

## **ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETRY AS A VEHICLE OF CONTEXTUAL COMMUNICATION**

**Ecaterina Oana Brîndaș, Assist. Prof., PhD, Emanuel University of Oradea**

*Abstract: One of the most stimulating approaches to the study of poetry is one based on the awareness that between the poetic production of a certain literary period and its historical and cultural context there is a symbiotic, inter-conditioning relationship. More than in any other age, Romantics used poetry to mirror and to respond to tumultuous historical change, but, in the same time, Romantic poetry had a great impact on influencing history in turn. The literary concerns of the Romantic poets were molded on the context of the events, of the political and social movements and ideology of their time, and then communicated, by means of poetry, to an increasingly large reading public. Poetry was a form of dialogue and was used as a weapon in the poets' struggle to influence political economy and overturn social and religious codes and norms. The Romantic poets viewed themselves as "prophets preaching in the wilderness", "unacknowledged legislators", who speak to and for the man. The usage of a simple, "common" poetic language helped to emphasize the universality of their message.*

**Keywords:** *poetry, Romanticism, context, communication, impact.*

Romanticism arose from a period of political and social turmoil, uncertainty and rebellion. It was a period of significant historical change in which political issues had a great impact on all sections of society and gave rise to heated debates concerning fundamental political, economical and social rights and principles. It is largely considered that intellectually Romanticism marked a violent reaction to the Enlightenment and that politically it was inspired by the revolutions in America and France.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the Romantic period was molded by a multitude of political, social, cultural and economical changes. More than in any other literary period, Romantics used literature to reflect and to respond to this riotous historical transformation, but, in the same time, Romantic literature had a great impact on influencing history in turn. Romantic poets, for example, were less insulated from political events and controversies than any other class of people. In these poets work in language, the same medium in which political concepts and demands are formulated, contested, and negotiated.<sup>2</sup> As John L. Mahoney accurately observed, Wordsworth, the father of English Romanticism, strongly believed that his poetry, far from being a mere helpmate in the service of hard knowledge, was itself a kind of knowledge, a hope for the good society because it was modified and tempered by the realities of time, age, and death, and sharply qualified by radical upheavals in the social, political and religious worlds.<sup>3</sup>

During Romanticism, poetry ranked above all other literary forms. When the Romantic poets, from Blake on to Shelly and Keats, talk about the relation of poetry to other areas of culture, they make the direct claim that poetry is prior to theology or moral philosophy and by "prior" they mean both more original and more intellectually powerful.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aidan Day, *Romanticism. The New Critical Idiom*, Routledge, London, 1996, 9.

<sup>2</sup> P. M. S. Dawson, *Poetry in an Age of Revolution* in *The Cambridge Companion to English Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 56

<sup>3</sup> John L. Mahoney, *William Wordsworth, a Poetic Life*, Fordham Univ. Press, 1997, xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: The Reading of English Romantic Poetry*, xxiii.

Poetry was a form of dialogue and was used as a weapon in the poets' struggle to influence the public opinion and overturn social and religious codes and norms. Poets used their poetry as a prolific way to communicate with their reading public because Romantic poetry had both the power to reflect and to influence many socio-political realities of the period.

Literary Romanticism has been subject to great arguments and violent controversy, particularly because it was considered to be responsible for divisive religious, political or social tendencies.<sup>5</sup> This golden age of lyric poetry stirred new feelings about the world of nature, about the notion of freedom, both personal and political, about creating and disseminating a general sense of openness towards otherness while simultaneously promoting a powerful ideology of national identity.

It is rarely that the perceptible limits of a literary period coincide so closely with crucial political events as is the case with what we call Romantic Movement states Edgell Rickword.<sup>6</sup>

The French Revolution in 1789, which involved the whole Europe, brought enormous changes both on the social and political condition of the population from the Continent, including England, having great economic and social implications. It was the time when old traditions were swept aside. The revolutionary cry, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, set the basis for democracy.

Harold Bloom considers that the French Revolution was the most important external factor that conditions English Romantic poetry<sup>7</sup>, while Shelly, one of the greatest poetic voices during Romanticism called the Revolution: "the master theme of the epoch in which we live." The upheaval of the Revolutionary period stirred a new manner of thought. The vast majority of European population was now beginning a completely new era in which the face of the world was changing.

During this period, the ideas behind the revolutions in America and France occupied the thoughts of Englishmen too. People were looking at the world in new and striking ways and literature reflected and communicated their revolt against outworn politics, traditions and mentalities. The Romantic Movement was closely connected to the idea of personal, individual liberty. It was the same idea that created enthusiasm and made the revolution practically a new religion.

The Industrial Revolution was of equal importance. Although it resulted in the rapid expansion of industry and accelerated growth of cities, the rapid development of the industry also had its shortcomings. These changes increased the wealth of the nation as a whole, but caused hardships among individuals. The social price for economic progress remained a high one for many people. There was an acute need to compensate the climate of turbulence and instability that best characterized that era and the Romantic poets aimed to do that by means of poetry. By the end of the century, many poets and artists had started reacting against the dehumanization of the new urban industrial society. The foundations were again set for a new cultural movement: Romanticism.

---

<sup>5</sup> Leon Rosenthal, *Romanticism*, Parkstone International, New York, 2008, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Edgell Rickword, *From Blake to Byron, The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, general ed. Boris Ford, Penguin Books, London, 1982, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, xiv.

All major English Romantic poets manifested a genuine and ardent interest in politics, evidenced by the political pamphlets they wrote (Shelley), by their activity as political journalists (Coleridge and Southey) and mostly, by satirizing political situations in their poetry (Blake, Byron, Keats). The literary concerns of the Romantic poets were molded on the context of the events, political and social movements and ideology of their age. Never in the history of English literature have poets looked so searchingly into their own souls and at the world around them and expressed their responses in language of such beauty and power. The spirit of individual freedom manifests itself in the works of every writer of this period. Each one is a law unto himself. The poet was considered to be a supremely individual creator, who gave freedom to his imaginative spirit, an innovator that took his materials from the past and reshaped them into vivid expressions of new ideas and feelings. The Romantic poet viewed himself as a prophet preaching in the wilderness, a gifted visionary who lived outside the society and whose works mirror a certain spirit of unrest, a sense of exaltation and an imaginative idealism. The Romantics believed that their power of imaginative vision, embodied in their poetry, was able to actually change the world and set the others free from the burden of a cruel, present reality.

Just as revolutions tore down old governments, these artists believed in tearing down old ideas and traditions.<sup>8</sup> Their belief was that humanity could not be governed by a strict set of rules or understood by systematic formulas. Instead, they pleaded for a more indefinable, emotion centered approach to life and they voiced these ideas in their works. A gradually but profound and irreversible transformation in artistic styles, cultural attitudes and relations between the artist and the society is notoriously evident during this period.

The Romantic poets were released to discover their own audiences in an open cultural market place. The mood of Romanticism prepared the country for a literary outburst. For the first time in the history of English literature, writers could find their own reading public in a cultural context that truly allowed them to express themselves and be, as Wordsworth said *a man speaking to men*. Starting in the 1740's to somewhere in the mid 1820's, a new readership was felt to have emerged and the conditions of publication experienced a significant development. The rise of journalism, the spread of literacy and the development of a lucrative book market made artist and writers less dependent on noble patrons. For example, Coleridge was active both as a political journalist, poet and as a writer of many significant works of political theory. However, none of the English Romantic poets lived entirely from their literary earnings, but their status as literary producers affected the sense of their own identity more than any other economic affiliation.<sup>9</sup>

The great majority of the readership was literate, but perhaps not well-educated. This could explain the emphasis on feeling and on life experience than on prior knowledge gained from reading. Most of the new readers were necessarily excluded from direct political power, which remained in the hand of the oligarchy in the capital. Apparently, the new romantic literary production was less politic than the court poetry of earlier periods, which circulated among smaller elite. However, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century literature, of any kind,

---

<sup>8</sup> Jessica Gunderson, *Romanticism*, Creative Publication, Mankato, 2009, 12.

<sup>9</sup> P. M. S. Dawson, *Poetry in an Age of Revolution*, in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature*, ed. Stuart Curran, 57-58.

mostly poetry had a more evident political content, for it tended to oppose the central British state and its institutions. This underlying civic preoccupation was one of the features of English Romanticism which was most excitingly new. The common impression in England of the politics of Romanticism has derived from English poetry because, starting from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the population has tended to associate the poetry we now call Romantic with social change and even revolution.<sup>10</sup> This is because the English poems typically appeal to a common public, deal with low subjects-rural life, rustic characters, emphasizes aspects related to political, social and even economical concerns of the time, is used as an instrument of criticism directed toward oligarchic structures, and, above all, because the poems are written in simple, vernacular language, without the use of elaborated expressions. The usage of this simple language also underlines the universality of the message and of the human emotions depicted in the poems.

The Romantic poetical production, mainly from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, manifests an evident tendency to appeal to a democratized audience, by either approaching themes favorable to “the lower orders” or “hostile to the powerful,” or “in employing diction, meters and symbols with popular connotations.”<sup>11</sup> The aristocratic discourse of the predecessors is clearly replaced with another type of language that exalts provincialism. Primitive and heroic societies became more and more objects of interest and, at the same time, the life of men living outside the pale of urban gentility was coming to be regarded as legitimate, even as the most proper , subject matter for poetry. Romantics aimed to write for and about the middle classes and their ordinary aspects of life.

The Romantic writer was a sort of prophetic voice crying in a wilderness that was completely dislocated from the social order and hierarchy. In *A Defence of Poetry* Shelley states that poets are “unacknowledged legislators of the world”. Not surprisingly, the heroes of many Romantic novels and poems are social outcasts (Byron’s Don Juan, Coleridge’s Ancient Mariner, Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein). Like his/her heroes, the Romantic writer was also a sort of wandering outcast, a modern hermit that occupied a self imposed marginal social position guiding himself/herself solely according to his/her personal vision and experience.<sup>12</sup>

In this time of great turmoil in the large world, with political upheaval in America, India and France, and with internal unrest caused by the phenomenon of the Industrial Revolution, young men of letters like Wordsworth became challenged to voice in their works the repercussions of these new affairs. The devastating social results of these transformations could now be seen “in microcosm by Wordsworth as he watched the idyllic cottage textile industries of Hawkshead and Penrith give way to factories, with all the implications for the blemishing of nature and the dehumanization of workers...he became an increasingly strong advocate for the purity of the environment and an equally strong foe of the incursions of buildings, factories and railways into his beloved Lake District.”<sup>13</sup> All major poets belonging to first generation of Romantics – Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey tried to find a

<sup>10</sup> Marilyn Butler, *Romanticism in England*, in *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism*, ed. Karl Kroeber, Gene W. Ruoff, Rutgers University Press, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Marilyn Butler, *Romanticism in England*, in *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Denis Delaney, Ciaran Ward, Carla Rho Fiorina, *Fields of Vision*, I, 116.

<sup>13</sup> idem, *ibidem*, 16.

substitute for the ugly industrial life that worked such hardships on certain classes and wrote poems *in their defense*.

Attempting to explain the full significance of his intentions, Wordsworth poses a simple, rhetorical question: “What is a poet?” A poet for Wordsworth is a man of unusual emotional vitality, guided by intuition rather than reason. The poetical inspiration should be based on the direct experience of the senses. In Wordsworth’s conception, an essential characteristic of the poet relies in his ability to communicate and transmit powerful and positive feelings, passions or emotions. Moreover, his keen imagination can reveal the inner truth of ordinary things to which the mind is habitually blind. The poet is seen as a general benefactor, the one who best perceives the uplifting relationship between man and nature. He is the one who speaks to and for the man. “*Relationship and love, like joy are key words and key concepts for Wordsworth.*” asserts David Daiches.<sup>14</sup>

*What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? and what language is to be expected from him?—He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind;*<sup>15</sup>

In his biography of the young poet, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy*, Kenneth R. Johnston explores the idea of self-creation in relation to Wordsworth’s life and his assumed role of “the Poet” during the period of revolution and social crisis. He concludes that “Wordsworth’s poetic self-creation was...intimately connected with an idea of his poetry and his life forming a model for national regeneration”<sup>16</sup>

Like Shelly and Byron in the next generation of Romantic poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were revolutionists in their desire for liberty of the individual. They were initially ardent supporters of the French Revolution and its ideals, although later became opponents of it and of what it stood for.

During the early years of the French Revolution, Wordsworth, a young man traveling through France, was attracted by this great new experiment in government. The French Revolution breathed hope into human hearts, a hope that wars and politics and industrial unrest could not entirely kill. The poetry Wordsworth wrote in his first period of creation, between 1792-1795, is neither considerable in amount nor great in quality, but it is of first-rate interest because it reflects Wordsworth at the high of his revolutionary ardor. Three poems come into consideration: *Descriptive Sketches* (1792), *Guilt and Sorrow* (1794) and the dramatic poem *Borderers* (1796). They are poems written in full faith of the Revolution with immersions of English political theory. Nevertheless, Wordsworth’s great period of creation, the great decade, 1797-1807, was not based on the Revolutionary idea, but on his reaction to the failure of this idea. In a letter dated in 1799, Coleridge urges Wordsworth to

<sup>14</sup> David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature*, Allied Publishers, 1979, 880.

<sup>15</sup> R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones, *Lyrical Ballads: William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge*, Routledge, 2013, 245-246

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth R. Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover Rebel, Spy*, W.W. Norton, 2001, 603.

“write a poem in blank verse, addressed to those who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hope of the amelioration of mankind”<sup>17</sup>

The literary criticism has brought this fragment from Coleridge’s letter into connection with the concluding portion of the second book of the *Prelude*, where Wordsworth addresses his readers, the men disillusioned by the failure of the revolutionary idea, the secret of the *principle of joy of the Faith that fails not in all sorrow*.

“...if in this time/ Of dereliction and dismay, I yet/ Despair not of our nature; but retain/ A more than Roman confidence, a faith/ That fails not, in all sorrow my support,/ The blessing of my life, the gift is yours,/ Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed/ My lofty speculations; and in thee,/ For this uneasy heart of ours I find/ A never-failing principle of joy,/ And purest passion./ Thou, my Friend! wert rear'd/ In the great City, 'mid far other scenes;/ But we, by different roads at length have gain'd/ The self-same bourne. And for this cause to Thee/ I speak, unapprehensive of contempt,/ The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,/ And all that silent language which so oft/ In conversation betwixt man and man/ Blots from the human countenance all trace/ Of beauty and of love.” (*Prelude II*, 456-475)

Wordsworth was also bitter, outspoken critic of the Industrial Revolution and denounced through his poems its negative impacts on society, in general, and on the individual, in particular. He often laments in his poems the ill, dehumanizing effects of the industrialized, citified life and sees in the man, involuntarily absorbed by it, a victim of materialism that lacks his vital, uplifting connection with nature. The natural world is once again described as a source of spiritual progress and moral elevation, contrasting the decadency of modern life and its materialism.

Wordsworth elaborated these views in several sonnets he wrote in the early 1800s. *The World is Too Much with Us* is one relevant example. The general outlook of the world presented is a fatalistic one. The past, present and future are all doomed to immorality, greed, selfishness, all caused by the unstoppable effects of materialism and the lack of communion with nature. The angry tone of the poet is directed at the decadent material cynicism of the time.” The world is too much with us; late and soon,/ Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers/... We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!/... for everything, we are out of tune.”<sup>18</sup> Wordsworth’s message transmitted through the sonnet was that the consumer culture accompanying the Industrial Revolution has made the man cold and insensitive to the world around him.

Other lake poets, such as Coleridge, embraced the same perspective. Coleridge, besides his poetic contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads* and his public lectures and pamphlets, especially on topics of political and religious reform, also started a periodical, *The Watchman*, which he conducted through ten issues. Its content included reports from the parliament, foreign intelligence and other observations and comments on current socio-political life, all sprinkled with bits of poetry most of it the editor’s own. Despite its rapid failure, the publication testifies Coleridge’s proclaimed purpose that poetry may and should be used in the service of a general social revival because it carried a message that the restless population, burdened by the shock of the French and Industrial revolutions, was prepared to listen.

<sup>17</sup> Janyce Marson, *William Wordsworth*, Infobase Publishing, 2009, 123.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Sharock, *Selected Poems of William Wordsworth*, Heinemann, Oxford, 1958, 94.

Coleridge addressed his public by means of sermons and lectures, through *The Watchman*, and also, as he hoped, through his verse.

The Romantics belonging to the second generation of poets Byron, Shelly, Keats, were also preoccupied to use their poetry as a vehicle of communication with a larger audience. They vehemently voiced in their poetry the disillusionment of the post-revolutionary period, the savage violence of the Terror and the threatening rise of Napoleonic empire. Many of their writings describe and criticize the Britain they knew, one highly fearful of the possibility of revolution, and as a consequence, deeply repressive. Byron opposed tyranny both in his poetry and in his life. Shelly, perhaps the most revolutionary and non-conformist of the Romantic poets was an idealist who never lost faith in the power of love and good will, a passionate militant for the idea of personal freedom at any cost, disregarding the individual's responsibilities to society and an individualist, who rejected the institutions of family, church, marriage and Christian faith, and rebelled all forms of tyranny. His strong belief was based on the idea that the human conduct would always be good if it were the result of sincere convictions and not bound by laws and social conventions. Most of his poems are intense pleas for freeing the human spirit from the conditions of life that enchain it. Its work emanates his vivid passion for reforming the world, his strong believes that the ultimate victory is that of love over hate and revenge. Shelly spent much of his life struggling against all forms of constrains imposed by the social codes. He was one of many of the English countrymen who despaired at the state of the nation. In *The Mask of Anarchy*, a poem written after the Peterloo Massacre, Shelly called upon the people to: "Rise like lions after slumber/ In unvanquishable number!/ Shake your chain to earth, like dew/ Which in sleep had fallen on you/ Ye are many, they are few!"<sup>19</sup>

Most of Shelley's early works are characterized by intense political passion and strong opposition to the tyranny of king, church and family. *Queen Mab; A Philosophical Poem; With Notes*, his first major poem makes no exception. The poem is is a Utopian allegory which sets the basis for Shelley's theory of revolution, one founded on the belief that a perfect society can be obtained, not through violent revolution but through virtuousness of humans combined with nature's evolution. The author's original notes to *Queen Mab* make explicit the particular aspects of the past and present tyranny, and the tragic condition of the humanity, one mainly characterized by injustice, persecution, sufferings, all caused by agents of a despotic tradition. The poem also projects a vision of a future that offers the possibility of perfectibility, one in which death is not to be feared, and in which man and nature are reunited in harmony. In place of the past and present vices he proposes republicanism, free love, atheism and vegetarianism, all projected in a visionary description of a future in which the idea of spiritual freedom reigns. "It is a wild and miserable world!/ Thorny, and full of care,/ Which every fiend can make his prey at will!/ O Fairy! in the lapse of years,/ Is there no hope in store?/ Will yon vast suns roll on/ Interminably, still illuming/ The night of so many wretched souls,/ And see no hope for them?/ Will not the universal Spirit e'er/ Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?"<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *The Poems of Shelley: Volume 3: 1819-1820*, ed. Jack Donovan, Cian Duffy, Kelvin Everest, Michael Rossington, Routledge, 2014, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Percy, Bysshe Shelley, *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Editions, 1994, 39.

In 1839 Mary Shelley, the poet's widow, published her husband's *Poetical Works*. Several atheistic passages from *Queen Mab* were removed. In an Introductory Note to this edition, Mary Shelley explained the goals of the author:

*He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is bursting. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood, which he thought the proper state of mankind, as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed Queen Mab.<sup>21</sup>*

The social and political themes from *Queen Mab* are further developed in *The Revolt of Islam*, or *Laon and Cythna*. Written in 1817 and published in the following year, the twelve cantos poem presents an allegory which transposes a highly personalized version of the French Revolution into an Oriental setting. In spite of its title, the poem has nothing to do with Islam in particular, but touches such topics as religion, revolutionary idealism or fight for liberation from political despotism. Shelly wrote *The Revolt of Islam* in order to understand and to come to terms with what he accepted as the temporary failure of the revolutionary movement. He saw this failure as a lesson of history that has to be learnt in order to guide future action.<sup>22</sup> The poem contains many autobiographical references, and introduces the idea of struggle and renewal which is present in much of his later work. The theme, a favorite one with Shelley, is that kings, priests, and laws are to be overthrown by love.

*Ode to the West Wind*. is considered by many critics to be Shelley's greatest short poem. The wind becomes a metaphor for his own art, a promoter of his thoughts, an allegory of the role of the poet as the voice of change and revolution, a companion whose force and power can lift "as a wave, a leaf, a cloud" and spread the poet's ideas all over the world. The wind's main purpose is to regenerate hope and energy in Nature, in the poet himself and in mankind in general. The poem ends with an optimistic note which is that if winter days are here then spring is not very far. Martin Day states that together with *The Cloud* and *To A Skylark*, *Ode to the West Wind* represents Shelley's search in the physical world for re-assuring analogies to substantiate his belief that regeneration follows destruction, that alternation does not mean obliteration and that mankind should heed the prophetic voice of the poets.<sup>23</sup>

*A Defence of Poetry*, written in 1821 and first published posthumously in 1840 in *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments* (1840), is an essay in which

<sup>21</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford Edition, 1914, republished in 2008 by Forgotten Books, www.Forgottenbooks.org, *The Complete Poetic Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 513.

<sup>22</sup> P. M. S. Dawson, *Poetry in an Age of Revolution*, 66.

<sup>23</sup> Martin S. Day, *History of English Literature, 1660-1837*, Doubleday & Co. Inc. Garden City, N.Y. 1963, 428.

Shelley argues that poetry has a moral function due to its the power to reveal the order and beauty of the universe and to reform the world. Shelley claims that the poets are missionaries, unacknowledged legislators of the world, “creators and protectors of moral and civil laws”<sup>24</sup>, prophets and leaders who, through their quest for the eternal truths of beauty, can show the way to a better society. Shelly strongly believed and argued that the message of the poetry has the power to awaken and enlarge the mind and lift the veil from the hidden beauty of the world. His essay was considered “one of the most penetrating general discussions on poetry that we have”.<sup>25</sup>

John Keats, another Romantic poet *par excellence*, shared the same conceptions about the role of the poet and poetry in the actual world. His trust in the power of poetry to communicate universal, healing truths, is voiced by the poet-persona in the first canto of Keats’ greatest narrative poem *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. The poet addresses to the goddess Moneta, by saying “sure a poet is a sage/ E humanist, a Physician to all men.”<sup>26</sup> and Moneta, in turn, reinforces his statement by saying that the poet is the one who pours out “a balm upon the world.”

In their own ways, chiefly through their poems but also in their prose writings, all Romantic poets affirmed poetry’s power to guide, illuminate and heal.<sup>27</sup> All Romantic poetry is funded on the idea that it has a sacred mission to communicate, to teach, to heal, to voiced the oppressed and condemn the oppressors. What unites all the Romantic poets is the common belief that poetry is the hope for the world and that the message within it has a regenerative force for the individuals and entire society.

### **Bibliography:**

- Bloom, Harold, *The Visionary Company: The Reading of English Romantic Poetry*.  
 Brett, R. L. and Jones, A. R., *Lyrical Ballads: William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge*, Routledge, 2013.  
 Butler, Marilyn, *Romanticism in England*, in *Romantic Poetry: Recent Revisionary Criticism*, ed. Karl Kroeber, Gene W. Ruoff, Rutgers University Press, f.a.  
 Chavis, Geri Giebel, *Poetry and Story Therapy: The Healing Power of Creative Expression*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011.  
 Daiches, David, *A Critical History of English Literature*, Allied Publishers, 1979.  
 Dawson, P. M. S, *Poetry in an Age of Revolution, The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010  
 Day, Aidan, *Romanticism. The New Critical Idom*, Routledge, London, 1996.  
 Delaney, Denis; Ward, Ciaran; Rho Fiorina, Carla, *Fields of Vision*, I, Longman, 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler, eds. *Gateway to the Great Books*, Volume 5, Critical Essays. Toronto: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1963, 214.

<sup>25</sup> Perkins, David, ed. *English Romantic Writers*, 2nd Edition. Toronto: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995, 1131.

<sup>26</sup> *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger, Heinemann, London, 1978, 1. 189-90.

<sup>27</sup> Geri Giebel Chavis, *Poetry and Story Therapy: The Healing Power of Creative Expression*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011, 21.

- 
- Donovan, Jack and Cian Duffy, Cian, *The Poems of Shelley: Volume 3: 1819-1820*, ed., Routledge, 2014.
- Gunderson, Jessica, *Romanticism*, Creative Publication, Mankato, 2009.
- Hutchins, Robert M. and Adler, Mortimer J eds. *Gateway to the Great Books*, Volume 5, Critical Essays. Toronto: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1963.
- Johnston, Kenneth R, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover Rebel, Spy*, W.W. Norton, 2001.
- Mahoney, John L, *William Wordsworth, a Poetic Life*, Fordham Univ. Press, 1997.
- Marson, Janyce, *William Wordsworth*, Infobase Publishing, 2009, 123.
- Martin S. Day, *History of English Literature, 1660-1837*, Doubleday & Co. Inc. Garden City, N.Y. 1963.
- Perkins, David, ed. *English Romantic Writers*, 2nd Edition. Toronto: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995.
- Rickword, Edgell, *From Blake to Byron, The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, general ed. Boris Ford, Penguin Books, London, 1982.
- Rosenthal, Leon, *Romanticism*, Parkstone International, New York, 2008.
- Sharock, Roger, *Selected Poems of William Wordsworth*, Heinemann, Oxford, 1958, 94.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford Edition, 1914, republished in 2008 by Forgotten Books, [www.Forgottenbooks.org](http://www.Forgottenbooks.org), *The Complete Poetic Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *The Selected Poetry and Prose of Shelley*, Wordsworth Editions, 1994.
- The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger, Heinemann, London, 1978.