

Romantic Period: Major Characteristics

Mrs. Shalini Ashish

English Literature, Shri Brijmohan Lal Sharma Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Beawar, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT

The Romantic Period began roughly around 1798 and lasted until 1837. The political and economic atmosphere at the time heavily influenced this period, with many writers finding inspiration from the French Revolution. There was a lot of social change during this period. Calls for the abolition of slavery became louder during this time, with more writing openly about their objections. After the Agricultural Revolution people moved away from the countryside and farmland and into the cities, where the Industrial Revolution provided jobs and technological innovations, something that would spread to the United States in the 19th century. Romanticism was a reaction against this spread of industrialism, as well as a criticism of the aristocratic social and political norms and a call for more attention to nature. Although writers of this time did not think of themselves as Romantics, Victorian writers later classified them in this way because of their ability to capture the emotion and tenderness of man.

KEYWORDS: *romantic period, English literature, revolution, writers, emotion*

INTRODUCTION:-

Robert Burns is considered the pioneer of the Romantic Movement. Although his death in 1796 precedes what many consider the start of Romanticism, his lyricism and sincerity mark him as an early Romantic writer. His most notable works are "Auld Lang Syne" (1788) and "Tam o' Shanter" (1791). Burns inspired many of the writers during the Romantic Period.[1,2,3]

William Blake was one of the earliest Romantic Period writers. Blake believed in spiritual and political freedom and often wrote about these themes in his works. Although some of his poetry was published before the official start to the era, Blake can be seen as one of the founders of this movement. His works, *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), are two of his most significant. These collections of poetry are some of the first to romanticize children, and in these works Blake pits the innocence and imagination of childhood against the harsh corruption of adulthood, especially within the city of London. He was also known for his beautiful drawings, which accompanied each of these poems.

POETRY

Scholars say that the Romantic Period began with the publishing of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This was one of the first collections of poems that strayed from the more formal poetic diction of the Neoclassical Period. Poets of the period instead used everyday words that the average person could understand. This also aided in expressing human emotion. Wordsworth primarily wrote about nature. He felt it could

provide a source of mental cleanliness and spiritual understanding. One of Wordsworth's well-known works is "The Solitary Reaper" (1807). This poem praises the beauty of music and shows the outpouring of expression and emotion that Wordsworth felt was necessary in poetry. His greatest piece is *The Prelude* (1850), a semi-autobiographical, conversation poem that chronicles Wordsworth's entire life. Conversational poetry was the literary genre most commonly used by Wordsworth and Coleridge, with the latter writing a series of eight poems following the genre structure of conversational verse and examining higher ideas of nature, man, and morality. This poetry is written in blank verse and is extremely personal and intimate in nature, with much of the content based on the author's life.

Coleridge and Wordsworth were very good friends and the two often influenced each other. While Wordsworth was much more meditative and calm, Coleridge was the opposite and lived a more uncontrolled life. Of his three major poems only one is complete: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). This poem tells the story of a sailor's journey and his experiences on the ship. The sailor is cursed by supernatural powers and is only able to return home when he appreciates the animals and nature around him. He is forced to wander the Earth sharing his story due to his earlier mistakes. His two other long form poems are *Kubla Khan* (1816) and *Christabel* (1816). According to Coleridge, his poem *Kubla Khan* came to him in an opium-induced dream after reading a work about Chinese emperor Kublai Khan. He was never able to finish the work. *Christabel* tells the story of the title character meeting a stranger named Geraldine who asks for *Christabel's* help. Ignoring the supernatural signs, *Christabel* rescues and takes her home, but it appears that the stranger is not normal. Coleridge was only able to finish two out of his five intended parts to the poem.

The Second Generation of Romantic Poets

Succeeding Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth was a new generation of poets, each following the pattern of Romanticism of those before them. John Keats is still one of the most popular of these poets, with his work continually read and analyzed today. Keats aimed to express extreme emotion in his poetry, using natural imagery to do this. He is well known for his odes, lyrical stanzas that are typically written in praise of, or in dedication to, something or someone that the writer admires. These odes followed the genre of lyrical poetry and focused on intense emotion using personal narrative. Among these odes, "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) [4,5,6] and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819) are most famous. Keats was preoccupied with death and aging throughout his life, which is shown in each of these two odes. "Ode to a Nightingale" discusses the temporary status of life and beauty, but in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," he explores the artistic permanence of the images on the urn.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was seen as a radical thinker for his religious atheism and largely ostracized by his contemporaries for his political and social views. One of his most famous works is *Adonais* (1821). This was a pastoral elegy, a poem combining death and rural life, written for John Keats. The poem mourns the death of Keats and his contribution to poetry. Another of his well-known works was *Ode to the West Wind* (1819) where he discusses the force and power of the wild wind and shows the Romantic writer's tendency to connect nature with art.

Lord Byron differed from the writing styles of Keats and Shelley. He was heavily influenced by the satire and wit from the previous period and infused this in his poetry. His satire *Don Juan* (1819-1824) is told in 17 cantos, divisions of long poems, and is based on the traditional legend of Don Juan. Byron changes the original telling of the story and instead of creating a womanizing character, he makes Don Juan someone easily seduced by women. The cantos follow his character's journey as he travels throughout Europe meeting several women and continually trying to escape from trouble. Byron's other notable work is *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-1816), another lengthy narrative poem. This poem was largely biographical and discusses many of Byron's personal travels. It describes the reflections of a young man who is seeking new beginnings in foreign countries after experiencing many years of war. This poem is significant because it introduced the Byronic hero, typically a handsome and intelligent man with a tendency to be moody, cynical, and rebellious against social norms.

THE NOVEL

During the Romantic Period the novel grew in popularity and became one of the major sources of entertainment for middle class citizens. Authors began to tailor their writing to appeal to this audience. Sir Walter Scott gained popularity during this time, both in Britain and around Europe. He mainly wrote within the genre of historical romances and made this a viable form of fiction for later writers. Scott also focused on his home country of Scotland, often writing about its beauty and romanticism. Scott's first major novel was *Waverley* (1814), which is set during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The rebellious group sought to restore the Stuart dynasty to Charles Edward Stuart. The hero, Edward Waverley, is commissioned to the army and sent to Scotland in 1745. While there, he joins the Jacobite groups even though he knows they will fail and is imprisoned; however, he is ultimately freed. The novel ends with a marriage between Waverley and a Baron's daughter, Rose, representing the rational, realistic present of Scotland post-rebellion. While this was his first success, generally *The Antiquary* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) are considered his masterpieces.

Gothic Fiction

During the second half of the 18th century, gothic fiction began to increase in popularity in Great Britain. This came from a look back to medieval times. Often this genre would combine supernatural and mysterious elements with the castles and dungeons of the past. The gothic novel combines the intense emotions of terror, anguish, fear, and even love. Coleridge and Byron both contributed works to this canon, but John William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) stand out as two of the genre's most enduring pieces. Polidori's work has importance for creating the vampire literary genre. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*,

published during the Victorian Period, would continue to generate popularity around vampirism.

Shelley combines elements of love and the supernatural in her gothic novel, *Frankenstein*. Dr. Victor Frankenstein harnesses the power of life and uses it to animate a creature he has built. When the creature is cast away and refused companionship for his hideous physical features, he becomes murderous and determines to ruin Victor's life.

Women Have Arrived

The Romantic Period saw more successful women writers, a precursor to their popularity in the Victorian era. The most significant female writer during this period was Jane Austen. Writing toward the end of the period, Austen did not always adhere to the strict Romantic Period guidelines and mocked some of the more extravagant plots of previous writers. Instead, Austen chose to highlight the everyday lives of average people, making a turn toward social realism. Her novels include relatable heroines with adventures that the ordinary reader would likely encounter.[7,8,9] She was also able to better depict the lives of women in this way. She understood that women had very little class mobility at the time and used many of her novels as a way to show this. Some of her famous novels include *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Northanger Abbey* (1817). *Pride and Prejudice* is still widely read today and tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet, the second eldest daughter among five. When Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy move into the neighborhood, the Bennet family hopes they will wed two of the unmarried daughters. Although Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy clash heads early on in the novel, they eventually fall in love and get married. Austen's novel *Emma* is also very popular and shows the consequences of meddling with love. Emma thinks that she could be a matchmaker, but her efforts ultimately fail and lead to heartbreak along the way. Although in the beginning of the novel she vows never to marry, by the end she realizes she is in love with Mr. Knightly and the two do get married.

The European Romantic Movement reached America in the early 19th century. It encompassed many of the same ideals, genres, and styles as the European Romanticism and appealed to the Americans' revolutionary spirit. The English Romantic Period ended with the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837. The Industrial Revolution was beginning to be fully felt by the people of England as the working class became dominant in the culture. Most significant would be the introduction of the steam printing press and the railroads, which would make it possible to easily make and distribute texts.

DISCUSSION

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century. Scholars regard the publishing of William Wordsworth's and Samuel Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 as probably the beginning of the movement in England, and the crowning of Queen Victoria in 1837 as its end.^[1] Romanticism arrived in other parts of the English-speaking world later; in the United States, it arrived around 1820.[10,11,12]

The Romantic period was one of major social change in England, due to the depopulation of the countryside and the rapid development of overcrowded industrial cities that took place roughly between 1798 and 1832. The movement of so

many people in England was the result of two forces: the Agricultural Revolution, which involved enclosures that drove workers and their families off the land, and the Industrial Revolution which provided them employment, "in the factories and mills, operated by machines driven by steam-power".^[2] Indeed, Romanticism may be seen in part as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution,^[3] though it was also a revolt against aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment, as well as a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature.^[4] The French Revolution was an especially important influence on the political thinking of many notable Romantic figures at this time as well.^[5]

England

18th-century precursors

The Romantic movement in English literature of the early 19th century has its roots in 18th-century poetry, the Gothic novel and the novel of sensibility.^{[6][7]} This includes the graveyard poets, who were a number of pre-Romantic English poets writing in the 1740s and later, whose works are characterized by their gloomy meditations on mortality, "skulls and coffins, epitaphs and worms" in the context of the graveyard.^[8] To this was added by later practitioners, a feeling for the "sublime" and uncanny, and an interest in ancient English poetic forms and folk poetry. These concepts are often considered precursors of the Gothic genre.^[9] Some major Gothic poets include Thomas Gray (1716–71), whose *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) is "the best known product of this kind of sensibility";^[10] William Cowper (1731–1800); Christopher Smart (1722–71); Thomas Chatterton (1752–70); Robert Blair (1699–1746), author of *The Grave* (1743), "which celebrates the horror of death";^[11] and Edward Young (1683–1765), whose *The Complaint, or Night-Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1742–45) is another "noted example of the graveyard genre".^[12] Other precursors of Romanticism are the poets James Thomson (1700–48) and James Macpherson (1736–96).^[6]

The sentimental novel or "novel of sensibility" is a genre which developed during the second half of the 18th century. It celebrates the emotional and intellectual concepts of sentiment, sentimentalism and sensibility. Sentimentalism, which is to be distinguished from sensibility, was a fashion in both poetry and prose fiction which began in reaction to the rationalism of the Augustan Age. Sentimental novels relied on emotional response both from their readers and characters. Scenes of distress and tenderness are common, and the plot is arranged to advance emotions rather than action. The result is a valorization of "fine feeling", displaying the characters as models for refined, sensitive emotional effect. The ability to display feelings was thought to show character and experience, and to shape social life and relations.^[13] Among the most famous sentimental novels in English are Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67) and *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* (1765–70), Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800).^[14]

Significant foreign influences were the Germans Goethe, Schiller and August Wilhelm Schlegel, and French philosopher and writer Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78).^[15] Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) is another

important influence.^[16] The changing landscape, brought about by the Industrial and agricultural revolutions with the expansion of the city and depopulation of the countryside, was another influence on the growth of the Romantic movement in Britain. The poor condition of workers, the new class conflicts and the pollution of the environment led to a reaction against urbanism and industrialization, and a new emphasis on the beauty and value of nature.^[13,14,15]

In the late 18th century, Horace Walpole's 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto* created the Gothic fiction genre, that combines elements of horror and romance. The pioneering gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe introduced the brooding figure of the gothic villain which developed into the Byronic hero. Her most popular and influential work, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1795), is frequently cited as the archetypal Gothic novel. *Vathek* (1786) by William Beckford and *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis were further notable early works in both the gothic and horror literary genres. The first short stories in the United Kingdom were gothic tales like Richard Cumberland's "remarkable narrative" *The Poisoner of Montremos* (1791).^[17]

Romantic poetry

The physical landscape is prominent in the poetry of this period. The Romantics, and especially Wordsworth, are often described as "nature poets". However, these "nature poems" reveal wider concerns in that they are often meditations on "an emotional problem or personal crisis".^[18]

The poet, painter and printmaker William Blake (1757–1827) was an early writer of his kind. Largely disconnected from the major streams of the literature of his time, Blake was generally unrecognized during his lifetime but is now considered a seminal figure in the history of both the poetry and visual arts of the Romantic Age. Considered mad by contemporaries for his idiosyncratic views, Blake is held in high regard by later critics for his expressiveness and creativity, and for the philosophical and mystical undercurrents within his work. Among his most important works are *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), "and profound and difficult 'prophecies'" such as *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *The Book of Urizen* (1794), *Milton* (1804–1810) and *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804–1820).^[19]

After Blake, among the earliest Romantics were the Lake Poets, a small group of friends, including William Wordsworth (1770–1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), Robert Southey (1774–1843) and journalist Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859). However, at the time, Walter Scott (1771–1832) was the most famous poet. Scott achieved immediate success with his long narrative poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in 1805, followed by the full epic poem *Marmion* in 1808. Both were set in the distant Scottish past.^[20] The early Romantic poets brought a new form of emotionalism and introspection, and their emergence is marked by the first romantic manifesto in English literature, the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1798). In it Wordsworth discusses what he sees as the elements of a new type of poetry, one based on the "real language of men", and which avoids the poetic diction of much 18th-century poetry. Here, Wordsworth gives his famous definition of poetry, as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" which "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility". The poems in *Lyrical Ballads* were mostly by Wordsworth, though Coleridge contributed one of the great poems of English

literature,^[21] the long Rime of the Ancient Mariner, a tragic ballad about the survival of one sailor through a series of supernatural events on his voyage through the South Seas, and involves the symbolically significant slaying of an albatross. Coleridge is also especially remembered for *Kubla Khan*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Dejection: An Ode*, *Christabel*, as well as the major prose work, *Biographia Literaria*. His critical work, especially on Shakespeare, was highly influential, and he helped introduce German idealist philosophy to English-speaking culture.^[22] Coleridge and Wordsworth, along with Carlyle, were major influences through Emerson, on American transcendentalism.^[23] Among Wordsworth's most important poems are *Michael*, *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, *Resolution and Independence*, *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* and the long, autobiographical epic *The Prelude*. *The Prelude* was begun in 1799, but published posthumously in 1850. Wordsworth's poetry is noteworthy for how he "inverted the traditional hierarchy of poetic genres, subjects, and style by elevating humble and rustic life and the plain [...] into the main subject and medium of poetry in general", and how, in Coleridge's words, he awakens in the reader a "freshness of sensation" in his depiction of familiar, commonplace objects.^[24]

Robert Southey (1774–1843) was another of the so-called "Lake Poets", and Poet Laureate for 30 years from 1813 to his death in 1843, although his fame has been long eclipsed by that of his contemporaries and friends William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859) was an English essayist, best known for his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821),^[25] an autobiographical account of his laudanum use and its effect on his life. William Hazlitt (1778–1830), friend of both Coleridge and Wordsworth, is another important essayist at this time, though today he is best known for his literary criticism, especially *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817–18)^[16,17,18]

Second generation

The second generation of Romantic poets includes Lord Byron (1788–1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and John Keats (1795–1821). Byron, however, was still influenced by 18th-century satirists and was, perhaps the least "romantic" of the three, preferring "the brilliant wit of Pope to what he called the 'wrong poetical system' of his Romantic contemporaries".^[27] Byron achieved enormous fame and influence throughout Europe with works exploiting the violence and drama of their exotic and historical settings. Goethe called Byron "undoubtedly the greatest genius of our century".^[28] A trip to Europe resulted in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), a mock-heroic epic of a young man's adventures in Europe, but also a sharp satire against London society. The poem contains elements thought to be autobiographical, as Byron generated some of the storyline from experience gained during his travels between 1809 and 1811.^[29] However, despite the success of *Childe Harold* and other works, Byron was forced to leave England for good in 1816 and seek asylum on the Continent, because, among other things, of his alleged incestuous affair with his half-sister Augusta Leigh.^[30] Here he joined Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley, with his secretary John William Polidori on the shores of Lake Geneva, during the "Year Without a Summer".^[30] Polidori's *The Vampyre* was published in 1819, creating the literary vampire genre. This short story was inspired by the life of Lord Byron and his poem *The Giaour*

(1813).^[31] Between 1819 and 1824, Byron published his unfinished epic satire *Don Juan*, which, though initially condemned by the critics, "was much admired by Goethe who translated part of it".^[32]

Shelley is perhaps best known for poems such as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music*, *When Soft Voices Die*, *The Cloud*, *The Masque of Anarchy* and *Adonais*, an elegy written on the death of Keats. Shelley's early profession of atheism, in the tract *The Necessity of Atheism*, led to his expulsion from Oxford,^[33] and branded him as a radical agitator and thinker, setting an early pattern of marginalization and ostracism from the intellectual and political circles of his time. Similarly, Shelley's 1821 essay *A Defence of Poetry* displayed a radical view of poetry, in which poets act as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world", because, of all of artists, they best perceive the undergirding structure of society.^[34] His close circle of admirers, however, included the most progressive thinkers of the day, including his future father-in-law, philosopher William Godwin. Works like *Queen Mab* (1813) reveal Shelley "as the direct heir to the French and British revolutionary intellectuals of the 1790s".^[35] Shelley became an idol of the next three or four generations of poets, including important Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite poets such as Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as well as later W. B. Yeats. Shelley's influential poem *The Masque of Anarchy* (1819) calls for nonviolence in protest and political action. It is perhaps the first modern statement of the principle of nonviolent protest.^[36] Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance was influenced and inspired by Shelley's verse, and Gandhi would often quote the poem to vast audiences.^[37]

Though John Keats shared Byron and Shelley's radical politics, "his best poetry is not political",^[38] but is especially noted for its sensuous music and imagery, along with a concern with material beauty and the transience of life.^{[39][40]} Among his most famous works are *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Ode to Psyche*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode on Melancholy*, *To Autumn* and the incomplete *Hyperion*, a "philosophical" poem in blank verse, which was "conceived on the model of Milton's *Paradise Lost*".^[41] Keats' letters "are among the finest in English" and important "for their discussion of his aesthetic ideas", including "negative capability".^[42] Keats has always been regarded as a major Romantic, "and his stature as a poet has grown steadily through all changes of fashion".^[43]

Other poets

Another important poet in this period was John Clare (1793–1864). Clare was the son of a farm labourer, who came to be known for his celebratory representations of the English countryside and his lamentation for the changes taking place in rural England.^[44] His poetry underwent a major re-evaluation in the late 20th century and he is often now considered to be among the most important 19th-century poets.^[45] His biographer Jonathan Bate states that Clare was "the greatest labouring-class poet that England has ever produced. No one has ever written more powerfully of nature, of a rural childhood, and of the alienated and unstable self".^[46]

George Crabbe (1754–1832) was an English poet who, during the Romantic period, wrote "closely observed, realistic portraits of rural life [...] in the heroic couplets of the Augustan age".^[47] Lord Byron, who was an admirer of Crabbe's poetry, described him as "nature's sternest painter,

yet the best".^[48] Modern critic Frank Whitehead has said that "Crabbe, in his verse tales in particular, is an important – indeed, a major – poet whose work has been and still is seriously undervalued".^[49] Crabbe's works include *The Village* (1783), *Poems* (1807), *The Borough* (1810), and his poetry collections *Tales* (1812) and *Tales of the Hall* (1819).

Female poets

Female writers were increasingly active in all genres throughout the 18th century, and by the 1790s women's poetry was flourishing. Notable poets later in the period include, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, Susanna Blamire and Hannah More. Other women poets include, Mary Alcock (c. 1742 – 1798) and Mary Robinson (1758–1800), both of whom "highlighted the enormous discrepancy between life for the rich and the poor",^[50] and Felicia Hemans (1793–1835), author of nineteen individual books during her lifetime and who continued to be republished widely after her death in 1835.^[51]

More interest has been shown in recent years in Dorothy Wordsworth (1771–1855), William's sister, who "was modest about her writing abilities, [but] she produced poems of her own; and her journals and travel narratives certainly provided inspiration for her brother".^[52]

In the past decades, there has been substantial scholarly and critical work done on women poets of this period, both to make them available in print or online, and second, to assess them and position them within the literary tradition.^[53] In particular, Felicia Hemans, although sticking to its forms, began a process of undermining the Romantic tradition, a deconstruction that was continued by Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802–1838).^{[54][55]} Landon's novel forms of metrical romance and dramatic monologue was much copied and had a long and lasting influence on Victorian poetry.^[56] Her work is now frequently classified as post-romantic.^{[57][58]} She also produced three completed novels, a tragedy, and numerous short stories.

Romantic novel

Mary Shelley (1797–1851) is remembered as the author of *Frankenstein* (1818). The plot of this is said to have come from a waking dream she had, in the company of Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and John Polidori, following a conversation about galvanism and the feasibility of returning a corpse or assembled body parts to life, and on the experiments of the 18th-century natural philosopher and poet Erasmus Darwin, who was said to have animated dead matter.^[59] Sitting around a log fire at Byron's villa, the company also amused themselves by reading German ghost stories, prompting Byron to suggest they each write their own supernatural tale.

Jane Austen's works critique the novels of sensibility of the second half of the 18th century and are part of the transition to 19th-century realism.^[60] Her plots, though fundamentally comic, highlight the dependence of women on marriage to secure social standing and economic security.^[61] Austen brings to light the hardships women faced, since they usually did not inherit money, could not work and were largely dependent on their husbands. She reveals not only the difficulties women faced in her day, but also what was expected of men and of the careers they had to follow. This she does with wit and humour and with endings where all characters, good or bad, receive exactly what they deserve. Her work brought her little personal fame and only a few positive reviews during her lifetime, but the publication in

1869 of her nephew's *A Memoir of Jane Austen* introduced her to a wider public, and by the 1940s she had become accepted as a major writer. The second half of the 20th century saw a proliferation of Austen scholarship and the emergence of a Janeite fan culture. Austen's works include *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and *Persuasion* (1817).

Drama

Byron, Keats and Percy Shelley all wrote for the stage, but with little success in England, with Shelley's *The Cenci* perhaps the best work produced, though that was not played in a public theatre in England until a century after his death. Byron's plays, along with dramatizations of his poems and Scott's novels, were much more popular on the Continent, and especially in France, and through these versions, several were turned into operas, many still performed today. If contemporary poets had little success on the stage, the period was a legendary one for performances of Shakespeare, and went some way to restoring his original texts and removing the Augustan "improvements" to them. The greatest actor of the period, Edmund Kean, restored the tragic ending to *King Lear*;^[62] Coleridge said that, "Seeing him act was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning."^[63]

Wales

Wales had its own Romantic movement, especially in Welsh literature (which was rarely translated or known outside Wales).^[64] The countryside and history of Wales exerted an influence on the Romantic imagination of Britons, especially in travel writings, and the poetry of Wordsworth.^[65]

The "poetry and bardic vision" of Edward Williams (1747–1826), better known by his bardic name Iolo Morganwg, bear the hallmarks of Romanticism. "His Romantic image of Wales and its past had a far-reaching effect on the way in which the Welsh envisaged their own national identity during the nineteenth century."^{[66][65][67][68]}

Scotland

James Macpherson was the first Scottish poet to gain an international reputation. Claiming to have found poetry written by the ancient bard Ossian, he published "translations" that acquired international popularity, being proclaimed as a Celtic equivalent of the Classical epics. *Fingal*, written in 1762, was speedily translated into many European languages, and its appreciation of natural beauty and treatment of the ancient legend have been credited, more than any single work, with bringing about the Romantic movement in Europe, and especially in German literature, through its influence on Johann Gottfried von Herder and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.^[69] It was also popularised in France by figures that included Napoleon.^[70] Eventually it became clear that the poems were not direct translations from the Gaelic, but flowery adaptations made to suit the aesthetic expectations of his audience.^[71] Both Robert Burns (1759–96) and Walter Scott (1771–1832) were highly influenced by the Ossian cycle. Robert Burns (1759–1796) was a pioneer of the Romantic movement, and after his death he became a cultural icon in Scotland. As well as writing poems, Burns also collected folk songs from across Scotland, often revising or adapting them. His *Poems, chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* was published in 1786. Among poems and songs of Burns that remain well known across the world are, *Auld Lang Syne*; *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.

One of the most important British novelists of the early 19th century was Sir Walter Scott, who was not only highly popular, but "the greatest single influence on fiction in the 19th century [...] [and] a European figure".^[72] Scott's novel writing career was launched in 1814 with *Waverley*, often called the first historical novel, and was followed by *Ivanhoe*. The *Waverley Novels*, including *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, and whose subject is Scottish history, are now generally regarded as Scott's masterpieces.^[73] He was one of the most popular novelists of the era, and his historical romances inspired a generation of painters, composers, and writers throughout Europe, including Franz Schubert, Felix Mendelssohn and J. M. W. Turner. His novels also inspired many operas, of which the most famous are *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835) by Donizetti, and Bizet's *La jolie fille de Perth*, *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1867).^{[74][73]} However, today his contemporary, Jane Austen, is widely read and the source for films and television series, while Scott is comparatively neglected.

America

The European Romantic movement reached America in the early 19th century. American Romanticism was just as multifaceted and individualistic as it was in Europe. Like the Europeans, the American Romantics demonstrated a high level of moral enthusiasm, commitment to individualism and the unfolding of the self, an emphasis on intuitive perception, and the assumption that the natural world was inherently good, while human society was filled with corruption.^[75] Romanticism became popular in American politics, philosophy and art. The movement appealed to the revolutionary spirit of America as well as to those longing to break free of the strict religious traditions of early settlement. The Romantics rejected rationalism and religious intellect. It appealed to those in opposition of Calvinism, which includes the belief that the destiny of each individual is preordained.^[19,20]

Romantic Gothic literature made an early appearance with Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820) and *Rip Van Winkle* (1819); there are picturesque "local color" elements in Washington Irving's essays and especially his travel books. From 1823, the prolific and popular novelist James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) began publishing his historical romances of frontier and Indian life, to create a unique form of American literature. Cooper is best remembered for his numerous sea-stories and the historical novels known as the *Leatherstocking Tales*, with their emphasis on heroic simplicity and their fervent landscape descriptions of an already-exotic mythicized frontier peopled by "noble savages", exemplified by *Uncas*, from *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) show the influence of Rousseau's (1712–78) philosophy. Edgar Allan Poe's tales of the macabre that first appeared in the early 1830s, and his balladic poetry was more influential in France than at home.^{[76][77]}

By the mid-19th century, the pre-eminence of literature from the British Isles began to be challenged by writers from the former American colonies. This included one of the creators of the new genre of the short story, and inventor of the detective story Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49). A major influence on American writers at this time was Romanticism.

The Romantic movement gave rise to New England Transcendentalism, which portrayed a less restrictive relationship between God and Universe. The publication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay *Nature* is usually considered the watershed moment at which transcendentalism became a major cultural movement. The new philosophy presented the individual with a more personal relationship with God. Transcendentalism and Romanticism appealed to Americans in a similar fashion, for both privileged feeling over reason, individual freedom of expression over the restraints of tradition and custom. It often involved a rapturous response to nature. It encouraged the rejection of harsh, rigid Calvinism, and promised a new blossoming of American culture.^{[75][78]}

The romantic American novel developed fully with Nathaniel Hawthorne's (1804–1864) *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), a stark drama of a woman cast out of her community for committing adultery. Hawthorne's fiction had a profound impact on his friend Herman Melville (1819–1891). In *Moby-Dick* (1851), an adventurous whaling voyage becomes the vehicle for examining such themes as obsession, the nature of evil, and human struggle against the elements. By the 1880s, however, psychological and social realism were competing with Romanticism in the novel.

RESULTS

Romanticism often considered as Romantic Age or Romantic Era was an artistic, literary and intellectual movement of Europe. Many different dates are given for the rise of the Romantic Age but the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge in 1798 is taken as the beginning of the Romantic Era.

Romanticism in literature concerned with the two bed – rock of emotions and imaginations. It introduces the readers to a world of strangeness and beauty as Pater considers it as "The addition of Strangeness in beauty." He further said that –

The desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to the desire of beauty.

Thus, the two most prominent elements of romanticism are curiosity and beauty. Romanticism also stands for freedom and liberty, and therefore it is "Literalism in Literature."

Rise of The Romanticism

Romantic Movement dates its origin in 1798 with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge. This movement in literature was preceded and accompanied by the change in literary styles. It was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and also the social and political norms of England as well as Europe. The rise of the Romanticism in English literature is somehow concerned with the Age of Enlightenment. The supreme Romantic Movement in English literature was the Renaissance. It had brought about a transformation not only in England but also in European life.

Characteristics of Romanticism

1. Contrast with Neo – Classicism

While talking about Neo – Classicism era, the Romantic era is totally opposed to it. There is a great contrast between Neo – Classicism and Romanticism. The main difference between neoclassicism and romanticism is that neoclassicism emphasized on objectivity, order, and restraint whereas romanticism emphasized on imagination and emotion. The

main thing in the poetry of Romanticism is the break from the thralldom of rules and regulations. W. J. Long marks –

The Romantic Movement was marked by a strong reaction and protests against the bondage of rule and custom which in literature, generally tend to fetter the free human spirit.

2. Love for Freedom

In Romantic Poetry, the emphasis was laid on liberty and freedom of the individual. Romantic poets were rebels against tyranny and brutality exercised by tyrants and despots over humans crushed by poverty and smashed by inhuman laws. English romanticism was an expression of the desire for freedom from the restraining forces of reason and the assertion of the rights of feeling and imagination. Thus, Freedom is the breath in which the Romantic poets breathed freely.

3. Supernaturalism

Supernaturalism is another outstanding quality of Romantic Poetry. Poets like Coleridge and Scott gave a sense of wonder and mystery to poetry. It was this supernaturalism that gave the atmosphere of wonder and mystery to the Romantic Poetry. Most of the romantic poets used supernatural elements in their poetry. Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the leading romantic poet in this regard, and "Kubla Khan" is full of supernatural elements.

4. Subjectivity

Subjectivity is another important feature of the Romantic poets. Subjective poetry is a kind of poetry in which the poet goes into himself and finds his inspiration from his own experiences, thoughts and feelings. Most of the Romantic poets are subject in this sense. For example, Keats's "Ode to the Nightingale" is basically based on personal matter. Subjectivity began to have its full play in the poetry of this age as W. J. Long points out –

The Romantic Movement was the expression of individual genius rather than of the established rules.

5. Variety of Moods

In Romantic Poetry, we come across an endless variety. The poetry of this age is as varied as the character and moods of different writers. A noted remark of W. J. Long said that –

In the works of the best romanticists there is endless variety. To read them is like passing through a new village, meeting a score of different human types, and finding in each one something to Love or to remember.

6. Simplicity in Style

The style of the Romantic Poets is varied but the stress was laid on simplicity. Instead of an artificial mode of expression of classical poets, we have a natural diction and spontaneous way of expressing thoughts in Romantic Poetry. Romantic Poets believe in the simplicity in their style. They followed the simplicity in their works. They not followed the artificial mode of the expression of classical Poetry. They have express thoughts in natural Diction and spontaneity way.

7. Emotion and Imagination

In Romantic Poetry, reason and intellect were subdued and their place was taken by imaginations, emotions and passion. In the poetry of all the Romantic Poets, we find heightened emotional sensibilities and imaginative flights of genius bordering on heavenly heights uncrossed by the poets of the previous age.

Authors of The Romantic Era

- William Wordsworth, born in 1770 and died in 1850, is considered as the father of Romantic Movement. In fact, the Romanticism in English literature began with his publication of Lyrical Ballads with co – author and his friend S. T. Coleridge. He was also the Poet Laureate of England from 1843 till his death in 1850.
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, born in 1772 and died in 1834, was another great poet of Romantic Era. He was a good friend of William Wordsworth, and they two together published Lyrical Ballads which marks the beginning of Romanticism. Coleridge contributed in Romantic Movement with his two best poems The Rime of Ancient, Christabel and Kubla Khan.
- John Keats, born in 1795 and died in 1821, was one of the prominent figures of the second generation of English Romantic poets. However, his reputation grew after his death. His famous works are Ode to Nightingale and When I Have Fears.
- P. B. Shelley, born in 1792 and died in 1822, was an English poet and friend of John Keats who contributed in English Romanticism along with John Keats. His great works of the time were Ode to The West Wind and A Defense of Poetry.
- William Blake, born in 1757 and died in 1827, was highly influential figures in the history of Romantic era. His poetry often accompanied by fantastic imagery. Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience are the two great works of Blake.

Works of The Romantic Era

Lyrical Ballads, The Rime of Ancient, Christabel, Kubla Khan, Ode to Nightingale, When I Have Fears, Ode to The West Wind, and Songs of Experience are some of the great works of the Romanticism of Literature.

The Romantic period was one of major social, political and literary change in England. Romanticism in literature concerned with the two bed – rock of emotions and imaginations. It introduces the readers to a world of strangeness and beauty as Pater considers it as "The addition of Strangeness in beauty." Thus, the two most prominent elements of romanticism are curiosity and beauty. Romanticism also stands for freedom and liberty, and therefore it is "Literalism in Literature." [17,18,19]

CONCLUSION

The Romantic Period (1798-1850) : Important Writers William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth is a well-known Romantic-era poet who has a substantial influence on English literature. Wordsworth, a poet who was born in 1770, made a significant contribution to literature. His poetry stands out for its emphasis on imagination and personal experiences as well as its relationship to environment.

"Lyrical Ballads," a collection of poems co-written by Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, marked a dramatic change in English poetry. His poems masterfully capture the splendour and tranquilly of the natural world, frequently capturing commonplace events and everyday occurrences. Wordsworth intended to awaken readers to the magnificent features of nature and evoke awe and amazement through his evocative language and vivid pictures.

One of Wordsworth's most known pieces, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (also known as "Daffodils"), best captures his poetic sensibility. His strong love of the natural world is captured in the poem, which also incorporates personal contemplation. Also covered in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" is the subject of memory and its capacity for transformation.

Through his poetry, Wordsworth expresses his conviction about the value of each person and the close relationship among nature with the human mind. His idea of the "egotistical sublime" emphasises how vitally important individual experiences and feelings are to poetry.

Wordsworth's poems had a significant impact on the Romantic movement. He paved the way for later poet generations with his great appreciation of nature, stress on the individual, and belief in the creative potential. Readers are still moved by his writings, which give profound insights into the human condition and inspire awe at the magnificence of nature.

In summary, William Wordsworth's poetry is distinguished by his awe of nature, investigation of unique experiences, and faith in the creative power of the mind. He is now recognised as one of the most important and renowned poets in history thanks to his contributions to the Romantic Era and English literature.

S. T. Coleridge

English poet, philosopher, and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a significant figure of the Romantic Era. Coleridge, who was born in 1772, is well renowned for his inventive poetry and thought-provoking philosophical principles.

The investigation of supernatural topics and the use of symbolic language and vivid imagery distinguish Coleridge's poetry. His well-known poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which explores guilt, atonement, and the might of nature, is a disturbing story. Coleridge's interest with the enigmatic and the sublime is evident in "Kubla Khan," another famous work that is dreamy and visionary.

In addition to his poetry, Coleridge also produced a number of philosophical and analytical works, including "Biographia Literaria," which made a significant contribution to literary theory and criticism. He was an essential contributor to the development of the Romantic literary movement and co-founded it.

Future generations of authors and intellectuals have been greatly influenced by the concepts and lyrical devices of Coleridge. His investigation into the imagination and his notion of the "willing suspension of disbelief" have had an ongoing impact on literature and philosophy.

In conclusion, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry and philosophical viewpoints had a profound influence on English literature during the Romantic Era. Readers are captivated by his visionary works, such as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan," because of their vivid imagery and provocative subjects. Coleridge's accomplishments as a poet, philosopher, and critic solidify his place in the literary canon, and his writings continue to be crucial for comprehending the spirit and core of the Romantic Era.

Walter Scott

Scottish author, poet, and historian Walter Scott was a well-known figure of the Romantic Era. Scott, who was born in

1771, is largely regarded as the creator of the historical fiction subgenre. His writing has had a significant influence on literature and cultural identity.

"Ivanhoe," "Rob Roy," and "Waverley," among Scott's other well-known books, are adored for their captivating stories, colourful characters, and accurate historical settings. Through his writings, Scott masterfully brought the struggles, adventures, and customs of several eras to life, engrossing readers with his masterful narrative and meticulous attention to historical detail.

Scott's poetry, best demonstrated by pieces like "The Lady of the Lake" and "Marmion," is not just limited to his books; it also displays his passion for Scotland's natural beauty and his strong sense of Scottish heritage.

Beyond his literary accomplishments, Scott contributed significantly to the resurgence of Scottish cultural pride by igniting a passion for Scottish customs and mythology. His influence went beyond that of his contemporaries, affecting writers of later generations and assisting in the growth of the historical fiction subgenre.

In conclusion, Walter Scott has cemented his position as a key character of the Romantic Era through his writings, including his novels, poetry, and cultural contributions. His skill at fusing fact and fiction, together with his fascinating storytelling, continue to motivate and enthrall readers all over the world. As a creator of the historical book genre and a defender of Scottish culture, Scott leaves behind an enduring and important legacy.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Gordon, George A well-known English poet of the Romantic Era, Lord Byron is most frequently referred to as just Lord Byron. Byron, a poet who was born in 1788, is renowned for his enthralling beauty, intense feelings, and investigation of both societal and personal subjects. Among his best pieces are "Don Juan," "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," and "She Walks in Beauty." Byron's poetic voice was disobedient and unafraid to break the rules of society and promote individualism. Lord Byron has earned a reputation as one of the most revered and important poets of the Romantic era thanks to his contributions to poetry and his captivating charisma. Readers are still motivated and enthralled by his enduring influence on literature today.

P. B. Shelley

P.B. Shelley, often known as Percy Bysshe Shelley, was a well-known Romantic-era English poet. The poetry of 1792-born Shelley embodied inventiveness, idealism, and a disobedience to societal expectations. His well-known compositions, including "Ode to the West Wind," "Prometheus Unbound," and "Ozymandias," displayed his mastery of the lyrical form and explored themes of liberation, the natural world, and the tenacious human spirit. The Romantic literary movement was forever changed by Shelley's poetic expressiveness and fervent expression. His contributions to poetry are honoured for their profound wisdom and aesthetic excellence, solidifying his reputation as a renowned Romantic poet.

John Keats

Born in 1795, John Keats was a significant Romantic-era English poet. Keats is regarded as one of the best poets to have ever written in the English language because of his exquisite poetry and in-depth analysis of subjects like beauty, love, and mortality. His well-known compositions,

like as "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and "To Autumn," demonstrate his capacity to arouse strong emotions with vivid imagery and complex language. Keats' poetry is distinguished by a deep and sensual relationship with nature. His untimely passing at the young age of 25 added to the mystique surrounding his writing and cemented his place in Romantic literature as a beloved author.

Thomas Love Peacock

English novelist, poet, and satirical Thomas Love Peacock was born in 1785. His distinctively witty and sardonic writing style throughout the Romantic Era was evident in all of his writings. Novels by Peacock, such as "Headlong Hall," "Nightmare Abbey," and "Crotchet Castle," were notable for their witty critiques of intellectual and societal tendencies of the day and keen social satire. Peacock's writings provided a unique voice in Romantic literature with a blend of sarcasm, intellectual dialogue, and humour. His writings are still valued for their sharp humour and perceptive observations, which has cemented his status as an important character in the era's literary environment.

Charles Lamb

Famous English essayist and poet Charles Lamb was born in 1775. Lamb is still regarded as a revered representative of the Romantic Era because of his wit, charm, and captivating writing. His collection of essays, "Essays of Elia," displayed his distinctive fusion of introspective contemplation, literary analysis, and social commentary. Themes like friendship, love, and the complexity of human emotions were explored throughout Lamb's works as well as the nuances of everyday life. Readers were won over by his personal and relatable writing style, and audiences are still drawn to his ageless wisdom. Through his literary works, Charles Lamb has cemented his place in history as a key Romantic character.

Thomas De Quincey

An important English essayist and writer named Thomas De Quincey was born in 1785. "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," his most famous work, had a tremendous impact on the Romantic Era. De Quincey's books are known for their examination of dreams, the imagination, and the more sinister sides of human nature. Readers were enthralled by his distinct storytelling technique, which was paired with reflection and literary analysis, and he became a well-known personality in English literature. De Quincey stood out for his ability to meld vividly descriptive language with insightful psychological understandings. His writing is still valued for its examination of human consciousness and its ongoing significance in the literary world.

Jane Austen

In 1775, renowned English author Jane Austen was born. She penned iconic novels including "Pride and Prejudice," "Sense and Sensibility," and "Emma," among others. In addition to exploring topics of love, marriage, social status, and societal standards, Austen's works focused on the lives of women in the Georgian and Regency eras. Austen's writing demonstrated her grasp of sarcasm and social satire through her sharp wit, perceptive observations, and endearing characters. Her books' enduring relevance and incisive depictions of interpersonal connections keep readers enthralled. One of the most well-known and important authors of the 19th century, Jane Austen's contributions to literature have cemented her place in that elite group.

In summary, the Romantic Period (1798–1850) is a noteworthy period in literary history, characterised by the contributions of notable authors who influenced the development of English literature. William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Walter Scott, Mary Shelley, and other authors probed the depths of human feeling while embracing the power of imagination and praising the magnificence of nature. Their writings have an enduring influence on the literary world and continue to enthrall readers. By focusing on individualism, the paranormal, and the expression of strong emotions, Romantic authors built a new literary landscape that had an impact on writers of later generations. Their contributions continue to be an essential part of the canon of literature, motivating both readers and writers with their profound understanding of the human condition.[20]

REFERENCES

- [1] Abrams and Greenblatt, p. 5.
- [2] Wynne-Davies, p. 21.
- [3] Encyclopædia Britannica. "Romanticism. Retrieved 30 January 2008, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Britannica.com. Retrieved 2010-08-24.
- [4] Christopher Casey, (30 October 2008). "'Grecian Grandeurs and the Rude Wasting of Old Time': Britain, the Elgin Marbles, and Post-Revolutionary Hellenism". Foundations. Volume III, Number 1. Retrieved 2009-06-25.
- [5] Abrams and Greenblatt, p. 2.
- [6] Cuddon, p. 588
- [7] "Pre-Romanticism." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 5 October 2012.
- [8] Line 23 of "The Grave" by Robert Blair.
- [9] Clarence Hugh Holman; William Harmon (1986). A Handbook to Literature. Macmillan. pp. 238, 452. ISBN 978-0-02-553430-8.
- [10] Drabble, p. 418.
- [11] Drabble, p. 107.
- [12] Drabble, p. 1106.
- [13] Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener, eds., The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period (2008).
- [14] Cuddon, p. 809.
- [15] Cuddon, pp. 588–9.
- [16] Drabble, pp. 957–8.
- [17] Chris Baldick (2001). The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-286219-8.
- [18] Abrams and Greenblatt, p. 9
- [19] "William Blake". Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. Web. 2 October 2012.
- [20] Wynne-Davies, p. 885.