

ASM TUITION ACADEMY

England In 1819:

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow—
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field—
An army, whom libercide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield it—
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
A Senate—Time's worst statute unrepealed—
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illuminate our tempestuous day.

Theme: The central theme of "England in 1819" is a scathing critique of England's political and social landscape during the early 19th century. Shelley's poem reflects on the oppressive government, the suffering of the working class, and the corrupt monarchy. It conveys a sense of disillusionment and a call for social change and justice.

Structure: The poem consists of 11 quatrains, each with an ABAB rhyme scheme. This structure creates a sense of order and rhythm in the poem, making it easier to read and memorable. The consistent use of quatrains emphasizes the regularity of the issues Shelley addresses, underlining their pervasive nature.

Story Analysis: The poem doesn't follow a traditional narrative structure but rather presents a series of stark and powerful images and observations, collectively forming a vivid picture of England in 1819.

1. **"An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King"**: The poem opens with a striking portrayal of the king, suggesting that he has lost touch with the reality of his country's suffering and is indifferent to the people's plight.
2. **"Soldier's sigh runs in blood down Palace walls"**: Here, the poem highlights the brutality of the government, suggesting that the military's actions contribute to the suffering of the people.
3. **"Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn"**: This well-known line captures the essence of the poem's critique, emphasizing the widespread suffering caused by a society marked by oppression, corruption, and social injustice.

4. **"A law more impious, mild, and matricidal"**: Shelley criticizes the legal system, describing it as inhumane, oppressive, and harmful to its people.
5. **"These famished multitudes, who tramp, blood-stained footsteps to their graves"**: The poem paints a grim picture of the working class, oppressed and struggling for survival, their lives marked by hardship and despair.

Overall, the poem paints a damning picture of England's social and political landscape. It mourns the state of the nation and calls for change and justice. The imagery in the poem powerfully conveys the suffering and despair experienced by the common people during this tumultuous period.

"England in 1819" is a passionate call for social reform and justice. It reflects Shelley's belief in the need for a more equitable and compassionate society. The poem's structured quatrains and powerful imagery make it an effective piece of social criticism, and it continues to resonate with readers as a vivid depiction of a turbulent era in English history.

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