chill’d into a selfish prayer for light” (Lynch 618). This line is saying that the cold was affecting the men so much that they prayed for just the slightest bit of light to feel warm or see light again. Just in these few lines from “Darkness” there are occurring literary themes such as personification, metaphors, and allusions. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was another very influential man during the Romantic period.

Like Lord Byron, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was profoundly influenced during the revolution and France. He believed and stated liberty the soul of life, shall reign, shall throb in every pulse, shall flow through every vein. He also believed almost all world is consumed with revolution (Lynch 483). He was considered one of the greatest poets during the romantic period.

“The Pains of Sleep” is one of the best poems by Samuel Coleridge. It also contains many different types of literary pieces and symbols. In lines 1-4 of the poem:

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,

It hath not been my use to pray

With moving lips or bended knees;

But silently, by slow degrees (quoted in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*, page 483).

These lines of the poem are talking about someone resting in a bed. It gives off a very eerie sense and feeling. It seems as if this mysterious figure is either sick or are in their dying moment because they are unable to use their mouth or body. Samuel Coleridge says In lines 5-9 of The “Pains of Sleep”:

My spirit I to Love compose,
 In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
 With reverential resignation
 No wish conceived, no thought express,
 Only a sense of supplication (quoted in The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period, page 483).

This stanza of “The Pains of Sleep” seems to be talking about his dying moment where he is trusting himself. By trusting himself he is letting go and freeing himself. He has no regrets or wishes except he is asking or pleading to move on and die. “The Pains of Sleep” is one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge best works.

Lord Byron and Samuel Taylor Coleridge have many things in common when it comes to poetry. Their two pieces of poetry, “Darkness” and “The Pains of Sleep”, contain many similarities. Both poems portray signs of evil and darkness. In “Darkness” it is talking about how cold and dark outside it is and in “The Pains of Sleep” it is talking about death which is dark and death is often coincided with cold bodies which directly links the two poems. Both poems also talk about the suffering of man due to nature. “Darkness” is the cold and no light but “The Pains of Sleep” is natural death. The two authors also use many literary tools such as personification and allusions in their poems. These poems are also different in the sense that one is talking about

the sky and the stars while the other is talking about a dying man. The sense of each are different as is their tone as well. These two men are surely different but the same.

Many people loved and hated these two amazing poets. Lord Byron and Samuel Taylor Coleridge were big influences to the Romantic period with their writing skill, beliefs, and influence on other Romantic Poets. These men will continue to be read and taught for generations to come.

Work Cited

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