

Analysis of On the Death of Margaret Parker, Cousin to the Author

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Abstract. In this paper, the author discusses the poem from four aspects, including the research background and significance, the form, the contents, as well as the conclusion. The author will also analyze the atmosphere of the poem, the rhyming scheme and the rhetoric methods of the whole poem. The objective of this paper is to analyze the early poetic features of Byron by trying to understand *On the Death of Margaret Parker, Cousin to the Author*. In this way, we can understand the emotional flow of the poet at the death of his cousin, the relationship between the two persons and the early life experience of George Byron. As for the research method, the author uses analysis and synthesis, together with induction and deduction. The conclusion of this paper is: In the poem, Byron applies the ABAB rhyming scheme with iambic suppression, alliteration, personification, pun, metaphor, repetition, and contrast and comparison. From some images, including wind, zephyr, evening and flowers, it can be seen the emotion between Byron and his cousin is very deep. Through some important words, including the king of terrors, heaven, god and angels, it can be seen that when the poet is young, he is a firm Christian with strong beliefs.

Research Background and Significance

On the Death of Margaret Parker, Cousin to the Author is created by George Byron when he is at the age of 14 in 1802, which is the earliest one of those that is still in existence. According to Byron's diary, Margaret Parker is his cousin whose relationship is quite close to him. She dies because of falling off the horse when the poet is at school. This poem is created when he comes to the front of the tomb [1] (Selected Poems of George Byron, 2016:3).

Since the poem is so early, the research of it is limited. As a result, the author wants to do a little work about the poem and the early poetic features of the famous poet. The analysis of the poem can help to understand the poetic development of the poet and the inner world of him, which is also the research purpose in this paper. Through analyzing the form, the contents, the atmosphere of the poem, the rhyming scheme and the rhetoric methods of the whole poem, the early creative poetic characteristics can be concluded.

Form

For a start, there are six stanzas in the poem by George Byron, which is also one of the earliest poems of the famous poet. For a start, there are six stanzas in this poem. In each line, there are five steps. And in each stanza, the rhyming scheme is ABAB with iambic suppression. Besides, there is alliteration in many sentences. For example, in the third and the fourth lines of the second stanza, there is alliteration such as the sounds of [s] of "the king of Terrors seized her as his prey" and [n] of "not worth, nor beauty, have her life redeem'd". In the fourth, fifth and the sixth stanzas, there is also the [s] and [n] sound alliteration. By using the two sounds' alliteration, the poet gives a bleak and sad feeling. It can be imagined that when you pronounce the sound of [s], a man can feel cold, and this can add the bleak and sad feeling of the atmosphere as well as the mood of the author. When you pronounce the sound of [n], it can create a feeling that you are signing at something. This is closely connected with the tone of the mourning poem.

Second, the author uses personification. For example, in the first stanza, the poet says “Hush’d are the winds and still the evening gloom, Not e’en a zephyr wanders through the grove.” In the eyes of the poet, even the wind can wander and feel sad because of the death of the beautiful girl. The whole environment and the atmosphere are cold, bleak and painful as the charming lady dies at such an early age. This is also the deep emotion at the bottom heart of the poet who uses the environment to express his own interior ego.

Third, there is also the pun in the poem. For example, in the fourth line of the first stanza, the poet says “And scatters flowers on the dust I love.” In this sentence, the word “dust” is a pun, which indicates not only the soil of the tomb but also the dead lady in the tomb. By writing this sentence, we can see that the relationship between the two is very deep.

Furthermore, there is metaphor. For example, in the first line of the second stanza, the author uses the words of “narrow cell” to refer to the tomb of his cousin. By using this method, the poet gives us a feeling of pity and sadness because of the limited land. There is also angle in this poem, which refers not only the angles in the heaven but also the beautiful girl at the same time. In the eyes of the poet, his cousin is as charming and lovely as an angle.

Moreover, there is repetition in many lines. For example, there are words “And still presumptuous mortals Heaven arraign, And, madly, godlike Providence accuse?” Another example is the last stanza “Yet is the remembrance of those virtues dear, Yet fresh the memory of that beauteous face; Still they call forth my warm affection’s tear, Still in my heart retain their wonted place.” By using repetition, the poet stresses his feeling through the certain words and can leave a deep impression on the readers.

Finally, the poet also applies the method of contrast and comparison. The whole fourth stanza itself uses this method. By contrasting the short and miserable life of his cousin with the imaginary beautiful and happy life in the heaven, the poet tries to feel a little calm and peaceful.

Contents

Image

There are a lot of images in this poem, by which the poet portrays the environment, the tone, as well as the emotional world of himself. These images are quite useful, and each of them has specific meaning and function.

(1)Wind

When we see the word “wind”, we are likely to have a kind of strong and powerful feeling, which is also the meaning of wind in many poems. In this poem, the poet says the wind has stopped, meaning that the life of his cousin has stopped at such a young and vital age. Just like the wind, no matter how strong or powerful, the life of Margaret has stopped. In this way, the poet tries to show the pity and sadness of his heart. At the same time, he knows this is the fact and he has to accept the truth, for any kind of wind will always have to cease.

Besides, the image of wind also refers to the fierce and desolate surroundings of the poem. At this point, wind also means the forlorn fate that can be so fierce that it seizes the life of such a young beautiful lady. In this way, the poet wants to show the grief mood inside him. The readers can also understand the desperate and helpless mood of the poet.

(2)Zephyr

The image of zephyr means the tender love of the nature as well as people who show true love and comfort for others. The poet says there is not even a zephyr wandering through the grove, indicating that there is no one coming to the front of the tomb to show sadness at the death of the young girl. She has been forgotten by the whole world, which makes the poet even more tolerated. Only Byron himself comes to the grove, he cannot forget his cousin although the other people cannot remember her at all. Through this, we can see the deep emotion between the poet and his cousin.

In addition, the image zephyr also indicates the quiet environment. The place is so quiet that there is not even a zephyr. It is just like the passing away of Margaret Parker. As the environment, even though he is not willing to accept the fact that his cousin has gone to a quiet place, he has to

accept the speechless and unhappy world after her death. Just like the fact that the zephyr has stopped, the heart of the poet has also stopped fluctuating. As a result, we can see that the feeling between Byron and Margaret is very deep and cannot be comparable by others. He is so grief at the death of his cousin and will remember her for a very long time.

(3) Evening

The image of evening refers to the end of one's life, which is the one of Baron's cousin Margaret. The poem begins with evening even before he says that his cousin's death. However, we can see the bleak and glooming atmosphere through this image.

Besides, evening also can remind readers of the dark environment inside the tomb, meaning that the young girl has gone to a dark place at such a bright age, making people feel quite pitiful.

Finally, evening expresses the gloomy mood of the poet as well. Just like the darkness of the wood, his heart is covered by grief and feels really hopeless. As a consequence, the image of evening includes both the fact of the cousin's death and his tortured emotion.

(4) Flowers

In the first stanza, the overall background is full of sadness and dreariness. Nevertheless, the image of flowers is the first beautiful and brave thing coming into our eyes. Through this image, it can be seen that Margaret is still as beautiful as flowers in his heart. Even though she has died, he can still hardly forget her beautiful face, indicating the deep affection between the two. In a word, flowers are not only the beautiful lady herself, but are also the fine relationship and feeling between them.

Important words

As a famous poet of the nineteenth century, Byron's belief in God has begun to sway. However, in this poem, it can be seen that he still believes in God when he is young. Through some important words, we are able to draw this conclusion.

(1) The king of Terrors

In this poem, the king of Terrors is terrible and unmerciful, who seizes the life of the young lady. Byron holds the view that it is the devil that has caught his cousin away. This is consistent with the Christian beliefs. The poet does not complain or doubt God and ascribes the error to the devil king.

(2) Heaven

In this poem, the word heaven is very divine in the poet's eyes. In the third stanza, he says that heaven is able to "reverse the dread decrees of fate", indicating that God is powerful and controls everything. In the fifth stanza, the poet says that "shall presumptuous mortals heaven arraign", expressing that as common people, we cannot doubt the right and sacred position of heaven.

(3) God

In the fifth stanza, the poet says that we cannot deny the godlike providence and shouldn't submit to my god. The poet uses the word "my" before god, showing the deep and close belief in god. From this stanza, it can be seen that Byron is a loyal Christian when he is at a young age. No matter what he encounters in his life, he never changes his beliefs.

(4) Angels

In this poem, angels refer to beautiful and warm-hearted spirits. In the fourth stanza, the poet writes that "weeping angels lead her to those bowers". The word weeping shows that the angels feel commiserative to the death of the young beautiful lady. In Byron's eyes, the angels are nice and friendly, which shows the strong beliefs of a Christian.

Conclusion

As a great and famous poet in the world, Byron can use many kinds of rhetoric methods even when he is very young. In the poem, Byron applies the ABAB rhyming scheme with iambic suppression, alliteration, personification, pun, metaphor, repetition, as well as contrast and comparison. By applying these methods, the poet creates a bleak and sad feeling of his cousin's death. From some images, including wind, zephyr, evening and flowers, it can be seen the emotion between Byron and

his cousin is very deep. Through some important words, including the king of terrors, heaven, god and angels, it can be seen that when the poet is young, he is a firm Christian with strong beliefs.

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