COURSE OUTLINE

ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM ROMANTICISM TO MODERNISM

Estonian: Inglise kirjandus romantismist modernismini
Code: FLGR 01.186
Semester:
When/where:
Lecturer: Pilvi Rajamäe
Office hours:
Format: lecture/seminar
Credits: 3 EAP
Aim: an overview of English literature from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century

Exam: written, 2 hours, 4 questions, 2 of them general (i.e. on textbook material), 2 with text analysis (i.e. your analysis of the texts we have been discussing in class, based on the material in the textbook, your notes from the lectures/seminars and your own reading of the texts; the author's name, the title and the full texts concerned will be provided at the exam together with the questions which will specify the angle from which I would like you to consider the texts)

Required reading:

Andrew Sanders. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature.* Oxford University Press, 1996, ISBN 0-19-871157-3 (Pbk)

Chapter 6: The Literature of the Romantic Period.
Chapter 7: High Victorian Literature.
Chapter 8: Late Victorian/Edwardian Literature.

And also the material from

Roy Strong. *The Spirit of Britain. A Narrative History of the Arts.* Pimlico, 2000
Walter E. Houghton. *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985
Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed.) *The Handbook to Gothic Literature.* London: Macmillan, 1998
included in the present course book.

NB! Note concerning required/obligatory reading

At our University to get 3 EAPs for a course a student is required to participate in 16 90-minute seminars/lectures in a semester, which makes a total of 24 hours, and spend the same amount of time (i.e. 24 hours) on independent work. The regulations laid down by the Faculty of Philosophy decree that the amount of scientific literature for a student to be studied independently is 10 pages per 60 minutes, which in the case of our 2 AP course makes 240 pages of independent reading. Please note that while the Chapters 6 to 8 from Sanders make up 170 pages, the amount of material you will actually have to use to prepare for the exam will amount only to 118 pages. The extracts in this course book from Strong, Houghton and Mulvey-Roberts taken together will amount to 122 pages, the total for your independent homework thus being the required 240 pages.
The limit imposed by the Faculty has also relegated all the novels I would ideally have liked you to read to the list of suggested (i.e. NOT obligatory) reading (see below).

Anthologies you might want to consult:

The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Fifth Edition. The Major Authors. Norton, 1987.
The Oxford Anthology 0f English Literature. Volume II. Ed. by Frank Kermode, John Hollander, Harold Bloom, Martin Price, J.B. Trapp, Lionel Trilling. Oxford University Press, 1973.
Literature of the Western World. Volume II: Neoclassicism Through the Modern Period. Second Edition. Ed. by Brian Wilkie, James Hurt. Macmillan, 1988.
Macmillan Anthologies of English Literature. Ed. by Michael Alexander, A. Norman Jeffares:
The Nineteenth Century. Ed. by Brian Martin. Macmillan, 1989.
The Twentieth Century. Ed. by Neil McEwan, 1989:

Other textbooks you might want to consult:

An Outline of English Literature. Ed. by Pat Rogers. Oxford University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-19-288078-0 (Pbk).
Ronald Carter, John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English. Britain and Ireland.* Routledge, 1997. ISBN 0-415-12343-7 (Pbk).

Longman Literature in English Series:
English poetry:
J.R. Watson. *English Poetry of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830.*
Bernard Richards. *English Poetry of the Victorian Period, 1830-1890.*
Neil Corcoran. *English Poetry since 1940.*
English fiction:
Gary Kelly. *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830.*
Michael Wheeler. *English Fiction of the Victorian Period, 1830-1890.*
Douglas Hewitt. *English Fiction of the Early Modern Period.*
The intellectual and cultural context:
J.R. Watson. *the Romantic Period, 1789-1830.*
Robin Gilmour. *The Victorian Period, 1830-1890.*

The Penguin History of Literature:
5. Literature of the Romantic Period.
6. The Victorians.
7. The Twentieth Century.

Texts discussed in class (most of them are extracts):

Radcliffe: *The Italian*
Wordsworth: *The Prelude (Cambridge and the Alps,*
Wordsworth Remembers the French Revolution)
Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey
Byron: *Manfred*
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
Don Juan (The Isles of Greece)
Shelley*: Mont Blanc*
Prometheus Unbound
Ode to Liberty
Alastor: The Spirit of Solitude
Sonnet: England in 1819

A Defence of Poetry

Keats: *On Seeing the Elgin Marbles*
Endymion
Ode to a Grecian Urn
Ode to a Nightingale

Tennyson: *The Lady of Shalott*
The Epic. Morte d'Arthur
Guinevere
Sir Galahad

Browning: *Porphyria's Lover*
My Last Duchess: Ferrara
Love Among the Ruins

Arnold: *Dover Beach*
To Marguerite
To Marguerite, in Returning
The Buried Life

Hopkins: *God's Grandeur*
Carrion Comfort
No Worst, There Is None
Though Art Indeed Just, Lord

Swinburne: *Poeta Loquitur*

Pater: *The Renaissance*

Wilde: *Symphony in Yellow*
Impression du Matin

Dowson: *Cynara*

Housman: *A Shropshire Lad* XXXV, XL

de la Mare: *Miss Loo*

Brooke: *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester*
The Soldier
The Dead

Mackintosh: *Recruiting*

Asquith: *The Volunteer*

Grenfell: *Into Battle*

Sassoon: *France*
The Death-Bed
How to Die
Attack

Rosenberg: *Louse Hunting*

Owen: *Dulce et Decorum Est*
Strange Meeting
Exposure
Futility

Lewis: *The Song of Militant Romance*

Hulme: *The Embankment*
Image

T.S. Eliot: *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*
The Waste Land

ENGLISH LITERATURE. Year 3
Suggested reading

Gibbon: *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
Godwin: *Things as They Are or, the Adventures of Galeb Williams*
Wollstonecraft: *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
Burke: *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*
Walpole: *The Castle of Otranto*
Radcliffe: *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
The Italian
Maturin: *Melmoth the Wanderer*
Lewis: *The Monk*
Beckford: *Vathek*
Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*
Burney: *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*
Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress
Austen: *Northanger Abbey*
Pride and Prejudice
Emma
Sense and Sensibility
Mansfield Park
Persuasion
Edgeworth: *Castle Rackrent*
The Absentee
Scott: *Waverley*
Ivanhoe
Carlyle: *Sartor Resartus*
Dickens: *Martin Chuzzlewit*
Nicholas Nickleby
Bleak House
Hard Times
Little Dorrit
Great Expectations
Gaskell: *Mary Barton*
North and South
Kingsley: *Alton Locke*
Disraeli: *Sybil, or The Two Nations*
Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*
Anthony Trollope: the 'Barchester' novels
the 'Palliser' novels
Charlotte Bronte: *Jane Eyre*
Emily Bronte: *Wuthering Heights*
Anne Bronte: *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*
Collins: *The Woman in White*
The Moonstone
Meredith: *The Egoist*
Eliot: *Adam Bede*

Felix Holt, the Radical
The Mill on the Floss
Middlemarch
Hughes: *Tom Browne's Schooldays*
Arnold: *Culture and Anarchy*
Ward: *Robert Ellsmere*
Butler: *The Way of All Flesh*
Pater: *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*
Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*
Moore: *Esther Waters*
Gissing: *New Grub Street*
Wells: *Tono Bungay*
Stevenson. *Treasure Island*
Kidnapped
Catriona
Kipling: *Kim*
Conrad: *Lord Jim*
Heart of Darkness
Nostromo
The Secret Agent
Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
Bennett: *The Old Wives' Tale*
Forster: *A Room with a View*
Howards End
A Passage to India
Chesterton: *The Man Who was Thursday, A Nightmare*
Graves: *Goodbye to All That*
Sassoon: *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*
Memoirs of an Infantry Officer

ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM ROMANTICISM TO MODERNISM
Revision questions

1. Walpole and the Gothic Revival.
2. The evolution of the Gothic romance in the 18th and 19th centuries (Walpole, Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin, Beckford, Mary Shelley, Stroker).
3. The Gothic/Romantic hero and heroine.
4. Radical and conservative responses to the revolutions in America and France (Gibbon, Burke, Paine, Godwin, Wollstonecraft).
5. Reflective and nature poetry in the Romantic period (Cowper, Burns, Crabbe, Clare, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats).
6. Visionary poetry and the role of the poet in the Romantic period (Blake, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley).
7. The Greek Revival (Byron, Shelley, Keats).
8. The novel in the Romantic period (Smith, Burney, Austen, Edgeworth, Scott).
9. The Romantic essayists (Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, Peacock).
10. The High Victorian cultural scene.
11. The Chivalric Revival (Scott, Digby, Tennyson).
12. Victorian earnestness and its various manifestations.
13. The Victorian gospel of work and duty.
14. The idealization of the Victorian home.
15. The Victorian woman worship.
16. The Victorian quest for moral purity.
17. The Victorian crisis of faith.
18. Ruskin and the Victorian Medieval Revival.
19. The major High Victorian novelists (Dickens, Gaskell, Thackeray, Trollope, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot).
20. The major High Victorian poets (Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Hopkins).
21. Victorian and Edwardian drama.
22. The late Victorian cultural scene.
23. The major Late Victorian novelists (Butler, Hardy, Gissing, Moore).
24. The Late Victorian literature of romance, adventure and colonial experience (Stevenson, Conan Doyle, Kipling, Conrad).
25. The major Edwardian novelists (Wells, Bennett, Forster).
26. The major Edwardian and Georgian poets (Kipling, Hardy, Yeats, Housman, Brooke).
27. The poets of the First World War (Brooke, Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg).
28. The Modernist revolution of the arts.
29. Modernist poetry (Pound, Lewis, Hulme, T. S. Eliot).

WALPOLE AND THE GOTHIC REVIVAL

On 10 January 1750 Horace Walpole wrote to Horace Mann, British minister in Florence, about his building plans. 'I am going to build a little Gothic Castle,' he announced, to which Mann, somewhat taken aback, replied: 'Why will you make it Gothic? I know it is the taste at present, but I am really sorry for it.' For Mann, who spent his life introducing upper class young men, amongst them Walpole, to the glories of classical and Italian Renaissance civilisation, such a decision was a betrayal of aristocratic ideals. But Walpole remained wholly undeterred by such a reaction, returning indeed to the topic three years later when he wrote again to Mann: 'As my castle is so diminutive, I give myself a Burlington-air, and say, that as Chiswick is a model of Grecian architecture, Strawberry Hill is to be so of Gothic.'

What this correspondence reveals is Walpole's conscious wilfulness in setting up Strawberry Hill, his house at Twickenham, as an architectural fount on a par with Lord Burlington's Chiswick. And in this he was to be proved right. But he cannot have been happy to have been reminded by Mann that what he was doing was in fact not original at all but 'the taste at present.' Originality was in the end to come to Strawberry Hill, however, as it evolved over almost three decades, ensuring its enduring position as one of the seminal buildings in the history of the country's domestic architecture.

There is something vaguely unpleasant about Horace Walpole. Ambitious, arrogant, tetchy, snobbish, malicious, jealous and small-minded are adjectives generally applied to him. How much these characteristics were heightened by being an outsider, a homosexual, within a conformist society it is difficult to say. His irritability must certainly have been made worse by gout, but one senses that much must have stemmed from a long and solitary life as an effeminate aristocratic bachelor whose code of class ruled out any form of permanent relationship. His passion for the handsome bisexual Henry Fiennes-Clinton, 9th Earl of Lincoln, was to lead nowhere and that felt for him by the poet Thomas Gray was to be rebuffed as from a social inferior. Small of stature, with large lustrous eyes set within a narrow face, and exhibiting a peculiar mincing gait, Walpole was always destined to be odd man out. And yet he was to be one of the century's great trend-setters, operating with an almost perverse sense of defiance of the established norms of taste and style.

Walpole's position from birth was one of privilege being the youngest son of the most influential politician of the century, Sir Robert Walpole, a father who in many ways embodied the antithesis of his son's aspirations. The parents, however, lived apart and Walpole, who was physically a frail child, was brought up by his mother whose memory he was later to celebrate in the Tribune at Strawberry Hill. His was a conventional upbringing, passing by way of tutors to Eton where he fell in with many of the people who were to form his life's inner circle, including Lincoln and Gray. Cambridge followed and then the conventional Grand Tour which he set out on in the company of Gray in 1739, initially it seems only with France in mind in order to perfect his French. Soon the tour was extended to include Italy with the usual scenario of Turin, Florence, Rome and Naples. In Italy his latent passion for raven-haired Lincoln was reawakened; they met at Reggio and then moved on together to Venice. No aspect of Walpole's life was as opaque as this relationship, if such it was, for he either destroyed or edited any evidence which would provide a clue as to its exact nature.

Lincoln's influence was far from benign, for he introduced Walpole to a dubious loose-living circle which included the homosexual John Chute, theatrical and flaunting, but someone who was to stay the course as the one constant member of what Walpole called his Committee of Taste advising on Strawberry Hill. Lincoln in fact married in 1744 and eventually he was to inherit the Pelham dukedom as 2nd Duke of Newcastle. No amount of venom was too great to be heaped upon any member of that family as far as Walpole was concerned. By the late 1740s he had already settled into what was to be the pattern of the rest of his life. And that consisted of a London season while Parliament was sitting (for he became an MP), first in a house in Arlington Street and later in Berkeley Square, and late spring and summer at his house in Twickenham. Little occurred to alter this except his retirement as an MP in 1767 and his rediscovery of France later in life. As a result he visited Paris a number of times, the last being in 1775. In his dotage Walpole was to inherit the title of Earl of Orford but too late to make it worth his while taking his seat in the Lords. He died on 2 March 1797, writing about that event two months before in the following terms: 'I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust.'

Nothing was further from the truth than this statement for obscurity was not his aim in life. Far from it, for Walpole had long before determined otherwise when, only in his second year at Cambridge, he had decided to be the social chronicler of his age. More than four thousand letters by Walpole exist, an almost inexhaustible mine of anecdote and gossip covering four decades of Georgian England. In addition he wrote memoirs of the reigns of George II and George III. These he left in a locked box to be opened only in the next century to what he must have known would be devastating effect. Walpole is an irresistible writer who knew how to wield his pen to deadly purpose. Unlike the diarists Pepys and Evelyn, Walpole wrote both his letters and the memoirs with posterity very firmly in view. The result has been to see the age through his eyes and with all his prejudices. Only in recent times has it been at all possible to discount his at times appalling distortion of both people and events. But that should not detract from the fact that Walpole's powers of narrative description and delineation of character are brilliant and his work remains a *tour de force.*

His fame as a writer was to be posthumous but he was to enjoy fame of another kind during his own lifetime, in the main through the building of his Thameside villa, Strawberry Hill. In May 1747 Walpole took a lease on five acres of fields and 'Chopp'd Straw Hall', Twickenham. This was an area where aristocrats, gentry and members of the merchant classes had their country retreats built in every imaginable style. The site was a delightful one, with meadows stretching down to the water's edge from the house and vistas to the wooded slopes of Richmond Hill. From the outset he had determined that the house should not only be Gothic in style but asymmetrical in plan.

Walpole never actually articulated what had first enticed him about Gothic, but he was certainly haunted by the pinnacles and spires of Eton College and by the turrets of Windsor Castle which soared above it. Indeed the year before he took Strawberry Hill he had leased a house in the lower ward of the castle. In Paris too he had been drawn to one of the capital's least imposing Gothic edifices, the Chartreux, because of its rambling and melancholic qualities. And this had inspired him to visit the Grande Chartreuse, high in the mountains of Savoy, which, although the building itself turned out to be a disappointment, left him enraptured by the wild Alpine scenery.

What Horace Walpole was to achieve through Strawberry Hill was to sell Gothic to high society as a fashionable living style. The house was built to be noticed and every addition he made to it was trumpeted abroad. At the outset there was nothing particularly novel about the project. Gothic as an architectural style had meandered on through the seventeenth century as one to be used for churches and college buildings. In the early eighteenth it had gained a political connotation as symbolic of the ideals of the ruling Whig oligarchy and ancient British liberties. Compared with the classical style, however, it was still but a trickle. Its potential to become a flood was there, as the dichotomy faced by aristocrats and gentry looking two ways at once gradually impinged, back to Ancient Rome and, at the same time, back also to the national medieval past. The result was an unhappy tension between simultaneously maintaining a respect for the classical heritage and, side by side, a devotion to the national heritage of the Gothic style.

The latter proliferated hugely during the 1730s and 1740s, thanks to a whole series of pattern books, particularly those by Batty Langley. These worked from the premise that Gothic was a corrupt version of Roman architecture which only called for squaring with the works of Vitruvius. All over the country Gothic garden buildings, entrance gates, towers, pavilions, steeples and mock ruins were erected by architects such as Sanderson Miller and Richard Bentley. The atmosphere of this rebuilding of the English medieval past is caught in lines by Thomas Gray, himself also an antiquarian and lover of Gothic, on some mock ruins put up by Lord Holland in Kent:

> Here mouldering fanes and battlements arise,
> Turrets and arches nodding to their fall,
> Unpeopled monasteries delude our eyes,
> And mimic desolation covers all.

Richard Bentley's gothic headpiece to Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard *(1751). Walpole was the publisher of Gray's works and Bentley worked on Strawberry Hill.*

That style was to take off even more in the 1750s because it was fully compatible with the new ideals of the Sublime as articulated by Edmund Burke. On to that later in the century Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight were to graft the aesthetic of the picturesque, which rested between the Sublime and the Beautiful but which gave theoretical sanction for the application of irregularity to buildings and sites which could not lay claim to the qualities demanded by the Sublime. Most of that lay in the future when Walpole began working on Strawberry Hill in the late 1740s but it was in fact to provide the vital thread which was to lead from Gothic to Gothic Revival, a principal nineteenth century style which was to cross the globe.

Walpole's contribution was to be crucial on two points. At Strawberry Hill for the first time there was an insistence on archaeologically correct Gothic, a criterion which Walpole disseminated to his wide circle of acquaintance. Secondly he introduced asymmetry into domestic architecture as any study of the ground-plan of Strawberry Hill amply demonstrates. 'I am as fond,' he once wrote, 'of the . . . Chinese lack of symmetry in buildings as in grounds or gardens.' Asymmetry was to be part of Straw-

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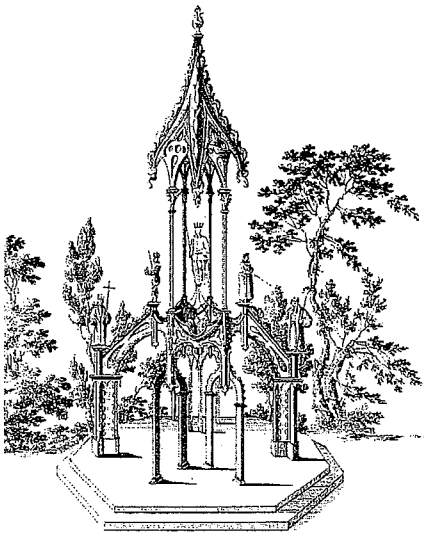
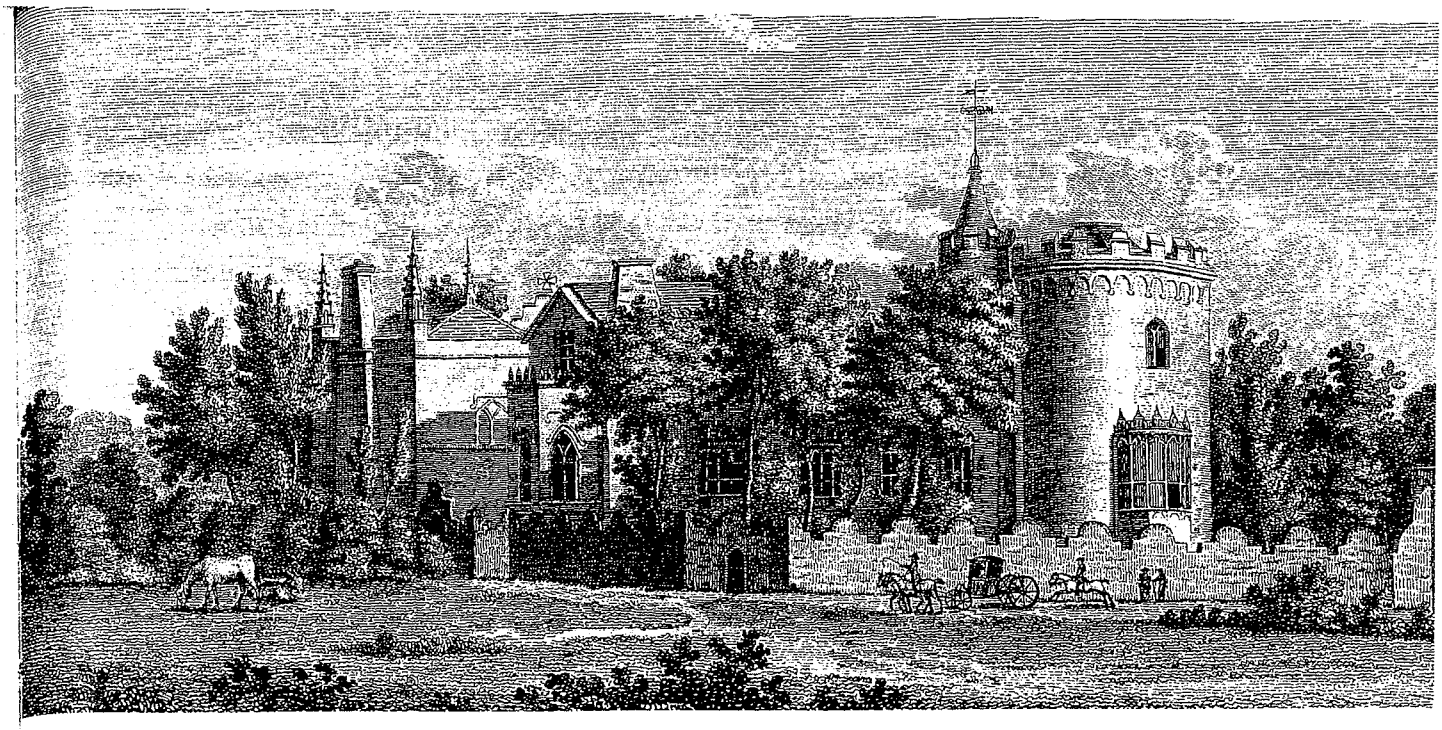
berry Hill from the start. Walpole was in fact applying to a building what William Kent, whose gardens if not his rendering of the Gothic style he admired, had first applied to garden design earlier in the century. Strawberry Hill had a variety of volumes and an indeterminacy of outline which together were to form the central characteristic of villa architecture thereafter.

Walpole's so-called Committee of Taste rambled on as the house was built over the years but only one person was to survive the whole course, John Chute. He was a younger son also, although later in life he inherited The Vyne (Hampshire) which he partly Gothicised. Walpole considered him 'an exquisite architect, of the finest taste, both in the Grecian and Gothic styles . . .' Chute seems to have goaded Walpole on to new excesses. The third member of the team was Richard Bentley, a pasticheur in the rococo Gothic manner who was to begin to fall from grace during the 1750s and who finally went in 1760. By then Walpole had turned against him as the purveyor of inauthentic Gothic. Bentley was only one of a procession of contributors which included William Robinson, Johann Heinrich Muntz, Thomas Pitt, James Essex and Robert Adam. But the truth of the matter was that the vision was Walpole's and these were his amanuenses. When those people worked for any other client the result was far more conventional and, in particular, the houses were always symmetrical.

The construction of Strawberry Hill went in two phases, the first a Gothicising of what was already there, the second the addition of what was in effect a second house tacked on to the existing one, a showplace in which Walpole's ever-expanding collections could be displayed and, increasingly, to which the public might be admitted to admire. The initial phase opened with superimposing a Gothic skin, inspired by Kent's Esher



Gothic whimsy became the fashion in the 1740s and 1750s fed by pattern books such as Paul Decker's Gothic Architecture Decorated . . ., *1759, in which this unlikely garden ornament figures.*



The front of Strawberry Hill from Horace Walpole's A Description of Strawberry Hill *(1784).*

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Place nearby, on to the east front towards the river. Like most of the exterior it lacked character in the detail and, although Walpole was to denounce Batty Langley's Gothic, it was very much in his manner. Far more important was the involvement of Bentley in designing a new entrance hall to act as a dramatic centrepiece for the house. With its complex use of attenuated Early English columns and dim shadowy light filtered through coloured glass (he bulk-bought old stained glass from Flanders) its effect on visitors was immediate. At the same time the south, or garden, front began to be remodelled and, in 1755, the Great Parlour was finished, allowing Walpole to entertain.

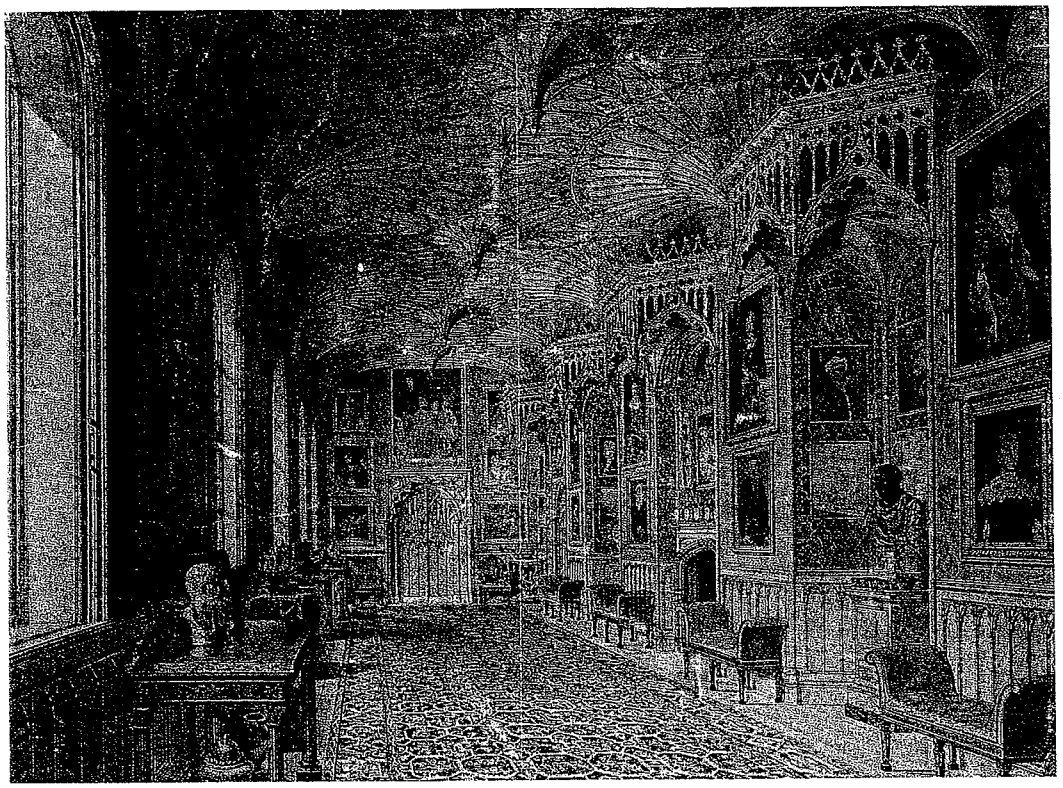
He had begun to fall out with Bentley and what might be categorised as the rococo Gothic phase drew to an end, to be replaced by a keenly historicist one in which every feature in the interior was to have its known source. By the autumn of 1758 Walpole had set his mind on 'a gallery, a round tower, a larger cloister, and a cabinet.' These formed in effect the display area and went up piecemeal; the Gallery was completed in 1763 and the Beauclerck Tower, at the extreme end of the development, was finished in 1776. Walpole, writing of the tower, summed up what was the visual impression of the whole: 'It has an exceedingly pretty effect, breaking the long line of the house picturesquely and looking very ancient.'

The impact of Strawberry Hill was to depend less on its exterior than on its interior decoration and on the disposition of its actual rooms, which were all shapes and sizes. Walpole was an interior decorator of genius, in essence making living with antiques fashionable for the first time. In that he was a pioneer of what was to become widespread after 1830 and ubiquitous by the close of the twentieth century. But in the second half of the eighteenth century it was a novelty. The usual treatment of the interiors of grand houses was for the furnishings and fittings to be designed in a single coherent style by the architect or by an upholsterer. By 1750 that could be in any of a number of styles, neo-classical, rococo, Chinese or, indeed, Gothic, but the central point was that everything was new, even if somehow old family things were incorporated. Much was of course designed and specially made for Strawberry Hill but these items were integrated into a décor which prided itself on being based on historic sources and in deploying real objects, ones which were treasured for their lineage, having belonged often to this or that famous historical personage. Although rooms were themed there was also an unprecedented mingling of periods and styles of artefact in a way which anticipated the cacophony of the Victorian era.

This was the key feature of the display rooms, for the private part of the house was far less eccentric, in fact the breakfast-room and bedroom were not Gothic at all. But it was what the public saw that mattered and it has been estimated that at least ten thousand members of the élite classes passed through the public rooms. By 1754 a trickle had begun and nine years later Walpole semi-officially opened the place, opining to a friend: 'My house is full of people, and has been so from the instant I breakfasted, and more are coming in; in short, I keep an inn; the sign, "The Gothic Castle". Since my Gallery was finished I have not been in it a quarter of an hour together; my whole time is passed in giving tickets to see it . . .' By 1776 he had published his first guidebook for visitors.

It is difficult to think that Walpole had not deliberately calculated the impact of his creations as being novel. The route followed was a set one: in through the entrance hall, up the stairs to the Armoury, the Library, the Star Chamber, the Holbein Chamber, the Tribune (formerly the Chapel), the Great North Bedchamber, the Gallery and down the backstairs and out along the Great Cloister which ran beneath the Gallery. What would have struck the visitors would have been the authenticity of the

Gothic. In the Library the bookcases were based on a screen in Old St. Paul's and the chimney was inspired by the tomb of John of Eltham. In the Holbein Chamber the screen was modelled on that on Archbishop Warham's tomb in Canterbury Cathedral. The ceiling in the Tribune was derived from the vaulting in the chapter house at York while that in the Gallery was fan vaulting in papier mâché, copied from one of the side aisles of Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey. Every room was filled with objects and pictures, Tudor and Elizabethan ones in the Holbein Chamber,



The Gallery at Strawberry Hill, an almost vulgar riot of crimson and gilt, mirror glass and papier mâché with a display of historical portraits. One of the house's show rooms as recorded in 1781.

including items like Cardinal Wolsey's hat hanging from the back of a chair made for one of the last abbots of Glastonbury. In the Tribune, in emulation of the grand-ducal one in the Uffizi, Walpole assembled all his greatest treasures in a setting deliberately ecclesiastical. A four-apsed square was lit with a golden gloom from coloured glass and there was an altar with candlesticks, sconces and ivory vases. 'I like Popery as well as you,' he wrote to a clerical friend, 'and I have shown I do. I like it as I do chivalry and romance. They all furnish me with ideas and visions . . .'

That it supplied just such for its visitors is undoubted. Walpole had transformed his house into a secular treasury of British and family history. Rooms like the Gallery with its crimson damask walls, niches lined with mirror glass and spider's web of gilded Gothic filigree work crammed with old portraits and old masters, paraded a glittering vulgarity which proved to be deeply seductive to the next generation. One other thing was also evident. This was a bachelor's house with little thought given to household practicalities and much instead applied to what at times barely arose above a series of tawdry stage sets.

But Strawberry Hill made its point. If offered above all to middle income people a possible style which was both manageable and distinctive. Asymmetry was henceforth to be of prime importance in domestic architecture. Also Walpole's deep concern with authenticity (in which he was not alone in his generation) led to a dramatic change of fortune for surviving medieval buildings. They began for the first time not

Walpole (4)

to be used as handy quarries for building stone but instead to be prized. The ruins of Fountains Abbey, for example, were incorporated into the landscape gardens of Studley Royal (Yorkshire). It led also to the earliest rescues of historic monuments. In 1765 the Bristol High Cross was saved and re-erected as a feature in the garden at Stourhead (Wiltshire). All of this led on in turn to the first serious restoration of cathedrals and churches, albeit that such work could precipitate damage. But that price was worth paying for what was a pioneer recognition of an architectural heritage which called for preservation.

Side by side with that Strawberry Hill gave an impetus to antiquarian studies which were revived earlier in the century with the founding in 1707 of the Society of Antiquaries. From 1773 onwards Francis Grose's volumes *Antiquities of England and Wales* began to appear, and also John Carter's works, including *Specimens of Sculpture and Painting* (1786), which was dedicated to Walpole, and his *Views of Ancient Buildings* (1786-93). Those fuelled the publication of Gothic architectural details, a movement which was to reach a climax in A. C. Pugin's *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* (1821-23) and L. N. Cottingham's *Working Drawings for Gothic Ornaments* (1823).

The full impact of Strawberry Hill on architecture lay in the future in 1797 when Walpole died. So too did his impact on the literary world which included not only his letters and memoirs but items which he produced from his own press which he had set up in 1757. Amongst these were the first defence of Richard III (1768), a subject which was to sire a progeny two centuries on, and *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762). The latter was based on the notes of the antiquary George Vertue which he had acquired in 1758 from Vertue's widow. The resulting book remains the foundation stone of English art history. But it is upon neither of these that his principal fame was to rest but rather on a novella, what he billed as a translation from an old manuscript, of which he published five hundred copies in 1765. It was entitled *The Castle of Otranto*.

That book, it has recently been argued, was written in a few weeks in the aftermath of the author's sexuality being cited in a contemporary pamphlet. What is striking is that *The Castle of Otranto* has never been out of print. It is recognised as the fount of a new literary genre, the Gothic novel, huge quantities of which were written until the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In addition it was to be a major source engendering enthusiasm for the Middle Ages and also for what were the trappings of the Romantic movement. As in the case of Strawberry Hill *The Castle of Otranto* was not without precedent, for it had predecessors in France in the 1730s and 1740s and it needs also to be placed into its native context. The poems of Ossian were being published at the time and the year in which Walpole's novella appeared Bishop Percy published his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.*

The Castle of Otranto tells the story of a castle ripped apart by a monstrous ghost. It contains all the inner dynamics which were to be utilised by almost all the Gothic novels which followed in its wake. These focused on a crime committed in the past which had not yet been avenged. The criminal was usually a murderer or a usurper and the real heir was generally lurking under a false identity unaware of his own destiny. The plots traced the persecution of that heir by the criminal until he was unmasked and the heir was able to take possession of his patrimony.

(For further details, see, if you wish, Roy Strong 'The Spirit of Britain'.)

GOTHIC 1760-1820

The Gothic Revival

It is a major change in attitudes towards medieval styles. **Antiquarianism,** the vogue for **the Graveyard school of poetry** and an intense interest in **the sublime** contributed to the **reassessment of the heritage of the Middle Ages**. **Gothic architecture**, which had been dismissed by the Neo-classicists as **massive, cumbersome, unwieldy, barbaric and childish** in its profusion of decorative detail and which was seen as being appropriately **ruined**, as befitted the symbol of the defeat of the Catholic Church by Reformation, now became associated with **a new, more expansive and imaginative potential for aesthetic production**.

From a derogatory term (associated with **barbarous customs, superstition, ignorance, extravagant fancy and natural wildness**), 'Gothic' metamorphosed during the C18 into a synonym for **liberty and democracy** (the ancient liberties of the freedom-loving Goths (i.e. the Germanic peoples generally/Goth=Jute=Gete) as opposed to the tyrannical Frenchmen, the liberties of the Protestant countries as opposed to the Catholic tyrannies like France), resistance to the imposition of classical aesthetic values and the pride in English national culture as free, natural and imaginative as opposed to classical servility (and in C19) the modern mechanical reproduction of art objects).

Gothic is symptomatic of **a nostalgia for the past** which **idealizes the medieval world** as one of **organic wholeness**, in which individuals were defined as members of the 'body politic'. This view of the past serves to contrast it with the modern bourgeois society, made up of atomistic, possessive individuals who have no essential relation to each other. Relations between people are seen as no longer organic but mechanistic, based on scientific laws of cause and effect and sheer self-interest which prompt the artificial construction of a society seen now as based on 'a social contract'. While in the feudal world the individual will had been restrained by external systems, the modern world rests on the autonomous and self-regulating individual. The belief in the ability of the individual to govern himself rationally is at the heart of the modern liberal definition of freedom as the absence of external constraints. It is a logical extension of the Protestant view of religion as a question of individual faith which will be pushed to its natural extreme by the philosophy of anarchism which views all external systems of regulation as unnatural and evil. Gothic can in this context be viewed as **a critique of Protestant bourgeois values**, as it attacks the modern liberal assumption that the individual is a self-regulating autonomous entity who is able to govern his own passions rationally without external constraints. The Gothic villain is frequently an example of the modern materialistic individual taken to an extreme, at which point he becomes an egotistical and wilful threat to social unity and order.

Gothic as a style

in literature and art can be viewed as: a rebellion against the constraining Neo-classical aesthetic ideal of order and unity in order **to recover a suppressed primitive and barbaric imaginative freedom**; **a return to the repressed subconscious energy** which strives to burst forth from the restraints of the conscious ego; a sign of **the resurrection of the need for the sacred and transcendent** in a modern enlightened secular world which denies the existence of supernatural forces; a kind of **generic missing link between the romance and the novel**; **a premature and crude manifestation of the emerging values of Romanticism** (the bizarre, eccentric, wild, savage, lawless, transgressive, original imagination); **a revolt against a mechanistic or atomistic view of the world** in favour of recovering an earlier organic model of the world.

Origins:
British folklore, ballads, romance (esp. Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*), the Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy (esp. Shakespeare), Milton's *Paradise Lost* (esp. the figure of Satan) and *Il Penseroso* (and the renaissance ideas of melancholy in general), the Graveyard Poets, Macpherson's *Ossian* (a fabricated Gaelic poet much admired for his romantic spirit and rhythm), German literature (esp. Schiller's *The Robbers*), ideas concerning the sublime, the sentimental novel (Rousseau, Richardson).

Stock components:
A tortuous, fragmented narrative relating mysterious incidents, horrible images, tales of darkness, desire (frequently incestuous) and power (usually evil).
The threat (whether imagined or real) emanating from typical Gothic characters like spectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats and bandits (usually dark-complexioned Mediterranean types), monks and nuns, fainting heroines, sentimental heroes; in the C19 also scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen, criminals and the monstrous double (e.g. Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Wilde's Dorian Gray).
Landscapes desolate and full of menace, based on the paintings of **Salvator Rosa** and **Claude Lorrain** (wild and gloomy mountains like the Alps (the sublime landscape *par excellence*)), later the modern urban scene.
Locations: decaying medieval castles, ruined abbeys, churches and graveyards, the country house.
Imagination and emotional excess exceed reason. Passion, excitement and sensation transgress social proprieties and moral laws. The boundless imaginative frenzy, untamed by reason, and luscious over-ornamentation in style were a move away from the strict Neo-classical demand for clarity, symmetry, unity and common sense.

The sublime:
De Boileau's translation of **Longinus**'s treatise ***On the Sublime*** (C3 AD)
Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757):

Beautiful objects are characterized by **smallness, smoothness, delicacy and gradual variation**. They evoke **love** and **tenderness** and **can be contained within the individual's gaze or comprehension.**

Sublime objects are **vast, magnificent and obscure**. Their **loudness** or **sudden contrast**s (like the play of light and shade in Gothic buildings) contribute to **the sense of extension and infinity**, **a transcendental experience** which cannot be processed by the rational mind. The **excess of emotion** produces in the viewer the conflicting emotions of **delight** and **horror**, **tranquillity** and **terror**. Terror here is akin to the sense of **wonderment** and **awe** accompanying the religious experience. Sublimity manifests itself, above all, in the **grandeur of the natural landscapes** (the wonder, awe, horror and joy produced by the irregularity, diversity and scale of mountain ranges like the Alps) which offers glimpses of **a metaphysical force beyond rational knowledge and human comprehension**; but also in **Gothic architecture** where the irregularity, ornamentation and the sheer size of the buildings suggests divinity and infinity.

The Handbook to Gothic Literature.
Ed. by Marie Mulvey-Roberts
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Gothic Novel

The Gothic Novel begins with the anonymous publication of collector, antiquarian, dilettante HORACE WALPOLE's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), subtitled 'A Gothick Story'. Walpole, who was also an MP, concealed himself behind layers of personae, teasingly framing the story as a fifteenth-century manuscript by one 'Onuphrio Muralto', translated by 'William Marshall, Gent.' The critics were hostile, sensing a fake, but not quite sure. The public, however, was enthusiastic; the first edition sold out in a matter of months and Walpole was prevailed upon to reveal himself as the author.

The story of *The Castle of Otranto* reveals many of the preoccupations of the later Gothic Novel. It looks back to a feudal world, in this case, medieval Italy, in which the Lord of the Manor, Manfred, the first of a long line of Gothic villain/heroes, exercises seigneurial rights over the minds and bodies of his subjects. His castle, however, as part of an ancient prophecy, appears to be haunted by a gigantic suit of armour. His obsession with primogeniture, and the inability of his wife Hippolita to provide him with an heir, lead him, on the news of the death of his sickly son, Conrad, to offer himself in a peremptory, and vaguely incestuous, fashion to his quondam prospective daughter-in-law, Isabella. Isabella, the first of a line of intrepid Gothic heroines, refuses him indignantly and flees through the subterranean vaults of the castle, taking refuge in the local monastery church. In the end, Manfred is revealed as the son of a usurper of the line of Otranto, which is represented by a young peasant of noble bearing, Theodore, who defies him and with whom Isabella has in the meantime fallen in love.

This plot encodes various obsessions of the later Gothic: the 'authenticating' pretence that the author is merely the editor of a found manuscript; the setting in medieval and 'superstitious' Southern Catholic Europe; the expectation of the supernatural; the conflation of hero and villain; the decay of primogeniture and of feudal and aristocratic rights in general, and the rise of an ambitious bourgeoisie eager to exercise individual freedom in marriage and inheritance; the focus on the victimised, but often defiant, position of women; the use of confined spaces – castles, dungeons, monasteries and prisons, to symbolise extreme emotional states by labyrinthine incarceration – all these characteristic modalities spring into being, more or less fully formed, in Walpole's tale.

But Walpole's story exhibits a contradiction between subject matter and language which is uncharacteristic of the tradition it founded. Stylistically, it is dry, witty, terse, and suffused with the rational virtues of eighteenth-century prose – it has no Romantic expansiveness, and thought it foregrounds extreme emotions, especially in the case of Manfred, its characters, generally speaking, are puppets without psychological depth and its action is screwed to a high pitch of melodrama. Walpole was personally close to the Enlightenment in France, and yet his antiquarianism and his dilettantism, beneath a humorous façade, revealed a more serious interest in neglected areas of historical scholarship and a willingness to speculate about alternative modes of awareness. In a famous account of the genesis of the tale, which proved interesting to André Breton and the French Surrealists in the 1930s, Walpole shows that he was indeed allowing his unconscious to dominate the writing process.

Mid-eighteenth-century aesthetics are built on Horace – polished, witty, decorous, and above all conscious, writing which is built on an aesthetics of product. But the Longinian aesthetics of THE SUBLIME, revived also in the mid-century by Burke in his *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), are founded on an aesthetics of process, foregrounding the affective relationship between reader and text. Burke's treatise is a blueprint for an aesthetics of terror and horror, laying down a set of conditions for the excitement of the reader's passions. The artist's task was to evoke fear, grandeur and awe in the soul of the reader.

Walpole also invented other characteristics of the genre that were to endure: his 'Gothic story' was ostensibly set back in the remote past in a age of 'superstition' when emotions were freer and manners more direct and barbarous than in eighteenth-century polite society. But as with many later Gothic novels this 'historical' content is relatively superficial, intentionally so, because the novel is essentially addressing changes of

taste in its eighteenth-century audience. The expanded and expanding reading public (in large part female), despite the neo-classical strictures of the eighteenth-century establishment, craved popular entertainment, and Walpole, not without humour, was the first to provide it. The early Gothic Novels are eighteenth-century costume-dramas that play with history.

After an apparent lull of almost two decades (during which time the magazines were highly active, as Mayo has shown), the Minerva Press, backed by the new circulating libraries, began to pour out Gothic three-deckers to a formula that derived in part from Walpole, but these writers' novels lacked his comic astringency of tone. Set in the medieval past, such novels were thought of at the time as subversive or childish 'romances', according to one's point of view, and they inserted themselves, at the extreme end, into the critical debate between Novel and Romance which ran from the mid eighteenth-century to well on in the nineteenth century. By end of the 1790s, the demand for such books had grown into an addiction, as Jane Austen's famous and brilliant **GOTHIC PARODY** both of this female readership, and of male attempts to control it, in *Northanger Abbey*, (1818), proves.

The leading Gothic novelist of the eighteenth century, far surpassing her forerunners Sophia Lee and Clara Reeve in popularity and known as 'the great enchantress', was **ANN RADCLIFFE** (her style and method of the 'explained supernatural' also spoofed expertly by Austen), who kept a generation on edge with *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Two years later, **MATTHEW LEWIS**, another Whig MP, published *The Monk*, whose camp sexuality and Faustian metaphysics proved a *succès de scandale* and had to be withdrawn under threat of blasphemy after a review by Coleridge. Ann Radcliffe replied to Lewis with *The Italian* (1797), half of which is set in the dungeons of the Roman Inquisition, and the Gothic genre was fully established, recognised in particular by the **MARQUIS DE SADE**, whose judgement in 1800 that these novels were 'the necessary fruits of the revolutionary tremors felt by the whole of Europe' has proved highly influential in later critical debate, marking a tradition of linking the Gothic novel with the French Revolution.

The 1790s were a turbulent decade and the Gothic novel was a focus for various cross-currents: English antiquarianism; Whig dilettantism; German influences from the **STURM UND DRANG**; Jacobinism; **OCCULTISM** and radical Secret Societies; French Revolutionary propaganda; conservative English nationalism; anti-Catholicism; feudal nostalgia; Romantic diabolism; Godwinianism.

By 1820, thanks to the publication of parodies like Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), the influence of the Enlightenment relativism of Sir Walter Scott, and the rise of his 'historical romance', the earlier novels had begun to seem somewhat *grand guignol*.

In 1818, **MARY SHELLEY**, following in the footsteps of both her father, William Godwin (who produced two novels in the Gothic mode, *Caleb Williams*, 1794, and *St Leon*, 1799), and her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft (who also published novels influenced by the genre), brought forth what she later half-jestingly referred to as her 'hideous progeny' – one of the most famous of all the Gothic novels, *Frankenstein*.

The plot of this novel, the story of a scientist who, having exultantly discovered the secret of artificial reproduction from corpses, creates a being and then, revolted by its apparent monstrosity, morally and physically abandons it, has become nothing less than a modern myth in the post-war period. Given the discovery and the use of the atom bomb, the subsequent Cold War and arms race, the developments in genetics and computers and the ethical issues raised by all these matters, this complex and ambiguously horrifying story prophetically codifies in miniature many of our contemporary concerns.

The publication of the Dublin writer **CHARLES MATURIN**'s extraordinary Faustian novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), which failed at the box office but was a great success in France, conventionally marks the end of the first phase of the tradition.

After 1820, the radicalism (as Kilgour has recently argued, Godwin is as much a model for the Gothic Novel as Burke), the confusion, and the anarchy of the 'old Gothick' gives way to the new conservative 'historical romance' of the Waverley era (roughly 1820–37). The Minerva Press gives up the Gothic and turns to children's books. The Gothic Novel breaks up and becomes a more scattered but now permanent and widely influential aspect of literary sensibility rather than a concerted genre or movement as such: a polarisation occurs between popular forms – the **'PENNY DREADFULS'** of Reynolds and of writers like **AINSWORTH** and the popular melodrama, on the one hand (*cf.* Simpson); and, on the other, the literary tradition dominated by Scott.

Mrs Radcliffe survived into the Victorian period as a writer's writer, or a clumsy forerunner of Romanticism; but *Blackwood's Magazine* (1818–80) and Henry Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine* (1814–84) had kept alive the Gothic flame, and by the 1840s both **DICKENS** and **THE BRONTËS** were showing unmistakable signs of the influence of the Gothic. In America, **POE**, following on from Radcliffe and **CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN**, began to produce his tales. In Scotland, defiant of the Enlightenment rationalism of Scott, **HOGG** used the Gothic convention of the **DOPPELGÄNGER** – probably derived from **HOFFMANN** – to satirise the growth of evangelical Calvinism in his *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, and produced a truly schizophrenic text. Eventually Dickens planned a similar 'confessional' structure for his last novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870).

By the mid-century, the Gothic Novel as a genre was apparently extinct, and the term 'Gothic', if used at all, was predominantly an architectural term (see **GOTHIC REVIVAL**). But paradoxically this diversified and underground role guaranteed its survival in the literary field. The cultural conditions in which it had first appeared – the unease about enlightenment modes of thought, about empirical science, and epistemological certainty inherited from the eighteenth-century, and the official, daylight definitions of national, and rational, Protestant culture, the criteria for 'superstition' – all these elements of late eighteenth-century cultural formation had survived, and indeed intensified in the ninteenth century. The Gothic mode had become decentred, a register available for writers of many different kinds, but its influence on Victorian writing was taken for granted, thanks to the currency of the magazines and the early immense popularity of Scott's Border Ballads.

Victorian culture, bolstered by recycled memories of Romantic poetry (for the relation between the Romantic tradition and the Gothic, see Praz), became obsessed with the escapism and utopian romance of medieval pre-industrial society, which had a symbiotic and compensatory relationship to its own growing industrialisation and urbanisation. The traditional historical themes of the Gothic, mingled with the Arthurian 'matter of Britain' and the Gothic revival in architecture, with its Catholic and anti-Catholic tensions and its claims to be a national style, reinforced the literary tradition. Many of these features are clearly evident in **BRAM STOKER**'s books at the end of the Victorian period.

Part of this currency of the mode is attributable to the Victorian pleasure in horror and darkness, and there is also a growing interest during the Victorian period in sexuality, sexual taboo and sex-roles.

The Shakespeare revival was also fully under way in the earlier eighteen hundreds and the heroic style of early Victorian acting added to the sense of a relation between theatre and the character in the novel. Dickens, in particular, employed a theatrical and melodramatic style, full of darkness, violence, and sudden horrors. Even his early comic work like *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–7), as Jackson and others have argued, owes a good deal to Gothic precedent – and later, after 1850, Dickens's London becomes a sublimely dark, disease-ridden labyrinth of courts and alleys flanking a Thames polluted and full of floating corpses. Dickens also experimented with Gothic characterisation – the symbolically 'flat' rendition of aspects of a person – in his studies of repression and criminal mentalities, frequently employing in his later work (Arthur Clenham in *Little Dorrit*, 1855–7, Jaggers and Wemmick in *Great Expectations*, 1860–1 and Bradley Headstone in *Our Mutual Friend*, 1864–5) subdued versions of the *doppelgänger* motif which Poe and Hogg had also developed.

Meanwhile, as Heilman first demonstrated, the Brontës internalised and psychologised the old Gothic, producing wild and dark accounts of the perversity of human passion, carrying on the Gothic tradition of the Satanic and Byronic Villain/Hero in the figures of Rochester and Heathcliff, set in a bleak Northern landscape of remote houses. Poe, in his magazine tales, in an intensely Schopenhauerian manner, also used the Gothic vocabulary of excess to explore an intense and suffocating inner world of psychological isolation and perversity, catalepsy and necrophilia, while at the same time using the tradition for philosophical purposes to satirise Cartesianism and parody the German Idealism which held for him such a fascination.

Precisely because it was not a concerted tradition, but a highly flexible register which could be employed as a shorthand in characterisation, setting, and narrative mode, a register which often hid itself in the respectable documentation of 'historical romance', the Gothic became a frequent sub-code in the Victorian novel. It became important for a writer to try something in this darker, affective mode, even if only a tale, only an exercise – expectations of horror, fear, anxiety and *diablerie* were strong in the audience and the mode became part of the writerly range in the nineteenth century. This period sees also the rise of new popular genres like detective and science fiction which overlap with the Gothic.

Literary history used to crystallise the later Gothic under the heading of the Victorian 'sensation school' – which included **J. SHERIDAN LE FANU**, Collins, and Charles Reade. The term 'sensation' is a reference to the physiological effect that the reading of such authors is supposed to have had on the audience, which links it directly back to the tradition of **THE SUBLIME**. The first two of these writers have undergone a revival of interest in the last ten years and now most of their works are currently available in paperback reprints. In particular, Le Fanu is seen as a major transmitter of the Gothic to later nineteenth-century writers like Bram Stoker and **AMBROSE BIERCE**. His collection *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) contains the *doppelgänger* **VAMPIRE** story 'Carmilla', which has always been a favourite of anthologists. In 1932 this story – as with several of the Gothic fictions of Poe – was made into a German expressionist film, *Vampyr*. Recent interest in lesbianism, vampirism, and perverse sexuality has revived the story, and given it currency again as a modern classic. Le Fanu's horror masterpiece, *Uncle Silas* (1864), has also been revived on stage and screen on several occasions from the 1920s onwards, while his particularly horrid chapter in *The House by the Churchyard* (1861–3), 'Narrative of a Hand', was transformed into another anthology classic, 'The Beast with Five Fingers' by W. F. Harvey. Le Fanu is prized particularly by later horror writers like **M. R. JAMES**, who edited him and on whose *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904), a leading

representative of the genre in the Edwardian period, he had a great deal of influence.

Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860) owes also something to the Gothic tradition – in particular its sublime and dramatic opening scene in which a woman dressed in white is encountered wandering in a North London suburb near Hampstead Heath, having escaped incarceration. Both these writers carry on an important rhetorical tradition begun by Ann Radcliffe and developed into a sophisticated and 'modern' art by Poe with their use of the 'explained supernatural' – that of the deliberately excessive, and sometimes ironical, foregrounding of 'explanation' as a mode of their documentary façade.

The later nineteenth century sees the steady production of minor classics in the horror tradition: **HENRY JAMES**'s 'The Jolly Corner' and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), M. R. James's collections (1904, 1911, 1919), Bram Stoker's early stories and tales, **HAWTHORNE**'s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Collins's *The Woman in White* and Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). But the dominant piece of Gothic writing of this period is undoubtedly, **STEVENSON**'s novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). This narrative, which, following some of the earlier experiments of Poe and Le Fanu, presents itself rhetorically in the Gothic magazine mode as a 'Strange Case', is often viewed by post-war writers on the Gothic Novel as a rich and penetrating analysis of Victorian repression, which anticipates Freud's work on the Ego and the Id. The story of the respectable, well-intentioned Doctor and his dwarfish, murderous 'other half' has passed into popular mythology as a way of describing split personality, and contributes to the literature on the divided self in the modern period. This story too has been the subject of extensive visual representation.

The great coup of the nineteenth-century Gothic novel, however, comes at its end, with *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker. This novel, together with Radcliffe's novels, Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Poe's tale 'The Fall of the House of Usher', and Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, represents the canon of the post-Second-World-War rehabilitation of the Gothic Novel. Stoker's novel creates single-handedly the literary myth of 'Transylvania', the kingdom of vampires, portrayed as a vortex-like region of Central Europe in which the Turks were originally repelled by the Magyars. Stoker's novel sites itself along the inflammatory metaphorical axis of invasion – geographical and bodily. The novel is a *farrago* of late Victorian beliefs; it is obsessed with the nature of the unconscious; the breaking of certain sexual taboos; the loss of Empire; the degeneration of the stock (i.e. the 'blood') of Western Europe; the onset of the New Woman; the decadent reliance on Empirical Science at the expense of traditional religion.

The figure of the evil Count Dracula, the leader of the Undead, was largely ignored at the time of publication, but since the Second World War has become one of the most charismatic and visually reproduced characters in the popular tradition of the Gothic Novel, rivalling Mary Shelley's Victor Frankenstein and his Monster. Other texts from this period have been rehabilitated in the post-war period: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), for example, a novella with Gothic overtones, has become a classic of the feminist modern tradition, reissued in paperback. In France, Gaston Leroux produced *The Phantom of the Opera* (1911), whose monstrous version of the Beauty and the Beast fairy-tale, recast as a post-Imperial historical romance, has also gained great currency in the post-war period, being turned into a world-touring popular musical.

With the exception of the Gothic strain in the shorter narratives of Kipling, Conrad, and Wells, the Edwardian period and the 1920s and 1930s see the Gothic retreat again into the magazines and anthologies, tapping an unease about Empire which Dickens had already shown himself aware of in his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). As Briggs has shown, the Gothic Novel appeared to decline, under threat from Modernism and the general reaction against Victorianism which took place after the First World War.

During this period, it is left to the cinema (see **GOTHIC FILM**), and in particular the directors of the German expressionist cinema, to explore new forms of re-presentation, often using the settings, motifs and plots of the Gothic novels as a framework, and thus drawing a whole generation of readers back to the novels. This German movement also provided the studio training ground for Alfred Hitchcock, whose contribution to the tradition after the war is outstanding.

This period also saw the emergence of the first of a series of unifying, explanatory critical frameworks, which seem to fit the extreme case of the Gothic Novel, in the essay of Freud on **'THE UNCANNY'** (1919). This vastly influential piece of writing, which, using **HOFFMANN**'s eighteenth-century Gothic novels and stories as examples, seeks to explain the phenomena of readerly and writerly uncertainty by the unconscious projection of repressed fantasy on the part of both, brought commentary on the Gothic Novel onto a new level, a discursive field which has become part of the metalanguage of the postwar Gothic itself. Following Freud, the Surrealists also recognised the eighteenth-century English Gothic Novels as important forerunners of their own experiments with the unconscious, linking their comments to those of the Marquis de Sade already quoted.

American popular culture, which had thoroughly domesticated Freudian analysis by the end of the Second World War, found a new home for the Gothic Novel, which was marginalised during the postwar

recovery period of the 1940s and 1950s in Britain. Important exceptions to this are the works of David Lyndsay, and two English Gothic Novels, between the late 1940s and 1960, the *Gormenghast Trilogy* (1946, 1950, 1959) of Mervyn Peake, and the pre-Wolfenden *doppelgänger* novel, *Radcliffe* (1963), by David Storey, a unique blend of naturalistic surface and Gothic motifs. The American interest in science and technology and the drive to demonise Eastern Europe during the Cold War period gave a new currency and availability to the shapes of Gothic fantasy, in conjunction with science fiction and detective fiction. The horror film was re-born, often deriving from magazine stories or novels of a Gothic type (like *Psycho* for example) or serving as remakes of the Gothic fictions themselves (such as the famous *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), which makes allusion to a forgotten story by R. L. Stevenson). This change, supported by the popularity of the Hammer Films in Britain, in its turn encouraged some limited underground paperback re-publication of the Gothic Novels.

After the 1960s, both genre and commentary have, in a sense, expanded in symbiosis. Or at least, they have both increased exponentially. From the late 1960s on, we have seen the growth of new markets and new readers, which parallel, but far surpass, the market expansion of the original Gothic Novels. Now, every book stall and airport bookstore has a pulp fiction section called 'horror'. The horror writer Stephen King was for a long time the world's best-selling author, and recently **ANNE RICE**, another American author, has begun to rival him with the immense popularity of her *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), which forms the beginning of a series. There are many other strands of the postwar Gothic Novel, which has evolved its own complex map.

The critical interpretation of the Gothic Novel is also evolving. The earlier dominance of psychoanalytic explanation from the 1930s to the 1950s gave way to more historical, linguistic and socio-cultural approaches. From the 1960s onwards, the growth of interest in popular culture and the rise of feminism have changed and immensely broadened the literary and critical possibilities for the Gothic. Lively international and interdisciplinary debate as to the nature of the 'subversiveness' of the Gothic Novel from the eighteenth century to the contemporary period is now under way, a debate which feeds round in a loop into the highly self-conscious fictional practice of such influential contemporary exponents as **ANGELA CARTER**, whose sophisticated collection of stories *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), a blend of fairytale and traditional sadistic Gothic, itself fully aware of the theoretical and fictional possibilities of these overlapping traditions, teases mercilessly the expectations of its would-be commentators and devotee-readers alike.

The heroine:

Gothic Romance

If a term more slippery than 'Gothic' exists, that term is 'Romance'. **MATTHEW LEWIS** called *The Monk* (1796), that notoriously lewd and outrageous narrative, 'A Romance', and Joshua Pickersgill Jr described as 'A Romance' *The Three Brothers* (1803), in the climactic scene of which a baby belonging to the hero's wife is destroyed by peasants who throw it about to see whether, being black, it can fly. But **ANN RADCLIFFE** and her ilk use the term equally to describe their kinder, gentler fiction, and it is to their sort of novel that the term now usually adheres – **TERROR** Gothic, Soft Gothic, **FEMALE GOTHIC**. Such Gothic tends to have a good dash of romance in the popular understanding of the word as well as the scholarly one, while retaining the classic trilogy of necessary Gothic components – isolation, complicated setting, a threat possibly supernatural but more likely to be human and male.

The heroines of Gothic Romance are not the vaporous, swooning creatures of caricature, undone by over-sensitivity; their troubles are real. Radcliffe's Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), for instance, valiantly counterfeits calmness while having a nocturnal picnic supper in the forest, storm and wolves pending, with two ruffians who 'she believes' may kill her. Her bravery is typical, though perhaps extreme. The heroines of Gothic Romance lift the black veil, go to the attic, confront the possible spectres – attempt, in short, to shed some factual light on their mysterious surroundings and find their ways out of their Gothic dilemmas. In **HORROR** Gothic, to be sure, their surroundings would be worse. Whereas in *The Monk* (1796) the unfortunate Agnes, locked in a convent charnel house, lifts in her hand a soft object that proves to be the putrefying head of a nun, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) the terrifying object behind the famous black veil is a waxwork representation of a corpse – waxen decay, waxen worms. It has no smell, and had Emily touched it (as she does not), her fingers would not have sunk.

Is this authorial discretion the identifying note of romance? Or does the genre depend on the likelihood that the beleaguered **HEROINE** will,

against all realistic odds, find her way to a happy ending? Perhaps a handful of miracles – the lucky moonbeam that falls on the trap door, the coming back clean and whole from the darkness – are a more potent distancer from the other sort of Gothic, and from the reader's world as well, than any removal in time or place.

Here, approximately, is what happens in Gothic Romance, from Ann Radcliffe and her many imitators in the 1790s and following, through Victoria Holt, and hers, in the 1960s. A young female is stripped of her human support, her mother usually dead before the novel begins, her father or other guardian dying in the early chapters. The lover (if any) who might protect her is sent away or prevented from seeing her. Depending upon the period of the novel, she may be kidnapped, or fall into the hands of an unscrupulous guardian, or go out as a governess, or marry hastily. Out in the world her troubles multiply. People want to kill her, rape her, lock her up in a convent for life, and make off with her small fortune. Her task is to defend her virtue and liberty, to resist evil, and especially to penetrate disguises – spot the plausible seeming villains, trust the suspicious looking heroes – and thereby rebuild a support system that will restore her to a quiet life. With pluck and luck she manages these near impossibilities and is rewarded with the discovery of lost relatives and/or the promise of reliable domestic love in a household of her own.

Setting is crucial for atmosphere and as metaphor. The Gothic world is melancholy, menacing, shot through with guilt and fear. But it is, despite some bizarre embellishments, recognisable as the grimmer side of the human condition, with its 'what am I doing here?' and its 'where is this anyway?' The past is mysterious, the future murky, the present full of pitfalls. Castles, no protection, are half ruined, semi-occupied by a bad lot. Their passageways and trap doors, their mysteries and apparitions, merely complicate the already tenuous situations of the heroines. In the earlier settings, Italian or Spanish, the landscapes run to mountains, chasms and heavy forests, not to mention the convents and monasteries of Catholicism (that arbitrary, sinister, un-British religion). Novelists from THE BRONTËS onward often favour the desolation of moors, less conducive to ambush (though there are old wells, marshes, and so on) but dramatic in their lack of shelter. Much of the action takes place in the dark.

Romance in the popular sense, the pursuit of love, though it often provides a convenient dénouement, is less of a presence than one would suppose, in part because the plots stress separation and isolation. Rather, the heroines are wracked by a longing for home, for family, for connection, and this longing – diffuse, melancholy, deep – infuses the fiction with its characteristic tone. In an inspired scene in Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), the heroine Ellena paces the beach near the isolated marble house to which she has been brought to be killed, and her cowled would-be assassin Schedoni crosses and recrosses her path. The self-protective cry wrenched from her in this crisis is only superficially untrue: 'I am far from home!' she cries. 'Night is coming on!' As the villain points out, she has no home.

The motif is consistent through the decades of Gothic Romance. Jane Eyre (usually considered a step in the lineage of Gothic heroines), after wandering and starving, very nearly immolates herself in the missionary work demanded by her cousin, whose blood connection she prizes, until she is saved by the miraculous voice of Mr Rochester, who will provide a home of greater warmth. Even the dream or wraith of Catherine at the start of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) mourns, 'I've been a waif for twenty years.' The jocular description of modern Gothic Romances like Victoria Holt's *The Mistress of Mellyn* (1960) as 'Girl Gets House' is not altogether off the mark.

The home for which they long, their happy ending, is not to be bought with moral compromise. When Emily of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* stands on the brink of a happy ending, escaped from her villainous uncle-by-marriage, with her virginity and patrimony both intact, she turns away her beloved Valancourt, whose attractions thrilled a generation of readers. He has passed through a period of dissipation in Paris, and although now reformed is, in her view, ruined. He is no longer a suitable mate, and so Emily sacrifices her dreams to her standards. Only the discovery that Valancourt's dissipation was exaggerated permits a happy ending. Ellena, in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, though an evil abbess is forcing her to take vows, nevertheless hesitates excruciatingly at the impropriety of being rescued by the man she loves but has not yet married; later she balks again at the indignity of marrying into his hostile family. We might remember Jane Eyre, too, who will neither marry St John without loving him, nor love Mr Rochester without marrying him. Recent heroines are comparatively flexible, but still disinclined to accept expensive gifts, stifle their opinions, or compromise their independence.

Some changes in the Gothic Romance naturally occur over the decades, though the similarities are more conspicuous. The gentility of the romances forestalls some of the dramatic changes of device evident in the tougher Gothics, which gradually give less attention to putrefaction and more to sex. In the romances, the putrefaction was always waxen and the sex always offstage.

Preoccupation with religion of an odd sort marks the early Gothic Romances but not the later ones. Heroines are not conspicuously pious in a conventional sense; indeed they are rather likelier to turn to Nature for comfort than to God. Bad nuns and monks tend to outnumber good

ones, and hardened villains quail before the greater villainy of the Inquisition. But the religion of Filial Piety thrives and even protects. Matilda and Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) hysterically assure one another that they cannot possibly love Matilda's mother Hippolita as much as she deserves. In Eleanor Sleath's *Pyrenean Banditti* (1811), the right-thinking heroine Adelaide is principally concerned, after having been robbed of her position and fortune and thrust into the hands of a loutish and vaguely criminal couple said to be her real parents, that she cannot feel the love she should feel for her new father. She assumes that she is somehow degenerate and unnatural, not that she has good taste. Her problem is solved by the revelation that the man is not after all her real father; the assumption that one must love even horrible fathers is left unchallenged. In the religion of Filial Piety, the miniature portrait is a holy medal standing for the absent parent, and the face of the parent sometimes drives off villains as a crucifix drives off vampires. In *The Italian*, for instance, the assassin Schedoni recoils at the sight of his own portrait on the bosom that he is about to poniard, and spares his niece on the mistaken premise that she is his daughter.

Heroines in the early Gothics are indisputably pretty, and although they may, like Ellena, discreetly embroider for a convent to supplement the family income, they possess aristocratic relatives. This changes after Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), though the novel itself is only marginally Gothic by Radcliffean standards. (The adventures of Romance heroines, for instance, never start in childhood except in pastiches like *Northanger Abbey* (1818).) Heroines after Jane consider themselves plain, though not always quite in her uncompromising way: they complain that their mouths are too wide, their hair too unruly, their eyes too far apart or too bold. Their possibilities are undeveloped until their heroes arrive. What is more, they are only gentlemen's daughters and, like Jane, venture out into the world to earn a living, though in the most modern of the novels the excursion is alternatively caused by an impulsive marriage to a near stranger. Thus in Victoria Holt's *Kirkland Revels* (1962), Catherine Corder marries a man who clearly feels some uneasiness about his ancient home, who takes her there and soon thereafter dies, leaving her in unexplained peril. Impulsive marriage is nearly as hazardous as being kidnapped. The great task for the most modern heroine is understanding which of the difficult or possibly villainous men around her will turn out to be the one she can trust and marry.

The metaphors of Gothic Romance still work. Though the marvellous scene in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* when Emily believes that she and her uncle are discussing the lease of her house and he believes that they are discussing her engagement, could no longer be done, only the ambivalence of the language has been lost. The struggle to acquire, not become, property, like the quest for a home and stability, is perennial. Are Gothic villains implausible? Studies tell us that we are most likely to be murdered by someone known and close to us. They tell us how often women unwittingly fall into the hands of men whose capacity for abuse they did not accurately gauge, and in what psychological labyrinths they lose the way out. 'Escapist' has long been a critically dismissive word, but we have failed to appreciate its implications. Gothic Romance may owe its devoted following and endless appeal to the most extraordinary thing that its heroines do: against all statistics and probability, they escape.

ANN B. TRACY

Wandering Jew (Ahasuerus)

The Legend of the Wandering Jew has as its nucleus a narrative motif which exists throughout the Western world and the Orient in almost all ethnic communities. It deals with a person who has committed a serious transgression against the basic and sacred values (of a simpler, rudimentary type) of human society, i.e. an outrageous murder and/or an act of blasphemy. His punishment is restless exile for an almost infinite time. He has to wander on earth at least for several human life spans or centuries until his crime is atoned for or someone has taken the burden on him/herself. Under a similar predicament are the figures of the 'Wild Huntsman', the 'Flying Dutchman' and Cain with Grendel, his monstrous descendant in Old English mythology.

The Legend of the Wandering Jew went through several modifications and variations. The starting point was given in the gospels of St Matthew (xvi:28) and of St John (xxi:22–3) in the reports of Christ's condemnation, torture and crucifixion. Both evangelists write that an officer hit Jesus with his hand. The stories derived from that, depict this man either as a boundless violator of God's majesty, or as a poor sinner, or as a wicked heathen, or even as a Jew. His name is 'Cartaphilus' or 'Buttadeus'/'Botadeo', i.e. the God-striker. After his baptism he carries the name Joseph. In the High Middle Ages this narrative reaches Italy (1223). In the year 1228 the story reappears in the Anglo-Latin chronicle entitled *Flores Historiarum* written by Roger of Wendover, a monk in St Albans. Here Jesus is said to have answered to Cartaphilus: 'I am going, and you will wait till I return.' An echo of this version seems to be the old man in Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, who implores the earth in vain to let him in. French, Spanish and Italian sources of the following centuries then emphasise and elaborate on the

psychological and physical tortures of the Wandering Jew's existence, thus preparing it for the Gothic inventory.

In the Reformation Age, the subsequent religious wars and in the context of the military threat to Europe by the Turks, new aspects are developed. A German pamphlet (1602) speaks of the *'Eternal* Jew' [der *ewige* Jude]. He is described as being 60 years old, with wild hair, a long grey beard, badly torn clothes, and he is now called Ahasherus – a name typifying Jews in general. This notion entered into the *Volksbuch* (popular story-book for the just literate) of *Ahasuerus* and found wide acceptance so that it also turned up in ballads and songs not only in Germany but all over Europe. In England, for example, it took the form of a ballad, *The Wandering Jew; or The Shoemaker of Jerusalem* (1625), or a comedy by Andrew Franklin, *The Wandering Jew; or, Love's Masquerade* (1797).

Probably the most significant factor behind the Renaissance and the Reformation is the discovery of the 'individual'. Around the middle of the eighteenth century then – the time when the Industrial Revolution had its take-off – this process had gone so far as to effect a restructuring of the Western societies under the aspect of *individual* needs and abilities while the traditional religious beliefs were still holding on. The intellectual and psychological consequences of this are thematised in what is called the Age of Romanticism. Here, then, the Legend of the Wandering/Eternal Jew, as well as the similar story of Dr Faustus, made it possible to express the situation of a suffering, homeless individual of high moral and social responsibility, who has to live without the support of transcendental beliefs. The 'lyrical rhapsody' *Der ewige Jude* (1783), written by the German pre-Romantic ('STURM UND DRANG') poet Christian Schubart, shows all the elements which are later attributed to the homeless, loveless, intellectually and aesthetically highly aware, guilt-ridden and suicidal individual of Lord Byron's works, such as *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* ('Byronic Hero').

In M. G. LEWIS's Gothic novel *The Monk* (1795) the Wandering Jew appears in the sub-story of 'Raymond and Agnes'. A new feature is the Jew's compulsive, magnetic eye. St Leon, the hero of William Godwin's novel of the same name, is a combination of Faustus, Ahasuerus and Cagliostro, a notorious eighteenth-century adventurer. SHELLEY makes Ahasuerus complain about God's tyranny in *Queen Mab* (1813). He also deals with that figure in *Hellas* (1822) and in *The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy* (published posthumously in 1887). Wordsworth wrote the poem *The Wandering Jew*. A widely known embodiment and surely the most Gothic version of the Wandering Jew motif seems to be MATURIN's hero in *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), who combines Dr Faustus, Mephisto/Lucifer, and Ahasuerus. In France we find Caigniez's melodrama *Le Juif errant* (1812). In 1844–5 there was Eugène Sue's very popular novel of the same title, and then came Halévy's opera *Le Juif errant* (1852), which is based on a libretto by Eugène Scribe. Even Leopold Bloom, the Jewish hero of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, is part of the Wandering Jew tradition.

Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem *The Wandering Jew* offers a summing up of all the aspects attributed to that character. The Wandering Jew stands for a mind depressed by human suffering, also for the suffering inflicted by society, for the search for an absconded God, and for the immense difficulties of striving for self-realisation, in an individual or in a group-specific sense. In order to thematise further aspects of such an existence, the nineteenth century began to attribute a female companion to the Wandering Jew: Herodias (Eugène Sue) or Salomé (George S. Viereck: *Salomé: The Wandering Jewess*, 1930).

The motif of the Wandering Jew and its perpetuating as well as its changing implications bear witness to most of the major intellectual developments of the last two thousand years. The disappearance of that motif in our present age may result from the emergence of a more concrete and factual picture of the Jewish people and from a weakening of the traditional religious and ethnic stereotypes. It may also be due to the impact of the modern media, and of course to the images and experience presented by an internationally significant Jewish (especially Jewish-American) literature.

HANS-ULRICH MOHR

Ann Radcliffe "The Italian."

(36)

CHAPTER III

—— Art thou any thing?
Art thou some God, some Angel, or some Devil
That mak'st my blood cold, and my hair to stand?
Speak to me, what thou art.

JULIUS CÆSAR

VIVALDI, from the period of his last visit to Altieri, was admitted a frequent visitor to Signora Bianchi, and Ellena was, at length, prevailed upon to join the party, when the conversation was always on indifferent topics. Bianchi, understanding the disposition of her niece's affections, and the accomplished mind and manners of Vivaldi, judged that he was more likely to succeed by silent attentions than by a formal declaration of his sentiments. By such declaration, Ellena, till her heart was more engaged in his cause, would, perhaps, have been alarmed into an absolute rejection of his addresses, and this was every day less likely to happen, so long as he had an opportunity of conversing with her.

Signora Bianchi had acknowledged to Vivaldi that he had no rival to apprehend; that Ellena had uniformly rejected every admirer who had hitherto discovered her within the shade of her retirement, and that her present reserve proceeded more from considerations of the sentiments of his family than from disapprobation of himself. He forbore, therefore, to press his suit, till he should have secured a stronger interest in her heart, and in this hope he was encouraged by Signora Bianchi, whose gentle remonstrances in his favour became every day more pleasing and more convincing.

Several weeks passed away in this kind of intercourse, till Ellena, yielding to the representations of Signora Bianchi, and to the pleadings of her own heart, received Vivaldi as an acknowledged admirer, and the sentiments of his family were no longer remembered, or, if remembered, it was with a hope that they might be overcome by considerations more powerful.

The lovers, with Signora Bianchi and a Signor Giotto, a distant relation of the latter, frequently made excursions in the delightful environs of Naples; for Vivaldi was no longer anxious to conceal his attachment, but wished to contradict any report

injurious to his love, by the publicity of his conduct; while the consideration, that Ellena's name had suffered by his late imprudence, contributed, with the unsuspecting innocence and sweetness of her manners towards him, who had been the occasion of her injuries, to mingle a sacred pity with his love, which obliterated all family politics from his mind, and bound her irrecoverably to his heart.

These excursions sometimes led them to Puzzuoli, Baia, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo, and as, on their return, they glided along the moon-light bay, the melodies of Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore. At this cool hour the voices of the vine-dressers were frequently heard in trio, as they reposed, after the labour of the day, on some pleasant promontory, under the shade of poplars; or the brisk music of the dance from fishermen, on the margin of the waves below. The boatmen rested on their oars, while their company listened to voices modulated by sensibility to finer eloquence, than is in the power of art alone to display; and at others, while they observed the airy natural grace, which distinguishes the dance of the fishermen and peasants of Naples. Frequently as they glided round a promontory, whose shaggy masses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to. The deep clear waters reflected every image of the landscape, the cliffs, branching into wild forms, crowned with groves, whose rough foliage often spread down their steeps in picturesque luxuriance; the ruined villa on some bold point, peeping through the trees; peasants' cabins hanging on the precipices, and the dancing figures on the strand—all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moon-light. On the other hand, the sea trembling with a long line of radiance, and shewing in the clear distance the sails of vessels stealing in every direction along its surface, presented a prospect as grand as the landscape was beautiful.

One evening that Vivaldi sat with Ellena and Signora Bianchi, in the very pavilion where he had overheard that short but interesting soliloquy, which assured him of her regard, he pleaded with more than his usual earnestness for a speedy marriage. Bianchi did not oppose his arguments; she had been unwell for some time, and, believing herself to be declining fast, was anxious to have their nuptials concluded. She surveyed with languid eyes, the scene that spread before the pavilion. The strong effulgence which a setting-sun threw over the sea, shewing innumerable gaily painted

There lived in the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo. at Naples, a man called father Schedoni; an Italian, as his name imported, but whose family was unknown, and from some circumstances, it appeared, that he wished to throw an impenetrable veil over his origin. For whatever reason, he was never heard to mention a relative, or the place of his nativity, and he had artfully eluded every enquiry that approached the subject, which the curiosity of his associates had occasionally prompted. There were circumstances, however, which appeared to indicate him to be a man of birth, and of fallen fortune; his spirit, as it had sometimes looked forth from under the disguise of his manners, seemed lofty; it shewed not, however, the aspirings of a generous mind, but rather the gloomy pride of a disappointed one. Some few persons in the convent, who had been interested by his appearance, believed that the peculiarities of his manners, his severe reserve and unconquerable silence, his solitary habits and frequent penances, were the effect of misfortunes preying upon a haughty and disordered spirit; while others conjectured them the consequence of some hideous crime gnawing upon an awakened conscience.

He would sometimes abstract himself from the society for whole days together, or when with such a disposition he was compelled to mingle with it, he seemed unconscious where he was, and continued shrouded in meditation and silence till he was again alone. There were times when it was unknown whither he had retired, notwithstanding that his steps had been watched, and his customary haunts examined. No one ever heard him complain. The elder brothers of the convent said that he had talents, but denied him learning; they applauded him for the profound subtlety which he occasionally discovered in argument, but observed that he seldom perceived truth when it lay on the surface; he could follow it through all the labyrinths of disquisition, but overlooked it, when it was undisguised before him. In fact he cared not for truth, nor sought it by bold and broad argument, but loved to exert the wily cunning of his nature in hunting it through artificial perplexities. At length, from a habit of intricacy and suspicion, his vitiated mind could receive nothing for truth, which was simple and easily comprehended.

Among his associates no one loved him, many disliked him, and more feared him. His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in its air; something almost

super-human. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, encreased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that can not easily be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice. Yet, notwithstanding all this gloom and austerity, some rare occasions of interest had called forth a character upon his countenance entirely different; and he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons, whom he wished to conciliate, with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph. This monk, this Schedoni, was the confessor and secret adviser of the Marchesa di Vivaldi. In the first effervescence of pride and indignation, which the discovery of her son's intended marriage occasioned, she consulted him on the means of preventing it, and she soon perceived that his talents promised to equal her wishes. Each possessed, in a considerable degree, the power of assisting the other; Schedoni had subtlety with ambition to urge it; and the Marchesa had inexorable pride, and courtly influence; the one hoped to obtain a high benefice for his services, and the other to secure the imaginary dignity of her house, by her gifts. Prompted by such passions, and allured by such views, they concerted in private, and unknown even to the Marchese, the means of accomplishing their general end.

Vivaldi, as he quitted his mother's closet, had met Schedoni in the corridor leading thither. He knew him to be her confessor, and was not much surprised to see him, though the hour was an unusual one. Schedoni bowed his head, as he passed, and assumed a meek and holy countenance; but Vivaldi, as he eyed him with a penetrating glance, now recoiled with involuntary emotion; and it seemed as if a shuddering presentiment of what this monk was preparing for him, had crossed his mind.

Wordsworth on the sublime
"The Prelude"
after crossing the alps

Imagination! lifting up itself
Before the eye and progress of my song
Like an unfathered vapour – here that Power,
In all the might of its endowments, came
Athwart me; I was lost as in a cloud,
Halted without a struggle to break through; 597
And now recovering, to my soul I say –
'I recognize thy glory': in such strength
Of usurpation, in such visitings
Of awful promise, when the light of sense 600
Goes out in flashes that have shown to us
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
There harbours, whether we be young or old.
Our destiny, our nature, and our home
Is with infinitude, and only there; 605
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
The mind beneath such banners militant
Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught 610
That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts
That are their own perfection and reward,
Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
Which hides it like the overflowing Nile.

SHELLEY

MONT BLANC°

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

I

THE everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendor, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings 5

Of waters—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap forever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-colored, many-voicèd vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odors, and their mighty swinging
To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
Which when the voices of the desert fail
Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion,
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by
Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them; thou art there!

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep—that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;
Has some unknown omnipotence upfurled°
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!

Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears—still, snowy, and serene—
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelop once this silent snow?
None can reply—all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,

53 **upfurled** Cj. James Thomson for *unfurled.*

So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
But for such faith, with nature reconciled;°
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell.
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this,* the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil

Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil;
Their food and their retreat forever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race
Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, forever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves,
Breathes its swift vapors to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights,
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapor broods
Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

Shelley

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

Preface

The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theater with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price for the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary.

The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost,* interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry° which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

a pernicious casuistry a phrase crucial to the understanding of Shelley's criticism of *Paradise Lost,* since it applies to the supposedly *Satanist* reading of the poem.

30

Shelley

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA
IN FOUR ACTS

Audisne haec, amphiarae, sub terram abdite?

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PROMETHEUS
DEMOGORGON
JUPITER
THE EARTH
OCEAN
APOLLO
MERCURY
PANTHEA
IONE
ASIA
Oceanides.
HERCULES
THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER
THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH
THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON
SPIRITS OF THE HOURS

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. FURIES.

ACT I

SCENE—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS *is discovered bound to the Precipice.* PANTHEA *and* IONE *are seated at his feet. Time, night. During the Scene, morning slowly breaks.*

Prometheus. Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,°
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,

6 **Requitest . . . praise** See *Paradise Lost,* V, 1. 782.

With fear and self-contempt and barren hope;
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,
O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair—these are mine empire:—
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!°
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, forever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, forever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage

1–7 **Monarch . . . God** See *Paradise Lost,* I, 11. 84f. and 242f.

Shelley
Prometheus (3)

Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoarfrost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-colored east; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall.

Phantasm.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move
In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony,
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!

I curse thee, let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally;
And after many a false and fruitless crime
Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

Prometheus. Were these my words, O Parent?

The Earth. They were thine.

Prometheus. It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

the poet:

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!

Byron

From Manfred°

A Dramatic Poem

ACT III, SCENE IV

Interior of the Tower

[MANFRED *alone*]

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night

Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learned the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Caesars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Caesars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levelled battlements
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;—
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Caesar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.—
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old,—
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns.—

Byron "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"

From *Canto* 3

["ONCE MORE UPON THE WATERS"]

1

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
Ada![1] sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted—not as now we part,
But with a hope.—
Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices; I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's[2] lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

2

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

3

In my youth's summer[3] I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life—where not a flower appears.

4

Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain—
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,

1. Byron's daughter, Augusta Ada, born in December 1816, a month before her parents separated. Byron's "hope" (line 5) had been for a reconciliation, but he was never to see Ada again.
2. England's.
3. Byron wrote canto 1 at age 21; he is now 28.

And both may jar:[4] it may be that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling,
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling
Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

5

He, who grown agèd in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him—nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife

Of silent, sharp endurance—he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpaired, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

6

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought![5] with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth.

7

Yet must I think less wildly—I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

8

Something too much of this—but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.[6]
Long absent HAROLD reappears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigor from the limb,
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

9

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he filled again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual; but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which galled forever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clanked not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

10

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation—such as in strange land
He found in wonderworks of God and Nature's hand.

11

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?

Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond[7] prime.

12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man, with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebelled,
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

13

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake

A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glassed[8] by sunbeams on the lake.

14

Like the Chaldean,[9] he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

15

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipped wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

16

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left—but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild—as on the plundered wreck
Where mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck—
Did yet inspire a cheer which he forebore to check.

THE ROMANTIC IMAGE OF THE POET

1757 **Thomas Gray** ***The Bard*** - the poet the embodiment of national resistance to tyranny

Ezekiel from the Old Testament - traditionally thought of as the most imaginative of the major prophets (he was one of the Israelites held captive in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 598 BC where he encouraged his people to keep alive a sense of national identity

1776 **Declaration of Independence** of the 13 American colonies (American colonists viewed as New Israelites who, divinely inspired, rise up against tyranny which is powerless against right and truth)

1789 the **French Revolution**, millennial apocalyptic expectations aroused (*The Book of the Apocalypse* ("Revelation") foretells the coming of the millennium of earthly kingdom and then eternal bliss symbolized by the marriage between the New Jerusalem ("a new earth") and Christ the Lamb ("a new heaven")

1793-94 the **Reign of Terror** under Robespierre ⇒apocalyptic hope reinterpreted: instead of revolutionary masses triumphing over earthly tyranny the individual visionary imagination should triumph over other senses ⇒the Romantic emphasis on *seeing* (i.e. achieving the imaginative vision of things as they are (Blake: "seeing through and not with the eye") and achieving a spiritual marriage between the mind and the external world

1793-1815 the **French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars**

1819 **Peterloo massacre** - a peaceful demonstration for parliamentary reform in St. Peter's Fields in Manchester charged by government troops, 9 killed, hundreds injured

William Hazlitt: *"For my part, I set out in life with the French Revolution and that event had considerable influence on my early feelings as on those of others. Youth was then doubly such. It was the dawn of a new era, a new impulse had been given to men's minds, and the sun of Liberty rose upon the sun of Life in the same day, and both were proud to run their race together. Little did I dream, while my first hopes and wishes went hand in hand with those of the human race, that long before my eyes should close, that dawn would be overcast and set once more in the night of despotism - "total eclipse"."*

J.J. Rousseau gave expression with a new intensity to the love of freedom, the state of man in society, new ideas concerning the self and the admiration of nature. In the place of a civilization of art and science (which he ridicules) virtuous simplicity ("the sublime science of simple minds") should be the ideal Man in a state of nature is "a noble savage", a compassionate, unaggressive being who "breathes only peace and liberty" (*Discourse,* 1754). Civilization leads to inequality, slavery and tyranny, the solution is the "social contract" between the monarch and the people (*The Social Contract*, 1762); the idea itself goes back through Milton, Hobbes, Lock et al ultimately to Plato's *Republic*. His *Confessions*, a controversial and frank account of his life as a man of feeling enchanted the Romantic poets (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III: "... *he knew/How to make madness beautiful, and cast,/O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue/Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past/The eyes which o'er them shed tears feeling and fast.* "

William Godwin (1756-1836) English radical and agitator for parliamentary reform during the French Revolution fired the English Romantic poets' mind with his extreme idealism and his impossibly high conception of the nobility of man

Blake: *"I know that this world is a World of **IMAGINATION and Vision.**"* Imagination as a fundamental feature of art: it can transform the world, provide an escape from it, it enjoys a creative freedom which it consciously strive to realize (for the revelation of spiritual truth, for political reform, for the pleasure of the individual). This creativity of the imagination is God-like in its operations because, like God, it creates new worlds.

Coleridge *Biographia Literaria* (1817) attacked the C18 concept of the mind as a mere recorder of sense impressions (i.e. Locke's *tabula rasa*, Hartley's theory of association (the mind receives impressions from the outside world, through the eye, and combining the impressions, the mind builds up a gradation of ideas from the simple to the complex ones)) on two grounds: that this process leaves no place for the individual's free will (as all actions are determined by sense impressions) and leaves out God as the real cause of theses sense impressions in the first place). He suggested a three-fold division of mental operation: fancy, the primary imagination and the secondary imagination: *"The IMAGINATION then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the infinite mind of the eternal art of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operations. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or when this process is rendered impossible, yet still al all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. FANCY, on the contrary, has not other counters to play with but fixities and definites ... equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of associations."*

Thus imagination is God-like on both its primary and secondary functions: the primary imagination perceives the world, is activated by this perception and becomes creative, re-creating the God-created world with every single act of perception; the secondary imagination goes even further as it dissolves and reorders the objects perceived to create new imaginary worlds. Because so God-like in its operations, imagination is mysterious and holy. Recognizing this immense creative power in oneself, the Romantic poet develops an intense interest in his own self (Wordsworth's *The Prelude*). The emphasis now shifts from the eternal world (the Augustan idea of art as a mirror which reflects nature, of poetry as painting) to the inner world of the poet's self (poetry as music, lyric becomes the chief form of poetry). The poet is governed by his imagination, he can never know when it might strike, but when it does, the poet will sing like the Aeolian harp (tuulekannel) which makes spontaneous music when the wind blows upon it.

Utilitarianism, based on Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1832) *Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) which presents a political and ethical theory of "Utility". *"It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong."* Man's conduct is governed by pain and pleasure. These can be quantitatively measured according to their intensity, duration, certainty and propinquity. When the pleasures and pains of all act affecting all the members of the community have been measured, the moral quality of these acts can be determined. The goodness of a law is measurable by the principle of Utility. i.e. how much it contributes to the happiness of every member of the community. All individuals are always motivated by self-interest, it is the business of law and education to devise sanctions sufficiently strong to make individuals subordinate their happiness to that of the community. Bentham

devised a *felicific calculus* to calculate scientifically the quantitative value of pains and pleasures as motives of action with extraordinary minuteness it order to provide a tool for improving morals and laws. Poetry in Bentham's system is relegated to the status of amusement and distraction: *"Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry."*

Thomas Love Peacock *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820) playfully argued that as mankind had grown up it was time to put away childish things (poetry) and speak as a man in prose.

Thomas B. Macaulay (1825): *"perhaps no person can be a poet or can ever enjoy poetry without a certain unsoundness of mind." "And as a magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effect its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge beaks upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which the poet calls up grow fainter and fainter."*

P.B Shelley *The Defense of Poetry* (1821) (see overleaf)

A. Lord Tennyson *Armageddon* (1828):

> *I felt my soul grow mighty, and my Spirit*
> *With supernatural excitation bound*
> *Within me, and my mental eye grew large*
> *With such a vast circumference of thought,*
> *That in my vanity I seemed to stand*
> *Upon the outward verge and bound alone*
> *Of full beatitude. Each failing sense*
> *As with a momentary flash of light*
> *Grew thrillingly distinct and keen.*

M. Arnold *Maurice de Guérin* (1863, 1865): *The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power, by which I mean /.../ the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When this sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered and oppressed by them, but to have their secret, and to be in harmony with them /.../ The interpretations of science do not give us this intimate sense of objects as the interpretations of poetry give it; they appeal to a limited faculty, and not to the whole man. /.../ I have said that poetry interprets in two ways; it interprets by expressing with magical felicity, the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature. In other words, poetry is interpretative both by having natural magic in it, and by having moral profundity. In both ways it illuminates man; it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him with himself and the universe."*

Wordsworth remembers the French Revolution

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very Heaven! O times
In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchantress – to assist the work
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favoured spots alone, but the whole Earth
The beauty wore of promise – that which sets
(As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of Paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away.
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtlety and strength
Their ministers, – who in lordly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it; – they, too, who of gentle mood
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild
And in the region of their peaceful selves;–
Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty
Did both find, helpers to their hearts desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,–
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia,– subterranean fields, –
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,– the place where, in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all!

from THE PRELUDE, Book 11, Lines 108–24 (1805)

Sonnet: England in 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised and dying king –
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn, mud from a muddy spring –
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow, –
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field, –
An army, which liberticide and prey
Make as an untilled field to all who wield,–
Golden and sanguine laws, which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless– a book sealed;
A Senate, – Time's worst statute unrepealed, –
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst to illumine our tempestuous day.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Shelley

Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude

Preface

The poem entitled "ALASTOR," may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image.[1] He

1. Shelley's view that the object of love is an idealized antitype to all that is best within the self is clarified by a passage in his *Essay on Love*, which may have been written at about the time of *Alastor:* "We dimly see within our intellectual nature . . . the ideal prototype of every thing excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of men. . . . [This is] a soul within our soul. . . . The discovery of its anti-type . . . in such proportion as the type within demands; this is the invisible and unattainable point to which Love tends; and . . . without the possession of which there is no rest nor respite to the heart over which it rules."

seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

"The good die first,
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,
Burn to the socket!"[2]

December 14, 1815.

Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebam quid amarem, amans amare.—*Confess. St. August.*[3]

Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!
If our great Mother[4] has imbued my soul
And motions of the forests and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.[1]

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb
No human hands with pious reverence reared,
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:—

2. Quoted from Wordsworth's *The Excursion* 1.519–21; the passage occurs in *The Ruined Cottage* (above, lines 96–98), which Wordsworth reworked into the first book of *The Excursion* (1814).
3. Condensed from a passage in St. Augustine, *Confessions* 3.1: "Not yet did I love, though I loved to love, seeking what I might love, loving to love." Augustine thus describes his state of mind when he was addicted to illicit sexual love; the true object of his desire, which compels the tortuous spiritual journey of his life, he later discovered to be the infinite and transcendent God.
4. Nature, invoked as the common mother of the elements and of the poet.
5. Wordsworth, *My Heart Leaps Up* (above, lines 9–10): "And I could wish my days to be / Bound each to each by natural piety." Wordsworth also used these lines as the epigraph to his *Ode: Intimations of Immortality.*

Alastor (cont.)

A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,[2]
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:—
Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn[3] bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude.
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
And virgins, as unknown he past, have pined
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. When early youth had past, he left
His cold fireside and alienated home
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
The red volcano overcanopies
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes[4]
On black bare pointed islets ever beat
With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
Of fire and poison, inaccessible
To avarice or pride, their starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and immeasurable halls,
Frequent[5] with crystal column, and clear shrines
Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.[6]
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
And the green earth lost in his heart its claims
To love and wonder; he would linger long
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,[7]
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake,[8] suspend
Her timid steps to gaze upon a form
More graceful than her own.

His wandering step
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec,[9] and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes,[1] and whatsoe'er of strange
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or multilated sphynx,
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble dæmons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery,[2] and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,[3]
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Shelley
"a Defence of Poetry"
(extracts)

In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects, observing[4] in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar, they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects. For there is a certain order or rhythm belonging to each of these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other: the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste, by modern writers. Every man in the infancy of art, observes an order which approximates more or less closely to that from which this highest delight results: but the diversity is not sufficiently marked, as that its gradations should be sensible, except in those instances where the predominance of this faculty of approximation to the beautiful (for so we may be permitted to name the relation between this highest pleasure and its cause) is very great. Those in whom it exists in excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word; and the pleasure resulting from the manner in which they express the influence of society or nature upon their own minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort of reduplication from that community. Their language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them, become through time signs for portions or classes of thoughts[5] instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. These similitudes or relations are finely said by Lord Bacon to be "the same footsteps of nature impressed upon the various subjects of the world"[6]—and he considers the faculty which perceives them as the storehouse of axioms common to all knowledge. In the infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry; and to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression. Every original language near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem:[7] the copiousness of lexicography[8] and the distinctions of grammar are the works of a later age, and are merely the catalogue and the form of the creations of Poetry.

But Poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance and architecture and statuary and painting: they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society and the inventors of the arts of life and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion.[9] Hence all original religions are allegorical, or susceptible of allegory, and like Janus[1] have a double face of false and true. Poets, according to the circumstances of the age and nation in which they appeared, were called in the earlier epochs of the world legislators or prophets:[2] a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters. For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time. Not that I assert poets to be prophets in the gross sense of the word, or that they can foretell the form as surely as they foreknow the spirit of events: such is the pretence of superstition which would make poetry an attribute of prophecy, rather than prophecy an attribute of poetry. A Poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not. The grammatical forms which express the moods of time, and the difference of persons and the distinction of place are convertible with respect to the highest poetry without injuring it as poetry, and the choruses of Æschylus, and the book of Job, and Dante's Paradise would afford, more than any other writings, examples of this fact, if the limits of this essay did not forbid citation. The creations of sculpture, painting, and music, are illustrations still more decisive.

* * *

A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other bond of connexion than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. The one is partial, and applies only to a definite period of time, and a certain combination of events which can never again recur; the other is universal, and contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature. Time, which destroys the beauty and the use of the story of particular

4. Following, obeying.
5. I.e., abstract concepts.
6. Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* ("On the Enlargement of the Sciences"), 1.3.
7. A group of poems (e.g., "the Arthurian cycle") that deal with the same subject.
8. The making of a dictionary.
9. Here Shelley enlarges the scope of the term "poetry" to denote all the creative achievements, or imaginative breakthroughs, of mankind, including noninstitutional religious insights.
1. Roman god of beginnings and endings, often represented by two heads facing in opposite directions.
2. Sir Philip Sidney had pointed out, in his *Defence of Poesy*, that *vates*, the Roman term for poet, signifies "a diviner, fore-seer, or Prophet."

facts, stript of the poetry which should invest them, augments that of Poetry, and for ever develops new and wonderful applications of the eternal truth which it contains. Hence epitomes have been called the moths of just history;[3] they eat out the poetry of it. The story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: Poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted.

The parts of a composition may be poetical, without the composition as a whole being a poem. A single sentence may be considered as a whole though it be found in a series of unassimilated portions; a single word even may be a spark of inextinguishable thought. And thus all the great historians, Herodotus, Plutarch, Livy,[4] were poets; and although the plan of these writers, especially that of Livy, restrained them from developing this faculty in its highest degree, they make copious and ample amends for their subjection, by filling all the interstices of their subjects with living images.

Having determined what is poetry, and who are poets, let us proceed to estimate its effects upon society.

Poetry is ever accompanied with pleasure: all spirits on which it falls, open themselves to receive the wisdom which is mingled with its delight. In the infancy of the world, neither poets themselves nor their auditors are fully aware of the excellence of poetry: for it acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness; and it is reserved for future generations to contemplate and measure the mighty cause and effect in all the strength and splendour of their union. Even in modern times, no living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgement upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impanelled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations. A Poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why. The poems of Homer and his contemporaries were the delight of infant Greece; they were the elements of that social system which is the column upon which all succeeding civilization has reposed. Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character; nor can we doubt that those who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector and Ulysses: the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to the depths in these immortal creations: the sentiments of the auditors must have been refined and enlarged by a sympathy with such great and lovely impersonations, until from admiring they imitated, and from imitation they identified themselves with the objects of

3. By Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning* 2.2.4. "Epitomes": abstracts, summaries.
4. Herodotus (ca. 480–ca. 425 B.C.) wrote the first systematic history of Greece; Plutarch (ca. 46–ca. 120 A.D.) wrote *Parallel Lives* of eminent Greeks and Romans; Titus Livius (59 B.C.–A.D. 17) wrote an immense history of Rome.

their admiration. Nor let it be objected, that these characters are remote from moral perfection, and that they can by no means be considered as edifying patterns for general imitation. Every epoch under names more or less specious has deified its peculiar errors; Revenge is the naked Idol of the worship of a semi-barbarous age; and Self-deceit is the veiled Image of unknown evil before which luxury and satiety lie prostrate. But a poet considers the vices of his contemporaries as the temporary dress in which his creations must be arrayed, and which cover without concealing the eternal proportions of their beauty. An epic or dramatic personage is understood to wear them around his soul, as he may the antient armour or the modern uniform around his body; whilst it is easy to conceive a dress more graceful than either. The beauty of the internal nature cannot be so far concealed by its accidental vesture, but that the spirit of its form shall communicate itself to the very disguise, and indicate the shape it hides from the manner in which it is worn. A majestic form and graceful motions will express themselves through the most barbarous and tasteless costume. Few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour; and it is doubtful whether the alloy of costume, habit, etc., be not necessary to temper this planetary music[5] for mortal ears.

The whole objection, however, of the immorality of poetry[6] rests upon a misconception of the manner in which poetry acts to produce the moral improvement of man. Ethical science[7] arranges the elements which poetry has created, and propounds schemes and proposes examples of civil and domestic life: nor is it for want of admirable doctrines that men hate, and despise, and censure, and deceive, and subjugate one another. But Poetry acts in another and diviner manner. It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces[8] all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, as memorials of that gentle and exalted content[9] which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it coexists. The great secret of morals is Love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination;[1] and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause.

5. The music made by the revolving crystalline spheres of the planets, inaudible to human ears.
6. In the preceding paragraph Shelley has been implicitly dealing with the charge, voiced by Plato in his *Republic*, that poetry is immoral because it represents evil characters acting evilly.
7. Moral philosophy.
8. Produces anew, recreates.
9. Contentment (pronounced con-tént).
1. Central to Shelley's theory is the concept (developed by 18th-century philosophers) of the sympathetic imagination—the faculty by which an individual is enabled to identify with the thoughts and feelings of others. Shelley claims that the faculty which in poetry enables us to share the joys and sufferings of invented characters is also the basis

Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens that faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. A Poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign the glory in a participation in the cause.[2] There was little danger that Homer, or any of the eternal Poets, should have so far misunderstood themselves as to have abdicated this throne of their widest dominion. Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected[3] a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose.[4]

* * *

It is difficult to define pleasure in its highest sense; the definition involving a number of apparent paradoxes. For, from an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the pleasures of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair itself are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of the pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. And hence the saying, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of mirth."[5] Not that this highest species of pleasure is necessarily linked with pain. The delight of love and friendship, the ecstasy of the admiration of nature, the joy of the perception and still more of the creation of poetry is often wholly unalloyed.

The production and assurance of pleasure in this highest sense is true utility. Those who produce and preserve this pleasure are Poets or poetical philosophers.

of all morality, for it compels us to feel for others as we feel for ourselves.

2. The "effect," or the explicit moral standards into which imaginative insights are translated at a particular time or place, is contrasted to the "cause" of all morality, the imagination itself.

3. Euripides, Greek writer of tragedies, 5th century B.C.; Lucan, Roman poet, 1st century, author of the *Pharsalia*; Tasso, Italian poet of the 16th century, author of *Jerusalem Delivered*, an epic poem about a crusade. "Affected.": assumed, adopted.

4. In the omitted passage Shelley reviews the history of drama and poetry in relation to civilization and morality, and proceeds to refute the charge that poets are less useful than "reasoners and merchants." He begins by defining utility in terms of pleasure, and then distinguishes between the lower (physical and material) and the higher (imaginative) pleasures.

5. Ecclesiastes 7.2.

The exertions of Locke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau,[6] and their disciples, in favour of oppressed and deluded humanity, are entitled to the gratitude of mankind. Yet it is easy to calculate the degree of moral and intellectual improvement which the world would have exhibited, had they never lived. A little more nonsense would have been talked for a century or two; and perhaps a few more men, women, and children, burnt as heretics. We might not at this moment have been congratulating each other on the abolition of the Inquisition in Spain.[7] But it exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world if neither Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Calderon, Lord Bacon, nor Milton, had ever existed; if Raphael and Michael Angelo had never been born; if the Hebrew poetry had never been translated; if a revival of the study of Greek literature had never taken place; if no monuments of antient sculpture had been handed down to us; and if the poetry of the religion of the antient world had been extinguished together with its belief. The human mind could never, except by the intervention of these excitements, have been awakened to the invention of the grosser sciences, and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of society, which it is now attempted to exalt over the direct expression of the inventive and creative faculty itself.

We have more moral, political and historical wisdom, than we know how to reduce into practice; we have more scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies. The poetry in these systems of thought, is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes. There is no want of knowledge respecting what is wisest and best in morals, government, and political economy, or at least, what is wiser and better than what men now practise and endure. But we let "*I dare not* wait upon *I would*, like the poor cat i' the adage."[8] We want the creative faculty to imagine that which we know; we want the generous impulse to act that which we imagine; we want the poetry of life: our calculations have outrun conception; we have eaten more than we can digest. The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world; and man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave. To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind? From what other cause has it arisen that these inventions which should have lightened, have added a weight to the curse imposed on Adam? Poetry, and the principle of

6. In a note Shelley says that although Peacock had classified Rousseau with these other thinkers of the 17th and 18th centuries, "he was essentially a poet. The others, even Voltaire, were mere reasoners."

7. The Inquisition had been suspended in 1820, the year before Shelley wrote this essay; it was not abolished permanently until 1834.

8. *Macbeth* 1.7.44–45.

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Self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and Mammon of the world.[9]

The functions of the poetical faculty are two-fold; by one it creates new materials of knowledge, and power and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order which may be called the beautiful and the good. The cultivation of poetry is never more to be desired than at periods when, from an excess of the selfish and calculating principle, the accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature. The body has then become too unwieldy for that which animates it.

Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science, and that to which all science must be referred. It is at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought; it is that from which all spring, and that which adorns all; and that which, if blighted, denies the fruit and the seed, and withholds from the barren world the nourishment and the succession of the scions of the tree of life. It is the perfect and consummate surface and bloom of things; it is as the odour and the colour of the rose to the texture of the elements which compose it, as the form and the splendour of unfaded beauty to the secrets of anatomy and corruption. What were Virtue, Love, Patriotism, Friendship etc.—what were the scenery of this beautiful Universe which we inhabit—what were our consolations on this side of the grave—and what were our aspirations beyond it—if Poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar? Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it: for the mind in creation is as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness: this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure.[1] Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the poet. I appeal to the greatest Poets of the present day, whether it be not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study. The toil and the delay recommended by critics can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connexion of the spaces between their suggestions by the

9. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matthew 6.24).

1. This passage reiterates the ancient belief that the highest poetry is "inspired," and therefore occurs independently of the intention, effort, or consciousness of the poet. Unlike earlier critics, however, Shelley attributes such poetry not to a god or muse but to the unconscious depths of the poet's own mind.

intertexture of conventional expressions; a necessity only imposed by the limitedness of the poetical faculty itself. For Milton conceived the Paradise Lost as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the Muse having "dictated" to him the "unpremeditated song,"[2] and let this be an answer to those who would allege the fifty-six various readings of the first line of the Orlando Furioso.[3] Compositions so produced are to poetry what mosaic is to painting. This instinct and intuition of the poetical faculty is still more observable in the plastic and pictorial arts: a great statue or picture grows under the power of the artist as a child in the mother's womb; and the very mind which directs the hands in formation is incapable of accounting to itself for the origin, the gradations, or the media of the process.

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest[4] moments of the happiest and best minds. We are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling sometimes associated with place or person, sometimes regarding our own mind alone, and always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond all expression: so that even in the desire and the regret they leave, there cannot but be pleasure, participating as it does in the nature of its object. It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own; but its footsteps are like those of a wind over a sea, where the coming calm erases, and whose traces remain only as on the wrinkled sand which paves it. These and corresponding conditions of being are experienced principally by those of the most delicate sensibility and the most enlarged imagination; and the state of mind produced by them is at war with every base desire. The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship is essentially linked with these emotions; and whilst they last, self appears as what it is, an atom to a Universe. Poets are not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this etherial world; a word, or a trait in the representation of a scene or a passion, will touch the enchanted chord, and reanimate, in those who have ever experienced these emotions, the sleeping, the cold, the buried image of the past. Poetry thus makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world; it arrests the vanishing apparitions which haunt the interlunations[5] of life, and veiling them or in language or in form sends them forth among mankind, bearing sweet news of kindred joy to those with whom their sisters abide—abide, because there is no portal of expression from the caverns of the spirit which they inhabit into the universe of things. Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; it exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change;

2. *Paradise Lost* 9:21–24.

3. The epic poem by the 16th-century Italian poet Ariosto, noted for his care in composition.

4. In the double sense of "most joyous" and "most apt or felicitous in invention."

5. The dark intervals between the old and new moons.

it subdues to union under its light yoke all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes; its secret alchemy turns to potable gold[6] the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty which is the spirit of its forms.

All things exist as they are perceived: at least in relation to the percipient. "The mind is its own place, and of itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."[7] But poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. And whether it spreads its own figured curtain or withdraws life's dark veil from before the scene of things, it equally creates for us a being within our being. It makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. It reproduces the common universe of which we are portions and percipients, and it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration.[8] It justifies that bold and true word of Tasso: *Non merita nome di creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta*.[9]

A Poet, as he is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue and glory, so he ought personally to be the happiest, the best, the wisest, and the most illustrious of men. As to his glory, let Time be challenged to declare whether the fame of any other institutor of human life be comparable to that of a poet. That he is the wisest, the happiest, and the best, inasmuch as he is a poet, is equally incontrovertible: the greatest poets have been men of the most spotless virtue, of the most consummate prudence, and, if we could look into the interior of their lives, the most fortunate of men: and the exceptions, as they regard those who possessed the poetic faculty in a high yet inferior degree, will be found on consideration to confirm rather than destroy the rule. Let us for a moment stoop to the arbitration of popular breath, and usurping and uniting in our own persons the incompatible characters of accuser, witness, judge and executioner, let us decide without trial, testimony, or form that certain motives of those who are "there sitting where we dare not soar"[1] are reprehensible. Let us assume that Homer was a drunkard, that Virgil was a flatterer, that Horace was a coward, that Tasso was a madman, that Lord Bacon was a peculator, that Raphael was a libertine, that Spenser was a poet laureate.[2] It is inconsistent with this

6. Alchemists aimed to produce a drinkable form of gold that would be an elixir of life, curing all diseases.
7. Satan's speech, *Paradise Lost* 1.254–55.
8. Shelley's version of a widespread Romantic doctrine that the poetic imagination transforms the familiar into the miraculous and recreates the old world into a new world. See, e.g., Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, above, chap. 4, on "freshness of sensation."
9. "No one merits the name of Creator except God and the Poet." Quoted by Pierantonio Serassi in his *Life of Torquato Tasso* (1785).
1. *Paradise Lost* 4.829.
2. Charges, some of them valid, which had in fact been made against these men. "Peculator": a misappropriator of public money. Raphael is the 16th-century Italian painter. The use of "poet laureate" as a derogatory term was a dig at Robert Southey, who held that honor at the time of Shelley's writing.

division of our subject to cite living poets, but Posterity has done ample justice to the great names now referred to. Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins "were as scarlet, they are now white as snow";[3] they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and the redeemer Time. Observe in what a ludicrous chaos the imputations of real or fictitious crime have been confused in the contemporary calumnies against poetry and poets;[4] consider how little is, as it appears—or appears, as it is; look to your own motives, and judge not, lest ye be judged.

Poetry, as has been said, in this respect differs from logic, that it is not subject to the controul of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence has no necessary connexion with consciousness or will. It is presumptuous to determine that these[5] are the necessary conditions of all mental causation, when mental effects are experienced insusceptible of being referred to them. The frequent recurrence of the poetical power, it is obvious to suppose, may produce in the mind an habit of order and harmony correlative with its own nature and with its effects upon other minds. But in the intervals of inspiration, and they may be frequent without being durable, a poet becomes a man, and is abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influences under which others habitually live. But as he is more delicately organized than other men, and sensible to pain and pleasure, both his own and that of others, in a degree unknown to them, he will avoid the one and pursue the other with an ardour proportioned to this difference. And he renders himself obnoxious to calumny,[6] when he neglects to observe the circumstances under which these objects of universal pursuit and flight have disguised themselves in one another's garments.

But there is nothing necessarily evil in this error, and thus cruelty, envy, revenge, avarice, and the passions purely evil, have never formed any portion of the popular imputations on the lives of poets.

I have thought it most favourable to the cause of truth to set down these remarks according to the order in which they were suggested to my mind, by a consideration of the subject itself, instead of following that of the treatise that excited me to make them public.[7] Thus although devoid of the formality of a polemical reply; if the view they contain be just, they will be found to involve a refutation of the doctrines of the Four Ages of Poetry, so far at least as regards the first division of the subject. I can readily conjecture what should have moved the gall of the learned and intelligent author of that paper; I confess myself, like him, unwilling to be stunned by the Theseids of the hoarse Codri of the day. Bavius and Mævius[8] undoubtedly are, as they ever were, insufferable

3. Isaiah 1.18.
4. Shelley alludes especially to the charges of immorality by contemporary reviewers against Lord Byron and himself.
5. I.e., consciousness or will. Shelley again proposes that some mental processes are unconscious—outside our control or awareness.
6. Exposed to slander.
7. Peacock's *Four Ages of Poetry*.
8. Would-be poets satirized by Virgil and Horace. "Theseids": epic poems about Theseus. Codrus

persons. But it belongs to a philosophical critic to distinguish rather than confound.

The first part of these remarks has related to Poetry in its elements and principles; and it has been shewn, as well as the narrow limits assigned them would permit, that what is called poetry, in a restricted sense, has a common source with all other forms of order and of beauty according to which the materials of human life are susceptible of being arranged, and which is poetry in an universal sense.

The second part[9] will have for its object an application of these principles to the present state of the cultivation of Poetry, and a defence of the attempt to idealize the modern forms of manners and opinions, and compel them into a subordination to the imaginative and creative faculty. For the literature of England, an energetic developement of which has ever preceded or accompanied a great and free developement of the national will, has arisen as it were from a new birth. In spite of the low-thoughted envy which would undervalue contemporary merit, our own will be a memorable age in intellectual achievements, and we live among such philosophers and poets as surpass beyond comparison any who have appeared since the last national struggle for civil and religious liberty.[1] The most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is Poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides, may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, the Power which is seated upon the throne of their own soul. It is impossible to read the compositions of the most celebrated writers of the present day without being startled with the electric life which burns within their words. They measure the circumference and sound the depths of human nature with a comprehensive and all-penetrating spirit, and they are themselves perhaps the most sincerely astonished at its manifestations, for it is less their spirit than the spirit of the age.[2] Poets are the hierophants[3] of an unapprehended inspiration, the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present, the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire: the influence which is moved not, but moves.[4] Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World.

1821 1840

(plural "Codri") was the Roman author of a long, dull *Theseid* attacked by Juvenal and others.

9. Shelley, however, completed only the first part of his *Defence*.

1. In the age of Milton and the English Civil War.

2. By "the spirit of the age" Shelley identifies what was later to be called "the Romantic movement" in contemporary literature and philosophy; he recognized its greatness, as well as its relation to the ferment of ideas and aspirations effected by the French Revolution.

3. Priests who are expositors of sacred mysteries.

4. Aristotle had said that God is the "Unmoved Mover" of the universe.

ROMANTIC NATURE POETRY

Predecessors:
Theocritus, a Greek pastoral poet whose *Idylls* are set in Arcadia – the idealized home of pastoral poetry where shepherds and nymphs lead an idyllic life of simplicity and innocence
Virgil *Eclogues*
Horace about the pleasures of country life
Spenser *Shepherd's Calendar*
Milton, the Garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost*

James Thomson *The Seasons* (1726-30) - **the first major poem-sequence of modern times to concentrate principally upon nature** (it also contains devotional, scientific, georgic (i.e. dealing with agriculture), historical and geographical elements). Its sublimity comes from the apprehension of the created world as evidence for the existence of God and of his benevolence. It anticipates the Romantics in two ways: 1) in its **very abundant, accurate and loving attention to the external world**, to the glorious variety to be found in the created world, and 2) in the **use of nature for individual meditation** (the poem may describe universal, general qualities of nature but it does so through the observation and shaping perception of an individual mind).

Thomson's observations are dominated by the **eye** (influence of Newton's *Optics*, especially the refraction of light), as were Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, Dyer's *Grongar Hill* and Pope's *Windsor Forest.*

They are also indebted to the landscapes of **Claude Lorraine, Salvator Rosa** and **Gaspar Poussin** and the **English landscape garden** ("le jardin anglais") they inspired. To appreciate the beauty of a scene more fully the Augustans used the **"Claude glass"**, a tinted mirror as a view-finder. By standing with their back to the actual landscape they used the mirror as a frame for finding picturesque Claudian scenes.

Edmund Burke in his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* stressed the **importance of individual feeling** but the emphasis is still on the **visual**.
C18 guide books recommended places of specific delight with "stations" from which they could be seen, the criterion being "the peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture".

Wordsworth starts his career (his first published poem being *An Evening Walk* (1793)) by describing his landscapes through the imagery of Claude and Rosa. Later he was to react against the tyranny of the eye and maintain that the true feeling for nature should take the place of superficial appreciation. **Nature** becomes for him **a source of vital and mysterious power, an object and inspirer of love.** To generate the kind of love of which W. speaks there has to be an intimacy, even a familiarity with nature that comes from personal experience.

Here the influence of **William Cowper**'s *The Task* (1784) is remarkable. C. celebrates the natural world in blank verse and is attached to his local landscape.

W. follows C.'s attachment to a local landscape but his **expression is more elevated and passionate**. For him the external world becomes **a moral force, a source of inspiration, a support in time of trouble, a blessing, a joy**.

Romantic nature poetry is characterized by:

1) **genuine pleasure found in the natural world;**
2) **landscapes** are not just beautiful, they **express elusive truths and perceptions of the mind**. The R. poets look outwards to nature to **find emblems of the mind.** They **externalize their emotions** in describing them through natural correspondences (mountains can correspond to aspiring, high ideas; the sea be the symbol of depth or boundlessness; the calm and steady lake stand for inner peace etc.);
3) **association of nature with moral and physical health** (nature seen as health-giving and opposed to smoky industrial towns in an age when consumption/tuberculosis was wide-spread)
4) it rests on a belief that there is a wholesome hunger after the natural and the pure;
5) these latter qualities are manifest in the spontaneous life of animals and children – from this follows that children represent unspoilt simplicity which had been preserved by freedom and lack of pressure, consequently natural education is more beneficial than the traditional academic one. This accords well with the C18 ideas concerning benevolence and sensibility.

Wordsworth ***Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey***
Keats ***Ode to a Nightingale***

Wordsworth

Lines[1]

Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798

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

1. "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of 4 or 5 days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol" (Wordsworth). The poem was printed as the last item in *Lyrical Ballads*.

Wordsworth had first visited the Wye valley and the ruins of Tintern Abbey, in Monmouthshire, while on a solitary walking tour in August 1793, when he was 23 years old. The puzzling difference between the present landscape and the remembered "picture of the mind" (line 61) gives rise to an intricately organized meditation, in which the poet reviews his past, evaluates the present, and (through his sister as intermediary) anticipates the future; he ends by rounding back quietly upon the scene which had been his point of departure.

Wordsworth (2)

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, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures.[2] Not for this
Faint[3] 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

2. Lines 66 ff. contain Wordsworth's famed description of the three stages of his growing up, defined in terms of his evolving relations to the natural scene: the young boy's purely physical responsiveness (lines 73–74); the post-adolescent's aching, dizzy, and equivocal passions—a love which is more like dread (lines 67–72, 75–85: this was his state of mind on the occasion of his first visit); his present state (lines 85 ff.), in which for the first time he adds thought to sense. All his knowledge of human suffering, so painfully acquired in the interim, chastens him while it enriches the visible scene like a chord of music; he has gained also awareness of an immanent "presence" which links his mind and all the elements of the external world.
3. Lose heart.

Wordsworth (3)

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,[4]
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[5] to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,[6]
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,

4. The fact that apparent changes in the sensible world have turned out to be projected by the changing mind of the observer gives evidence that the faculties "half create" the world; the part that is "perceived" (line 107) is what has remained unchanged between the two visits. This view that the "creative sensibility" contributes to its own perceptions is often reiterated in the early books of *The Prelude*.

5. Creative powers. ("Genial" is here the adjectival form of the noun "genius.") The sense of lines 111–13 is: "Perhaps, even if I had not learned to look at nature in the way I have just described, I would not have suffered a decay in my creative powers."

6. His sister Dorothy.

Wordsworth (4)

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[7]—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!

July 1798 1798

Keats

Ode to a Nightingale

1

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 winged dryad of the trees,
      In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
    Singest of summer in full throated ease.

2

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 Provencal 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.

Keats 'Ode to a Nightingale' (2)

3

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou amongst 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 last sad 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.

4

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.

5

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed 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.

6

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused 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.

Keats "Ode to a Nightingale" (3)

7

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 selfsame 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 faery lands forlorn.

8

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?

JOHN KEATS (1819)

Charles Brown, with whom Keats was then living in Hampstead, wrote: "In the spring of 1819 a nightingale had built her nest near my house. Keats felt a tranquil and continual joy in her song; and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass plot under a plum tree, where he sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind the books. On inquiry, I found those scraps, four or five in number, contained his poetic feeling on the song of our nightingale."

THE GREEK and other REVIVALS

Mid C18 – a remarkable upsurge of interest in archeology in Europe; it ceases to be a narrowly scholarly discipline and at the same time becomes more scientific.
1732 - excavations begin at Herculaneum under the auspices of the King of Naples
1732 - in London the aristocratic Society of Dilettanti is established to bring together upper class tourists with archeological interests
1765 - *Oeuvres d'architecture* by Joseph Peyre launches the revival of the architecture of Imperial Rome which served as a model for the architecture of the French and Russian empires and a host of smaller autocracies
Gradually curiosity expanded to embrace the whole of the ancient Mediterranean world and the Orient (Robert Wood and James Dawkins, *The Ruins of Palmira in the Desert,*1753; *The Ruins of Balbek,* 1757; Sir William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture ... Gardens,* 1757)
1770s – the revival of Italian High Renaissance architecture (neo-Palladianism, neo-Mannerism) accompanied by a similar interest in the rural architecture of the Roman landscape befitting the pastoral mode

1759 - Julien D. Leroy's French *The Ruins of the Beautiful Monuments of Greece* appeared in English translation
1762 – the first volume of **James Stuart and Nicholas Revett's *The Antiquities of Athens*** published (the second volume in 1787, the third in 1795, the fourth in 1816), to become the bible of Hellenizing classicism

From 1799 to 1803 Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin, was ambassador to the Ottoman Sultan. He became interested in the ruins of the Parthenon in Athens, the Temple of Athena on the Acropolis which had been ruined by Venetian bombardment in 1687 and was being destroyed through lack of care and vandalism. Elgin arranged for some figures from the temple to be brought to England. These were purchased by the English government for the nation in 1816 and handed to the British Museum where they have since been displayed and are popularly known as the **Elgin Marbles**. **(Keats *On Seeing the Elgin Marbles*)**

As a new variety of architectural images came to be added to the language of neo-classicism (pyramids, Egyptian obelisks, grandiose Sicilian temples etc.) a way was opened to ecclecticism.
1803 - to combat this spoiling of standards a group of English amateurs and architects suggested replacing Roman orders of columns (which were now seen as imperfect copies of the Greek ones) by the purer range of the Greek ones. The start of this **Hellenizing classicism** or the **Greek Revival** was marked by the foundation in London of the Athenian Society for the Study of the Most Perfect Art. In a general climate of **philhellenism** the Greek style became the true criterion of architectural distinction.

1821 – a revolt against the Ottoman overlordship broke out in Greece
1823 – a deputation of Greek nationalists arrived in London to plead for intervention; a Greek Committee established to help the rebels, Byron sails with friends to Greece and dies at the headquarters of Prince Mavrocordatos at Missolonghi in 1824

Between 1765 and 1825 the **classical writers were reinterpreted**; they were re-read with a different emphasis and deeper understanding, the accent now being on **republicanism**. The people in revolt against the remnants of medieval feudalism could think of themselves as being *more* classical than their opponents, the supporters of the *ancien régime*.
(Shelley *Prometheus Unbound*)

While the Renaissance had meant the assimilation of Latin culture, the Romantic period witnessed **a new awareness of the Greek heritage** and Greece supplanted Rome as an ideal country. What made this affiliation even more romantic was that modern Greece was under the tyrannical rule of the barbarous, fiendish and corrupt Turks. In the eyes of many Europeans the liberation of Greece from the Turks meant an assertion of the virtues of classical civilization over the vices and tyrannies of the modern world. The Greece the revolutionary writers dreamed of was either the heroic era when the society had not been polluted by exploitation, or the age of the Athenian commonwealth, the republic which had produced the greatest masterpieces of art. Similarly, when they thought of Rome, they thought of the virtuous, strong and sober republic and not of the corrupt degenerate and tyrannical empire.
(Shelley *Ode to Liberty*)

The admiration of poets and thinkers for the pagan Greco-Roman world came also to mean **opposition to Christianity**. The Christian God could now be represented as little better than a tyrant modelled on the cruel Turk, while Jesus was imagined as a pale impotent Jew and his suffering and mission on the cross contrasted unfavourably with the **charm and vigour of the Olympian gods** who now were seen to stand for the eternal rulers of the spirit of man. This pagan culture could also stand for sexual freedom and a greater licence in general (for example in dress and conduct). It also stood for beauty and inspired **a cult of beauty and nobility**.
(Keats *Ode to a Grecian Urn*)

Lastly, the warm climate of Greece and Italy and the beauty of the idealized Greco-Roman world of antiquity provided **an escape from the cold and sombre north**.
(Keats *Endymion*)

Paradoxically, most of the poets who went south in search of the beauty and romance ended up in Italy. Modern Greece, though being known to dedicated tourists, had little appeal due to the Turkish presence, its arid climate, the poverty and what was seen as "degradation" of its people who had lost the admirable qualities of their ancestors.
(Byron *The Isles of Greece*, from *Don Juan*)

Keats

On Seeing the Elgin Marbles°

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceivèd glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an undescribable feud;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old time—with a billowy main—
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

Endymion

Book I°

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old, and young sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

* * *

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
Into o'er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits.
And it had gloomy shades, sequestered deep,
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
A lamb strayed far a-down those inmost glens,
Never again saw he the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
Over the hills at every nightfall went.
Among the shepherds, 'twas believèd ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
From the white flock, but passed unworried
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
Until it came to some unfooted plains
Where fed the herds of Pan: ay great his gains
Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there were many,
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny,
And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
Stems thronging all around between the swell
Of turf and slanting branches: who could tell
The freshness of the space of heaven above,
Edged round with dark treetops? through which a dove
Would often beat its wings, and often too
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
There stood a marble altar, with a tress
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
Had taken fairy fantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
And so the dawnèd light in pomp receive.
For 'twas the morn: Apollo's upward fire
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
A melancholy spirit well might win
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun;
The lark was lost in him; cold springs had run
To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the mass
Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed tenfold,
To feel this sunrise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the dawn
Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
A troop of little children garlanded;
Who, gathering round the altar, seemed to pry
Earnestly round as wishing to espy
Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited
For many moments, ere their ears were sated
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then
Filled out its voice, and died away again.
Within a little space again it gave
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking
Through copse-clad valleys—ere their death, o'ertaking
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmered light
Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
Into the widest alley they all past,
Making directly for the woodland altar.
O kindly muse! let not my weak tongue falter
In telling of this goodly company,
Of their old piety, and of their glee:
But let a portion of ethereal dew
Fall on my head, and presently unmew
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced along,
Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;
Each having a white wicker overbrimmed
With April's tender younglings: next, well trimmed,

Endymion (2)

A crowd of shepherds with as sunburned looks
As may be read of in Arcadian books;
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
Let his divinity o'er-flowing die
In music, through the vales of Thessaly:
Some idly trailed their sheep hooks on the ground,
And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
With ebon-tippèd flutes: close after these,
Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
A venerable priest full soberly,
Begirt with minist'ring looks: alway his eye
Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
And after him his sacred vestments swept.
From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
Of mingled wine, outsparkling generous light;
And in his left he held a basket full
Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull:
Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
Than Leda's love,° and cresses from the rill.
His agèd head, crownèd with beechen wreath,
Seemed like a poll of ivy in the teeth
Of winter hoar. Then came another crowd
Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
Their share of the ditty. After them appeared,
Upfollowed by a multitude that reared
Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought car,
Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
The freedom of three steeds of dapple brown:
Who stood therein did seem of great renown
Among the throng. His youth was fully blown,
Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
And, for those simple times, his garments were
A chieftain king's: beneath his breast, half bare,
Was hung a silver bugle, and between
His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen.
A smile was on his countenance; he seemed,
To common lookers-on, like one who dreamed
Of idleness in groves Elysian:
But there were some who feelingly could scan
A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
Through his forgotten hands: then would they sigh,
And think of yellow leaves, of owlet's cry,
Of logs piled solemnly.—Ah, well-a-day,
Why should our young Endymion pine away!

2

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

3

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

5

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all°
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

1

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe° or the dales of Arcady?°
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Shelley

ODE TO LIBERTY

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like a thunderstorm against the wind.—Byron

I

A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself, sublime and strong,
(As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,)
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the Heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but, power from worst producing worse,

The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
Were, as to mountain-wolves their raggèd caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest,° congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous° waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favoring Heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;

41 **sister-pest** religion. 47 **dividuous** that which can be divided.