

Romanticism literature review examples

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



In England, the ground for Romanticism was prepared in the latter half of the eighteenth century through the economic, political, and cultural transformations. The system of absolute government crumbled even earlier in Britain than elsewhere; nationalistic sentiment sharpened, imperialistic endeavors widened, and the century saw an increasing growth of periodical literature which catered to the middle classes. The ideas of neoclassical, such as decorum, order, normality of experience, and moderation were increasingly displaced by an emphasis on individual experience. The moral function of the literature was increasingly counterbalanced by an emphasis on aesthetic pleasure and the psychology of the reader's response to beauty and sublimity.

An emphasis on originality and genius supplanted the primacy of imitation of classical authors or nature. Thinkers such as Locke, Hume, and Burke had been instrumental in these shifts of taste and philosophical orientation. Critics such as Edward Young, William Duff, and Joseph Warton produced influential treatises.

The early British practitioners of Romanticism included Thomas Gray, Oliver Goldsmith, and Robert Burns. The English movement reached its most mature expression in the work of William Wordsworth, who saw nature as embodying a universal spirit, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge who drawing on the work of Kant, Fichte and Schelling gave archetypal formulation to the powers of poetic imagination. Like their European counterparts, the English Romantics reacted at first favorably to the French Revolution and saw their own cultural and literary program as revolutionary.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) is the poet most closely associated with the Romantic Movement, and his lyrics 'Lyrical Ballads' published jointly with Coleridge in 1798, articulates some of the key percepts of Romanticism: the definition of poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; the understanding of the poet as a man speaking to men in the language of common men were the appropriate subject for poetry. Wordsworth had a lengthy career stretching from 1780s (first poem, Sonnet on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress) to the 1840s. Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth to a relatively prosperous family, however the early death of his mother and father ruined family financially and he suffered financial hardships which shaped his early political radicalism. The separation of Wordsworth from his French mistress due to outbreak of war between England and France in 1793 marked the onset of productive creative period which saw the publication of important early poems such as The Ruined Cottage (1797) and Tintern Abbey (1798), also marked the beginning of his collaboration with Coleridge. The work of Wordsworth, like that of every other great romanticist, is self-centered. He wrote two long autobiographical poems; The Prelude, which is invaluable as a picture of Wordsworth in the days of his youth; and The Excursion, more philosophical yet less inspired. His shorter poems, particularly the Sonnets maintained the high standard of excellence until after 1820.

The poem To a Highland Girl hold in suspension almost all the elements, both of subject matter and of poetic atmosphere, that the romantic poet holds dear. This poem is a famous lyrical ballad of the Wordsworth, the poet's poem are constituted of the nature elements and the poem is interspersed

with the elements of nature like rocks, earthly dower, trees, water and others. The highland girl's beauty and innocence is compared to the elements of nature to describe her complete and serene beauty. The poet sees a highland girl and describes her beauty to the readers. The description of her beauty presents the skill of the poet to transform a simple and humble being in utmost subject of admiration, thus illustrating the poetry theory where the elevation of modest and common theme along with grandeur of plainly lyrical grace relinquishes the neoclassical poetry's doggerel verse. Wordsworth thus explains the humble abode of the highland girl with lawn with grey lawns, trees, waterfall, and the common days of such simple living. The emotions of humanity, piousness and purity arises in the heart of poet when he says I don't know the girl or her people, still my eyes are full of tears for her as I bless her " I bless Thee, Vision as thou art / I bless thee with a human heart / God shield thee to thy latest years! / I neither know thee nor thy peers, / And yet my eyes are fill'd with tears". The poet's romanticism reflects in this lyrical ballad as the sensitivity towards human emotions, the association to nature and the original feelings are strongly interspersed in the poem. The reader visualizes the vivid image of highland girl and upholds the admiration for humble and common subject. The poet exploits the socio-historical experiences of women's subordinate position and transforms that culturally fabricated status to a natural and essential place.

Wordsworth's journey of twenty-five years in literally domains were in startling fashion varied from poetic sublime to the ridiculous inept. The major failures of his work occurred due to his too rigid application of this theory of simple diction, to his blind lack of self-criticism and to his fundamentally

deficient sense of humor. However, still there exists his works that bear the unmistakable stamp of genius and embody all the great traditions of the Romantic Movement. Such poems are To a Highland Girl and The Solitary Creeper. The sacred calling of the poet in If Thou Indeed Derive Thy Light from Heaven; the intuitive yearnings for the beautiful and undying in Immortality Ode and others are there for the romanticist to enjoy for spiritual profit and emotional pleasure. It is, indeed, as a poet of nature that Wordsworth is great, and his influence upon subsequent romantic writers has been enormous.

References

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