

Belief in Change

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Midterm Essay

As many know, during the industrial revolution, there were major advancements in technology, business, economy, and society that changed the world and continue to shape it today. However, there were many challenges during the industrial revolution, one massive flaw was the increase of child labor. Imagine working many hours outside in dangerous working conditions, with no breaks, in dangerous spots where you could potentially severely hurt yourself at such a young age, with little to no pay for your work. As there weren't many government regulations on working conditions, many children had to work numerous hours. Many had to work in factories, farms, mines, etc. There were many tragedies and accidents with the youth during that time. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a famous poet in the 19th century, refused to be silent about the matter and wanted to write politically and opinionated poetry about what she felt. She made "The Cry of the Children", a poem that tells the experiences of child labor, between the voice of a child and a sympathetic speaker, the poem tells the reader the hardship of using children as workers and ruining those kids' childhood. This poem shows that child labor is something inhumane and shows the reader that there must be a stop to using children in such a harsh way. However, this wasn't the only time humans were treated wrongfully in history. During the 18 to 20th centuries, there was Western colonization and treated others differently. Many when colonized had to become laborers and slaves to others. Having no control as Westerners colonized them. The post-colonial literature theory has a huge impact on educational settings and concepts on identifying the formation process. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "The Cry of the Children" pictures the injustice of the exploitation of child labor, her protest mainly focuses on the failures of her culture and the cruelty of society and oppression in important controversy. The message she wants to share in the poem is to protect culture rather than destroy it and stop inequality for others. Her poem's message relates to the same as the

postcolonial theory. The voices of most the world's working children have gained prominence in debates over their well-being. Many have defended their right to work, questioning Minority World perceptions of children's "best" interests. Employers' perspectives, on the other hand, are mostly ignored, raising questions about how decolonized the discourse and material spaces of children's labor are. A postcolonial perspective on children's labor casts doubt on the idea that most nations require Western advice on how to handle children. It also opens possibilities for more-than-economic connections between working children and their employers, beyond western discourses of economic exploitation. As both had the people struggle for power and had social impact and exploitation of people. In the poem, many moments provide evidence that it has similar ideas to post-colonization. Although it isn't exactly similar, it has a great amount of sentiment that one would relate to knowing about the post-colonization theory, they have the idea for change.

There are many ways to show how the poem and the theory have similar connections. An example that correlates to the literary theory would be in stanza 12. In this stanza, the speaker states that the children are tired, sad, destroyed by the fact that they are just kids and must live like an adult without a childhood. They never will have experience of what being a kid is, they are restricted and in despair of what they must go through every single day. This stanza compares the children's life to the grief of grown men, slaves, and orphans. They all have their struggles of them but at such a young age. They have no fun, to experience, and society expects them to act at a mature age when it's not true. The line "are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom, Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm", these words alone can relate to the emotion of post-colonization. It's important to recognize and understand other traditions, social

life, economy, and politics, however, many during that time pictured children as labor. Both people, the children, and the people colonized saw the oppression at that moment, the hardship and struggles that they had to face. They felt abandoned by society, trapped in an endless cycle of labor to better civilization. The voices of many are sometimes not heard, but one must try and understand the sorrow of others, and reach out to the helpless, no matter what challenges they are going through. Elizabeth could listen and understand the feeling when writing the poem, she too was discouraged and criticized during the 1800s, as women were discouraged from engaging in topics like child labor. She was an activist who fought for what she believed was right and wrong, she broke down the perspective of others in poetry.

In the face of labor, it is one of the most gruesome things that history brings up time and time again. Many could not handle the workload and challenges many had to deal with to keep society advancing. Many thought death was better than living in a world of difficult problems one faces. Elizabeth saw the struggle of children working, as they work constantly and have no time to enjoy a peaceful life. Stanza 4 explicitly explains the children's value of death. This section talks about a young girl who has passed away a year ago, Alice. However, the children don't mourn her death, instead, they celebrate Alice can rest in peace. The line, "It was good when it happens, say the children, that we did before our time." Shows that children have lost all hope of peace and rest in their lives. This shows the author's view of the children as tragic and horrific, and the way they were treated made them accept death with open arms. During colonization, there were also struggles from work, and many had different morals after being oppressed and having grueling labor. In both moments, there were people we saw the struggle of living and refused to work painfully, and accepted death. People saw the inequality and injustice one person gives to

another. Readers will understand that both the poem and the theory saw the wrongs of the treatment of a group of people. There is individuality among everyone and the hatred that one gets because they are different from others, and what they have to go through to live.

When seeing the reality of the struggles some people have in life, it makes people realize that there should be a change for the better, and how there aren't many who stop at something so inhumane as child labor. In the final stanza, it repeats what was talked about throughout the poem, and tells the reader that the children just saw dread and darkness in life and have questions on why they must live this way and for how long. The children ask for change and when will it happen. The line "How long, they say, how long, O cruel nation, Will you stand to move the world, on a child's heart-..." shows the concern that the suffering will never end. They stress that a children's cry is more than a man's anger. This asks for the change of these actions, so cruel and unfair, and when society will understand the wrongs of their values in such harsh ways. The same for change can be applied to the postcolonial literary theory. Although it's not very similar because of the different types of people involved in the theory, and of the difference that takes place and time of the theory too, it does have points that share the same idea and show why there should be a change in the ways people are treated. The theory and poem both share the pursue of change in the way different people are treated, whether it be a kid or African American, there were dark moments in their lives with nothing to hold on to. They want to share their story and social experience on how they were treated differently than others who were different by culture, wealth, social status, etc.

When understanding the concept of postcolonial literary theory, it comes to mind the harsh and unfairness people were treated that they went through. Elizabeth saw the injustice of people being treated differently and oppressed for their rights especially children during that period. When making her poem, she emphasized the injustice and sadness children had to go through in everyday work. She saw that there has to be a change for the less unfortunate and the ones who endure the labor of living. Postcolonial literature shows that there was concern with political, economic, historical, and social impact when colonial rule was made. There was suppression, resistance, inequality, and the same went for expressing child labor in the poem. The poem ties in the experiences in postcolonial literature. We all know the struggles in everyday life, some may have it harder than others, and every point in life may have its ups and downs. The sacrifices one must make too much one is willing to go through and telling their perspective of the struggles of working to achieve something. Everyone is different no matter what, even if they're from a different part of the world, or in a different time, we see the connections of messages and meaning to the poem "The Cry of the Children" and the theory of postcolonial. Seeing the social impact that people can make on others in such a tough way, with no injustice. There must be the change needed to better society as a whole, and stop the toughest labor for people that have been through it the most.

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