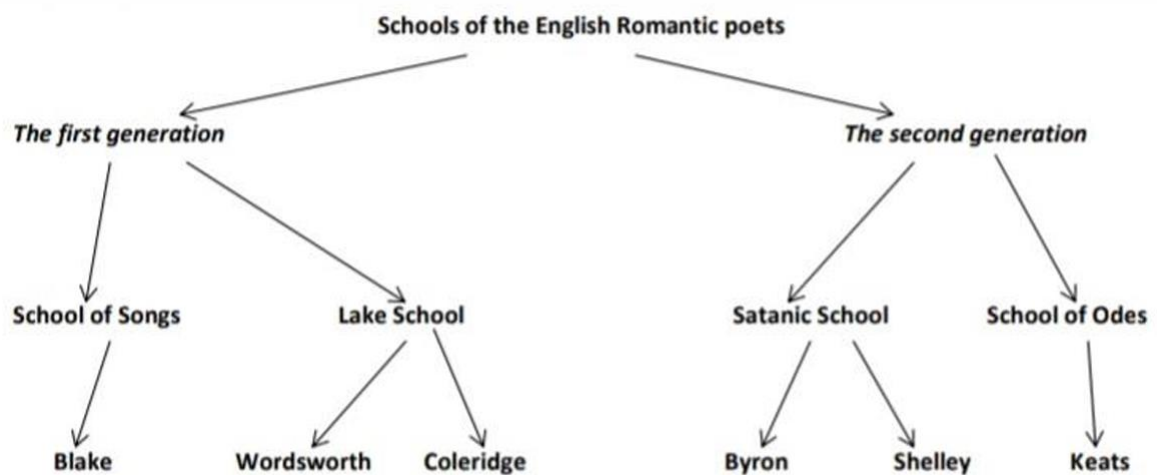


Romantic Poetry
(1798-1837)

3rd Year

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Romanticism: is a complex artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in the second half of the 18th century in Western Europe, and gained strength during the Industrial Revolution. It was partly a revolt against aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature, and was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature. Romantic poetry is generally said to begin around 1798, with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. This collection broke away from the strict forms and rationalism of the Neoclassical age, emphasizing emotion, nature, imagination, and individual experience. It ended when queen Victoria ascended to the throne.



Schools of the English Romantic Poets

- 1- **School of songs:** it is called as such because Blake wrote *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*.
- 2- **Lake school:** it is called by this name because those poets lived near a lake Northwest England.
- 3- **Satanic School:** it is named as such because of the views and lifestyles of those poets.
- 4- **School of Odes:** it is called as such because Keats wrote the six great odes.

Characteristics of Romantic Poetry

- Subjectivity: Romantic poetry is the poetry of sentiments, emotions and imagination. Romantic poetry opposed the objectivity of neoclassical poetry. Neoclassical poets avoided describing their personal emotions in their poetry, not like the Romantics.
- Romanticism was a reaction against the rationalism of the Age of Enlightenment and the belief that pure intellect expressed through science could explain everything. Romantic poetry contrast with neoclassical poetry, which is poetry of intellect and reason, while romantic poetry is the product of emotions, sentiments and the heart. Romantic poetry is a reaction against the set standards, conventions, and the traditional rules of poetry.
- This new philosophy and esthetic sensibility asserted that one could use the power of imagination to create visions of a better world and thus escape widespread urban growth and pollution caused by industrialism.
- Melancholy: occupies a prominent place in romantic poetry, because it is a major source of inspiration for the Romantic poets. In “Ode to a Nightingale”.
- Medievalism: is another important characteristic of romantic poetry, especially in the works of John Keats and Coleridge. They were attracted to exotic, remote and obscure places, and so they were more attracted to Middle Ages than to their own age. Romantics poetry were also attracted to the ancient and exotic.
- belief in intuition; Romantics believed that knowledge is gained through intuition rather than deduction. This is best summed up by Wordsworth who defined poetry as “is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”
- Romanticism was also a celebration of free, original artistic expression and the isolated free thinkers who can change society.
- According to Wordsworth in his preface to the 1802 edition of the Lyrical Ballads, poetry should use the language really spoken by common people and its subject matter should be the daily experience of ordinary people.

- Hellenism: The world of classical Greece was important to the Romantics. John Keats' poetry is full of allusions to the art, literature and culture of Greek. The "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is an example of this.
- Supernaturalism: Most of the romantic poets used supernatural elements in their poetry. They used supernaturalism not just for the creation of horror and awe, but rather for the pleasure of the reader. Samuel Coleridge is the leading romantic poet in this regard. His poem "Kubla Khan" is completely the product of his imagination, and is full of supernatural elements.