

ENGH-H-CCT-9

‘Romanticism’: An Overview

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- **Romantic traits in the Neo-Classicalists**

Longinus- vehement & inspired passion

Plotinus- mind = ‘gives a radiation out of its own store’

- **Romantic essence**

- i. Composition derived from nature - hence artless & passionate - like aborigines
- ii. Compositions - would explore objects of sense already transformed by feelings of the poet.

Wordsworth- ‘Throughout... objects... derive their influence not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects’

- **Poetry as ‘overflow’**

Coleridge- Like poetry, are to express Intellectual purposes, thoughts, conceptions, sentiments that have their origin in the human mind.

- Shelley - **poetry is the ‘expression of imagination’**

Wordsworth- ‘Poetry’ “proceeds whence it ought to do, from the soul of Man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world.”

Wordsworth- understanding is to be a ‘spousal verse’ celebrating the marriage of mind and nature

- **Romantic idea of unity and ‘wholeness’**

1802- Coleridge – “Everything has a life of its own and... we are all one Life”

Prelude- The notion of an infant in the mother's arms – connectivity with the world

Coleridge- Poetry represents the mean between the general and the familiar and the individual and the novel.

- **Purpose of Poetry**

Wordsworth- poetry has a moral purpose- ‘to teach and to instruct’

purifying men to make ‘us better’

Poet= “a nightingale’ which sings in solitude ‘a song in which all human beings join with him”

- **The Romantic ideals of Beauty and Truth**

In 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' - Keats wrote "I never can feel certain of any truth but from a clearer perception of its Beauty"

'To a Skylark', Shelley wrote, "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught;/Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

- **Romantic angst**

Death to Shelley = solitude-*ennui* night = death

- **Nature = solace/pastoral, childhood**

Coleridge = the poet is the one who carries the simplicity of childhood into the power of manhood... contemplates all things. with the freshness and wonder of a child

Wordsworth - 1802 – "The child is the father of Man; / And I could wish my days to be/ Bound each to each by nature piety"

Wordsworth- A child has a 'visionary gleam'

Childhood = immortality- child could overcome the agonies of earth.

- **The Romantic 'Utopia'**

Shelley = poet = seer who could create a utopic space

Poet according to Wordsworth - The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor, he cherishes and loves it in his solitude; the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion.