Blake’s “The Song of Innocence and Experience”

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Blake’s “*The Song of Innocence and Experience”* is based on the theme of the innocent pastoral world of childhood against the adult world of repression and corruption. In this poem, Blake stands outside innocence and experience and pits himself against restrictive morality, despotic authority, sexual repression, and institutionalized religion. The *Songs of Innocence and Experience* dramatize the naïve fears and hopes that trace the children’s transformation from childhood to adulthood. Blake’s work beautifully contrasts with the ways in which adulthood’s harsh experiences destroy the good in the innocence of childhood. He explains in his rhythmic song how the child’s ignorance of the dark night or social evil is his innocence, and when he begins to realize the things and the evils happening in the surroundings, his innocence vanishes (Blake, W., 1794).

Blake’s work is perhaps of a radically different nature. However, Romanticism influenced his work, and thus, he explained the beauty of childhood with the help of different rhythmic words. By highlighting the cheerfulness, joy, and smile of childhood, Blake somehow connects childhood with innocence in a most romantic way, and finally, he shows the harsh experience of adulthood, which kills the innocence of childhood. This shows that Blake wants to convey how life changes when the child moves to adulthood and how the dark evils, in terms of social evils, affect his innocence. He has somehow used this song as a dual message. At one end, he has conveyed the message to the children about how their innocence can be affected and how they can protect it. On the other hand, he conveys the message to adults that dark nights can have a negative impact on their innocence, so they need to protect themselves from the evils of life.

Day 2:

Blake’s poem, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, is a great work that has different literary values. Most poets are more concerned with Romanticism, but Blake’s work is quite different. Blake’s work includes questions about different aspects, such as the primacy of nature, the city, and the country, the quality of enlightenment achievement, the centrality of the child, the industrial revolution, and so on. In fact, the poem *Songs of Innocence and Experience* is also divided into two clear ambits: one part consists of a 19-poem collection based on innocence, and the second part consists of his work about experience. Both parts of this poem are interconnected. He picked up different elements from the innocence part, and then those elements were responded to in the experience part of the poem.

Moreover, the first part of the poem, *Innocence*, was published before the French Revolution, whereas the part, *Experience,* was published after the Reign of Terror. Blake started his poem with a soft theme and then rapidly converted it into violence, which reflects his shift from pessimism to optimism. The poems "The Tyger" and "The Lamb" are his works, which represent his shift from innocence to ambiguity. Blake was basically living in an era when the British Industrial Revolution was at its peak, and children were used as a workforce. He was against this action, and thus, he followed the ideals of the French Revolution in his poem. He basically wanted the people of his country to follow the same French Revolution ideals and to stand against those who were destroying the innocence of children for their personal benefit.

Day 3:

Mary Wollstonecraft had done a great job for women's rights, and thus, she can be considered the mother of feminism. She was a groundbreaking novelist, philosopher, social critic, advocate of the rights of women, and travel writer in Britain. She stood for the rights of women and argued that both men and women should have equal access to educational opportunities. She also participated in different debates to speak for the rights of women. She was also a participant in the French Revolution and various education reforms.

In the 18th century, when men were treated with more love than women, Mary Wollstonecraft was the first one to write for the rights and equality of women. This can also be seen in her writing because her insistence on men's and women's equality was the most persistent and controversial topic of her writing. It wouldn't be wrong to consider her the rock star of the 18th century who wished to see women active and educated, but she was not against men. Rather, she just wanted to make women strong, educated, and equal to men.

Day 4 Quiz:

Points:

Words 600

Day 5:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a great poet as well as a philosopher. He believed that strong imagination plays a vital role in transcending unpleasant circumstances. In his poems, he also used the power of imagination, by which the speaker forgets about his surroundings and imagines a new fabricated experience. An example of Coleridge's imaginative work is "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison." In this poem, he discusses a poetic mind that represents an imaginative journey that cannot be physically possible. Through this poem, he shows that no matter what the circumstances are,

imagination is a great strength. In the poem, *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*, the prisoner imagines the journey in which he enjoys the tree, shadows, and leaves, and through imagination, he completely forgets about his prison.

According to Coleridge, imagination is the strength of the poems, but imagination and fancy are two different things. Fancy is not creative. Rather, imagination is creative, allowing the person to imagine different things and then come back to reality. Coleridge was fascinated by his works, and thus, his work was different from the fancy that he described as shaping power. He also invented the influential notion of "willing suspension of disbelief," which is related to the Romantics' fascination with children because, somewhere, some children do not understand reality, and thus, they love to remain in their imagination. This is the main theme that has been presented in Coleridge's poems, in which he shows how children are imaginative, whereas adults are realistic.

From my point of view, Coleridge's definition of a great poet is correct because without imagination, one cannot use great words of feeling.

Day 6:

William Wordsworth was a great and famous poet during the English Romantic Revolution. His work was threefold. Firstly, he formulated a new attitude towards nature in his literature. He used to introduce nature in his poetry verses in such an amazing way that the connection between the human mind and nature in his poetry was appreciable. Secondly, he probed deeply into sensibility, and the evidence of his fine work is his poem, *The Prelude*, which was an autobiographical poem. Thirdly, he created the greatest English poetry by placing human experience at the center. Thus, he did an incredible job in British literature and stood next to William Shakespeare. William's work was based on memory, describing nature, the human mind, and sensibility, but his work was entirely different from the work of Coleridge, who used imagination as the tool of his poetry. Most of his poems were imaginative and were far away from reality. However, both did a great job in British literature.

William Wordsworth not only did his best in British literature but also worked with his fellows, named Lord Byron, Robert Southey, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. They all worked together because they all lived in the Lake District of Cumbria in the 19th century. The Lake Poets used a similar theme in their poetry, especially towards children and Romanticism; they all had the same approach of radical political convictions and love of liberty. After the French Revolution, their love of liberty was converted into nationalism because they realized that the Church's guiding forces and the constitutional monarchy of England were the only guarantors of freedom.

William Wordsworth's poetic accent was so simple that he used to imply that any reader who had been exposed to nature could understand the world's secrets. He used a very simple sonnet form in his poetry to express his ideas, such as "I wandered lonely as a Cloud." Simply, the Lake Poets were amazing in their ways.

Day 7:

Most of William's work was based on memory, and he was considered a writer with a simple accent. Most of his work was about nature and his childhood memories of trees, leaves, and other stuff. However, when we go deep into his work and biography, it becomes clear that most of the work is based on his memories with his sister, Dorothy Wordsworth. In his work, "Tintern Abbey," he uses several phrases that make it clear that Dorothy, his sister, is the main part of his memories. Dorothy was an excellent social worker, and thus, she posted several entries. When we compare Dorothy's work with William's work, it becomes clear that William reflected the work of Dorothy in his poems. His lines, "I wandered lonely as a cloud," are a clear indication of Dorothy's lines that she saw daffodils near the river bed.

Then William married Mary Hutchinson and had a complete life. According to Mary, William Wordsworth and Dorothy both had writing work in the same direction. Both were working in a similar direction, and Dorothy had an entirely complicated personality. According to Mary, Dorothy was a woman who was an all-rounder, and she was the one who had helped her brother by all means.

Day 8:

Blake's work has different literary values. Concerning the poem *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, he picked up different elements from the innocence part, and then those elements were responded to in the experience part of the poem. Blake's poem "The Lamb" represents his shift from innocence to ambiguity. Blake lived in an era when the British Industrial Revolution was at its peak, and children were used as a workforce. He was against this action, and thus, he followed the ideals of the French Revolution in his poem. He wanted the people of his country to follow the same French Revolution ideals and to stand against those who were destroying the innocence of children for their benefit. Thus, in his work, a political message was hidden for the public to save innocent labor and give back innocence to the children (Poetry Foundation, n.d.).

Not only Blake but also Lamb has done his work in the best way to motivate people to protect children's innocence. In his poems, he also showed that children cannot carry the burden of earning and working like elders. The children are smaller and more innocent than we think. The people have considered them animals and have been using them as labor, which is quite unethical. So Lamb and Blake both were concerned about the innocence of the children and wanted to convey a political message to the public to save children and not use them as labor.

Day 9:

Shelley was not just a poet but a revolutionist who wanted to see everyone free from power. In his poetry, he discusses both the power of seen and unseen nature. In his poetic work, there are many

stanzas that highlight his concern for power, such as the following (Poetry Foundation, 2016):

“Power, like a desolating pestilence,

Pollutes Whate’er it touches.”

According to him, power pollutes the environment and increases sins and evils, so no person has the right to act like a king or as a powerful man; rather, everyone has the right to live his life according to his wishes and style.

When reading “Prometheus Unbound,” Shelley unbounded humanity and King, the God. In this work, he considered himself a king who had all the powers of God and stated:

“King of Kings Ozymandias am I.”

This line makes it clear that Shelley has represented himself as power. This reading is actually about the philosophy of life in which Shelley considers himself powerful and discusses that his works and power are perfect, just like the Almighty God. Simply, in his work, he wanted to convey to his reader that power does not make a man powerful; rather, it is an initiative to evil.

Quiz:

Ten questions total (5 MCQs and five short questions)

Wrote 600 words.

Day 10:

Mary Shelley was a famous writer who had faced so many tragedies in her life. She spent her life without her biological mother, and thus, she could understand the importance of creatures in creation. Her reflections on her life experiences can also be seen in her writing. Her writing, *Frankenstein,* is so popular just because of her concept of creation and creatures. In this poem, Shelley discusses a mad scientist who invented a ghost-like creation. The creation felt lonely because it was different from humans; thus, it demanded that the scientist create another creation like it. The scientist understood that creation does evil, and if the creation has a partner, then reproduction may happen, and this will become a threat to society. In short, the theme is science fiction, in which the end reveals that creation is nothing without the creator, and that is why, after the death of a scientist, creation disappeared because it considered that without the creator, it could not survive.

The main hero of this book, *Frankenstein,* is the scientist Victor because he invented a ghost creation and controlled it from being evil for society. Also, he is the hero of the book because, with Victor’s death, the creation disappeared, and the story ended.

Day 11

Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Mary Shelley, was a strong woman and a famous writer in the nineteenth century. She believed in showing that females have the dominant role in society. However, she died exactly a few days after Mary's birth, so she could not transfer her thinking to Mary, and this is what can be observed easily from her writing. Mary spent her life with her biological mother, and that is why she was unable to understand the importance of the female role in her life. Thus, in her novel *Frankenstein*, she does not discuss the role of feminism in a highlighted way. Many female roles, such as Elizabeth, Mrs. Saville, Justine, and Sadie, were discussed in the novel, but no character played a prominent role. All the feminist roles were passive characters, and the primary roles were Victor and his creation. Thus, Mary did not believe in discussing women as dominant characters in her writing.

In the novel, Victor refuses to create a female monster just because he is aware of the evil actions of the monster, and he knows that if he creates any female monster, then the creations will reproduce, and this will cause great harm to humanity.

Day 12

When reading the novel *Frankenstein,* it is difficult to give the title of *Hero* to any character in the novel. Victor and his creation are the two main characters of the novel. Now, the creation cannot be titled a hero because it was an evil threat to humanity. A hero is one who may be called an ideal personality, who guides something, or who does something that a normal person cannot do. In this way, we can call Victor a *Hero*. No doubt, he is selfish and isolated and has no concern for the people around him, but the end of the novel shows him as a hero.

Victor was the one who created a monster, which was his different invention. Later, when the monster demanded a female creation and started harming people, Victor understood that it was essential to stop the monster. Victor could create a female monster and could ruin humanity, but he took a step and thought that he would not do anything that was harmful to human beings. Somewhere, he knew that if he created a female monster, both creations would reproduce new monsters, which would create evil in society. Thus, he went against the monster and finally died. Moreover, with his death, the creation disappeared, which shows that creation was basically because of Victor; thus, he was the actual hero of the novel.

References

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