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British Romantic Literature

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(Publishers of Educational Books)

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Website: www.neerajbooks.com

MRP ₹ 280/-

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**Sample Preview
of the
Solved
Sample Question
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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

BRITISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE

B.E.G.C.-109

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Question No. 1 is compulsory. Answer any **three** from the rest of the questions.

SECTION-A

Q. 1. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Romanticism and its difference from Neo-classical theory of poetry.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 9, Q. No. 12 and Page No. 2, 'Salient Features of Romanticism'.

(b) Folk poetry of Robert Burns.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 4, 'Robert Burns (1759-1796)'.

(c) Relationship between Victor Frankenstein and the monster of his creation.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 120, 'Story of Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus'.

(d) Keats's views on beauty and permanence in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11 Page No. 108, 'Ode to a Nightingale' and Page No. 112, Q. No. 2.

Q. 2. Comment on William Blake's 'fearful symmetry' in his collections 'Songs of Innocence' and 'Songs of Experience' with reference to his poems 'The Lamb' and 'The Tyger'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 29, 'The Songs of Innocence and Experience' and Page No. 30, 'The Lamb and The Tyger'.

Q. 3. Discuss William Wordsworth's perception of Nature in 'Tintern Abbey'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 40, Q. No. 3.

Q. 4. How does Keats present a contrast between the real world and the world of the Nightingale in 'Ode to a Nightingale'? Justify his longing for the latter through his Poetic fancy.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 108, 'Ode to a Nightingale' and Page No. 110, 'Interpretation'.

Q. 5. Give an account of the themes of crime, punishment and redemption as witnessed S.T. Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 53, Q. No. 1, Page No. 55, Q. No. 5, Q. No. 7 and Q. No. 9.

Q. 6. Discuss Shelley's appeal for the re-birth of a new world in reference to 'Ode to the West Wind'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 103, Q. No. 1 and Page No. 104, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 3.

Q. 7. Describe Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a tragedy.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 129, Q. No. 2 and Chapter-15, Page No. 144, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 4.



QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

BRITISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE

B.E.G.C.-109

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Question No. 1 is compulsory. Answer any **three** from the rest of the questions.

SECTION-A

Q. 1. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Mary Shelley

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 117, 'Introduction' and 'Infancy and Early Year.'

(b) Ballad

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 57, 'Introduction', 'Introduction to S.T. Coleridge', 'The Ballad: Part-I, Part-IV' and Page No. 60, 'The Ballad, Part-V, Part-VII'.

(c) Charles Lamb as an essayist

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 77, 'Introduction', 'Charles Lamb: A Biographical Sketch and Page No. 83, Q. No. 1 and 2.

(d) After Blenheim as an anti-war poem

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 73, Q. No. 4 and Page No. 75, Q. No. 4 and Q. No. 5.

Q. 2. George Crabbe's *The Village Book* is a realistic depiction of rural life of the 18th century England. Elucidate.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 21, 'Introduction' and Page No. 24, Q. No. 5 and Page No. 26, Q. No. 1.

Q. 3. How do the poems *Tintern Abbey* and *Daffodils* exemplify Wordsworth's theory of poetry as "emotions recollected in tranquility"?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 40, 'Poetic Devices in *Tintern Abbey* and *The Daffodils*', Page No. 2, Page No. 43, Q. No. 5 and Page No. 44, Q. No. 6.

Q. 4. Give an account of the sufferings that the Mariner undergoes at various stages in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 49, 'Interpretation'.

Q. 5. Following the development of thought bring out the theme of *Ode to the West Wind*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 101, Q. No. 3 and Page No. 104, Q. No. 2 and Q. No. 3.

Q. 6. Attempt a summary of Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 110, 'Interpretation'.

Q. 7. Attempt a character sketch of the 'Monster' in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 143, 'Monster and Monstrosity' and Page No. 144, Q. No. 2 and Page No. 146, Q. No. 6.



Sample Preview of The Chapter

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BRITISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE

BLOCK-I : BRITISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE-I

The Romantic Age : An Introduction



INTRODUCTION

Romanticism movement originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century. The period was one of major social change in England due to depopulation of the countryside and rapid development of overcrowded industrial cities that took place roughly between 1798 and 1832. The Romantic Movement in England was brought about by various political, social, literary and other factors. In this chapter, we will discuss the term 'Romanticism' and romantic poets and their contribution to the movement.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

BACKGROUND TO THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

The Romantic Period started in 1798 with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and ended in 1832 when Sir Walter Scott died. The Reform Bill extending the right to vote to the middle class and labourers was also passed in 1832. The period saw England shifting from being a primarily agricultural to a modern industrialized society. The owners of industrial units got the balance of power from the land-owning aristocracy. They employed large numbers of people. The period also saw various revolutions which had far-reaching consequences to England. *The American Revolution led to the Declaration of Independence (1776)* by the thirteen colonies and the French Revolution had impact on the whole of Western Europe.

Liberals and radicals in England supported the French Revolution. The Declaration of the Rights of Man by the French National Assembly was welcomed. In his *Reflection on the Revolution in France (1790)*, Edmund Burke disapproved the events in France. In his *Rights of Man (1791-92)*, Tom Paine issued a spirited rejoinder to Burke. In his *Rights of Man (1791-92)*, Tom Paine pleaded for a democratic republic for England by peaceful or violent means. William Godwin's *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice (1793)* had a great impact on Wordsworth, Shelley and others. Godwin made a prediction that eventually all property would be distributed equally and all government would disappear. Later events in the French Revolution, notably the execution time beings of the royal family, the guillotine of innocent people during the Reign of Terror, and Napoleon's dictatorship disenchanting the early supporters. During this period, there was a revolutionary change in the means and pace of production with the invention of James Watt's steam engine which replaced wind and water as sources of energy in 1765. People became either owners and traders or wage earners without property. The people were divided into the rich and the poor. Introduction of more machinery into industry led to more unemployment. The economic depression in 1815 was caused by the decline in wartime demand for manufactured goods. There were agitations and riots by the working class and the ruling class responded with more repressive measures. The Reform Bill

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fulfilled the political aspirations of some sections of people. Developments in other spheres included Capt. James Cook circumnavigated the globe (1768-71) and discovered Australia and the Sandwich Islands. Fascinating accounts of life in the South Seas led to a re-thinking on the nature of society and the political systems. Ocean travel became safer with Cook's accurate charting of the coastlines. Commerce got a boost with the exploitation of new markets in India and elsewhere. The communications networks also developed.

The period saw the growth of pamphlets as an effective means for debates controversial issues. The debate on the French Revolution was conducted through pamphlets. Later the pamphlet was replaced by the periodical for debate on political issues. Parliamentary reform was inspired by the achievement of the middle class in France. Public opinion in England favoured representation to big towns leading to the passage of the Reform Bill. The idea of revolution had an impact on the Romantic Movement from the beginning. The French Revolution was the great divide and the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind. In his book, *The Spirit of the Age*, William Hazlitt: "There was a mighty ferment in the heads of statesmen and poets, kings and people....It was a time of promise, a renewal of the world – and of letters". The French Revolution and the new slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity promised a free and egalitarian society. The period saw abolition of monarchy and feudal structure. The field of literature saw the writing of lyrics, odes and ballads instead of the genres of the epic and the tragedy. In language, the speech of the common people replaced the cultivated speech of the elite. In terms of themes, poets and writers prefer more commonplace incidents in place of great events. The period saw democratization of literature in genre, in language, in themes and in characters.

DEFINITION OF ROMANTICISM

Romanticism has been defined various ways as F.L. Lucas counted as many as 11,396 definitions. The term has been derived from the word 'Rome'. Three main languages in Europe during the seventh and eighth centuries were: (i) *Lingua Latina*: the language of the scholars, (ii) *Lingua Barbara*: the language of Germanic tribes, and (iii) *Lingua Romanarustica*: a group of vulgar Latin dialects from which the Romance languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Rumanian have been derived.

The term 'Romantic' is related to the Romance languages. It was first used in the late 17th century to describe paintings with certain bizarre qualities. Le Tourneur referred to Shakespeare as a romantic writer because the playwright was not a neo-classical writer. A romantic writer has his own uniqueness. In the Age of Reason, writers represented their age. The Romantics differ from them. Goethe defined "classic" as good health and "romantic" as sickness. Madame de Stael stressed the medieval and Christian qualities in German romantic literature which she introduced into France around 1800. These features were in contrast to rationalism and agnosticism of the Augustal period or the Age of Reason. For her, the new literature celebrated an open heart and ended which she said the aridity of the eighteenth century. German poet Heine had an opposite view. According to Victor Hugo, romanticism implies 'liberalism in literature'. Romanticism tends to see the individual at the very center of all life and all experience. The individual is the priority of the art and literature. Thrall and his associates say, romanticism gives importance to the creative imagination that tends to speak a nobler truth than facts or logics. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Romanticism spread through most of Western Europe affecting art, music, literature, philosophy, religion and politics.

SALIENT FEATURES OF ROMANTICISM

Romanticism is a contrast to Neo-classical theory of poetry which believes in artificial conventions, literary tradition and poetic establishment. According to the Neo-classical theory, poetry is an imitation and acquired by training.

They say poets instruct and please. For them, art is a mirror and gives a reflection of life. The Romantics says the poet himself is the source of poetry. Wordsworth says poetry is a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". It is an inborn gift and not something that can be acquired. Poetry is the expression of emotion and imagination. Romantics discard the traditional view that poetry is a painstaking effort. Blake says poetry comes from inspiration, vision and prophecy. Keats says poetry should come "as naturally as the leaves of a tree". Romantic poets employ innovative themes, forms, language and style in their poetry.

For example, Wordsworth wrote about lowly and eccentric characters like 'an idiot boy' or 'a leech gatherer'. Coleridge uses supernatural themes as in *The Ancient Mariner* and Keats often deals with "far away

and long ago” exotic places and forgotten events. The Romantics got inspiration from folk literature and the literature of the Middle Ages and classical antiquity. They also use symbolist techniques, especially by Blake and Shelley. “West Wind” and “Skylark” examples of this. The Romantic poets use external nature instead of humanity as the poetic subjectmatter. They describe landscape and its aspects. Wordsworth saw in nature the power to chasten and subdue. Neoclassic poetry is written on other people like Alexander Pope’s “The Rape of Lock”. Romantic poetry is highly subjective. They also had a fascination for solitary figures, social non-conformists, outcasts and rebels such as Prometheus, Cain, Don Juan and Satan. They use everyday speech of ordinary people instead of lofty poetic diction. The Romantic poets use new metres and stanzas instead of traditional forms. They wrote ballads and sonnets. They discarded the heroic couplets and used Spenserian stanza and other experimental verse forms. They idealised the rural life. They also included in their poems the wild, the irregular and the grotesque in nature and art. For them, incest is not a taboo theme. They did not pay any heed to tradition and decorum. Classicism and Romanticism are anti-thetical. Classicism deals with social, formal, intellectual and static, whereas Romanticism focuses on individual, informal, emotional and dynamic.

Joseph Addison’s ‘Sir Roger’ is a basic human type. But the Romantics took their cue from Rousseau who said, “If I’m not better than other people, at least I’m different”. The Neo-classical writers were focus on conformity, formality, acceptance of approved standards and patterns of behaviour. Careful workmanship is the hallmark of classicism. Classicism focuses on the intellectual, romanticism on the emotional. The former describes static scenes in Greek sculpture whereas the latter catch the transient moments. Keat’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” depicts the activities of people etched on a static urn. The Romantic Movement can be called a revolutionary movement.

EARLY ROMANTIC POETS

Discussed below are some of the poets who wrote poetry with Romantic features before 1798:

James Thomson (1700-1748): He wrote about nature. For example, his poem, “The Seasons” (1730) talks about the fearful aspects of nature such as floods and storms. Known as “a poet of pictorial landscape”, he speaks of the link between man and nature.

The great variety and beauty of nature move him deeply. The lines from “The Seasons” below reflect his fascination for nature:

Now the soft Hour
Of walking comes for him who lonely loves
To seek the distant Hills, and there converse
With Nature, there to harmonize his Heart,
And in pathetic Song of breathe around
The harmony to Others.

Mark Akenside (1721-1770): The poet tries to revive the Greek forms of the lyric. His poem, “The Pleasure of Imagination” (1744), is didactic and descriptive. The poet finds the beauty and harmony of nature in the lines below from the poem:

Once more search, undismayed, the dark profound
Where nature works in secret; view the beds
Of min’ral treasure, and th’eternal vault
That bounds the hoary ocean; trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change.

Joseph Warton’s (1722-1800): Warton’s “The Enthusiast” (1744) presents Rousseau’s primitivism and the Romantics’ love of the antique. It writes about the communion with nature, the superiority of the Noble Savage and the idyllic innocence of the New World:

Happy the first of Men, ere yet confin’d
To smoky cities; who in sheltering Groves,
Warm caves, and deep-sunk Vallies liv’d and lov’d
By Cares unwounded.

(The Enthusiast, 11.78-81)

William Collins (1721-1759): The poet uses the landscape evoking ideas and emotions. He particularly loves Nature at twilight. His “Ode to Evening” is the forerunner of Keats’s “To Autumn”. Romantic tendencies like a return to the past and anti-intellectualism may be noticed in his “Ode on Popular Superstitions”. Coleridge is impressed with Collins’s use of superstitions and classical legends. The lines below illustrate Collins’s favourite theme of the twilight scene:

Now Air is hush’d, save where the weak-ey’d Bat,
With short shrill Shriek flits by on leathern Wing,
Or where the Beetle winds
His small but sullen Horn,
As of the rises ‘midst the twilight Path,
Against the Pilgrim born in heedless Hum:
(Ode to Evening, 11.9-14)

Thomas Gray’s (1716-71): In his “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”, the poet focuses on nature and the rustic life:

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Now folds the glimmering landscape on the sight,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Gray records the different moods of nature in charming detail. His descriptions paved the way for the Romantic poets's fascination for nature.

Few lines from Gray's poem:

"In the evening I walked alone down to the lake
by the side of Crow Park after

Sunset and saw the solemn colouring of night draw
on, the last gleam of fading

Away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the
waters, and the long shadows of the

Mountains thrown across them, till they nearly
touched the hithermost shore.

Distance heard the murmur of many waterfalls not
audible in the daytime".

William Cowper (1731-1800): Cowper believes that thinking of Nature will offer wisdom more easily than the reading of books. He writes about the beauty of the countryside in his poems. Cowper also flays Alexander Pope for his "smoothness" and 'manly rough line'. The lines from his poem, *The Task*, below show the contrast between the rural and the urban scene:

God made the country, and man made the town,
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least bethreatn'd in the fields and groves?

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

Burns loved freedom and respected the common man. He was attracted by nature and believed that emotion was a better guide than reason.

The Use of Folk Song

In the 18th century, when the Scots longed for independence and unity, Burns looked into the Scottish ballad tradition both to oppose and reject the English culture. He was influenced by the folk tradition. Burn has two tendencies:

- (a) Cultivated tradition of polite poetry in the 18th century.
- (b) Peasant poetry about peasants among whom he lived.

Burns did not believe in any rules for composing poetry. The folk elements are found in various elements of his poetry.

Themes

Burn used the themes such as death, birth, youth, old age, love and grief in his poems. He also employed

seasonal activities such as harvesting and May dances and seasonal changes like snowfall. He stylised settings and dramatic situations. He also made use of tableaux repeating certain fixed scenes.

Form

Elements like debate and riddles are found in his poetry. Birds and flowers get human treatment.

Vocabulary

He uses simple vocabulary, stock phrases and formal devices such as the refrain which imposes limits on language in folk poetry.

Rhyme

Burns is not rigid in its use of rhyme as Neo-classical poetry. He uses assonance, alliteration and internal rhyme in his poetry. Observe these poetic devices in the following line of Burns: Burns wrote many traditional and original songs and wrote three long poems. He wrote on lowly subjects. For examples, he wrote a poem titled "To a Mouse". Another poem, "The Cotter's Saturday Night" shows his interest in the humble people. Burns expressed his patriotism for Scotland. He revolted against religious orthodoxy and satirized Presbyterian and Calvinist faith in Scotland in his poems.

Love Poems

Burns wrote love poems, influenced by folk Poetry. He used repetition as a poetic device to produce an incantatory effect: "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose". Another poem, "Ye Flowery Banks" presents a native view of nature. In this girl's song, he used the traditional rose-thorn image to show loss of chastity. Burns resorts to suggestion instead of direct statement. Many of his love songs including "A Red, Red Rose" shows male protectiveness. Patriotism is another recurring theme. "Auld Lang Syne" is called "the world's greatest song of human fellowship and friendship". Burns's poetry is based on local people and situations, but he stresses the elemental, the universal, and the permanent moods and thoughts in all humanity.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

William Blake is a seminal figure in the history of the poetry and visual art of the Romantic Age. His paintings and poetry have been characterised as part of the Romantic movement and as "Pre-Romantic". He wrote his *Songs of Innocence* (1789) through a new process called "illuminated printing". In these poems, he says that childhood is the original state of happiness, self-enjoyment and unity. In his "Songs of Experience" (1794) he expresses his indignation at the hypocrisy