Course Profile

Course Title	Analysis of Literary Texts (2021-22)
Level	Undergraduate, L3
Award Title	3rd Year, Bachelor of Art/ Licence (BA)
Awarding Body	University of Bejaia
Teaching Institution	University of Bejaia
Faculty	Letters and Languages
Department	English
Regulations	http://www.univ-bejaia.dz/formation/formations/2016-06-29-11-34-56
Location	Pole Universitaire de Aboudaou, Bejaia
Length of the course Unity Coefficient Number of Credits Mode of Teaching Mode of evaluation	Two semesters (1 year) Fundamental 3 4 Hybrid Exam 50% Progressive assessment 50%
Instructor	Mrs. S. Saibi sihem.saibi@univ-bejaia.dz

This document offers a summary of the course profile. Further information about the regulations, policies, and programs can be found in the prospectuses, canvas, and handbooks available in paper format in the University of Bejaia. The resources are also available in the official websites of the University of Bejaia.

http://www.univ-bejaia.dz/formation/images/reglement%20a%20publier/mobile/index.html#p=2

In French and in Arabic

http://www.univ-bejaia.dz/Fac_Lettres_Langues/fr/2018-11-15-09-28-25/textes-reglementaires-pedagogie

1. Course Overview

This course will allow you to explore a wide variety of literary texts written by English and American writers between the late 18th century and mid-20 th century. It will also deepen your knowledge of artistics movements, writing practices, and literary genres. This course was designed to develop your critical and analytical skills, call your attention to intrinsic as well as extrinsic elements of the texts, show you how literature plays an important role in politics and culture, and prepare you for literary research.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Course

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read and analyze short and long texts
2. Explore different literary periods and genres
3. Show polished writing skills and produce literary commentaries
4. Understand the elements of romanticism, transcendentalism, realism, and naturalism
5. Demonstrate awareness and mastery of basic literary concepts and methods of text analysis
6. Understand the importance/ legacy of each literary movement
7. Prepare students for literary research

3. Course Structure and Schedule

First Semester

Week	Lesson	Texts and Supports
1	The Roots of Romanticism Early European Romantics (The Pre-romantics, The Graveyard School of Poetry)	
2 and 3	English Romantic Poetry	Poems (odes, ballads, praise poems, and lyrical ballads) by first and second generation romantics
4 and 5	English Romantic Prose: The Romance	A selected passage from Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811)
6	An Introduction to American Romanticism and Transcendentalism	
7	The Gothic Short Story	Irving Washington's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819)
8	The Gothic Short Story	"Sleepy Hollow" by Irving Washington
9	The Gothic Short Story	Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839)

8	Summary	

First Term Exams

Second Semester

Week	Lesson	Texts and Supports
1	an Introduction to Realism and Naturalism	
2	Victorian Literature: The Industrial Novel	Extracts from Hard Times: *Hard Times: For These Times* (1854)
3	English Naturalism	Extracts from Hardy's *Tess* of the d'*Urbervilles* (1891) Selected Scenes from Ian Sharp *Tess* of the d'*Urbervilles* (1998)
4	The Gilded Age: American Realism	Reading a selected passage from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)
5	The Gilded Age: American Realism	Commenting on aspects of the novel
6	The Gilded Age: American Realism	Discussing Twain's Style
7	American Naturalism	Reading a short story Jack London's "To Build a Fire" (1902)

8	American Naturalism	Discussing aspects of the short story

Second Term Exams

4. Learning Resources

All the required and recommended resources are available online and in our library. Please use the links below to get information about the aforementioned texts:

- Via intranet : bejaia/opac
- http://recherche.univ-bejaia.dz/opac
- http://recherche.univ-bejaia.dz
- http://www.univ-bejaia.dz/dspace
- http://www.univ-bejaia.dz/revues
- SNDL (système national de documentation en ligne): http://recherche.univ-bejaia.dz/index.php/sndl.html
- http://www.pnst.cerist.dz/

5. Assessment

Some changes in assessment may occur because of COVID-19. Updates will be communicated to students systematically via E-learning.

6. Class Etiquette

- There are no breaks.
- Tablets and laptops are allowed to read ebooks.
- Eating and drinking are not permitted.
- Recording lectures is not allowed.
- Mute your phone
- Check your email regularly
- Always take notes
- Be on time
- Do not leave without permission

About Online Lectures:

Active participation, whether online or in class, is important. During live sessions, students must follow the following principles:

- In online lectures, mute your audio except when the instructor asks you to comment.
- Irrelevant and unsuitable comments are deleted.
- Online discussions should be relevant and related to the topics.
- You are required to attend live sessions. The link (invitation to the online seminar) will be sent to you by email.
- Regular attendance is taken into consideration.

7. Course Policies and Guidelines

7.1. About Academic Integrity

- Cheating in examinations and progressive assessment is not acceptable.
- plagiarizing class assignments is not accepted
- Working in pairs or in groups on assignments is not permitted

For further information on ACADEMIC INTEGRITY in our university please check http://www.univ-bejaia.dz/formation/formations/2016-06-29-11-34-56

7.2.About Grades and Feedbacks

Students who are not satisfied with their marks should consult the policies before applying for 'a counter-correction'.

8. About Students with Disabilities and Additional Needs

The University of Bejaia supports inclusive education. Students with disabilities and additional needs can ask for different, reasonable academic measures.

N.B.

Face masks and distancing are compulsory

All lectures will be held via Zoom or Google Meet (or any other platform) if a campus closure is recommended because of Covid-19.

Preamble: Some Remarks on Close Reading (la lecture attentive) and the Literary Commentary

In this course, undergraduate students will learn how to close-read short passages and write literary commentaries. The goal of close reading is to enable students to engage with many selected passages written by different writers between 1789 and 1908. Although close reading is the least favored method among teachers of literature, I believe that it can be beneficial to EFL undergraduates. Many teachers and students prefer context-based approaches; however, they very often miss the most important details provided in the texts. When doing close reading, readers and teachers are invited to pay attention to the smallest details in the selected passage. The detailed analysis of word choice or stylistic devices, for instance, allows readers to learn more about the author's style and epoque.

Close reading today is heterogeneous; it is not always mechanical and boring. We can use many techniques and tools (even digital tools) to encourage students to annotate and draft their literary commentaries. F. Jameson has always called for historicising texts;i.e, putting them in their contexts, but if teachers (and students alike) historicize, they will 'distance themselves' from the texts they are reading. Historicization can be good in teaching ideologies not literature. Theory-oriented reading can be practiced when readers are *ready* and *well-equipped*. By 'ready' and 'well-equipped' I mean capable of making a difference between what the text ACTUALLY says and what it does. Historicising can be used only when the text demands it. With L3 students, it is better to use methods and tools that will help them understand the meaning of the text, not the intention of the writer/ poet.

The literary commentary, known more in France than in English-speaking countries, is a close reading of a short passage. It is a detailed formal analysis of a selected passage and an explanation supplied by the reader (student). The steps of close reading and writing the literary commentary are inspired from many works by I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, T.S. Eliot, and C. Brooks.

Learning how to write a literary commentary has many advantages. The major advantage is to learn how to respond to a text. Another advantage is to get prepared for writing more complex commentaries and long dissertations. It should be noted that M2 students have a course titled Stylistics where they are asked to respond to passages and write stylistic commentaries.

Although the two types are different, they share many striking similarities. Both commentaries are text-based and focus on 'the words on the page'.

The tradition of writing literary commentary in our department began years before the second reform of the LMD system (2014). We started teaching the basics of literary and stylistic commentary in 2005-2006 under the direct supervision of Dr. N. Senhadji.

Before ending my preamble, I would like to say that close reading is practiced after introducing literary movements and some key historical events that took place in Europe and USA. I did not include in my case studies a detailed analysis of context(s). However, in the study of adaptations or the social(ist)/ industrial novel, a different approach was adopted.

Dr. Sihem SAIBI

March, 2021

Romantic Literature

Introduction

The Industrial Revolution in England in the second half of the 18th cy, the French Revolution of 1789_ 1794, and the American Revolution had a strong impact upon England's economic, political, and social scenes, mainly in the first decades of the 19th cy. The ind.rev brought with it modern equipment, capitalism, and class division. Economic exploitation and the political struggle between capitalists and the masses became a chief social issue in England.

With the overthrow of monarchy in France and the coming into power of the Jacobins, the ruling class in England felt vulnerable and decided to wage war with France till the fall of Napoleon in 1815. Two major events in the first two decades of the 19th cy took place: the Luddites' destruction of machinery in 1810_11 and the bloodbath of St. Peter's Fields near Manchester in 1819. The post-Napoleonic wars brought economic depression to England, the fall of agricultural production, and poverty. People demanded reform, and the bourgeoisie began to fight for domination in political power. The clash between the industrial capitalists and aristocrats ended with the passing of the law of reform in 1832 and the victory of the capitalists. The workers and poor people who brought support to the capitalists won nothing apart from more exploitation and poverty.

In the 1790s the political philosophy of the ruling classes in England was represented by Edmund Burke who firmly opposed bloodshed and revolution and promoted social change in his essay "Reflections on the French Revolution" published in 1790. Other intellectuals and thinkers like Thomas Paine, Joseph Priestly, and William Godwin reacted and wrote for the 'rights of man' and political evenhandedness. The aforementioned radical writers called for impartiality and wrote against cruelty and all forms of oppression and exploitation (feudalism and capitalism). One should also refer to the big influence of high-ranking French writers and thinkers of the Age of Reason like Rousseau, Diderot, Voltaire, Montesquieu, to name only a few.

Romanticism Defined

The word romanticism has a long, intricate history. In the Middle Ages, romance designated the new vernacular languages derived from Latin, the language of learning. *Romancar*, *romanz*, and

enromancier meant to compose or translate books in the vernacular language (French, Italian, Spanish…). A *roman* or *romant* referred to any artistic work or popular book. By the 17th century in Britain and France, romance had acquired the deprecating nuances of unbelievable, strange, larger-than-life, and chimerical. In France a division was made between *romanesque* and *romantique* (affectionate, gloomy, sentimental, and tender). The first writer to establish the term *romantisch* in literary contexts is Frederich Schlegel. Schlegel was not very plain; *romantisch* for him referred to an imaginative work written in an expressive way about a moving topic. He also linked the 'romantic' to Christian while his brother August contrasted romantic literature to that of classicism. Madame de Stael- who knew the Schlegel brothers, made the term *romantique* popular in France. She distinguished between the literature of the North and of the south saying that the northern was medieval, Christian and romantic while the southern was Classical and pagan.

Romanticism is an artistic and intellectual movement which lasted from 1798, with the publication of *LyricalBallads*, to the passage of the first Reform Bill of 1832. In Britain, Romanticism was a more unofficial trend than a structured movement. As a literary movement, it came first in Germany with the "Sturm und Drang" (storm and stress) of the late 18th cy. In England, however, it started a little later, with the romantic precursors in the late 18th cy. In France the movement developed in the early 19th cy with Victor Hugo, Chateaubriand, Beranger, Lamartine, and George Sand.

In Britain, according to many historians and scholars, Romanticism started in the 18th century with the pre-romantics who wrote between 1740 and 1790, the period known as the Age of Sensibility. Many poets like Young, Percy, and McPherson wrote about death and decay and used the same motifs (ruins and graveyards) in their poems; this explains why the name Graveyard School of Poetry was attributed to them. During the forty odd years, writers also wrote sentimental novels like *Pamela* (1740) by Richardson, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) by Goldsmith, and Sentimental Journey (1768) by Stern. Nature poetry and gothic novels by writers of the mid 18th cy paved the way to the rise of Romanticism.

It was not until the last years of the 18th century and the first two decades of the 19th century that the movement in England reached its highest point with the poetry of Lake Poets (Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge), and young talents like Keats, Byron, and Shelley. Historical fiction during this period also developed well and carried the romantic character like the great historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. The gothic novel and the novel of manners also

flourished with exceptional writers like Jane Austen and Anne Radcliff. The Romantic period was the age of great poetry and great prose.

The literature of the Romantics expressed a negative stance toward the social, economic, and political conditions that resulted because of ind. Rev, the rise of bourgeoisie, and the growing interest in capitalism. The main figures associated with Romanticism are Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, Byron, Scott, Austen, and Keats.

Aspects of Romanticism

Romantic literature is characterized by several features. The inner world of the individual, the visionary, and the fantastic are stressed. There is also a growing interest in pantheism (the belief that God is part of the created world rather than separate from it). Other aspects include:

- An increasing interest in Nature: nature was seen by Romantics as filled with the spirit of God and untarnished by man. In Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey", nature becomes the anchor of the poet's purest thoughts; the nurse, the guide, and the guardian of his heart and soul (see the poem). The romantic philosophers believed in the metaphysical or sacred, spiritual nature of reality. According to them, a higher reality existed behind the appearance of things in the physical world.
- An increasing interest in the primitive and uncivilized
- An emphasis on natural religion
- An emphasis on spontaneity, the power of imagination, and natural genius
- An emphasis on the individual self and individual's ordinary experience: Romanticism emphasized the importance of the subjective experience. Only emotions and feeling could lead us to higher truths.
- The concept of the sublime
- Feeling and emotion are seen as superior to logic and analysis

Themes in Romantic Literature

- **Dreams and Visions**; the most notable example of the emphasis on dreams and visions in romantic literature is Coleridge's poem "Kubla Khan" (1816), which he claimed to have written during a dream while deeply asleep. In fact, Coleridge was not the only artist who asserted to write his poem during hallucination; De Quincey wrote his *Confessions of an Opium Eater* where he uncovered his addiction to opium.

- **Pantheism**: it is the belief that there is no difference between God and His creation. God and the world are one; in fact, the world was the manifestation of God. Romantics wrote about the divine presence of the simple things around them. This idea changed people's way to perceive nature as a place of mysticism and rejuvenation.
- **The Self**: Romantics were attracted by the idea of individual consciousness, and unlike their predecessors who wrote about the lives of kings and knights, they focused on the lives of ordinary people; the real actors of change and revolt.
- **Emotion and Feeling**: Romantics valued passion, intuition, and feeling over logic and reason.

Style

- Denial of strict Poetic Forms: Romantics refused old poetic traditions like the heroic couplet used by Alexander Pope and his followers. They asserted the value of ordinary language used by ordinary people. Form, said the Romantics, should be shaped by content.
- Poetry Vs Prose: poetry during this epoch was emphasized, and most writers valued this form and claimed that fiction (popular fiction) could promote mental idleness and decrease the tastes of readers unlike poetry which could elevate the mind.

Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey: The Lake School of Poetry

Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey were known as the Lake Poets because they lived and knew each other in the last few years of the eighteenth century in the district of the great lakes in Northwestern England. Wordsworth and Coleridge published a collection of poems together in 1798 that later became a touchstone and a landmark in romantic poetry. The three aforementioned poets had fundamental fondness in their youth but soon after became conformists. They were relentlessly attacked by young romantic poets like Byron and P.B. Shelley. The disagreement between the two generations was because of ideological and aesthetic issues. Besides, the young poets came from aristocratic families unlike poets of the first generation who came from the petty bourgeoisie.

The best known poet of the first generation and the Lake School of Poetry is Wordsworth (1770_1850). His literary output and long poetic/literary career made him one of the most important artists who composed in English. His brilliant and sublime lyrical ballad "Lines" and

his autobiographical verse “The Prelude” are unambiguously examples of the English romantic spirit that expressed wrath against the Industrial Revolution and political cruelty in Europe. His indebtedness to Milton is palpable in most of his poems which refer openly or indirectly to this great English poet. Wordsworth wrote in blank verse to pay tribute to Milton, a figure of great poetry and artistic liberty and wit.

Wordsworth wrote about the sufferings of the poor and the blacks. His two poems “Driven from the Soil of France, a Female Came” and “ “Thomas Clarkson” are good examples about the poet’s attitude against slavery. His poems romanticize rural life in England with a special homage to ordinary people (hunters, beggars, mothers, shepherds, poor children and so on).

Also central to his poetry is the theme of nature. Wordsworth’s verse celebrates nature, a source of inspiration and consolation. Images from nature are very common; they translate the writer’s fascination with nature and reveal his devotion to Nature as a muse and a reflection of the divine. Skylarks, butterflies, daisies, and even fruit-trees are commonly referred to in his poems. The speaker is always impressed by the sight of very simple things: an evening glow, a mountain, or even a rainbow. His short poem “My Heart Leaps Up” (also known as “The Rainbow”) is a good example of how nature can be a source of beauty and delight:

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now when I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The Child is the father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

Wordsworth was a true worshiper of Nature and a pantheist who believed in the unity of God and Nature.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

Coleridge (1772_1834) was born in Devon. He left Cambridge University and enlisted as a soldier. After his return, he planned with his friends to go to America and settle there to realize his dream of founding a pantisocracy. This project did not materialize and they had to stay in their country and continue their career as writers and poets. IN 1976he met Wordsworth; the two poets two years after decided to work together. The two young poets traveled to Germany. During his stay, Wordsworth learned German and started to translate German literary and philosophical works.

Coleridge, however, started to take drugs (opium in liquid form) which destroyed his health (and pocket) and was not able to renounce it. He traveled to different places like Malta and Italy and gave lectures on poetry and philosophy. He was not simply a poet; in fact, he wrote essays and published books on criticism, religion, and philosophy.

It should be noted Coleridge's early poems and plays (yes, he wrote plays!) dealt mainly with political and social issues like the French Revolution ("The Destruction of the Bastille" 1789 and "Parliamentary Oscillators" 1794) and famine in Ireland ("Fire, Famine, and Slaughter" 1797 and his play Zapolaya 1817).

Coleridge's poetic production was little but not insignificant. His most important poems are "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", "Christabel", and "Kubla Khan". "The Rime" is probably Coleridge's most important literary accomplishment. Written in ballad meter, this poem narrates the thrilling story of a mariner (or a sailor) and his supernatural adventures. "Cristabel", another demonic poem, is about a serpent disguised as a fine-looking woman (Geraldine) who oppresses a blameless lady (Christabel). Fear and horror are key elements in this poem since it is set in a medieval castle. The influence of gothic tradition is so obvious and palpable. Coleridge's talent to narrate and create an awe-inspiring and gothic poem with ghostlike, uncanny characters is what makes this text, long but unfinished, an entrance to the gothic mode that became later popular in the 19th century. "Kubla Khan", the third of his demonic poems, is, albeit its shortness, very significant. The poem is an adaptation of an Eastern love story between Xanadu and an Abyssinian maid. What is unusual in this poem is its structure which is disconnected; in fact, the poet wrote it after taking opium (Thank you for the cliché of the poet as a junkie and drug abuser). According to Coleridge, this hallucinatory and dream-like poem was the product of

a daydream (and opium!). Nevertheless, the elements of romantic poetry are all present in the last poem: vagueness, primitiveness (the charm of the Orient), and imagination.

George Gordon Byron:

Byron (1788-1824) inherited the title of a baron at the age of ten after the death of his father's uncle. He was educated at the fashionable school of Harrow and then went to Cambridge, where he studied literature and history. His first collection of poems did not receive credit because his poems were artificial (artless and not creative). Byron was relentlessly attacked by critics and readers; as a result, Byron answered by a satire titled "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" in 1809 in which he attacked his commentators. Clearly, his access to the world of logos (words) was not trouble-free.

Between 1809 and 1811, he began a tour (a grand tour in fact), visiting many European countries. After his homecoming, he took his seat in the House of Lords. In 1812 (February 27), he made his legendary speech accompanied with his poem "Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill" where he criticized the English government. On April 21, he made another moving speech on the Irish Question where he demonstrated his compassion for the Irish people under the English rule.

Byron's popularity as a poet grew when he published "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" and "Lines to a Lady Weeping" in 1812. However, his marriage was a total failure; his wife left him after only one year of marriage, probably because of his numerous extra-marital or disreputable "relationships"; things that were seen as morally wrong in 19th century England. Because it was no longer possible to stay in his country, Byron decided to immigrate and never return. He moved to Switzerland in 1816, where he met P. B. Shelley and his mistress (Mary), and later went to Italy to settle later in Greece in 1823. Before his 'trip' to Switzerland, he wrote several poems or verse-tales (stories in verse) that became later known as "The Oriental Tales". In Switzerland he wrote "The Prisoner of Chillon" ; a long poem not very different from the previous one. While in Italy, he produced other poems and joined a clandestine organization, the Carbonari, and assisted the patriots in revolt against Austrian rule. His house was used as a secret weapon store and a meeting place of the Italian patriots. The uprising failed, and Byron fled to Greece to help the Greeks in their revolt against Turkish domination. He died in Missolonghi, a Greek city, because of fever. He was only 36!

As mentioned above, Byron started writing poetry when he was young. He wrote his first volume "Hours of Idleness' ' when he was only 19, but he was soon ridiculed by readers and

reviewers for his lack of talent and artistic wit. His most important poems were written during his stay in Italy and Greece. “Don Juan”, “The Lament of Tasso”, and “Ode on Venice”, to name only a few, are examples of his Italian poems. “Don Juan” (1818-1823) is his most significant work. The poem was left incomplete because of Byron’s premature death. In fact, this long poem is a novel written in verse and has little to do with the original story of Don Juan, the lover and seducer. The hero in this long narrative poem is Don Juan, a young Spanish aristocrat who falls in love with a married woman named Julia. The young lover is chased away after being caught with Julia by Julia’s husband. His shipwrecks and he is cast upon the shore of a Greek Island. A young woman called Haidee (she is the daughter of a pirate) saves him; a new love story begins. When the father returns, and discontented with the presence of Don Juan, he chains him and ships him away on a pirate ship.

Don Juan escapes and joins the Russians against the Turks. Impressed by Don Juan’s cleverness, the Empress sends him to England on a political task. In England, Don Juan begins new affairs in aristocratic families. The story ends here; the parallels between the hero and the poet are obvious since both were forced to live in constant exile and committed to politics. This long narrative in verse informs us about many societies in the 19th century; the dictatorship of Catholic Spain, the roughness of pirates’ life in the Greek Island, the cruelty of the Ottomans, and the intelligence work of the Russians. More importantly, though the poem was left incomplete, through this character, we learn about the aristocratic way of life and its power on English society.

Byron’s influence on literature is immense. Byron developed English poetry with his pioneering style and ideas. French writers, more particularly, were deeply influenced by his art, and among them we can cite Lamartine, Hugo, and De Vigny. In Algeria and after the introduction of English literature in colleges in the seventies and eighties, Byron’s poetry was introduced; it became very admired by young readers and lovers of romantic poetry most likely because of the poet’s interest in oriental culture and oral literature and the parallels between his poems and Chateaubriand’s which evoke a mythical and exotic past. His poetry was studied, thus becoming a hallmark and a reference for young talents who aspired for change and avant-garde style of writing poetry.

Shelley (Percy Bysshe):

Shelley (1792- 1822), like Byron, was born of an aristocratic family and inherited the title of baron and a big estate. At school he was already a radical and dissenter; he opposed the

school's harsh system of treating pupils. Later in the University (Oxford), his ideas grew more and more radical; he objected to all types of oppression and he criticized society. In 1811 he wrote his memorable booklet "On the Necessity of Atheism" that was the main cause of his exclusion from Oxford University and quarrel with his father. He ran off with a young girl named Harriet Westbrook and became involved with activists like Daniel O'Connell who were known for their struggle for Irish independence. He wrote other pamphlets and handed them out to people to denounce the crimes committed by England in Ireland.

"Queen Mab" was his first significant poem published in 1813. A year later, he was asked to return to Christianity and reconcile with his conventional father. Byron refused to reunite with his father and separated with Harriet. He fell in love with Mary Godwin, the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. The unmarried couple eloped to France, and Harriet killed herself leaving two young children. The court, however, refused to give custody to the father. This incident inspired him to write his pungent poem "To the Lord Chancellor".

Between 1818 and 1822 and during his stay in Italy, Shelley wrote many remarkable poems and poetic dramas like "Prometheus Unbound" , "Hellas", "The Mask of Anarchy", and "Rosalind and Helen". Clearly, the influence of Greek mythology is plain; he delicately reworked some myths to deal with political themes like autocracy and subjugation. "The Mask of Anarchy", for instance, is one of Shelley's great political lyrics, written on the occasion of the massacre of Manchester.

"Ode to the West Wind" (1819) is one of Shelley's poems where elements of romanticism are stoutly present. Nature and love are idealized; the wind is described as destroyer and preserver: wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, flowers, trees, mountains, and clouds are spiritualized in his poems; nature is revered and idealized. His poems about nature reveal his faith in pantheism but also his cynicism especially in his later poems ("A Dirge", "A Lament", and "Remembrance") which are dark and exceedingly sad. Shelley was also a theorist of poetry. His "Defense of Poetry" is a luminous and comprehensive study of the role of the poet as the wisest and most well-known of men, and poetry as something heavenly; a testimony of the best and happiest moments of best minds. Shelley was a radical poet even when he was not in his homeland. Fiercely, he supported social reform and revolution against despotism. He also called his people to rise up to put an end to oppression.

John Keats: Keats (1795-1821) was born in London. He was the son of a stable-keeper. At the age of fifteen, he lost his parents and was taken care of by his grandparents. He gave up his

studies to devote himself to poetry. His first attempts were intensely attacked by critics who later classified him as part of the Cockney School of Poetry because of his background and his low diction. Keats's poems upset the aristocratic and bourgeois readers. He died in 1821 in Rome, Italy, and his unexpected and untimely death was mourned by his contemporaries, Byron and Shelley, who wrote elegies that, later, became popular poems. Unlike Shelley and Byron, Keats was very reserved and did not attack the system. However, he wrote for the wellbeing of his people and became successful among the Romantics despite his young age. Keats is best remembered for his odes, mainly "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode to Autumn", and "Ode on Melancholy". The poem is not basically about the beautiful songs of this beautiful singing bird as many readers might expect. The poet's personal despair, his bitterness, and his dissatisfaction with the changing society are all referred to in this beautiful but profound poem.

Keats also wrote unforgettable and notable poems like "Robin Hood", "La Belle Dame Sans Mercie", and "Ode: Bards of Passion and of Mirth". While "Robin Hood" and "La Belle Dame" deal with longing to a pre-industrial West, "Bards" discusses the function of poets and their art. During his lifetime, Keats was not a great poet. It was after death that he won recognition and respect, and his poetic reputation grew more and more. Many readers see him as an idealist and a campaigner of the cult of beauty and art for art's sake; an artist who had very little interest in political reform and who preferred to isolate himself and devote his poetry to admire and romanticize nature. Actually, this young gifted poet showed compassion to his people, the masses! Keats, utterly, was not a dreamer.

Workshops: Studying Poems by Romantics and Writing on Romantic Poetry

The Ballad in the Romantic Age

Analysis of "The Little Black Boy" By William Blake (1789)

The Little Black Boy

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

1 My mother bore me in the southern wild,

2 And I am black, but O! my soul is white;

3 White as an angel is the English child:

4 But I am black as if bereav'd of light.

5 My mother taught me underneath a tree

6 And sitting down before the heat of day,

7 She took me on her lap and kissed me,

8 And pointing to the east began to say.

9 Look on the rising sun: there God does live

10 And gives his light, and gives his heat away.

11 And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive

12 Comfort in morning joy in the noonday.

13 And we are put on earth a little space,

14 That we may learn to bear the beams of love,

15 And these black bodies and this sun-burnt face

16 Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

17 For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear

18 The cloud will vanish we shall hear his voice.

19 Saying: come out from the grove my love & care,

20 And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.

21 Thus did my mother say and kissed me,

22 And thus I say to little English boy.

23 When I from black and he from white cloud free,

24And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

25 Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear,

26 To lean in joy upon our fathers knee.

27And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,

28 And be like him and he will then love me.

Prelude: The Ballad Defined

Ballad Like *ballade* (*q.v.*) and ballet, the word derives from the late Latin and Italian *ballare*‘ to dance’. Fundamentally a ballad is a song that tells a story and originally was a musical accompaniment to a dance. The ballad is an ancient poetic form which, in Europe, flourished from the late Middle Ages, treating topics from legend and folklore as well as from local and national history. As a primarily oral form, however, its antecedents may be discerned in the Germanic story-telling tradition of the *Beowulf* poet and beyond to the Homeric cycle. (64)

From *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Fifth Edition. J. A. Cuddon. c 2013 The Estate of J. A. Cuddon. Published 2013 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Blake’s “The Little Black Boy”

"The Little Black Boy" is a poem from William Blake's collection *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794). This book contrasts qualities such as childhood and adulthood to display their importance and purpose in the world. "The Little Black Boy", in particular, gives a romantic picture of a gifted black boy in search of help from his mother and God. The child's incorruptibility lies in his lack of understanding and his inert approval of racial reality.

The black boy, who was born in the "southern wild" complains about his color and identity: "I am black, but O! my soul is white, / White as an angel is the English child: / But I am black as if bereav'd of light" (Stanza 1). This opening stanza destabilizes opinions that mock the lack of awareness of Africans. These lines are heartrending when we learn that Blake wrote them in a period where the practice of slave-trade was very common. The public opinion derided Africans and popularized the idea that they were insensitive.

In Blake's poem, the little black boy at the start admits the ideas of black and white. Alternatively, he too declares that "[his] soul is white". This stresses the child's purity and his blamelessness. While the little black boy takes for granted that his *skin tone* is *dark* and "bereav'd of light", he nonetheless seeks out *illumination* from his mother and God. The mother helps him connect with Nature and God. Notice how the following nouns and phrases include images from nature: "Underneath a tree" (l. 5), "the sun", and "clouds". Shafts of light and elements of nature also refer to God's love. In the last stanza, the little black boy does not contrast himself to the English (white) child but sees his (dark) body as a receiver of Father's love. "The Little Black Boy" is a Romantic forerunner to other portrayals of black children in 19th-century abolitionist verse.

Form

The poem is made of seven quatrains (7 x 4) rhyming ABAB. A quatrain is a stanza of 4 lines. Blake's poem is not a traditional ballad; the choice of this form can be justified by the fact that ballads, unlike epics, present little external information to understand the narrated story. Another point that should be emphasized here is their simple poetic structure and rhyme scheme. As mentioned above, a ballad has a series of quatrains; the lines are in iambic (unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable) tetrameter (8 syllables) or trimeter (6 syllables). Briefness and recurrence are so common in ballads to make them easy for people to remember. Remember that the ballad is an unsophisticated song for the masses. What is different between Blake's ballad and the traditional ballad is the rhythm; the lines are in iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter adds more dramatic power to the content, but also maintains the natural speech since part of the

narrated story is told by an innocent child . The poem is a conversation between a child and his mother; the iambic pentameter is appropriate to uphold directness and engage the reader (call and response).

The Romantic Ode

Case Study: Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819)

Analysis of Literary Texts

Chapter One: Romantic Literature

« Ode to a Nightingale » By John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thine happiness–

That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,

Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been

Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,

Tasting of Flora and the country green,

Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,

Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,

And purple-stained mouth;

That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,

And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs;

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

Already with thee! tender is the night,

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

Clustered around by all her starry Fays;

But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month endows

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time

I have been half in love with easeful Death,

Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,

To take into the air my quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,

To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad

In such an ecstasy!

Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain–

To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down;

The voice I hear this passing night was heard

In ancient days by emperor and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,

She stood in tears amid the alien corn;

The same that oft-times hath

Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam

Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well

As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep

In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music: – Do I wake or sleep?

Analysis of Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale"

John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" exemplifies Romanticism because it assembles the majors themes, techniques, and philosophical issues. It is unquestionably representative of the Romantic poetry written by male artists because we meet an introverted, forlorn male speaker, in search of

going beyond a world of aching limitation to a world of beauty, innocence, eternity, liberty, and hope.

As far as form is concerned, the poem is an ode, a grand classical type conventionally composed to eulogize an unusual, frequently 'metaphysical', body (the nightingale in Keats poem and the West Wind in Shelley's). In Keats' poem, the ode is addressed to a bird whose startling and stunning songs suggest great emotions that surpass the power of language to represent ultimate beauty. The speaker's yearning to relate to this symbol of natural truth arouses his imagination; the poem reveals how poetic imagination can invoke an ultimate world. Many scholars and researchers have shown how poets of the early nineteenth century like Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, to name only a few, have dealt with the same issues in their verses.

Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" ends with "Do I wake or sleep?" (l. 80), a question that illustrates the Romantic desire to look into new experiences that outrun the limits and margins of 'reason'. For Keats the nightingale, a bird that refers to the beautiful Philomela in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, is not only a beautiful creature. This bird represents happiness and uncertainty at once; it sings in "full-throated ease" and it inhabits the trees like the female spirits of oak trees alluded to in the text. It is neither male nor female. Female nightingales do not sing while male nightingales sing loudly at night.

Day and night are also vague in the poem. Keats wrote his poem one morning in May 1819, according to his friend Charles Brown, and the first stanza implies the daytime setting of a "melodious plot / Of beechen green, and shadows numberless". Yet, we later read that the bird sings in a night world so dim, and the speaker "cannot see what flowers are at [his] feet". The speaker, therefore, relies on other senses and modes of cognition to see what is around him at night! There is a tension between the "forest dim "of the invisible bird (l. 20) and the actual "world", where "youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies".

The poem describes the speaker's human "sorrow" and the bird's innate "happiness". He begins with a description of lack of sensation in the opening lines and then imagines himself drinking from Hippocrene, the fountain of inspiration and creativity. The speaker dreadfully tries hard to attain the nightingale on "the viewless wings of Poesy"; nevertheless, "the dull brain perplexes and retards". The speaker is left questioning if death is the only way left to join the nightingale.

Later, in the last two stanzas, the speaker realizes that even imagination, which is compared to "the deceiving elf", cannot lastingly defeat his distress and awareness of death. The

mysterious silence that follows the bird's leaving is crucial. Isn't that consciousness of death an awakening in itself? The closing lines suggest a kind of epiphany: the boundaries between reality and vision are blurred and uncertain.

Form

The analysis of structure reveals that two popular forms are combined: the Petrarchan sonnet and the Shakespearean sonnet. Keats' poem has eight separate stanzas that are written in iambic pentameter; the 8th line is an exception. The rhyme scheme of each stanza is ABABCDECDE; the first four lines rhyme ABAB while the six last lines rhyme CDECDE. In a Shakespearean sonnet, the three quatrains present a problem, and in the last two lines (couplet) an answer is offered. In Keats' poem, however, each quatrain presents a problem, and the explanation is supplied in the sestet (last six lines). Notice how in the first sonnet the speaker presents the problem (the pain in his heart) and how he explains the reasons (the bird's song) in the last six lines.

Analysis of « Ode to the West Wind » By P. B. SHELLEY

إذا حلّ الشتاء، فهل سيكون الربيع بعيداً؟"

Who is Percy Bysshe Shelley?

P. B. Shelley (1792-1822) was born in Horsham, Sussex, of a rich family, and educated at Eton and Oxford. He was a calm, meditative child, with sometimes sudden occurrences of aggressive temper indicative of his unruly spirit. At Eton he was called 'The Atheist', and he was excluded from Oxford for writing a pamphlet about atheism. His father then refused to allow him to return home unless he fixed his ways and became more conformist. Shelley went to London and married (eloped with) an innkeeper's daughter (she was only 16 and she wanted to run away from the boarding school). The marriage was a disappointment. Later, he met Mary, the daughter of William Godwin, a wild romantic philosopher, and Mary Wollstonecraft, an essayist who wrote about the rights of women. Shelley eloped with Mary and ran away to Switzerland. The first wife, Harriet Westbrook, drowned herself in the Serpentine.

Shelley and Byron were good friends; they traveled and lived together (see the biography of Byron). Shelley loved boating, and at Genoa (Italy), he had a small schooner made for him, which he called *Ariel* after one of Shakespeare's characters. One day, Shelley and his friend left Leghorn in Ariel, but a fierce storm arose and both died. Shelley's body was found on the seashores. He died very young; he was only 30.

Shelley's most important work is his play in verse *PrometheusUnbound* (1819), an otherworldly and dreamy story of man's release from God and his flight towards ultimate excellence. Shelley wrote another play, *TheCenci*, but it was less popular than the first. *QueenMab* (1813) and *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) and other collections of poems were written under the influence of Byron. "The Skylark", "Ode to the West Wind", and "The Cloud" are Shelley's best remembered poems.

Text

I

1 O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,

2 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead

3 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

4 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,

5Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O Thou,

6 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

7 The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,

8 Each like a corpse within its grave, until

9 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

10 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill

11 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)

12 With living hues and odours plain and hill:

13 Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;

14 Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!

II

15 Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,

16 Loose clouds like Earth's decaying leaves are shed,

17 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

18 Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread

19 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,

20 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

21Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge

22 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,

23 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou Dirge

24 Of the dying year, to which this closing night

25 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,

26 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

27 Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere

28 Black rain and fire and hail will burst: O hear!

III

29 Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams

30 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,

31 Lulled by the coil of his chrystalline streams,

32 Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,

33 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers

34 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

35 All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers

36 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou

37 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

38 Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below

39The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear

40The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

41Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,

42 And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

IV

43 If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;

44 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;

45 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

46 The impulse of thy strength, only less free

47 Than thou, O Uncontrollable! If even

48 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

49 The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,

50As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed

51Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

52As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.

53Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

54I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

55 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed

56 One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

57 Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:

58 What if my leaves are falling like its own!

59 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

60 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,

61 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,

62 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

63 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,

64 Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth!

65 And, by the incantation of this verse,

66 Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth

67 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

68 Be through my lips to unawakened Earth

69 The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

70 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Vocabulary:

Hectic= feverish, red like the cheeks of a feverish person / **Tochariot** = to drive, as if in a chariot / **Wingedseeds**: the seeds of some plants which have wings to enable them to fly through the air / **Thine azure …** = the spring wind that blows in an azure sky / **Hues**= colors / **Loose** = detached / **Aery surge** : the wind is compared to the sea which moves up and down / **Dirge** = funeral song or lament / **Lulled**= soothed to sleep / **Pumice** = lava. Baeie was a town (Naples) that was destroyed by an eruption / **Quivering**= moving unsteadily / **Cleave** = divide /**Chasms**= gulfs, abysses /**Oozy**= moist/ **Sapless**= without sap / **To pant** = to breathe heavily and with difficulty / **To outstrip thy sky speed** = to go more quickly than thou traveling rapidly across the sky

Introduction

The selected text is one of Shelley's most noteworthy poems. Shelley (Percy Bysshe) was one of the most dominant voices of the second generation of romantic poets. Along with Keats and Byron, they produced the most significant pieces of poetry in the English tradition. The poem

under study reveals the poet's venture to rework one of the oldest poetic forms (the ode) and his aspiration to draw upon different sources to bring into being one of the best odes of the period. Readers will notice the many parallels between this poem and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". Both poems deal with the power of the landscape on the mind. Moreover, "Ode to West Wind" and "Tintern Abbey" explain very well the concept of pantheism. Shelley, like his predecessor Wordsworth, advocated the romantic idea that nature is imbued with transcendent (divine) features. Another point that should be underlined is that Shelley was an atheist. Nature in his poetry is compared to religion.

Few Notes on Context

Shelley started composing this poem in October 1819. In 1820, the poem was published in *PrometheusUnbound*. The poet himself noted that he composed this poem not far from Cascine Wood, Florence, on a day when "the tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapors which pour down the autumnal rains". In this poem, the wind and nature, in general, are seen as related to the speaker's/ poet's SELF. The wind can supply spiritual and poetic vigor as many critics have noted.

Understanding the Poem

"Ode to the West Wind", as announced in the title, depicts the power of the wind. The first canto (1-14) begins with the speaker's direct address to the wind. The west wind is described as "wild"; it is the breath of autumn's being (line1) that spreads out the dead leaves, which, like ghosts, escape the magician's spells (lines 2-3). The autumn leaves are wild red, yellow, black, and peculiarly pale. In line five, the speaker again summons the west wind and describes it as a mover or transporter of the flying seeds to the soil which becomes their burial place, until the blue wind of spring wakes them up. The wind, like God, has the power to breathe life into dead things (that's what we understand !). The blue wind's clarion[i] makes the grains flower, with living colors and smells that will fill all places. The first canto ends with the speaker echoing the idea of the wind as an undomesticated spirit. Hear me, the speaker says to the wind, you who are moving everywhere and have the power to protect and destroy.

The speaker in the second canto/song/ sonnet explains how the baggy or heavy clouds move, and the decomposing (dead) leaves fall from their trees. The knotted limbs of "Heaven and Ocean" (17) with the "angels of rain and lightening" (18) will breed something

perilous and violent. The speaker speaks of a furious Maenad [ii], whose untamed locks of hair are spread in the air. A comparison is made between the locks of the coming rainstorm and the locks of those mad women."Thou dirge", the speakers says to the wind, the closing night of the year will be the showground of a vast resting place, arched with the wind's gathered force. Rain and lightning and thunder clouds will explode. Like the previous canto, this one ends with the words "O hear", but the speaker does not explain why he wants the wind to listen to him.

The third canto makes reference to the Mediterranean Sea; who (personified) has been quiet and tranquil during summer. Summer is now over, and the west wind is set to wake the sea. Old palaces and towers of the Baiae's bay tremble, and the level Atlantic Ocean cuts itself into abysses as a sign of obedience to the west wind. The aquatic plants suddenly become terrified when they hear the voice of the wind; they shiver and ruin themselves of terror. With the words "O Hear", this canto ends.

Canto four beautifully expresses the speaker's wishes to be carried, like a quiet leaf or even a fast cloud, by the wind. He wishes he could fly with the wind to breathe heavily and sense its power. The wind is unruly and wild, and the speaker envies him. In his boyhood, the speaker used to see himself and the wind as 'buddies'. He even imagined himself competing with the mighty wind. Now the speaker is no longer full of life; he knows well that he cannot be a leaf or a wave that is why he supplicates the wind to carry him. He is tired and worn out.

"Make me a lyre", says the speaker to the west wind. This picture of the lyre[iii] and the sound it makes when the wind blows is very common in romantic literature (in Thoreau's *Walden* and Wordworth's poems we find the same image). The speaker wants to be a lyre that could be played by the wind in the forest. The commotion of the wind's charming but cheerless sounds will take from the speaker and the dying trees that profound "autumnal tone". Be my spirit, reckless one! Adds our speaker. The speaker dreadfully wants the wind to substitute his spirit. He wants the wind to take his worthless thoughts and spread them like the wasted leaves to accelerate a new birth. And with the spell of this verse, he continues, the wind will spread out the words among mankind. Like a trumpet, the wind will puff an insight. The poem ends with the most memorable lines that every lover of romantic poetry cites: "O Wind,/ If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" (69-70). Will death and decay be followed by life and renewal?

Speaker:

The poet and the speaker are the same, and this becomes clear when we read the last canto. The speaker asks the wind to disperse the words of his verse among mankind.

Themes

Nature and its Power

Shelley's poem deals with many themes. Like in the other texts explored in the previous lectures, this poem discusses the power of Nature. The wind here acts as a destroyer and preserver; it is able to destroy and regenerate. Readers will notice that the more we move from one canto to another, the more hostile the wind becomes. Yet, there is something awe-inspiring and uplifting in the way the wind is described to us. The wind forces us to see it as something potent; human limitation, then, is a verity. Nature is more powerful than man (like in Wordsworth's poems).

Death and Decay

The imagery of death pervades the text. We see decaying trees, withering plants, fear-provoking vaults and sepulchers, and corpses throughout the poem. The West Wind comes each autumn to remind us that death is essential and seeds have to die to blossom later. The poem ends with ambiguity when the speaker speculates about winter and spring.

The Poet-Hero

In these lines, the poet is celebrated. Remember? This poem is an ode which commemorates the victor who is neither an athlete nor a Greek god.

The Power of Imagination and Poetry

Shelley was not the first to associate the power of poetry with the power of nature. Like Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey", "Ode to the West Wind" celebrates creativity and the poetic mind. Shelley wrote a long essay, evocative of Wordsworth's preface of *LyricalBallads*. Shelley's *The Defense of Poetry* per se is an ode to poetry. Poetry, according to Shelley, has the task and responsibility to reconstruct the world; imagination alone has the power to do that. Poets, Shelley continues, are "the unacknowledged legislators of the world". In the selected poem we are studying, the speaker-poet is a kind of prophet; he hopes that his words one day will reach people. The last canto illustrates these two themes.

Language

Literary devices are so common in Shelley's poem. Some of the stylistic devices will be explained and interpreted in this section. The first noticeable rhetorical device in the selected text is obviously repetition. The words 'wild', 'wind', 'leaves', 'decay', 'decaying', 'clouds', 'blue', 'spring', 'winter', 'leaf', and 'spirit' are repeated many times. We also find allusions to creatures and places. Of importance is the use of oxymoron, where the two opposing words "Preserver and Destroyer" are used together in the same line to demonstrate the duality of the wind. Personification is very common in this poem. The West Wind is personified; it is "wild", powerful, and mighty. The speaker describes him as the Preserver and Destroyer; this graphological deviation is noteworthy because the two words generally should not be capitalized. The poet consciously capitalizes the words preserver and destroyer to stress the god-like qualities of the wind. The spring wind is also personified; it becomes the cute little sister of the grand West Wind. Shelley feminizes the spring wind while giving the most masculine attributes to the autumn wind (interesting!). The sound of her clarion is strident.

Other devices include apostrophe and anastrophe. Apostrophe is obvious in this poem. Remember that an apostrophe is a figure of speech represented by exclamation or interjection 'O'. The speaker in Shelley's poem addresses the wind, which is an imaginary character, saying "O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being," (line 1) as if the wind were present and capable to be aware of his feelings. Apostrophe is employed here to stress the importance of the wind and add drama to his poem. Anastrophe, the inversion of words in a sentence, is another figure of speech employed by Shelley, particularly in line three where we see the words in bold letters inverted:

Thou, from whose unseen presence the **leavesdead**

There are many remarkable examples of comparison in this poem. In the first sonnet, for instance, there is a metaphor; the wind is compared to "the Autumn's breath" (line 1). The decaying leaves are compared to ghosts, and the seeds are compared to cadavers lying in their tombs (simile). In the second canto, the thunderclouds are compared to Maenads.

Shelley in his poem uses many aural/sound devices like the repetition of consonants and vowels. Alliteration is a common device in this poem. Notice how the words ``wild", "**w**est", and" **w**ind" in the opening line alliterate. Other examples that can be included can be found in lines 33, 36, and 60. In many lines, the sound /s/ is repeated; this device is called sibilance[iv]. In line 60, for instance, the sound /S/ is used more than twice in rapid succession. Sibilance is

used in this poem to create musicality and imitate some sounds of autumn like the scraping of dead leaves or the sounds of the wind. Plosives are also common and are used to show the brutality of the wind mainly in the second sonnet. Cacophony is also present in the poem; harsh letters and syllables which include p, b, k add some roughness to the atmosphere. There is also the repetition of consonants, what we call consonance, in lines 53 and 54 to cite only a few.

Form, Rhythm, Rhyme, and Meter

An ode, by definition, is a lyric poem made of many stanzas. The ode is written in a formal tone and language and describes superior emotions and ideas. There are two kinds: the public and the private or personal. While the first kind commemorates official occasions, the second celebrates personal ones. Private odes are usually contemplative and philosophical. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind " is a private ode. There are three famous forms named after their originators: the Pindaric[v] (Greek), the Horacian[vi] (Latin), and the Spenserian (English). The Pindaric odes were composed to be sung and performed in a (Dionysiac) theater. Invocations to gods and divine myths are usually integrated. Pindaric odes are made of three parts (stanzas): a strophe, an antistrophe, and an epode. The strophe is the opening piece the Greek chorus chanted while moving from one side of the stage to another and this was followed by an antistrophe or a reverse movement and an epode sung while standing still. The Horacian odes, in contrast, are very personal, general, and contemplative. They are intended for a private reader unlike the Pindaric odes which are written to be sung and admired by a theatrical spectator. The English odes, structurally speaking, are irregular. Few poets in the 18th century wrote odes. John Dryden's "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" is a typical example of a Spenserian ode made of a turn, a counter-turn, and a stand.

During the Augustan Age, poets of the Graveyard School wrote odes and attempted to improve metrical arrangements. The Romantics also refreshed the ode; Keats and Shelley did extremely well and wrote the best odes of the Romantic Age. Wordsworth and Coleridge also wrote some odes; Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" (1802-1804) and Coleridge's "France" (1709) are good examples. It should be noted that few writers after the Romantics attempted to write odes.

Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind " is not a traditional ode because many elements of the aforementioned types are incorporated. The poem is made of five cantos or more precisely quatorzains (terza rima sonnets). The sonnets themselves are neither Italian nor English; they

share two things with conventional sonnets: the number of lines (14 lines) and the meter (iambic pentameter). Each canto or sonnet is made of four stanzas of three lines (4 X 3= 12 lines) and ends with a couplet (a couplet= 2 lines). Why combine two types in one piece? One possible answer is that the poet himself wanted to play with voice; moving from a public to a subjective one. The rhyme pattern in each quatorzain (14 lines) is aba, bcb, cdc, ded, ee. Notice how Shelley used terzinas (stanzas of three lines) in his poem. This way of composing poetry was practically widespread in Romance languages, but infrequent in English. Few poets wrote in terza rima; Dante in his *La Commedia divina* wrote in this way. Shelley lived in Italy and was influenced by Italian poetry. Lines in this poem are composed in iambic pentameter. An iamb is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Observe the following lines:

57 Make **me** thy **lyre**, e**ven** as **the** fo**rest** is:

58 What **if** my **leaves** are **fal**ling **like** its **own**!

59 The **tu**mult **of** thy **mi**ghty **har**mo**nies**

Conclusion

Throughout this stylistic analysis of the poem, we can say that Shelley, as a poet of the second generation, has created a masterpiece by revising the mode and showing how form can be shaped by content. One can simply say:

O, Wild P. B. Shelley, thou breath of romantic being,

O, amazing Shelley

Analysis of Blake's "The Ecchoing Green" (1789)

The sun does arise,

And make happy the skies.

The merry bells ring

To welcome the spring.

The skylark and thrush,

The birds of the bush,

Sing louder around,

To the bells' cheerful sound,

While our sports shall be seen

On the echoing green.

Old John with white hair

Does laugh away care,

Sitting under the oak,

Among the old folk.

They laugh at our play,

And soon they all say:

'Such, such were the joys

When we all, girls and boys,

In our youth-time were seen

On the echoing green.'

Till the little ones weary

No more can be merry;

The sun does descend,

Who is William Blake?

William Blake (1757-1827) is one of the most prominent artists[x] and writers of all time although his works did not achieve critical appreciation when he was alive. The most identifiable features of his works (mainly poetry) are:

1. a demonstration of radical social and religious attitudes

2. An eagerness for commentary on the changing cultural scene resulting from industrialization and economic progress

3. The use of myth and allegory

4. The use of gothic elements

5. An emphasis on the value of imagination .

William Blake was born into a middle-class family in London. His father, James Blake, was a hosier. Blake left school at a young age and continued receiving education from his mother. He took drawing classes in addition to reading poetry. Religion and spirituality[x] were essential and powerful factors in his life. Themes and motifs in his writings and drawings were drawn from the Bible, classical literature, Greek mythology, and the artwork of Renaissance artists like Michelangelo, Raphael, and Albrecht Durer.

In 1782 Blake met and married Catherine Boucher.[x] In 1784 Blake opened a printing shop and began working with Joseph Johnson, who was a *radical* publisher and bookseller.[x] Blake became interested in the American Revolution and French Revolution during this time. He started to show support for revolutionaries and reformers. Between 1789 and 1820, he produced the Prophetic Books which included *Tiriel*, *The Book of Thel*, *America: AProphecy*, *Europe: A Prophecy*, *The Book of Ahania*, *The Book of Los*, *Song of Los*, *Vala*, *Milton: A Poem*, and *Jerusalem: The Emancipation of the Giant Albion*.

In addition to *Prophetic Books*, he printed in 1789 his *Songs of Innocence*, one of his most illustrious works from which “Ecchoing Green” is taken. The collection of poems *Songs of Innocence* is not only concerned with purity and virtue as the title seems to suggest. In fact, this collection includes poems originating from a burlesque novel that he wrote earlier. In 1794,

he printed *Songs of Experience*. This volume with the first one underlined the contrast between good and evil and the differences between the 'new' material world and the 'old' natural world. While the first collection emphasizes the magnificent and transcendent splendor of the natural world, the second draws attention to the desolation of the material world that resulted from industrialization and cultural change. In 1791, Blake began composing *The French Revolution* but failed to complete it. He wrote *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* which was printed between 1790 and 1793.

At the time of his death (1827), Blake was not well-known, maybe because of his radical and unconventional views. Blake was against slavery and sexual discrimination; he even criticized forced marriage and chastity. Many of his manuscripts were considered too 'radical' and were destroyed after his death. William Blake influenced many generations of writers, artists, and thinkers. Blake's ideas challenged the beliefs of reason and focused on the potential of the individual and the power and importance of human imagination and feeling. He also redefined the idea of spirituality.

Weary (21): tired/ Skylark (line5): a bird/Thrush: a bird/Sports (line 9): game

Commentary

The title of this poem (published in 1789) refers to a peaceful pastoral setting where children play merrily. They are described as naive children untrammeled by the social rules and constraints of adult worldliness and experience. The picture of rustic pleasure (1st stanza) is destabilized by a menacing feeling (2nd and 3rd stanzas). The repeated structure of this poem underlines the feeling of discomfort that characterizes the two last stanzas, moving from day "the sun arises" (line 1) to night "the sun descends" (line 30). The movement between day and night may suggest the life cycle; the movement from life to death. It may also suggest the movement from juvenile innocence to adult experience.

The poem is made of 3 stanzas, and each stanza is made of 10 lines. Each stanza is composed of 5 rhyming couplets. The first stanza represents morning: "The sun does arise" (line 1). Groups of words indicating happiness are stressed: happy (2), merry (3), and cheerful

(8). Children are compared to singing birds because of their 'joie de vivre' and play (1st stanza). The carefree atmosphere, the sprightly mood and the cheerful tone (in the first and 2nd stanzas) can be felt from the poet's use of rhyming couplets and short lines (each line contains 4 to 6 words). The rhyming couplets also seem to personify this feeling of resonance/echo like in lines 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, and so on and so forth. Each sound is repeated twice all along the text like an echo. Other joyful noises are heard in the poem like the sounds of church bells (3) and birds of the bush (6).

The quick rhythm of the first stanza becomes slow in the second. This dawdling pace is accompanied by a fairly ominous, serious and scornful tone. Old John with his white hair sitting under a tree with other old men are *laughing at* the children's play (2nd stanza). They remember the old days (17 to 20). There is a feeling of melancholy mixed with nostalgia and probably grief expressed through the repetition of the word "such" in line 17. The old men remember their "youth time" when they used to play on the echoing green.

In the last stanza (21 to 30), the tone becomes more solemn. The feeling of melancholy is plain: no more can be merry, says the speaker in line 22, suggesting that cheerfulness and inexperience cannot last forever. Death like night (darkness of night) is evident. The first and second stanzas end with the same line: "on the echoing green" (lines 10 and 20) while the third ends with "on the darkening green". The last line (30) is not unforeseen; readers can easily anticipate the ending of this poem because of the somber tone adopted in the second and third stanzas. Now the "echoing" green becomes "darkening"; it is silent and fear-provoking. The word darkening probably refers to the end of an era, the end of the idyllic, rustic world full of joy and innocence, which is now sullied (forever!) because of industrialization.

Romantic Ideals and Ideas in Blake's "The Echoing Green":

Romantic poets valued ruins and ancient sites. They also looked for sublimity, a state of being in which a person was at once overwhelmed, terrified, and filled with a sense of magnificence, splendor, and wonder. In Blake's poem, the sublime is achieved through the celebration of a distant and unattainable idyllic place, the echoing green. Emotion and instinct instead of logic are highly stressed in the text.In terms of style and language, Blake separated with old poetic conventions that characterized the poetry of his predecessors. Unlike Alexander Pope and his contemporaries, Blake used a very simple language which was compatible with the topic. Neo-Classicists, however, used their poetry and shaped their subject-matter to fit them.

Wordworth's « Tintern Abbey » or The Sublime Illustrated

Full Title: Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour

Five years have past; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur.—Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose

Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,

Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves

'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke

Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

With some uncertain notice, as might seem

Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire

The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;

And passing even into my purer mind

With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,

As have no slight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man's life,

His little, nameless, unremembered, acts

Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,

To them I may have owed another gift,

Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—

In darkness and amid the many shapes

Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir

Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,

Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,

O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,

How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,

And somewhat of a sad perplexity,

The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food

For future years. And so I dare to hope,

Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,

Wherever nature led: more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days

And their glad animal movements all gone by)

To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract

Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

Their colours and their forms, were then to me

An appetite; a feeling and a love,

That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, not any interest

Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,

And all its aching joys are now no more,

And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this

Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts

Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,

Abundant recompense. For I have learned

To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes

The still sad music of humanity,

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power

To chasten and subdue.—And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still

A lover of the meadows and the woods

And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,

And what perceive; well pleased to recognise

In nature and the language of the sense

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul

Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,

If I were not thus taught, should I the more

Suffer my genial spirits to decay:

For thou art with me here upon the banks

Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,

My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch

The language of my former heart, and read

My former pleasures in the shooting lights

Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while

May I behold in thee what I was once,

My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray

The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,

Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress

With quietness and beauty, and so feed

With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

The dreary intercourse of daily life,

Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb

Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;

And let the misty mountain-winds be free

To blow against thee: and, in after years,

When these wild ecstasies shall be matured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind

Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,

Thy memory be as a dwelling-place

For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,

Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—

If I should be where I no more can hear

Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget

That on the banks of this delightful stream

We stood together; and that I, so long

A worshipper of Nature, hither came

Unwearied in that service: rather say

With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,

That after many wanderings, many years

Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,

And this green pastoral landscape, were to me

More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

Sublime (adjective)

From the Latin *sublimis* meaning looking up from

Synonyms: lofty, high, elevated

History of the Concept and Definition: The word 'sublime' first appeared as a rhetorical term in the Greek treatise *Peri Hypsous* (*On the Sublime*), supposedly written by Longinus in the first century A.D. The concept of the sublime was used in 17th cy to describe great thoughts, superior feelings, and lofty images and figures in rhetorical diction. English and Scottish writers of the 18th cy like David Hume, Joseph Addison, and John Dennis, to name only a few, became interested in the idea of the sublime as a result of intense poignant closeness caused by the experience of splendid nature. They wrote about their feelings of fearfulness and horror and the impressions of immense vastness and size that the view of the mountains had inspired in them.

In 1757 Edmund Burke published his study *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* in which he made a division between the sublime and the beautiful. According to him, the sublime is associated with hugeness, darkness, and splendor. The beautiful, however, is associated with smallness, weakness, and softness. The sublime calls for wonder, veneration, admiration, and bewilderment. On the other hand, the beautiful calls forth love and contentment. Edmund's full-length study influenced Emmanuel Kant who later published two great works about the concept of the sublime: *Observations* on the *Feelings of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) and *Critique of Judgment* (1790). According to Kant, the experience of the sublime first overpowers the mind and allows reason, upon recuperating its balance, to recognize transcendental ideas of infinity and the absolute.

William Wordsworth: Life and Work

The significance of William Wordsworth (1770-1850) to Romanticism is immense. Together with Coleridge (Samuel Taylor), he produced one of the key works in English romantic poetry

titled*Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Although he produced other collections like *TheExcursion* (1814) and *Poems* (1815), his *Lyrical Ballads* remains a landmark in English literature because of its focus on nature, children, and ordinary life. In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, written for the release of the collection in 1800, Wordsworth rejected the classification of poetry in which the epic was the highest and the short lyric the most inferior of poetic forms. He said that ordinary life, written about in familiar language, is the most appropriate issue for a true poet. Wordsworth declined the idea that poetry should be about a higher nature and principles. The major function of poetry, according to Wordsworth, is to defend what is fundamentally human in spite of the metropolitan and industrialized society.

Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, Cumberland, in the Lake District of northern England, one of the five children of John Wordsworth and Ann. At 13 he was orphaned; his mother died in 1778, and his father in 1783. Under the charge of his uncles, Wordsworth attended St. John's College at Cambridge, earning a B.A. in 1791. Later, he went to France where he met Annette Vallon, who bore him a daughter, Caroline. Wordsworth never married Annette but visited and supported them financially. In 1792, Wordsworth returned alone to England because of lack of support and the rising enmity between the two countries. The following year, he released his first two volumes: *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*.

While living in Somerset, he met Coleridge in 1795, and the two started a friendship that resulted in the co-writing of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which contained the two most significant poems in romantic literature: Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". The first edition also contained other poems like "The Thorn," "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," "The Idiot Boy,", "The Female Vagrant," and "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman." In 1799, Wordsworth moved back to the Lake District (his native land) where he worked with Coleridge and Robert Southey. The three artists are often referred to as the Lake School poets. The relationship between Coleridge and Wordsworth started to get worse because of their divergent poetic visions and Coleridge's opium dependence. However, the two poets reconciled and remained lifelong friends.

In 1802, Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson, his childhood friend. The couple had five children, two of whom died in early childhood. Wordsworth was awarded honorary degrees from Durham and Oxford Universities in 1838 and 1839, and the title of poet laureate in 1843. Wordsworth died on April 23, 1850, and his final work *ThePrelude* was published by his wife that year.

"Tintern Abbey": An Analysis of Form and Content

Scholars and researchers of Wordsworth's poetry know well the significance of "Tintern Abbey" because it summarizes the major themes that are echoed in the poet's other poems. "Tintern Abbey" deals mainly with the themes of nostalgia, the eternalness of nature, and the value and complexity of imaginative life. Written in 1798, at the end of the annus mirabilis of collaboration between Wordsworth and Coleridge, this poem appears at the end of their collection *LyricalBallads*, and marks a new beginning for Wordsworth. Influenced by Coleridge's conversation poems, Wordsworth calls his readers to listen in a friendly and private dialogue between the speaker and nature, and later between the speaker and his dear sister Dorothy.

The Title: The title is significant because it sums up the content of the text and teaches us many things. First, we learn from the title that the text was composed not very far from Tintern Abbey; a Christian monastery located in Wales which was abandoned in 1536. When Wordsworth wrote the poem, Tintern Abbey was not a practicing church; it was closed by Henry 8^{th}. In fact, the poem is not about the abbey itself; it is used to symbolize the idyllic past. The phrase "on revisiting the banks of the Wye" is of great importance to understand the content of the text; the speaker has already visited the place and this is his second visit. The last bit of the poem's title gives us the exact date when the poem was written: July 13, 1798.

Setting: The banks of the Wye River in Southeast Wales north of Cardiff/ July 13, 1798.

Explanation and Analysis:

"Tintern Abbey" is made of five long sections. The first section ("Five years… sits alone") is completely about setting (time and place). Lines 1 and 2 inform us how much time has passed; five long years the speaker announces stressing on the length of this period. In the following couple of lines (3-4), we understand that this is not the speaker's first encounter with the place. The speaker's impressions are skillfully depicted. More description of the scene follows; the waterfalls and the cliffs are portrayed in lines 3 to 5. The cliffs are steep and lofty, and the landscape and the pastoral farms are so green. Notice the repetition of the adverbs "again" and "once again" many times (4-9-15) in the first stanza to reinforce the idea of "revisiting" the location. From 9 to 14, we learned that the speaker was sitting under a tree trying to list all the specific parts of the view. Remember that the speaker was not "in" but "away" the abbey; he could see the monastery (or more precisely the ruins) and what surrounded it. From 14 to 18, the speaker tells us there are signs of human presence; the smoke goes up silently from a dwelling. A

vagrant (a wanderer) or a hermit (a solitary person) lives in a cave from where the smoke was coming.

The second section ("these beauteous forms….life of things") begins with the speaker's contemplation. The poet now knows that these 'beauteous' forms have always been with him, deep-rooted in his mind. This mental picture has been "Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart". It has changed his whole being. These "beauteous forms" were not absent from his mind as is a landscape to a man born blind. In moments of exhaustion, annoyance and angst, these memories of nature made him feel "sweet sensations" in his blood, his heart, and even his wholesome mind. The speaker later speaks of the sublime of nature; his spiritual consciousness of the sublime becomes plain. Wordsworth makes it clear that human beings are in nature unspoiled, innocent, and pure.

The third section ("if this . . . . turned to thee") contains a kind of reservation; the speaker maybe echoes the reader's possible suspicions. He attempts to give reasons for how he is right and what he means. He doubts, for just a moment, whether this thought about the power of nature is useless, but he can't go on. He exclaims: "yet, oh! How often, amid the unpleasant daylight, annoyed and "unprofitable fever of the world have I turned to thee (nature)" for inspiration and peace of mind. He thanks the 'Sylvan Wye' for the eternal power it has dented on his mind. His spirit has very often turned to the river Sylvan Wye for inspiration when he was lost wandering through the woods (metaphor for life). The river here represents holiness and spirituality.

Though the tone becomes solemn and the poet seems to be bewildered in the fourth section ("and now…. moral being") when he refers to a "sad perplexity", nature seems to offer him joy and contentment. Wordsworth is a good storyteller; he relates his personal experiences in the form of a poem. He takes us back to his 'boyish days', which is gone by now, but "[t]hat time is past", and "all its aching joys are now no more, and all its dizzy raptures". The speaker/poet does not grieve for those days nor complain about their loss; he has gained something in return, as he says: "other gifts/ have followed; for such loss… for I have learnt to look on nature, not as in the hour/ of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes/ the still, sad music of humanity". This is a declaration about growing; he is now mature and is able to feel "a joy of elevated thought, a sense sublime, and far more deeply interfused," coming right from "the light of the setting sun,/And the round oceans and the living sky". Wordsworth says he is a lover of the meadows, the woods, the mountains, andall which we see from this green earth and this grand world. Nature, our poet claims, is the caretaker (nurse), the guide and the guard(ian) of his

heart and soul. Wordsworth, like Whitman, is in love with nature, the spring of the lofty sublime thoughts referred to earlier in these lines.

The last section ("nor perchance….end of text) carries on with the same contemplation from where the poet speaks to his sister Dorothy (oops! Our poet was not alone!). He prays for her and informs her about his maturity. She reminds him of when he was young. He says that nature has never betrayed his heart, and that is why they had been living from joy to joy. Nature can astonish the mind with peace and splendor and nourishes it with sublime thoughts, and no wicked tongues can distort their hearts. The poet begins to speak to the moon and to ask 'Nature' to bless his sister. When the present childish thrills will be matured, her mind will become a house of the beautiful forms, and her memory a haven of all sweet sounds and harmonies to surmount sorrow, loneliness, and terror. The ending of the poem takes us back to the first scene (section 1) where we see the sharp and lofty cliffs and green idyllic site, the starting point of all this meditation/poem.

Themes: "Tintern Abbey" deals with many themes like nature, memory, imagination, innocence, nostalgia, and childhood.

Form, Tone and Style:"Tintern Abbey" is a lyrical ballad[x] written in blank verse[x] in a nostalgic and melancholic tone to create a sense of naturalness and emotional genuineness. The poet does not respect the meter; he breaks it many times. Some lines are end-stopped while others are enjambed (egs: lines 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, and 13). Enjambment is so common in Wordsworth's poem. Like run-on sentences (long sentences without punctuation), some lines in "Tintern Abbey" do not end with a pause (period or comma). Wordsworth used enjambment to make his poem sound more natural and rhythmic.

Analysis of an Extract from "Endymion" or "A Thing of Beauty" By John Keats

"My Imagination is a Monastery and I am its Monk" **Letter to Percy Bysshe Shelley (August 16 1820)**

John Keats: Life and Work

Keats, the symbol of the young dreamy poet, was born in 1795, in London, England. His father died accidently in 1804, and his mother died of tuberculosis five year later. His life was different from that of Byron or Shelley; no odd journeys and no double-crossing relationships. He visited Italy and died there. Unlike Shelley and Byron, he had little education, but read lengthily and appreciated Greek mythology and Greek writers. He was a chemist, apprenticed to a surgeon. Fanny Brawne was his first true love. Keats never married Fanny because he suffered from tuberculosis. In 1816-17, he abandoned medical practice and published a volume of poetry entitled *Poems*. *Endymion* (1818), a long poem from which the selected text was extracted, recounts the love story between an immortal and a mortal. In 1820, Keats published another collection titled *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St Agnes, and Other Poems*. Keats died of tuberculosis February 23, 1821, in Rome, Italy, at the age of only twenty-five.

Extract from Book 1, *Endymion*

1 A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:

2 Its loveliness increases; it will never

3 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep

4 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

5 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

6 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing

7A flowery band to bind us to the earth,

8 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth

9 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,

10 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkn'd ways

11 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,

12 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall

13 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,

14 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon

15 For simple sheep; and such are daffodils

16 With the green world they live in; and clear rills

17 That for themselves a cooling covert make

18 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,

19 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:

20 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms

21 We have imagined for the mighty dead;

22 An endless fountain of immortal drink,

23 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Commentary

The selected extract is taken from a long narrative poem written by Keats between April and November 1817. Though it was negatively received at the time of its publication and qualified as a poetic/literary flop and a ‘monstrously’ funny piece of poetry, this poem shows Keats’ knowledge and revision of Greek mythology. In *Endymion*, Keats confirmed his mastery of and fascination with classical literature, taking unconvincing and weak stuff from Greek myth and trying to develop or modify it into something like an epic. The narrative form of the epic, for

Keats, was the most inflexible of all poetic forms and, therefore, the most valid testimony of the poet's (literary) talent(s). Keats wrote in *Letters*:

> [It] will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination and chiefly of my invention which is a rare thing indeed – by which I must make 4000 Lines of one bare circumstance and fill them with Poetry; and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the Temple of Fame – it makes me say – God forbid that I should be without such a task! (*JKL*, 1, 170)

I think, dear Students, that you have understood Keats' project. His purpose was not simply to write an epic, but to experiment with the form. At first sight, this simple poem written in rhyming couplets seems very 'immature' or let's say structurally unsophisticated. A careful reading reveals that the text encourages a refined interpretation. The supposedly incoherent arrangement and obtrusive contradictions as many critics have already noted may ruin any attempt to see the symbolic dimension of the text.

The opening line of the extract is so striking and authoritative: 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever'. The themes of beauty and eternity are stated right from the beginning. What 'thing of beauty' was the poet talking about? Art? Physical beauty? It could not be something material. Keats, without delay, in lines 13 and 14, puts in plain words that he is talking of ephemeral things: "From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon, / Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon". Keats, a true ROMANTIC, and apparently a lover of Platonism, like other poets of his epoch, seems to explain one of the oldest philosophies: perfect forms stay the same and are only appreciated; observable facts are in a condition of change and relentlessly changeable materializations.

Unlike poets of the first generation, and unlike his contemporaries like Byron and Shelley, Keats was an escapist. He preferred to write about humanity and perfection; he never (unequivocally) advocated social or political reforms. Keats was a mystical mastermind who was

simply interested in themes like art, beauty, and truth; he wanted to explain to the world that beauty and truth are associated.

« She Walks in Beauty » 1815 by George Gordon Lord Byron

Text:

Stanza 1

1 She walks in beauty, like the night

2 Of Cloudless climes and starry skies;

3 And all that's best of dark and bright

4 Meet in her aspect and her eyes:

5 Thus mellowed to that tender light

6 Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

Stanza 2

7 One shade the more, one ray the less,

8 Had half impaired the nameless grace

9 Which waves in every raven tress,

9 Or softly lightens o'er her face;

11 Where thoughts serenely sweet express

12 How pure, how dear, their dwelling place.

Stanza 3

13 And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,

14 So soft, so calm, so eloquent,

15 The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

16 But tell of days in goodness spent,

17 A mind at peace with all below,

18 A heart whose love is innocent.

Analysis

Introduction

Lord Byron wrote this poem in 1814 when he was 26 years old. The text was published in 1815 in *HebrewMelodies*, a collection of poems. This intriguing poem was composed the next morning Byron met Anne Wilmot in a party. Blake apparently was awestruck by the mystifying splendor of this mysterious woman. Her looks were different; her face was pale and she wore a long black evening dress that shined because of the sequins. It should be remembered here that this poem is not concerned with the woman's physical beauty or her black gown; in fact, it goes beyond to portray and explain the concept of inner beauty.

Biography

Lord Byron was born in 1788 in London. His mother, Catherine Gordon, was a descendent of a Scottish noble family. His father, John Byron, also called Mad Jack, was a gambler who took his wife's money and left the country to live with his sister. Byron was born with a deformity; he suffered a lot because of it. He spent his childhood with his mother in Scotland. In 1798, when his great uncle died, he became the sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale. From 1801 to 1805, he went to Harrow School, and later attended Trinity College until 1808. When he was still a student, he produced a collection of poems, *Fugitive Pieces*. After his graduation, he was entitled to a seat in the House of Lords. In July 1809, Lord Byron left his country to visit Greece and Turkey. Three years later, he returned and carried on his job in Parliament. In 1812, two of his cantos were published, which made him one of the most acclaimed poets and spokesmen of romantic poetry of his age. However, his love life was a catastrophe as he had several affairs and *dangerous liaisons* with many women (including his own half-sister Augusta) and had many illegitimate children!

In 1815, he married Annabella Millbank and had a daughter with her that he named her after his half-sister. Lord Byron was very violent towards his wife. His marriage lasted only one year; Annabella left him with Augusta and disappeared. After this brutal separation, a real humiliation at that time which caused too much gossip, Lord Byron left for Europe. He met Shelley (who also ran away from a scandal) in Geneva, Switzerland. Byron, P.B. Shelley, and Mary Wollstonecraft (Mrs Shelley) became close friends and lived together in a nice dwelling that was rented by Byron. In 1816, he composed his Canto III that would appear later in *Childe Harold*. In Italy, one year later, he finished his fifth Canto that was published in 1818. During his sojourn, Lord Byron lived with and loved several women, just like his hero Don Juan. In 1823, he moved to Greece and became an active devotee of an armed group that fought for independence during the Turkish occupation. In 1824, Lord Byron caught a fever and died.

Poem Summary

Stanza One: The poem begins with an enjambed line (no punctuation mark, no pause). Line one should be read with line 2 to understand the meaning. Stopping at the end of the opening line means that the woman, like the night, walks silently and her dark side is emphasized. Lines 1 and 2 should be read together to see the comparison and the startling beauty which comes from the opposition between light and darkness. The two following lines stress the idea expressed previously as we read that in her eyes and aspect brightness meets with obscurity. Only in clear skies can brightness and darkness convene or not! In this woman's eyes and aspect, says the speaker, these two opposing forces somehow meet. The reader now can understand the two first lines. Lines 5 and 6 tell us how obscurity and glow are "mellowed", smoothed, and softened to become a "tender" or warm light that "heaven" refuses to bequeath to the day. Our speaker does not love total darkness or total light; he is more interested in the balance between these conflicting forces (confused? Wait to see the second stanza!) .

Stanza Two: "One shade the more", the speaker adds, and "one ray the less" (line 7). Again, the speaker highlights the two contradicting concepts. The unidentified and mysterious "grace" cannot be spoiled by the balance between the blackness of her tress and the clarity/paleness of her face (7-10). The woman's magnificence can be damaged by either an extra shade or one beam less. In the last two lines of this part, a reference is made to this woman's mind when the speaker says that the thoughts peacefully "sweet express" how wholesome and how precious is their "dwelling place".

Stanza Three: Lines 13-14-15 describe the woman physically. The speaker says that, on her soft, peaceful, and expressive cheek and brow, the smiles that prevail and the shades that shine, tell more about the splendor of her soul and heart. Physical beauty, therefore, is but a materialization of inner beauty. “A mind at peace” and “[a] heart whose love is innocent” are then more important than anything else.

Speaker

This text is different from the lyrics studied in the classroom where the speaker can be easily identified. There is no “I” or “we” like in “Tintern Abbey” or “The Ecchoing Green”. Seriously, who is the speaker in this poem? Is it Byron or somebody else? From the introduction (see page 2), we take for granted that Byron is the speaker. What is clear is that the speaker is a kind of a romantic artist and a lover of beauty; he is gifted, infatuated, and reverential as we understand from the poem that he has this capacity to see the woman’s internal beauty. He resembles the poet’s heroes (more or less !).

Did he know this woman or was she a perfect stranger? A close reading of the poem will reveal at least two things: first, the speaker did not desire that woman, but he was jealous of what she represented, and secondly, the speaker studied the woman’s character and probably they did not know each other perfectly. Numerous critics have underlined the speaker’s envy for the woman’s incorruptibility; a quality that he did not possess. Throughout the text, we feel the speaker’s implied yearning for that unnamed grace and that aura that surrounded the woman. The speaker then grieves over his loss of purity that can be read in the two closing lines.

Themes

The selected text is a praise poem that celebrates and eulogizes beauty. This poem, at first sight, seems to describe a friendless woman wearing a mourning dress that glows in darkness. Nevertheless, what is more stressed in the text is internal beauty. Kindness, quietude, and ingenuousness make this woman unique and inspiring; her beauty is transcendent. The “nameless grace” is what the poet, if truth be told, appreciates, not her physical attributes. Byron, a true romantic poet, is more interested in the feelings of mystery, wonder, and admiration that he sees in the perfect balance between light and darkness that reside in this woman. The subject of this poem is not “she”, but “it” or beauty.

Sense of balance is another topic dealt with in this text. Light and darkness, which are two opposing concepts, coexist in agreement. They even unite and meet to give birth to something more agreeable and gratifying. The woman's dark tresses melt with her whitish face; the harmonization is remarkable that we forget about the woman's external beauty.

Harmony and beauty are not the only themes developed in this poem. The *woman* who walks in beauty is not any woman; she is *the* woman. She is the perfect woman with eyes that flawlessly hold "that's best of dark and bright" as we learn in line 3. Her grace is too awful for words; it is "nameless" (8) and cannot be explained. She is ideal and perfect; she is perfection! Remember this is a representative text of romantic poetry. The speaker, a romantic and a sensitive artist, loves meditating on objects or ideas.

Style

Byron's text is made of three six-line stanzas (3X6=18) that follow the same rhyme scheme (ababab). "night" (1) rhymes with "bright" (3) and "light" (5), and "skies" (2) with "eyes" (4) and "denies" (6). Observe how two opposites "night" and "bright" end with the same sound. The meter is quite consistent. The lines are written in iambic tetrameter (4 iambs) like in the following example (line 1):

She **walks** in **beau**ty, **like** the **night**

Iambic tetrameter is very much frequent in hymns and praise songs/poems because of its minimalism and naturalness. Byron could not have chosen a better meter to write "She Walks in Beauty". Had he written it in iambic pentameter, he would have disfigured that spontaneity which characterizes this lyric. Iambic pentameter goes well with poems which deal with serious subject-matters and more complex feelings (like in Wordsworth's sonnet).

Originally, as already mentioned somewhere in this analysis, this poem was published in *Hebrew Melodies*. Byron was, in fact, asked to write a volume of verses set to ancient Jewish melodies, and it was Isaac Nathan who wanted to arrange for performance. "She Walks in Beauty" does not contain biblical references, but it is a simple lyric that reflects on beauty and art. The language, as many critics have noted, is simple. Northrope Frye, for instance, said that this poem does not take account of indistinctness, intellectualized irony, strength, and intensity of phrasing that modern critics seek in poetry. Diction in this poem is so ordinary that some critics went on to point out that the text was 'unpoetic'.

What makes this poem great, at least in my point of view, is its simple language. Readers will continue to admire this poem for its content, musicality, and simple diction. Whether you see the woman as a personification of excellence or a representation of art, “She Walks in Beauty” is a good piece of poetry that best exemplifies the romantic spirit and art.

English Prose

Scott and the Historical Novel

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was born of a lawyer's family in Edinburgh, Scotland. At the age of twenty-one, he became a lawyer. Scott was influenced and fascinated by folk poetry and the movement of "Storm and Stress" ("Sturm und Drang"). He translated many poems and plays from German and in 1802-3 he published "The Minstrelsy of Scottish Border", a collection of old Scottish ballads and legends. He published other poems few years later like 3The Lady of the Lake" and "Marmion". He became less prominent as a poet and abandoned writing poems to dedicate himself to prose writing. In 1814 his first novel *Waverly* was published incognito. He continued writing fiction without revealing is real identity. In 1820 he accepted a baronetcy and was given the title "Sir". In 1825 and because of the economic crisis in England, Scott had financial issues and many debts to pay; he was forced to write more novels, and his health, consequently, deteriorated. He died in 1832.

Scott started his career as novelist at the age of forty. In fact, he is the originator and initiator of historical fiction. In his novels, he represented the destiny of persons and history as undividable and indissoluble. The development of 'History' is determined by and related to the dynamic role of people. Scott was not a historian, so his works are recreations of historical periods. Historical truthfulness was not his aim, especially in his last novels which were written to pay his huge debts. Readers must not read his 'historical" novels as books of history; they must, however, concentrate on the brilliant description of the characters who populate these works. Scott did not write history, but he fictionalized and romanticized it.

Scott's novels can be divided into three categories: novels based on the history of Scotland, novels about England, and novels about France and other countries. *Waverly* (1814), *OldMortality* (1816), *RobRoy* (1817), and *TheHeartofMidlothian* (1818) are about his native country, Scotland. They ingeniously portray the domination of the English ruling class. *Ivanhoe* and his other novels about English history, in contrast, cover many historical epochs, from middle ages to Restoration. *Ivanhoe* is Scott's most important novel because it authentically and dexterously describes the feudalism of English oppressors. The language is rhythmical but sometimes becomes very dramatic and fits well the themes dealt with in this work of genius. Scott showed a real dexterity in characterization and plot structure; some readers may have some trouble in reading it because of the incorporation of old English poetry in this ROMANTIC piece

of prose. The last group of his novels which deals with the history of France and other European countries has been widely criticized by reviewers and critics because of the writer's unpremeditated distortion and twisting of some historical events.

Readers, as pointed earlier in this essay, should utterly be vigilant in approaching and reading Scott's novels since they are imaginative works and not works of history. Characters in Scott's fiction are emblematic representations of social classes. Last but not least, Scott's heritage and influence are huge and momentous. Writers like Alexandre Dumas (pere, a French novelist), Pushkin (a Russian writer), and Cooper (an American writer) were immensely influenced by Scott's narrative art and use of history.

Austen and the Novel of Manners

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is one of the few recognized and renowned female writers who managed to find a place in the (male) literary space or mainstream. Young, female, and talented, she demonstrated an unparalleled agility in prose writing (even her contemporary novelist Scott criticized her). Jane Austen was born in Hampshire, in Southern England, of a country clergyman's family. She led a quite monotonous life; a good reason to write and read books. She wrote novels and had many problems publishing them. She soon became famous after the publication of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1815). Her two novels *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* appeared after her death in 1818.

Austen's novels, for many (Algerian) readers and students of English literature, are only about love and marriage; in other words, they deal with feminine issues. Therefore, compared to the poems and novels of her 'male' contemporaries, they are not amply political. The power of her novels lies in her narrative tactics, skillful depiction and analysis of simple things, and ardent examination of 19th century society.

Pride and Prejudice is a good example of the English novel of manners which was popular during this literary period. It portrays middle class families and sensationalizes in a very witty way the differences between different social classes. The novel shows how marriage can be used to climb the social ladder; each character is in search of the perfect partner.

1. Write a commentary on the passage extracted from *Sense and Sensibility* suggesting what it reveals about the characters involved.

Commentary

The selected passage is taken from Jane Austen's debut novel *Sense and Sensibility*(1811). Austen began writing the novel in 1795, and she originally titled it Elinor and Marianne. The first draft was revised in 1809. This classic is a romance and a novel of manners that offers an exhaustive description of 19th century middle-class life and tells the story of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood.The opening chapter introduces the Dashwoods and the story of the estate and how it was passed to the legal inheritors. This essay analyzes characters in the selected extract with a special emphasis on Elinor and Marianne who personify sense and sensibility respectively.

To begin with, all the characters who appear in the text are revealed by an all-knowing narrator. Third person narration offers an in-depth study of all the characters involved in the story. After a swift description of the estate, the first character, briefly introduced by the narrator, appears in the opening paragraph as “the late owner” of the house, a gentleman, who lived with his sister and had no children (paragraph 1). We learn through the narrator that Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters become impoverished after the death of Mr. Dashwood.

John Dashwood, another character, is described as the legal inheritor of Norland estate. He is described as “an ill-disposed young man”, “cold hearted”, “selfish”, but“well respected” (paragraph 7, lines 1 and 2). In a very sarcastic observation made by our mocking narrator, we learn that Mrs. Dashwood has too much influence on her husband. Mrs. Dashwood is a distorted version of her husband; she is insular and self-centered. John Dashwood, despite his kindness and ability to show gentleness and open-handedness towards his step-mother and half-sisters, is obsessed with money.

Mrs. John Dashwood is an insensitive and tactless woman. Her discourteous behavior and disagreeableness towards her mother-in-law, who has just lost her husband, are incomprehensible. Mrs. Dashwood, in contrast, is a very sensible woman. She is an amiable, devoted mother. She gravely loathes her daughter-in-law. After Fanny’s unwelcomed and unlooked-for coming, she wanted to leave the house. Her daughter, Elinor, persuaded her to stay.

Her love for her daughters and her wish to stay on good terms with her step-son reveal her fortitude, dedication, and willingness to protect her family.

Elinor, the eldest daughter, is described by the narrator as a young woman who“possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgment” (paragraph 11). She is also loving, but she knows how to rule her emotions. Marianne, the other daughter, isamodel of the romantic heroine that can be found in 19th century English literature.She is “sensible and clever” but enthusiastic in everything (paragraph 12). Unlike Elinor, Marianne Dashwood is zealous and impulsive. Marianne is incapable of governing her emotions just like her mother. The contrast between the two sisters is elucidated by the narrator as we read in these lines:

Elinor saw, with concern, the excess of her sister’s sensibility; but by Mrs. Dashwood it was valued and cherished. They encouraged each other now in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which overpowered them at first, was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking an increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself. She could consult with her brother, could receive her sister-in-law on her arrival, and treat her with proper attention; and could strive to rouse her mother to similar exertion, and encourage her to similar forbearance. (paragraph 13)

The discrepancy is so obvious. The psychological contrast between the two main characters is well summarized in the previous quotation. Elinor represents 19th century moral and feminine values: sense, limit, reserve, and social responsibility. Marianne, in contrast,embodies naturalness, impetuosity, and passion. Their temperaments will play an important role in their decisions and relationships. The narrator seems to warn her readers of romance, imagination, idealism, and more importantly the excess of sensibility. As mentioned in the introduction, the novel was written in 1795; a period that witnessed the decline of neoclassicism and the development of romanticism. Therefore, Elinor can be identified with the 18th spirit because she exemplifies the ideas of Enlightenment like wisdom, perception, temperance, and self-control. Margaret, the other sister, is a good-natured, sympathetic girl; she is influenced by Marianne. She is thirteen and seems to follow the steps of her sister.

This chapter is an illustration of Jane Austen’s wittiness and talent to create credible characters. Austen made use of direct characterization by telling us what the personality of the character is.

American Romanticism and Transcendentalism

Introduction

American Romanticism (1800s-1860): As we have seen earlier, the birthplace of romanticism was Europe. In America, romanticism arrived in 1800 and became a major artistic movement because there was a growing sense of optimism and also desire to build a new democratic nation. European romanticism was established on a desire to break out with its own history to start over. America, in contrast, was already the incarnation of that desire because everything was fresh, and everything seemed promising. Like British Romantics, American Romantics and transcendentalists celebrated the divinity of the individual and believed that human nature was made in likeness to God. Besides, American romantics worshiped nature because of their history with it. Since the creation of America, nature was always seen as a holy place, an Eden, and a paradise on Earth.

Transcendentalism Defined:

Transcendentalism (henceforward tr) is a philosophical principle that calls attention to the unity of all things, the inherent good in human beings, and the value of feeling and intuition over reason and practice. American tr. originated in Concord, Massachusetts, and enjoyed recognition and fame between 1830 and 1855. The most important figures of tr are Emerson (Ralph Waldo), Parker (Theodore), Fuller (Margaret), Alcott (Bronson), and Thoreau (Henry David). The above-mentioned members wrote essays in favor of transcendental thoughts. Their essays were published in the *DIAL* magazine. The New England transcendentalists reacted against the British School of philosophers who believed that the mind is inactive and accepts things passively.

The American nation was pushing the borders to the Pacific while democracy was growing up. A rising sense of optimism, a belief in progress and individualism helped in the development of tr. In fact, transcendentalism went a little beyond European Romanticism. The two schools or movements share many ideas like a profound admiration of nature, a preference of emotion over reason, a break up with classical forms and conventions, and a belief in the self.Transcendentalists, like Thoreau and Whitman as it will be shown later, claimed that the ultimate truth of the spiritual nature of the universe was voluntarily available to every human being. Tr was also egalitarian in its principles; people were the same in the eyes of God, and had enough power to be aware of God in their daily lives.

The victory over the British gave new force to expressions of American nationalism which was reflected in an unparalleled desire to produce a separate national literature detached from European literary tradition. Politically, economically, and socially, this was the "Era of the Common Man". Individualism and antiauthoritarianism became central logos and themes for writers, thinkers, and artists of the Romantic period. This did not mean that institutions were not respected; Romantics and Transcendentalists, often seen as sons of anarchy, were reformers and iconoclasts, but they also called for respect and social progress.

The American Civil War, for many historians and scholars, marked the death of Romanticism. Was it because of the triumph of Northern abolitionism or the end of Southern gallantry? Was it because of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln or was it because of something else? It is not easy to answer this question, but it is clear that optimism died with the decline of Romanticism. The literary scene was influenced by the political changes; the Civil War was so brutal that artists, in particular, and Americans, in general, were forced to change their way of seeing things.

Romanticism was not exclusively American. It started first in Europe (see the previous lectures). American Romanticism differs from its British foil in one thing: the context. The United States during the romantic period dwelled in a distinctive historical moment. America was a newly independent nation; young but self-sufficient, economically fragile but politically tough, and socially alienated but geographically wide. Democracy was not an alien concept; Americans were already familiar with it.

Romanticism was not the only intellectual trend in 19th century America. Transcendentalism, an extreme expression of Romanticism, was developing at the same time in New England and gaining more and more fame in the other regions of the country. Transcendentalism accepted some of the romantic ideas like the divinity of the individual and of nature and the primacy of intuition over reason and logic. Transcendentalists were above all essayists and philosophers, so their first objective was to blur the differences between the literary and philosophical and spiritual activities because most of them were trained as ministers. Emerson, for instance, was a poet and thinker; the poet and the priest have the same function. Transcendentalists were also social reformers and participated in many movements like women's movements, educational reform, and anti-slavery. They questioned many concepts and institutions; they attempted to readjust and reform education and give more freedom to women and people of color. At the heart of their debates was the idea of "the common man". The

Jacksonian democracy was inconsistent and contradictory, since women, Native Americans, and slaves were not given the same rights as white men.

The lyric poem was the preferred literary form in 19th cy Europe. However, in America new literary forms emerged because of the accessibility of print materials which helped in the development of literary magazines and the growth of readership. In long fiction, for instance, two major forms appeared: the novel and the romance. People demanded more romantic tales despite the earlier beliefs, which were still popular, about the inadequacy of the novel and its power to corrupt the mind. Reading imaginative stories was for a long time seen as a waste of time; writers of fiction were forced to think twice about their craft. The novel and its cousin, the romance, were related to middle-class values, but while the novel was associated with verisimilitude and social problems, the romance was associated with mystery, the supernatural, and exaggeration.

Also significant to this debate is the rise and development of new sub-genres like crime and gothic fictions. The short story, the sketch, and the tale as forms of short fiction also developed well during the romantic epoch. The three aforementioned terms do not refer to the same thing; the sketch is descriptive and focuses on events, the tale puts emphasis on narration, and the short story develops one or two characters. Examples of famous short stories and tales by leading short story tellers include: “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle” by Washington Irving, and “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allen Poe. Other renowned practitioners of the short story are Melville, Hawthorne, and Davis, to name only a few.

The slave narrative is most likely the most remarkable new form of this period. Dozens of fine narratives by slaves and ex-slaves were published in magazines. Other narratives were less popular or were rediscovered later in the twentieth century. Slave narratives by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs were the most popular and often read in America in 19th century.

The American Romantics attempted to capture their world and demonstrate how art was influenced by context. Often seen by twenty-first century readers as exaggerated, highly symbolic and idealized, these works interpret their creators’ attempts to react against the principles and standards of Enlightenment.

The era following the Civil War is commonly known as the Age of Realism. Realists reacted against their precursors. The Fireside Poets, the transcendentalists, and the Romantics

were highly criticized by the Realists. What is amazing is that some ideas did not ‘expire’; self-reliance and adventure survived very well; works by modernists and even postmodernists are living examples of the influence of romantics on them. The roots of modern American literature reside in romantic tradition.

Workshops and Classroom Activities:

- Analyzing an extract from Whitman’s “Song of Myself”
- Assignments: Reading selected passages from gothic short stories written before the American Civil War
- Writing about American romantic short fiction

Walt Whitman's « Song of Myself »

Sections 1-2-3-4-5

Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity

With the publication of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, American poetry experienced a deep change. Whitman reshaped, revised, and reinvented poetry. Influenced by the romantic ideas of his time, Whitman extended and broadened the meaning of democracy in the art of writing poetry by throwing out meter, rhyme and rhythm. He crafted a form and a style of his own, using an American language with audacious, impudent (sometimes unpleasant would say some readers) images and expressions. Equally, he introduced themes that did not please many conservative readers. Whitman's poetry represented the resistance of a nation dismantled because of cultural, racial and economic conflicts. Transformation, war, urbanization, and industrialization are frequently referred to in his work.

Walt Whitman

Whitman was born in 1819, in Long Island, New York. His father was a house builder. The Whitman family struggled financially and was obliged to move to different places. Walt Whitman attended public school in Brooklyn until the age of 11, and because of financial issues, he was forced to leave school and work to help his family. He worked first in a law firm as an office boy, and in 1831 he was apprenticed at the *Patriot* and later the *Star* newspapers published in Brooklyn. This experience in printing and journalism influenced his career and interest in writing poetry later on. He learnt much about politics, prose writing, and literature in general when working in newspaper offices. Whitman was also a fervent and enthusiastic reader; he read classics and was interested in religion and Greek drama.

In 1835 he found work as a printer in Manhattan, but a fire two years after destroyed the printing district. Whitman found himself again unemployed and was obliged to join his family in Long Island. He worked as a teacher from 1836 to 1841. He, like Thoreau, was against physical punishment and traditional methods of learning practiced at that time in public schools. His short experience in teaching influenced him; he wrote many articles on the need to reform education. Whitman also became enthusiastically engaged in politics and supported the Democratic Party.

Whitman started to publish fictional works like “Death in the School Room” and *FranklinEvans* when working for different newspapers. In 1848, he moved to New Orleans to work as an editor of the *DailyCrescent* but he left the newspaper four months later. He returned to Brooklyn and founded a newspaper, which printed until 1849. From 1849 to 1854, he started to publish poems and work on his first collection *LeavesofGrass*. In 1855, his first collection was published (anonymously), but it did not receive a high critical acclaim and success among American readers. Whitman sent copies to poets and intellectuals like Whittier, Emerson, and Longfellow. He was recognized as a promising poetic voice by Emerson. The reactions to his first edition and the death of his father did not disappoint him. The second and third editions sold well, and by 1860 he was preparing a third one.

The Civil War (1861-1865) became an influential event in Whitman’s life and career. During the war, he worked as a journalist in Brooklyn, and then moved to Washington where he lived for 10 years. After the war, he published two other editions of *Leaves of Grass*, which contained further revisions and other new poems. He began to have health issues, and in 1873, he had a stroke. Unable to take care of himself, he left Washington to join his brother George in Camden, New Jersey. In 1882, he published *Specimen Days*, a collection of sketches and commentaries on writers and thinkers, and observations of America. While working on his final edition, his health failed rapidly. He died on March 26, 1892. Hundreds of people came to the funeral to pay tribute to Whitman, the father of American poetry and the poet of the people.

“Song of Myself” (1855)

When the poem first appeared in the first edition of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, it was not titled. It was later titled “Poem of Walt Whitman, an American” in 1856. It became “Walt Whitman” in the 1860 edition, and in 1881 it was titled “Song of Myself”. The poem was in a continuous state of adjustment and correction during the six editions of the collection. The last edition of the poem includes 1346 lines divided into 52 sections. “Song of Myself”, certainly, is the most significant poem in the collection *LeavesofGrass*because it deals with many themes of the book like democracy and unification of human beings with God.

The poem received mixed reviews, which ranged from unenthusiastic and negative judgments to encouraging appraisals, by readers and reviewers of the time[x]. Certainly, Americans were not ready yet to read a poem not written according to the Anglo-American conventions of that time. The nonconformist form as well as the fresh and anomalous themes literally troubled and surprised them. Today, “Song of Myself” is seen as a work of genius

because Whitman, contrary to many of his contemporaries' expectations, succeeded to perfectly translate the American way of life and spirit into plain but full of meaningful verses.

Whitman in "Song of Myself" gives up the standard language of lofty poetic diction to replace it with the everyday language of American conversation combined with odd or informal words, technical terms (like "atom" in the first section), and slang. The length of the line is jagged. Equally, the length of stanza is uneven and inconsistent, and rhyme is lacking. Whitman instead used repetition (alliteration, anaphora, epiphora, and parallelism) to create some musicality. In section 1, for instance, we find instances of alliteration in line 5 "I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass" where the sounds /l/ and /s/ are repeated. Other examples include "shine and shade" (24), and "heaven or hell" (46). The words "myself", "assumed", "atom", "loafe" are repeated twice. In section 2, repetition of words is also common: "perfumes" (14), "distillation" (16 and 17), and "leaves" (25). Another type of repetition is anaphora at the beginning of lines 32-33, and 34 which begin with "Have you". Anaphora is also present in lines 37, 39, and 40 which begin with "You shall". Section 3 is a good example to discuss the poet's use of another type of stylistic and rhetorical device known as petiphora. Lines 43, 44, 45, and 46 all end with "than there is now". The final stanza in the last section includes parallel structure, a repetition of form: "And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own, / And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own". Repetition is a stylistic and rhetorical device and it is used by Whitman to give his poem an artistic effect. In addition, this device is used to persuade and lay stress on some ideas and establish rhythm.

"Song of Myself" is an epic-lyric; two genres are merged here: the epic and the lyric. "Song of Myself" is not a traditional epic written about extraordinary people in a lofty style. While epics (like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) begin with solemn summons to gods, spirits, and Muses; Whitman's poem "Song of Myself" begins merely with "I celebrate myself", calling upon himself or his "self". "Song of Myself" is certainly an American epic. The influence of Wordsworth is so obvious; Wordsworth was also engaged in revising the epic genre and creating what is now known as the English epic. His "Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Autobiographical Poem" is a good example of the new /modern epic.

Many critics and readers claim that the opening line alludes to Virgil's *Aeneid* (a Latin epic poem written between 29 and 19 BC). Virgil begins his poem with: "I sing of warfare and a man at war". The opening line of the text is uncommon; Whitman fully declines the conventional epic to affirm his own distinctiveness and the exceptionality of his poetry. The speaker is not a hero; he is simply an ordinary man. The poem is also a lyric, a confession of a lonely speaker.

Notice that the speaker is the poet himself (the first section gives information about the poet-speaker's origin and age).

"Song of Myself" remains the leading poem in Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Whitman's so-called literary narcissism has no limits; but at the same time, he guarantees the reader at the outset that his 'celebration of self is a representative act: "And what I assume you shall assume, / For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." "Song of Myself" is not a monologue; it is a conversation between the "I" or the speaker and the "you" or the reader. Whitman refreshed the use of the first person in American literature; Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and Henry David Thoreau's*Walden* are good examples of the use of the first person. Whitman spoke straightforwardly to the reader using the colloquial and even slang tointerpose the rhythm of the poem: "For every atom belong to me as good belongs to you. / I loafe and invite my soul." Whitman's language suggests a poet who is of the people. He is also totally American: "My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air, / Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same." Whitman placed himself as a populist poet.

The selected lines (1 to 100) illustrate well transcendental thinking. The opening lines (1 to 4) are probably the most significant lines in the whole extract because they introduce the themes of equality and democracy. Whitman's preoccupation with democracy is plainly expressed in the very beginning of the poem (1-4). The second stanza, however, explains the speaker's spiritual journey he takes to arrive at his vision of social equalitywhen he says "I loafe and invite my soul, / I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass" (4 and 5). Idleness can liberate the mind to reflect and think about simple things and discover truths in nature and within the self through intuition.

Section 2 celebrates and romanticizes nature, chiefly when he compares the scents of perfumes (which are so artificial or non-natural) to the odor of air/atmosphere (so natural) (1 to 20). The speaker is intoxicated with the smell of nature. His fascination with the smoke of his own breath, inspiration and respiration, the beating of his heart, and the passing of blood and air through his lungs remind us of Wordsworth's experience with nature and how a simple remembrance of nature in "Tintern Abbey" made him feel "sweet sensations" in his blood, heart, and mind. The speaker in the third stanza of Section 2 admirably celebrates the five senses (21-31).

Section 3 begins with the speaker's idea that there is too much talk about the past and future and there is no better moment, according to him, than the present moment. He continues

saying that there is no more heaven or hell; it is better to live now. Later, he refers to man's preoccupation with urge, the "procreant urge of life". The body, like the soul, is "clear and sweet", and both are indissoluble.

In Section 4 Whitman lists the things that frame the speaker's personality when he says in line 80 "but they are not the Me myself". The "Me", according to Whitman, is different from the "self". He waits, "witness[s] and watch[es]" (78); a reference to the imminent union with the soul to tell him more about himself. The final section in the extract explains well the value of union of the body and soul to the mystical experience. He manifestly speaks to his soul in line 88 when he says: "I believe in you my soul, the other I am must not abase itself to you". The other "I am" is different from but equal to the self.

In section 5, the body and soul engage in what appears to be a sexual act. It is important to note, at this juncture, that the reader should see this act as a metaphor. The scene itself is charged with imagery, and the sexual act, in view of that, generates a spiritual vision of the world, passing "all the argument of the earth." This is the essential opposition of "Song of Myself"; the body is sometimes equal to the soul and at other moments a representation of it.The last stanza of Section 5 depicts the moment of union of body and soul with God. Whitman seems to say that God is now in me and I know well the 'true' meaning of brotherhood and equality (last line).

Themes and Symbols: This extract is full of symbols and deals with a multitude of themes like:

1. Nature: as a romantic poet, Whitman celebrates and romanticizes nature. Nature is a sanctuary, a temple, a haven, and a heaven. Nature is a holy place where man can converse with God.

2. Individuality and the Self: This extract examines the self (who I am and what I am). It also celebrates individualism. The first stanza, for instance, is about the need to respect the individual self and its uniqueness.

3. Identity and individual spirituality: In this poem, Whitman declares that each one has to make his/her own journey alone to discover the ultimate truth about himself/ herself.

4. Democracy or Unity in Diversity: Whitman used the symbol of grass right in the opening section. Grass symbolizes the nation, and each person is unique and beautiful.

Commentary (a close reading of a passage taken from Irving Washington's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow")

Introduction (Identifying the text)

The selected passage comes from (or is taken from) Washington Irving's most famous short story titled "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1819) that appears in a collection of stories titled *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*. Washington Irving is known as America's *first* international literary 'superstar' because of his well-written spooky and gothic stories and desire to valorize American identity and culture. Briefly, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" tells the tragic story of the unfortunate Yankee schoolmaster known as Ichabod Crane. The passage is taken from the beginning of the short story and it essentially describes the showground where the events take place. In what follows, I will analyze setting (time and place), mood, and atmosphere by referring to language employed in the text.

Development: Response to the Text

The passage begins with a detailed description of TarryTown. The narrator (Knickerbocker) says that the name was given "in former days, by the good housewives of the adjacent country" (paragraph 1, lines 6 and 7). The place has a long history; it was established by the first Dutch settlers a few hundred years ago. What is interesting in the opening paragraph is how the narrator draws a contrast between the actual (realistic) description of the place and the delightful and somehow fairylike (dreamlike) features of the same place. The contrast is purposeful; the narrator wants to tell us that the line between reality and fantasy is very thin, and there is always something macabre, mysterious, and gruesome that hides behind that apparent serenity.

The narrator's tactic is clear; he wants us to see the place as odd, strange, and above all magical and enchanted. In the second paragraph, an emphasis is put on the place's uncommon quietness; the narrator says that "[he knows] none more promising than this little valley" (paragraph 2, line 6).

In the third paragraph, Knickerbocker continues his thorough description of the mysterious setting. The glen is "sequestered", and its inhabitants, the descendents of Dutch settlers, are strange (lines 1-2). The name Sleepy Hollow is introduced for the first time by the narrator. We learn from Knickerbocker that there is a"drowsy, dreamy influence" that seems to "hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere" (4-5). The place is called Sleepy Hollow, then, because of the peaceful and dreamy air that permeates the valley. The place, according to the narrator, was ensorcelled by an old German doctor or an Indian chief. The people of Sleepy Hollow are superstitious and sometimes see strange things and hear voices.

However, the strangest thing about this marvelous, enigmatic, and unusual place is the apparition of a Headless Horseman on horseback through the night. Rumors say that the figure on horseback is the ghost of a Hessian trooper whose head was "carried away" by a cannon-ball during the Revolutionary War. The specter is not only seen by the natives of the valley, but also by anyone who stays there for a time (paragraphs 4,5, and 6). Anyone who inhales the "witching influence of the air" becomes imaginative and begins to "dream dreams, and see apparitions" (paragraph 6, lines 5 and 6).

In the last paragraph, we are told that this 'peaceful spot' (line 1) has always resisted all changes and developments happening in the state of New York. People and their manners and customs stayed "fixed" despite the great flow of migration and advance taking place in the rest of the country. This idea reminds us of "Rip Van Winkle", another short story written by the same writer. The inhabitants of Sleepy Hollow, who seem to be indifferent and unresponsive to changes, are compared by the narrator to "little nooks of still water, which border a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbor, undisturbed by the rush of the passing current" (lines 5-7). The pool of water caricatures the place and its residents.

Conclusion

The analysis of the selected passage suggests that the mood is ominous, terrifying, and threatening.As mentioned in the introduction, the writer is a master of American gothic literature. Fantasy flirts with reality, and strangeness trifle with familiarity. The selected text accentuates the dreamlike aspects of the setting. It also demonstrates that the inhabitants of Sleepy Hollow have been devastated by the war. Although the narrator did not explicitly mention that the place

hosted an awful event, and many troops of different origins (British troops, Germans mercenaries, and patriot militiamen) were involved in it, one can understand that the figure of the headless horseman is an indirect reference to the American Revolution. We also understand that the residents of Sleepy Hollow have invented their own ways to process the trauma of the war. They have chosen insensibility, oblivion,silence, and above all ‘superstition’.

The Victorian Age

Introduction

When Victoria came to the throne in 1837, all the great romantic poets (except Wordsworth) were dead. William Wordsworth continued writing poems, which gained little esteem and recognition among Victorian readers and critics. Byron, Shelley, and all the great Romantics were inimitable and their poems were matchless; in fact, Browning and Tennyson, who later became the most important poets of the Victorian Age, wrote and published volumes in the 1830s and no one paid attention to them. With the accession of Victoria, England witnessed an incomparable progress. The Victorian Age was the age of security and material wealth; Englishmen and -women had more money and more spare time and they began to read insatiably, considering literature to be the most English form of artistic expression. Writers became more conscious of their mission, so they turned their attention to other issues. They found the impulse in Romantic literature, which unequivocally called for change and idealism at the same time. However, optimism and idealism proved to be unfeasible to portray the *hard times of those times*. The Victorian epoch was scientific in attitude. The inventions of the Industrial Revolution were followed up by the practical development of steel and electricity, and science and sociology found themselves blended in the writings of Darwin and Huxley.

Victorian Poetry: Tennyson, The Brownings, and Minor Poets

Alfred Tennyson was a strange combination of contradictions, but he was the Queen's favorite poet. His poems, for lovers of Romantic poetry, may seem very tedious, dull, and unexciting. Most of his first attempts were disregarded or unflatteringly received. In 1842, he published *Morte d'Arthur* and *Locksley Hall*, which brought him eminence and critical praise. Tennyson remains the most representative Victorian poet.

Elizabeth Barret Browning is certainly the most celebrated Victorian female poet. "The Cry of the Children" is a fervent social study. Elizabeth Barret was a very rebellious young woman of fragile health; she disobeyed her father and got clandestinely married to Robert Browning in Italy. Robert, at the time, was a young unheard of poet who published two poems in 1840. After his union with Elizabeth, he was known as the man who married the poet. Between 1842 and 46, he produced a collection of poems: *Bells and Pomegranates*. The collection introduced the poet as an obscure poet. In 1850 he published Christmas Eve and five year later

Men and Women. The latter contains more psychological depth and excellent versification. The poet became an idol of a select few who thought they could understand his works. Browning was more famous among intellectual aristocrats.

Miss Barretor Mrs. Browning, expressed her love for her husband in many of her poems and sonnets that were published privately in *Sonnets from the Portuguese* in 1850.Her great work is *Aurora Leigh* (1857), a semi-autobiographical poem. She died in Italy in 1864, leaving her husband alone. Robert did not stop writing; his poetical activity continued resulting in the production of a series of monologues which are considered as the best of his poems. He died in 1889 and was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Matthew Arnold and Edward Fitzgerald were also known as poets of the Victorian period. Arnold, known more as a critic, published volumes of poetry: in 1853 and 1859 and an elegy for his friend A. H. Clough in 1867. Fitzgerald introduced and adopted the Persian poem Rubaiyat Al Khayyam, setting a new fashion of oriental(ist) literature and art. He also made translations from the Greek and the Spanish.

Religion:

The position of the Church of England in 1837 was somehow undefined. The young men studying theology at Oxford considered the Church to have become the slave of social conditions; Fired by Keble's sermon in 1833, they had founded the Oxford Movement, which was to lead part of the High Church towards Roman Catholicism. The leader of the movement was the theologian John Henry Newman (1801-90). Newman with Dr. Pusey, Froude and others wrote the *Tracts for the Times* that came under the official ban as Catholic. In 1846 Newman became a Catholic priest and in 1854 he was appointed rector of the new Catholic University of Dublin. In 1879, he was made a Cardinal. His writings consist mainly of collected lectures, poems, and personal accounts.

Victorian Prose: Carlyle and Ruskin

In spite of the great Victorian poets, the chief contribution of the nineteenth century to English literature was in the form of the novel. Apart from the novelists, there were other great prose writers: historians like Carlyle and Macaulay, philosophers and scientific writers like Darwin and Huxley, critics like Mathew Arnold, religious writers like Cardinal Newman, and sociologists like Ruskin. The two most important figures are Ruskin and Carlyle.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-81), a Scottish writer, was educated at Edinburgh University. He began his literary career by translations from German, all his works are imbued with Germanic culture. IN 1833-4, his first major work appeared, *Sartor Resartus*, written in a complicated Teutonic style. He also wrote a book titled The History of the French Revolution, but the

manuscript was accidentally destroyed. Carlyle, after this incident, rewrote it from memory. *Heroes and Hero Worship*, a series of lectures, appeared in 1848.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was interested in his youth in painting. In 1843, he began publishing *Modern Painting*, a book about his friend and great painter Turner. Later, he turned his attention to social problems and began writing and publishing volumes of sociological studies on which his fame rests: *Unto This Last* (1862), *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1867), and *Munera Pulveris* (1871)

Dickens and the Social Protest Novel

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was the son of a government clerk whose imprisonment for debts darkened the early years of Charles's childhood and who figures in *David Copperfield*, the autobiographical novel that describes the early life of the author, as the memorable Micawber. This novel also tells us that David (the fictional projection of the child Charles Dickens) was sent out as an apprentice because of the family's poverty. David becomes a reporter of debates in the House of Commons. The *Sketches by Boz* (1836) was the first successful work of fiction; it was followed by the famous *Pickwick Papers*. *Oliver Twist*, basically a *roman feuilleton*, was published between 36 and 37 and signaled the writer's first entrance in the world of long fiction writing. The publication of *Oliver Twist* in the form of a novel was a great success welcomed by critics and reviewers, despite the many shortcomings and inconsistencies. (see your notes and lessons for more details on the author's life and *Oliver Twist*). Dickens wrote many novels and short stories, but in spite of his great success he often wrote under financial stress. To alleviate it, he took to giving lectures and readings of his works in public and went twice to America on reading and lecturing tours that were a great strain on his overworked nerves. Dickens died suddenly on June 9th, 1870. He was buried privately in the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.

The Rival of Dickens: Thackeray

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) was the contemporary of Dickens. Readers and critics often compare and contrast these figures and their works, pointing out their merits and purposes. Thackeray was born in India, where his father was a Civil Servant. He was educated in England, but could not get a college degree. After his many trips abroad, he took up writing as a profession. His tone became noticeably dismal when his wife became 'insane'. He fought against sentimentalism by portraying his characters in a pragmatic way that he was accused by some critics of being too cynical and by others of using one-dimensional characters lacking psychological depth. His best known novel is Vanity Fair (1848), an anti-silver fork novel which satirizes snobs and attacks their life-style. *TheParisSketchBook* (1841), *The Book of Snobs*

(1848), *Pendennis* (1848-50), *Henry Esmond* (1852), and *TheVirginians* are also quite popular novels that targeted the upper class during the Victorian Age.

Female Voices, Feminine Concerns

The Bronte Sisters

The destiny and brilliance of Anne, Charlotte, and Emily have captured for many years the attention of readers, scholars, and even movie-makers. The Bronte sisters were the daughters of an Irish clergyman. Their mother died leaving them alone with their father who later became blind. Their only brother, Patrick, who was addicted to opium and alcohol, caused them too much suffering. Patrick Branwell Bronte was also a very talented painter; he also attempted to write but failed because of many unexplained reasons (financial?). The three sisters published a volume of poems under the pen-names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Only two copies were sold! In 1847, Charlotte's Jane Eyre was published, and in 1948 Emily's Jane Eyre and Anne's Agnes Gray were published.The brother died in September 1848, Emily in December, and Anne in the following May. Only Charlotte now survived. She produced two more novels: *Shirley* (1849) and *Villete* (1853). A year later, she married Mr. Nicholls who had long loved her but been discouraged by Mr. Bronte. She died after less than a year of married life! Of the three sisters, Anne seems to be the less gifted and Emily to have been the strangest and most powerful genius, at least as a poet. *Wuthering Heights* is a grim and haunting tale of passion which makes the writer's style and language close to the lyricism of the first romantics.

George Eliot

Born three years after Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot (1819-1880) did not become known as a writer till several years after the latter's death. She was Brought up in narrow religious views and about the age of twenty-two rebelled against her father and his evangelical training. She became a rationalist in all matters, and in 1846 she translated into English Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. In 1854, she translated Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. The next year, she made her first attempt at fiction writing with the first of her Scenes of Clerical Life. *Adam Bede*, a novel published in 1859, was a great success. A year later, she published *The Mill on the Floss*. Her other novels *Silas Marner* (1861), *Romola* (1862), *Felix Holt* (1866), and *Middlemarch* (1872) were widely received. In her zeal of truth and reality, her sense of humor and pathos appealed to some of her readers; if the freshness of the first chapters of *The Mill on the Floss*, charmed others, many readers felt repelled by her pictures of social rebels with ideas and ideals. After the death of Henry Lewes, with whom she had gone to live without legally marrying him as a protest against social conventions, she married J. W. Cross but died in December of the same year.

Imperialism, Imaginative Romance, and Late Victorian Literature

It was towards the end of the nineteenth century that England became conscious of itself as the heart of the greatest empire the world has ever known; and the man who first gave adequate expression to this feeling was Rudyard Kipling. Born in Bombay in 1865, he went to college and then returned to India where he became a journalist. His poetry and prose echo the unity of the Empire and the superiority of the English over all other nations. Kipling was very successful as a novelist; nevertheless, he produced quite interesting tales that were written for children like *The Jungle Book* (1894), *The Second Jungle Book* (1895), and *Just So Stories* (1902). Like Kipling, who wrote romances of imagination, Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson and H. G. Wells wrote historical novels, tales of adventures, and grisly mystery stories. Stevenson, an underrated Victorian novelist, wrote one of the most memorable novels on the theme of doubling. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1887), *Treasure Island, or the Mutiny of Hispaniola* (1881-2) inspired many modernist writers. Stevenson also wrote poetry; his collection *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885) contains more than 60 poems. Wells, a teacher and scientist, wrote stories of fantastic scientific achievement; he is famous for his three novels *The Time Machine* (1885) and *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *Men in the Moon* (1901).

Artistic Movements:

Ruskin had been the great artistic stimulus in the first half of the 19th cy. For Ruskin the world was so beautiful, and therefore artists should imitate reality, at the same time trying to make the lives of everybody, including the poor, as beautiful and artistic as possible. About the 1850s several young painters formed themselves into a group and called themselves Pre-Raphaelites, since they went back to the Italian primitives for their inspiration. The group included the founder, Rossetti, W. Holman Hunt, Millais, and several others. Dante Gabriel Rosseti was also a poet and through him the movement spread to literature. His sister Christina Rosseti also wrote poetry, which is often religious in character. The only poet of real importance to show allegiance to this movement and the French Symbolists was Algernon Charles Swinburne. The movement was to culminate in the strange figure of Oscar Wilde, an Irish writer and spokesman of the cult of Art for Art's Sake. Oscar Wilde wrote novels and comedies like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

Pessimism

The early Victorian epoch had been a time of illimitable confidence and hope, but it also contained within itself its own collapse. Towards the end of the century, the English began to realize that their affluence could not go on forever increasing, and that after a climax there comes a fall. Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer had attacked the whole fabric of Victorian contentment. Scientific inventions had invented joblessness. The empire was becoming difficult to handle. Many Victorians saw 'modernity' (not modernism) as a menace to cultural traditions that had long shaped English identity. Fast urbanization helped deracinate people from their conservative background and cultural traditions. Victorian anthropology gave acceptance to the feelings of

apprehension and angst that English traditions would be destroyed. George Meredith, a less known Victorian novelist, was an icon of obscurity. His novels *The Egoist* (1890) and *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) are prime examples of pessimistic Victorian literature. Thomas Hardy's novels are masterworks of desperation. Most of the dreadfully cynical novels were written by Thomas Hardy. Hardy, an architect by profession, wrote against Victorianism and the sense of injustice. His novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* reveals the writer's perfect mastery of writing the tragic novel. One should also add that Hardy developed an interest in scientific theories of natural selection and evolution (1891). After *Jude the Obscure* (1895), he gave up the novel and began to write verse, in which he seemed to find some relief.

Case Studies and Classroom Activities

1. Reading selected passages from *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens and commenting on aspects of the novel.

Text 1: Chapter 1, Book 1

Discussing the following themes:

Fact vs Imagination

Education

Utiltarianism

Text 2: Chapter 4, Book 1

Analyzing characters

Studying hyperbole and irony as aspects of the author's style

Assignment: Read Chapter 5, Book 1, and analyze the narrator's description of Coketown.

COKETOWN, to which Messrs. Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the key-note, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

1. It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

2. These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

3. You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there - as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done - they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The

2. Reading Phase 1 from Hardy's *Tess* and commenting on the themes of chance and fate.

Classroom Activities and assignments: What is a tragic novel? What is a tragic hero? Why is Tess a tragic heroine?

Understanding Tone in Thomas Hardy's novel: What is tone?

Tone can be defined as the writer's attitude toward something. Tone and voice are different. Tone can change from one part to another; it can be sympathetic or unsympathetic, serious or comic, emotional or restrained; cynical or sentimental, biased or impartial.

In Thomas Hardy's *Tess*, the tone is pessimistic. The pessimistic tone reveals the writer's Weltanschauung (or world outlook) and the prevailing spirit and vision of the late 19th century.. Thomas Hardy saw the human being as the victim of fate, destiny, malevolent and arbitrary forces. The central character in his novel struggles against her fate and also against her environment. The students are encouraged to read passages from the novel and pay attention to the writer's tone.

Reading Thomas Hardy's Article

THE SCIENCE OF FICTION

[Contribution to a symposium in the *New Review*, April, 1891, pp. 315-319]

Since art is science with an addition, since some science underlies all Art, there is seemingly no paradox in the use of such a phrase as "the Science of Fiction." One concludes it to mean that comprehensive and accurate knowledge of realities which must be sought for, or intuitively possessed, to some extent, before anything deserving the name of artistic performance in narrative can be produced.

The particulars of this science are the generals of almost all others. The materials of Fiction being human nature and circumstances, the science thereof may be dignified by calling it the

codified law of things as they really are. No single pen can treat exhaustively of this. The Science of Fiction is contained in that large work, the cyclopaedia of life.

In no proper sense can the term "science" be applied to other than this fundamental matter. It can have no part or share in the construction of a story, however recent speculations may have favoured such an application. We may assume with certainty that directly the constructive stage is entered upon, Art--high or low--begins to exist.

The most devoted apostle of realism, the sheerest naturalist, cannot escape, any more than the withered old gossip over her fire, the exercise of Art in his labour or pleasure of telling a tale. Not until he becomes an automatic reproducer of all impressions whatsoever can he be called purely scientific, or even a manufacturer on scientific principles. If in the exercise of his reason he select or omit, with an eye to being more truthful than truth (the just aim of Art), he transforms himself into a technicist at a move.

As this theory of the need for the exercise of the Dædalian faculty for selection and cunning manipulation has been disputed, it may be worth while to examine the contrary proposition. That it should ever have been maintained by such a romancer as M. Zola, in his work on the *Roman Expérimental*, seems to reveal an obtuseness to the disproof conveyed in his own novels which, in a French writer, is singular indeed. To be sure that author--whose powers in story-telling, rightfully and wrongfully exercised, may be partly owing to the fact that he is not a critic--does in a measure concede something in the qualified counsel that the novel should keep as close to reality *as it can*; a remark which may be interpreted with infinite latitude, and would no doubt have been cheerfully accepted by Dumas *père* or Mrs. Radcliffe. It implies discriminative choice; and if we grant that we grant all. But to maintain in theory what he abandons in practice, to subscribe to rules and to work by instinct, is a proceeding not confined to the author of *Germinal* and *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*.

The reasons that make against such conformation of storywriting to scientific processes have been set forth so many times in examining the theories of the realist, that it is not necessary to recapitulate them here. Admitting the desirability, the impossibility of reproducing in its entirety the phantasmagoria of experience with infinite and atomic truth, without shadow, relevancy, or subordination, is not the least of them. The fallacy appears to owe its origin to the just perception that with our widened knowledge of the universe and its forces, and man's position therein,

narrative, to be artistically convincing, must adjust itself to the new alignment, as would also artistic works in form and colour, if further spectacles in their sphere could be presented. Nothing but the illusion of truth can permanently please, and when the old illusions begin to be penetrated, a more natural magic has to be supplied.

Creativeness in its full and ancient sense--the making a thing or situation out of nothing that ever was before--is apparently ceasing to satisfy a world which no longer believes in the abnormal--ceasing at least to satisfy the van-couriers of taste; and creative fancy has accordingly to give more and more place to realism, that is, to an artificiality distilled from the fruits of closest observation.

This is the meaning deducible from the work of the realists, however stringently they themselves may define realism in terms. Realism is an unfortunate, an ambiguous word, which has been taken up by literary society like a view-halloo, and has been assumed in some places to mean copyism, and in others pruriency, and has led to two classes of delineators being included in one condemnation.

Just as bad a word is one used to express a consequence of this development, namely "brutality," a term which, first applied by French critics, has since spread over the English school like the other. It aptly hits off the immediate impression of the thing meant; but it has the disadvantage of defining impartiality as a passion, and a plan as a caprice. It certainly is very far from truly expressing the aims and methods of conscientious and well-intentioned authors who, notwithstanding their excesses, errors, and rickety theories, attempt to narrate the *vérité vraie*.

To return for a moment to the theories of the scientific realists. Every friend to the novel should and must be in sympathy with their error, even while distinctly perceiving it. Though not true, it is well founded. To advance realism as complete copyism, to call the idle trade of story-telling a science, is the hyperbolic flight of an admirable enthusiasm, the exaggerated cry of an honest reaction from the false, in which the truth has been impetuously approached and overleapt in fault of lighted on.

Possibly, if we only wait, the third something, akin to perfection, will exhibit itself on its due pedestal. How that third something may be induced to hasten its presence, who shall say? Hardy the English critic.

But this appertains to the Art of novel-writing, and is outside the immediate subject. To turn to the "science"...Yet what is the use? Its very comprehensiveness renders the attempt to dwell upon it a futility. Being an observative responsiveness to everything within the cycle of the suns that has to do with actual life, it is easier to say what it is not than to categorise its *summa genera*. It is not, for example, the paying of a great regard to adventitious externals to the neglect of vital qualities, not a precision about the outside of the platter and an obtuseness to the contents. An accomplished lady once confessed to the writer that she could never be in a room two minutes without knowing every article of furniture it contained and every detail in the attire of the inmates, and, when she left, remembering every remark. Here was a person, one might feel for the moment, who could prime herself to an unlimited extent and at the briefest notice in the scientific data of fiction; one who, assuming her to have some slight artistic power, was a born novelist. To explain why such a keen eye to the superficial does not imply a sensitiveness to the intrinsic is a psychological matter beyond the scope of these notes; but that a blindness to material particulars often accompanies a quick perception of the more ethereal characteristics of humanity, experience continually shows.

A sight for the finer qualities of existence, an ear for the "still sad music of humanity," are not to be acquired by the outer sense alone, close as their powers in photography may be. What cannot be discerned by eye and ear, what may be apprehended only by the mental tactility that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all of its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a more accurate delineator of human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of external observation, but without that sympathy. To see in half and quarter views the whole picture, to catch from a few bars the whole tune, is the intuitive power that supplies the would-be stoyrwriter with the scientific bases for his pursuit. He may not count the dishes at a feast, or accurately estimate the value of the jewels in a lady's diadem; but through the smoke of those dishes, and the rays from these jewels, he sees written on the wall:--

We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.

Thus, as aforesaid, an attempt to set forth the Science of Fiction in calculable pages is futility; it is to write a whole library of human philosophy, with instructions how to feel.

Once in a crowd a listener heard a needy and illiterate woman saying of another poor and haggard woman who had lost her little son years before: "You can see the ghost of that child in her face even now."

That speaker was one who, though she could probably neither read nor write, had the true means towards the "Science" of Fiction innate within her; a power of observation informed by a living heart. Had she been trained in the technicalities, she might have fashioned her view of mortality with good effect; a reflection which leads to a conjecture that, perhaps, true novelists, like poets, are born, not made.

(Reproduced from Harold Orel, ed. *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*. London: Macmillan, 1966. 134-138).

Source:

https://people.stfx.ca/rnemesva/hardy/science.html

Post-Bellum Literature: American Regionalism, Realism, and Naturalism (The Literature of The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era)

American realism is a literary and artistic movement that emerged in the late nineteenth century in response to Romanticism. The most popular American realists are William Dean Howells, Henry James, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, and Kate Chopin. Although the realist school appeared first in Europe, American realism appeared in the late nineteenth century and used different methods and has different features. In Europe, realism is associated with writers like Emile Zola, Gustave Flaubert, Honoré de Balzac, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ivan Tourguenyev, Huan Valéra, José María de Pereda**,** Charles Dickens, and George Eliot, to name only a few. Their writings highlighted the moral and sometimes sexual conditions of the lower class. In the United States, however, many writers at the beginning resisted these themes. It was in the late 19th century, with the rise of a new generation of muckrakers and naturalists that Americans liberated themselves from the yolks of puritanism, optimism, and idealism. The realist movement began in the United States shortly after the Civil War (1865).

Local Color/ Regional Literature in USA: Regional literature refers ro fiction and sometimes poetry that puts emphasis on dialects, customs, traditions, topography, and other aspects that are specific to a specific state or a region. Regional literature was influenced by Southwestern Humor which was dominant during the Civil War. In regional literature, one can find romanticism because the setting is often rural, distant, and exotic. However, the presence of the exotic does not always mean that the work belongs to american romantic tradition. Twain's *Huck Finn* is an example of regional literature, but despite the presence of nostalgia and sentimentality, there is a sense of accuracy of description that reminds us of realistic literature.

Regional literature was practiced by many writers in different regions. In New England, we have Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and Sarah Orne Jewett. In the South we have Kate Chopin and Charles W. Chesnutt while in the Midwest and the West, we have Hamlin Garland, Bret Harte, and of course Mark Twain. The aforementioned writers wrote novels, tall tales, and short stories (more precisely sketches) and used dialects to achieve authenticity.

Naturalism: is a link between two artistic movements: realism and modernism. Naturalism and realism challenged idealism that characterized the romantic movement and attempted to explain and portray the outside world 'faithfully' and 'truthfully'. Naturalism took a step further by adding philosophy and science to emphasize objectivity. In the USA, both movements developed thanks to investigative journalists (muckrakers) whose main objective was to expose corruption in business and politics mainly after the Civil War. Crane, Norris, Dreiser, to name only a few, worked as journalists and newspaper reporters. Their careers helped them to give a sense of reality to their novels and short stories. It should be noted that the muckrakers were very influential between 1902 and 1912.

Unlike realists, naturalists portrayed life as a harsh affair and insisted on heredity and environment. They also studied the world of the poor because they believed that life should be the subject of art. Most of these writers were influenced by the works and theories of philosophers, anthropologists, and scientists like the works of Gregor Mendel (the father of genetics and laws of heredity), Friedrick Max Muller, Charles Sanders Pierce (the founder of pragmatism) Johan Friedrich Blumenbach (the founder of anthropology), Max Nordan, Herbert Spencer, and of course Charles Darwin and Karl Marx.

The late 19th century and beginning of the 20th century was the age of the new tycoons, the capitalists, the financiers, and the robber barons. Upton Sinclair and his contemporaries (Theodor Dreiser, Jack London and later John Dos Passos and Richard Wright) saw socialism as a possibility to fight against capitalism.

Case Studies: Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Jack London's "To Build a Fire"

1. Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*

Objectives:

- Introducing the Picaresque Novel (le roman picaresque, novela picaresca)
- Understanding aspects of the picaresque novel
- Explaining local color in the novel
- Understanding Twain's style of writing
- Analyzing other aspects

What is a picaresque novel?

The Picaresque Novel is a genre of prose that relates the adventures of a rogue. The picaresque novel has an episodic structure and is usually written in the first person. The main character is a picaro (a rogue), and the language is so real.

Classroom Activities: Understanding and Commenting on Mark Twain's Style

What is style? What are the different types of style? What do we mean by colloquial style? What is regional style? What is 'local color'?

Style and Realism in Mark Twain's *Huck Finn*

The undebatable success of *Huckleberry Finn* lies in the skillful transcription of AMERICAN oral language. The language used in the novel cannot be found in American novels and short stories like Irving' "Rip Van Winkle", Poe "The Fall of the House of Usher", or Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. The time of the well-polished style is over, and the influence of English literature is ancient history. From the very opening lines, the language is informal and spontaneous that we hear from an adolescent. This language is so persuasive; it is the language of the ordinary American. If puritan writers chose the plain style, Twain opted for the vernacular and the familiar. *Huckleberry Finn* is not a novel of development. Unlike other 19th century novels told in the first person, Twain's novel is not a retrospective story. It is a story of experience; the time of narration is not distant from the time of action.

The eponymous hero frees himself from his creator's tutelage and addresses the readers in the first lines reminding them that he has already appeared in another story written by Mr. Mark Twain. Surprisingly, the author is criticized for having taken some liberties with the truth in the previous novel. By doing this, the little hero recovers his voice and solemnly affirm that the evidence to be given shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

It is important to note that Twain explained in what he called "Explanatory Note" that he used various dialects:

> A number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; theextremest form of the backwoods South Western dialect; the ordinary'Pike County' dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. Theshadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guess work;but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several patterns of speech.

The note demonstrates the author's concern for linguistic accuracy. Before composing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain wrote sketches and short stories in which he experimented with regional literature. He was influenced by many writers / humorists like George Washington Harris, Johnson Jones Hooper, Thomas Bangs Thorpe. His first successful long short story or tall tale is entitled "The Famous Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1865). Later, he started to recite pages from his works. Clearly, his mastery of regional dialects come from his experiences as an orator and a skilled storyteller. The spelling mistakes, solecisms (sentences that violate grammatical rules), improprieties, and incorrectnesses are so common in the narrative. Grammatical negligence is not a coincidence as we will see.

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, stylistically, is interesting. Scholars have praised Twain's use of colloquial English to give a new lease of life to American literature and break with romantic writers. The use of the vernacular should not be seen as a weakness. Twain, a regionalist and a realist writer, wanted to make his readers see Huck as a naive boy. Besides, the protagonist is an educated adolescent and we see the world through his eyes.

Before seeing some examples of dialects and their aspects, it is interesting to mention that there are two different registers in the novel. Some characters speak in 'correct' English, others use the vernacular. For example, in the passages where Huck and Jim meet the two frauds, we can see that Twain was mocking what can be called disingenuousness. Huck's repugnance can be felt in the passages where we see the King and Duke engineering to cheat the Wilks family. The King, who plays the role of a preacher and brokenhearted uncle, gives a sophisticated speech that is different from Huck's simple, colloquial style. Another white character who uses standard English is Judge Thatcher.

Huck and Tom are different. Tom is educated and sees the world differently. He always exaggerates and is concerned with doing things correctly. He often refers to his favorite books like Robin Hood and The Arabian Nights. Huck, in contrast, is more realistic. He reads the world in a different way and is guided by common sense. Indeed, Huck is surprised when Tom accepts to help him steal Jim because he believes that only people of low status like him can accept to go to hell.

To understand what and how many dialects are spoken in the novel, a linguistic analysis of the speech of the characters in the novel is indispensable. In what follows, I divide the speech varieties into two categories: the dialects used by whites and the dialects spoken by blacks. It seems that there are more than seven dialects spoken by white characters. In his 'Introductory Note', Twain named some dialects (6 dialects in total) and mentioned something like "the extremest form of the backwoods South-Western dialect".

One of the speech varieties used in the novel is African American dialect (Black English) used in the South. This variety is characterized by the use of 'was' instead of 'were', the use of 'been' as the perfective, the use of 'done' instead of 'did', the use of done-perfect construction without the auxiliary 'have', the use of past suffixe 'ed' with irregular verbs, and so on. Some pronouns take different forms like 'dis', 'dat', 'dey', 'em', and so on. Phonologically, Black English is characterized by the omission of the sound r (like in 'thoo' instead of 'through'), palatalization (like in 'dish-yer' instead of 'this here'), the substitution of th with f (like in 'mouf'

instead of ‘'mouth'), the substitution of th with d (like in ‘dese’ instead of 'these'), and the use of prefix ‘on’ instead on ‘un’ (in ‘oneasy’ but not ‘uneasy’). There also other aspects that are found in Pike (the dialect spoken by Huck) like: final consonant cluster reduction (‘ole’ instead of 'old'), deletion of initial unstressed syllables marked by the use of an apostrophe ('crease instead of 'increase'), and epithetic t or in other words, the use of ‘t’ at the end of some words (‘wunst’ in 'once’).

Huck speaks a dialect largely spoken in Missouri. This variety is called Pike dialect which is spoken in the South (more precisely in Pike County, Missouri) by white people. This dialect is characterized by the use of double negation, the negation inversion, and the use of present tense third person s with the pronoun I. Huck’s dialect is different from other dialects spoken by other white characters (Arkansas Gossips, Judith Loftus, King, Bricksville Loafers, Aunt Sally, Uncle Silas, Raftsmen, Sir Walter Scott, and Pap Finn). Other examples of Pike dialect include: jest for 'just,' ‘jint’ for ‘joint,' ‘fur’ instead of 'for,' 'warn't for 'wasn't,' ‘ketched’ for 'caught,' ‘throwed’ for 'threw,' unmarked plurals like in ‘five pound’, and so on.

Readers should know that the inconsistencies in the characters’ dialects are not deliberate mistakes. Twain took many years to compose his novel. He even abandoned it and returned to it later. fifths. Apparently, Twain did not pay attention to these inconsistencies before sending his final draft to the publisher. The dialects can be summarized as follows:

Black English spoken in Missouri (Negro Dialect): Jim and other four characters

Southwestern: Arkansas Gossips

Standard Pike County: Huck, Tom, Aunt Polly, Ben Rogers, Pap, Judith Loftus

Modified "Pike County": Thieves on the Sir Walter Scott

Modified "Pike County": King

Modified "Pike County": Bricksville Loafers

Modified "Pike County": Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas Phelps*

*This classification was taken from a linguistic study of dialects in Twain’s novel. The article is titled “The Dialects in Huckleberry Finn” and written by David Carkeet in 1979.

Assignment: Students are asked to choose a passage and write an appreciation, paying particular attention to its stylistic features.

Activity 2: Commenting on Twain's Portrayal of 19th Century America

A Tale of Two Eras: Mark Twain's *Huck Finn* as a Commentary on Antebellum and Postbellum America

An important aspect of Mark Twain's novel is the setting. Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is set in the South before the Civil War. Twain's South is not romanticized simply because Twain commented on the antebellum South from the perspective of man who witnessed the horrors of the Civil War. The novel was conceived and composed after the era of Reconstruction (1865–77). Scholars have often been divided between those who think that Twain escaped the issue of race during Reconstruction while others believe that he commented on it. In order to understand the novel, one should relate it to its setting and also the context of its composition; i.e., the election of 1876 which led to the end of Reconstruction, the Compromise of 1877, and the removal of Federal troops from the South. Twain started *Huckleberry Finn* in 1876 and finished it in 1883 which coincided with the year that the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act illegal.

The novel's greatness lies in its ability to show us the South's splendor and ordinariness at the same time. Few writers have truly portrayed 19th century America as Twain did. Twain spent his teenage years and early twenties traveling in different parts of the United States, and he was so familiar with the Mississippi River because he was a riverboat pilot. Although other writers like Bret Harte, Willa Cather, and Kate Chopin wrote about their regions and were famous mainly for regional literature and local color, it can be said that Twain's literary realism was based on his broad experience and long travels.

Twain's novel emphasizes the particular aspects of its setting and characters like space, time, beliefs, ideas, and even stereotypes. Twain, who is a key figure in regional literature, wrote many sketches and short stories where he used local color. For example, he wrote "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," about an old mining camp in California and the people that inhabited a local hostelry. His two novels *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The*

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, refer to his voyages up and down the Mississippi River. As said earlier, *Huckleberry Finn* is notable for its realistic representation of the beauty and plainness of the South. In fact, it offers a general analysis of American society during the 19th century. This representation surpasses the fundamentals of regional literature to expose racial injustice and discrimination. The novel brilliantly dramatizes and satirizes 19th century traditional South, where Christians mistreat Blacks and children. The white characters shoot their neighbors and cheat people too. Indeed, Twain began writing his novel in 1876 and worked on it for 7 years before publishing it in 1884. Forty years separate the publication date and the novel's setting. However, Twain vividly and skillfully resuscitated the pre-Civil War South by reviving his childhood experiences in Hannibal. The fictional town of St. Petersburg is a copy of Hannibal where Twain grew up.

Twain's use of local color was not to romanticize the South. One has to read the introductory note and the opening paragraph to understand the author's project. Satire runs deep in the novel and can be captured right from the beginning. The novel caustically critiques the antebellum period. The hero, who is a white adolescent, befriends a slave, and it is through their adventures that the writer comments on the white southerners' double standards and artificiality. The story depicts the events foregoing the Civil War and prefigures the maintenance of slavery in the South. Although Mark Twain did not refer directly to abolitionism and the Compromise of 1850, any reader familiar with American history can feel that the book was written to show that the writer wanted his readers to see that the South has not improved in terms of treating black Americans.

It is indispensable to note that during the antebellum period, slavery divided America into free and slaveholding states. 18 states were free while 15 were slave-holding. The North was against slavery, but the South was not. The splitting up began to amplify, a fact that hard-pressed the slave-holding states and free states to plunge into a gory civil war.

It is somehow startling and unexpected to see that Twain did not give us a romantic view of the pre-civil war North. In one scene, Judith Loftus, who lives in Illinois that was considered a free territory, accuses Jim of murdering Pap Finn. As a result, Jim is hunted by the men of the town. The incident seems in some way inconsistent when we are not familiar with the history of slavery in America and we do not pay attention to the first chapters that explain Missouri's policies and laws regarding slaves. Jim, Miss Watson's slave, does not work in plantations. Jim runs away because he does not want Miss Watson to sell him to another master from Louisiana. Jim did not want to be sold down because he would be separated from his family. Jim had a wife and children who lived with another owner in close proximity. Many readers and critics accused Twain of caricaturing Jim, but a closer look reveals that Twain Jim appears as an affectionate person. After all, slaves before the Civil War did not have many rights and were seen as inferior

to white Americans. It is true that in the second chapter, Jim is portrayed as an article of trade; however, throughout the novel, we discover that he is a human being.

In one scene, Jim talks about asking help from an abolitionist to capture his wife and children in order to join him. Huck's reaction is quite contradictory; this should not be read as a sign of racism. Huck sees abolitionists negatively because he was raised by white people. This reaction shows that even the writer held a negative opinion about northerners and more precisely abolitionists because most of them were upper class whites. Huck's anti-abolition sentiment was ordinary and justified back then.

Huck rejects the idea of abandoning Jim because he promised to keep Jim out of harm's way. Abolition did bring an end to discrimination neither against blacks nor against the whites who helped slaves. The novel is set during the 1840s before The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave. The law allowed whites to hunt slave and return them to slavery. In 1850, the North ended slaveholding in Washington D.C. and admitted New Mexico and California as free states; however, the South passed Fugitive Slave Law and asked the Congress to stop interfering with the slave trade. This compromise or deal ended the dreams of slaves.

Huck's decision to not deliver Jim to the slave hunters is a moral lesson that reminds us of Anthony Burns' story. During the 1840s, a network to help and protect slaves to run away from the South was created. The network was called the Underground Railroad. In 1854, a man named Anthony Burns escaped his master named Charles Suttle of Alexandria in Virginia but was recaptured in Boston and escorted by 2000 soldiers to a ship that took him back to the South. There was a mob that attempted to free him. The story of this runaway slave is echoed in Twain's novel.

Twain understood that the Civil War did not end slavery. The path to freedom and equality was very long and bitter. The economic damage and the trauma on both sides (whites and blacks) caused by the war of session were not trivial. Southern states approved "Black Codes," to have more control on blacks and perpetuate physical and psychological cruelty. The government sent thousands of soldiers to the South to curb violence and bigotry but did not succeed. The Jim Crow South (or post-bellum South) was characterized by inexcusable vindictiveness towards former slaves, and racial inequality became a major aspect of this era. In fact, Twain was so cynical, and his doubt can be felt throughout his novel. For instance, the issue lynching is dealt with in the novel through three characters: the Duke, the Dauphin, and Colonel Sherburn. This gentleman gave a powerful speech in which we could see the author's opinion about the matter in the scene where the duke and dauphin performed *The Royal Nonesuch*. During this performance, Colonel Sherburn shots Boggs and is accused of murder.

Buck Harkness decides that Sherburn should be lynched. The shooting scene is followed by an excruciating scene where we see an irritated crowd going to Sherburn's house. The man delivers a powerful speech where he says:

> The idea of *you* lynching anybody! It's amusing. The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to lynch a *man!* Because you're brave enough to tar and feather poor friendless cast-out women that come along here, did that make you think you had grit enough to lay your hands on a *man?* Why, a *man's* safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind—as long as it's day-time and you're not behind him.33 "Do I know you? I know you clear through. I was born and raised in the South, and I've lived in the North; so I know the average all around. The average man's a coward.

The problem of lynching, in fact, was so common during the era of Reconstruction. The scene in Twain's novel is reminiscent of facts and stories about former slaves being tortured, mutilated, and burned to death by white southerners told in the South at that time. The author's sentiment of revulsion is described from Huck's perspective:

> And pretty soon you'd hear a loafer sing out, "Hi! *so* boy! sick him,Tige!" and away the sow would go, squealing most horrible, with a dog or two swinging to each ear, and three or four dozen more a-coming; and then you would see all the loafers get up and watch the thing out of sight, and laugh at the fun and look grateful for the noise. Then they'd settle back again till there was a dog-fight. There couldn't anything wake them up all over, and make them happy all over, like a dog-fight—unless it might be putting turpentine on a stray dog and setting fire to him, or tying a tin pan to his tail and see him run himself to death.

Mob violence was a kind of amusement among white southerners especially the members of KKK. It should be noted that this organization was founded in 1865 and not before the Civil War.

Twain also commented on the people who came from the North to make money in the South. The Northern carpetbaggers came after the Civil War. Two characters who remind us of carpetbaggers are the two frauds: the duke and dauphin. They appear in the novel carrying carpet bags and they are described by Huck as mean humbugs and frauds. The two men travel to the South to steal money and scam people at a religious event. They also try to take the inheritance from orphans and sell Jim to the Phelps. The two northerners are described as

brainless yet very dangerous. In the mob scene, they are tarred and feathered as a sign of punishment.

To conclude, Twain's most popular novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a critique of pre-Civil War and Reconstruction although much of its events are set before the Civil War.

Man and Nature in American Literature: Jack London's "To Build a Fire" as an Example

Man's relationship with Nature is a recurrent motif and theme in American literature. In fact, it appears in the first documents recorded by the European explorers and founding fathers. It is also a main theme of 19th century literature. A large body of romantic literature examines the idea of man versus nature; for example, Thoreau's *Walden* offers an optimistic view of Nature characteristic of the literature of the period. However, while Emerson, Melville, and Thoreau approached Nature from a philosophical / metaphysical perspective seeing it as a source of absolute truth, London and his contemporaries had a quite skeptical attitude. Nature, according to American naturalists, does not give us answers. Naturalists go beyond dark romanticism when it comes to their way of approaching Nature. Dark Romantics attempted to explain the spiritual beauty of Nature that sometimes can be evil. In contrast, Nature, according to naturalists, is simply unresponsive and indifferent.

Through his tragic fable / parable "To Build a Fire", Jack London, an outstanding adventurer and storyteller, portrays the wild North and more precisely the Klondike in the late nineteenth century. Nature, according to London, is both beautiful and ruthless. The short story is also about man and nature, loneliness, perseverance, despair, and wisdom. The short story follows the journey of a *chechaquo* traveling in the Yukon. The nameless character knows little of the new world around him. The man walks with his dog as his only companion and has to face the extreme cold to join his comrades in the evening who have taken another path. The journey turns into a struggle where fire becomes the only hope to survive the cruelty of Nature.

It is important to remember that two there are two versions of the short story, published six years apart. The first, published in 1902, is intended for a young audience. In fact, London wrote his short story while sailing from San Francisco to Hawaii on his boat. He revised his draft many times; the version published in Youth's Companion (1902) is different from that published in Century (1908) and in Lost Face (1910). In the first version, the man is called Tom Vincent. The main character travels alone. The story is less dramatic; the last fire does not go out, and the man survives and joins the camp. The ending is reminiscent of Lafontaine's fables; the man, who had defied the warnings of an old man living on Sulfur Creek learns his lesson "NEVER TRAVEL ALONE". The second version is enriched with many details. The setting is fully described and emphasized. Thus, in the 1908 version, the man is nameless (Everyman?) and walks through the snow with a dog (a husky) at his side. The ending is tragic as we see the protagonist fighting against frost, fear, and despair. He learns too late that instinct is more

important than civilization. Man is not the master of nature is the lesson that the man and reader learn from this universal story.

In Jack London's "To Build a Fire", the nameless narrator starts his story by describing the environment as intimidating and ominous:

> Day had broken cold and grey, exceedingly cold and grey, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth- bank, where a dim and little-travelled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at his watch. It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun.

The narrator's emphasis on the absence of sun on a clear day is interesting. The 'subtle gloom' caused by the absence of the sun presages danger. This idea is repeated in the third paragraph as we read: "But all this--the mysterious, far-reaching hairline trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all--made no impression on the man". According to the narrator, the nameless protagonist does not seem to pay attention to the obvious signs. Right from the beginning, we understand that the protagonist has made an error of judgment by ignoring and disrespecting the signs. The environment is uninviting and gloomy:

> The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white, rolling in gentle undulations where the ice-jams of the freeze-up had formed. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hair-line that curved and twisted from around the sprucecovered island to the south, and that curved and twisted away into the north, where it disappeared behind another spruce-covered island. This dark hair-line was the trail--the main trail--that led south five hundred miles to the Chilcoot Pass, Dyea, and salt water; and that led north seventy miles to Dawson, and still on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael on Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more.

Nature in the text is more than a mere background; in fact, it is a major character and plays the role of the man's enemy and antagonist. It is ruthless and cruel. Nature in this short text constantly reminds us of man's weakness. London was familiar with the pitiless North since he went in 1897 to the Klondike and tried to make a fortune. One year later, he sent a report to California where he recorded his experience. The Klondike is present in all his famous short stories (around 76 short stories).

London, through his narrator, makes it clear that man is safer when his is in community. Man is likely to survive when he has imagination too. The man's frailty, lack of imagination, overconfidence, and arrogance lead him towards self-destruction:

> The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty odd degrees of frost. Such a fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear-flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head.

The above quoted passages show that man's knowledge of nature is important but not always sufficient. The protagonist does not survive because he does not know how to use his knowledge correctly. His lack of wisdom makes his knowledge ineffectual. Jack London traveled a lot and knew that man should never travel alone. The protagonist thinks that he is equal to Nature; his way of ignoring temperature for example when he says that "the temperature did not matter" suggests his lack of perception. It is only when his hands start freezing that he remembers the old-timers recommendations. The man's intuition is clouded by his disproportionate conceit. Even his husky "was depressed by the tremendous cold. It knew that it was no time for traveling" as the narrator tells us.

Clearly, London was interested in the theme of Man versus Nature, and more importantly human nature versus Nature. This is made obvious in the passages that explain the differences between the man and his companion (the dog). The protagonist theorizes a lot and ignores the old timer's wisdom unlike his dog that uses his instinctual knowledge.

Instead of using his instinctual knowledge, the man uses his civilized knowledge which is useless when one is put in a brutal environment. His watch, a sign of civilization, is of no help. The tragic end reminds us of Darwin's theory: "It is not the most intellectual of the species that

survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself".