

WEEK: 20

Week Beginning: (Monday 3rd August 2020)

Subject: ENGLISH

Year: 9

Lesson Objective:

- Understanding Romantic Poetry.
- Reading William Blake poetry.

Keywords/ Concepts

- Romantic Poetry.
- Power
- Nature.

Class Worksheets

- Poem by William Blake (The London)

Homework Worksheets

- Write own Romantic poem.

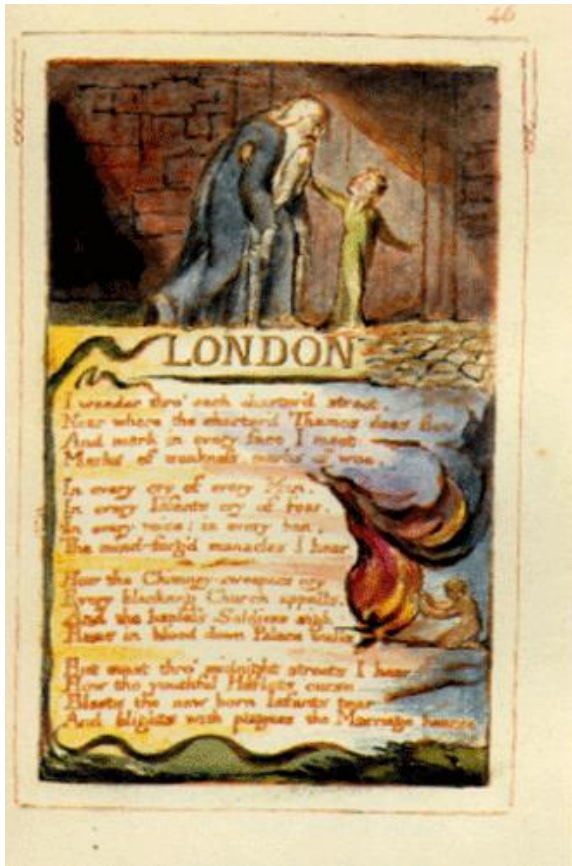
Additional Notes

The Romantics

WHAT IS ROMANTICISM? A RADIO DISCUSSION

This page gives you an outline of a discussion on the Romantic movement, led by Melvyn Bragg. The starting point was this question: ***Has Romanticism, as a movement emerging towards the end of the 18th Century, a distinct philosophy: ie. an outlook that takes in distinctive political, artistic and philosophical positions.*** The notes below are a record of the discussion.

- ◇ Romanticism was: An association in 18th and early 19th C of Romanticism with EMOTION (expression, not suppression of feeling) and REBELLION in the moral, artistic and (with the French Revolution in 1789) in the political sphere.
- ◇ SOURCE of Romanticism can be found in the writings and philosophy of Jean Jaques Rousseau: "*Man is born free and is everywhere in chains*" Established the concept of "*the noble savage*"; the idea that human beings are naturally virtuous, but the process of civilisation and society corrupts them with rules: teaches selfishness (this idea is powerful in many Romantic poets, especially Blake). Rousseau also initiates a new respect for childhood as a natural unspoilt state: children innately good. (Strong idea in Wordsworth's poetry).
- ◇ NATURE and feeling are decisive concepts in Romanticism. There is in Wordsworth and Coleridge a focus on the natural world. Also, (and quite radical at the time) the idea that the experience and language of ordinary, uneducated people can be the proper subject of poetry: the idea that the peasant's feelings are as intense and worth recording or exploring as the educated man's. Further than this, the notion that all men have IMAGINATION and the capacity to see beyond the natural world; hence the visionary poetry of Blake, Shelley and Coleridge (*Kubla Khan*, and *The Ancient Mariner* eg.)
- ◇ BLAKE: a London poet, not one of the countryside like Wordsworth & Coleridge. Fits in opposition to the prevailing 18th Century philosophy before Romanticism: RATIONALISM. Attempt to explain all human and natural phenomena by reason and empirical study. (British philosophers, Locke and Hume). Empiricism starts with what the senses tell you. It led in Hume to scepticism about the existence of God. English Romanticism is not religious in any denominational sense; but it can be viewed as a reaction against the empiricist's downgrading of the spiritual aspects of life.



LONDON [bold text mine]

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice; in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I **hear**

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I **hear**
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

Quote	How does this present Romanticism?
'Charter'd street'	
"marks of weakness, marks of woe"	
"How the Chimney- sweepers cry"	

The Romantics

London William Blake

1. *Charter'd* is a repeated and significant word in the first stanza. Comment on its meanings and implications (its **connotations**). Make sure you understand the contemporary commercial connotations the word had when Blake wrote in the 1790s. What other words in stanza 1 create a serious or sombre tone?
2. What's the mood of the second stanza and what for you creates that mood? Comment on how the sentence works in this stanza. The last line is a disturbing completion of the line. Why? What creates the effect of build up and tension over the four lines?
3. Do a quick cartoon sketch of *mind-forg'd manacles*. Suggest the meaning(s) of *ban* in stanza 2.
4. In stanza 3 what do *church* and *palace* seem to represent? Comment on how Blake manages quickly and concisely to associate them with distress and horror.
5. In the last stanza *Blasts* and *blights* are the powerful verbs. How does Blake ensure they stand out and have impact? Make sure you have the meaning of these two words. Now analyse the words of the four lines to explain how this closing verse describes and condemns corruption in the city.
6. Sum up in two or three sentences Blake's picture of London. Now or later add two or three more sentences to sum up the contrast in Wordsworth's *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge...*