

UERJ

FFP

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English Literature I

Task 1: Discuss the stillness as a romantic characteristic in W. S. “Composed upon Westminster Bridge”.

In the poem “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” the poet writes in a Romantic mode. In the first line he talks about “Earth” that is a common theme to the Romantics. They used to talk about the visible world.

He continues saying that “Dull would he be of soul who could pass by”. So, if a person could not see the fairness of the Earth that the poet describes this person will be completely full.

In the entire poem the speaker is describing the beauty of the city and how it pass a calm feeling to him. The nature in the city and the silence is a sanctuary to the poet, as he says, “The city now doth, like a garment, wear/ The beauty of morning silent, bare”. We can notice that the speaker is admiring the silence of the city when everyone is sleeping. The city is beautiful because of it is peaceful, an essential trait to Romantics.

Another important trait to Romantics is the freedom. This represents the soul of this kind of poets. And the speaker observes it in the river when he says, “ the river glideth at his own sweet will”.

In the end of the poem Wordsworth continues talking about the calmness of the asleep city and personifies it when he says that the mighty heart is lying still. As we can see in these verses: “Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;/And all that mighty heart is lying still!”.

Task 2: Romanticism is a journey away from the corruption of civilization and the limits of rational thought and toward the integrity of nature and the freedom of the imagination. Discuss Blake's criticism of industrial civilization in "London"

In the first and in the second verses the chartered street and the chartered Thames demonstrate one aspect of the emerging industrial society and the increasing restriction of public spaces and the monopoly of certain companies and corporations. The speaker walks through the city and show the reader how he is immersed in an urban universe of cruelty.

The poet describes London as a place of restrictions and suffering as we can see in the verse "A mark in every face I meet, /Marks of weakness, marks of woe". These signs or marks are an indication of how Blake saw the London society, which for him would be a society in decline.

The speaker sees in the cry of every man and every child the fear of the voices and the mind's prison the suffering of the innocent, the cry of the chimney-sweeper, the sigh of soldier and the harlot's curse. These are points that show images of the industrial civilization that the speaker is talking about in the poem.

In the third stanza the cry of the chimney-sweep and the sigh of the soldier and blood on palace walls represents the how institutions of power use and oppress the people. But the poet does not blame only the institutions or the industrial civilization for the city's problems; the oppressed help to make their own prison, their "mind-forged manacles".

In the last stanza the poet uses the contrast of the image of the innocence of a new-born and the harlot's curse. He contrasts too the marriage, that is a beginning of a new life with another person with the end of a life that is represented by the hearse, as we can see in the verse "And blights with plagues the marriage-hearse". These could be metaphors to the industrial civilization that in the same times brings modernity and evolution, but brings the suffering and the sacrifice to the society.

Task 3: Robert Browning's most important poetic message regards the new conditions of urban living. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the once-rural British population had become centered in large cities, thanks to the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution. Thus violence became a sort of aesthetic choice for many writers, among them Robert Browning. In many of his poems, violence, along with sex, becomes the symbol of the modern urban-dwelling condition. How does the poems "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess" reflect this notion?

In the poem "My Last Duchess", the Duke is talking with an emissary who is negotiating the Duke's new marriage. The Duke shows the paint of his ex wife, the last Duchess. The painting is kept hidden behind a curtain. She was lovely and smiles so much, but the Duke gave orders to her to stop smiling, as we can see in these verses "Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,/Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without/Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;/ Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands". We can consider that the painting is the realization of his sick desire, because the happiness smile of the Duchess is only to him.

We can see aspects of urban life in the way that Duke treated his first wife, the way of thinking the relationship with woman, who he gives orders and did not like to see her happiness with others. The woman in urban life serves as an object in a marriage probably without love, where the Duke boasts about his art collection (the painting of the Duchess and the Neptune cast in bronze) to show able to get the wedding.

We can observe in the poem "Porphyria's Lover" the same desire of dominate the woman. The man murders the woman with a desire of retain that moment between them. She worshipped him, but the speaker sees that she will do what society expects (do not stay with him) and to preserve the relationship intact he strangles her. In his mind this will make the moment during forever. It is clear in these verses: "That moment she was mine, mine, fair, /Perfectly pure and good: I found/A thing to do, and all her hair/In one long yellow string I wound/Three times her little throat around, /And strangled her. No pain felt she;"

Probably the urban society makes the man of the first poem thinking that he should not only be the center of attention to his wife, but the only object of her attention. She did

not do that was expected of her and he turns against her, perhaps not just giving orders to stop her smile, but killing the woman. In the second poem the relationship would not be approved by the society. And to keep the moment immortalized he kills her. In both cases may have an influence of social expectation and the sick desire of the two men.

Task 4: Compare and contrast “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” a very early poem by W. Butler Yeats, with “The Circus Animals’ Desertion,” written not long before he died. What, if anything, do these poems have in common? How are they different? What does each poem say about the human heart, and how does the difference between those statements indicate Yeats’s development as a poet?

“The Lake Isle of Innisfree” is about a person who wants to go to Innisfree and build cabin to find the peace “And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow”. He says that he will have a little bean garden and a honeybee hive. In the last stanza, the speaker declares that he is leaving because while he stands “on the roadway, or on the pavements gray” he hears “the water lapping with low sounds by the shore”.

In the poem “The Circus Animals’ Desertion”, the speaker tries to write a poem, but nothing happens. He tries for a long time “I sought a theme and sought for it in vain, / I sought it daily for six weeks or so”. The poet remembers his old themes. He says that “Those masterful images because complete” and they “grew in pure mind”, but he do not know where they began. And he finishes saying that he will lie down “where all the ladders start”.

The three stanzas three stanzas of the poem “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” have the ABAB rhyme scheme. In the poem “The Circus Animals’ Desertion”, the five stanzas have the ABABABCC rhyme scheme. It is divided into three parts (I, II, and III).

The first poem is like the beginning of a journey as if the poet was searching for something, in that case the peace in the cabin. The second one shows some frustration. The speaker appeared to be someone who already completed what he had to do, as if he had done all the issues and in this moment could not do something new. Now he can only remember the old deeds. As we can see in the verses: “I sought a theme and sought for it in vain, / I sought it daily for six weeks or so” and “What can I but enumerate old themes”.

The final lines of “The Circus Animals’ Desertion” in which the poet says "I must

lie down where all the ladders start/ In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart" contrasts with "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," that he highlights the importance of the heart, as we can observe: "I hear it in the deep heart's core".

In the early poem we can notice a light heart that looks for the peace of a quiet place. In the poem written not long before he died we can see a heavy heart that cannot find the novelty of things. Those differences indicate Yeats's development as an experienced poet, that saw many themes, passed for the search of the peace and now thinks about the real meaning of that.

Task 5: W. H. Auden lived during the age of the great totalitarian dictators Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Franco, and saw the rise of the bureaucratic state. How does the poem "September 1, 1939" addresses these issues?

The poem "September 1, 1939" has nine stanzas of eleven lines each. The title is about the day that Hitler invaded Poland, the beginning of World War II. The speaker starts telling that he sits "in one of the dives/On the Fifty-second Street", he talks about his feelings of fear and uncertainty for the future, and he shows the socialist schemes of the 1930's that could not prevent the war. The scene that the speaker sees is a place where "Waves of anger and fear/Circulate over the bright".

The second stanza brings a critic to Martin Luther's ideas that drove a whole culture mad. And talks about a person of Linz (Adolf Hitler) that turned himself into a "psychopathic god." And even education seems to provide a violent worldview. "I and the public know/ What all schoolchildren learn, /Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return."

Auden remembers Thucydide, the general of ancient Athens who was sent into exile, that talked "About Democracy, /And what dictators do". The poet blames people for not seeing beyond "the elderly rubbish" and the false speech about democracy. The "neutral air" where skyscrapers proclaim their full height indicates the strength of "Collective Man".

The poet describes the lost of individuality present in totalitarianism and the idea of "collective man" that provides the illusion of "an euphoric dream". People in this society are trapped in the idea that the convention takes "The furniture of home" and "Repeating

Their morning vow; / 'I will be true to the wife I'll concentrate more on my work". The poet makes the critic "Who can release them now, / Who can reach the deaf, / Who can speak for the dumb? ".