

Imageries in three poems of george gordon lord byron



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This paper is about the imageries in three poems of George Gordon Lord Byron namely: " She Walks in Beauty", " I Saw Thee Weep", and " When We Two Parted". Imageries are mental pictures evoked through the use of descriptive words and figurative language. There are two levels of Imagery. The first one is the descriptive imagery which accounts to visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, kinesthetic, and thermal which a person sense. The second level is the symbolizing which reveals the other meaning or the symbolical meaning of a certain piece.

George Gordon Lord Byron George Gordon Byron was born on January 22, 1788 in Aberdeen, Scotland, and inherited his family's English title at the age of ten, becoming Baron Byron of Rochdale. Abandoned by his father at an early age and resentful of his mother, who he blamed for his being born with a deformed foot, Byron isolated himself during his youth and was deeply unhappy. Though he was the heir to an idyllic estate, the property was run down and his family had no assets with which to care for it.

As a teenager, Byron discovered that he was attracted to men as well as women, which made him all the more remote and secretive. He studied at Aberdeen Grammar School and then Trinity College in Cambridge. During this time Byron collected and published his first volumes of poetry. The first, published anonymously and titled *Fugitive Pieces*, was printed in 1806 and contained a miscellany of poems, some of which were written when Byron was only fourteen.

As a whole, the collection was considered obscene, in part because it ridiculed specific teachers by name, and in part because it contained frank,

erotic verses. At the request of a friend, Byron recalled and burned all but four copies of the book, then immediately began compiling a revised version—though it was not published during his lifetime. The next year, however, Byron published his second collection, *Hours of Idleness*, which contained many of his early poems, as well as significant additions, including poems addressed to John Edelston, a younger boy whom Byron had befriended and deeply loved.

By Byron's twentieth birthday, he faced overwhelming debt. Though his second collection received an initially favorable response, a disturbingly negative review was printed in January of 1808, followed by even more scathing criticism a few months later. His response was a satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which received mixed attention. Publicly humiliated and with nowhere else to turn, Byron set out on a tour of the Mediterranean, traveling with a friend to Portugal, Spain, Albania, Turkey, and finally Athens.

Enjoying his new-found sexual freedom, Byron decided to stay in Greece after his friend returned to England, studying the language and working on a poem loosely based on his adventures. Inspired by the culture and climate around him, he later wrote to his sister, "If I am a poet ... the air of Greece has made me one." Byron returned to England in the summer of 1811 having completed the opening cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a poem which tells the story of a world-weary young man looking for meaning in the world. When the first two cantos were published in March of 1812, the expensive first printing sold out in three days.

Byron reportedly said, " I awoke one morning and found myself famous. " His fame, however, was among the aristocratic intellectual class, at a time when only cultivated people read and discussed literature. The significant rise in a middle-class reading public, and with it the dominance of the novel, was still a few years away. At 24, Byron was invited to the homes of the most prestigious families and received hundreds of fan letters, many of them asking for the remaining cantos of his great poem—which eventually appeared in 1818.

An outspoken politician in the House of Lords, Byron used his popularity for public good, speaking in favor of workers' rights and social reform. He also continued to publish romantic tales in verse. His personal life, however, remained rocky. He was married and divorced, his wife Anne Isabella Milbanke having accused him of everything from incest to sodomy. A number of love affairs also followed, including one with Claire Clairmont, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley's sister in law. By 1816, Byron was afraid for his life, warned that a crowd might lynch him if he were seen in public.

Forced to flee England, Byron settled in Italy and began writing his masterpiece, *Don Juan*, an epic-satire novel-in-verse loosely based on a legendary hero. He also spent much of his time engaged in the Greek fight for independence and planned to join a battle against a Turkish-held fortress when he fell ill, becoming increasingly sick with persistent colds and fevers. When he died on April 19, 1824, at the age of 36, *Don Juan* was yet to be finished, though 17 cantos had been written.

A memoir, which also hadn't been published, was burned by Byron's friends who were either afraid of being implicated in scandal or protective of his reputation. *She Walks in Beauty* " *She Walks in Beauty*" is an eighteen-line poem. It was written in 1814 and published in 1815. The poem is written in a simple way and readers can find loads of visual and kinaesthetic imageries in it. In the first two lines of the poem, visual imagery and kinesthetic imagery are presented as an unnamed woman is compared to a night: " She walks in beauty, like the night/ Of cloudless climes and starry skies".

Readers may visualize the lady as a beautiful, without a single flaw and imperfection like the stars in the night. On the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth lines, a visual imagery is presented: " And all that's best of dark and bright/ Meet in her aspects and her eyes:/ Thus mellowed to that tendered light/ Which heaven to gaudy day denies. " Purely visual imagery is present on the second stanza. The readers may visualize " shade" and " ray", and the " waves in every raven tress" that lightens " over her face". On the third stanza, visual imagery and kinesthetic are presented.

The " cheek", the " brow", the " smiles", and the " tints that glow" that which the lady has can be perceived through vision and the movement on which the lady had as she smiles can be perceived through kinesthetic. The poem depicts of which any lady may possess. The lady is not only described according to her appearance but also on how she carries herself in front of many people. Her exterior beauty is a reflection of her interior goodness. The poem has many oxymorons in it that the readers may get confused about. Each line has contrasting ideas like " mellow'd to the tender light/ gaudy day denies" and " So soft, so calm, yet so eloquent".

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But the author may just want the readers to understand that beauty is not just being brilliant or radiant, but is also being dark “ like the night”. Dark may also represents the internal beauty of a person, as well as the occult parts of beauty, and light as the external beauty – the bright of the face, the eyes, the smiles, etc. And both external and internal beauties in proportion, when dark and light are in the right measure, and perfection now appears. The lady has not been named by the author and just describes the countenance of hers.

This foretold that the lady in the poem may refer to any woman. *I Saw Thee Weep* “ *I Saw Thee Weep*” is a sixteen line poem. It is published in 1815. Like the first poem which was explained, this poem is loaded of visual imagery and a bit of kinesthetic imagery. In the first and second stanzas, readers can conceive visual imagery and may picture out in their minds the “ big bright tear”, “ eye of blue”, “ violet dew”, “ smile”, and “ sapphire blaze” for the first stanza and “ clouds”, “ sun”, “ mellow dye”, “ sky”, and “ sunshine” for the second stanza that are mentioned.

Also, readers may observe kinaesthetic imagery in both stanzas: the motion of the persona when he “ saw thee smile”, the “ dropping” of the violet dew, the big bright tear as it “ came o’er” that eye of blue, and that fill’d that “ glance of thine” for the first and sunshine “ leaves” a glow behind for the second. The persona of the poem might be a lover and saw his love weep. He might be so in love with the subject of the poem that even she cried a lot, for his eyes she is still beautiful. When she smiles it is like the world of him becomes wonderful that “ lightens o’er the heart”.

When We Two Parted “When We Two Parted” is a thirty-two-line poem. It is published in 1813. In the first stanza, kinesthetic imagery and auditory imagery are presented. Kinesthetic imagery is evident in the first line: “When we two parted” and auditory imagery in the second line: “in silence and tears”. In the fifth line, visual and thermal imagery are evident: “pale grew thy cheek and cold”. On the sixth line, there are kinesthetic and thermal imagery: “Colder thy kiss”. On the second stanza, there are visual, thermal, and kinesthetic imagery.

Readers can find visual imagery in the first line: “the dew of the morning” and kinesthetic and thermal imagery in the second line as the dew “sank chill on my [his] brow”. The next line: “I hear thy name spoken” has an auditory and kinesthetic imagery. On the whole, the poem is all the time giving the feeling of the pain that the persona has due to the separation of him and his lover. In the poem, the lines: “To sever for years/ After long years” has a corresponding meaning. The persona is telling that they are going to sever for years and he foreshadows of what he will do when they meet again.

Also the persona tells about how he will face life with his lover and it is “in silence and in tears”. The persona experienced “half broken-hearted” showing his pain. Their separation might be due to death of his lover with the metaphor of “Pale grew thy cheek and cold,/ colder thy kiss” since cold is a perfect form to express the death in contrast with the warm involving the life. To sum up, the poem is about the mourning off a lover when his love had died and he was left all alone in pain with broken vows and promises. On

the last stanza of the poem, the persona looks forward for a meet with his lover.

Perhaps they would meet life after death and they could restart the relationship which was corrupted because of the parting. Byron expresses wonderfully what people feel when the person they love splits up with them or dies – the loneliness and pain provoked by the missing of the person who loves. Conclusion Since Byron is a romantic poet, he wrote poems which can overwhelm the heart of the readers as his writings developed a Romantic style as distinctive and as influential. The imageries he used are helpful factors in showing the beauty of the poems.

By the use of visual, auditory, thermal, kinesthetic and other imageries, readers may have a total escape of the real world as if they were at the situation in the poem. These imageries are revealed in order for the readers to know, understand, and appreciate a certain literary piece. Poems and other literary pieces may express sympathy to the readers – to let the readers know that they are not the only human being who experienced those certain events in life. Indeed, imagery is an aid in expressing thoughts which the author wanted to imply that may help a person to live life to the fullest.