Literary Analysis On Thanatopsis

Born in 1794 and dying in 1878, William Cullen Bryant was an American romantic poet, writer, and longtime editor of the New York Evening Post, and the author of Thanatopsis, which means consideration of death. During the time Thanatopsis was written in the 1800s, there was sickness everywhere. People were terrified of who would be taken next. In William Cullen Bryant's poem Thanatopsis, he uses personification and tone to show that death is almost like coming home. The images he uses are a subtle hint that he is describing and explaining heaven.

William Cullen Bryant is portraying nature as a person and continues this entire poem). Bryant writes, "To him who in the love of Nature holds Communion with her visible forms, she speaks A various language". Nature is represented as a living being in Thanatopsis, and a very loving comforting being. He is using nature as almost a mother-like figure; in this picture he paints that nature is like a person if proven when he says, "Go forth, under the open sky, and list to Nature 's teachings, while from all around ' (14-15). We are supposed to list – a old way of saying listen – to nature and learn from her, but also be comforted by her as nature is our final earthly resting place.

The images William Cullen Bryant uses are a subtle hint that he is describing and explaining heaven. E. Miller Budick states two separate times about "the still voice of God" (Budick). What that means is that in the poem, there is a still voice, or an understood voice. Budick suggests by the words the voice says that it is the voice of God. The wordage used by Bryant in "Earth and her waters, and the depths of air — comes a still voice — yet a few days, and thee" (lines 16-17). Is very similar to that of the voice of God in the Bible. The voice of nature begins from the earth, the waters, and the air. It is significant that the poem considers nature's voice a still voice because it implies quiet and calm, things will be alright. The poem Thanatopsis is all about death, which sounds morbid; but the way William Cullen Bryant death is not something to fear at all. When we die Bryant paints the picture as us coming home to nature, and that we will ever be alone because we have nature, the ground, and all the deceased to come home to Although there is no solid proof that Bryant was a man of faith or not, it feels like he is describing how he pictures what heaven is like in his mind.

When William Cullen Bryant writes "thy gates shall yet give away thy bolts shall fall.", "thy gates" one can interpret the phrase as the gates of Heaven. As Peter says in Peter 1:11 "And God will open wide the gates of heaven for you to enter into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (TLB). Both authors are describing gates, in bible when the gates of Heaven are mentioned it is always described as warm, welcoming, beautiful, and a coming home to Jesus. In the same way Bryant describes his gates, and how death is coming home, The Bible describes the same metaphor for entering Heaven. A majority of Thanatopsis is Bryant describing this beautiful nature scene, and how death is like coming home. During the time William Cullen Bryant wrote Thanatopsis in the 1800s, disease affected Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. There was no immunity, and few medical remedies against imported diseases running rapid as tuberculosis, smallpox, measles, chickenpox, cholera, whooping cough and influenza, among others. Bryant was describing heaven do comfort people during a time where society was dying of sickness one by one.

Faith is a controversial topic in and of itself, some are made uneasy or uncomfortable. Whether a person is a Christian, or even believes in Heaven or not, Thanatopsis calms the anxiety surrounding death. Sure, we as humans will always have questions and wonder where we will all wind up; but with the time mankind has on earth, we need to enjoy nature. Nature is breath-takingly divine if society would just simply look. Form the individual blades of grass, to the beautiful trees and bodies of water. Everyone is so focused on what is next, or social status that very few go outside and just breathe in the beauty of nature. Every tiny detail Bryant puts in to describing the surroundings of the scene of Thanatopsis just goes to show what humans should be focusing on. If you are a person of faith, you know that everything in this planet was created by hand, just for us; which makes it even more beautiful. God knows exactly the number of grains of sand there is to how many leaves are on every tree. Even people of faith are till terrified of death, but we know that in nature we will go, and then to the gates of heaven.

To conclude, the poem Thanatopsis by William Cullen Bryant is a beautifully written poem that was magnificent for its time and for centuries to come. Death is great fear in the lives of most people is death and dying alone. The poem Thanatopsis by William Cullen Bryant puts an end to this fear by finding beauty in death, as it is like coming home.

Works Cited

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