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English 2003

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### Advice from William Wordsworth to future Architects

In the sonnet “Composed Upon Westminster Bridge”, William Wordsworth depicts the Westminster Bridge as a beautiful creation. “A sight so touching in its majesty,” (line 3). Not only is the bridge a piece of art, but it’s also being compared to royal status. In my perspective, Wordsworth’s sonnet can be viewed as a critic comment to the architect behind the so called “majesty”. City Tech students majoring in architecture can benefit from the poem, they could think about how civilians are going to be affected by a building just like Wordsworth was. Not only does the poem provide us with a strong observation about the beauty of the bridge, but it provides inspiration to future architects by the emotions that the Westminster Bridge makes the speaker feel.

When designing a structure it’s important to inspect the landscape it’s going to be placed on because there are many components, that have to be managed before setting a foundation. For example, water, hills, etc, which is a factor that the speaker doesn’t know about, but successfully manages to mention in line 12, “The river glideth at his own sweet will.” He has given the bridge a human like action by saying it’s standing on its own will over the river. I strongly agree with the speaker when he says the bridge stands on its own will because what that translates to is that the foundation of the bridge is strong causing it to stay in place. The Westminster Bridge is located over the Thames River in London, and has been around for many years. The architect who is

behind the work of the model had to include the river as an obstacle because without the right materials the bridge would get mold and fungus causing the dry out of the structure, which wouldn't allow the bridge to stand up for a long period.

The speaker provides a strong emotion throughout the sonnet, that can be used as inspiration for future architect graduates. "The beauty of the morning; silent bare/ ships, towers, domes, theaters and temples lie," (lines 5-6). The audience is being told how the view from the bridge looks like in the morning. I believe that the tone of the speaker is very calm when he mentions that that morning is silent and as he views all the surroundings with amusement he doesn't fail to describe all the types of mankind structures that have been created. If all these standing buildings were possible to create the City Tech architecture program students are capable of creating similar structures and more. The speaker observes domes around him which is a type of shape, shapes are factors also needed to execute the design of a structure. In the processes of designing, an architect develops a technique by using different shapes to give even more detail to the object. The variation of shapes may had cause the designer of the Westminster Bridge to have arcs and distinguish itself from other bridges.

It's important to create something that stands out, but that also compliments its surroundings. I think that's a very good advice and from an architect view it's a good strategy to keep in mind. When the speaker provides detail about the view and the creations he mentions "This City now doth, like a garment wear," (line 4). Meaning that the city is like a model and the main accessory is its structures around that complement the city. The speaker is correct it would be weird to place a bridge on the dessert or scaffolding on the top of a mountain. When I place myself in the shoes of an architect I view the location and adaption. First one must create a structure that is going to remain still in the climate where it's located in, but once there's a solid

physical structure it takes away attention from the landscape. That's why it's important for mankind creations to compliment nature's creation.

Fellow students in the architect program at City Tech, whenever there's a situation in which you're feeling stuck it could be helpful to read the sonnet written by William Wordsworth. You can interpret the speaker's word in many ways, as I did. The sonnet can inspire you maybe to design different structures that have not yet been built. The speaker also provides good feedback, imagine that the designer of the Westminster Bridge is you, take notes on the speaker's reaction to the landscape, surroundings, and weather. Wanting a fascinating reaction like the speaker's may help motivate yourself to strive for a similar reaction for your own creation. However, if the speaker doesn't send any type of message or inspiration you can read it to get rid of any stress. "Open unto the fields, and to the sky/ All bright and glittering in the smokeless air/ Never did sun more beautifully steep/ In his first splendor, valley rock or hill/ Ne'er saw I, never felt so calm so deep," (lines 7-11). The tone of the speaker is very calm and relaxed. He mentions many natural formations which is a form that represents tranquility. It's important that no matter what kind of interpretation we get from the sonnet, to at least view it as a helpful comment from a civilian. Many people are going to criticize, but there's always positive words just like the speaker's. For those pursuing an architecture major I highly recommend the poem as it might help with the next few years.