



AP European History 2000 Student Samples

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In the late nineteenth century, the gender roles of men and women, while still rigid, had changed somewhat from what the poem suggests particularly among the upper and lower classes. The poem accurately reflects gender roles in middle-class life.

Among the upper class, the final two lines "Man with the head and ~~the~~ woman from the heart: / Man to command woman to obey," ring less accurate. By the late nineteenth century, it was important for women to be decently educated in order to marry well, their chief function. Thus a number of finishing schools for women emerged and more women were schooled. Also, a suffragette movement had started in England and gained the right to vote by the close of the nineteenth century. Suffrage is a key means of power and when women won the right to vote, the need to obey men, particularly those in office diminished drastically.

Lower class and working class women would find the first two lines, "Man for the field and woman for the hearth: / Man for the sword and for the needle she:" inaccurate. A majority of these women had to work outside the home in factory jobs to keep the family fed and clothed. Men continued to do much of the fighting of wars but women's work was no longer purely domestic. At factories women operated heavy machinery and did other heavy jobs.

The middle classes, those where a man could make enough money to support his family without his wife working but money was not plentiful enough to 'waste' on educating a girl this poem rings the most true. Because these women did not have to work, they didn't. They stayed by the hearth and took care of the domestic duties. As they were not educated, intuition or the heart became their chief means of knowledge. As the most conservative class, the middle class would most have reflected this poem.

Group 2
Question 6

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

Thus depending on your class, this poem describes your views and life in a varying degree of accuracy. To an upper or working class woman the poem rings only somewhat true, for different reasons. A middle class woman would largely find the poem to describe her life in the late nineteenth century.

In the late nineteenth century, gender roles for European men and women were undergoing some changes. The old custom that women stay home and tend to children was being altered by the Industrial Revolution. They still were considered inferior, but they were given more opportunity to leave the home for work.

When producing goods in the home or on farms was no longer a sufficient source of income, many families were forced to move to cities where work in factories had become available. Before, women had worked beside their husbands on farms as well as caring for children, cooking, cleaning, and producing hand-made goods to sell. She was expected to obey and do what it took to help the family survive. This is somewhat different from the common image of a woman who did nothing but domestic chores, but the idea is the same. The woman obeyed her husband and assumed an inferior position.

With the Industrial Revolution, women could no longer limit themselves to housework. They had to work in factories, often separated from their husbands. This did not mean that they had more rights or respect. But they were a more active participant in bringing in the family's income. Of course, so were small children, so that didn't imply much about their social standing.

The old idea that a woman must never work outside the home was being blocked out by extreme poverty and necessity. It was probably not enjoyable for the man who had to let his "weaker" wife join the workforce. It is even doubtful that it was a blessing for the woman who suffered injury and disease because of the horrible working conditions.

The man did not lose his position as head of the family because of this new working situation. Nor did women get to stop

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taking care of the house during the few hours when they were not working.

The late ~~19~~ nineteenth century did bring about the need for women to leave the confines of the home and venture into the working world. It did not, however, destroy the customary patriarchal ~~structure~~ structure of the family.