Analysis Of The Poem To My Brother By Siegfried Sassoon

There are usually several meanings to a poem or piece of artwork that represents the true meaning of the artist and this is a part of what makes the expression useful or purposeful to those who come across the art at some point and the same is the case with simple poems as well as complicated poems as well. The poem, “To My Brother,” by Siegfried Sassoon, which is a short poem about several different topics at once. These include the theme of the poem which is about two people who are related in some way as brothers and their experiences as brothers. The poem goes on to hint that one brother is going to be moving on without the other and so there is an element of sadness in this poem as well. There are several different themes that can be pulled from the poem but it is difficult to conclude for certain which one could be the true meaning of the author. There are different elements to support each of these themes that exist in the poem such as character, theme, symbolism, and style. Regardless, poems such as this often display a deeper meaning than what the poem may initially seem which is where the benefit of being able to provide an explication of the poem can come into play. Most of what this poem focuses on are the bond that two can form together and some of what that entails so that the reader can relate to this in one way or another.

The poem “To My Brother,” by Siegfried Sassoon is a poem that comes from a soldier with firsthand experience in World War I. Sassoon was known as “one of the most prominent poets in England during this time including 1918 when this poem, in particular, was published” (Kennedy, par. 2). He became an advocate for the end of the war in the later years of his writing which actually won him a lot of criticism at the time. The poem, “To My Brother,” is a poem about two brothers and how much of a bond they have developed between one another as well as how one of them has to move on without the other. This is presumably due to some sort of incident during the events of the war that resulted in this common scenario which people during this time and in this context may have gone through or experienced. This dramatic sharing for the firsthand experience that is very real and intense is a part of what gives the poetry its meaning and impact. The context, in that it was created during World War I, is what makes it even more relevant and applicable to the society and population that it was presented at the time. This is what contributes to the success and recognition of the poem through today.

There are several themes that are highlighted in the poem “To My Brother” which focuses on “two soldiers who have become figurative brothers in their growth and soldiers” (Summers, par. 3). The beginning of the poem starts with the two looking at each other as if they were doing so for the last time, “Look in these eyes” (line 2) which starts this theme of farewell in the poem. The theme of saying farewell or goodbye is one of the first themes that is shown in this poem. The other theme that is implied is the brotherhood and friendship that exists between the two which is also something that is a major theme in the poem. Even if they are not related specifically, the poem mentions the bond that has been created between the two which is a part of the theme in this poem as well. One other theme that is shown in this poem is the collaboration and cooperation between the two the leads to the success of the other: “And through your victory, I shall win the light” (line 8). The success of one cannot take place without the other even though it seems like the situation is unsuccessful. The victory of one is due to the sacrifice of the other which is another theme that is presented in this poem. Together, these themes set the tone for the poem and the message that it is trying to convey to the readers.

As Summers says, “There are a variety of literal and figurative elements associated with this poetry that contribute to its dramatic feel and impact on the reader” (Summers, par. 4). Each of these is shown in the different parts of the poem that the author makes a distinction between the situation and the context of this as well. The beginning of the poem involves looking at one person from the eyes of the other which could be literal or figurative. Later on, Sassoon describes destiny as “We are returning by the road we came” (line 4). The poem refers to returning to the road that they came from which seems to be more figurative than literal. It is not likely that this means the actual road that they traveled on but instead the figurative path that was taken by them to reach where they are. While the ghosts referenced in the poem are not real, the reality that the one will not be able to continue one with the other presumably because they are passed away is one of the realities that is focused on in this poem. The relation between these two elements seems to be the main focus of the poem and the main source of its dramatic impact. Being able to connect the two with different literal and figurative descriptions is a part of what makes the poem as interesting and impacting as it is.

There are also other elements of poetry that are seen in this poem specifically that go outside of the context and meaning of the poem in particular. This involves the rhythmic style in which “the poem is written and presented to the readers but in the context of war and related subjects” (Bergonzi, par. 3). This is a poem that is presented in 4 lines by 4 lines with a total of 8 lines. The rhythm of the poem is in pairs of two consistently throughout and the rhythm of the wording and the context matches consistently throughout as well. These are elements of poetry and poetic expression that are common in poetry but not essential. In this case, they are used by the author but there are many examples of poetry that do not use these examples. These are different tools that the authors can use to help emphasize or highlight some of their intended themes and messages. They can also simply be used to present the message or theme in an interesting or creative way. This poem involves a simple and rhythmic poetic pattern where reality and fiction of the experience are blended together by the author in this particular experience.

To sum up, there are many aspects in the poem, “To My Brother,” by Siegfried Sassoon that highlights both the context of what the poem is describing as well as the context of poetry in general. This poem, which comes from a time surrounding World War I, focuses on the relationship between two who are figuratively brothers from the experiences that they shared together. The poem consists of several themes and attributes of poetry which contribute to the dramatic feel of the poetry which includes the contrast between fiction and non-fiction. Despite its short length, there is a lot of meaning that is in the poem which is a part of why it has been so successful and known over the years. Among the several themes that the story covers are the themes of brotherhood, saying farewell, and moving on. Each of these is presented in its own way throughout the poem in various ways. There are many real and fictional aspects of this poem that are used to support these themes consistently throughout the poem as well as many poetic elements that are present in this as well such as the rhythmic balance and structure of the poem. Together, each of these contributes to this high-quality poem that is known by so many, even many years after it was produced. And this is because Sassoon used elements of poetry and fiction such as character, theme, symbolism, and style in his poetry to show his point.