Romantic Poetry

The Romantic Period
1785- 1830

1789- 1815: Revolutionary and Napoleonic period in France- 1789: the Revolution begins with the assembly of the States- General in May and the storming of The Bastille on July 14- 1793: King Louis XVI executed: England joins the alliance against France- 1793-94: The Reign of Terror under Robespierre. 1804: Napoleon crowned emperor.- 1815: Napoleon defeated at Waterloo

1807: British slave trade outlawed (slavery abolished throughout the empire, including the West Indies, twenty-six years later)

1811- 20: The Regency- George, Prince of Wales, acts as regent for George III, who has been declared incurably insane

1819: Peterloo Massacre

1820: Accession of George IV

The Romantic period, though by far the shortest, is at least as complex and diverse as any other period in British literary history. For much of the twentieth century, scholars singled out five poets- Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Percy Shelley, and Keats, adding Blake belatedly to make sixth- and constructed notions of a unified Romanticism on the basis of their works. But there were problems all along even the two closer collaborators of the 1790s, Wordsworth and Coleridge would fit no single definition, Byron despised both Coleridge's philosophical speculations and Wordsworth's poetry; Shelley and Keats were at opposite poles from each other stylistically and philosophically, Blake was not at all like any of the other five.

Nowadays, although the six poets remain, by most measures of canonicity, the principal canonical figures, we recognize a greater range of accomplishments. In 1798, the year of Wordsworth and Coleridge's first *Lyrical Ballads*, neither of the authors had much of a reputation; Wordsworth was not even included among the 1,112 entries in David River's *Literary Memoirs of Living Authors of Great Britain* of that year, and *Lyrical Ballads* was published anonymously because, as Coleridge told the publisher, "Wordsworth's name is nothing- to a large number of people mine *stinks*." Some of the best regarded poets of the time were women- Anna Barbauld, Charlotte, Smith, MaryRobinson- and Wordsworth and Coleridge (junior colleagues of Robinson when she was poetry editor of the *Morning Post* in the late 1790s) looked up to them and learned their craft from them. The rest of the then- established figures were the later eighteenth century poets who are printed at the end of volume I of this anthology- Gray, Collins, Crabbe, and Cowper in particular. Only Byron, among

the now-canonical poets, was instantly famous; and Felicia Hemans and Letitia Landon ran him a close race as best-sellers. The Romantic period had a great many more participants than the six principal male poets and was shaped by a multitude of political, social, and economic changes.

REVOLUTION AND REACTION

Following a widespread practice of historians of English literature, was use "Romantic period" to refer to the span between the year 1785, the midpoint of the decade in which Samuel Johnson died and Blake, Burns, and Smith published their first poems, and 1830, by which time the major writers of the preceding century were either dead or no longer productive. This was a turbulent period, during which England experienced the ordeal of change from a primarily agricultural society, where wealth and power had been concentrated in the landholding aristocracy, to a modern industrial nation. And this change occurred in a context of revolution- first the American and then the more radical French- and of war, of economic cycles of inflation and depression, and of the constantthreat to the social structure from imported revolutionary ideologies to which the ruling classes responded by the repression of traditional liberties.
the early period of the French Revolution, marked by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the storming of the Bastille, evoked enthusiastic support from English liberals and radicals alike. Three important books epitomize the radical social thinking stimulated by the Revolution. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Man* (1790) justified the French Revolution against Edmund Burke's attack in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-92) also advocated for England a democratic republic that was to be achieved, if lesser pressures failed by popular revolution. More important as aninfluence on Wordsworth and Percy Shelley was William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), which foretold an inevitable but peaceful evolution of society to a final stage in which property would be equally distributed and government would wither away. But English sympathizers dropped off as the Revolution followed its increasingly grim course: the accession to power by Jacobin extremists, intent on purifying their new republic by purging it of its enemies; the "September Massacres" of the imprisoned nobility in 1792, followed by the execution of the king and queen; the new French Republic's invasion of the Rhineland and the Netherlands, which brought England into the war against France; the guillotining of thousands in the Reign of Terror under Robespierre; and, after the execution in theirturn of the men who had directed the Terror, the emergence of Napoleon, first as dictator them as emperor of France. As Wordsworth wrote in *The Prelude*,

become Oppressors in their turn, Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
For one of Conquest, losing sight of all
Which they had struggled for ... (11.206-09)
Napoleon, the brilliant tactician whose rise through tha ranks of the army had seemed to epitomize the egalitarian principles of the Revolution, had become an arch aggressor, a despot, and would be founder of a new imperial dynasty. By 1800 liberals found they had no side they could wholeheartedly espouse. Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815 proved to be the triumph, not of progress and reform, but of reactionary despotisms throughout continental Europe.
In England this was a period of harsh, representative measures. Public meetings were prohibited, the right if habeas corpus (the legal principle protecting individuals from arbitrary imprisonment) was suspended for the first time in over a hundred years, and advocates of even moderate political change were charged with treason. Efforts during these war years to repeal the laws that barred Protestants who did not conform to the Anglican Church from the universities and government came to nothing in the new climate of counter-revolutionary alarm, it was to portray even a slight abridgement of the privileges of the established Church as a measure that, validating the Jacobins' campaigns to de-Christianize France, would aid the enemy cause. Another earlycasualty of this counterrevolution was the movement to abolish the slave trade, a cause supported initially by a wide cross section of English society.
In the 1780 and 1790s numerous writers, both white (Barbauld, Robinson, Coleridge and Wordsworth) and black (Ottobah Cugoano and Olaudah Equiano), attacked the greed of the owners of the West Indian sugar plantations and detailed the horrors of the traffic in African flesh that provided them with their labor power. But the bloodshed that accompanied political change in France strengthened the hand of apologists for slavery, by making any manner of reform seem the prelude to violent insurrection. Parliament rejected a bill abolishing the trade in 1791, and sixteen years- marked by slaves rebellions and by the planters'' brutal reprisals-elapsed before it passed a new version of the bill.
The frustration of the abolitionist cause is an emblematic chapter in the larger story, of how a reactionary government sacrificed hopes of reform while it mobilized the nation's resources for war. Yet this was the very time when economic and social changes were creating a desperate need for corresponding changes in political arrangements.
For one thing, new classes inside England- manufacturing rather than agricultural-were beginning to demand a voice in government proportionate to their wealth. The "Industrial Revolution"- the shift in manufacturing that

resulted from the invention of power driven machinery to replace hand labor-had begun in the mid-eighteenth centurywith improvements in machines for processing textiles, and was given immense impetus when James Watt perfected the steam engine in1765. In the succeeding decades steam replaced wind and water as the primary source of power for all sorts of manufacturing processes, beginning that dynamic of ever accelerating, economic expansion and technological development that we still identify as the hallmark of the modern age. A new laboring population massed in sprawling mill towns such as Manchester, whose population increased by a factor of five in fifty years. In agricultural communities the destruction of home industry was accompanied by the acceleration of the process of enclosing open fields and wastelands (usually, in fact, "commons" that had provided the means of subsistence for entire communities) and incorporating them into larger, privately owned holdings. Enclosure was by and large necessary for the more efficient methods of agriculture required to feed the nation's growing population (although some of the land that the wealthy acquired through parliamentary acts of enclosure they in fact incorporated into their private estates). But enclosure was socially destructive, breaking up villages, creating a landless class who either migrated to the industrial towns or remained as farm laborers, subsisting on starvation wages and the little they could obtain from parish charity. The landscape of England began to take on its modern appearance- the hitherto open rural areas subdivided into a checkerboard of fields enclosed by hedges and stone walls, with the factories of the cities casting a pall of smoke overvast areas of cheaply built houses and slum tenements. Meanwhile, the population was increasingly polarized into what Disraeli later called the "Two Nations"—the two classes of capital and labor, the rich and the poor.

No attempt was made to regulate this shift from the old economic world to the new, since even liberal reformers were committed to the philosophy of laissez-faire. This theory of "let alone," set out in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, holds that the general welfare can be ensured only by the free operation of economic laws; the government should maintain a policy of strict noninterference and leave people to pursue, unfettered, their private interests. On the one hand, laissez-fair thinking might have helped pave the way for the long-postponed emancipation ofthe slave population of the West Indies; by 1833, when Parliament finally ended slavery, the anomaly that their unfree labor represented for the new economic and social orthodoxies evidently had become intolerable. But for the great majority of the laboring class at home, the results of laissez-fair and the "freedom" of contract it secured were inadequate wages and long hours of work under harsh discipline and in sordid conditions. Investigators reports on the coal mines, where male and female children of ten

or even five years of age were harnessed to heavy coal sledges that they dragged by crawling on their hands and knees, reads like scenes from Dante's *Inferno*. With the end of the war in 1815, the nation's workforce was enlarged by demobilized troops at the very moment when demand for manufactured goods, until now augmented by theneeds of the military, fell dramatically. The result was an unemployment crisis that persisted through the 1820s. Since the workers had no vote and were prevented by law from unionizing, their only recourses were petitions, protest meetings, and riots, to which the ruling class responded with even more repressive measures. The introduction of newmachinery into the mills resulted in further loss of jobs, provoking sporadic attempts by the displaced workers to destroy the machines. After one such outbreak of "Luddite" machine breaking the House of Lords- despite Byron's eloquent protest- passed a bill (1812) making death the penalty for destroying the frames used for weaving in stocking industry. In 1819 hundreds of thousands of workers organized meetings to demand parliamentary reform. In August of that year, a huge but orderlyassembly at St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, was charged by saber- wielding troops, who killed nine and severely injured hundreds more; this was the notorious "Peterloo Massacre," so named with sardonic reference to the Battle of Waterloo, and condemned by Shelley in his poem for the working class "England in 1819."

Suffering was largely confined to the poor, however, while the landed classes and industrialists prospered. So did many merchants, who profited from the new markets opened up as the British Empire expanded aggressively, compensating with victories against the French for the traumatic loss of America in 1783. England's merchants profited, too, thanks to the marketing successes that, over time, converted once- exotic imports from these colonies into everyday fare for the English. In the eighteenth centurytea and sugar had been transformed in this way, and in the nineteenth century other commodities followed suit the Indian muslin, for instance, that was the fabric of choice for gentlemen's cravats and fashionable ladies' gowns, and the laudanum (Indian opium dissolved in alcohol) that so many ailing writers of the period appear to have found irresistible. The West End of London and new seaside resorts like Brighton became in the early nineteenth century consumers' paradises, sites where West Indian planters and nabobs (a Hindi word that entered English as a name for those who owed their fortunes to Indian gain) could be glimpsed displaying their purchasing power in a manner that made them moralists favorite examples of nouveau riche vulgarity. The word *shopping* came to English usage, in this era. Luxury villas sprang up in London, and theprince regent, who in 1820 became George IV, built himself palaces and pleasure domes, retreats from his not very onerous public responsibilities.

But even, or especially, in private life at home, the prosperous could not escape being touched by the great events of this period. French revolutionary principles were feared by English conservatives almost as much for their challenge to the "proper" ordering of the relations between men and women as for their challenge to traditional political arrangements. Yet the account of what it meant to be English that developed in reaction to this challenge- an account emphasizing the special virtues of the English sense of home and family- was in its way equally revolutionary. The war that the English waged almost without intermission between 1793 and 1815 was one that in an unprecedentedmanner had a "home front" the menaced sanctuary of the domestic fireside became the symbol of what the nation's military might was safeguarding. What popularity the monarchy held on to during this turbulent period was thus a function not of the two King Georges' traditional exercise of a monarch's sovereign powers but instead of the publicity, tailored to suit this nationalist rhetoric , the emphasized each one's domestic bliss within a "royal family," Conceptions of proper femininity altered as well under the influence of this new idealization and nationalization of the home, this project (as Burke put it) of "binding up the constitution of country without dearest domestic ties."

And that alteration both put new pressures on women and granted them newopportunities. As in earlier English history, women in the Romantic period were provided only limited schooling were subjected to a rigid code of sexual bahaviour, and (especially after marriage) were bereft of legal rights. In this period women began, as well, to be deluged by books, sermons, and magazine articles that insisted vehemently on the physical and mental differences between the sexes and instructed women that, because of these differences, they should accept that their roles in life involved child rearing, housekeeping, and nothing more. (Of course, in rendering this advice promoters of female domesticity conveniently ignored the definitions of duty that industrialists imposed on the poor women, who worked in their mills.) Yet a paradoxical byproduct of the connections that the new nationalist rhetoric forged between thewell-being of the state and domestic life was that the identity of the patriot became one a woman might attempt, with some legitimacy, to claim. Within the framework created by the new accounts of English national identity a woman's private virtues now had a public relevance. They had to be seen a crucial to the nation's welfare. Those virtues might well be manifested in the work of raising patriotic sons, but, as the thousands of women in this period who made their ostensibly natural feminine feelings of pity their alibi for participation in abolitionism demonstrated, they could be turned to nontraditional uses as well.

The new idea that, as the historian Linda Colley has put it, a woman's place was not simply in the home but also in the nation could also justify or at least

extenuate theaffront to proper feminine modesty represented by publication by a woman's entry into the public sphere of authorship. "Bluestockings" educated women- remained targets of masculine scorn. This became, nonetheless, the first era in literary history in which women writers began to compete with men in their numbers, sales, and literary reputations just in the category of poetry, some nine hundred women are listed in J.R. de Jackson's comprehensive bibliography, *Romantic Poetry by Women*. These female authors had to tread carefully, to be sure, to avoid suggesting that (as one male critic fulminated) they wished the nation's "affectionate wives, kind mothers, and lovely daughters" to be metamorphosed into "studious philosophers" and "busy politicians." And figures like Wollstonecraft, who in the *Vindication of the rights of woman* graftedradical proposal about gender equality onto a more orthodox argument about the education women needed to be proper mothers, remained exceptional. Later women writers tended cautiously to either ignore her example or define themselves against it.

Only in the Victorian period would Wollstonecraft's cause of women's rights rally enough support for substantial legal reform to being, and that process would not be completed until the twentieth century. In the early nineteenth century the pressures for political reform focused on the rights of men, as distinct from women. Middle-class and working-class men, entering into strategic and short-lived alliances, made the restructuring of the British electoral system their common cause. Finally, at a time of acute economic distress, and after unprecedented disorders that threatened to break outinto revolution, the first Reform Bill was passed in 1832. It did away with the rotten boroughs (depopulated areas whose seats in the House of Commons were at the disposal of a few noblemen), redistributed parliamentary representation to include the industrial cities, and extended the franchise. Although about half the middle class, almost all the working class, and all women remained without a vote, the principle of the peaceful adjustment of conflicting interests by parliamentary majority had been firmly established. Reform was to go on, by stage, until Britain acquired universal adult suffrage in 1928.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Writers working in the period 1785-1830 did not think of themselves as "Romantic"; the word was not applied until half a century later, by English historians. Contemporary reviewers treated them as independent individuals, or else grouped them (often maliciously, but with some basis in fact) into a number of separate schools; the "Lake School" of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Robert Southey; the "Cockney School," a derogatory term for the Londoners Leigh

Hunt, William Hazlitt, and associated writers, including Keats; and the "Satanic School" of Percy Shelley, Byron, and their followers. Many writers, however, felt that there was something distinctive about their time- not a shared doctrine or literary quality, but a pervasive a intellectual and imaginative climate, which some of them called "the spirit of the age." They had the sense that (as Keats wrote) "Great spirits now on earth are sojourning," and that there was evidence of the experimental boldness that marks a literary renaissance. In his" Defence of Poetry" Shelley claimed that the literature of the age "has arisen as it were from a new birth," and that "an electric life burns" within the words of its best writers, "less their spirit than the spirit of the age." He explainded this spirit as an accompaniment of revolution, and others agreed. Francis Jeffrey, the foremost conservative reviewer of the day connected "the revolution in our literature" with "the agitations of the FrenchRevolution, and the discussions as well as the hopes and terrors to which it gave occasion." Hazlitt, who devoted a series of essays, entitled *The Spirit of the Age* to assessing his contemporaries, maintained that the new poetry of the school of Wordsworth "had its origin in the French Revolution."

The imagination of many Romantic-period writers was preoccupied with revolution, and from that fact and idea they derived the framework that enabled them to think of themselves as inhabiting a distinctive period in history. The deep familiarity that many late-eighteenth-century Englishmen and women had with the prophetic writings of the Bible contributed from the start to their readiness to attribute a tremendous significance to the political transformations set in motion in 1789. Religious belief predisposedmany to view these convulsions as something more than local historical events and to cats them instead as harbingers of a new age in the history of *all* human beings. Seeing the hand of God in the events in French and understanding those events as the fulfillment of prophecies of the coming millennium came easily to figures such as Barbauld, Coleridge, Wollstonecraft, and, above all Blake: all were affiliated with the traditions of radical Protestant Dissent, in which accounts of the imminence of the Apocalypse and coming of the Kingdom of God had long been central. A quarter-century later, their millenarian interpretation of the Revolution would be recapitulated by radical writers such as Percy Shelley and Hazlitt, who, though they, tended to place their faith in notions of progress and the diffusion of knowledge and intended toidentify a rational citizenry and not God as the moving force of history, were just as convinced as their predecessors were that the Revolution had marked humanity'schance to start history over again (a chance that had been lost but was perhaps recoverable).Another method that writers of this period took when they sought to salvage the millennial granting a crucial role to the creative imagination. Some writers

rethought apocalyptic transformation so that it no longer depended on the political action of collective humanity but depended instead (in a shift from the external to the internals) on the individual consciousness. The new heaven and earth promised in the prophecies could, in this account, be gained by the individual who had achieved a new, spiritualized, and visionary way of seeing. An apocalypse of the imagination couldliberate the individual from time, from what Blake called the "mind-forg'd manacles" of imprisoning orthodoxies and from what Percy Shelley called "the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions."

Wordsworth, whose formulations of this notion of as revolution in imagination would prove immensely influential, wrote in *The Prelude* the classic description of the spirit of the early 1790s. "Europe at that time was thrilled with joy. /France standing on top of the golden hours, / And human nature seeming born again" (6.340-42). "Not favored spots alone, but the whole earth. /The beauty wore of promise" (6.117-18). Something of this sense of possibility and anticipation of spiritual regeneration (captured in that phrase "born again") survived the disenchantment with politics that Wordsworthexperienced later in the decade. His sense of the emancipator opportunities brought in by the new historical momentcarried over to the year 1797, when working in tandem, he and Coleridge revolutionized the theory and practice of poetry. The product of their exuberant daily discussions was the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798.

POETIC THEORY AND POETIC PRACTICE

Wordsworth undertook to justify those poems by means of a critical manifesto, or statement of poetic principles, which appeared first as a short Advertisement in the original *Lyrical Ballads* and then as an extended Preface to the second edition in 1800, which he enlarged still further in the third edition of 1802.

In it he set himself in opposition to the literary ancient regime, those writers of the eighteenth century who, in his view, had imposed on poetry artificial conventions that distorted its free and natural expression. Many of Wordsworth's later critical writings were attempts to clarify, buttress, qualify points made in this first declaration. Coleridge said that the Preface was "half a child of my own brain"; and although he developed doubts about some of Wordsworth's unguarded statements, he did not question the rightness of Wordsworth's attempt to overthrow the reigning tradition. Of course, many writers in eighteenth-century England had anticipated Wordsworth's attempt, as well as the definitions of the "authentic" language of poetry it assumed. Far from unprecedented, efforts to displace the authority of a poet such as Pope can be datedback to only a few years after Pope's death in 1744; by 1800 readers

were accustomed to hear, for instance, that Pop's propensities for satire had derailed true poetry by elevating wit over feeling. Moreover, the last half of the eighteenth century, a time when philosophers and moralists highlighted in new ways the role that emotional sensitivity ("sensibility") plays in mental and social life, had seen the emergence of many of the critical concepts, as well as a number of the poetic subjects and forms, that later would be exploited by Wordsworth and his contemporaries.
Wordsworth's Preface nevertheless deserves reputation as a turning point in literary history, for Wordsworth gathered isolated ideas, organized them into a coherent theory, and made them the rationale for his own We can safely use concepts in the Preface as points of departure for survey of some of the distinctive elements in the poetry of the Romantic period- especially if we bear in mind that during this era of revolution definitions of good poetry, like definitions of the good society, were sure to create as much contention as consensus.

The Concept of the Poet and the Poem
Seeking a stable foundation on which social institutions might be constructed, eighteenth-century British philosophers had devoted much energy to demonstrating that human nature must be everywhere the same , because it everywhere derived from individuals' shared sensory experience of an external world that could be objectively represented. As the century went on, however, philosophers began emphasizing- andachievements.

poets began developing a new language for- individual variations in perception and the capacity the receptive consciousness has to filter and to re-create reality. This was the shift Wordsworth registered when in the reface he located the source of a poem not in outer nature but in the psychology of the individual poet, and specified that the essential materials of a poem were not the external people and events it represented but the inner feelings of the author or external objects only after these have been transformed by the author's feelings. Wordsworth in 1802 described all good poetry as, at the moment of composition, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Other Romantic theories concurred by referring to the mind, emotions, and imagination of the poet for the origin, content and defining attributes of a poem.

Using a metaphor that parallels Wordsworth "overflow," and that Wordsworth revive in a late poem, Mary Robinson and Coleridge identified some of their key poems of the 1790s as "effusions" – ardent outpourings of feeling. Coleridge subsequently drew on German precedents and introduced into

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English criticism an account of the organic form of literary works; in this account the work is conceptualized as a self-originating and self-organizing process, parallel to the growth of a plant., that begins with a seed like idea in the poet's imagination, grows by assimilating both the poet's feelings and the materials of sensory experience, and evolves into an organic whole in which the parts are integrally related to each other and to the whole. In keeping with the view that poetry expresses the poet's feelings, the lyric poem written in the first person, which formuch of literary history was regarded as a minor kind, became a major Romantic form and was often described as the most essentially poetic of all the genres. And in most Romantic lyrics the "I" is no longer a conventionally typical lyric speaker, such as the Petrarch an lover or Cavalier gallant of Elizabethan and seventeenth-century love poems, but one who shares recognizable traits with the poet. The experiences and states of mind expressed by the lyric speaker often accord closely with the known facts of the poet's life and the personal confession in the poet's letters and journals. This reinvention of the lyric complicated established understanding of the gender of authorship. It may not be an accident, some cities suggest, that Wordsworth in the Preface defines poetry as "the real language of men" and the Poet as a "man speaking to men": Wordsworthian who began to publish when women such as Robinson and Charlotte Smith occupied the vanguard of the new personal poetry, might have decided that to establish the distinctiveness of his project he needed to counterbalance his emphasis on his feelings with an emphasis on those feeling "manly" dignity. This is not to say that women writer's relationship to the new ideas about poetry was straightforward either. In one of her preface Smith says that she anticipates being criticized for "bringing forward with querulous egotism, the mention of myself." For many female poets the other challenge those ideas about poetry posed might have consisted in their potential to reinforce the old, prejudicial idea that their sex- traditionally seen as creatures of feeling rather thanintellect- wrote about their own experiences because they were capable of nothing else. For male poets the risks of poetic self-revelation were different- and in some measure they were actively seized by those who, like Coleridge and Shelly, intimated darklythat the introspective tendency and sensitivity that made someone a poet could also lead him to melancholy and madness.

It was not only the lyric that registered these new accounts of the poet. Byron confounded his contemporaries' expectations about which poetic genre was bests suited to self-revelation by inviting his audience to equate the heroes of *Childe Harold, Manfred and Don Juan* with their author, and to see these tensional protagonists' experiences as disclosing the deep truths of his secret. Wordsworth's*Prelude* represents an extreme instance of this tendency to self-

reference. Though the poem is of epic length and seriousness, its subject is not, as is customary in an epic, history on a world changing scale but the growth of the poet's mind.

The Prelude exemplifies two other important tendencies. Like Blake, Coleridge in early poems, and later on Shelley, Wordsworth presents himself as in his words, "a chosen son" or "Bard." That is, he assumes the persona of a poet-prophet, a composite figure modeled on Milton, the biblical prophets, and figures of a national music, the harp playing patriots, Cletic or Anglo- Saxon, who, eighteenth-century poets and antiquarians had located in a legendry Dark Age Britain. Adopting this bardic guise, Wordsworth puts himself forward as a spokesman for civilization at a time of crisis- atime, as Wordsworth said in *The Prelude* of the "melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown." (Spokesman is appropriate here: almost always, the bardic poet prophet was a distinctively male persona.) *The Prelude* is also an instance of a central literary form of English, as of European, Romanticism-a long work about the crisis and renewal of the self, recounted as the story of an interior journey taken in quest of one's true identity and destined spiritual home and vacation. Blake's Milton, Keats's *Endymion* and *Fall of Hyperion*, and in Victorian poetry, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* also exemplify this form. Late in the period there are equivalent developments in prose: spiritual autobiographies (Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Easer*) undergo a revival, at the same timeLamb and Hazlitt rediscover the essay as a medium of self revelation.

Spontaneity and the Impulses of Feeling

Wordsworth defined good poetry not merely as the overflow but as the "*spontaneous* overflow" of feelings. In traditional poetics, poetry had been regarded as supremely an art- an art that in modern times is practiced by poets who have assimilated classical precedents, are aware of the "rules" governing the kind of poem they are writing, and (except for the happy touches that, as pope said, are "beyond the reach of art") deliberately employ tested means to achieve premeditated effects on an audience. But to Wordsworth, although the composition of a poem originates from "emotion recollected in tranquility" and may be preceded and followed by reflection, the immediate act ofcomposition must be spontaneous- arising from impulse and free from rules. Keats listed as an "axiom" a similar proposition- that "if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all." Other Romantics voiced similar declarations of artistic independence from inherited precepts, sometimes in a manner involving, paradoxically, a turn from the here and now toward a remote,

preliterate, and primitive pats. If the ancient bard was a charismatic figure for many Romantics, this was in part because imagining the songs he might have sung made it easier to think about an alternative to the mundane language of modernity- about a natural, oral poetry, blissfully unconscious of modern decorums. (Though they chafed against this expectation, writers from the rural working class- Burns and later John Clare- could be expected, by virtue of their perceived distance from the restraint and refinement of civilized discourse, to play a comparable role inside modern culture, that of peasant poet or natural genius.) When, after waterloo, writers like Byron, Hunt, and the Shelley traveled to Italy, taking these bardic ideals with them, they became enthralled with the arts of the improvisator and improvisatrice, men and women whose electrifying oral performances of poetry involved no texts but those of immediate inspiration. One of the writers who praised and emulated that rhapsodic spontaneity, Percy, thought it "an error to assert that the finest passage of poetry are produced by labor and study." he suggested instead that these were the products of an unconscious creativity: "A greatstatus or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb."
The emphasis in this period on the spontaneous activity of the imagination is linked to a belief (which links the Romantics' literary productions to the poetry and fiction of sensibility written earlier n the eighteenth century) in the essential role of passion, whether in the province of art, philosophy, or morality. The intuitive feelings of "the heart" had to supplement the judgments of the purely logical faculty, "the head." "Deep thinking," Coleridge wrote, "is attainable only by a man of deep feeling"; hence "a metaphysical solution that does not tell you something in the heart is grievously to be suspected as apocryphal."

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Wordsworth identified *Lyrical Ballads* as his effort to counteract the degradation in taste that had resulted from "the increasing accumulation of men in cities": the revolution in style he proposed in the Preface was meant in part to undo the harmful effects of urbanization. Because he and many fellow writers kept their distance from city life, and because natural scenes so often provide the occasions for their writing, Romantic poetry for present- day readers has become almost synonymous with "nature poetry." In the Essay that supplements his Preface, Wordsworth portrays himself as remedying the failings of predecessors who, he argues, were unable truthfully to depict natural phenomena such as moonlit sky: from Dryden to Pope, he asserts, there are almost no images of external nature "from which it can be inferred that the eye

of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his objet." Neither Romantic theory nor practice, however, justifies the opinion that Romantic poets valued description for its own sake, though many poems of the period are almost unmatched in their ability to capture the sensuous nuances of natural scene, and the writers participated enthusiastically in the touring of picturesque scenery that was a new leisure activity of their age. But in the Essay Supplementary to the Preface, Wordsworth's complaint against eighteenth- century poetic imagery continues: take an image from an early eighteenth century poem, and it will show no sign either, he says that the Poet's "feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination." For Wordsworth the ability toobserve objects accurately is a necessary but no sufficient condition for poetry, "as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects." And while many of the great Romantic lyrics- Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," Keats's "Nightingale," Smith's *Beachy Head* remark on an aspect or a change of aspect in the natural scene, this serves only as stimulus to the most characteristic human activity, that of thinking. The longer Romantic "nature poems" are in fact usually meditative, using the presented scene to suggest a personal crisis; the organizing principle of the poem involves that crisis's development and resolution.

In addition, Romantic poems habitually endow the landscape with human life, passion, and expressiveness. Many poets respond to the outer universe as a vital entity that participates in the feeling of the observer (an idea of sympathetic exchange between nature and humanity that Mary Shelley, however, would probe fiercely in her novel *The Last Man*). James Thomson and other descriptive poets of the eighteenth century had depicted the created universe as giving direct access to the deity. In "Tintern Abbey" and other poems, Wordsworth not only exhibits toward the landscape attitudes and sentiments that human beings had earlier felt for God; he also loves it in the way human beings love a father, a mother, or a beloved. Still, there was a competing sense, evident especially in the poetry of Blake and Percy Shelley; the natural objects were meaningful primarily for the correspondences linking them to an inner or spiritual world. In their poems a rose, a sunflower, a cloud, or a mountain is presented not as something to be observed and imaged but as an object imbued with significance beyond itself: "I always seek in what I see," Shelley said, "the likeness of something beyond the present and tangible object." And by Bspurned "as the dust upon my feet, no part of me." Annotating a copy of Wordsworth's 1815 *Poems*, Blake deplored what *he* perceived as Wordsworth's commitment to unspiritualized observation: "Nature objects always did and now do weaken, deaden, and obliterate imagination in men."

Romantic Poetry

The Glorification of the Ordinary

Also discussing Wordsworth, Hazlitt declared his school of poetry the literary equivalent of the French Revolution, which translated political change into poeticalexperiment. “King and queens were dethroned from their rank and station in legitimate tragedy or epic poetry, as they were decapitated elsewhere ... The paradox [these poets] set out with was that all things are by nature, equally fit subjects for poetry, or that if there is any preference to give, those that are the meanest [i.e. most humble] and most unpromising are the best.” Hazlitt had in mind Wordsworth’s statement that the aim of *Lyrical Ballads* was “to choose incidents and situations from common life” and to use “language really spoken by men”: for Wordsworth’s polemical purposes, it is in “humble and rustic life” that this language is found. Later eighteenth-century writers had already experimented with the simple treatment of simple subjects. Burns- like the young lake, mere nature, as perceived by the physical eye, wasWordsworth, a sympathizer with the Revolution- had with great success represented “the rural scenes and rural pleasures of [his] natal Soil,” and in a language aiming to be true to the rhythms of his regional Scots dialect. Women poets especially – Barbauld, Robinson, Baillie- assimilated to their poems the subject, matter of everyday life. But Wordsworth underwrote his poetic practice with a theory that inverted the traditional hierarchy of poetic genres, subjects and styles: it elevated humble life and the plain style, which in earlier theory were appropriate only for the pastoral, the genre at the bottom of the traditional hierarchy, into the principal subject and medium for poetry in genera;. And in his practice, as Hazlitt also noted, Wordsworth went further and turned for the subjects of serious poems not only to humble country folk but to the disgraced, outcast, and delinquent- “convicts, female vagrants, gypsies... idiot boys and mad mothers.” Hence the scorn of Lord Byron, who facetiously summoned ghosts from the eighteenth century to help him demonstrate that Wordsworth’s innovation, had been taking literature in the wrong direction.

“Peddlers,” and “Boats,” and “Wagons”! oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?

Yet Wordsworth’s project was not simply to represent the world as it is but, as he announced in his Preface, to throw over “situation from common life... a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.” No one can read his poems without noticing the reverence with whichhe invests words that for earlier writers had been derogatory- words such as “common,” “ordinary,” “everyday,” “humble.” Wordsworth’s aim was to shatter the lethargy of custom so as to refresh our sense of wonder in the everyday, the trivial, and the lowly. In the eighteenth

century Samuel Jonson had said that "wonder is a pause of reason"- "the effect of novelty upon ignorance." But for many Romantics, to arouse in the sophisticated mind that sense of wonder presumed to be felt by the ignorant and the innocent- to renew the universe, Percy Shelley wrote, "after it has been blunted by reiteration" – was a major function of poetry. Commenting on the special imaginative quality of Wordsworth's early verse, Coleridge remarked. "To combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances, which every day for perhaps forty yearshad rendered familiar ... this is the character and privilege of genius." Contributing to this poetry of the child's eye view, Baillie and Barbauld wrote poems centered on an observer's effort to imagine the unknowable perspective of beings for whom thought and sensation are new or not begun- in Baillie's case, a "waking infant," in Barbauld's, a "little invisible being who is expected soon to become visible" but is still in its mother's womb.

The Supernatural, the Romance, and Psychological Extremes

In most of his poems, Coleridge, like Wordsworth, dealt with everyday things, and in "Frost at Midnight" he showed how well he too could achieve the effect of wonder in the familiar. But Coleridge tells us in *Biographia Literaria* that, according to the division of labor that organized their collaboration on *Lyrical Ballads*, his assignment was to achieve wonder by a frank violation of natural laws and of the ordinary course of events; in his poems "the incidents and agents were to be in part at least, supernatural." And in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Christabel, and "Kubla Khan," Coleridge opened up to modern poetry a realm of mystery and magic. Stories of bewitching, haunting, and possession- shaped by antiquated treatises on demonology, folklore, and Gothic novels- supplied him with the means of impressing upon readers a sense of occult powers and unknown modes of being.

Materials like these were often grouped together under the rubric "romance," a term that would some time after the fact give the "romantic" period its name. On the onehand romances were writings that turned, in their quest for settings conductive to supernatural happenings, to "strange fits of passion" and strange adventures, to distant pasts, faraway places, or both Keats's perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn" or the China of "Kubla Khan." On the other hand romance also named a homegrown, native tradition of literature, made unfamiliar and alien by the passage of time. For many authors, stating with Horace Walpole, whose Castle of Otranto (1764) began the tradition of Gothic fiction, writing

under the banner of romance meant reclaiming their national birthright: a literature of untrammeled imagination associated, above all, with Spenser and Shakespeare of fairy magic and witchcraft- that had been forced underground by the enlightenment's emphasis on reason and refinement. Byron negotiated betweenromance's two sets of associations in Childe Harold, having his hero travel in far- off Albania and become entranced by the inhabitants' savage songs, but also giving the poem the subtitles "A Romaunt" (an archaic spelling of romance) and writing it in Spenserian stanzas. This was the same stanzaic form, neglected for much of the eighteenth century that Keats drew on for the *Eve of St. Agnes*, the poem in which he proved himself a master of that Romantic mode that establishes a medieval setting for events that violate our sense of realism and the natural order. The Romantic period's "medieval revival" was also promoted by women: Robinson, for instance (author of "Old English," "Monkish," and "Gothic" Tales). As well as Letitia Landon, Felicia Hemans, Joanna Baillie, and others, women who often matched the arch-medievalistSir Walter Scott in the historical learning they brought to their compositions.

The "addition of strangeness to beauty" that Walter Pater near the end of the nineteenth century would identify as a key Romantic tendency is seen not only in this concern with the exotic and archaic landscapes of romance, but also in the Romantic interest in the mysteries of mental life and determination to investigate psychological extremes. Wordsworth explored visionary states of consciousness that are common among children but violate the categories of adult judgment. Coleridge and De Quincy shared an interest in dreams and nightmare and in the altered consciousness they experienced under their addiction to opium. In his odes as in the Quasi- medieval "ballad" La Belle Dame sans Merci" Keats recorded strange mixtures of pleasure ad painwith extraordinary sensitivity, pondering the destructive aspects of sexuality and the erotic quality of the longing for death. And Byron made repeated use of the fascination of the forbidden and the appeal of the terrifying yet seductive satanic hero. There were, of course, writers who resisted these poetic engagements with fantasized landscapes and strange passions. Significant dissent came from women, who, given accounts of their sex as especially susceptible to the delusions of romantic love, had particular reason to continue the Enlightenment program and promote the rational regulation of emotion. Barbauld wrote a poem gently advising the young Coleridge not to prolong his stay in the "fairy bower" of romance but to engage actively with the world as it is. Often satirical when she assesses characters who imagine themselves the pitiable victims oftheir own powerful feelings, Jane Austen had her heroine in *Persuasion*, while conversing with a melancholy, Byron- reading young man, caution him against

overindulgence in Byron's "impassioned descriptions of hopeless agony" and "prescribe" to him a "larger allowance of prose in his daily study." And yet this heroine, having "been forced into prudence in her youth," has "learned romance as she grew older." the reversal of the sequence that usually orders the story line of female socialization suggests a receptivity to romance's allure that links even Austen to the spirit of the age.

Individualism and Alienation

Another feature of Byron's poetry that attracted notice and, in some quarters, censure was its insistence on his or his hero's self-sufficiency. Hazlitt, for instance, borrowed lines from Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* to object to Byron's habit of spurning human connection "[a]s if a man were author of himself, / And owned no other kin." the audacious individualism that Hazlitt questions here (a questioning that he carries on in part by enacting his own reliance on others and supplementing his words with Shakespeare's) was, however, central to the celebrations of creativity occupying many Romantic period writers: indeed, in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth (as if anticipating and preemptively defying Hazlit) had already characterized his poeticexperimentation as an exercise in artistic self-sufficiency. The Preface has been read as a document in which Wordsworth, proving himself a self-mae man, arranges for his disinheritance- arranges to cut himself off, he says, 'from a large portion of the phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poet." the German philosophers who generated many of the characteristic ideas of European Romanticism had likewise developed a account of how individuals might author and create themselves. In the work of Kant and others, the human mind was described as creating the universe it perceived and so creating its own experience. Mind is "not passive," Kant's admirer Coleridge write, but "made in God's image, and that too in the sublimest sense- the Image of the Creator." And Wordsworth declared in*The Prelude* that the individual mind "Doth, like an Agent of the one great mind, / Create, creator and receiver both." The Romantic period, the epoch of free enterprise, imperial expansion, and boundless revolutionary hope, was also an epoch of individualism in which philosophers and poets alike put an extraordinary high estimate on human potentialities and powers.

In representing this expanded scope for individual initiative, much poetry of the period redefined heroism and made ceaseless striving for the unattainable its crucial element. Viewed by moralists of previous ages as sin or lamentable error, longings that can never be satisfied- in Percy Shelley's phrase, "the desire of the moth for a star"- came to be revalued as the glory of human nature. "Less than everything," Blake announced, "cannot satisfy man." Discussions of the

nature of art developed similarly. The German philosopher Friedrich Schlegel's proposal that poetry "should forever be becoming and never be perfected" supplied a way to understand the unfinished, "fragment" poems of the period (Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" most famously) not as failures but instead as confirmation that the most poetic poetry was defined as much by what was absent as by what was present the poem, in this understanding, was a fragmentary trace of an original conception that was too grand ever to be fully realized. This defiant attitude toward limits also made many writers impatient with the conceptions of literary genre they inherited from the past. The result was that, creating new genres from old, they produced an astonishing variety of hybrid forms constructed on fresh principles oforganization and style: "elegiac sonnets," "lyrical ballads," the poetic autobiography of *The Prelude*, Percy Shelley's "lyric drama" of cosmic reach, *Prometheus Unbound*, and 9in the field of prose) the "historical novels" of Scott and the complex interweaving of letters, reported oral confessions, and interpolated tales that is Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Blake went furthest: the composite art of word and image and "illuminated printing" he created for his poems daringly reinvented the concept of the book.

In this context many writers choice no portray poetry as product of solitude and poets are longer might understood as a means of reinforcing the individuality of their vision. (The sociability of the extroverted narrator of Don Juan, who is forever buttonholing"the gentle reader," is exceptional-Byron's way of harkening back to the satire of the eighteenth century.) And the pervasiveness of nature poetry in the period can be attributed to a determination to idealize the natural scene as a site where the individual could find freedom from social laws, an idealization that was easier to sustain when nature was, as often in the era, represented not as cultivated fields but as uninhabitable wild wastes, unploughed uplands, caves, and chasms. Rural *community* threatened by the enclosures that were breaking up village life, was a tenuous presence in poetry as well.

Wordsworth's imagination is typically released, for instance, by the sudden apparition of a single figure, stark and solitary against a natural background; the words "solitary," by one self," "alone sound through his poems. In the poetry of Coleridge, Shelly, and Byron (before *Don Juan* launched Byron's own satire on Byronism), the desolate landscapes are often the haunts of disillusioned visionaries and accursed outlaws, figures whose thwarted ambitions and torments connect them, variously, to Cain, the Wandering, Jew, Satan, and even Napoleon. A variant of this figure is Prometheus, the hero of classical mythology, who is Satan liken in setting himself in opposition to God, but who, unlike Satan, is the champion rather than the enemy of the human race. Mary

Shelley subjected this hero, central to her husband's mythmaking, to ironic rewriting in *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein, a "Modern Prometheus," is far from championing humankind. For other women of the period, and for Shelley in novels following*Frankenstein*, the equivalent to these half- charismatic, half-condemnable figures of alienation is the woman of "genius."
In a world in which- as Wollstonecraft complained in the *Right of Woman*- "all women are to be leveled by meekness and docility, into one character of ... gentle compliance," the woman who in "unfeminine" fashion claimed a distinctive individuality did not gain authority but risked ostracism . As for the woman of genius, in writings by Robinson, Hemans, and Landon particularly, her story was often told as a modern variation on ancient legends of the Greek Sappho, the ill- fated female poet who had triumphed in poetry but died of love. Pressured by the emergent Victorianism of the 1820s and playing it safe, Hemans and Landon especially were careful to associate genius withself-inflicted sorrow and happiness with a woman's embrace of her domestic calling. Even Romantics who wished to associate literature with isolated poets holding mute converse with their souls had to acknowledge that in real life the writer did not dwell in solitude but confronted, and was accountable to a crowd. For many commentators the most revolutionary aspect of the age was the speared of literacy and the dramatic expansion of the potential audience for literature. This revolution, like the Revolution in France, occasioned a conservative reaction: the worry, frequently expressed as books ceased to be written exclusively for an clite, that this bigger audience (by 1830, about half England's population of fourteen million) would be less qualified to judge or understands what it read. Beginning in 1780, more members of the working classes hadlearned to read as a result of lessons provided in Sunday schools (informal sites for the education of the poor that long antedated state- supported schools). At the same time reading matter became more plentiful and chapter, thanks to innovation in retailing- the cut- rate sales of remaindered books and the spread of circulating libraries where volumes could be "rented"- and thanks to technological developments. By the end of the period, printing presses were driven by steam engines, and the manufactures of paper had been mechanized, publishers had mastered publicity, the art (as it was called) of "the puff." Surveying the consequences of these changes, Coleridge muttered darkly about that "misgrowth," "a Reading Public," making it sounds like something freakish. Books had become a big business, one enrolling increasing numbers of individuals whofound it possible to do without the assistance of wealthy patrons and who, accordingly, looked to this public for their hopes of survival. A few writes became celebrities, invested with a glamor that formerly had been reserved for royalty and that we nowadays save for movie stars. This was the

case for the best selling Byron, particularly, whose enthusiastic public could by the 1830s purchase dinner services imprinted with illustrations from his life and works.

How such popular acclaim was to be understood and how the new reading public that bestowed it (and took it away) could possibly be reformed or monitored when, as Coleridge's term "misgrowth" suggests, its limits and composition seemed unknowable: these were preaaing questions for the age. Opponents of the French Revolution andpolitical reform at home pondered a frightening possibility: If "events... [had] made us a world of readers," (as Coleridge put it, thinking of how newspapers had proliferated in response to the political upheavals), it might also be true that readers could make events in turn, that the new members of the audience for print would demand a part in the drama of national politics. Conservatives were aware of arguments conjecturing that the Revolution had been the result of the invention of the printing press three centuries before. They certainly could not forget that Pain's *Rights of Man*- not the reading matter for the poor the Sunday- school movement had envisioned- had sold an astonishing two hundred thousand copies in a year. Distributed by clubs of workers who pooled money for this purpose, read aloud in alehouses or as listeners worked in the fields, thosecopies reached a total audience that was much more numerous still.

However, the British state has lacked legal provisions for the prepublication censorship of books since 1695, which was when the last Licensing Act had lapsed. Throughout the Romantic period therefore the Crown tried out other methods for policing reading and criminalizing certain practices of authoring and publishing. Paine was in absentia found guilty of sedition, for instance, and in 1817 the radical publisher William Hone narrowly escaped conviction for blasphemy. Another government strategy was to use taxes to inflate the prices of printed matter and so keep political information out of the hands of the hands of the poor without exactly violating the freedom of the press. In the meantime worries about the nation would fare now that "the people" read were matchedby worries about how to regulate the reading done by women. In 1807 the bowdlerized edition was born, as the Reverend Thomas Bowdler and his sister Henrietta produced The Family Shakespeare, concocting a Bard who, his indelicate expurgated, could be sanctioned family fare.

Commentators who condemned the publishing industry as a scene of criminality also cited the frequency with which, during this chaotic time, bestselling books ended up republished in unauthorized, "pirated" edition. Novels were the pirates' favorite target. But the radical underground of London's printing industry also appropriated one of the moist politically daring works of Percy Shelley, *Queen Mab*, and by keeping it in print, and accessible in cheap editions,

thwarted attempts to posthumously sanitize the poet'sreputation. And in 1817 Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, was embarrassed to find his insurrectionary drama of 1794, *Wat Tyler*, republished without his permission. There was no chance, Southey learned that the thieves who had filched his intellectual property and put this souvenir of his youthful radicalism back into circulation would be punished: the judiciary ruled that copying law was for the law-abiding and did not apply to "sedition."

Explain Coleridg's Concept of the literary work as an Organic whole.

the work is conceptualized as a self-originating and self-organizing process, parallel to the growth of a plant., that begins with a seed like idea in the poet's imagination, grows by assimilating both the poet's feelings and the materials of sensory experience, and evolves into an organic whole in which the parts are integrally related to each other and to the whole.

How does Wordsworth deal with time in "Tintern Abbey"? (Ehtemalan)

"Tintern Abbey" is a meditative poem in which a visit to familiar landscape triggers remembrances of time past. Wordsworth uses verse paragraphs to signal shifts among his present experience of the scene, memories of his earlier visit to the Wye, and memories from the intervening years. This fluid movement from one moment in time to another suggests the rambling of the mind as it plays over the physical landscape.

What is the structure of The Prelude?

Wordsworth designed the structure of the Prelude to mirror the subject of the poem, the "growth of a poet's mind." The major principle of organization is that of mental association, or the power of the mind to connect disparate incidents into a coherent framework.

Discuss the moral symbolism of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and its connection to the poem's theme.

Certain earlier moment in the poem contribute to a heavily moralistic effect. The marginal glosses especially provide a running didactic commentary on the Mariner's story: "The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen" : "And the Albatross begins to be avenged"; "By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm"; He blesseth them in his heart"; "By

grace of the Holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshes with rain"; "The Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew"; "The curse is finally expiated"; "The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him." These explanatory statements suggest a Christian allegory involving the pilgrimage of an Everyman through sin, retribution, and penance to a kind of provisional redemption. This redemption is apparently dependent on repeated confession as a sign of the Mariner's continual renewal of spiritual recognition.

John Keats

John Keats was an English Romantic poet. He was one of the main figures of the second generation of romantic poets along with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, despite his work only having been in publication for four years before his death.

Although his poems were not generally well received by critics during his life, his reputation grew after his death, so that by the end of the 19th century he had become one of the most beloved of all English poets. He had a significant influence on a diverse range of later poets and writers. Jorge Luis Borges stated that his first encounter with Keats was the most significant literary experience of his life.

The poetry of Keats is characterized by sensual imagery, most notably in the series of odes. Today his poems and letters are some of the most popular and most analyzed in English literature.

Ode On A Grecian Urn

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?
Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.
Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,--that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Romantic Poetry

"Ode on a Grecian Urn"

In contemplating the Grecian urn, the poet is struck by its permanence and silence; it is an art object that represents human action frozen in mute gesture for all time. Although made by a specific Greek artisan (its real parent), it is nevertheless a timeless, object, a "child" adopted and loved through the ages but not engendered or understood in any one epoch.

The contrast established in stanza 1 between poetry and the urn as types of art objects depends on the urn's special liberation from temporality. Unlike the urn, a poem has a temporal dimension; it moves in time and depends for its existence on being spoken or read. The word "thus" in line 3 seems to refer to the urn's special link to eternity and stillness: Because the urn has this relationship to time, it is privileged in a way that poetry is not.

"Head melodies are sweet, but those unheard/ Are sweeter" (lines 11- 12), the poet6 says in stanza 2, extending the contrast between art that exists only in time and in reality and the urn, which represents eternity and potential. The antiquity and classic quality of the urn shroud it in mystery and divest it of all purely topical interest. For the purpose of this poem at least, the urn is depicted as more tantalizing and inviting to the imagination than other art forms. Instead of the "heard" melody of, for example, the nightingale in "Ode to a Nightingale," the "unheard" melodies piped on the silent friezes of the Grecian urn stimulate the poet to contemplate time and eternity, life and art.

In response to the inviting silence of the friezes on the Grecian urn, the speaker offers his own voice, he addresses the urn directly, attempting o fill in the blanks of its story. What is most striking about the apostrophe in the poem is the heavy use of interrogation, especially in stanzas 1 and 4.

The poet addresses the urn in these stanzas in order to ask it questions about the tale it tells. The pictures on the urn portray the pastoral ideal, with male and female figures gamboling through beautiful rustic landscapes and pagan ritual being piously observed.

But the poet is curious to know more about these silent gestures. He wants to know what exactly is being represented. Who are these figures and what motivates their actions?

By stanza 4 the questions becomes longer as the poet makes suggestions about the possibilities of the story that clearly exceed the boundaries of what is actually depicted. For example, he conjecture about the town that is "emptied" of the folk represented in the friezes. He has begun, that is, to conjecture about something that is not represented on the urn rather than something that is. He seems to want to extend the limits of the art object beyond what it offers.

In stanza 5, a further change in the speaker's apostrophizing signals his growing

frustration with the silence and stillness of the urn. If he began the poem by praising these very attributes, at the end of stanza 4 and beginning of stanza 5 he characterizes the urn as "teasing" rather than inviting. "Cold Pastoral!" he says in his address to the urn, and in this apostrophe he distances himself from the object that he began by anthropomorphizing in familial terms ("bride of quietness," "forechild"). Perhaps even more revelatory of this distancing is the apostrophe in the first line of stanza 5, "O Attic shape," for in this mode of address the urn loses all its "human" qualities; it becomes a mere "shape," an object for contemplation. Although the speaker goes on to call the urn a "friend to man," he has realized the distance between life frozen in art and life as a process. Perhaps Keats is suggesting that the real "sacrifice" which is enacted is a sacrifice of time- bound human experience for the sake of art.
Stanza 3 is the focus for the contrast between life and art in the poem. The speaker continues the joyful exclamations of stanza 2: the life on the urn, he declares, neither alters not decays. The experience of love, for example, is never sated in fulfillment, for the Greek artisan has caught it at the moment before the actual expression of passion. All is excited, forever unwearied anticipation. As ion other versions of Arcadia, in the pastoral world of the urn one finds eternal spring. But as the poet continues his encomium of the joys of the immortal life of art, he becomes aware of its distance from the life of process and passion he finds in the real world.

The picture of life he paints in line 28 through 30 is one of closing satiation and sorrow; this is a love that takes its toll on the lover, not a love of promise sustained forever.
The often debated, difficult lines which end stanza 5, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," – that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know," are relevant to the contrast between the urn's truth and the truth of life. After addressing the urn as "Cold Pastoral!" and accusing it of teasing us "out of thought," the speaker goes on to call it "a friend to man" that offers humanity a piece of aphoristic wisdom. But despite the rather neat formulation attributed to the urn, the poem as a whole presents an ambiguous picture of the relationship between life and art. The urn's truth and beauty are indissolubly linked, partly because it is undying and permanent, free from decay and time. This perception of permanence and beauty constitutes one kind of truth, but it is questionable whether it is sufficient as a guide for our lives on earth. The urn tells an important "story," but not the only one. In "Ode on Melancholy," for example, Keats himself shows a different, more mixed image of truth and beauty, for in that poem he shows us a beauty that depends on death and change rather than

on being immune from it.

Ode To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cell.
Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.
Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,---
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir, the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Romantic Poetry

"To Autumn"

This poem was written by Keats in September, 1819. He was greatly struck by the beauty of the season. The air was fine, and there was a temperate sharpness about it. The weather seemed "chaste". The stubble fields looked better than they did in spring. Keats was so impressed by the beauty of the weather that he recorded his mood in the form of this ode. *The Ode to autumn* ranks among the finest poems of Keats. The treatment of the subject is perfectly objective or impersonal. The poet keeps himself completely out of the picture. He only describes certain sights and sound without expressing his personal reaction to these sights and sound. The poem is a perfect Nature-lyric. No human sentiment finds expression; only the beauty and bounty of nature during autumn are described. Sometimes this ode is taken as having an autobiographical quality: it is possible to connect its serenity with the way of keats's own life. However, it is almost certain that he simply tried to catch the spirit of an autumn afternoon. Here is poem in which season has been personified and made to live. In the first stanza, the poet describes the fruits of autumn, the fruits coming to maturity in readiness for harvesting. In the second stanza, autumn is personified as a woman present at the various operations of the harvest and at cider-pressing. In the last stanza, the end of the year is associated with sunset; the songs of spring are over and night is falling, but there is no feeling of sadness because autumn has its own songs. The close of the ode, though solemn, breathes the spirit of hope.

Autumn is season of ripe fruitfulness. It is the time of the ripening of grapes, apple, gourds, hazelnuts, etc. it is also the time when the bees suck the sweetness from "later flowers" and make honey. Thus autumn is pictured in the stanza as bringing all the fruits of earth to maturity in readiness for harvesting. In second stanza, autumn is seen in the person of a reaper, a winnower, a gleaner, and a cider- presser. Reaping, winnowing, gleaning and cider-pressing are all operation connected with the harvest and are, therefore, carried on during autumn. Autumn is depicted firstly as a harvester sitting carelessly in the field during a winnowing operation; secondly, as a tired reaper fallen asleep in very midst of reaping; thirdly, as a gleaner walking homewards with a load on the head; and fourthly, as a cider- presser watching intently the apple-juice flowing out of the cider-press. Autumn is not altogether devoid of music. If spring has its songs, autumn too has its sound and songs. In the evening, when crimson light of the setting sun falls upon the stubble-fields, a chorus of natural sound is heard. The gnats utter their mournful sounds; the full-grown lambs bleat loudly; the hedge- crickets chirp; the robin's high and delicate notes are heard; and the swallows twitter in the sky. In this last stanza the close of the year is associated

with sunset and night-fall.

This is the most faultless of Keats's odes in point of construction. The first stanza gives us the bounty of autumn, the second describes. The occupation of the season and the last dwells upon its sound. Indeed, the poem is a complete and concrete picture of autumn, "the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness". The bounty of autumn has been described with all its sensuous appeal. The vines suggesting grapes, the apples, the gourds, the hazels with their sweet kernel, the bees suggesting honey—all these appeal to our senses of taste and smell. The whole landscape is made to appear fresh and scented. There is a great concentration in each line of the first stanza. Each line is like the branch of a fruit-tree laden with fruit to the breaking-point.

The second stanza contains some of the most vivid pictures in English poetry. Keats pictorial quality is here seen at its best. Autumn is personified and presented to us in the figure of the winnower, "sitting careless on a granary floor". The reaper "on a half –reaped furrow sound asleep", the gleaner keeping "steady thy laden head across a brook", and spectator watching with the patient look a cider-press and the last oozings there from. The reaper
, the winnower, the gleaner, and cider presser symbolize autumn. These pictures make the poem human and universal because the eternal labours of man are brought before the eyes of the reader.

The third stanza is a collection of varied sounds of Autumn—the choir of gnats, the bleating of lambs, the singing of crickets, the whistling of red-breasts, and the twittering of swallows. Keats's interest in small and homely creatures is fully evidenced in these lines. The whole poem demonstrates keats's interest in Nature and his keen and minute observation of natural sights and sounds. Keats's responsiveness and sensitivity to natural phenomena is one of the striking qualities of his poetry.

The poem is characterised by complete objectivity. The poet keeps himself absolutely out of the picture. Nor does he express any emotion whether of joy or melancholy. He gives the object of feeling, not the feeling itself. The poem is written in a calm and serene mood. There is no discontent, no anguish, no bitterness of any kind. There is no philosophy in the poem, no allegory, no inner meaning. We are just brought face to face with "Nature in all her richness of tint and form". The poem breathes the spirit of Greek poetry. In fact, it is one of the most Greek compositions by keats. There is the Greek touch in the personification of autumn and there is the Greek note in the poet's impersonal manner of dwelling upon Nature.

We have here the usual felicity of diction for which keats is famous. Phrases like "mellow fruitfulness", "maturing sun", "hair soft-lifted", barred clouds" which "bloom the soft –dying day", "hilly bourn" are examples of keats's happy

coinages. Nor is poetic artifice wanting to add beauty to the verse. The alliteration in the following lines is, for instance, noteworthy:

To smell the gourd, and plump the hazel shelis
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm day ill never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Several words here contain the same "z" sound-hazel, shells, flowers, bees, days, cease, cells. The abundance of "m" sound in these lines is also noteworthy: plump, more, warm, summer, brimm'd clammy.

Its Form

The rhyme-scheme in this ode is the same (except for a little variation) in all the stanzas each for which consist of 11 lines. Thus it is a "regular" ode. The handing of verse-structure is wonderfully resourceful. The use of the run-on line in the first stanza, for instance, is noteworthy. If "swell" and "plump" give the outward signs of fat richness, the stress on "sweet kernel", inevitable after the pause at the end of the previous line, vividly makes us think of the lusciousness within. And imagined sweetness leads to even greater sweetness of the honey made by the bees. The loaded abundance is suggested by the heavy movement in the last line which describes the over-brimming of their cells. There is so much oozing sweetness here that the honey-combs are insufficient to hold it all. As F.R. Leavis has shown (in *Revaluation*), Keats employs verse structure in the last four lines of the second stanza to enact the very movement of the gleaner. Keats is here able to suggest the prudent hesitation of the man (or woman) carefully balancing his load before he crosses the brook. Again, the extreme slowness with which the drops of cider issue from the press is suggested by the line: "Thou watchest the last oozing, hour by hour."

A Critic's Comment

"Most satisfying of all the *odes*, in thought and expression, is the *ode To Autumn*. Most satisfying because, for all splendor of diction in the others, there are times when the poetic fire dwindles for a moment, whereas in this *ode,* from its inception to its close, matter and manner are not only superbly blended, but every line carries its noble freight of beauty. The first stanza is a symphony of sound. The artist shapes the first and the last, and in the mist the man, the thinker, gives us its human significance. Thus is the poem perfected, its sensuous imagery enveloping as it were its vital idea."(A. Compton-Rickett)

David Perkins, quoting another critic, says this ode is regarded as "a very nearly

perfect piece of style" but that it has "little to say". However, says David Perkins, this ode is very "significant". Even more than Keat's other odes, To autumn, is "objective, oblique and impersonal, carried scarcely at all by direct statement that involves the poet" Its expression, like that of the Grecian Urn or the Nightingale, is concrete and symbolic, and as in these other odes, the symbol adopted has been previously established in Keat's poetry. Keat's view of the season is one the whole rather conventional: spring is the time of budding, summer of the fulfillment, and winter of the death. Autumn coming between summer and winter can be seen as the intensifying and prolonging of summer. In other word, autumn suggests precisely that lengthening-out of fulfillment as its crest or climax which Keat's had desired to find in the concrete world. So the poet, turning to the concrete, contemplates it with serenity.

The Imagery in the First Stanza

Autumn, accordingly, is described as a season of "mellow fruitfulness". The sun is ripening or "maturing" the earth, "conspiring" to loud the vines and bend the apple trees, "to swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells". The season fills "all fruit with ripeness to the core"; and these images of full, inward ripeness and strain suggest that the maturing can go no further, that the fulfillment has reached its climax. Even the cells of the bees are over brimmed. Yet the ripening continues, "budding more, and still more, later flowers". The bees "think warm days will never cease". Thus through the imagery the poem suggests a prolonging of fulfillment. At the same time, however, there are indirect images of ageing. For the sun is maturing—it is not only ripening the things, but it also growing older. So also autumn itself, the "close-bosom friend" of the sun.

The Imagery in the Second Stanza

The second stanza picks up and continues imagery of arrested motion in the first. Autumn is here personified in a variety of attitudes; but dominant image is of autumn as the harvester—and harvester that is in a sense another reaper, death itself. Instead of harvesting, however, autumn is motionless, death being momentarily held off as the ripening still continues. First autumn appears "sitting careless on a granary floor". The granary is where the harvest would be stored, but autumn is not bringing in the grain. The assonance and alliteration of the line, "thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind", leads into the image of autumn feeling drowsy or sleepy on half–reaped furrow—again the harvest arrested. Finally autumn is seen near a cider-press where it watches "the last oozing hours by hours". This is one of the two images suggesting activity, the other being the gleaner with laden head crossing at book; but the motion is so

slow the reader takes the cider-press almost as a repetition of the half-reaped furrow.

But, of course, these are the last, oozings, and the harvest is drawing to a close. The notion of death is present but it will emerge more emphatically in the third stanza.

The Imagery in the Last Stanza; the Mood and the Thought of the Poem

Things reveal their essential identity most intensely at the moment of dying or readiness to die. So the last stanza begins with the one comment the poet offers in this own person. "Where are the songs of spring?" but there is no rebellion in the answer:"Think not of them, thou last thy music too". There follows an image of the day, which, like autumn, is about to end, and the death is accompanied by a fulfillment; for as it dies the day blooms all flowers ("while barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day"). The stanza proceeds with images of death or withdrawal, and of song, and the songs are a funeral dirge for the dying year. At the same time, there is a tone of tenderness in the stanza; and objectivity of last few lines suggests an acceptance which includes even the fact of death. Death is here recognized as something inherent in the course of things, the condition and price of all fulfillment, having like the spring and summer of life its own distinctive character or "music" which is also to be prized and relished. In the last analysis, perhaps, the serenity and acceptance here expressed are aesthetic. The ode is, after all, a poem of contemplation. The symbol of autumn compels that attitude. The poet's own fears, ambitions and passion are not directly engaged, and hence he can be relatively withdrawn. The poet seems to suggest that life in all its stages has a certain identity and beauty which man can appreciate by disengaging his own ago. "Thus the symbol permits, and poem as whole expresses, and emotional reconciliation to the human experience of process."

There are various hints of death in the final stanza, but the idea of death is not treated with horror or resentment. The day is dying softly, the rosy "bloom" of sunset taking away from the stark bareness of now fully reaped corn-fields.

And, in any case, the very reference to the close of the day, like the final line about the swallows will come back next year, so another day will down, for the great movement of life goes on, however short the existence of the individual. Superficially altogether different from the Ode On Melancholy, to Autumn, is deeply related to that poem. The Melancholy ode accepts the impermanence of beauty and joy as inevitable. In the Ode To Autumn, impermanence is again accepted, and accepted without the least trace of sadness because Keats is able to see it as a part of a larger and richer permanence.

This greater permanence is continuity of life itself, in which the impermanence of the individual human existence is one tiny aspect of a vast and deathless pattern. The rotation of the season offers a symbol of this continuity that is immediately satisfying. When Keats , in the last stanza, refers to the “music” of autumn, he is obviously pointing out the futility of regretting that spring has gone by. What is past is past. After all, autumn has its own characteristic sounds, which are as much part of the year as the songs of spring. Moreover, although autumn will be followed by the cold and barrenness of winter, winter will in turn give way to a fresh spring. Life goes on. The individual year may be drawing to a close, but there will be a new year to take its place. This is indirectly conveyed with wonderful effect in the concluding line of the ode:”And gathering swallows twitter in the skies”. In one way the line gives a hint of coming winter, for the swallows are gathering to migrate to warmer climates. Yet we remember that migratory birds return when the cold weather ends, so that the very hint of their forthcoming departure carries with it a suggestion of their re-appearance hen warm days come again.

1. Why does the poet say in “Ode on a Grecian” in stanza 1 that the urn “canst thus express/ A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme”?

2. “Ode on a Grecian” is an apostrophe to an inanimate object. How does the rhetorical device function in the poem?

3. In the Ode on a Grecian, the speaker begins to establish a contrast between life as it is represented on the urn and life as it is lived. What is the nature of this contrast, and where does it surface in the poem?

William Blake

William Blake was born in London in 1757. His father, a hosier, soon recognized his son's artistic talents and sent him to study at a drawing school when he was ten years old. At 14, William asked to be apprenticed to the engraver James Basire, under whose direction he further developed his innate skills. As a young man Blake worked as an engraver, illustrator, and drawing teacher, and met such artists as Henry Fuseli and John Flaxman, as well as Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose classicizing style he would later come to reject. Blake wrote poems during this time as well, and his first printed collection, an immature and rather derivative volume called *Poetical Sketches*, appeared in 1783. *Songs of Innocence* was published in 1789, followed by *Songs of Experience* in 1793 and a combined edition the next year bearing the title *Songs of Innocence and Experience showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul.*

Blake's political radicalism intensified during the years leading up to the French Revolution. He began a seven-book poem about the Revolution, in fact, but it was either destroyed or never completed, and only the first book survives. He disapproved of Enlightenment rationalism, of institutionalized religion, and of the tradition of marriage in its conventional legal and social form (though he was married himself). His unorthodox religious thinking owes a debt to the Swedish philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), whose influence is particularly evident in Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.* In the 1790s and after, he shifted his poetic voice from the lyric to the prophetic mode, and wrote a series of long prophetic books, including *Milton* and *Jerusalem.* Linked together by an intricate mythology and symbolism of Blake's own creation, these books propound a revolutionary new social, intellectual, and ethical order. Blake published almost all of his works himself, by an original process in which the poems were etched by hand, along with illustrations and decorative images, onto copper plates. These plates were linked to make prints, and the prints were then colored in with paint. This expensive and labor-intensive production method resulted in a quite limited circulation of Blake's poetry during his life. It

has also posed a special set of challenges to scholars of Blake's work, which has interested both literary critics and art historians.

Most students of Blake find it necessary to consider his graphic art and his writing together; certainly he himself thought of them as inseparable. During his own lifetime, Blake was a pronounced failure, and he harbored a good deal of resentment and anxiety about the public's apathy toward his work and about the financial straits in which he so regularly found himself. When his self-curated exhibition of his works met with financial failure in 1809, Blake sank into depression and withdrew into obscurity; he remained alienated for the rest of his life. His contemporaries saw him as something of an eccentric—as indeed he was. Suspended between the neoclassicism of the 18th century and the early phases of Romanticism, Blake belongs to no single poetic school or age. Only in the 20th century did wide audiences begin to acknowledge his profound originality and genius.

Proverbs of Hell

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.
Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.
The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.
Prudence is a rich, ugly old maid courted by Incapacity.
He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.
The cut worm forgives the plow.
Dip him in the river who loves water.
A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star.
Eternity is in love with the productions of time.
The busy bee has no time for sorrow.
The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure.
All wholesome food is caught without a net or a trap.
Bring out number, weight and measure in a year of dearth.
No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.
A dead body revenges not injuries.
The most sublime act is to set another before you.

If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.
Folly is the cloak of knavery.
Shame is Pride's cloke.
Prisons are built with stones of law, brothels with bricks of religion.
The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.

The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.
The nakedness of woman is the work of God.
Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps.

The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity, too great for the eye of man.
The fox condemns the trap, not himself.
Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.
Let man wear the fell of the lion, woman the fleece of the sheep.
The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship.
The selfish, smiling fool, and the sullen, frowning fool shall be both thought wise, that they may be a rod.
The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit watch the roots; the lion, the tyger, the horse, the elephant watch the fruits.
The cistern contains: the fountain overflows.
One thought fills immensity.
Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you.
Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth.
The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn of the crow.
The fox provides for himself, but God provides for the lion.
Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night.What is now proved was once only imagin'd.

He who has suffer'd you to impose on him, knows you.
As the plow follows words, so God rewards prayers.
The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.
Expect poison from the standing water.
You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough.
Listen to the fool's reproach! it is a kingly title!
The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth.
The weak in courage is strong in cunning.
The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow; nor the lion, the horse, how he

shall take his prey.
The thankful receiver bears a plentiful harvest.
If others had not been foolish, we should be so.
The soul of sweet delight can never be defil'd.
When thou seest an eagle, thou seest a portion of genius; lift up thy head!
As the caterpiller chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays

his curse on the fairest joys.
To create a little flower is the labour of ages.
Damn braces. Bless relaxes.

The best wine is the oldest, the best water the newest.
Prayers plow not! Praises reap not!
Joys laugh not! Sorrows weep not!
The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands and feet Proportion.
As the air to a bird or the sea to a fish, so is contempt to the contemptible.
The crow wish'd everything was black, the owl that everything was white.
Exuberance is Beauty.
If the lion was advised by the fox, he would be cunning.
Improvement makes strait roads; but the crooked roads without improvement are roads of genius.
Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires.
Where man is not, nature is barren.
Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ'd.
Enough! Or too much.

"The Proverbs of Hell"

"The Proverbs of Hell" are full of contradictories and tonal ambiguity. Not only does the tone shift between proverbs, but a single adage can be read as parodic and serious at the same time. The title indicates a "devilish" and playful intention to parody the Book of proverbs in the Old Testament, and indeed Blake often capriciously turns the conventional wisdom of moral maxims on its head. For example, instead of prudence and the golden mea the poet advises a wild abandon:

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.
Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity.

However, the celebration of excess is not just a playful rhetorical inversion, for it has thematic significance in the "Proverbs" as a whole. According to Blake, the violation of restraints ends of the temperateness of the familiar adage "Enough is as good as a feast" (recorded in John Heywood's Proverb [1546]), with its admonition to be content with a sufficiency, Blake seems to advocate intemperance: "Enough or too much." Interested in plentitude and fullness, he urges "enough" as every person's proper portion, but if the right measure cannot be found, "too much" is better than too little. In fact, he suggests that the proper measure can never be found without going beyond it: "You never know what is enough unless you know what more than enough is, "a similar belief in

exceeding limits is implied in Blake's definition of "Exuberance" (literary, "to come forth abundantly") as "Beauty." Again, in his comparison between the cisterns which contains ad the fountain which overflows, he implicitly prefers the fountain. After all, one can only "expect poison from the standing water." Against the orthodoxies of self-restraint, self-interest, and prudence, Blake poses an ethic of self-expression and daring. Indeed, the riddling quality of many of the proverbs in Blake's way of attacking convention and asserting a personal credo.

In his thoroughgoing parody of proverbial wisdom, Blake inverts not only admonitory maxims but moral fables. Using traditional animal allegory, he reverses the usual system of values by praising the vices conventionally exemplified by various beasts:

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God
The lust of the goat is the bounty of God
The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God

Beneath the ostensible rebelliousness and immorality of such assertions is the idea that being trues the passions and to the self is more valid than abiding by an externally imposed system of law.

Blake's outrageous slogans are, in fact, paradoxical truths. Implied in his inversion of proverbial wisdom is a serious system of belief which values intense feeling, individuality, and energy. His revolutionary upheaval of received wisdom constitutes a means to a serious end, an attempt to shake human beings awake so that they may fully realize their individuality and humanity.

In this system, Blake makes room for aphorisms of a more conventional sort, as one of the two poles between which humanity inevitably moves:

The busy bee has no time for sorrow.
The most sublime act is to set another before you.
The thankful receiver [sic] bears a plentiful harvest.

Thus the traditional values of industry, self-sacrifice, and gratitude find a place on Blake's scheme alongside the specifically Blakean values of self-expression, sensual awareness, and experiential freedom. Still, the revolutionary statements far outnumber the orthodox dicta, for in Blake's view the thrust of growth depends on the violation of strictures. As he puts it, "damn braces: bless relaxes."

The belief in creative experiment as a precondition for self-realization becomes part of Blake's artistic creed. Thus our understanding of the world derives from the daring and genius of people who felt free to imagine: "What is now proved was once only imagined." In Blake's view, absolute freedom of thought leads

not to idle fantasy but to a vision of reality ("Everything possible to be believed is an image of truth"), and the mind's vagaries, as opposed to reason, are the pathway to imaginative comprehension ("Improv[me]nt makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement, are roads of Genius"). Indeed, Blake was fiercely opposed to the late eighteenth century ideal of reason as the supreme good, and for him the scientific "improvers" Locke and Newton were symbolic representations of death and tyranny.

Blake's rhetorical strategy of invention and paradox is in itself a "crooked road" which veers and changes direction, expressing truths in a startling and original style. "The Proverbs of Hell" thus constitute a verbal enactment of those qualities of excess, exuberance, and revolutionary fervor which Blake recommends as a style of life and art.

The Sick Rose

ROSE, thou art sick!
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy;
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

"The Sick Rose"

Robert Burns employs traditional symbolism in his love ballad, drawling on the association of the rose with springtime vitality and beauty. He simply asserts a similarity, using the established connotations of the flower as a kind of shorthand to describe and compliment his beloved: "O My Luve's like a red, red rose/ That's newly sprung in June" (lines 1-2). This simile, like the following one comparing the mistress to a melody "that's sweetly played in tune." produces an effect of graceful decoration with a reticent, allusive quality. Instead of explicit statement, Burns relies on convention, those agreed-upon meaning known to both reader and writer, to suggest the nature of the likeness between mistress and rose.

In contrast, Blake's strategy is bolder and more immediate. Instead of simile he uses metaphoric substitution, directly addressing the rose in the first line of the poem and presenting a drama in which the rose and the worm are actors. By beginning with the idea of disease ("O Rose, thou art sick"), Blake is announcing in the tone of a prophet, the calamity that has befallen Burns's pure rose of love. In the modern world, sexual love has become pathological.

In the context of Blake's central metaphor of a rose diseased, the phrase "the

bed of crimson joy" has ambiguous and ambivalent connotations. The crimson joy is not the natural burgeoning of Burns's red, red rose but an unhealthy self-gratification; the rose's joy recedes the arrival of the worm and furthermore is concealed; for the bed must be "found out" by the worm. Both rose and worm have secret" loves, as compared with the open, straightforward love that the persona of Burns's lyric brings to his mistress. "The Sick Rose" offers an implicit drama that exploits rather than simply presents the conventional symbol of the rose. Burns draw on the role the rose in a stable iconographic scheme, while Blake shows the fact of the rose in a dynamic, unfolding sequence. The use of extended metaphor rather than condensed simile energizes the whole poem and at the same time lends it an enigmatic, riddling quality. "The Sick Rose" is a poem of and about experience, while "A Red, Red Rose" is innocent in that it confines itself to a single sweet gesture of compliment, excluding any negative or repellent features that the "rose" might possess.

The poem is started with sexual connotations; the rose suggests the female genitalia, and the worm the phallus. Only a specifically sexual reading accounts most fully for the physical properties of rose and worm as well as for the references to "bed," "crimson joy," and "dark secret love." Thus the burrowing of the worm into the "bed of crimson joy" as a metaphor for sexual intercourse. The hidden bed of the rose and the secret love of the worm imply the polarity between the sexes, their self-protective isolation and concealment before the act that unites them In Blake's terms, the sexual relationship is inherently a form of conflict, with the male in pursuit and the female in hiding.

Blake ends the poem with an image of destruction: "And his dark secret love/ Does thy life destroy." However, Blake's pessimistic view of sexuality applies to sex of a particular kind. In the poem the worm is an "invisible" one that "flies in the night/ In the howling storm" (line 3-4). The language implies that the worm is a kind of incubus, a demond lover called up in a nocturnal fantasy of agitated desire and longing, and that the intercourse in imaginary. Thus the eroticism of the worm is dark and secret, life-denying rather than life-enhancing. Blake hints that the sickness of the rose is represses passion, which issues in autoerotic fantasy and delusion. It is this kind of "love," self involved and self defeating that is destructive.

Blake's use of metaphor to sketch this drama of involuted desire is highly effective, since it allows him to condense a complex analysis of sexual conflict into eight short lines. The basic horticultural conceit, a rose devoured by a pest, also provides the poem with its emotional texture, conveying a sense of waste and repugnance. The poem is thus a graphic illustration of one of Blake's "Proverbs of Hell." "He who desires but acts nor, breeds pestilence."

1. Compare Blake's use of the rose as a symbol of Burns in "A Red, Red Rose."
2. Discuss the central metaphor of "The sick Rose."

3. How "serious" is Blake's intention in the "Proverbs"?

William Wordsworth

Wordsworth, born in his beloved Lake District, was the son of an attorney. He went to school first at Penrith and then at Hawkshead Grammar school before studying, from 1787, at St John's College, Cambridge - all of which periods were later to be described vividly in The Prelude. In 1790 he went with friends on a walking tour to France, the Alps and Italy, before arriving in France where Wordsworth was to spend the next year.

Whilst in France he fell in love twice over: once with a young French woman, Annette Vallon, who subsequently bore him a daughter, and then, once more, with the French Revolution. Returning to England he wrote, and left unpublished, his Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff - a tract in support of the French Revolutionary cause. In 1795, after receiving a legacy, Wordsworth lived with his sister Dorothy first in Dorset and then at Alfoxden, Dorset, close to Coleridge.

In these years he wrote many of his greatest poems and also travelled with Coleridge and Dorothy, in the winter of 1798-79, to Germany. Two years later the second and enlarged edition of the Lyrical Ballads appeared in 1801, just one year before Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson. This was followed, in 1807, by the publication of Poems in Two Volumes, which included the poems 'Resolution and Independence' and 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'.

During this period he also made new friendships with Walter Scott, Sir G. Beaumont and De Quincy, wrote such poems as 'Elegaic Stanzas suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle' (1807), and fathered five children. He received a civil list pension in 1842 and was made poet-laureate just one year later.

Today Wordsworth's poetry remains widely read. Its almost universal appeal is perhaps best explained by Wordsworth's own words on the role, for him, of poetry; what he called "the most philosophical of all writing" whose object is "truth...carried alive into the heart by passion".

Tintern Abbey

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a sweet inland murmur. Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Among the woods and copses lose themselves,
Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
The wild green landscape. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.
Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been to me,
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration: -- feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
As may have had no trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life;
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,

To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lighten'd -- that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless day-lights; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the wood
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food

For future years. And so I dare to hope
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led; more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,

And their glad animal movements all gone by,)
To me was all in all. -- I cannot paint
What then I was, The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. -- That time is past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh or grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,

And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,
This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young,
the exact expression of which I cannot recollect.
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize

In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor, perchance,
If I were not thus taught, Should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,

My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our chearful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,

Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,
If I should be, where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; And that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Now wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake

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The World Is Too Much With Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not.--Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

"Tintern Abbey"

"Tintern Abbey" is a meditative poem in which a visit to familiar landscape triggers remembrances of time past. Wordsworth uses verse paragraphs to signal shifts among his present experience of the scene, memories of his earlier visit to the Wye, and memories from the intervening years. This fluid movement from one moment in time to another suggests the rambling of the mind as it plays over the physical landscape.

The opening stresses the lapse of time between the present experience and the original visit five years before: "Five years have passed; five summers long winters!" (Lines 1-2). The poet then goes on to paint the particulars of the present scene, representing earth, sky, hedgerows, and farms as parts of a fused, organic whole.

As the poem progress, we learn how the poet has arrived at this unified vision of the forms of nature. In the second paragraph (lines 213-48), he begins to describe the operations of his memory on the forms of physical experience and to show how these memories have become integrated in his moral life. His mind has turned and returned to the origin scene in order to gain solace in the midst of the "joyless daylight" (line 52) of worldly cares: "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, /O sylvan Wye! Thou wandered through the woods, /How often has my spirit turned to thee!" (Lines 55-57). Time becomes layered as the poet superimposes past sensations on present experience. The influence of the past I suggested in the condensed "autobiography" of paragraph 4 (lines 58-83), where Wordsworth remembers his adolescent self- haunted, sensual, impulsive, seeking escape in nature. That initial encounter with the landscape is recalled as fevered and passionate, with the young Wordsworth projecting his own emotional turmoil onto the natural forms around him.

The poet returns to the present in the second half of paragraph 4(lines 83- 111), elaborating on his mature philosophy of the illuminating interchange between self and scene, subject and object, which yields a recognition of a presence in nature beyond the realm of scene, animating both the beholder and the thing beheld.

The last development in the poem is the invocation in the fifth paragraph (lines 112- 159) of "my dearest Friend," Wordsworth, who becomes yet another means of endowing the present with the emotional riches gleaned from experiences in the past.

his sister's "wild ecstasies" 9line 138) recall Wordsworth's past, that is, his adolescent impulses, and suggest the future, that is, the "sober pleasure" (line 139) which is Wordsworth's current mood and which shall ne his sister's in years to come as the operation of memory within her deepens the moral and emotional significance of her present experience. Using the process of free association as the mind wanders through time; Wordsworth blends past, present, and future into a fluid medium which traces the timeless values that he sees as immanent in nature. In doing so, he reveals the reassuring continuities of the individual's imaginative life.

... For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity

The passage begins with a comparison between time past and time present. The difference between "the hour/ Of thoughtless youth" (line 90) and the poet's more mature perspective is the addition of the element of thought. No longer limited to sensual appetite, the narrator now experiences in the presence of nature something beyond the reach of the sense. The emphasis on metaphysical sensations- "hearing oftentimes/ The still, sad music of humanity" (lines 90-91) and "And I have felt/ A presence which distribute me with the joy/ Of elevated thoughts" (lines 93-95) - suggests that the poet's interaction with the scene is not solely perceptual; rather, it has become psychological and creative, partly a transfiguration of nature by the power of imagination. Detailed visual description is replaced by generalized reference ("the light of setting suns,/ And the round ocean and the living air" [lines 97- 98]), implying that mere vision, the coarser appetitive response of his adolescent self who "had no need of .. any interest/ Unborrowed from the eye" (lines 81-83), has been subdued. It would seem that only this relative defeat of the "eye" allows the poet to experience "a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused" (lines 95-96).

At the same time, Wordsworth does not simply turn away from physical nature in order to celebrate a quasi- divine revelation. He insists on a complex simultaneity of response that integrates the individual's mental life with the world outside. Imagination has the primary role in achieving this difficult integration. Thus the lines "the mighty world/ Of eye, and ear- both what they half create, /And what perceive" (lines 105-107) refer both to the physical world apprehended by the sense and to and internal, animated version of this world created in the mind. In this crucial passage, as elsewhere in the poem, Wordsworth alludes to the difficulty of arriving at a full imaginative comprehension of nature. The "serene and blessed mood" (line 41) he invokes

early in the poem is countered by “a sad perplexity” (line 60); a sense of “loss” precedes the “abundant recompense” 9lines 86-87). The individual, after all, can only “half create” the world anew, and although “nature and the language of the sense” (line 108) produce a feeling of internal continuity and moral certitude in the poet, he needs the further support of his young sister, who will repeat, heighten, and clarify his own experience, lest he allow his “genial spirits to decay” (line1130. the mature perspective, transforming the “wild ecstasies” of sensual youth into a “sober pleasure” compounded of memory and imagination, is achieved only through an active effort of creative will.

The Prelude

--Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all Rivers, lov'd
To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song,
And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flow'd along my dreams? For this, didst Thou,
O Derwent! travelling over the green Plains
Near my 'sweet Birthplace', didst thou, beauteous Stream
Make ceaseless music through the night and day

Which with its steady cadence, tempering
Our human waywardness, compos'd my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me,
Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
When, having left his Mountains, to the Towers
Of Cockermouth that beauteous River came,
Behind my Father's House he pass'd, close by,

Along the margin of our Terrace Walk.
He was a Playmate whom we dearly lov'd.
Oh! many a time have I, a five years' Child,
A naked Boy, in one delightful Rill,
A little Mill-race sever'd from his stream,
Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
Bask'd in the sun, and plunged, and bask'd again
Alternate all a summer's day, or cours'd
Over the sandy fields, leaping through groves
Of yellow grunsel, or when crag and hill,

The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
Were bronz'd with a deep radiance, stood alone
Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
On Indian Plains, and from my Mother's hut
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
A naked Savage, in the thunder shower.
Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Foster'd alike by beauty and by fear;
Much favour'd in my birthplace, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which, erelong,

I was transplanted. Well I call to mind
('Twas at an early age, ere I had seen
Nine summers) when upon the mountain slope
The frost and breath of frosty wind had snapp'd
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
To wander half the night among the Cliffs
And the smooth Hollows, where the woodcocks ran
Along the open turf. In thought and wish
That time, my shoulder all with springes hung,
I was a fell destroyer. On the heights

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
Still hurrying, hurrying onward; moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head; I was alone,
And seem'd to be a trouble to the peace
That was among them. Sometimes it befel
In these night-wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpower'd my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toils
Became my prey; and, when the deed was done

I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.
Nor less in springtime when on southern banks
The shining sun had from his knot of leaves
Decoy'd the primrose flower, and when the Vales
And woods were warm, was I a plunderer then

Romantic Poetry

In the high places, on the lonesome peaks
Where'er, among the mountains and the winds,

The Mother Bird had built her lodge. Though mean
My object, and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustain'd, and almost, as it seem'd,
Suspended by the blast which blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag; Oh! at that time,
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind

Blow through my ears! the sky seem'd not a sky
Of earth, and with what motion mov'd the clouds!
The mind of Man is fram'd even like the breath
And harmony of music. There is a dark
Invisible workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, and makes them move
In one society. Ah me! that all
The terrors, all the early miseries
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes, that all
The thoughts and feelings which have been infus'd

Into my mind, should ever have made up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks likewise for the means! But I believe
That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame
A favor'd Being, from his earliest dawn
Of infancy doth open out the clouds,
As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
With gentlest visitation; not the less,
Though haply aiming at the self-same end,

Does it delight her sometimes to employ
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, and so she dealt with me.
One evening (surely I was led by her)
I went alone into a Shepherd's Boat,
A Skiff that to a Willow tree was tied

Within a rocky Cave, its usual home.
'Twas by the shores of Patterdale, a Vale
Wherein I was a Stranger, thither come
A School-boy Traveller, at the Holidays.

Forth rambled from the Village Inn alone
No sooner had I sight of this small Skiff,
Discover'd thus by unexpected chance,
Than I unloos'd her tether and embark'd.
The moon was up, the Lake was shining clear
Among the hoary mountains; from the Shore
I push'd, and struck the oars and struck again
In cadence, and my little Boat mov'd on
Even like a Man who walks with stately step
Though bent on speed. It was an act of stealth

And troubled pleasure; not without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my Boat move on,
Leaving behind her still on either side
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. A rocky Steep uprose
Above the Cavern of the Willow tree
And now, as suited one who proudly row'd
With his best skill, I fix'd a steady view
Upon the top of that same craggy ridge,

The bound of the horizon, for behind
Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
She was an elfin Pinnace; lustily
I dipp'd my oars into the silent Lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat
Went heaving through the water, like a Swan;
When from behind that craggy Steep, till then
The bound of the horizon, a huge Cliff,
As if with voluntary power instinct,
Uprear'd its head. I struck, and struck again

And, growing still in stature, the huge Cliff
Rose up between me and the stars, and still,
With measur'd motion, like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling hands I turn'd,

And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the Cavern of the Willow tree.
There, in her mooring-place, I left my Bark,
And, through the meadows homeward went, with grave
And serious thoughts; and after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain

Work'd with a dim and undetermin'd sense
Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts
There was a darkness, call it solitude,
Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes
Of hourly objects, images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
But huge and mighty Forms that do not live
Like living men mov'd slowly through the mind
By day and were the trouble of my dreams.
Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!

Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought!
That giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of Childhood didst Thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human Soul,
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,

And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsaf'd to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours, rolling down the valleys, made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon, and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling Lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills I homeward went

In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,

And by the waters all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows through the twilight blaz'd,
I heeded not the summons:--happy time
It was, indeed, for all of us; to me
It was a time of rapture: clear and loud
The village clock toll'd six; I wheel'd about,

Proud and exulting, like an untired horse,
That cares not for its home.--All shod with steel,
We hiss'd along the polish'd ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chace
And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din,
Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud,
The leafless trees, and every icy crag

Tinkled like iron, while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the image of a star
That gleam'd upon the ice: and oftentimes

When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks, on either side,
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion; then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopp'd short, yet still the solitary Cliffs
Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had roll'd
With visible motion her diurnal round;
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watch'd

Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.
Ye Presences of Nature, in the sky
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
And Souls of lonely places! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when Ye employ'd
Such ministry, when Ye through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impress'd upon all forms the characters
Of danger or desire, and thus did make

The surface of the universal earth
With triumph, and delight, and hope, and fear,
Work like a sea? Not uselessly employ'd,
I might pursue this theme through every change
Of exercise and play, to which the year
Did summon us in its delightful round.
We were a noisy crew, the sun in heaven
Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours,
Nor saw a race in happiness and joy

More worthy of the ground where they were sown.
I would record with no reluctant voice
The woods of autumn and their hazel bowers
With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
True symbol of the foolishness of hope,
Which with its strong enchantment led us on
By rocks and pools, shut out from every star
All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
Among the windings of the mountain brooks.
--Unfading recollections! at this hour

The heart is almost mine with which I felt
From some hill-top, on sunny afternoons
The Kite high up among the fleecy clouds
Pull at its rein, like an impatient Courser,
Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
Dash'd headlong; and rejected by the storm.
Ye lowly Cottages in which we dwelt,

A ministration of your own was yours,
A sanctity, a safeguard, and a love!

Can I forget you, being as ye were
So beautiful among the pleasant fields
In which ye stood? Or can I here forget
The plain and seemly countenance with which
Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye
Delights and exultations of your own.
Eager and never weary we pursued
Our home amusements by the warm peat-fire
At evening; when with pencil and with slate,
In square divisions parcell'd out, and all

With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,
We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
In strife too humble to be named in Verse.
Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,
Cherry or maple, sate in close array,
And to the combat, Lu or Whist, led on
thick-ribbed Army; not as in the world
Neglected and ungratefully thrown by
Even for the very service they had wrought,
But husbanded through many a long campaign.

Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few
Had changed their functions, some, plebeian cards,
Which Fate beyond the promise of their birth
Had glorified, and call'd to represent
The persons of departed Potentates.
Oh! with what echoes on the Board they fell!
Ironic Diamonds, Clubs, Hearts, Diamonds, Spades,
A congregation piteously akin.
Cheap matter did they give to boyish wit,
Those sooty knaves, precipitated down

With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of Heaven,
The paramount Ace, a moon in her eclipse,
Queens, gleaming through their splendour's last decay,
And Monarchs, surly at the wrongs sustain'd
By royal visages. Meanwhile, abroad
The heavy rain was falling, or the frost

Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth,
And, interrupting oft the impassion'd game,
From Esthwaite's neighbouring Lake the splitting ice,
While it sank down towards the water, sent,

Among the meadows and the hills, its long
And dismal yellings, like the noise of wolves
When they are howling round the Bothnic Main.
Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
How Nature by extrinsic passion first
Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand,
And made me love them, may I well forget
How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
Not seldom, even in that tempestuous time,

Those hallow'd and pure motions of the sense
Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
An intellectual charm, that calm delight
Which, if I err not, surely must belong
To those first-born affinities that fit
Our new existence to existing things,
And, in our dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union betwixt life and joy.
Yes, I remember, when the changeful earth,
And twice five seasons on my mind had stamp'd

The faces of the moving year, even then,
A Child, I held unconscious intercourse
With the eternal Beauty, drinking in
A pure organic pleasure from the lines
Of curling mist, or from the level plain
Of waters colour'd by the steady clouds.
The Sands of Westmoreland, the Creeks and Bays
Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
How when the Sea threw off his evening shade
And to the Shepherd's huts beneath the crags

Did send sweet notice of the rising moon,
How I have stood, to fancies such as these,
Engrafted in the tenderness of thought,
A stranger, linking with the spectacle

No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
And bringing with me no peculiar sense
Of quietness or peace, yet I have stood,
Even while mine eye has mov'd o'er three long leagues
Of shining water, gathering, as it seem'd,

Through every hair-breadth of that field of light,
New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.
Thus, often in those fits of vulgar joy
Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits
Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
And is forgotten; even then I felt
Gleams like the flashing of a shield; the earth
And common face of Nature spake to me
Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,

By chance collisions and quaint accidents
Like those ill-sorted unions, work suppos'd
Of evil-minded fairies, yet not vain
Nor profitless, if haply they impress'd
Collateral objects and appearances,
Albeit lifeless then, and doom'd to sleep
Until maturer seasons call'd them forth
To impregnate and to elevate the mind.
--And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
Wearied itself out of the memory,

The scenes which were a witness of that joy
Remained, in their substantial lineaments
Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
By the impressive discipline of fear,
By pleasure and repeated happiness,
So frequently repeated, and by force
Of obscure feelings representative
Of joys that were forgotten, these same scenes,
So beauteous and majestic in themselves,

Though yet the day was distant, did at length
Become habitually dear, and all
Their hues and forms were by invisible links

Allied to the affections. I began
My story early, feeling as I fear,
The weakness of a human love, for days
Disown'd by memory, ere the birth of spring
Planting my snowdrops among winter snows.
Nor will it seem to thee, my Friend! so prompt
In sympathy, that I have lengthen'd out,

With fond and feeble tongue, a tedious tale.
Meanwhile, my hope has been that I might fetch
Invigorating thoughts from former years,
Might fix the wavering balance of my wind,
And haply meet reproaches, too, whose power
May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
To honorable toil. Yet should these hopes
Be vain, and thus should neither I be taught
To understand myself, nor thou to know
With better knowledge how the heart was fram'd

Of him thou lovest, need I dread from thee
Harsh judgments, if I am so loth to quit
Those recollected hours that have the charm
Of visionary things, and lovely forms
And sweet sensations that throw back our life
And almost make our Infancy itself
A visible scene, on which the sun is shining?
One end hereby at least hath been attain'd,
My mind hath been revived, and if this mood
Desert me not, I will forthwith bring down,

, with the length/ Of five

Through later years, the story of my life.
The road lies plain before me; 'tis a theme
Single and of determined bounds; and hence
I chuse it rather at this time, than work
Of ampler or more varied argument.

"The Prelude"

All these episodes represent what Wordsworth calls "spots of time" (XII, 1), those moments in life which charge the imagination and lend the pea sign of the

continuous influence of nature on the poet's mind. All suggest animated universe that is rich in significancerceiver a sense of power. They are scattered throughout The Prelude as. Some of these incidents are triggered by an optical illusion which suddenly suggests to Wordsworth the presence of a vital force permeating the scene. For example, in narrating his nighttime foray in the stolen boat, Wordsworth describes his destination, a craggy ridge as a monster rearing up from the deep:

... The grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with a purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me
(1, 381- 385)

Similarly, when Wordsworth describes his sudden stop while skating, the landscape seems to come alive, continuing to sweep by him with a movement of its own:

... yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me- even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
(1, 458- 460)

Both these incidents forge a link between the youthful poet's mind and the breathing world of nature which surrounds him.

A related theme is the power of the landscape to bind the poet to other people. In Book VIII, Wordsworth depicts his encounter with a solitary shepherded, who appears like a "

giant" in the mist and then, stepping into the sun, like an angel transfigured by light:

His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
By the deep radiance of the setting sun.
(VIII, 269- 270)

From this visual perception, Wordsworth moves to recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of the individual:

... Thus was man
Ennobled outwardly before my sight,
And thus my heart was early introduced
To an unconscious love and reverence

Of human nature;
(VIII, 275- 279)

The other two episodes listed, the risings of moon and sun, suggest the poet's active role in the interchange between humanity and nature. The poet is not merely that passive recipient of visual sensation but a creator of meaning through the subjective power of his mind. Thus Wordsworth's eye moves over the waters shining in the moonlight, "gathering... new pleasure like a bee among the flowers" (1, 578- 580). His description of the sunrise, with the sky "kindling," the sea "laughing," and the mountains "shining" (IV, 319- 332), suggests that the benevolent power of the scene comes in part from the animating vision of the poet's own eye. As he says elsewhere, of a sunset:

... An auxiliary light
Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
Bestowed new splendor;
(II, 368- 370)

These "spots of time" knit the fabric of the poet's experience, creating a continuous thread of revelation which connects the major crises of the poem. It is through these momentary flashes on insight that Wordsworth develops the habit of meditation which prepares him for the great illuminating visions of the Simplon Pass and Mr. Snowdon.

Wordsworth designed the structure of the Prelude to mirror the subject of the poem, the "growth of a poet's mind." The major principle of organization is that of mental association, or the power of the mind to connect disparate incidents into a coherent framework. Thus one "spot of time" follows another in a continuous stream, as Wordsworth illustrates the operation of creative thought on the physical forms of experience. A strictly chronological report of events is abandoned in favor of a more faithful rendering of the poet's spiritual autobiography, which consists in fact of an accumulation of timeless visions. Beyond this fabric of associations, the poem several other organizing patterns. One of these- a pattern if ascent and decline or crisis and recovery depends on a magnified version of the spots of time motif. Thus the visions occurring at the Simplon Pass and Mr. Snowdon represent climactic moments in the poet's experience, when the simple train of associations becomes charged with religious and moral significance and the poet full realizes and articulates his philosophy of life. As these two moments represent the zenith of the poet's inner- Wordsworth's residence in London (Book VII), the fair at Smithfield (Book VII), and his sojourn in Paris (Books IX-= XI)- represent humanity alienated from nature, struggling with the "blank confusion" (VII, 722) of the city and the terrible conflict of political ideologies. These crises in Wordsworth's life illustrate "a heart that had been turned aside/ from Nature's way by outward accidents" (XI, 290- 291), suggesting a descent into error on

the spiritual journey from which the poet can recover only by renewed contact with the natural world.

These patterns of timeless vision and of crisis and resolution are superimposed upon a rough chronology, extending from the childhood memories of Books I and II through the years at Cambridge (Books IX- XI). But Book VIII, which reviews the first twenty- one years of Wordsworth's life, and Books XII through XIV, which amplify the theme of imagination, reflects the general tendency of the poem to wander from strict chronology in order to mirror the poet's inner thoughts and associations. It is significant that the climactic ascent of Mt. Snowdon, which occurs in the final BOOK (Book XIV), is an event drawn from the poet's early twenties but reserved for the end of the work because of its spiritual meaning.

A final organizing pattern consists of the passages of direct address to the "Friend," identified with the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. These passages create a kind of critical apparatus in which Wordsworth directly comments on his methods of turning raw experience into poetry, the very poetry, in fact, which we are reading.

Thus the design of the poem reflects Wordsworth's highly developed self-consciousness as a poet. The small associations and large climaxes represent his fidelity to the raw material of his perceptions, while the continuing appeals to Coleridge as fellow poet, critic, and even mentor show his attention to the poetic craft of translating feelings into words.

Both passages figure as climactic "spots of time" in the poem, representing two ascents, both literal and figurative, which culminate in visionary insight. On both occasions, Wordsworth experiences the natural scene as an invitation to reflect on and celebrate the power of imagination to transfigure and illuminate the visible world. Although the two incidents differ in some respects, their similarity is striking, with the second passage largely echoing the first. This reiterative quality is characteristic of The Prelude as a whole and is a significant feature of Wordsworth's portrayal of the "growth of a poet's mind."

In the first incident, the narrative suggest an initial disappointment with the merely visible, for the poet discovers not from any divinely illuminated landscape but rather from a humble passerby that he has "crossed the Alps" (VI, 591). Out of his disappointment Wordsworth fashions his encomium of the imagination, which is indebted not to external nature but rather to a feeling of expectation and "something evermore about to be" (VI, 608). Humanity's glory and greatness, Wordsworth feels, lie I the striving for "infinitude" (VI, 605), that moment "when the light of sense/ Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed/ The invisible world" (VI, 600- 602). Wordsworth is then rewarded by

just such a moment. On the gloomy downward track, through a scene of "woods decaying," buffeting winds, "torrents shooting," muttering rocks, "drizzling crags," and a "raving stream" (VI, 625- 633), he suddenly perceives "the invisible world." All the unlikely hostile features of the landscape are to him ... like the workings of one mind, the features

Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The type sans symbols of Eternity,
The first, and last, and midst, and without end.
(VI, 636- 640)

The similes are insistent in the sense that there is no apparent visual correspondence between the actual scene, a terrifying fragmented wilderness, and the unitary, organic vision of one mind, one face, and one tree. The fullness of the rhetoric, with its increasing abstraction (" Apocalypse," "Eternity") and its conflation of ideas (person superimposed on tree, time sequence jumbled), suggests that Wordsworth is not only celebrating the synthesizing power of creative imagination but also striving to assert its autonomy from the physical world.

The ascents of Mt. Snowdon, by repeating many of the features of the journey through the Simplon Pass, becomes proof once again of the individual's ability to climb to the heights. Temporally displaced, this episode from the poet's early adulthood functions as a final climax in book which organizes itself as a series of climaxes. The initial mood is unpromising ("Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog" [XIV, 12]), and the travelers are pensive and sunk in "private thoughts" (XIV, 18). But here the scene Wordsworth stumbles upon is apparently hospitable to the imagination; the moon's illumination produces a "flash" of insight, and the mist signifies the "invisible world" toward which the poet yearns:

For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash and lol as I looked up,
The moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Reset a silent sea of hoary mist.
(XIV, 38- 42)

What follow is a discourse on the scene as "the emblem of a mind/ That feeds upon infinity" (XIV, 70- 71). But Wordsworth's exegesis of his chosen symbols departs widely from the original terms of moon and mist, again, as in the Simplon Pass episode, implying the mind's freedom from mere facts. Describing the poetic faculty of "higher minds," he applauds the fact that "They

from their native selves can send aboard/ Kindred mutations" (XIV, 93- 94) in a way that rivals nature. When he asserts that "they build up greatest things/ From least suggestions" (XIV, 101- 102), he is at the same moment demonstrating the process.

The language becomes heightened in a way reminiscent of the alpine revelation, with references to the transcending of time ("till Time shall be no more") and to "Deity"

(XIV, 11- 112). Again there is a turning away from the actual scene in nature toward philosophic abstraction and discursive eloquence.

If Wordsworth has in this instance once again achieved the sublime, it may be asked what is the effect of this repetition, and indeed of all the repetitions of *The Prelude*. As Harold Bloom remarks, "For Wordsworth there is always a precise extend and a houness, to the mind's master's.... Each case is the same insofar as the creative faculty remains a constant or at least a constant potential, but each is different in terms of how the mind is stimulated to its imaginative potential, which works "but in alliance with the work/ Which it beholds" (II, 259- 260). In a sense, Wordsworth's compulsion to record many interactions with many landscapes becomes a testimony to the inherent power and beauty of nature, which continually evokes the fullest possible response of the poet, again and again, in every phase of the poet's life. Conversely, and more importantly, the repeated encounters constitute a proof of the poet's unfailing powers. As the poem progresses, Wordsworth increasingly present himself as independent of the visible scene, using it primarily as something to transcend or transfigure as he proves once again that he has the power to do so. Thus every "spot of time" i9s an individual victory wrested from the merely visible. It is only by an accumulation of such victories that Wordsworth can persuade the reader, and perhaps himself, of humankind's spiritual capacity for interaction with and dominion over nature.

1. Analyzes the treatment of time in the "Tintern Abbey".

2. Discuss the themes and significance of ther passage (lines t88- 111) which begins:

… for I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity

(lines 88- 91)

3. Explain what the following episodes in The Prelude have in common: the boat ride (lines 357- 400), skating with friends (lines 425- 463), the rising moon (lines 567- 580), the walk home after the dance at sunrise (lines 309- 338), and, meeting the shepherds (lines 256- 293).

4. What is the structure of The Prelude?

5. Compare the passage describing the Simplon (VI, 562- 640) with that describing the vision on Mt. Snowdon (XIV, 1- 129).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Coleridge was the son of a vicar. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, London, where he became friendly with Lamb and Leigh Hunt and went on to Jesus College Cambridge, where he failed to get a degree. In the summer of 1794 Coleridge became friends with the future Poet Laureate Southey, with whom he wrote a verse drama. Together they formed a plan to establish a Pantisocracy, a Utopian community, in New England. They married sisters, but the scheme fell apart and they argued over money and politics.

Coleridge at this time was an ardent non-conformist and in 1796 preached throughout the West Country, deciding, however, not to become a minister. In 1797 he met William Wordsworth and for the next year and a half lived and worked closely with him, collaborating to produce the Lyrical Ballads. In 1798, disillusioned with English politics, Coleridge set out for Germany, where he studied Kant, Schiller and Scheling. On his return he moved to the Lake District to be with the Wordsworths, but suffered from his failing marriage and an increasing dependence on opium. He also fell hopelessly in love with Wordsworth's future sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson, the inspiration for his love poems of this period, and separated from his wife in 1807. Coleridge failed to restore his health or mental balance and quarrelled irrevocably with Wordsworth in 1810, alienating also Dorothy and Sara, with whom he had been editing a periodical The Friend. Winter 1813-14 brought a rebirth of his religious beliefs and for the first time he openly admitted his opium addiction and sought medical help. In 1816 he lodged in the London household of a young surgeon Dr James Gilman, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. The publication of Christabel in this year assured his reputation as a poet but the end of his life was taken up with religious and philosophical prose works.

Dejection: An Ode

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
With the old Moon in her arms ;

And I fear, I fear, My Master dear !
We shall have a deadly storm.
I
Well ! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence

Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
[Image]Which better far were mute.
For lo ! the New-moon winter-bright !
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling

The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
And oh ! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast !
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
[Image]And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live !
II
A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,

Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
[Image]In word, or sigh, or tear--
O Lady ! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green :
And still I gaze--and with how blank an eye !
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,

That give away their motion to the stars ;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen :

Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are !

III

[Image]My genial spirits fail ;
[Image]And what can these avail

To lift the smothering weight from off my breast ?
[Image]It were a vain endeavour,
[Image]Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west :
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

IV

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live :
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !

And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
[Image]Enveloping the Earth--
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

V

O pure of heart ! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be !
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady ! Joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,
Joy, Lady ! is the spirit and the power,

Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,

Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud--
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud--
[Image]We in ourselves rejoice !
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,

This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness :
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth :
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth ;
[Image]But oh ! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can ;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man--
This was my sole resource, my only plan :
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
[Image]Reality's dark dream !

I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth ! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist ! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,

Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds !
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold !
[Image]What tell'st thou now about ?
[Image]'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds--
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold !
But hush ! there is a pause of deepest silence !
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,

With groans, and tremulous shudderings--all is over--
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud !
[Image]A tale of less affright,
[Image]And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,--
[Image][Image]'Tis of a little child
[Image][Image]Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way :
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep :
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep !
Visit her, gentle Sleep ! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth !
[Image]With light heart may she rise,
[Image]Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice ;

To her may all things live, from the pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul !
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady ! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus may'st thou ever, evermore rejoice.

“Dejection: An Ode”

The primary I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in

the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree,* and in the mode of its operation. it dissolves, diffuse, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

Coleridge differentiates sense perception from the creative and integrative faculty which "struggles to idealize and to unify." Thus the primary imagination, common to all people, corresponds to the act of seeing or hearing and is a sign of human existence, the finite mind's assertion of "I AM." In somewhat language, Coleridge defines the secondary imagination as an :echo" of the primary, implying that it is somewhat dependent on sense perception ; however, this second faculty is a more active function of the perceiving mind, "coexisting with the conscious will," which dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate."

In general, Coleridge discusses the difference between the two modes of imagination as a contrast between passive and active. The primary imagination takes in the world of objects but leaves those objects unchanged, "essentially fixed and dead," while the secondary imagination disintegrates the world of appearances in order to reconstruct them and make them live.

In "Dejection: An Ode" the poet repeatedly makes a distinction between the passive reception of an "inanimate cold world" and the act of creative will which vitalizes nature, engendering "a new Earth and a new Heaven." the activity of the secondary imagination is called, in the poem, "Joy," "while the state in which the primary imagination is in ascendance is simplicity linked to the dejection of the titles. In stanza 2, Coleridge illustrates the primary mode, beginning with a description of his profound depression ("A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear, /A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief" [lines 21-22]) and moving on to a precise visual description of the world perceived as so many sense 9impressions. Gazing at the western sky in the calm before the storm, Coleridge catalogues the sights which strike his eye thin clouds, the crescent moon, the scattered stars, and the tinted horizon. These perceptions, representing the activity of the primary imagination, suggest that it is in the main a physical process, similar in function to Blake's "vegetable eye." But Coleridge insists that merely seeing these objects is not enough: I see them all so excel, lently fair, /I see, nor feel, how beautiful they are!" (Lines 37- 38). The absence of creative joy, of what he later calls "my shaping spirit of

Imagination" (6, 86, meaning stanza 5, line 86), makes him impotent to transform or enliven this world of objects:

It were a vain endeavor,
Though I should gaze forever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

(3, 42- 46).the "Aeolian lute" in stanza 1 is connected with the impotence and passivity of the primary imagination. (An Aeolian lute is a harp with strings stretched over a rectangular sounding box, placed in an opened window so that it produces musical chords when played on by the breeze. It was a common household object in the early nineteenth century and often was used in romantic poetry as an image of the mind responding to the natural world.) The allusion to "the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes/ Upon the strings" (lines 6-7) suggests that the poet is himself just such a harp, visited by the elements and plucked upon by the wind, without any force or energy of his own. In contrast, the discussion of Joy in stanza 5 implies that the secondary imagination is itself elemental, compounded of air and water, simultaneously as tangible as rain as intangible as light or vapor. It is the source of all "that charms or ear or sight," the origin of "all melodies" and "all colors."It is "this light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,/ This beautiful and beauty making power" (lines 62-63); it is "cloud at once and shower," "the spirit and the power" (lines 66-67). The world perceived imaginatively or "joyfully" is neither cold not dead born again into "a new Earth and a new Heaven (line 69).

When Coleridge returns to the lute in stanza 7, it seems that his identification is less with the harp than with the wind that plays upon it. The wind, like "Joy, the luminous cloud" (line 71), is an elemental power that vitalizes the world, imbuing it with motion and sound. On the one hand, Coleridge has the answer to his grim wish, expressed in stanza 1,that the wind "might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!" (line 20); the "sobbing draft" has become: a scream/ Of agony by torture lengthened out" (lines 97-98), and Coleridge, like the lute, helplessly responds to an external power. At the same time, the poet is not solely a responsive instrument, answering the storm, but is himself a maker of storms. Poet and wind merge in the description of the latter as an impassioned actor, "Perfect in all tragic sounds!" and a "mighty poet, e'en to frenzy bold!" (Lines 108-109). The poem is a dramatic performance, a record of frenzy and boldness is confronting the poet's own imaginative loss and failure. Although the emphasis throughout most of the poem is on the suspension of imagination and the oppression of Joy by sudden visitations of grief, stanza 7

appears to present a catharsis or release. The breaking of the storm animates both the scene and the poet. The wind does not so much cause an imaginative renewal (it "long has raved unnoticed" [line 97]) as signal or accompany it. Coleridge himself is a "Mad lutanist" (line 104), once again in possession of the image making power. "What tell'st thou now about?" (Line 110) Coleridge asks the wind, and immediately he has his own answer:

"Tis of the rushing of an host in rout," and "It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!/ A tale of less affright, / And with delight" (lines 111:117- 119). The world is no longer static, silent, and dead but alive with meaning which the poet, gifted with secondary imagination, bestows.

Though ostensibly Coleridge has lost his way, like the little child "upon a lonesome wild" sobbing for her mother (lines 121- 125), and though Joy is apparently wholly transferred to another (the "Lady" to whom the poem is addressed), stanza 7 suggests that the poet has at least momentarily recovered his creativity. The reference to the little child lost, the "tender lay" which Coleridge hears in the moaning of the wind, is significant: Coleridge is like the child not only in that he is lost but in that he is "not far from home" (line 123). He is near to "what nature gave me at my birth, /My shaping spirit of Imagination" (lines 85-86).

"Dejection: An Ode" documents that "struggle to idealize and to unify" which Coleridge attributes to the secondary imagination. As he records his sense of suspended will and imaginative impotence, he at the same time covertly attempts to common up the "sweet and potent voice" of joy. Despite his insistence that this voice is sent "from the soul itself ... of its own birth" (lines 56-57), something given rather than willed, the whole poem is an invocation of that power, a willing of the wind to rise and the storm to break. The ode both calls forth the "secondary imagination" and witnesses its coming.

That the themes of the two poems are related is a consequence of the fact that Coleridge began composing his ode immediately after hearing the opening stanzas of Wordsworth's. Although Coleridge revised the poem extensively in the next six months, the concerns expressed in the original verse letter to Sara Hutchinson, dated April 4, 1802, survive in the final version.

The poem is both an inquiry into the origins of creative joy and a description of imaginative loss and emptiness. Coleridge considers the secondary imagination, the power of Joy, to be inexplicable, a "given" which emanates from the soul itself. No plan "by abstruse research to steal/From my own nature all the natural man" (line 89-90) can regenerate "what nature gave me at my birth, / My shaping spirit of Imagination" (lines (84- 85). Indeed, in Coleridge's view intellect "infects" him, and his soul is strangled by "habit" and reality's dark

dream" (lines 92, 93, and 95). The whole of stanza 6 sketches the journey from "joy" and "dreams of happiness" to the "afflictions" of his current life. There is no explicit resolution of the crisis he presents; although stanza 7 dramatizes a reawakening of creative power, Coleridge never clearly acknowledges that Joy can be recovered. He wholly transfers it to the "Lady":

Joy lift here spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
(8, 134-136)

By locating the source of imaginative power within the sol, Coleridge denies the effectiveness of the external world to stimulate joy. "O Lady! We receive but what we give, /And in our life alone does Nature live" (lines 47- 48). Joy, like its contrary, dejection, is a visitation; but dejection is kind of robbery or theft, while joy is a gift "that ne'er was given, / Save to the pure, and in their purest hour" 9lines 64- 65).

Coleridge's handling of the theme of imagination is similar to Wordsworth's in the "Immorality" ode in that both poets emphasize the mysterious gift of creative joy and express sorrow at its loss. However, Wordsworth suggests a developmental scheme: as children, we come "trailing clouds of glory" (lines 64), but the light of joy grows with the passage of time until "at length the Man perceives it die away, / And fade into the / light of common day" 9loines 76-77). Wordsworth's firm connection between joy (or "light) and childhood allows him the consolations of nostalgia. He empathize with the delight of "Thou Child of Joy," treating him almost as an intercessor, one who reminds him of his original divine spark and recalls him to the love of nature. He also places more emphasis on the comfort which maturity can bring, as thought and memory play over the natural scene and compensate, in part, for the loss of the imaginative radiance which once flooded his vision:

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find

Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death.
In years that bring the philosophic mind.
(10, 178- 187)

For Coleridge, however, who treats imaginative loss more as a robbery than a natural process, there is no "primal sympathy" or "philosophic mind"; rather, he unsuccessfully struggles by "abstruse research to steal" what once was his and is hunted by "viper thoughts.../ Reality's dark dream!" (Lines 89, 94-95). Wordsworth has the further solace of turning once again to nature, as he does in the final stanza of the "Immorality" ode. He does not so rigorously confine the origins of joy to the perceiver so that the world is without influence. Where Coleridge say that "in our life alone Nature live," Wordsworth turns to "ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves and, denying any separation, asserts "yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might" (lines 188, 190). For Coleridge, the light seems to have irrevocably failed, leaving behind an "inanimate cold world" (line 51), while to Wordsworth "the meanest flower that blows can give Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" (lines 203—204).
The apostrophe of the Lady (lines 25, 47, 59, 64, 67, 139) gives the ode a dramatic quality, Rather than reflecting in solitude, Coleridge is ostensibly talking to someone, explaining and confessing. In successive drafts of the poem, the unseen auditor was called "Sara" (Sara Hutchinson), "William" (William Wordsworth) and "Edmond" before Coleridge settled on the neutral appellation "Lady." The implication of these revisions is that the hearer's roles are more important than his or her particular identity. The roles seem to be those of intercessor, surrogate, and heir. In stanza 4 and 5, the lady is closely associated with Joy, that power of the soul, both a light and a voice, which regenerates nature:

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven
(5, 67-69)
The Lady is "pure of heart!" (Line 59) and thus intimately acquainted with "this strong music in the soul... This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist" (lines 60, 62). In her exceptional virtue she is possessed of the radiance which Coleridge can o longer find. Although the poet never explicitly asks her to intercede for him, she has a saintlike quality as one through whom he can regain access to Joy. Though her he can call up, or at least remember, "a new Earth and new Heaven."

At the same time, the Lady is like Wordsworth's sister in "Tintern Abbey." in the latter poem, Wordsworth's "dearest Friend, / My dear, dear Friend"(lines 115- 116) becomes a surrogate for the poet; her "wild ecstasies" recall his own youthful experience of nature, and the "sober pleasure" of her "after years" will repeat his mature experience. He lives again through her and, by mixing

memory and anticipation, depends the significance of the current moment. Coleridge likewise calls the Lady "friends devoutest of my choice" and treats her experience as an extension of his own. He need hardly explain to her "the sweet and potent voice" of the soul or the joy that animates the world since she is living witness of what he has known.

It is noteworthy that both poets introduce their "friends" after a reference to a failure or decay of their "genial spirits," for the surrogates are somewhat linked to the ideas of inner power and vitality. Wordsworth say that even should nature fail to provide him with a moral center, he will not "suffer my genial spirits to decay: / For thou art with me" (lines 113- 114). For Wordsworth, his sister is a consolation and a guide; her life heightens and clarifies his own.
For Coleridge, the inner decay has already occurred, apparently without hope of reversal. "My genial spirits fail; /And what can these avail/ To lift the smoothing weight from off my breast?'' (Lines 37- 40). Nature cannot help him, and the reference to the Lady in line 47 suggests that she is not a guide or teacher but rather a disciple or heir:

"O Lady! We receive but what we give, / And in our life alone does Nature live" (lines 47- 48). The closing benediction in stanza 8 confirms the lad's role as heir, one to whom Coleridge passes on the legacy of joy while he himself is resigned to loss and sorrow.
Visit her, gentle Sleep! With wings of healing,
. . . . . .
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
(Lines 128; 134- 136)
If to hi the worlds lacks "the passion and the life, whose fountains are within" (line 46), to her "all things live," animated by "her living soul."
Despite the Lady's somewhat different function from Wordsworth's "Friend," the effect is similar. Although Coleridge is not explicit about the resolution of his crisis, the language of the poem's closing suggest that his friend too brings a renewal of hope and vitality. The ode's progress from "unimpassioned grief" to its final word, "rejoice," suggests that Coleridge has, over his own protestations, achieved a release of some kind from the "smothering weight" of dejection. He has also found the means to create a poem even in lamenting his creative impotence; the poem, like the storm, is a "mountain birth," a brief but highly charged performance. If not Joy, then the animating influence of the Lady has attuned" his voice to write it.

The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner
IN SEVEN PARTS
PART I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
`By thy long beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me ?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
May'st hear the merry din.'
He holds him with his skinny hand,
`There was a ship,' quoth he.
`Hold off ! unhand me, grey-beard loon !'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye--
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child :
The Mariner hath his will.
The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
He cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.
`The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop

Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon--'

The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.
The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music ; but the Mariner continueth his tale.
The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.
The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;

And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.
The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.
`And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.
With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,

And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
The southward aye we fled.
And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.
The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.
And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen :

Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken--
The ice was all between.
The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.
At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came ;

As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.
It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through !
And lo ! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.
And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,

And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo !
In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'
The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.
`God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !--
Why look'st thou so ?'--With my cross-bow

I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.
And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play

Came to the mariners' hollo !
His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.
And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe :

For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow !
But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make

themselves accomplices in the crime.
Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.
The fair breeze continues ; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.
The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.
The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.
Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !
All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,

Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.
Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.
And the Albatross begins to be avenged.
Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, every where,

Nor any drop to drink.
The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !

Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.
About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.
A Spirit had followed them ; one of the invisible inhabitants of this

planet, neither departed souls nor angels ; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.
And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so ;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.
And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;

We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.
The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner : in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.
Ah ! well a-day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III
There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.
The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.
At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist ;

It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.
At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship ; and at a dear ransom
he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.
With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail ;

Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !
A flash of joy ;
With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call :
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.
And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or

tide ?
See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal ;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !
The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well nigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun ;
When that strange shape drove suddenly

Betwixt us and the Sun.
It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.
And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.
And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.
Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,

Like restless gossameres ?
The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship.
And those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a DEATH ? and are there two ?
Is DEATH that woman's mate ?
[first version of this stanza through the end of Part III]
Like vessel, like crew !

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold :
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.
Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.
The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice ;
`The game is done ! I've won ! I've won !'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.
The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.
At the rising of the Moon,
We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,

The steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip--
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.
One after another,
One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,

Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead.
Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.
But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.
The souls did from their bodies fly,--
They fled to bliss or woe !
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow !

PART IV

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him ;
`I fear thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.
(Coleridge's note on above stanza)
I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.'--
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !

This body dropt not down.
But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.
Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.
He despiseth the creatures of the calm,
The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :

And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.
And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.
I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;

I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.
I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made

My heart as dry as dust.
I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat ;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.
But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.
The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they :
The look with which they looked on me

Had never passed away.
An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.
In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward ; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native

country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.
The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide :
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside--
Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread ;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charméd water burnt alway

A still and awful red.
By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.
Beyond the shadow of the ship,

I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.
Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,

They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.
Their beauty and their happiness.
He blesseth them in his heart.
O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware :
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,

And I blessed them unaware.
The spell begins to break.
The self-same moment I could pray ;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

Oh sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !

She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.
By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.
The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained.
My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank ;
And still my body drank.
I moved, and could not feel my limbs :
I was so light--almost

I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blesséd ghost.
He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.
And soon I heard a roaring wind :
It did not come anear ;
But with its sound it shook the sails,

Sure I had drunken in my dreams,

That were so thin and sere.
The upper air burst into life !
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about !
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.
And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud ;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side :
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.
The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on ;
The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on !
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.
The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze up-blew ;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools--
We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.
But not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.
`I fear thee, ancient Mariner !'
Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,

Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :
For when it dawned--they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.
Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !
And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.
It ceased ; yet still the sails made on

A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.
[Additional stanzas, dropped after the first edition.]
Till noon we quietly sailed on,

Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.
Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.
The Sun, right up above the mast,

Had fixed her to the ocean :
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion--
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.
Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound :
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.
The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element,

take part in his wrong ; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.
How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.
`Is it he ?' quoth one, `Is this the man ?
By him who died on cross,

With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.
The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew :
Quoth he, `The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART VI

FIRST VOICE

`But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing--
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the ocean doing ?'

SECOND VOICE

`Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast ;

His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast--
If he may know which way to go ;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance ; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

FIRST VOICE

`But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind ?'

SECOND VOICE

`The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.
Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :

For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded ; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :

All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.
The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away :
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.
The curse is finally expiated.
And now this spell was snapt : once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw

Of what had else been seen--
Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.
But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,

In ripple or in shade.
It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring--
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.
Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze--
On me alone it blew.
And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?
We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray--

O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.
The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?
We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray--
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.
The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.
[Additional stanzas, dropped after the first edition.]
The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.
The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,
And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,

Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.
And appear in their own forms of light.
A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck--
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !
Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man,

On every corse there stood.
This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,

Each one a lovely light ;
This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart--
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.
But soon I heard the dash of oars,

I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.
[Additional stanza, dropped after the first edition.]
The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.
I saw a third--I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !

He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII
The Hermit of the Wood,
This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !

He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.
He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve--
He hath a cushion plump :
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.
The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
`Why, this is strange, I trow !
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now ?'

Approacheth the ship with wonder.
`Strange, by my faith !' the Hermit said--

`And they answered not our cheer !
The planks looked warped ! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere !
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were
Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along ;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,

And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'
`Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look--
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared'--`Push on, push on !'
Said the Hermit cheerily.
The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,

And straight a sound was heard.
The ship suddenly sinketh.
Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.
The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.
Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned

My boBut swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.
Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.
I moved my lips--the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit ;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
`Ha ! ha !' quoth he, `full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'
And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him ; and the penance of life falls on him.
`O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
`Say quick,' quoth he, `I bid thee say--
What manner of man art thou ?'
Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,dy lay afloat ;
Which forced me to begin my tale ;

And then it left me free.
And ever and anon through out his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land ;
Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.
I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;
That moment that his face I see,

I know the man that must hear me :
To him my tale I teach.
What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are :
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea :

So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.
O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !--
To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends

And youths and maidens gay !
And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.
Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,

He made and loveth all.
The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.
He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”
The poem offered an explicit “moral” in the Mariner’s farewell words to the wedding Guest:
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

(Lines 614- 617)
This homily is reinforced by Coleridge's marginal gloss, which explains that the Mariner's role is "to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth." He is thus presented as a reformed sinner, preaching a doctrine of charity to the Wedding Guest, who is moved and chastened by the Mariner's tale ("A sadder and a wiser man, / He rose the morrow morn" [lines 624- 625]).
Certain earlier moment in the poem contribute to a heavily moralistic effect. The marginal glosses especially provide a running didactic commentary on the Mariner's story: "The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen" : "And the Albatross begins to be avenged"; "By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm"; He blesseth them in his heart"; "By grace of the Holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshes with rain"; "The Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew"; "The curse is finally expiated"; "The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him." These explanatory statements suggest a Christian allegory involving the pilgrimage of an Everyman through sin, retribution, and penance to a kind of provisional redemption. This redemption is apparently dependent on repeated confession as a sign of the Mariner's continual renewal of spiritual recognition.
The poem itself, however, does not invite such simple equations as "Mariner equals Everyman," "Albatross equals Christ," and so on. The Rime is richer in connotation than such equations would suggest, and Coleridge seems to have regretted including the overtly moralistic passages, coming to see them as false to his central concept. Answering an objection from a reader that the poem lacked a moral, he said that on the contrary "the poem had too much.... It ought to have had no more moral than the *Arabian Nights'* tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up and says he must kill the aforesaid merchant because one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son" (*Table Talk* [May 31,. 1930]).
By his own account, then, Coleridge meant the Mariner's act to be sudden, inexplicable, and casual rather than malignant or willful. In the poem, the Mariner narrates the event in an abrupt, disconnected manner which suggests that the action itself was disconnected and "causeless." When the Wedding Guest questions the Mariner's sudden agitation, the Mariner answer with a bald assertion:

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!-

Why look'st thou so!"- With my crossbow
I shot the ALBATROSS,
(Lines 79- 82)

The Mariner fails to provide an explanation of motive here. Again, later, at the crucial moment when his view of the water snakes changes from that of "a thousand thousand slimy things" (line 238), to "O happy living things! No tongue/ Their beauty might declare" (lines 282- 283), the spiritual change seems inexplicable. The final "moral" ("He prayeth best, who loveth best" [line614]) represents in a sense another failure to explain in its reduction of the poem's complex significance to a simple adage. The Mariner's compulsive narration of physical details and his striking omission of any meaningful attempt at interpretation suggest a kind of enthrallment. He is possessed by a supernatural vision which he can recount but cannot elucidate. When he blesses, he is "unaware" when he preaches, he is superficial and naïve. He is like a vessel for something beyond himself, incapable of interpreting his own experience. Despite the Mariner's limitations as a narrator, his experience remains deeply meaningful. As an ordinary person gripped by strange events and stranger visions, he represents the potency of God's grace, which can alter the individual's relation to the world. What the Mariner speaks of, albeit somewhat tritely, is love ("A spring of love gushed from my heart" [line 284] "For the dear god who loveth us, / He made and loveth all" [lines 616- 617]), a love that is at least implicitly Christian. This love has the power to transfigure existence, to animate it and render it coherent. The individual is bound to the supernatural infusion, proceeding from divine will, which awakens a deeper consciousness. The description of the water snakes swimming in the moonlight which precedes the Mariner's sudden ability to pray suggest something beyond a prevailing mood or trick of perception. The moon, for Coleridge as for many other romantic poets, symbolizes a magical or supernatural radiance which attends, and arouses, imaginative excitement. The special significance of the moon is suggested by the unusually elaborate marginal note describing it:

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they inter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The Mariner, then, wants the world to belong to him as the sky belongs to the stars; he wants to feel at home in nature, to move through it and to experience the silent joy of arrival. In the poem, the radiance and movement of the night sky are transferred to the water snakes, which move, rear, coil, and swim,

shedding an "elfish light," "hoary flakes," and "a flash of golden fire." In the Mariner's mind, for the moment inspired by God's grace, nature is alive and glowing, with the moon, stars and creatures of the deep connected and unified in a single vision. In contrast to this vision of connection and oneness, the Mariner's original crime had been profoundly discontinuous, implying a view of the albatross as an isolated thing, separate from and alien to himself. The sense of inclusiveness, continuity, and connection. Of a world bathed in a single medium, is the mark of grace, the "one life" as perceived by every sensitive, vital being. The Mariner's naïve statement at the end of the poem about loving "all creatures," for "God made and loveth all," is an acknowledgment of the comprehensiveness and coherence of the creative vision conferred by God. God frees the Mariner from the curse of guilty by an act of divine will, just as the rain pours from heaven into the "silly" ("blessed" or "happy") buckets on the deck (lines 297- 300). The Mariner is literary a vessel for God's grace; his obtuseness and naiveté constitute a way of emphasizing the miraculous quality of grace, which can arouse even a limited consciousness to a sense of love.
The supernatural apparatus of the poem is connected to the theme of the quickening of consciousness which is God's gift. It functions as a metaphor for the animation and plenitude of the world as imaginatively perceived. Thus, the Latin epigraph of the poem (adapted by Coleridge from Thomas Burnet, *Archaeologiae philosophicae* [1692]) alludes to a populous universe of "invisible natures" and, while acknowledging humankind's ignorance of these natures, stresses that "it is helpful sometimes to contemplate in the mind, as on a tablet, the image of a greater and better world, lest the intellect, habituated to the petty things of daily life, narrow itself and sink wholly into trivial thoughts."
The Mariner's reports of supernatural visions- death and life-in-death playing dice on the skeleton ship, the dead crewmembers animated by angelic spirits, the conversation of two polar spirits- suggest that despite a certain obtuseness and literalness in his narration, he can at times see the invisible world, strangely alive with hidden significance. As a vessel Of God's will, he is afforded glimpses of something beyond the merely physical.
The weather, too, is a sign of the Mariner's state of grace, constituting a symbolic index of his relationship to nature. The opening descriptions of the wind, the albatross, the roaring ice, and the glimmering moonshine suggest a world alive with imaginative possibility, just as the "hot and copper sky," "bloody Sun," "painted ocean"and"slimy sea" of the terrible calm imply a dead world, enlivened by "nor breath nor motion." The albatross is above all a natural being, perceived primarily as alive, or "quick." One of the underlying themes of the poem is the contrast between the quick and the dead, between imagination and mere perception. This polarity is dependent on the spiritual

condition of the beholder, for it is only God's grace that allows the Mariner to perceive nature as significant and vital. Thus the Mariner is truly animated, inspirited and inspired, when he sees the water snakes flashing in the moonlight.

The conclusion of the poem, with its pat didacticism, fails to embrace the thematic implications of the whole. The theme of imaginative perception, which derives from the mysterious operation of grace, transcends the narrow categories of conventional morality, just as the Mariner's extraordinary tale outstrips his capacities as a rather ordinary teller. The inadequacy of the Mariner's final formulation emphasizes the mystery. Although he seems only partially aware of the significance of his experience, his glimpse of a coherent world, divinely illumined, is his mark of grace.

The general effect of the "naïve" narrative is to produce an atmosphere reminiscent of folktales and fables. The central story of sin and redemption is common to much folklore, and the supernatural elements are like those found in many fabulous tales and legends. The emphatic sermonizing of the Mariner's tale suggests the style of naïve allegory, again a feature typical of popular storytelling. This admonitory quality is particularly associated with the ballad form, and the Rime ends, like many ballads, with an explicit moral:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
all things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.
(Lines 614- 617)

The Mariner's strange journey becomes an ethical exemplum, an admonition not only to the Wedding Guest ("A sadder and a wiser man, / He rose the morrow morn") but to every reader.

Coleridge's use of ballad prosody (short lines, alternating tetrameter with trimester, and an abab rhyme scheme) produces a musical verse which mesmerizes the reader as well as the Wedding Guest. But apart from the songlike quality which it has in common with many ballads, the *Rime* is generally quite different in effect from medieval exemplars of the form. Within the inherently repetitive structure of the ballad stanza, Coleridge heightens the hypnotic effect by frequent use of verbal repetition. Single words, phrases, and whole lines are reiterated verbatim, usually in an exclamatory way. For example, the emphatic repetitions in the Mariner's description of the sudden calm which paralyzes the ship after his slaying of the albatross convey his own sense of paralysis and horror:

Day after day, day after day
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;

As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.
Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink; Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. (Lines 115- 122)

The Mariner's tale is spellbinding in the sense of casting a spell; he binds his listener not only "with his glittering eye" (line 13) but by reliving and thus transferring his strange experience through the hypnotic medium of words. The verbal repetitions suggest the stress of compulsion, for it is only by obsessively naming his sensation and visions that Mariner can exorcise them. There is at times a mechanical quality to the recitation, as though the narrator himself were under a spell. The generally repetitive diction also suggest the Mariner's alienation from the physical world. His language is somehow blocked, the constricted word choice suggesting his emotional constriction.

The simplicity of the imagery, although again partly attributable to the oral tradition of ballads, contributes to the "automatic" tone of the narrative. Many of the similes function like epithets, sketching basic sensations and sights in an unimaginative, subdued fashion. Thus, the sails "sigh like sedge" or make a noise "like of a hidden brook," and the ice is "as green as emerald." Only in the description of the sea snakes the imagery grow more complicated, in order to signal the Mariner's new perception at the climactic moment before the breaking of the spell.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light

Fell off in hoary flakes.
Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.
(Lines 272- 281)

The specificity of the language implies the Mariner's new relationship to nature, his sudden closeness to, and ability to see, the universe of living things. The water snakes are no longer "slimy things" (line 125) but "happy living things" (line 282),

unspeakably beautiful. This vivid description is very different from the constricted naïve style which dominates the poem.

Romantic Poetry

The prevailing naiveté of the poetic style creates a sense of strangeness. The narrator is both casting a spell and locked in a spell, and his language is for the most part incantatory and obsessive. The strangeness of the narrative derivers, pernatural events reported. At the same time, the style itself has a certain strangeness, with its hypnotic, driven diction and unvarying rhythms.

1. In Biographia Literaria on "the imagination, or esemplastic power," Coleridge makes a distinction between the "primary imagination" and the "secondary imagination"?

2. Relate this theory to Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode."

3. Compare the ideas on poetic imagination in Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" with those expressed in Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood."

4. What is the function of the Lady in "Dejection: An Ode"?

5. The Rime in some ways a "naïve" narrative, using the short stanzas, simple prosody, and predictable images of the ballad form. Discuss the effect of this simple narrative style.

6. Discuss the moral symbolism of the poem and its connection to the poem's theme.

Robert Burns

Robert Burns (25 January 1759 – 21 July 1796) (also known as **Rabbie Burns**, **Scotland's favourite son**, the **Ploughman Poet**, **Robden of Solway Firth**, the **Bard of Ayrshire** and in Scotland as simply **The Bard**) was a Scottish poet and a lyricist. He is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland, and is celebrated worldwide. He is the best known of the poets who have written in the Scots language, although much of his writing is also in English and a "light" Scots dialect, accessible to an audience beyond Scotland. He also wrote in standard English, and in these his political or civil commentary is often at its most blunt.

He is regarded as a pioneer of the Romantic movement, and after his death he became a great source of inspiration to the founders of both liberalism and socialism, and a cultural icon in Scotland and among the Scottish Diaspora around the world. Celebration of his life and work became almost a national charismatic cult during the 19th and 20th centuries, and his influence has long been strong on Scottish literature. In 2009 he was chosen as the 'Greatest Scot' by the Scottish public in a vote run by Scottish television channel STV.

As well as making original compositions, Burns also collected folk songs from across Scotland, often revising or adapting them. His poem (and song) *Auld Lang Syne* is often sung at Hogmanay (the last day of the year), and *Scots Wha Hae* served for a long time as an unofficial national anthem of the country. Other poems and songs of Burns remain well-known across the world today include *A Red, Red Rose*; *A Man's A Man for A' That*; *To a Louse*; *To a Mouse*; *The Battle of Sherramuir*; *Tam o' Shanter*, and *Ae Fond Kiss*.

A Red, Red Rose

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only Luve
And fare thee well, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

"A Red, Red Rose"

It is true that Burns draws on conventional mages in his love ballad. However, the skillful use of simile, metaphor, and hyperbole, coupled with subtle rhythmic cadences, indicates that the lyric is not the product of a naïve sensibility but rather an artful creation.

The opening line, "O My Luve's like a red, red rose," with its four strong stresses, constitutes a simple, bold assertion of the poet's feeling. The lover draws on the conventional association of love with nature's bounty; his mistress, like a rose, represents beauty, blossoming, awakening life, and springtime vitality. The next simile, which attributes the sweetness and harmony of music to the beloved, is equally simple and straightforward: O My Luve is like the melodie/ That's sweetly played in tune" (lines 3-4).

Having characterized his mistress, the poet attempts to quantify the depth of his feelings. First, he
measures" his own boundless love by reference to his lady's infinite beauty ("As fair art thou ... / So deep in Luve am I " [lines 5-6]). This device serves to compliment the lady while at the same time asserting the depth of the poet's devotion. The implication is that her beauty is in fact immeasurable, like the poet's love. The poet then explores another dimension of love, its length or duration, offering a series of images which convey the notion that his love will last forever. He will love her "Till a' the seas gang dry," till "the rocks melt wi' the sun," and "while the sands o' life shall run" (lines 9, 10, 120. These images suggest the poet's psychological situation. With a lover's impetuosity, he claims that he will love her until the world ends, while the hourglass reference ("the sands of life") adds a poignant6 admission of the transience of mortal life and the evanescence of even an "undying" love. "Luve" is not only as beautiful but as fragile as any rose "newly sprung in June." The poem ends with another hyperbole, the poet's heroic vow that he will overcome nor only immeasurable time but vast distance to be by his mistress's side. The fleeting suggestion of the impending separation of the lovers gives the lyric a touch of drama and urgency.

In addition, the balladlike rhythms of the four stanzas enhance the poem's lyricism. In part, Burns achieves this songlike quality through repetition. Thus the iterated lines "And I will Luve thee still, my dear. /Till a' the seas gang dry" and "And fare thee weel, my only Luve. / And fare thee weel awhhile1" not only provide rhetorical emphasis but constitute a musical refrain. The word "love" is itself repeated many times, as if to insist on the basic emotion expressed in the poem. The urgency and passion are contained within an unassuming format; the simple rhyme scheme (abcb) and the tripping rhythm (iambic tetrameter) provide a songlike "setting" for the poem's insistent repetitions and headlong hyperboles. The ballad setting connects the individual lover, caught up in the throes of a particular passion, with all lovers. Although certain rhetorical features of the poem suggest the poet's personal psychology, his impetuosity and desire, the ballad elements evoke the universal experience of love, lending the lyric the quality of a spontaneous, anonymous song which almost sings itself.

Part of the appeal of the poem lies in this evocation of folk song. In fact, "A Red, Red Rose," like many of Burns's songs, incorporates elements from several folk songs of the day. The obvious "Scottishness" of the poem is thus authentic. here, as in other lyrics, Burns made accessible to English reader an otherwise unfamiliar dialect as well as the remnants of a folk culture which had apparently survived longer in the rural hinterlands of Scotland than it had in England. Because of its traditional ballad motifs and dialect words, the poem has the effect of putting the reader in contact with an older and simpler, although by no means naïve, sensibility. Its qualities of directness and honesty are derived.

To A Mouse

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle!
I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,

An' justifies that ill opinion,
What makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!
I doubt na, whiles, but thou may thieve;

What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!
Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell –

Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.
That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!
But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;

The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!
Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me;
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects dreaer!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

"To a Mouse"

"To a Mouse," which consists of a continuous direct address to the mouse, is written for the most part in colloquial Scots dialect. Features of this "low" (that

is, nonliterary) style include the elision of syllables ("cow'rin', tim'rous beastie"): the use of diphthongs or elongated vowel sounds which suggest Scottish inflections ("I would be laith [loath]" in line 5 and "art no thy lane [are not alone]" in line 37); the frequent of onomatopoeic words ("bickering brattle," "stibble ... nibble... dribble");the use of many diminutives ("beastie," "breastie," "housie," "mousie"); and the employment of dialect words, especially relating to weather- *snell* ("bitter") and *cranreuch* ("hoarfrost")- and agriculture- *pattle* ("plowstaff") and *coulter* ("cutter blade"). Taken together, these linguistic devices suggest an intimate, colloquial style and stress the connection between the poor farmer and the wee "beastie" on whom he lavishes compassion; both are of humble origin and spend their lives in obscure toil on the land.

However, at several points in the poem, Burns adopts a more elevated language, introducing a second style which suggests an educated consciousness. For example, in stanza 2, a cluster of Latinate words occurs: "dominion," "union," "opinion," "companion." These polysyllabic words contribute to a shift in tone as the poet formally elaborates on the implications of his theme. The farmer commiserates with his victim because they are alike in their earthborn morality; both belong to an integrated and coherent natural order 9"Nature's social union") which "man's dominion" callously violates. But the connection between farmer and mouse is clearly a conscious act of sympathy rather than an intuitive identification, for the formal diction illustrates the gap between the "beastie," who can only react instinctively, and the man, who can philosophically reflect on their shared plight. The shift in styles allows Burns to convey both emotional connection and explicit interpretation.

In stanza 2, Burns comes close to puncturing his dramatic fiction, speaking in what one could call the poet's own voice, as distinct from the farmer's. But he quickly returns to the homely dialect associated with the farmer in the next four stanzas, which amplify the pitiable situation of the mouse. In the last two stanzas, Burns employs a middle style as the farmer expounds on the proverbial wisdom implied by the tale and reflects on his personal fortunes. The mouse becomes an illustration of the maxims that "foresight may be vain" and that "the best-laid plans o' mice an' men/Gang aft agley" (lines 39-40).

The diction here is closer to that of Standard English, with only a sporadic dropping of final consonants and the single idiomatic phrase "gang aft agley"; the more formal style suggests a shift from dialogue to meditation, although ostensibly the farmer is still addressing the mouse. "But och! I backward cast my e'e/On prospects drear!" (Lines 45-46) evokes the image of a person wincing in pain while naming his or her regrets and fears.

The modulations up and down the scale of diction provide a means of combining emotional pathos with philosophical reflection. The farmer seems move close to the mouse in the dialect passages and to stand back from him when he moralizes in the middle and high styles. Burns thus creates two levels of meaning, one intimate and "homely," the other more formal and public, while retaining a consistent persona. The consistency of the persona derives in part from the pervasive dialect elements and idiomatic expressions, which occur even in the more formal passages. And in part, the consistent rhythmic texture of the verse, with its regular elongations and contractions (three tetrameter lines, a two- beat line, a tetrameter line, and a two- beat line) itself seems to characterize the speaker, giving him an idiosyncratic speech pattern. Thus the stylistic discontinuities are absorbed by the coherent rhythms of the poem. Until the last stanza, Burns emphasizes the common lot of "mice an' men." However, at the very end of the poem, he introduced a distinction between the farmer and the field mouse. Analyze the significance of this distinction.

In a sense, the last stanza of the poem is a commonplace, expressing the familiar idea that dumb animals are fortunate compared with people. Thus Burns says to the mouse, "But thou art blessed compared wi' me!" (line 43). He implies that the gift of reason enjoyed by human beings has an ironic double edge. Though t endows people with the ability to think and plan, it also burdens them with memory and anticipation. The mouse's "foresight" is instinctive; his whole existence is involved, really in the present moment only. For the individual, the present is complicated by regretful recollection of past troubles (the backward looks on "prospects drear" [line 46]) and fearful imagination of future ills (what the farmer can "guess an' fear" [line 48]). Instead of freeing the farmer from bondage to his immediate physical hardships, memory and anticipation haunt him, circumscribing his life of toil with troubled reflections.

This final observation on the unhappy fate of mortals expands and enriches the poem. By abandoning a simple parallel between the mouse and the man, Burns goes beyond anthropomorphism to provide insight into a condition specifically human. In his emphasis on the limitations of this condition, he offers an implicit critique of reason as humanity's highest good. Burns's pessimistic view of human nature and his melancholy focus on the yearnings and fears which haunt the sensitive, conscious individual are characteristically romantic.

1. A Red, Red Rose, is boring and trite; it echoes the sentimental of hundreds of other love lyrics and has nothing special to recommend it. "How accurate is this criticism of "A Red, red Rose"?

2. Discuss the levels of diction in the "To a Mouse"

3**.** Until the last stanza, Burns emphasizes the common lot of "mice an' men." However, at the very end of the poem, he introduces a distinction between the farmer and the field. Analyze the significance of this distinction.

4. Is "To a Mouse" sentimental? Defend your answer.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Shelley, born the heir to rich estates and the son of an Member of Parliament, went to University College, Oxford in 1810, but in March of the following year he and a friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, were both expelled for the suspected authorship of a pamphlet entitled The Necessity of Atheism.
In 1811 he met and eloped to Edinburgh with Harriet Westbrook and, one year later, went with her and her older sister first to Dublin, then to Devon and North Wales, where they stayed for six months into 1813. However, by 1814, and with the birth of two children, their marriage had collapsed and Shelley eloped once again, this time with Mary Godwin.

Along with Mary's step-sister, the couple travelled to France, Switzerland and Germany before returning to London where he took a house with Mary on the edge of Great Windsor Park and wrote Alastor (1816), the poem that first brought him fame.
In 1816 Shelley spent the summer on Lake Geneva with Byron and Mary who had begun work on her Frankenstein. In the autumn of that year Harriet drowned herself in the Serpentine in Hyde Park and Shelley then married Mary and settled with her, in 1817, at Great Marlow, on the Thames. They later travelled to Italy, where Shelley wrote the sonnet Ozymandias (written 1818) and translated Plato's Symposium from the Greek. Shelley himself drowned in a sailing accident in 1822.

Ode to the West Wind

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,

Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aery surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,

Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even

I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

"Ode to the West Wind"

Both poems are in sense long apostrophes to an external agent of inspiration in "Ode to the west wind" the poet literally prays for "inspiration"(in Latin, inspirited means" to breathe in"), wishing to draw in the" breath of autumn's being"(line1).the first three section are extended address to the west wind, each ending with the words" Oh, hear!" Thus the poet is a supplicant begging the potent force of nature to heed his cry .in the fourth section, the prayer becomes specific as the narrator yearns for liberation through passive yielding to the

power of the wind: “Oh! Lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud” (line53).Finally, in the fifth section, the poet’s prayer becomes a wish for total identification and fusion with the wind: “Be thou, spirit fierce, my spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one! (line61_62). This symbolic connection between the poet and the force of nature is elaborated in term of agent and vehicle, with the wind” driving” and “ scattering” the poet’s thoughts and words through the universe. Thus the poet is an instrument on which the wind plays, a prophet inspired by higher power. Shelley’s image of the wind playing upon the poet as upon an instrument (“Make me thy lyre” [line57]) frequently appears in the works of other romantic poets as well. Coleridge’s conversation poem “The Eolian Harp.” Dramatizing the quickening power of the wind as it “plucks” the poet’s soul. and the first line of Wordsworth’s long poem The Prelude (“Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze”[book 1 ,line1])are two instances of this romantic convention, Among the romantics the classical notion of poetic inspiration is naturalized with prophetic power conferred on the passive , waiting vessel by the vital infusion of the breath of the wind .The Aeolian harpan actual musical instrument popular in the nineteenth century , whose music was produced by the wind _ was a natural symbol of this relationship.

In “To a Skylark” the poet again addresses an aspect of nature, this time a bird. At once he “dematerializes” the literal bird. Making it as spiritual and symbolic a presence as the wind becomes in “Ode to the west wind”.

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
BIRD thou never wert… (line1_2)

The bird’s song, like the breath of the wind, represents the force of inspiration for which the poet longs. Much of “To a Skylark “is devoted to series of elaborate comparison between the invisible outpouring of the skylark’s melody and other natural phenomena: the “aerial hue “of the unseen glowworm or the sweet scent of the hidden rose. These similes for the skylark, like the lengthy epithets describing the west wind, suggest the potent and magical influence of nature’s inspiration.

A side from the first line of the poem ,there are only two other instances of direct address in “To a Skylark, beginning ”Teach us” (line61)and ”Teach me”(line101).The most significant moment of prayer comes at the very end, in the last stanza, where the poet seeks to learn the bird’s “gladness” so that he may utter an inspired(“mad”) harmony for the word to hear (lines101_105) The emphasis here on the idea of teaching is very different from the fused identification the poet desire in” Ode to the west wind”. Instead of the union and prophetic inspiration, the poet develops the concept of transmission: the “secret” of song is a legacy from bird to poet and from poet to world.”Ode to

the west wind insist on a symbolic merging between inner self and outer world, while ”Skylark” observes the inevitable separateness of humanity from nature, dramatizing instead the longing to approach and “learn” nature’s unselfconscious expressive power.

The images in the poem are interconnected according to the scheme of the elements, with air, water and earth as the dominant motifs. More specifically, air (the west wind) animates earth. Heaven, sea, and finally humanity with a vital power of regeneration .in fact, a myth of regeneration underlies the whole poem as Shelley moves from the chaos of the autumnal scene to a closing prophecy, or at least a hope, of new life: “if winter comes, can spring be far behind?”(line70)

The opening section describes the effect of wind on the landscape. Treating the autumnal blast as a metaphor for death and pestilence and only hinting at the possibility of future revitalization. The allusion to “thine azure sister of the spring” (line9) and epithet “Destroyer and preserver” (line14) suggest the ambivalent significance of this wild and hectic phase of the seasonal cycle. Shelley elaborates on the idea of chaos in two succeeding section. In section II (2), he describes the tempest brewing in the heavens, again emphasizing the theme of death in image of the vaulted sepulcher of the sky. In section III(3) ,the underwater scene is described metaphorically as an autumnal landscape like that in section 1 , with the trees of the sea denuded of their foliage like those of the land. In fact, image of trees run throughout the poem, from the literal falling of leaves in the first section, to the “tangled boughs of heaven and ocean”(line 17) in the second , to the “ sapless foliage” (line40) underwater in the third , to the poet’s references to himself as a “dead leaf”(line43) and an autumnal forest in section IV and V.

In these descriptions of the force of nature , the poet is a supplication , powerless and beseeching. His longing to” pant beneath thy power” (line45), to “share the impulse of thy strength” (line46), or as in his childhood, to be “the comrade of thy wanderings” (line49) attests to a feeling of impotence, Alienation and loss. The suggestion is that poet and nature are out of phase and that the poem represents a striving to overcome the resulting sense of isolation and emptiness.

If nature is presented throughout most of the poem as “other” an external force in the final section the poet claims this “other” for his own. All the image of the poem fuse in the closing movement as Shelley locates a natural landscape within himself. Praying to the wind to "inspire" him, to fill him with its own prophetic knowledge and promise, he says, “Oh! Lift me as wave, a leaf, a cloud!” (line53). In recapitulating the dominant image of the ode, Shelley insists

on the essential harmony existing between humanity and nature, with all living things participating in the oneness of the universe.
The theme of regeneration provides the climax of the poem in section V:
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth! (line63_64)
The vegetative, seasonal, and human cycle merge and combine in this vision of new life and springtime awakening. There is a quasi – religious quality to the vision, with its implicit reference to winter crucifixion ("I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"[line54]). And springtime resurrection ("new birth" [line64]). However Shelley's vivid image of earth, sky and water place the poem firmly in the world of nature. The role of the poet is especially significant in Shelley's vision of an animated universe, for his is the voice of the prophetic seer whose incantation endows the word with meaning.

Adonais

I weep for Adonais -he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be

An echo and a light unto eternity!"
Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,

Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies

With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.
O, weep for Adonais -he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;

For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend; -oh, dream not that the amorous Deep

Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.
Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania! -He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,

The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,

Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;

And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;

And some yet live, treading the thorny road
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.
But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished -
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;

The broken lily lies -the storm is overpast.
To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal. -Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day

Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more! -
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.
O, weep for Adonais! -The quick Dreams,

The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not, -
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.
And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,

And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.
One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;

Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem

A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.
Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,

And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.
And others came... Desires and Adorations,
Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;

And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp; -the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.
All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,

Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aereal eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.
Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;

Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds: -a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both

Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.
Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain

Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!
Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Season's bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,

Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.
Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;

Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning? -the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.
He will awake no more, oh, never more!
" Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.
She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs

Our of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.
Our of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,

And human hearts, which to her aery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible

Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.
In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath

Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.
"'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,

With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!
"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?

Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.
"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion; -how they fled,

When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled! -The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.
"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight

Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."
Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Irene sent

The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue.
Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,

Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.
A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift -
A Love in desolation masked; -a Power
Girt round with weakness; -it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; -even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower

The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's -oh! that it should be so!
What softer voice is hushed over the dead?

Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.
Our Adonais has drunk poison -oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown

Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!

But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt -as now.
Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now –

Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.
Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep -
He hath awakened from the dream of life -
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
I

nvulnerable nothings. -We decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.
He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn

A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.
He lives, he wakes -'tis Death is dead, not he;

Mourn not for Adonais. -Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown

O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!
He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,

Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.
He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heavens' light.

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.
The inheritors of unfulfilled renown

Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton

Rose pale, -his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.
And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die

So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry,
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"
Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;

As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.
Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;

For such as he can lend, -they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.
Go thou to Rome, -at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness

Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;
And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,

A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.
Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind

Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?
The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. -Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled! -Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak

The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.
Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles, -the low wind whispers near:

'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.
The breath whose might I have invoked in song

Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

"Adonais"

The climax of the poem begins with lines "Peace, peace! He is not dead, he doth not sleep …" (39, 1, meaning stanza 39, line1) and continues through stanza 44, which describe the apotheosis of the dead poet Keats. This section of elegy marks the decisive shift from the mood of lament which dominates the opening ('I sweep for Adonais-he is dead!") To the joyous recognition of Adonais's eternal life.

In the conventional Christian elegy, the climax is always a revelation of the soul's salvation; the center of the poem thus restates the central tenet of Christian theology that we "die to live". In Adonais, Shelley offers a variation on this theme, describing the spirit's immortality in terms of a natural religion. The dead soul, instead of rising up to heaven, diffuses itself everywhere in the living world:

He is made one with Nature: …..
He is presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and
stone (42,370:373-374)

The preeminent Christian elegy, Milton's Licidas, exploits some of the same pagan and pastoral motifs Shelley draws on in Adonais. For example, after death Licidas becomes a "genius of the shore" (line183), merging with the natural world even as he "rises" above it ("So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,/Through the dear might of him that walked the waves,/ …/In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love"[line 172-173-177]"). Thus Shelley's emphasis on a pantheistic nature inhabited by spiritual "geniuses" and gods has a precedent in the residual paganism of Christian elegy. However, Shelley's avoidance of any specifically Christian allusion (such as Milton's "through the dear might of him that walked the waves") sets "Adonais" apart from the convention. Shelly presents nature as an animistic realm of being, imbued with the vitality of a spiritual "one," rather than simply as a metaphor for the soul's immortality.

Thus the poem's paganism is central rather than a merely symbolic gesture. The spiritual quickening of nature is connected with the dead poet's utterances.

Thus it is Adonais's "voice" that survives in nature:

…there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird:
(42,310-313)

The communion with nature in death is the epitome of the romantic poet's struggle, in life, to merge with the vital forces of the universe. Thus Keats's odes, celebrating the identification between subject and object, humanity and nature, are one precedent for his apotheosis in *Adonais*: "He is a portion of the vileness/ which once he made more lovely" (44,379-380)". These stanzas constitute both the philosophical and the emotional heart of the poem. The elegy is structured on affective rather than narrative sequences first evoking a mournful response by means of image and tableaux and then eliciting an epiphanic joy by shifting the refrain (from "O weep for Adonais _ he is dead!"[stanza3] to He lives, he wakes_ its death is dead, not he: Mourn not for Adonais" [stanza41]).The whole climactic section of the poem heightens the sense of joy by emphasizing the participation of dead poet in the life of nature. Shelley expresses his sense of spiritual presence presiding over the universe in terms of the Neoplatonic image of a unitary source of light. This light which is metaphor for essential being or the "one," emanates from above, filtering down to the mundane realm of shadows and colors. The notion of a prism which stains, bends, shatters, refracts, and "transfuses" the pure, heavenly light into the illusory image of the world suggests that the world is a fragmented and shadowy imitation of the "One." In stanza 52, this recognition of the inferior

nature of the mortal life becomes a longing for death:" . . . Die, / If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek! "(Lines 464-465).

Earlier, in the climactic section of the elegy (stanzas 39-44), the allusions to Neoplatonism contribute to the shift from sorrow to joy. According to the Neoplatonism doctrine of ideas or "forms," a realm of unseen essences exists above of the realm of sense, endowing the physical world with spiritual significance. In Shelley's treatment, Adonis himself becomes a kind of essence or "idea," animating the material world and lending it an aspect of formal beauty. The dead poet is associated with pervasive "Power" and with" the one Spirit's plastic stress" which "sweeps through the dull dense world" (43,381-382). He matter and elemental life of the divine forms which impress on dead matter and elemental beauty, imbuing it with light. The image of "one spirit" overcoming dull matter and "bursting in its beauty and it's might /from trees and beasts and men into heavens light" (43,386-387) in the loveliness of a nature endowed with visionary significance. There is some ambiguity in the imagery, indicating the poet's ambivalence about succumbing to the "plastic stress" of the spiritual "one." The "light" explodes and the "fire" consumes so that spiritual apotheosis is at the same time.

annihilation Nonetheless, as the poem moves to its conclusion. The recognition of the Neoplatonic ideal becomes positive longing for death. In stanza 54, for example, the poet formally invokes the "One" ("That light . . . That Beauty") as the seductive end of his desires: "The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me, / Consuming the last cloud of a cold mortality" (line485_486). Thus Shelley uses Neoplatonism in a way similar to the Christian paradox of life in death, so that death becomes a movement from dark to light, cold to heat. There is, however, no hint of Christian God or of such concepts as sin, sacrifice, or atonement. Shelley's paganism is austere, and his consolations are metaphoric, aesthetic, and philosophical rather than religious.

In stanza31 through 34, Shelley gives portrait of himself as a mourner at Adonais's tomb, presenting himself as a martyr sharing the poet's fate already suffered by the "slain" Keats. Alluding to himself as a "frail from" (line271). "A pardlike spirit" (line280), and "a dying lamp, a falling shower, /A breaking billow" (line284_285), he suggested that himself is dying, fading away into pure spirit. In stanza 33, Shelley dresses himself in the attributes of morning and in stanza 34, he indicates his sympathetic identification with the dead poet describing himself as one "who in another's fate now wept his own" (line300). The highly charged emotionalism of the passage suggests not only Shelley's empathy with Keats but his sense of his own martyrdom. The references to Actaeon, the hunter turned into deer and pursued by his own hounds. Are followed by the allusion to a mark on his brow "which was like

Cain's or Christ's _Oh! That it should be so! (Lines 305_306). By identifying himself with the slain Adonais, Shelley attempts to transform himself, like Keats, into an emblem of the poet's fate. The poet, regardless of individual personality and circumstances, is marked, doomed to suffer in the world because of his intense spirituality.

At the end of the poem, the identification between the two poets becomes complete. Shelley treats Keats as a kind of alter ego who has gone before to prepare the way for his own death. The voice of Adonais is a seductive call for a "reunion" with his other self:

Tis Adonais calls! Oh, hasten thither,
No more let life divide what Death can join together. (53, 476_477)

In the final stanza, Shelley eerily prefigures his own actual death by drowning, describing his spirit as a bark "driven/ far from the shore" (line488_489). In the midst of the tempest, Adonais becomes the polestar, guiding his ship toward death:

Whilst burning through the in most veil of heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like star,
Because from the abode where the Eternal are.
(55, 493_495)

The poet is driven toward the spiritual self-realization which only death can confer.

1. Discuss the strategy of invocation, comparing its use in "Ode to the West Wind" with that in "To a Skylark."

2. The "Ode to the West Wind" contains many images drawn from natures. How does Shelley integrate these natural images into his vision of humanity and the universe?

3. Where is the climax of the poem in Adonais?

4. In stanza 52, Shelley alludes to a Neoplatonic conception of the universe Comment on the Neoplatonism found here and elsewhere in the poem.

5. Analyze the poet's relationship to Adonais.

George Gordon Lord Byron

George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, later George Gordon Noel, 6th Baron Byron, FRS , commonly known simply as Lord Byron, was a British poet and a leading figure in the Romantic movement. Among Byron's best-known works are the brief poems She Walks in Beauty, When We Two Parted, and So, we'll go no more a roving, in addition to the narrative poems Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and Don Juan. He is regarded as one of the greatest British poets and remains widely read and influential.
Byron was celebrated in life for aristocratic excesses including huge debts, numerous love affairs, rumours of a scandalous incestuous liaison with his half-sister, and self-imposed exile. He was famously described by Lady Caroline Lamb as "mad, bad and dangerous to know". It has been speculated that he suffered from bipolar I disorder, or manic depression. He travelled to fight against the Ottoman Empire in the Greek War of Independence, for which Greeks revere him as a national hero. He died at 36 years old from a fever contracted while in Missolonghi in Greece.

She Walks In Beauty
She walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.
One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,

Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,

A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

"She Walks in Beauty"

The lyric employ basically conventional imagery, although it does depart from the traditional picture of the lady as fair and bright, associated with the splendors of daylight, in its comparison of the mistress to the night. This mistress, like Shakespeare's, is "nothing like the sun."

Apart from the slight paradoxical tension of the first line, however, the distinctive quality of the poem derives not from any departure from the norm but rather from a graceful elaboration of the conventions of compliment. Avoiding trite or obvious similes, Byron employs an extended metaphor which conveys the idea of a subdued and subtle radiance. The mistress is "like the night/ Of cloudless climes and starry skies" (lines 1-2), no pitch dark but glimmering with a diffused light. Like a portrait in chiaroscuro, her face is modeled through an interplay of light and shadow, and her dusky beauty makes daylight seem garish:

And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light which heaven to gaudy day denies.
(Lines 3-6)

Imagery drawn from painting continues as the poet discusses the shades, rays and tints that compose the mistress's particular radiance.

The whole poem is marked by a kind of nonchalant ease that places in within the central tradition of the English love lyric. The smoothly flowing lines, the simple rhyme, and the fresh handling of the imagery of light and dark contribute to the impression of elegant and unlabored compliment. Although the poet suggest that the lady's grace in "nameless," that is, beyond the power of words to express, he in fact "names" the grace through his subtle use of metaphor and simile.

Darkness

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went--and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:

And they did live by watchfires--and the thrones,
The palaces of crowned kings--the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire--but hour by hour

They fell and faded--and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash--and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,

The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless--were slain for food.
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again:--a meal was bought

With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
All earth was but one thought--and that was death
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails--men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,

And he was faithful to a Gorse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,

Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress--he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things

For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects--saw, and shriek'd, and died--
Even of their mutual hideousness they
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,

The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless,
A lump of death--a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expired before;

The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them--She was the Universe.

"Darkness"

Byron's vision assumes an intense reality from the opening line: "I had a dream,

which was not all a dream." The poet thus insists on the ambiguous status of his nightmare, implying that the mind's images represent another order of reality and reveal an underlying truth.

The truth which the poem reveals is both philosophical and psychological. Philosophically, the poem is a statement of absolute nihilism; Byron seems to be saying that beneath the surface of society and civilization, beneath all the appearances of the world, there exists a formless chaos of appetite and self destructive passion. Thus, social institutions and social bonds appear in the poem as perverted mockeries. The blazing hearth is replaces by "blazing homes" (line 14), feasting becomes "a meal... bought/ With blood" (line 39-40), and an alter becomes a heap of "holy things/ For an unholy usage" (lines 59-60). Light- the emblem of warmth, life, reason, intellect, and love- becomes a transient flicker creates by the self consuming, self destructive acts of humankind.

In a sense, the poem is like an admonitory sermon, cataloguing the horrors for sinners of the Day of Judgment. However, the unemphatic, matter-of-fact style is the antithesis of the persuasive rhetoric associated with sermons. Instead of an admonition or argument, "Darkness" constitutes a bleak description of a dying world. The conjunction of neutral reportorial style with a nightmare vision gives the poem a surrealistic, allegorical quality. The poem reads like a parable, but the meaning is elusive. If this is a picture of hell, it is a hell on earth, rendered realistically and exhaustively.

The narrator's description, while rhetorically subdued, nonetheless conveys a definite emotional texture. The "dream" the narrator recounts is profoundly melancholic and despairing. In its imagery of violence, isolation, madness, and cannibalism, the poem documents a process of dehumanization, focusing obsessively on the catastrophic rending of individual and social connections. Thus the psychological landscape is as dark as the physical one, projecting a sense of radical alienation and deprivation, with all order perverted and all values eroded. The studied impersonality of the style only intensifies the impression of psychological fragmentation. It is as though the narrator were morally catatonic, reciting a catalogue of horrors in a flat and affectless monotone.

In the catalogue of horrors which constitutes the poem, these incident stand out for two reasons. First, they offer narrative interest. Instead of merely itemizing or naming catastrophes. Byron singles out specific figures in the bleak landscape as characters in a drama. Moreover, these individual dramas hold out the promise of personal salvation or heroism in the midst of chaos. The faithful dog standing watch over hid dead master represents heroic virtue, and the two enemies who meet in the flicking light of the alter symbolize the possibility of

some form of communion. However, both episodes end the same way, with a laconic "he died" (line 54) and "they died" (line 67). The numbing flatness and finality of the rhetoric prevails over the slight suggestion of suspense and drama which the two anecdotes provide.

Indeed, Byron's handling of these episodes dramatizes not heroism or communion nut the inevitable succumbing of all living creatures to the general annihilation. The dog, who "sought out no food" (line 51), dies of hunger, and the enemies die "even of their mutual hideousness.../ Unknowing who he was upon whose brow/ Famine had written Friend" (lines 67- 69). The irony of these stories- the futility of the dog's being "faithful to a corse" (line 48) and the enemies' ignorance of each other's identity- suggests the leveling power of darkness. Every human feeling be it loyalty or hatred, becomes an absurdity at the world's end, in a universe of utter blackness.

Byron's rhetorical strategy in "Darkness" is intentional. The use of catalogue and the accumulation of images of conflagration and death contribute to the obsessive tone of the poem and the poet's intensely nihilistic vision. Each item becomes an illustration of the overriding theme: "... no love was left; /All earth was but one thought- and that was death" (line 41- 42). The blank verse, with its flat, conversational rhythms, does not poeticize or embellish the horrible vacuum which is the poem's subject.

The most consciously "poetic' moment comes at the very end of the poem in the personification of "Darkness." This selective use of figurative adornment is powerful, for in the final image the blunt recital of facts has its necessary document. What has been happening recurrently in the poem, the fitful dying of flickers of flame and gleams of light, happens conclusively in the last lines:

And the clouds perished; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them- She was the Universe.
(Lines 81-82)

The syntax of these lines suggests that Darkness is not merely a passive force, a physical by- product of the death of the sun. "She is an active agent, who swallows up and overwhelms the whole world. The clipped assertion "she was the Universe," still in keeping with the factual style of the whole poem, nonetheless implies some kind of victory or domination. In this climactic vision, the usual terms are reversed: instead of describing darkness as the absence or extinction of light, as he did earlier in the poem, Byron portrays "her" as a positive presence, asserting hegemony over the entire cosmos and actively possessing it. If throughout the poem the insistent, detailed, claustrophobic language creates a feeling of nightmare, the last line is particularly nightmarish,

turning a passive physical event into an illogical and terrifying apparition.

1 Analyze the imagery of the lyric in “She Walks in Beauty”.

2. The poem “Darkness” is in essence Byron’s vision of the apocalypse, or end of the universe. What are the philosophical implications of this

vision?

3. There are two anecdotes in the poem, one concerning a dog and his master, the other about two enemies who meet before an alter. What is the significance of these stories?

4. It is possible to criticize “Darkness” for its repetitive style and diction; the poem may be seen as both boring and slightly ridiculous because of its excessive morbidity. Can it be defended against these criticism?