University of Mohamed Boudief
Department of Letters and English Language
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Teacher: Khaoula REBAHI

LESSON FOUR:

The Romantic Period 1798-1832

Great change swept the Western world at the end of the 18th century. A successful revolution in America and an ongoing one in France shattered the political stability of the day. In Britain, revolutions in industry and agriculture rocked the social and economic structure of the nation. Reflecting and responding to these dramatic changes was a movement that came to be called romanticism, which dominated Western intellectual and artistic life in the early 19th century.

Romanticism was an outgrowth of 18th-century neoclassicism as well as a reaction against it. The spiritual father of the movement was the French Enlightenment thinker Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's argument that human society is based on a contract between the government and the governed echoed earlier ideas of England's John Locke and helped inspire the French Revolution. Rousseau attributed evil not to human nature but to society, insisting that in the natural state a human being was essentially good and happy—a "noble savage." This idealization of nature and human beings became basic tenets of romantic thinking. Also basic was an emphasis on the individual, the personal, and the emotional — in sharp contrast to the emphasis on society, science, and reason that had been at the root of neoclassical thought.

Literary romanticism was pioneered in Germany by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and in Britain by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. However, unlike the artistic ideals of neoclassicism, those of romanticism did not reflect the mainstream views of British society. During its peak period from 1798 to 1832, while the political instability and violence emanating from continental Europe prompted a conservative reaction throughout most levels of British society, romanticism flowered mainly as a movement of protest—a powerful expression of a desire for personal freedom and radical reform.

William Pitt the Younger

In the 1780s, before the conservative reaction set in, the need for reform was apparent not only to members of Britain's more liberal Whig party but also to the new Tory Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger (son of the prime minister who led Britain through the Seven Years' War). The nation's growing cities were beset with a host of problems, including crime and poor sanitation. Child labour and other

factory abuses were not being addressed, the emerging industrial centres in the north and west had no representation in Parliament, and archaic laws denied rights to many religious groups, including the Catholic majority in Ireland. Britain had lost its American colonies, primarily because of incompetent management, and the rest of its overseas empire faced a number of difficulties, ranging from corruption in India to the evils of the slave trade.

Although Pitt came to power as a reformer, his reform plans were pushed aside when the French Revolution erupted in 1789. Initial British sympathy for the revolution soon died down when France's revolutionary moderates fell from power. The Whig politician Edmund Burke, who had supported the American Revolution, was among the first to attack the excesses of the increasingly radical government of France. Burke's attacks created a rift within the Whig party, leaving the party's leader, Charles James Fox, with little support. As the violence of the French radicals increased, so did the British reaction, especially when France began exporting revolution beyond its borders. In 1793, after French troops invaded Holland, Britain entered upon a war with France that would ultimately last for over 25 years. Pitt was forced to succumb to fearful voices equating all reform efforts with revolution and arguing for domestic repression to keep Britain from falling victim to the violence and anarchy seen in France.

Near the end of the century, rebellious Irishmen, encouraged by the promise of French assistance, rose up against their British masters. Though this rebellion was quelled after poor weather prevented a major French landing, the threat of a French invasion of Britain by way of Ireland remained. To combat the threat, Pitt offered to sponsor various reforms, including the granting of voting rights to Roman Catholics, if the Irish Parliament would agree to dissolve itself and join politically with the British Parliament. The passage of the Act of Union in 1800 formalized this arrangement, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but George III—still on the throne despite his periodic bouts of madness—refused to allow voting rights for Catholics. Pitt was forced to resign, just when his nation needed him most—when the brilliant Corsican general Napoleon Bonaparte had emerged as the dominant force on the French political scene.

The Rise and Fall of Napoleon

In late 1799, when Napoleon had taken control of France's revolutionary government, his charisma and acceptance of democratic principles had won him the admiration of reform-minded intellectuals throughout Europe. Soon, however, his hunger for power became clear. In 1804 he crowned himself emperor of France, and over the next several years his military and political manoeuvres allowed him to establish control over most of continental Europe. Called back to power in 1804, Pitt tried to prepare Britain for a seemingly inevitable French invasion. Fortunately, in 1805 the British fleet under Horatio Nelson succeeded in destroying the French navy in the Battle of Trafalgar off the coast of Spain, ending

the threat of invasion. The victory was bittersweet, however, for Nelson himself was killed in the battle, and within months Pitt was also gone, dying of overwork at the age of 46.

His plans of invasion thwarted, Napoleon tried to break Britain economically by closing the ports of continental Europe to British trade. Tightening his grip on the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), Napoleon deposed the Spanish king and placed his brother Joseph on the throne. In the "Peninsular War" that followed, British troops—commanded first by Sir John Moore (killed in action in 1809) and then by Sir Arthur Wellesley—gradually liberated the Iberian Peninsula from French control. In 1811, with the Peninsular War in full swing, George III was declared insane and his eldest son and heir—George, Prince of Wales—became Britain's regent, or acting ruler. A spendthrift with loose personal morals, Prince George had been a gambling buddy of the now-deceased Whig leader Charles James Fox and (unlike George III) had always favoured the Whigs. Now, however, he abandoned them and sided with the Tories, once again quashing hopes of domestic reform. Anyone who criticized the regent too openly became subject to arrest and imprisonment.

In 1812, Napoleon made the mistake of invading Russia, a nation with which he had enjoyed an uneasy peace. Though his army got as far as Moscow, the brutal Russian winter forced it into a retreat during which starvation, the freezing weather, and Cossack raids managed to kill off most of the French troops. Meanwhile, Wellesley's British forces were closing in on France from the south. At the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, the nations allied against Napoleon dealt him what seemed a death blow. When the allied forces entered Paris a year later, Napoleon was captured and exiled to the island of Elba; but while allied ministers met to decide Europe's fate at the Congress of Vienna, Napoleon escaped and returned to the French throne for the so-called Hundred Days. He was finally defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in Belgium in 1815 and exiled to the more remote island of St. Helena. Wellesley (recently ennobled as the duke of Wellington), who commanded the British troops that bore the brunt of the battle, was the hero of the hour, and "to meet one's Waterloo" became synonymous with "to suffer a decisive defeat."

The Aftermath of the War

The end of the war with France did not mean an immediate end to reactionary British domestic policies, for the fear of revolution still remained strong. To Britain's growing mass of restless labourers were added thousands of discharged veterans returning to a nation in which jobs were scarce, wages low, and poverty widespread. Large landowners successfully pressured the Tory government to continue the Corn Laws, which barred cheap foreign grain from British markets and so kept the price of food high. Industry, in contrast, operated under the economic philosophy of **laissez-faire capitalism**, which held that government should not interfere in private enterprise. Thus, workers remained at the mercy of factory owners. They were even forbidden from banding together in labour unions that might pressure owners into improving work conditions and wages.

The Regency ended in 1820, when George III died and the Prince of Wales officially took the throne as George IV. Over the next several years, the Tories gradually began to institute some of the reforms that the nation so sorely needed. Sir Robert Peel revamped Britain's harsh criminal code and organized the nation's first professional civilian police force. The duke of Wellington, now serving as prime minister, pushed the Catholic Emancipation Act through Parliament in 1829, just in time to allow the newly elected Irish Catholic political leader Daniel O'Connell to take his seat in the House of Commons. Wellington's more conservative fellow Tories opposed the bill, however, and like Pitt before him, he was forced to resign over the issue. Thus, the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832, which more fairly distributed seats in Parliament and extended the vote to middle-class men, would be a Whig effort, not a Tory one. This landmark bill marks the end of the romantic period and the start of the mainstream reform efforts that characterized the dawning Victorian era.

Cultural Influences

Revolutions represented a challenge to the 18th century political, social, religious, philosophical and artistic ideals that were no longer considered adequate. The balance and symmetry of the early 18th century society was in danger of collapsing under the weight of new ideas about man and nature, freedom and democracy, art and literature. By the end of the century, many poets and artists had started reacting against the suppression of human nature. They refused to treat man as a "social animal" and believed in the importance of the individual and his creative potential. These artists were called Romantics.

The word "**romantic**" comes from the French word "roman", the name for medieval tales written in Romanic (Vernacular French) dialect. The term was initially used in the middle of the 17th century in a derogatory way to mean "exaggerated, unconvincing". Later, it took on a positive meaning and described the expression of personal feelings and emotions. Romanticism was a European cultural movement which involved writers, artists and philosophers in Germany, France, Italy and England. In France, Rousseau called into question the influence of civilization upon man and placed man’s emotional capacities over "reason". **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (1712–1778) was a Genevan philosopher, writer, composer, and one of the main architects of the Romantic movement in Europe. He argued that private property was the start of civilization, inequality, murders and wars. A central theme in his work is the belief that society ruins man and that happiness is to be found by living in a simple way without the trappings of civilization. German philosophers gave a new importance to the imaginative power of the individual human mind. The mind, or "ego", was seen to be the actual creator of the world it perceived.

The theories of German philosopher **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804) questioned the validity of scientific empiricism. In 1781 he published his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he attempted to determine what we can and cannot know through the use of reason independent of all experience. Briefly, he came to the conclusion that we could come to know an external world through experience, but our knowledge about it was limited by the limited terms in which the mind can think: if we can only comprehend things in terms

of cause and effect, then we can only know causes and effects. It follows from this that we can never know the world from the "standpoint of nowhere" and therefore we can never know the world in its entirety, neither via reason nor experience. Since the publication of his *Critique*, Immanuel Kant has been considered one of the greatest influences in all of western philosophy. In the late 18th and early 19th century, one direct line of influence from Kant is **German Idealism.**

German idealism is the name of a movement in German philosophy that began in the 1780s and lasted until the 1840s. Kant's **transcendental idealism** was a modest philosophical doctrine about the difference between appearances and things in themselves, which claimed that the objects of human cognition are appearances and not things in themselves. **Fichte** (1762–1814), **Schelling** (1775–1854), **and Hegel** (1770–1831) radicalized this view, transforming Kant's transcendental idealism into absolute idealism, which holds that things in themselves are a contradiction in terms, because a thing must be an object of our consciousness if it is to be an object at all. English writers kept pace with the shifts in philosophical mood. In the beginning of the 19th century the spirit of intellectual rebellion continued to persist in the literary works. The most significant changes took place in the field of poetry.

Romantic literature

Although the beginning of Britain's romantic period is traditionally assigned to the year 1798, aspects of romanticism are evident in earlier British literature. Writing in the dialect of Lowland Scotland, Robert Burns, who died in 1796, produced heartfelt lyrics about love, nature, and the Scottish past, many of which were meant to be sung to familiar tunes. ***William Blake***, who began publishing in the 1780s, expressed his rebellious spirit and his mystical view of the nature of good and evil in such works as The French Revolution, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and the contrasting poems of Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience.

Nevertheless, the real flowering of romanticism came with the 1798 publication of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's landmark collection Lyrical Ballads. The two men, who had first met in 1795, were united by their shared desire to explore new modes of literary expression. Wordsworth, who had visited France when the revolution began, was deeply committed to the common people and sought to express individual human experiences in a natural language. Coleridge, in poems like "Kubla Khan," focused on more exotic experiences, letting his imagination wander in realms of mystery and the supernatural. Both poets rejected the world of science and industry, feeling that insight into human experience flows most freely from communion with nature. With Wordsworth's sister, Dorothy— whose diaries reveal much about the two poets' personalities—they spent a good deal of their time in the rural Lake District of north-western England, so that they and their friend Robert Southey are sometimes referred to as the **Lake Poets**.

Wordsworth and Coleridge belonged to the so-called first generation of romantic writers. The leading poets of the second generation, which rose to prominence during the Regency, were ***Lord Byron,***

Percy** Bysshe Shelley*, ***and John Keats. Byron, in both his poetry and his personal life, helped popularize the brooding, self-absorbed romantic figure now sometimes known as the Byronic hero. Both he and his friend Shelley, a brilliant lyric poet, were members of the upper class whose radical politics and personal affairs eventually made them figures of scandal, leading to their self-imposed exile from Britain. The equally brilliant John Keats, a less-well-born acquaintance of Shelley's, also left Britain, seeking a cure for his tuberculosis in the warmer climate of Italy. All three poets died young while living abroad.

Though best known for poetry, the romantic period also was a time when many memorable works of **prose** were produced. The romantic emphasis on personal experience is evident in the fine personal essays of Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, and Thomas De Quincey, many of which first appeared in literary journals. ***Sir Walter Scott***, the most popular novelist of the day, pioneered the historical novel in his best-selling Waverley (1814), set in his native Scotland. Also popular were gothic novels of mystery and horror, such as Frankenstein (1818) by ***Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley***, the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley and the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft. Jane Austen, on the other hand, remained in many ways a neoclassical writer, penning ironic novels of manners such as Pride and Prejudice (1813) and Emma (1815). Nevertheless, Austen's introduction of more dialogue into fiction helped pave the way for the realistic novels of the Victorian era.

Romantic Poetry's Defining Features

"There was a mighty ferment in the heads of statesmen and poets, kings and people. ... It was a time of promise, a renewal of the world," wrote essayist William Hazlitt in 1 825 to describe his age of revolution and change. Critics and historians have tried to pin down the characteristics of this "mighty ferment" ever since. Here are five features of English romanticism, taken largely from Wordsworth's preface to Lyrical Ballads.

- ***A New Concept of Poetry:*** Wordsworth's emphases on personal experience and on the glorification of the individual are very different from earlier poets' emphasis on the greater world of human behaviour. To some degree, all romantic poets wrote about the intricate workings of their own minds and the complexities of their emotions.
- ***A New Spontaneity and Freedom:*** Spontaneity is part of Wordsworth's definition of poetry. The romantics were critical of the artificiality they saw in much neoclassical literature, and they placed a high value on emotional outbursts: "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!" wails Shelley in "Ode to the West Wind." This emotional freedom is matched by the free play of imagination. In his poem "Kubla Khan," Coleridge describes an elaborate palace that existed only in his mind.
- ***Love of Nature:*** Romantic poetry is often dubbed "nature poetry" because of its subject matter. But the romantics rarely use nature for its own sake; rather, they look to nature as a stimulus for their own thinking. For instance, a "beauteous evening" for Wordsworth is an occasion for spiritual contemplation.

- ***The Importance of the Commonplace:*** Wordsworth wanted to enlarge the province of poetry to include "incidents and situations from common life." Although Byron was the only aristocrat among his contemporary poets and didn't quite accept such a lowering of standards, the other romantics often chose humble subjects. They celebrated with Wordsworth the ordinary things—an early morning stroll, a field of daffodils, or a change of seasons.
- ***Fascination with the Supernatural and the Exotic:*** While Wordsworth concentrated mostly on ordinary life, Coleridge introduced mystery and magic into English romantic poetry. From the wonderfully strange journey in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to the "stately pleasure dome" of "Kubla Khan," Coleridge opened up to poetry the realm of the supernatural and the exotic. A preoccupation with the supernatural already characterized Gothic novels of the 18th century, but the romantic poets added a touch of elegance and alluring beauty to the terrors of the unknown.

England's Greatest Nature Poet

Outliving all the other major English romantic poets, **William Wordsworth** was a conservative figure by the time of his death in 1 850. Yet five decades before, with his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Wordsworth had ushered in a revolution in English poetry, championing the literary philosophy now called romanticism. Viewed as a nature poet, Wordsworth saw nature as a source of spiritual comfort to human beings. His romantic philosophy valued imagination and emotion over reason and stressed the importance of the individual. It also placed poetry at the very centre of human experience.

As a child, Wordsworth spent his free time taking in the sights and sounds of the Lake District in northern England, where his father worked as an estate manager. These happy times lasted only until he was seven, when his mother's death began a family breakup that continued with his father's death just five years later. Placed in the care of uncles, the young Wordsworth was sent to the finest schools, including Cambridge University, but he took little joy in them. He had already developed a deep appreciation for nature; by contrast, he found school life stifling and artificial.

During a summer break from Cambridge in 1790, Wordsworth and a friend hiked through France and witnessed first-hand the effects of its recent revolution. Excited by the changes he saw, Wordsworth returned to France a year later, where he fell in love with a young woman named Annette Vallon. But before the two could marry, the outbreak of war between Britain and France forced Wordsworth to return home abruptly. The growing violence and steady erosion of democratic principles in France turned Wordsworth away from his ardent support of the revolution; and with France an enemy nation, for years he could do little to help the child Annette had borne him. The entire situation filled him with guilt and anxiety.

One bright spot of Wordsworth's return to England was his reunion with his sister Dorothy, from whom he had been separated since childhood. Resolving not to be parted again, he and Dorothy moved to

the western English county of Dorset. They lived near the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whom Wordsworth had recently met. There the two men began the famous collaboration that would result in the publication of Lyrical Ballads. The poems in the collection, with their simple language and subject matter drawn largely from nature and common life, represented a sharp departure from the more formally crafted poetry of the day. Though now considered a cornerstone of England's Romantic Movement, Lyrical Ballads was praised by only a handful of critics when it was first published in 1798.

Selected Poems by Wordsworth

The Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A Poet could not be but gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Analysis

On April 15, 1802 Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy went to their friends, the Clarksons, at Eusemere. When they were coming back to Grasmere, they saw a large number of golden daffodils growing on the bank of a lake Ullswater in the Lake district. They both were astonished by the mesmeric beauty of

these daffodils which were fluttering and dancing with the light breeze. Inspired by this delightful spectacle Wordsworth composed this poem in 1804 and published it in 1807.

William Wordsworth's literary classic, *'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'* has been dissected methodically for explicating the poet's mood, the surrounding location, the allegorical meanings, and the beauty of nature in full motion. The poet's love and proximity with nature have inspired and moved generations-after-generations of poetry aficionados and young minds.

Summary of I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' describes a speaker walking aimlessly down the hills and valley when he stumbled upon a beautiful field of daffodils.

The speaker, likely William Wordsworth himself, is walking aimlessly down the hills and valley when he stumbled upon a beautiful field of daffodils. The speaker is transfixed by the daffodils seemingly waving, fluttering, and dancing along the waterside. Albeit, the lake's waves moved as fervently but the beauty of daffodils outdid with flying colors. The poet feels immensely gleeful and chirpy at this mesmerizing naturalistic sight. Amongst the company of flowers, he remains transfixed at those daffodils wavering with full vigor. Oblivious to the poet is the fact that this wondrous scenery of daffodils brings the poet immense blithe and joy when he's in a tense mood or perplexed for that matter. His heart breaths a new life and gives him exponential happiness at a sight worth a thousand words.

Themes in *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

Throughout *'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'* Wordsworth engages with themes of nature, memory, and spirituality. These three are tied together as the speaker, Wordsworth himself, moves through a beautiful landscape. He takes pleasure in the sight of the daffodils and revives his spirit in nature. At the same time, Wordsworth explores the theme of memory, as he does in other works such as *'Tintern Abbey'*. The flowers are there to comfort him in real-time but also as a memory from the past.

Structure and Form of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

The poetic form of '*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'* is composed of four stanzas of six lines each. It is an adherent to quatrain-couplet rhyming style, A-B-A-B-C-C. Every line conforms to iambic tetrameter. The poem *Daffodils* works within the a-b-a-b-c-c parameter as it uses consistent rhyming to invoke nature at each stanza's end. Moreover, it helps in creating imagery skillfully as the poet originally intended. The poem flows akin to a planned song in a rhythmic structure. Consonance and alliteration are used to create rhymes.

Literary Devices in *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

Wordsworth makes use of several literary devices in *'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud'*. These include but are not limited to similes, hyperboles, personification, and allusion. Similes are also used since the poet alludes himself to an aimless cloud, as he takes a casual stroll. Moreover, daffodils are compared to star clusters in Milky Way to explicate the magnitude of daffodils fluttering freely beside the lake. At times, hyperbole is used to explicate the immensity of the situation. The allusion of daffodils to stars spread across Milky Way is one such instance. Furthermore, the daffodils are even made anthropomorphous in order to create a human portrayal of Mother Nature in this instance.

Moreover, the poet has also used reverse personifications, equating humans to clouds, and daffodils to humans with constant movement. Using this clever tactic, the poet brings people closer to nature, becoming a hallmark of William Wordsworth's most basic yet effectual methods for relating readers with nature, appreciating its pristine glory. *Daffodils* celebrate the beauty of nature and its purity, along with bliss of solitude. He deems his solitude as an asset and inspires him to live a meaningful life.

Analysis of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

Stanza One *I wandered ..... the breeze*

In the first stanza, the poet says that he was wandering ***lonely as a Cloud that floats on high o'er vales and Hills***. The phrase refers to him being roaming around without any purpose. He was all alone like a cloud that floats high in the valley.

Usually, the clouds are not ***alone,*** but here the poet probably refers to a fragment of the cloud that moves among the hills in the valley. Unlike the clouds that are full of rain and thus move in purpose, this fragment has no particular direction to move and just roams around above the valley.

While roaming in the valley he suddenly sees ***a crowd, a host, of golden daffodils.*** The words crowd and host mean a large number of people. Hence the poet uses personification and attributes the human qualities to daffodils.

The poet calls daffodils ***golden*** rather than yellow in order to express their majesty and beauty. According to the poet, he sees a large number of daffodils ***beside the lake, beneath the trees*** i.e. along with the shores of the lake and below the trees because they are small.

The daffodils seem to be ***fluttering and dancing in the breeze***. Again the poet personifies the daffodils by showing them as flapping (wings of birds or in imaginations that of angels) and dancing (like humans) in the moving breeze.

In a way, the poet imagines as if the daffodils possess the qualities of both thus of the world and the meta world. Hence this is the example of juxtaposition in I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud.

Stanza Two *continuous ... sprightly dance*

The second stanza begins with the comparison between daffodils along the lake and stars in the Milkyway. The poet says that the daffodils ***stretched in never-ending line along the margin of a bay.*** The bay here refers to the lake.

According to the poet, the daffodils which covered the shore of the lake seemed to be unending like the stars in the sky and like them (the stars of Milkyway), they were too twinkling.

The phrase ***Ten thousand saw I at a glance*** is a **hyperbole** that means the poet saw a large number of daffodils which he could not count. The daffodils were ***Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*** The word **head** here refers to the top flower part of the plant.

Sprightly dance means lively and jubilant dance. The daffodils were thus moving their heads (flowers) in a rhythm which looked quite amazing and seemed to the poet as they were dancing.

Stanza Three *The waves … brought*

In the third stanza, the poet brings in the waves waving in the lake. The poet says that ***the waves beside them danced; but they out-did the sparkling waves in glee.***

The line means that there were waves too which seemed to be dancing in the lake, but the joyful dance of the daffodils was far better than theirs. And for a poet like Wordsworth himself, their joyful company was the ultimate source of pleasure and ecstasy.

These lines somehow reflect the ideals of the Romantic Age and its theme **return to nature.** The ultimate source of joy for the Romantics was nature and its appreciation.

Hence in the poem, the poet concludes that seeing the daffodils dancing along the la lake is the dream of every poet including him and being there is like dream coming true.

And thus the poet ***gazed—and gazed*** i.e. kept looking on the daffodils and their dance. However, he could not fully appreciate the scenery before him. ***Wealth*** here means '**happiness**'.

For the Romantics, nature and its beauty was the ultimate wealth and because it was in abundance, he could take away just a little bit of it though he kept watching them.

Stanza Four *for oft … the daffodils*

In the fourth and final stanza, the poet says that while sitting on his couch (a kind of bench) and ***in vacant*** *(when he is idle)* ***or in pensive mood*** *(when he is sorrowful),* the memories of those daffodils ***flash upon*** his ***inward eye*** i.e. his spiritual or the Romantic vision.

Their memory then becomes the source of joy in his solitude. His heart is then filled with pleasure ***and dances with the daffodils***. Thus the memory of the daffodils becomes his companion in his solitude and taking away all his sorrows and boredom make his spirit dance with them.

Poem two: My Heart Leaps Up (William Wordsworth, 1770 – 1850)

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

Analyse the poem above

William Blake (1757-1827): Blake's poetry dwelt upon his divine vision and rebelled against traditional poetic forms and techniques. He created his own mythological world with man as the central figure. His more famous poems include The Lamb, The Tyger, The Chimney Sweeper, and The Clod and the Pebble. What makes Blake's poem especially attractive for teaching in high school is he often wrote two poems with the same title–one poem negative and one poem positive, excellent for compare and contrast writing.

The Little Black Boy by William Blake

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but oh my soul is white!
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And, pointed to the east, began to say:

'Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away,
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

'And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

'For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,
Saying, 'Come out from the grove, my love and care
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice','

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

Poetry: Definition, Genres and Devices

Poetry is the expression of a thought, an idea, a concept or a story in a structured or non structuredform. A flow and a music created by the sounds and syllables make poetry beautiful. Most poets use forms and structures. All types of poetry are often written in several styles. These styles are defined by the number of lines in each stanza, the syllables used in each line or the structures of rhyme used and so on.

I-Definition:

Poetry is a form of literature, **spoken** or **written**, that emphasizes rhythm, other intricate patterns of sound and imagery, and the many possible ways that words can suggest meaning.

-The **Orature** or the **oral tradition** stands for the spoken and sung cultural history preserved and passed on from one generation to the next in spoken, not written, stories and songs.

-Key Concepts:

***Prosody:** The study of the structure of poetry and the conventions or techniques involved in writing it, including rhyme, meter, and the patterns of verse forms.

***Versification:** The art of making verses, or the theory of the phonetic structure of verse.

Free Verse: Poetry which does not essentially follow any structure or style, i.e. verse with no regular meter and no end rhyme.

Blank Verse: it is one of the most common forms of English poetry. It is verse that has no rhyme scheme, but has a regular meter.

II-Devices of Poetry:

1-Content: It is what the poem is all about; the ideas, themes and storyline that it contains. One way of approaching a poem is by getting a general idea of what it is about and this is sometimes called the surface meaning of the poem on which to build more complex ideas that form the analysis of it.

2-Poetic Voice: also known as the speaker, mask, or persona (Latin for mask) refers to the voice that speaks a poem; this speaker is not usually identical to the author who writes the poem. The author assumes a role, or counterfeits the speech of a person in a particular situation.

3- Structure: Poem are divided into **stanzas and verses (lines)**

- Stanza: a group of lines in a poem.

-Verse (=line):1 line;

- **Couplet:** 2 successive lines which rhyme with each other;
- **Triplet:** 3 lines;
- **Quatrain:** 4 lines (especially lines that rhyme alternatively);
- **Cinquain:** a five-line stanza.

4- Rhyme: The occurrence of the same or similar sounds at the end of words.

a- Internal Rhyme: Rhyme within a line of poetry.

b- External Rhyme: Rhyme at the end of lines.

> **Run-on line (Enjambment):** A line that ends without a pause and continues into the next line for its meaning.
>
> **# End-stopped line**
>
> **Refrain:** The repetition of the same line or lines regularly in a poem.

Important Terms:

***Eye Rhyme** is an imperfect **rhyme** in which two words are spelled similarly but pronounced differently [such as: *love* and *move* (**/lʌv/** and**/mu:v/**); *come* and *home*(**/kʌm/** and **/həum/**)]

***Rhyme Scheme** is the formal arrangement of rhymes in a **stanza** or a poem. Rhymes are identified by letters: **aabb, abab**, **ababcc**, etc.

* **Rhythm:** The recurrence of accent or stress in lines of verse. It is the pattern of beats or a series of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem.

* **Meter:** The pattern of stressed (/), unstressed (X) syllables in verse. Groups of syllables are known as **metrical feet**; each line of verse is made up of a set number of feet. Thus:

- **Monometer**: one foot per line
- **Dimeter**: two feet per line
- **Trimeter**: three feet per line
- **Tetrameter**: four feet per line
- **Pentameter**: five feet per line
- **Hexameter**: six feet per line
- **Heptameter**: seven feet per line
- **Octameter**: eight feet per line

* **Foot:** The literary device "foot" is a measuring unit in poetry, which is made up of stressed and unstressed syllables. The stressed syllable is generally indicated by a vertical line (|), whereas the unstressed syllable is represented by a cross (X). The combination of feet creates meter in poetry. Later, these meters are joined for the composition of a complete poem. Therefore, a foot is the formative unit of the meter.

- **Iamb**: Combination of unstressed and stressed syllable – (daDUM)
- **Trochee**: Combination of stressed and unstressed syllables – (DUMda)
- **Spondee**: Combination of two stressed syllables – (DUMDUM)
- **Anapest**: Combination of two unstressed and a stressed syllable – (dadaDUM)
- **Dactyl**: Combination of stressed and two unstressed syllables – (DUMdada)
- **Amphibrach:** Combination of unstressed, stressed and unstressed syllable – (daDUMda)
- **Pyrrhic:** Combination of two unstressed syllables – (dada)

There are two types of meter, which are known as *rising* meter and *falling* meter. Each type of meter uses a different type of foot. As the rising meters go from unstressed syllables to stressed ones, they mainly use iamb and anapest feet. On the contrary, the falling meters go from stressed syllables to unstressed ones, and mostly use trochee and dactyl feet.

Example:

1-IAMBIC PENTAMETRE: (5 iambs, 10 syllaables)

That time   of year   thou mayst   in me   behold
X /   X /   X /   X /   X /

2-TROCHAIC TETRAMETRE: (4 Trochees, 8 syllables)

Tell me   not in   mournful   numbers
/ X   / X   / X   / X

* **Imagery:** Refers to a pattern of related images in a poem.

* **Symbolism:** The use of symbols in a poem.

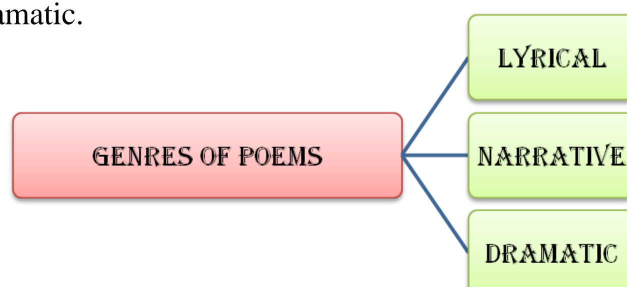
* **Diction:** refers to the poet's choice of words in a poem (denotative vs. connotative diction).

* **Syntax:** The arrangement of words in a sentence. In poetry, the alteration of the normal order of words is called ***inversion*** (otherwise known as ***anastrophe***). Inversion is usually used for rhetorical effect.

* **Figures of Speech:** Alliteration, assonance, consonance, hyperbole, simile, metaphor, personification,etc.

III-Genres of Poems:

Throughout its long history, poetry has relied on evolving rules about what a poem is, with new kinds of poetry building on earlier kinds to create greater possibilities of expression. Actually, poems can be narrative, lyrical and dramatic.



Examples:

ABC: A poem that has five lines that create a mood, picture, or feeling. Lines 1 through 4 are made up of words, phrases or clauses while the first word of each line is in alphabetical order. Line 5 is one sentence long and begins with any letter.

Acrostic: A poem in which the first letter in each line form a word or message when read in a sequence.

Ballad: This is an old style of writing poetry, which was used to tell stories. A ballad usually has stanzas made up of either seven or eight or ten lines, and ends with a short four or five line stanza. Each stanza ends with the same line, which is called 'a refrain'.

Burlesque: Poetry that treats a serious subject as humour.

Epic: Usually a long and descriptive poem which tells a story about a heroic figure. Epics usually are longer than most poems and may even take up a book.

Elegy: A sad and thoughtful poem about the death of an individual.

Limerick: This is a very witty and often vulgar kind of a poem, which is quite short. This poem has five lines in a stanza. The first, second and fifth line have the same metrical structure and they rhyme with each other. They contain seven to ten syllables each. The second and fourth lines have the same metrical structure and rhyme with each other.

Carpe diem: Latin expression that means 'seize the day.' Carpe diem poems have a theme of living for today.

Epigram: A very short, ironic and witty poem usually written as a brief couplet or quatrain.

Epitaph: A commemorative inscription on a tomb or mortuary monument written to praise the deceased.

Epithalamium (Epithalamion): A poem written in honour of the bride and groom.

Ghazal: A short lyrical poem that arose in Urdu. It is between 5 and 15 couplets long. Each couplet contains its own poetic thought but is linked in rhyme that is established in the first couplet and continued in the second line of each pair. The lines of each couplet are equal in length. The closing signature often includes the poet's name or allusion to it.

Idyll (Idyl): Poetry that either depicts a peaceful, idealized country scene or a long poem telling a story about heroes of a bygone age.

Lay: A long narrative poem, especially one that was sung by medieval minstrels.

Ode: A lengthy lyric poem typically of a serious or meditative nature.

Pastoral: A poem that depicts rural life in a peaceful, romanticized way.

Rondeau: A lyrical poem of French with the opening phrase repeated twice as the refrain.

Shape: Poetry written in the shape or form of an object.

Sonnet: A fourteen-line poem in iambic pentameter.

Examples of the Genre

GENRE	WORK	POET
Ballad	- The Rime of the Ancient Mariner	*-Samuel Taylor Coleridge*
Epic	- The Iliad; The Odyssey	*-Homer*
Elegy	- Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard	*-Thomas Gray*
Idyll	- Idylls of the King	*-Alfred, Lord Tennyson*
Limerick	- Book of Nonsense	*-Edward Lear*
Ode	- Ode to the West Wind	*-Percy Bysshe Shelley*

Prose in the Romantic Period

Three types of novel flourished in the Romantic period: *the historical novel, the novel of manners and the Gothic novel.*

Walter Scott (1771–1832) started out as a writer of Romantic narrative verse and ended up as a historical novelist. He wrote several historical novels, mainly about Scottish history.

Jane Austen (1775–1817) shared the chronological time with the Romantics, but her novels have some features of Realism. She has a unique talent and cannot really be assigned to any group. Her novels remain as popular and critically acclaimed as ever. Her primary interest is people, not ideas, and her achievement lies in the meticulously exact presentation of human situations and in the delineation of characters that are really living creatures. Her novels deal with the life of rural land-owners, seen from a woman's point of view. There is little action but a lot of humour and true dialogue.

-The public taste for Gothic novels which had first appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century continued throughout the Romantic period. Gothic novels were based on tales of the macabre, the fantastic and the supernatural. They were usually set in haunted castles, graveyards, ruins and wild picturesque landscapes. This type of novel satisfied the Romantic appetite for wild natural settings, the Middle Ages, and unrestrained imagination. The greatest Gothic novel of the Romantic period is **Mary Shelley**'s **(1797–1851)** *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818).*

Mary Shelley

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851) was born on August 30,1797, in London. Her mother, *Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797)* wrote one of the first books on the rights of women, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792).* Her first inspiration for her feminist works came from having grown up with a father who constantly beat her mother. Later in life, after several unsuccessful love affairs, she found happiness with the radical philosopher *William Godwin.* They married when Mary Wollstonecraft was already pregnant, but she died a few days after giving birth to Mary. This was the first of many tragedies

suffered by Mary in her life. Mary grew up in an intellectual household surrounded by her father's famous friends, philosophers, writers and poets such as William Blake and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

In spring of 1814 Mary met the poet and revolutionary *Percy Bysshe Shelley,* who was an admirer of her father. He was already married at the time and a child. The two fell in love, but Mary's father was against their relationship. In July, Mary eloped with Shelley to the Continent. She described their adventures in her book *History of a Six Weeks' Tour Through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland (1817).* Financial difficulties brought the young couple back to England.

In 1815 Mary gave birth prematurely to a baby girl who died two weeks later. Shelley received a large annual income and the couple moved into a house on Bishopsgate Heath. In 1816, their son William was born. At this time, Mary's stepsister Claire was having an affair with Byron and persuaded Mary and Shelly to travel with her to Switzer-land. The Shelleys spent a great deal of time with George Gordon, Lord Byron, sailing on Lake Geneva and discussing poetry and other topics, including ghosts and spirits, long into the night. During one of these "ghostly sessions" Byron proposed that each person present should write a ghost story. Mary's contribution to the contest became the novel ***Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818).***

At the end of that summer the Shelleys moved back to England. There they received the news that Shelley's wife Harriet had drowned herself. Mary and Shelley married. Public hostility towards the couple made them move to Italy. When Mary was only twenty-four, her husband drowned in the sea, leaving her penniless with their only surviving son Percy Florence. Mary hoped that Percy Shelley's father would help her, but he said that he would only do so if she gave up the boy. She refused and began to write to make money. When Shelley's father died, Percy Florence inherited the family fortune. Mary lived the rest of her life fairly peacefully and happily. She died in London on 1 February, 1851.

Content

Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus

Genre: Gothic novel

Summary: **Robert Walton**, an explorer, describes his trip to the Arctic in letters to his sister, **Margaret**, who lives in England. One of Walton's letters contains a strange story. Once Walton and his crew saw a gigantic man being pulled by a dogsled. The following day they discovered another, smaller man, desperately ill, adrift on a sheet of ice. Walton brought the man onto his ship. After a week the man was able to talk and told Walton an incredible story.

The man's name was **Victor Frankenstein**. He was a young scientist from Geneva, Switzerland. At the university Victor made strange experiments. He constructed a huge creature from parts of human corpses and brought it to life. Victor was horrified by his creation and ran from his laboratory. He became very ill and disoriented for almost two years. As he prepared to return home to his family, Victor learned that **William**, his seven-year-old brother, had been murdered. **Justine Moritz**, a young woman the

Frankenstein family had adopted, had been accused of the crime. Justine was tried, found guilty, and hanged. But Victor refused to believe that Justine committed the murder. Instead, he suspected that his creature wasn't really dead, and was responsible for the horrible crime.

Victor felt guilty for William's murder and Justine's execution. Desperate to be alone, he climbed into the mountains, where he encountered the creature. The creature told Victor that he was hiding in the woods. He realized that he was repulsive to other human beings. In the forest the creature discovered a peasant family living in a cottage. By secretly observing them, the creature learned to read and write. Then, in his jacket pocket, the creature found Victor's journal and read of the experiments that led to his creation. The creature demanded that Victor create a female companion for him. He promised to go away with the new creature and never bother Victor again.

Victor set up a new laboratory in Scotland and began the work. But he was terrified at the idea of the two creatures creating a new, horrible race of monsters. So instead of completing his task, Victor destroyed his work before giving life to the new creation. The monster took the revenge by strangling Victor's best friend, **Henry,** first, and then Victor's bride **Elizabeth.** Grief-stricken over the death of Elizabeth, Alphonse Frankenstein, Victor's father, died a few months later. In despair, Victor vowed to pursue the creature and destroy it. He chased the monster for months, finally arriving in the Arctic where he met Walton and his expedition. Victor Frankenstein died on Walton's ship. The night Victor died, the monster entered Victor's room and wept. He told Walton he planned to build a huge fire and burn himself to death. Before Walton could respond, the creature jumped from the ship and landed on a floating slab of ice. Walton concludes his final letter, telling Margaret that the monster was carried out to sea, where he disappeared into the darkness.

Literary terms

Gothic novel: an English genre of fiction popular in the 18th to early 19th centuries, characterized by an atmosphere of mystery and horror and having a pseudo-medieval setting.

Robert Walton meets Victor Frankenstein

Frankenstein develops an obsession with science

Frankenstein creates his Monster

The Monster kills William – but Justine is executed for it

The Monster and Frankenstein meet again

The Monster begs Frankenstein to build it a wife

Frankenstein agrees but destroys the new creation

Frankenstein marries Elizabeth, but the Monster murders her

Frankenstein dies and the Monster also goes off to die

QUESTION

There are different opinions on scientific progress:

" Whenever the humans are trying to play God, they are in great trouble" ;

" Everything that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable".

Which of them do you support?