

Lazarus Annotated Poetry Analysis—"The New Colossus"

Before you read the poem, read the poet's biography. List three details that might influence the poem.

1. (she was Jewish, but not a migrant)
2. (her poetry changed when violence against the Jewish people rose)
3. (she wrote this poem to welcome migrants)

As you read the poem:     Underline words/phrases that relate to historical facts  
                                   Circle words/phrases that stir up emotions  
                                   Place a question mark next to ideas that you don't recognize and may need to research

After you read the poem, answer the following questions:

1. What historical background does a reader need to better understand this poem?

(“Brazen giant of Greek fame”—Colossus of Rhodes—celebrating conquest, not welcome)

2. How does this poem relate to migration? Refer to the historical context and text of the poem.

(statue of liberty one of migrants' first sights)  
(Mother of Exiles—Jews leaving their homelands—journey--acceptance)  
(world-wide welcome? Does this reflect American sentiment?—reception/reaction)  
(Give me...tired...poor...huddled masses yearning to be free—push factor)  
(Send...the homeless—push factor)  
(golden door—land of opportunity/dreams—pull factor)

3. Look at the words you circled as stirring up emotions. What emotions do those words make you feel? Are those more negative, or more positive? Both?

4. What might the poet be persuading you to think about migration and/or migrants? Write your responses in a sentence.

(The poet wants the reader to feel negative emotions about the migrants. They are tired, wretched, homeless tempest-tossed.)

(The poet wants the reader to feel negative emotions about the place the migrants left. They are brazen, conquering, pompous.)

(The poet wants the reader to feel positive emotions about the Statue of liberty, symbol of America. She is a mighty woman, with mild eyes and a world-wide welcome)

5. Based on your analysis, write a sentence expressing the poet's message

(The poet is welcoming migrants, regardless of their circumstances (exile, poverty, homelessness) to America, the land of freedom and opportunity)

6. What did you learn by analyzing this poem?

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