

Comparison between preludes and american beauty

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T. S Eliot's Preludes and American Beauty are different texts, shaped by their composer's contextual values that portray the two themes isolation and the search for meaning. Although both texts are composed during different periods of time, they both encompass many of the techniques and styles which reflect upon their context to portray similar themes.

This is evident in a comparative study of the two texts. T. S Eliot's represents the isolation of an individual from society in his Preludes through his reflection of underlying contextual concerns. The general depiction of the cityscape in the modernist period is viewed as ugly, dirty and as a place of physical and spiritual poverty. Human society is meaningless and trivial and people are pretentious and not concerned with deep connections of others. This isolation is conveyed through the imagery of dingy shades. T. S Eliot utilises this technique to convey to the reader the notion that nobody ever visits the scene, hence emphasising isolation.

In the lines 'in a thousand furnished rooms' and 'the thousand sordid images', repetition of the word 'thousand' is used by T. S Eliot. He represents the scene of the poem as a great, wide and well-equipped landscape, yet the word 'sordid' conveys the scene as abandoned.

Consequently, Eliot alludes to the loss of individuality. This also reflects upon Eliot's contextual values of disconnection in society. From the poem, personification is used in the lines 'the winter evening settles down with smell of steaks in passageways' by T. S Eliot. There, he makes non-living

unimportant objects the focus of his sentence by giving the ??? winter evening??? human characteristics. ??? Winter evening??? also describes the scene as cold and lifeless which ultimately relates to the isolation of the individual. From Eliot??™s ??? Preludes??™, it is evident that he is reflecting the inherent contextual concerns of his time.

Similarly, Sam Mendes also explores this notion of the isolation in his film American Beauty, extending contextual values. American Beauty, directed in the late 20th century reflects upon his context. The family dynamics in the late 20th century consisted heavily of rising divorce rates and dysfunctional families which influences Sam Mendes in his production of the film.

In the beginning of the film, Sam Mendes immediately portrays the loss of individuality in his opening scene. A bird??™s eye camera shot is used to effectively show the neighbourhood of houses that all appear to be identical in appearance and their identical colour patterns of black and white present the audience with the idea that the neighbourhood is silent and detached, hence alludes to the loss of individuality. In the dinner scene early into the film, Mendes presents the audience with a medium shot of the family. This scene did not have much dialogue involved, the grey background and the soft melodic music is evident to the sedateness and isolation between the characters in the scene. The contextual values Mendes directed the film in are reflected in this scene through the idea of dysfunctional families. Eliot??™s idea of alienation from society is mirrored by the Burnham??™s in American Beauty.

Although the techniques used between both composers are distant, their notions are similar. Eliot represents the individual's search for meaning in 'Preludes' with his depiction of the urbanised city as desolated, sordid and futile. He presents sordid imagery of 'grimy', 'withered' and 'muddy feet' to portray the city as a foul and unwelcoming place. This technique gives the reader an idea of Eliot's perception on the city which is as a place people will want to escape from. This diction also reflects upon Eliot's context. Modernism, recognised through the rise of motor vehicles and industries is viewed as smoky and polluted.

In 'Preludes III', T. S. Eliot uses the perspective of second person to refer to the readers, dragging them into the bleak landscape of the poem. This perspective used by T. S. Eliot allows the readers to feel the claustrophobia within the poem and their urge to escape from the city. In 'Preludes IV', T. S. Eliot alters the perspective in this section changes from 3rd person 'his soul stretched'; to 1st person 'I am moved' to 2nd person 'wipe your hand' is seen in 'Preludes IV'. Through the change in tone and rhythm, T. S. Eliot effectively conveys the idea of how different people all endure the same experiences of claustrophobia in the city scene.

Ultimately, the search for meaning is conveyed. The contextual values of Mendes portray the search for meaning in 'American Beauty'. In the late 20th century, postmodernism is about the change of society's view on life. People overlook superficiality and are more obsessed with acquiring material wealth than their social interactions.

In American Beauty, the notion is portrayed through Carolyn when she gets upset over Lester spilling beer on the couch. The dialogue from Carolyn ??? This is a \$4, 000 sofa, upholstered in Italian silk??? supports her superficiality. A medium camera shot is used to portray the detachment of Carolyn care for life through the white background. In this scene, Mendes??™s context is reflected through Carolyn??™s obsession with material wealth rather than life. The notion is also portrayed through the plastic bag motif. The grey background portrays the insignificance of the bag but the dialogue from Ricky ??? And this bag was, like, dancing with me??? shows that he personifies the bag as a living thing. The juxtaposition between techniques shows that even superficial things represent something deeper.

Preludes and American Beauty both reflect upon their contextual values to portray the notion of the search for meaning. In conclusion, ??? Preludes??™ and ??? American Beauty??™ both encompass the search for meaning and individual isolation in society. Through utilisation of sophisticated techniques by both Eliot and Mendes, it is clear that there is a strong contextual influence on how these two notions are represented in a text. Their representations of these universal notions resonate with audiences and transcend contextual boundaries.