

Essay on comparison and contrast of paintings of two artists

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



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For this assignment, the two paintings that I have chosen to compare and contrast are Joseph Mallord William Turner's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: Italy (exh1832) and J Constable's Chain Pier, Brighton (exh1827). The reason I have chosen the mentioned painting is that they were completed more or less at the same time.

- Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: Italy

Turner's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: Italy is a depiction of his own mind. In simple words, it means that this painting is not of an actual place that exists on the blue planet. Instead, the scene in the painting is the invention of Turner (Mahoney 369). The motivation behind this painting is the admiration of Turner for a poem by his favorite poet, Lord Byron. Thus, Turner has tried to paint the atmosphere of Italy for which he had great love in his heart and mind. In his poem, Byron acquaints the readers with the story of Childe Harold. It is important to mention here that Childe is one of the titles of the olden times that were given to the male offspring of a nobleman. In the poem, Byron tells about how Childe Harold spent his precious time in wasting his adolescence years and then makes a decision for beginning a new life in Italian land. This decision is made as the beauty of Italy's classical ruins pulls him towards the place. Thus, Turner has showed his love for the decaying beauty of heritage of Italy in the painting just like Byron did in his poem. It was in 1832 that Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: Italy was put on the display. The painting also had a part of Byron's as an attachment. Among the people in the front, the man in a habit of monks is regarded as Childe Harold.

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It was in 1920s that Turner developed a strong admiration for Greece and Italy. This interest was further strengthened when he came across Byron's poem i. e. Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. It was, if truth be told, a panoramic poem in which Byron talked of far-away, outlying lands. This poem is also considered as the first travel poem in English poetry. It is also being said that Turner encountered it even before its completion. According to historians of arts and literature, Turner was acquainted with the poem by 1818. It is also a fact that this phase of Turner's life was a critical one during which he experienced a change in his arts concepts and the world. Thus, the poem had a profound impact on Turner's thoughts. Being a seasoned tourist, it is thought that Turner enjoyed the travelogue characteristics of the poem and managed to paint them on the canvas. The synoptic flounce and the propinquity of Byron's words also made Turner enthusiastic to pick up his brush and paint the voyage as imagined by his mind (Finley 19).

If inspected and observed closely, it is very easy to understand that Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: Italy is one of those unique works of arts that successfully " establishes relationships between different times by finding resemblances and parallels between events in history and those of the present or near present" (Finley 19). Turner was able to correlate with Byron's thoughts by regarding freedom, tyrannical rule and slavery as interesting subjects of discussion to a civilization and society that had its vision blurred by the French Revolution. The Italian people were affected by the Napoleonic wars at the time the painting was finished by Turner. Thus, Turner tried to portray the future insights of Italy and its people by recreating the thoughts of Byron. The painting is not only a creation of

Turner's mind but also suggests that how closely the artist shared beliefs and hopes with Byron. Their shared convictions resulted in the birth of the painting that is a great example of hopes, expectations and optimistic thoughts. The romantic enthusiasm of Turner made the painting an epic one. It can be correctly said that Turner was able to reclaim the past and make insinuations for the present. Turner was very well acquainted with the use of watercolors. This painting is a reflection of his knowledge of Greek art and architecture. It is true that Turner was in love with connecting past and present. Turner also visited Italy several times and this is the reason why his painting is a mirror to his proliferating absorption with colors (Finley 19).

- Chain Pier, Brighton

On the other hand, according to Henry Fuseli, a renowned artist of his time, the weather in the painting by Constable looks real to such a great extent that it calls for a greatcoat and umbrella. As far as the opinion of Constable in concerned about his own painting, he describes Brighton's busy beaches as " Ladies dressed & undressed – gentlemen in morning gowns & slippers on, or without them altogether about knee deep in the breakers – footmen – children – nursery maids, dogs, boys, fishermen –preventative service men (with hangers & pistols), rotten fish & those hideous amphibious animals the old bathing women, whose language both in oaths & voice resembles men – all are mixed up together in endless & indecent confusion" (Leslie 134) while writing letter to a close friend. Despite the fact that there were a number of sketches of Brighton that were made by Constable, this particular painting is the only one in which he has painted the town. The inspiration behind painting this scene is the fact that at that time, Constable had to stay in stay

in Brighton for the reason that his sick wife (a patient of tuberculosis) needed the sea air in order to get better. If truth be told, Constable was not a happy man as he was made to live in a place for which he had no good feelings in his heart. He felt that the place was given unnecessary popularity and the seaside was not a place to get happy about. This is the main factor that the stormy and chaotic setting in the painting straightforwardly reflects his unstable and confused mood. The dislike for the place can even be understood by the fact that his wife also died there. That troubling and depressing reason made Constable to dislike Brighton with the depth of his heart. If inspected closely, one can observe that his work turned out as more stormy after the death of his beloved wife. Thus, the sky in the painting is totally a reflection of Constable's hurt. It is also significant to mention here that all through the span of his lifetime, Constable made skies' studies at various times of the sunlight hours and year. The history of arts describes him as the inimitably greatest skies and weather painter. He is also renowned for his landscape painting.

As already mentioned, Constable had to visit Brighton so that his wife, Maria, could be helped from dying. In the painting, Constable tries to reflect the fact that Brighton was being developed as a modern seaside resort in those times. Thus, he is successful in displaying the busiest and the full-of-life beach against a milieu of Brighton's new hotels, suburban lodgings and the Chain Pier itself. It was in 1823 that the opening of the pier took place before the first visit of Constable. However, a storm destroyed the pier in 1896. If closely inspected, the Royal Albion Hotel is on the extreme left of the painting. At some distance, Marine Parade extends itself whereas at a further

distance, Rottingdean windmill can be seen on a hilltop (Dimbleby, Brown, Humphreys & Riding 68). The painting is a reflection of Constable's mixed feelings about the place. According to Fisher, the painting is a ferocious beauty due to the reason that Constable painted the sky in such a way that it totally has domination over the whole scene. The artist has been successful in displaying his usual austere observance to the nature (Thornes 135).

According to an assessment in *The Examiner* (July 1st, 1827), Constable was able to flourish and capture “ the natural look of our English atmosphere, half-sullen and half-smiling” (Thornes 135).

As far as the comparison of the two mentioned pictures is concerned, it is not incorrect to state that both the picture have been beautifully painted and the two artists have remarkably used the oil paints to complete them. There is not much that is identical in the two pictures. On the other hand, there are some major differences that set the paintings apart from each other. Firstly, Turner's painting is not the reflection of an original scene. Instead, the artist has painted his imagination on canvas being inspired by a poem. On the other hand, Constable has painted the actual scenes of Brighton. Secondly, the painting of Turner is a reflection of hope and expectation of good times. On the other hand, Constable has painted a scene that is a mirror of his chaotic thoughts and perplexed feelings. While Turner is able to put up a scene that gives a feeling of happiness, prosperity, peace and calmness to the observer, Constable's work of art makes the observer feel sad, hurt and depressed due to the stormy and turbulent effects that the painting is a sign of.

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