

Discuss the literary tradition of narrative poetry, placing "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" within that tradition. Compare and contrast "The Pied Piper" and "The Mayor" in the narrative poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin". Discuss the morality of The Pied Piper's actions

In this essay I am going to look, at the literary traditions of Narrative poetry. I am going to look at the Pied Piper of Hamelin in this context and I am going to compare and contrast the two main characters in this poem and I will discuss the morality of the Pied Piper's actions.

Narrative poetry is poetry that tells a story about anything from, The Pipe Piper of Hamelin, to The 'Green Eye or the Little Yellow God'. They were stories that were written for simple people, and not many people could read, or write, so the only way for news and stories to travel were by wondering minstrels. Who wrote ballads for people. They used simple and strong rhymes, rhythm, repetition and word choice. Most ballad were written in four line stanzas, for easy rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. Professional minstrels. They were a present to the people at all sorts of venues, like wakes, markets, feasts, fairs, town meeting, etc, where people would hear about the latest news and stories.

People then took it upon themselves to learn the ballad off by heart. They were then passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. But they only passed it down from word of mouth from the 14th century to the 16th century, this was because in about 1920 the printing press was invented. This is when poets could print their poems on broadside sheets. This shows that the Pied Piper of Hamelin is a narrative poem because minstrels, only printed poems that tell stories i.e. narrative poetry.

The Pied Piper's physical appearance can be describe as "the strangest figure," (line 56)because of what he wore " His queer long coat from heel to head was half of yellow and half of red," (lines 57 to 58) and " a scarf of red and yellow stripe, to match with his coat of the self same cheque; and at the scarf's end hung a pipe." (lines 81 to 83) This shows that he was not from Hamelin, because on line 25 it says that people wore ermine gowns and things that are plain " to think we buy gowns lined with ermine" (line 25) and he wears bright bold colours. He can also be described as the "strangest figure" because of the way he looked " for example he himself was tall and thin with sharp blue eyes, each like a pin." This shows that he was healthy as he is fully grown and has not starved and his blue pin like eyes tell us that he is healthy because when you go to the doctors he looks at your eyes and mouth and if you have bright eyes and a bushy tall you are considered healthy. You are also considered healthy if you have swarthy skin as it shows that you have been out in the sun for a long time and that you have being to hotter countries which shows that he is able to move around the world therefore he was healthy enough to do so " And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin, No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin." (lines 61 to 62) " In tartary I freed the cham Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats: I eased in Asia the nazism of monstrous blood of vampire-bats" (lines 89 to 92) this also proves he's considerably travel.

The mayor on the other hand has a totally opposite physical appearance to that of the pied piper. the town's people say to him " you're old and obese," (line 29) this shows

that he was Grossly overweight and old looking, because of the diet he had “council dinners made rare havoc with claret, moselle, vin -de grave, hock.” (lines 156 to 157) “Looking little though wondrous fat; nor brighter was his eye nor moister than a too -long-opened oyster,” (lines 47 to 49) this show that he was fat and unhealthy because a too -long-opened oyster is something that it well past its best and something that is looking old and dry and shriveled and un -healthy. Also “ Anything that sounds of a rat make my heart go pit-a-pat ,” (lines 53 to 54) make him sound like he has a un -healthy heart and as if he has problems.

The Pied Piper is presented as a contented and a honest person because he goes to Hamelin and offers them a service and they take him up on it, and he completes his service to his best, “ if I can get rid your town of rats Will you give me a thousand guilders?” (lines 54 to 55) He is also a kind and polite person because he says his pleases and his thank you’s “ He advanced to the council table: and Please, your honours.” (line 70 to 71) He can also be called polite because he has manners like if you knock on a door you are meant to wait for a reply before going in, he does this “ Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap! Just as he said this, what should hap at the chamber -door but a gentle tap,” (lines 42 to 44)-- “ come in cried the mayor looking bigger : and did come the strangest figure .” (lines 55 to 56) He is also a very powerful man, he can dominate and overpower even the most dominant of people “Unable to move or sleep, or cry to the children’s’ merrily skipped by, -could only follow with the eye that joyous crowd at the pipers back”, (lines 210 - 213) this shows that the people were gripped and slightly overpowered by him. The pied piper is also honest because when the mayor offers him £50,000 guilders to get rid of the rats, on return for getting rid of the rats he only asks for 1,000. When he comes back to claim his money he still only asks for 1,000 “Will you give me a thousand guilders? ‘one take fifty thousand’ ” (lines 95 - 96)- “With a first, if you please, my thousand guilders” (line 154). This also shows he is not greedy and does not ask for what he does not need.

The Mayor’s character is presented as the opposite to that of the Pied Pipers in that he is mean, cruel and dishonest. When the pied piper comes to see him to get rid of the rats he offers him a sum of money that he cannot afford and is not willing to pay “One, take fifty thousand, was the exclamation of the astonished mayor and co -operation.” (lines 96 - 97) This shows that he is an irrational person and is willing to give everything away to someone who might be a fraud, we know he cannot pay for this as “ With at first, if you please a thousand guilders!, a thousand guilders!, the mayor looked blue so did the co-operation” (lines 154 - 156)- “but for all that guilders what we spoke of them, as you very well know. was in joke beside, our losses have made us thrive a thousand guilders! come on take fifty.” (lines 170 -173) He also likes to bully people and test people like the pied piper “ you threaten us, fellow? Do your worst blow your pipe there till you burst ,” (lines 189 to 190 .) He is also very full of him self because when the pied piper takes the children to the mountain foot he says “He never can cross that mighty top! He’s forced to let the piping drop, and we shall see our children stop!” But as we know he went into mountain.

I think the Pied Pipers actions were not justified, due to the fact you should never take someone’s loved ones away from family members. However, I do believe the town as a whole should have been punished in some way, because they have allocated the mayor as a spokes person for the whole town. I think that it was the mayor’s fault for the children’s disappearances due to his lack of responsibilities for his town, as it is his duty

to keep the town in order and keep the peace.

I believe the Pied Piper could have created the same effect by different means, such as, attracting other unwanted species to the town. As he said he is “able, by means of a secret charm, to draw all creatures living beneath the sun, that creep or swim or fly or run, after me so as you never saw!”

I have discussed literary tradition of narrative poetry and I have placed the Pied Piper within this. I have compared and contrasted the two main characters of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, the Mayor and the Pied Piper. I have discussed the mortality of the pipers actions, I have looked at the physical appearance of the two main characters and I have discussed the personalities of them.