

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (1798 – 1832)

The Precursors of the Romantic Revival or the Transitional Poets

The most important transitional poets or the precursor of Romanticism of the eighteenth century are

James Thomson
Oliver Goldsmith
Thomas Percy
Thomas Chatterton
James Macpherson
Thomas Gray
William Collins
William Cowper - *God made the country and man made the town*
George Crabbe
Robert Burns
William Blake

The eighteenth century is usually known as the century of "prose and reason." In this age the neoclassicism reigned supreme and in that all romantic tendencies lay dormant. The transitional poets or the precursors of the Romantic Revival show some elements associated with romanticism, while not altogether ignoring the old conventions.

The romantic **quality of the poetry of transitional poets is "liberalism in literature"**.

Their poetry is not altogether intellectual in content and treatment. They naturally **return to the lyric**.

Their poetry is **no longer "drawing-room poetry."** They do not limit their attention to urban life and manners only. Their poetry becomes much **more subjective**. They show a much greater interest in the middle Ages.

Rationalism **dominated a various ways** and at various points: **sentimentalism, Spenserian revival, the feeling for nature, medievalism, orientalism, the cult of the ballad** during the 18th century. This reaction swells into a conscious movement of opposition, which goes by the name of Romanticism. They have **"a love of the wild, fantastic, abnormal, and supernatural."**

The English Romanticism falls into two distinct periods:-

First generation – the Lake poets: Wordsworth, Coleridge and Robert Southey are closely associated. They have many important views in common.

Second generation - Byron, Shelley, and Keats differed in their views on poetry, though they had much in common.

Romanticism continued throughout the Victorian age down to the neo-Georgian symbolism. The notable writers of Victorian age were **Tennyson, Morris, Swinburne and Browning**.

The concepts of Romanticism are

1. **Introversion** –the romantic poets are preoccupied with their **personal emotions**.
2. **Belief that poetry above all is inspiration, and writes itself**.

Wordsworth puts it "All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."

Keats puts it "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to the tree, it had better not come at all."

3. **Rejection of all rules and canons**, all theories of imitation or of genres. The poet was absolutely free to evolve his own form.

4. No sense of form - They just meander on as the spirit moves them, no Romanticism in architecture;

5. **“Flight from reality,” this is not an escape, but rather a routine, search for beauty.** The terms “romantic” and “realistic” are not mutually exclusive,

E.g. Wordsworth treated his pictures of nature and of village with complete fidelity to “realism”. The romantics actually avoided the brutality of everyday life, to reveal “the charm of novelty to things of everyday.

The seventeenth century is known as Romantic period. The best known Romantic **poets were William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel T. Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and John Keats.**

Other Romantic period writers were

Preface to Lyrical Ballads

Author: Wordsworth

About the Author

Born	- 7 April 1770 , in Cockermouth, Cumberland,
Died	- on 23 April 1850
Cause of death	- of pleurisy

He was **one of the members of lake poets** who born in a lake district. Other lake poets are **Coleridge and Robert Southey**

He is a Nature poet and founder of Romantic Movement.

Romantic period developed with **the publication of Lyrical Ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798.**

Herbert divides his period of creative activity into four parts.

First Period:- Before 1791 ‘the Descriptive sketches’, and ‘Evening walk’ are the best known poems of this period.

Second period:-1792to1797. His work ‘The Borderers, Guilt and sorrow, Margaret or The Ruined cottage’ are published.

Third Period:- 1797 to 1807. In this period the poet’s powers were at their Zenith. The most notable works are ‘The Lyrical ballads, Lines Written in Early Spring, Michael, Tintern Abbey, Peter Bell, Lucy Poems, The Prelude, Immortality Ode, Ode to duty, The Solitary Reaper, Resolution and Independence, to the Cuckoo, The Exclusions, Sonnet on his Milton, Upon West Minister bridge etc..

Fourth Period:- 1808 to 1850. After 1807 the poet’s powers began to decline. ‘Laodamia, Punishment of Death, Lines written on the death of Charles Lamb’ are written in this period.

Wordsworth’s view of Nature is coloured by his ‘hyper individualism’.

Wordsworth’s development is divided into three stages.

The First Stage:-

In his **early days of boyhood he experienced a ‘calm delight’.** Nature **seemed to speak to him “rememberable things”** and served only a background.

The Second Stage:-

He experienced a sensuous beauty of Nature.

The Third Stage:-

He sees Nature by the eye of soul in this period. Wordsworth passes through spiritual experiences of Nature.

He says in his poem 'The Tables Turned', 'Let Nature be your Teacher'. 'The Prelude' is an account of the best part of the poet's education that he received from Nature.

To him the God is Man and in Nature is one.

The poems 'The Prelude' 'Tintern Abbey', 'Immortality Ode', are remarkable for their auto biographical significance. 'The Prelude' is subtitled as 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind'.

Lord Byron used to call William Wordsworth "Turdswordh.

He was Poet Laureate from 1843 to 1850.

Works

1. **Descriptive Sketches - published in 1793**
2. **Lyrical Ballads published in 1798:**
3. **The Prelude:** Wordsworth composed it in 1805 but it was published posthumously in 1850. It is considered an epic of self which has a record of his development as a poet.
4. **The Excursion** published in 1814: The poem deals with good pictures and tales of country life. It is incomplete.
5. The White Doe of Ralston -1815
6. The Waggoner - 1819
7. Peter Bell - 1819
8. Yarrow Revisited - 1835
9. The Recluse: This poem was also an incomplete poem.
10. **The Ruined Cottage:** This is also an incomplete poem.
11. **Borders- 1842: This is the only play written by Wordsworth.**
12. Two volumes of poems - Wordsworth also composed two volumes of poems published in 1807. It has his best poems such as The Solitary Reaper, I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud, Ode on the Intimations of Immortality, Ode to Duty and The Green Linnet.

His critical works are

1. Advertisement to the Lyrical Ballads, 1798
2. Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800
3. Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, **1802**
4. Appendix on Poetic Diction
5. His Notes to 'The thorn'.

He wrote a new 'Preface' for the 1815 edition and the older one was added an 'Appendix'. The 1802 'Preface' is taken as a standard text. Critics regard it as a land mark in the history of criticism.

Lyrical Ballads

First edition was published in 1798

Second edition was published in 1800

Third edition was published in 1802.

Wordsworth's friends wanted him to write a Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. Wordsworth was unwilling to write a preface for two reasons:

- (i) he might be suspected of trying to offer arguments as to why the public should like his poems,
- (ii) the space offered by a normal preface was inadequate for a convincing defence of the new kind of poetry that he had written.

This preface came to be seen as a *de facto* manifesto of the Romantic movement.

Key assertions about poetry are

1. Ordinary life is the best subject for poetry
2. Everyday language is best suited for poetry
3. Expression of feeling is more important than action or plot
4. "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" that "takes its origin from emotion, recollected in tranquillity"

Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems is a collection of poems by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, first published in 1798 and generally considered to have marked the beginning of the English Romantic movement in literature.

A second edition was published in 1800. Wordsworth included additional poems and a preface detailing the pair's avowed poetical principles.

Third edition was published in 1802. Wordsworth added an appendix titled ***Poetic Diction*** in which he expanded the ideas set forth in the preface.

Poems in the 1800 edition of Lyrical Ballads

Volume I

Poems written by Wordsworth

1. Expostulation and Reply
2. The Tables Turned; an Evening Scene, on the Same Subject
3. Old Man Traveling; Animal Tranquillity and Decay, a Sketch
4. The Complaint of a forsaken Indian Woman
5. The Last of the Flock
6. Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite
7. Goody Blake and Harry Gill
8. The Thorn
9. We are Seven
10. Anecdote for Fathers
11. Lines written at a small distance from my House and sent me by my little Boy to the Person to whom they are addressed
12. The Female Vagrant
13. Simon Lee, the old Huntsman
14. Lines written in early Spring
15. Lines written when sailing in a Boat at Evening
16. written near Richmond, upon the Thames
17. The Idiot Boy
18. The Mad Mother
19. Lines written above Tintern Abbey

Poems written by Coleridge

1. The Foster-Mother's Tale
2. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
3. The Dungeon
4. The Nightingale, written in April 1798.
5. Love

Volume II of Lyrical Ballads

1. Hart-leap Well
2. There was a Boy
3. The Brothers, a Pastoral Poem
4. Ellen Irwin, or the Braes of Kirtle
5. Strange fits of passion have I known,
6. Song
7. She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways
8. A slumber did my spirit seal
9. The Waterfall and the Eglantine
10. The Oak and the Broom, a Pastoral
11. Lucy Gray
12. The Idle Shepherd-Boys or Dungeon-Gill Force, a Pastoral
13. 'Tis said that some have died for love,
14. Poor Susan
15. Inscription for the Spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwent-Water
16. Inscription for the House (an Out-house) on the Island at Grasmere
17. To a Sexton
18. Andrew Jones
19. The two Thieves, or the last stage of Avarice
20. A whirl-blast from behind the Hill
21. Song for the wandering Jew
22. Ruth
23. Lines written with a Slate-Pencil upon a Stone
24. Lines written on a Tablet in a School
25. The two April Mornings
26. The Fountain, a conversation
27. Nutting
28. Three years she grew in sun and shower,
29. The Pet-Lamb, a Pastoral
30. Written in Germany on one of the coldest days of the century
31. The Childless Father
32. The Old Cumberland Beggar, a Description
33. Rural Architecture
34. A Poet's Epitaph
35. A Character
36. A Fragment
37. Poems on the Naming of Places,
38. Michael, a Pastoral

Summary

His poems were **materially different from those of contemporary and earlier poets**. So a **preface was necessary to open the eyes of the reading public to know the worth of his poems**. The readers accustomed to the phraseology of Pope and the other writers, were stunned by Wordsworth's new techniques. So an explanation or an introduction was required.

Wordsworth's chief aim in writing the poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate them in a selection of the language really spoken by men. He chose humble and rustic life for his poems.

(i) In rustic life, the essential passions of the human heart found a free and powerful expression.

(ii) The feelings are simple and are forcefully expressed.

(iii) The manners are simple and so more durable and more easily understood than the manners of city-bred people.

(iv) The passions of men are closely connected with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.

(v) The simple language in which they convey their feelings, is more permanent and philosophical than the artificial diction used by the poets of the time.

Other contemporary Poets are enlightening the readers and purifying their affections.

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. The poet also thinks deeply. The true poet always discovers what is really important and worthwhile.

Wordsworth cared more for simple feelings than for sensational developments. He has **avoided the hackneyed and artificial poetic diction of the contemporary poets**. He has also **avoided the personification of abstract idea**. He has **used the language really used by men**.

He says that **there can be no "essential difference" between the language of prose and that of poetry**. The same human blood circulates through the veins of both. The only difference is its metre.

He **defines the poet as a man speaking to men**. He has greater powers of communication and can sympathise and feel for others. **The poet communicates emotions** which he has not directly experienced. He **makes his language forceful and lively**. The aim of poetry is to give pleasure.

Poetry is the most philosophic of all writings. "The object of poetry is **general and operative truth**. It is the image of man and nature. The only restriction under which the poet works is the necessity of giving pleasure."

Knowledge is always built up by pleasure. **Knowledge gained by both the poet and the man of science is pleasure**. The knowledge of the poet is universal, the knowledge of the scientist is a personal and individual acquisition. The scientist uses his intellect and his knowledge is superficial but poet, **reaches for the soul of things**. "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge". The poetic truth is complementary to scientific truth. **It gives to scientific truths, emotions and feelings**.

Metre has a restraining effect on the flow of emotion and passion. It softens the painful and the pathetic, because it has a distancing effect.

The end of poetry is to produce excitement with an overbalance of pleasure.

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling recollected in tranquility.

Wordsworth feels that **he may be criticized for his choice of simple themes and simple language.** But Wordsworth says that **he is not going to make any alteration to please some readers.**

His poetry is entirely different from traditional poetry. If it proves successful, it will inaugurate a new era in the history of English. The Publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 is the landmark of English Poetry and Romantic age begins from his poem. The theories he produced and poetics he invented cause a revolution in English literature.

In 1795, Wordsworth moved with his sister Dorothy to Racedown, then to Alfoxden in Grasmere. There **Wordsworth could be closer to his friend and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge.** They began to write *Lyrical Ballads*, first published in 1798 and reissued with Wordsworth's monumental preface in 1802. **According to him the theory of poetry is "spontaneous overflow" of emotions. They write in the simple language of common people, telling concrete stories of their lives.** According to this theory, poetry originated in "emotion recollected in a state of tranquility"; the poet then surrendered to the emotion, so that the tranquility dissolved, and the emotion remained in the poem. The explicit emphasis on feeling, simplicity, and the pleasure of beauty over rhetoric, ornament, and formality changed the course of English poetry, replacing the elaborate classical forms of Pope and Dryden with a new Romantic sensibility. Wordsworth's influenced later writers such as John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron in England, and Emerson and Thoreau in America.

In the early 1790s William Wordsworth lived for a time in France, during the violent period of French Revolution. While in France, **Wordsworth had a long affair with Annette Vallon, with whom he had a daughter, Caroline.** His meeting with **Caroline is described in a sonnet "It is a beautiful evening, calm and free."**

The Reign of Terror in Paris made him to read philosophy books of William Godwin and others. The rationalism he found in the works of thinkers clashed with his own softer, more emotional understanding of the world.

Wordsworth's understanding of the human mind is like of psychoanalysis and the general Freudian acceptance of the importance of childhood in the adult psyche. **Seamus Heaney has called "Dr. Johnson's supremely adult eighteenth century".** **Wordsworth believed, as he expressed in poems such as the "Intimations of Immortality" Ode that, upon being born, human beings move from a perfect, idealized realm into the imperfect, un-ideal earth.** In childhood, some memory of the former purity and glory remains, and have joyous relationship to the beauties of nature.

Byron is the only important poet to become more popular than Wordsworth during Wordsworth's lifetime. He wrote a sardonic preface to *Don Juan*. He spent his last days as Poet he was widely considered the most important author in England.

According to Wordsworth Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. He lived in Rydalmount with his sister, wife and two children till his death in 1850.

- The exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations.
- Example: **In the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius and of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and**

Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope.

- **The maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings, as in the poems of the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER;**
 - The last struggles of a human being, at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the **Poem of the FORSAKEN INDIAN;**
 - Shewing, as in the Stanzas entitled **WE ARE SEVEN,**
 - The perplexity and obscurity, of moral attachment when early associated with the great and beautiful objects of nature, as in **THE BROTHERS;** or, as in the Incident of **SIMON LEE,**
 - General purpose to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned feelings, as in the **TWO APRIL MORNINGS, THE FOUNTAIN, THE OLD MAN TRAVELLING, THE TWO THIEVES,**
 - The works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies
 - A short composition of Gray to distinguish Prose and Metrical composition
- "Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West" by Thomas Gray**

- The language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry. A large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose.
- No essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.
- We call Poetry and Painting Sisters for their resemblance.
- **Poetry sheds no tears "such as Angels weep,"**
- The rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction between poetry and prose.
- Poet describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering.
- Poetry is for a matter of amusement and idle pleasure.
- Aristotle had said that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion.
- Poetry is the image of man and nature.
- The Poet writes of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man.
- Poet considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure.
- The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude.
- Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science.
- It is said of the Poet, as **Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after."**
- The Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters.

- Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men.
- I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.
- **I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE and HARRY GILL, which is one of the rudest of this collection.**
- The language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in **parodies of which Dr. Johnson's Stanza is a fair specimen.**
- Our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce in a high degree to the improvement of our own taste: for **an accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition.**
- The word "Poetry" opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition.
- Pope's "Messiah" throughout, Prior's "Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue."

William Wordsworth, in the beginning of his preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, explains the purpose behind the collection of poems: it was an "experiment" to determine whether poetry written in "the real language of men" could be successful. He was surprised, he notes, when he found that more readers like the poems than dislike them, as they are significantly different than any other poetry circulating at the time.

His poems pleased readers who would read them with more than common pleasure and, on the other hand that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike.

Wordsworth requested the assistance of a Friend (Coleridge), who furnished him, with the Poems of the 'Ancient mariner, the Foster-mother's tale, the Nightingale and the Poem entitled Love.

The Poems of his Friend (Coleridge) would in a great measure have the same tendency as his own. There would be no discordance in the colours of their style; as their opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide.

Wordsworth's friends wanted him to write a Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth was unwilling to write a preface for two reasons:

- (iii) he might be suspected of trying to offer arguments as to why the public should like his poems,
- (iv) the space offered by a normal preface was inadequate for a convincing defence of the new kind of poetry that he had written.

The metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations such as in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius and that of

Status or Claudian, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope.

Wordsworth, in his Poems **choose incidents and situations from common life**, in a selection of **language really used by men**; and, at **the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination** and to make these incidents and situations by tracing in them the primary laws of our nature, chiefly, as far as regards the manner associate ideas in a state of excitement.

Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because the **essential passions of the heart find a better soil**. The language of these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived. Such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than frequently substituted for it by Poets. They separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order **to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation**.

For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are the representatives of all our past feelings.

The purpose is to illustrate the **manner** in which **our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement**. This essay is to attain by various means; by tracing **the maternal passion** as in the poems of **the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER**; at the approach of death, **cleaving in solitude to life and society**, as in the Poem of the **FORSAKEN INDIAN**; as in the Stanzas entitled **WE ARE SEVEN**, by displaying **the strength of fraternal**, or to speak **more philosophically, of moral attachment and beautiful objects of nature, as in THE BROTHERS**; or, as in the **Incident of SIMON LEE**. It is to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of **less impassioned feelings**, as in the **TWO APRIL MORNINGS, THE FOUNTAIN, THE OLD MAN TRAVELLING, THE TWO THIEVES**, characters of which the elements are simple, belonging rather to nature than to manners. His poems are distinguished from the popular Poetry of the day that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not **the action and situation to the feeling**. His meaning is rendered perfectly intelligible to the Poems entitled **POOR SUSAN and the CHILDLESS FATHER**.

The human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent **stimulants; a very faint perception** of its beauty and dignity.

The **tendency of life and manners the literature** and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. **The works of Shakespeare and Milton**, are driven into **neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies**, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.

The subjects and aim of these Poems are personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes. He rejected an ordinary device to elevate the style, and

raise it above prose. He imitates to adopt the very language of men, **a figure of speech** occasionally prompted by passion but reject them as a mechanical device of style.

He has wished to keep his reader in the company of flesh and blood. There will also be found in these volumes **little of poetic diction**. His ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance as it is friendly to **one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense**; but it has necessarily cut him off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets..

If in a Poem a series of lines, or even a single line arranged and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose. Some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written. Example: Milton's poems.

Gray, in "**Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West**" has attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, in the structure of his own poetic diction.

*"My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;"*

*"I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear
And weep the more because I weep in vain."*

The single word "fruitless" for fruitlessly does in no respect differ from that of prose.

The language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry.

There is **the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and call them Sisters**. They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies. **Poetry sheds no tears "such as Angels weep,"** but natural and human tears; the **same human blood circulates through the veins of them both**.

Rhyme and metrical arrangement constitute a distinction between prose and poetry. The language of Poetry is a selection of the language really spoken by men. The Poet does not speak through the mouths of his characters. It cannot be either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments. The Poet's subject be upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures.

If the Poet **interweave any foreign splendour of his own is unnecessary**. The **Poems must depend entirely on upon the highest importance to our taste and moral feelings**. He cannot content me with these detached remarks. He is like a man fighting a battle without enemies. The works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from the present poets. Our moral feelings influencing, and influenced by these judgments be corrected and purified.

Poet is a man speaking to men. He has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul, than a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and he rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him. He has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

Poetry is a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; poet will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as if it were a thing as **indifferent as a taste for Rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry.** Aristotle had said, that **Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general,** and operative; not standing upon external testimony. **It carried alive into the heart by passion; truth.** It gives strength and divinity to the tribunal.

Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles stand in the way of the fidelity of **the Biographer and Historian.** The Poet has an adequate notion of the dignity of his art. The Poet writes to give immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information. This cannot be expected from a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man.

Poetry is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe; it is a task light and easy to **look at the world in the spirit of love.** The Man of Science, the Chemist and Mathematician may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. The Anatomist's knowledge may be painful the objects with which is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure. Poet considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure.

Poet considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature.

The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition. **The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude:** the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. **Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science.** Shakespeare hath said of man, "that he looks before and after."

In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge-it is as immortal as the heart of man.

The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art.

Science shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.

Poetry will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts.

The Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner.

Poets are connected with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sun-shine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. **The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men.** His language differs in any material degree from that of all other men proved that it is impossible. **Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men.**

Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; the distinction of metre is regular and uniform.

Poetry depends upon the metre, and accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style.

The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure. Excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. If the **words produced by excitement are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them,** there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. A greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, **especially in rhyme, than in prose.** Example: Clarissa Harlowe, or the Gamester. **The metre of the old Ballads is very artless.**

Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure an effect. Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, in the feelings of pleasure and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy.

The mind derives pleasure from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder.

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity. Nature be cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson. Reader's mind should be

sound and vigorous to get an overbalance of pleasure. **The verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.**

Pope by the power of verse alone has contrived to render the plainest common sense interesting, and even frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion. The Tale of **GOODY BLAKE and HARRY GILL is one of the rudest of this collection related in metre.**

The truth is an important one; the fact is a valuable illustration of it.The language of poetry closely resembles that of life and nature. Dr. Johnson's Stanza is a fair specimen.

And walk'd into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand."

Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town"

The words and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation in both these stanzas. The words "the Strand," and "the Town," connected with none but the most familiar ideas. One stanza is admirable, and the other is fair example of the superlatively contemptible.

Sir Joshua Reynolds says, this is not only an act of justice, but in our decisions upon poetry especially. It may conduce in a high degree to the improvement of our own taste: for an accurate taste in poetry.

Poetry may give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature.

Appendix of 1802, on Poetic Diction

Wordsworth adds a few words concerning the origin of the phraseology but he has condemned under that name. The earliest Poets wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: their language was daring and figurative.

A language of poetry differs materially from the real language of men in any situation.

The Poet spoke to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority.

The language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men.

The language had uttered by the Poet affected bare events or heard uttered around him. The first Poets spoke an unusual language and it was still the language of men.

The finest example of three different styles of composition are Pope's "Messiah" throughout, Prior's "Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue," and "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," and Dr. Johnson's "Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes," from 'The Ant'
One more quotation from **Cowper's verses** supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk "Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!"
More precious than silver and gold,

The Relationship between Poetry and Prose

Poetry and prose should differ not only in structure but also in language. "Prosaisms," or instances where the language in a poem resembles that of prose, lead some critics to condemn poets as "ignorant of [their] own profession."

The language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and . . . a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose.

The Nature and Role of the Poet

According to Wordsworth, the poets should have the ability to feel emotions more deeply and express them more accurately than others around him.

The principal object is to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men.

The poet considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature.

SELF TEST

1. The movement of 'return of Nature' has to do with
A) The Neo-Classical age B) The Romantic Age C) Jacobean Age D) None
2. The Pre-Romantics were influenced by the Middle Ages.
A) Yes B) No C) May D) None
of these
3. Who earlier English odes were written to eulogize a person or the art of music or poetry.
A) Yes B) No C) Cannot be said D) None
of these

