

24 nov 2020 - Tennyson

Features of his works

Unlike Browning Tennyson was a real victorian writer; he was born on the same year as Darwin, and in a way he anticipated Darwin's theories of evolution, although he was more concerned with the spiritual evolution of mankind than with the biological one.

- He was very much interested by science, and he was able to work out a compromise between science and religion, suggesting the progressive development of the human race, both through the succession of generations on Earth, and through the belief in a life after death
- He was interested in political and historical events, that changed the face of Europe, and he often found subjects for his poems among them.
- He was influenced by the grace and musicality of the romantics, in fact he was called a romantic of the third generation, but he was a true victorian when he emphasizes the importance of balance and discipline in form
- He was concerned with the social values of his time, and tried to face the great questions of his age, like family, patriotism, love and religion.
- He borrowed most of his themes from the Middle Ages, from classical antiquity and from old legends; he always added a personal note into them. This note was often melancholic.

Ulysses

p. 34-35

It is a celebration of the ancient hero, but Tennyson's Ulysses is an old and tired king, who rules over an island inhabited by people who are only concerned with material life.

He has fought the long war of Troy; he has met dangers and adventures of any sorts and he has become famous all over the world for the idea of the horse.

Although he is old, and he guesses that little remains for him to live, he wants to set sails for the extreme adventure before death closes everything.

His adventure is spurred by his intention

| to follow knowledge like a sinking star;

this make him similar to Dante's Ulysses, the hero that induced his companion to leave Ithaca, their families and their certainties

| per seguir virtute e canoscenza

Although he is old, he is ready to challenge the world, death and the unknown.

Unlike Dante's Ulysses, he is not going to break a divine law, because the 19th century faith in science and in progress had long cancelled men's fears of going beyond the limits imposed to men by God; Dante put Ulysses in hell because he had trespassed the limits imposed to men by God: the pillar of Hercules.