THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF ROMANTICISM

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

Henry H. Brown

1949

THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF ROMANTICISM

BY

HENRY H. BROWN

A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts

Department of English

1949

PREFACE

It is not the purpose of this study to be an exhaustive examination of the question of Romanticism. That problem is too immense. As one writer has noted, there are over eleven thousand books on the subject. Any attempt to consider that amount of critical material is out of the question.

Neither is this paper intended to answer the question, "What is Romanticism?" Of the more than eleven thousand books on the subject, there are probably more than eleven thousand answers to the question, each of them different. There is some agreement among critics that no one solution is adequate. Therefore, such an attempt in this paper would be futile labor.

The purpose of this study, then, is to indicate how the critical concepts of the meaning of Romanticism have changed in the period from 1800 to the present time. It is, in a sense, a short history of the critical reaction to the Romanticism of the early nineteenth century.

The plan of the work is chronological. Each author is considered according to the time when his critical concepts appeared in publication. It is believed that this method will best indicate the changes through which criticism of the Romantic period has gone.

Each author is considered in three more or less distinct steps. First, his definition of Romanticism is explained. Second, his supporting arguments are considered. And third, the connection between his critical concepts and the social and economic environment of his time is indicated.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Romanticism is long and varied. Since 1800, when the period of its fullest expression began, it has been adored and vilified, but it has never been ignored. This, I think is proof enough that it occupies an important place in literary history. As such, then, it is worthy of serious study.

Attempts to define Romanticism are legion, but there never has been a definition sufficiently inclusive to be adequate. The chances are that there never will be, for Romanticism and the Romantic Period exhibit a heterogeniety unsurpassed by any other period in English literary history. But this inability to define is no evidence of its unreality. It is, in fact, a definite force in literature and is, therefore, a valid subject for a study such as this.

The criticism of this phenomon of the early nineteenth century has gone through a number of interesting and important changes. The nature of these changes will be considered in this paper, and an attempt will be made to trace the pattern which these changes have made.

We are here concerned with the critical concepts of a period in literary history which has long been called the Romantic Period, and which has been understood to have occupied, roughly, the first half of the nineteenth century. During this period, in which there developed a new era of poetry, there also developed a new era of criticism. There was, in the poetic practices and theories of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley, a certain common attitude and this attitude has been, and is, called Romantic. Therefore, if this attitude is Romantic, then the concepts and ideas which these critics expressed may be rightly termed their understanding of Romanticism. It will be best, then, to open this study with an attempt to discover what ideas the critics of age were trying to develop, and what they thought about them.

There were three important problems with which the Romantics concerned themselves. The first was the question of the nature of poetry, which the age felt it was taking up and answering in important and partially new ways. The second was the problem of Shakespeare and the proper method of evaluating his works. The third, which may be regarded as equivalent to the question of Romanticism itself, was that of the right to eschew the rules of the preceding age and the development of a new and liberal doctrine of the legitimate in literary art.

The critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries held that poetry was either embellished imitation or embellished fiction. The aim of the poet was the betterment of reality and nature. In contrast, the Romantic poets and critics thought of poetry primarily as a means of communicating emotion by representing the subjective reaction to facts, and secondarily, as a means of interpreting experiences in a new way, through an intuitive power which ordinary men did not possess.

This idea was worked out in the new doctrine of the imagination set forth by Wordsworth and Coleridge, and later by Shelley and Leigh Hunt. The preceding era had regarded the imagination as a recalling faculty like the memory, or as a creative process. The Romantics went further. For them the imagination was a process which, through objects and sensations, produced a realization of things beyond the realm of sense. Thus, the function of the poet was to perceive and interpret the inner nature of these matters. They felt that poetry was truthful to a greater degree than prose or science, and they found its superiority to consist of the power of individual intensity of insight and feeling.

To illustrate these points of view, let us note some specific passages from the works of these author-critics.

Wordsworth said of the aim of his poetry:

> The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect....1

He continues:

> Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling developed therein gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. 2

...the subject is indeed important! For the human mind is

1 William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1800," Wordsworth's Prefaces and Essays on Poetry, ed. A.J. George, Boston, D.C. Heath, 1892, p. 3-4.

2 Ibid., p. 6.

> is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know that one being is elevated above another in proportion as he possesses this capability.3

Of the qualities making up a poet he said:

> Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a poet, is implied nothing differeing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what was said is, that the poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner.4

Defining poetry he said:

> I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.5

Wordsworth's definition of imagination is important:

> Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following poems, has no reference to images that are merely faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but it is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition governed by certain fixed laws.6

He continues,

> ...but the imagination also shapes and creates; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight then in that of consolidating number into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number—alterations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers.7

Coleridge said of imagination:

> The imagination, then, I consider as either primary or secondary.

3 Ibid., p. 6-7.
4 Ibid., p. 20.
5 Ibid., p. 26.
6 William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, 1815," Ibid., p. 46-47.
7 Ibid., p. 51.

> The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary imagination 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 operation. It dissolves,diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.8

His definition of poetry:

> My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in the preceding disquisition on the fancy and imagination. What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, What is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is the distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind.9

Of the poet he said:

> The poet, described in the ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends and (as it were) fuses each into each, by that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.10

Hazlitt's definition of poetry is lengthy, much qualified:

> The best general notion which I can give of poetry is, that it is the natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting and involuntary movement of imagination and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds, expressing it.11

> Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions. It

8 Samuel T. Coleridge, "Biographia Literaria," Chapt. XIII, The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. W.G.T. Shedd, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1884, Vol. III, p. 363-364.

9 Ibid., Chapt. XIV, p. 373-374.

10 Ibid., p. 374.

11 William Hazlitt, "On Poetry In General," The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe, London, J.M. Dent, 1930, Vol. V, p. 1.

> relates to whatever gives immediate pleasure or pain to the human mind. It comes home to the bosoms and businesses of men; for nothing but what so comes home to them in the most general and intelligible shape can be a subject for poetry. Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself.12

> Poetry, then, is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry; but poetry is the most emphatical language that can be found for those creations of the mind which ecstasy is most cunning in. Neither a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightenings of the imagination.13

> It does not define the limits of sense, or analyze the distinctions of the understanding, but signifies the excess of the imagination beyond the actual or ordinary impression of any object or feeling.14

> Poetry is in all its shapes the language of the imagination and the passions, of fancy and will. Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd than the outcry which has been sometimes raised by frigid and pedantic critics, for reducing the language of poetry to the standard of common sense and reason; for the end and use of poetry, 'both at the first and now, was and is to hold the mirror up to nature,' (Hamlet, III,ii, 24) seen through the medium of passion and imagination, not divested of that medium by means of literal truth or abstract reason.15

> It is the undefined and uncommon that gives birth and scope to the imagination; we can only fancy what we do not know.16

Byron took an adverse view of imagination and invention:

> It is the fashion of the day to lay great stress upon what they call 'imagination' and 'invention', the two commonest of qualities: an Irish peasant with a little whiskey in his head will imagine and invent more than would furnish forth a modern poem.17

Shelley's definition of imagination and reason:

> According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental

12 Ibid., p. 2.
13 Ibid., p. 3.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., p. 8.
16 Ibid., p. 9.
17 Lord Byron, "Letter to John Murray, Esq., On the Rev. W.L. Bowles's Strictures on the Life and Writings of Pope," as quoted by R.M. Alden, Critical Essays of the Early Nineteenth Century, New York, Scribner's, 1921, p. 269.

> action which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced, and the latter as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to color them with its own light, and composing from them as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity. The one is...the principle of synthesis, and has for its object those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; the other is...the principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things simply as relations; considering thoughts not in their integral unity, but as the algebraic representations which conduct to certain general results. Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known; imagination is the perception of the value of those quantities, both separately and as a whole. Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things. Reason is to imagination as the instrument to the agent, as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance.18

Of poetry Shelley said:

> Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be the expression of the imagination; and poetry is connate with the origin of man.19

He considers imagination the instrument of moral good:

> 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 the pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination: and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. 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 forever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb.20

Poetry compared to logic:

> Poetry, as has been said, differs in this respect from logic, that it is not subject to the control of the active powers of

18 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Defence of Poetry," The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and W.E. Peck, New York, Scribner's, 1930, Vol. VII, p. 109.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., p. 118.

> of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence have no necessary connection with the consciousness or will.21

Hunt's definition of poetry:

> Poetry, strictly and artistically so called,--that is to say, considered not merely as poetic feeling, which is more or less shared by all the world, but as the operation of that feeling, such as we see it in the poet's book,--is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity.22

Poetry employs imagination:

> It embodies and illustrates its impressions by imagination, or images of objects of which it treats, and other images brought in to throw light on those objects, in order that it may enjoy and impart the feeling of their truth in its utmost convictions and affluence.23

And,

> Poetry is imaginative passion. The quickest and subtlest test of the possession of its essence is in expression; the variety of things to be expressed shows the amount of its resources; and the continuity of the song completes the evidence of its strength and greatness. He who has thought, feeling, expression, imagination, action, character, and continuity, all in the largest amount and highest degree, is the greatest poet.24

> Poetry begins where matter of fact or science ceases to be merely such, and to exhibit a further truth, that is to say, the connection it has with the world of emotion, and its power to produce imaginative pleasure.25

Imagination defined by Hunt:

> There are different kinds and degrees of imagination, some of them necessary to the formation of every true poet, and all of them possessed by the greatest. Perhaps they may be enumerated as follows: First, that which presents to the mind any object or circumstance in everyday life, as when we imagine a man holding a sword, or looking out of a window; Second, that which presents real, but not every-day circumstances, as King Alfred

21 Ibid., p. 138.
22 Leigh Hunt, "An Answer to the Question, What Is Poetry?," Imagination and Fancy, London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1844, p. 1.
23 Ibid., p. 2.
24 Ibid., p. 3.
25 Ibid., p. 4.

> tending the loaves, or Sir Philip Sidney giving up the water to the dying soldier; Third, that which combines character and events imitated from real life with imitative realities of its own invention, as the probable parts of the histories of Priam and Macbeth, or what may be called natural fiction as distinguished from supernatural; Fourth, that which conjures up things and events not to be found in nature, as Homer's gods and Shakespeare's witches, enchanted horses and spears, Ariosto's hippogriff, etc.; Fifth, that which, in order to illustrate or aggravate one image, introduces another: sometimes in simile..., sometimes in metaphor...; Sixth, that which reverses this process, and makes a variety of circumstances take color from one, like nature seen with jaundiced or glad eyes, or under the influence of storm or sunshine....26

> Imagination indeed, purely so called, is all feeling; the feeling of the subtlest and most affecting analogies; the perception of sympathies in the nature of things, or in their popular attributes.27

> The term imagination is too confined; often too material. It presents too invariable the idea of a solid body—of 'images' in the sense of the plastercast cry about the streets.28

There also developed in this period a new doctrine of Shakespeare criticism. Like the new doctrine of poetry, this new criticism may be better understood by comparing it with that of the preceding age. Critics in the eighteenth century found a paradox in Shakespeare's admitted greatness because he violated the accepted rules of dramatic composition. Thus, he was regarded as an exception, a child of nature who was either ignorant of, or exempt from, the rules of art. This idea is connected with the view of imagination as something contending with reason for mastery. When reason and imagination were in proper equilibrium a real work of art resulted. In the nineteenth century the converse theory was held. Imagination was thought superior to reason and thus, Shakespeare's work was not paradoxical, but in accordance with more profound laws of composition naturally understood by genius.

26 Ibid., p. 7-8.
27 Ibid., p. 29-30.
28 Ibid., p. 31.

Coleridge expounded this doctrine, taking for the basis of his views the idea that the laws of Shakespeare's art were organic and not formal like those made by men. The principles of form which an organism represents are determined by its inner nature. Likewise, if a work of art is organic, the laws by which it is developed will be found in its nature. Therefore, it is wiser to attempt to understand these laws than to observe the violation of other laws. This attitude was held by Coleridge and most of his contemporaries, and it became the orthodox view of the nineteenth century.

There are however, two points of fallibility in this view. Art is never spontaneous, but is modified both by the author's intent and by the tendencies of his time and place. The Romantics however, could not conceive of these fallacies. Thus, there grew up a doctrine of Shakespeare's perfection or infallibility.

A corollary to this attitude was the view of Shakespeare's characters as having independent existence which led to discussing them as actual persons. This method dominated the nineteenth century and it is essentially the same as we use today. It did not dominate however, to the exclusion of all other methods of critical approach. Coleridge developed a new method, that of viewing Shakespeare's work in its historical setting, which we also make use of today.

Now, let us examine some passages from the work of the Romantic critics concerning this subject.

Coleridge held that Shakespeare was faultily understood:

> Shakespeare appears, from his Venus and Adonis and Rape of Lucrece alone apart from all his great works, to have possessed all the conditions of the true poet. Let me now proceed to destroy, as far as may be in my power, the popular notion that he was a great dramatist by mere instinct, that he grew immortal

> in his own despite, and sank below men of second- or third-rate power when he attempted aught beside the drama--even as bees construct their cells and manufacture their honey to admirable perfection, but would in vain attempt to bulid a nest. Now this mode of reconciling a compelled sense of inferiority with a feeling of pride began in a few pedants, who, having read that Sophocles was the great model of tragedy, and Aristotle the infallible dictator of its rules, and finding that Lear, Hamlet, Othello, and other masterpieces were neither in imitation of Sophocles nor in obedience to Aristotle, and not having (with one or two exceptions) the courage to affirm that the delight which their country receivedfrom generation to gneeration, in defiance of the alterations of circumstances and habits, was wholly groundless, took upon them, as a happy medium and refuge to talk of Shakespeare as a sort of beautiful lusus naturae, a delightful monster,--wild, indeed, and without taste or judgement, but, like the inspired idiots so much venerated in the East, uttering, amid the strangest follies, the sublimest truths. In nine places out of ten in which I find his awful name mentioned, it is with some epithet of 'wild,' 'irregular,' 'pure child of nature,' etc. If all this be true, we must submit to it; though to a thinking mind it cannot but be painful to find any excellence, mere human, thrown out of all human analogy, and thereby leaving us neither rules for imitation, nor motives to imitate; but if false, it is a dangerous falsehood, for it affords a refuge to secret self-conceit,--enables a vain man at once to escape his reader's indignation by general swollen panegyrics, and merely by his ipse dixit to treat as contemptible what he has not intellect enough to comprehend, or soul to feel, without assigning any reason, or referring his opinion to any demonstrative principle; thus leaving Shakespeare as a sort of Grand Llama, adored indeed, and his very excrements prized as relics, but with no authority or real influence.29

> Assuredly that criticism of Shakespeare will alone be genial which is reverential. The Englishman who without reverence--a proud and affectionate reverence--can utter the name of William Shakespeare, stands disqualified for the office of critic.30

Shakespeare's work is organic:

> Let me, then, once more submit this question to minds emancipated alike from national, or party, or sectarian prejudice; Are the plays of Shakespeare works of rude uncultivated genius, in which the splendor of the parts compensates--if aught can compensate--for the barbarous shapelessness and irregularity of the whole? Or is the form equally admirable with the matter, and the judgement of the great poet not less deserving our wonder than his

29 S.T. Coleridge, "Shakespeare's Judgement Equal to His Genius," The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. W.G.T. Shedd, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1884, Vol. IV, p. 50-51.

30 Ibid., p. 52.

> genius? Or, again, to repeat the question in other words, Is Shakespeare a great dramatic poet on account only of those beauties and excellences which he possesses in common with the ancients, but with diminished claims to our love and honor to the full extent of his differences from them? Or are these very differences additional proofs of poetic wisdom, at once results and symbols of living power as contrasted with lifeless mechanism --of free and rival originality as contradistinguished from servile imitation or (more accurately) a blind copying of effects instead of a true imitation of the essential principles? Imagine not that I am about to oppose genius to rules. No! the comparative value of these rules is the very cause to be tried. The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one; and what is organization but the connection of parts in and for a whole, so that each part is at once end and means? This is no discovery of criticism; it is a necessity of the human mind; and all nations have felt and obeyed it, in the invention of meter and measured sounds as the vehicle and involucrum of poetry, itself a fellow-growth from the same life, even as the bark is to the tree.31

De Quincey compared Shakespeare's works to those of nature:

> O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art, but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers, like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be notoo much or too little, nothing useless or inert, but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident.32

And Lamb said:

> It is common for people to talk of Shakespeare's plays being so natural; that everybody can understand him. They are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of them lies out of the reach of most of us.33

The third question of importance upon which the Romantics expressed their views in criticism was that of correctness and freedom in poetry.

31 Ibid., p. 53-54.

32 Thomas De Quincey, "On Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, Vol. X, p. 393-394.

33 Charles Lamb, "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," The Collected Works of Charles Lamb, p. 532.

Wherever romantic tendencies are found in criticism, there will also be found either indifference or hostility to the formal restrictions which other sources had placed upon the author. For example, if the preceding age insists upon observing the unities in the drama, the Romantics will insist upon their independence of such rules. However, the early nineteenth century was not much concerned with these problems, first, because the eighteenth century had not provided any very imposing authority, and second, because the chief battleground of such problems, the drama, did not command very much interest during the period. Nevertheless, some instances of anti-classical radicalism appeared, and it is of these that we shall take notice.

DeQuincey outlines the function of literature:

> In that great social organ which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices, that may blend and often do so, but capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of knowledge, and secondly, the literature of power. The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move; the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely, it may travel towards an object seated in what Lord Bacon calls--'dry light;' but proximately it does and must operate--else it ceases to be a humid light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering iris of human passions, desires and genial emotions.34

Of the worth of literature he said:

> Were it not that human sensibilities are ventilated and continually called out into exercise by the great phenomena of infancy, or of real life as it moves through chance and change, or of literature as it recombines these elements in the mimicries of poetry, romance, etc., it is certain that, like any animal power or muscular energy falling to disuse, all such sensibilities would

34 Thomas DeQuincey, "The Poetry of Pope," The Collected Writings of Thomas DeQuincey, ed. David Masson, London, A.C. Black, 1897, Vol. XI, p. 54-55.

> gradually droop and dwindle. It is the relation to these great moral capacities of man that the literature of power, as contra-distinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. It is concerned with what is highest in man; for the scriptures speak not of the understanding, but of the understanding heart, '--making the heart, i.e., the great intuitive (or non-discursive) organ, to be the highest state of capacity for the infinite. Tragedy, romance, fairy tale, or epopee, all alike restore to man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, or retributions, which else (left to the support of daily life in its realities) would languish for want of sufficient illustration.35

Lord Macauley outlined the difference between eighteenth and nineteenth century poetry:

> Wherein especially does the poetry of our times differ from that of the last century? Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would answer that the poetry of the last century was correct, but cold and mechanical, and that the poetry of our time, though wild and irregular, presented far more vivid images and excited the passions far more strongly than that of Parnell, of Addison, or of Pope. In the same manner we constantly hear it said that the poets of the age of Elizabeth had far more genius, but far less correctness, than those of the age of Anne. It seems to be taken for granted that there is some incompatibility, some antithesis, between correctness and creative power. We rather suspect that this notion arises merely from an abuse of words, and that it has been the parent of many of the fallacies which perplex the science of criticism.36

> What is meant by correctness in Poetry? If by correctness be meant the conforming to rules which have their foundation in truth and in the principles of human nature, then correctness is only another name for excellence. If by correctness be meant the conforming to rules purely arbitrary, correctness may be another name for dulness and absurdity.37

> A writer who describes visible objects falsely, and violates the propriety of character, a writer who makes mountains 'nod their drowsy heads' at night, or a dying man take leave of the world with a rant like that of Maximin, may be said, in the high and just sense of the phrase, to write incorrectly. He viblates the first great law of his art. His imitation is altogether unlike the thing imitated. The four poets who are most eminently free from incorrectness of this description are Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton. They are therefore, in one sense, and

35 Ibid., p. 56.

36 Lord Macaulay, "The Doctrine of Correctness," Miscellaneous Works of Lord Macaulay, ed. Lady Trevellyan, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1880, Vol. I, p. 468-469.

37 Ibid., p. 469.

that the best sense, the most correct poets.[38]

> At last, when poetry had fallen into such utter decay that Mr. Hayley was thought a great poet, it began to appear that the excess of the evil was about to work the cure. Men became tired of an insipid conformity to a standard which derived no authority from nature or reason. A shallow criticism had taught them to ascribe a superstitious value to the spurious correctness of poetasters. A deeper criticism brought them back to the true correctness of the first great masters. The eternal laws of poetry regained their power, and the temporary fashions which had superseded those laws went after the wig of Lovelace and the hoop of Clarissa.[39]

These, then, are the answers which the Romantics gave to the questions mentioned earlier. They are, I think, representative of the Romantic viewpoint. There are, it will be noticed, certain common attitudes regarding imagination, the nature of poetry, Shakespeare and correctness in poetry running throughout the passages quoted. The one or two passages disagreeing with the common attitude can be explained as exceptions. Byron, for example, was a reactionary who delighted in antagnoizing the other Romantics by expressing his aversion to certain new ideas. On the whole, we are justified, I think, in accepting the attitudes expressed as the viewpoints current in the early nineteenth century.

Now the Romantic Period is generally agreed by critics to have ended approximately in 1830 with the ascendency of the young Tennyson. There developed, in this period after 1830, a new theory of poetry and criticism which looked askance at the tenets of Romanticism and sometimes even assailed its dominance. However, the most serious threat to Romanticism did not develop until around 1859. This was the year that Darwin published his Origin of the Species, and it was the many misinterpretations of

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p. 477.

Darwin's theories that raised the threat to Romanticism.

His theory of evolution, as misrepresented by its adherents and misunderstood by its opponents, was purported to prove that the processes of nature indicated no purposiveness. "All that happened was by chance; there was no directive tendency, no forsight, nothing like moral governance or an ultimate tendency towards righteousness."[40] This false idea that Darwin had refuted the theory of design in the universe is the basis of the conviction, which is still current today, of the meaninglessness of human life. And, of course, this feeling struck at the basis of the Romantic beliefs. With the trumph of this materialistic philosophy, there could be no compromise with Romantic dreams about the beauty of nature and the moral value of the world.

This attack by Darwinism abated towards the last decade of the nineteenth century. A new view of science and philosophy began to re-establish the reputation of Romanticism. One of the first writers to attempt to widen the boundaries of Romanticism was Walter Pater. In his book, Appreciations, he examined the question and came to an interesting and novel conclusion.

The words "classical" and "romantic" have been used sometimes too vaguely and sometimes too absolutely by critics, thought Pater, yet they do define two real tendencies in the history of literature. They have been used to indicate greater opposition between the tendencies than actually exists. But in the creative minds of all generations this opposition does not exist and the true aesthetic critic uses the division only to delineate the peculiarities of the objects which concern him.

Classicism has often been used, in a scholastic sense, to denote

40 Ernest Bernbaum, Guide Through the Romantic Movement, New York, Ronald Press, 1949, p. 305.

what is old and accustomed at the expense of the new by critics who value the old for the conventional authority that grows up about it. In a like manner, Romanticism has been used, vaguely, to denote opposition to eighteenth century literary traditions and a return to the Middle Ages. In Germany it has been used to describe a certain school of writers, and in France it was used to denote the appearance of special artistic qualities in a certain period. "But," Pater maintains, "the romantic spirit is, in reality, an ever-present, an enduring principle, in the artistic temperament; and the qualities of thought and style which that, and other similar uses of the word "romantic" really indicate, are indeed but symptoms of a very continuous and widely working influence."[41]

To Pater, classical literature was that which possessed absolute beauty of artistic form and to which was added the accidental, tranquil charm of familiarity. He quotes Stendhal as saying, 'Romanticism is the art of presenting to the people the literary works which, in the actual state of their habits and beliefs, are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; classicism on the contrary, of presenting them with that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their grandfathers."[42] Pater adds to the qualities of classicism the love of music which is in everyone. Thus, the classic is that which time has shown will at least never displease us. "And," says Pater, "in the classical literature of Greece and Rome, as in the classics of the last century, the essentially classical element is that quality of order and beauty, which they possess, indeed, in a pre-eminent degree, and which impresses some minds to the exclusion of everything else in them."[43]

41 Walter Pater, Appreciations, London, Macmillan, 1890, p. 255.
42 Ibid., p. 257. 43 Ibid. p. 258.

In the same vein is Pater's well-known and often-quoted definition of Romanticism. "It is," he says, "the addition of strangeness to beauty, that constitutes the Romantic character in art."[44] He understood the desire for beauty to be an element in every artistic organization. Only when curiosity was added to this desire did the phenomenon of Romanticism result.

These two elements, curiosity and desire for beauty, generate two tendencies in literature. A predominance of curiosity results in the grotesque. A successful union of strangeness and beauty results in an exquisite beauty, and the romantic spirit refuses to have beauty without strangeness.

To develop these elements the romantic spirit turned to the Middle Ages for inspiration. "In the overcharged atmosphere of the Middle Ages," says Pater, "there are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty, to be won, by strong imagination, out of things unlikely or remote."[45]

In general, the romantic spirit may be said to be the product of certain eras, even though its elements, curiosity and love of beauty, may be traced in all good art. Outbreaks of this spirit come when curiosity is emphasized in man's approach to art, or when men exhibit a deep intellectual thirst for excitement after a long ennui or in reaction to external, practical things. Among other art, early nineteenth century poetry is a case in point. Taking his cue from Stendhal, Pater argues that all good art was romantic in its day. The novelty of form and motive, which characterizes Romanticism, is necessary in literature

44 Ibid.
45 Ibid., p. 261.

to hold and stimulate interest. This is what great writers have always understood. Their great aim has always been to keep up with this ever-changing spirit and still to retain the flavor of what was well done in the past. Thus, those who follow this principle eventually become classical and approach nearer to perfection.

Romanticism, then, is a spirit which is evident at all times, in varying degrees and which is always partly a matter of individual temperament. There are born classicists and born romanticists. The born classicist starts with form, ignores all that will not fit into it, and aspires only to be like the old masters. On the other hand, the born Romanticists start with original, untried matter. This they strip of its non-essentials until it adjusts itself in a clear, orderly, proportionate form, which form, in its turn, becomes classical.

Classicism, then, is order in beauty, Romanticism the addition of strangeness to beauty. For Pater these two tendencies are always present and recognizable in all art.

"Any attempt to make a definition of Romanticism that will be at once specific and adequate is sure to result in failure,"[46] according to Mr. Phelps. He offers as a reason for this statement the fact that the word "Romanticism" is used critically in very different ways.

In his book, Mr. Phelps examines a number of definitions of the word as to mood, subject matter and method. He concludes that all definitions have three things in common, subjectivity, love of the picturesque, and a reactionary spirit. By the first he means that the aspiration and vague longing of a writer will be evident in his work; by the second, that element of strangeness added to beauty which may

46 William Lyon Phelps, The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement, Boston, Ginn and Co., 1893, p. 1.

which may appear as a fondness for moonlit waters or ivy-covered towers, or as a passion for the unnatural and the horrible. By the third he means that the Romantic movement in any country will be reactionary towards what has immediately preceded it.

In the light of these three elements, it is easy to see why the Romantic movement took its inspiration from the Middle Ages. The Medieval period contained what the Romantic spirit yearned for. "Its religion, military and social life, and all forms of medieval art can hardly be better characterized than by the word picturesque, and souls weary of form and finish, of dead perfection, of faultily faultless monotony, naturally sought the opposite of all this in the literature and thought of the Middle Ages."[47] The Classical Augustans neglected this period and the Romantics began an attempt to revivfy and brighten this forgotten Medieval life. Nevertheless, under the formal, critical and prosaic crust of the eighteenth century, the fire of Romanticism was glowing.

The period from 1798 to 1830, which Mr. C.H. Herford has labelled "The Age of Wordsworth," was one immensely rich in achievement. Politically and socially events were taking place which greatly affected the latter half of the century. But perhaps the event which is most remembered is that which Mr. Herford generally terms the "Revival of Romance." The age witnessed the development of poetic genius to a degree before unknown and the most original and commanding figure of the age was William Wordsworth.

The "Revival of Romance" has been known by many names, most of which denote certain phases of Romanticism rather than romanticism in general. For example, "The return to nature," applies to the elements of romanticism

47 Ibid, p. 3.

set forth by Rousseau. The phrase, "The renascence of wonder," describes a view of romantic poetry which includes Chatterton, Blake, Coleridge, and Keats, but excludes the work of Scott. And also the French term lyrisme cannot be used to describe the heterogeneous Romanticism of England.

What then, is Romanticism? According to Mr. Herford it is, primarily, "the extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility."[48] The world of sense and thought takes on a new poignancy of response and appeal to man. "Glory of lake and mountain, grace of childhood, dignity of the untaught peasant, wonder of faery, mystery of the Gothic aisle, radiance of Attic marbles,"[49] are all marks of the movement. These sources of inspiration have one thing in common, they are all strange. They are ways of escape from the commonplace and the routine. But the romance which is the source of poetry is more than strange. It has the power of apparently detaching one from the world of reality and at the same time of restoring one to reality at a higher point. "To rekindle the soul of the past, or to reveal a soul where no eye had yet discerned it; to call up a Helen or Isolde, or to invest lake and mountain with 'the light that never was on sea or shore;' to make the natural appear supernatural, as Wordsworth and Coleridge put it, or the supernatural natural,—were but different avenues to the world of Romance."[50] The Romantic reaction to this world of imagination was different from that of the preceding age. The eighteenth century reduced reality to sense impressions. The Romantics rejected this solution, and instead formed their own ideals which resulted in revolt, reaction, intervention in affairs, or seclusion from them, but not ever in complete unconcern.

48 Charles H. Herford, The Age of Wordsworth, London, Geo. Bell, 1899, p. xiv.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., p. xiv-xv.

Hence the essence of Romanticism is to be found in its speculative elements. Its poets are teachers, prophets, reformers, philosophic reactionaries, or innovators in religion, criticism or history. They eschewed the didactic poem and yet their poetry often implies a criticism of life. For this reason some mention of the history of romantic ideas is pertinent to an account of romantic art.

Two great movements of European thought provided the sources of Romantic thought: the revolutionary naturalism of Rousseau, and the transcendental movement in Germany from Kant to Hegel. Rousseau's contribution was his Humanism which expressed the dignity and worth of man as man, and the power of natural scenery to respond to his needs. Emile is the picture of a mind arriving at all it needs to know by itself. The Social Contract advances the equal and inalienable rights of man as the basis of political thought, and the New Heloise expresses the revealing power of love.

With increased richness and subtlety, these marks of Rousseau's Humanism were carried on by Romantic poets. Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge idealized childhood. Shelley's heroes were inspired by freedom and passion, and with a finer insight, the Romantics also developed the harmonies between man and external nature which Rousseau had perceived.

There were three limitations in Rousseau's thinking. He was unconscious of any organic unity in the state. He was also unconscious of the same thing in history. Finally, his religious faith took the form of sublime deism, failing to see God as anything but the articifier of the world.

Romanticism was able to overcome these three difficulties, "by an advance to points of view which reconciled both civilization and nature

as elements in a single ideal."[51] In each country, England, France and Germany, this change was effected in a different, but in each it had one common characteristic. This can be described as the emerging prevalence of conceptions derived from organic life over those derived from mechanics. "The fundamental presumption about the nature of things, upon which the current reflection of an age is always based, began to be derived not from aggregates of mutually attracted atoms, but from totalities of parts each involved in and involving the whole, and sharing in a continuous evolution towards an implicit end."[52]

In England this change to organic modes of thinking resulted in a supremacy of the individual imagination. The English Romantic poets lived close to the glory of the natural world, and they thought of their imagination as divining nature, not as correcting her.

Still another change in the Romantic feeling for art took place during the period from 1798 to 1830. At the time of the Lyrical Ballads the Romantics looked upon art as a form of artifice. By the time of Tennyson's first poems, Romanticism regarded art and nature as two related domains of nearly equal attraction.

Thus, Romanticism seems part and parcel of Rousseau's revolutionary individualism. But Romanticism in society and politics was not dominantly revolutionary. Instead, it varied from revolt to reaction. Many young revolutionaries such as Wordsworth and Coleridge became arch-conservatives. In society, thought changed from a feeling for the cosmopolitan humantiy of the revolution to a passionate desire for Nationalism. Thus, the organic conception of life resulted in a Romantic realism, and this realism took three forms, political, historical, and religious.

51 Ibid., p. xvii.
52 Ibid., p. xviii.

In politics, Romantic realism produced an organic conception of state characterized by a change in the ideal of law. Formerly, law had been associated with force. Now it became associated with reason. Wordsworth, in "Ode to Duty," expressed his disavowal of the illusory freedom of unrestraint.

The nationalism engendered by Romantic realism was characterized by the Romantic revival of history. The idea of a national past influenced the conception of the continuity of history, which, in turn, evoked much interest in historical writing. In England Scott founded the historical novel, using his historical imagination to portray the past as yet alive. England also helped to re-discover Greece. Though the Hellenic revival began many years before, it was only during the "Age of Wordsworth" that Greek art began to be understood and that Greek poetry became a vital part of English poetry.

National sentiment was also the source of the "Renascence of Wonder." The first to express this new feeling was Burke who believed the body politic invested with a certain mysterious religious awe. This awe was an expression of his organic conception of the controlling force of the universe. A revival of the faculty of awe and a sensibility to it entered into Romanticism, and colored the poetry. As the revival of the past reanimated history, so the revival of awe respiritualized religion. This mysticism led to a study of early religious imagination in myth and resulted in the poetry of the mysterious such as "The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel."

But this sensibility to mystery produced a subtle and profound state of mind which had nothing to do with the historical aspect of Romanticism. It distinguishes the transformed Rousseauism of Wordsworth and Shelley

from the simpler naturalism of Rousseau himself. Rousseau found clear and incisive pictures of nature at work. To Wordsworth, nature was mysterious and unfathomable, and Rousseau's mechanical deism gave way to the animate and wonderful universe of Wordsworth and Shelley.

Romanticism does not possess any common characteristics of style, but it has certain dominant traits in which some critics find the ground of difference between Romantic and Classic. A distinction which had little currency in England. Mr. Herford maintains that "a style is Romantic in proportion as it presents its objects not simply and directly, but through a glamour of imagery and emotion which, according to the quality of the poet, obscures or reveals."[53] "The Romantic poet sees all things in the light of their larger relations, transcends distinctions, expresses by figure and metaphor."[54]

The chief ability of English Romanticism lay in its intimate and subtle interpretations of both the world of external nature and the world of wonder and romance. For Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, nature provided an unlimited source of lovely imaginings, and "all are masters of that region in which imagination brings us nearer to the heart of reality by apparently deserting it."[55]

At the same time, English Romantic poets had certain limitations. "They lacked vision for the world of man save under certain broad and simple aspects,--the patriot, the peasant, the visionary, the child, They lacked understanding of the past, save at certain points on which the spirit of liberty had laid a fiery finger."[56] These limitations are marks of the era, an era in which a glimmer of understanding of the world

53 Ibid., p. xxvii.
54 Ibid., p. xxviii.
55 Ibid., p. xxviii.
56 Ibid., p. xxix.

of man arose, but which left its fruition to the next generation.

Thus, Mr. Herford finds the characteristics of Romanticism chiefly in the thought or feeling of the author. According to Mr. Phelps' criteria it is doomed to failure because it is too specific. Likewise the next definition which we will examine. Nevertheless, it is important because it represents a once current and popular view.

Mr. H.A. Beers prefers to narrow his concept of Romanticism to the dictionary definition: "pertaining to the style of the Christian and popular literature of the Middle Ages."[57], rather than analyze it into its elements. He thought of Cowper as a naturalist, Shelley as an idealist, and Wordsworth as a transcendental realist. The name Romanticist he reserves for writers like Scott, Coleridge and Keats.

"Before Scott," he says, "no genius of the highest order had lent itself wholly or mainly to retrospection."[58] Thus, Scott became the center and the culmination of English Romanticism. "All Romanticists are resurrectionists,"[59] according to Mr. Beers, and Scott was the most important of them all. He was the first to popularize romance, and he was one of the first to go back to the medieval past and revivify the feudal society.

One of the important things to notice about Scott is his education which prepared him for his career. He was literally steeped in the history, legends and ballad poetry of the Scottish border. The tales told him in his childhood were the ballads of Mediveal England. He read Ossian and Spenser and Percy's Reliques. When he could use the Edinburgh library,

57 Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, New York, Henry Holt, 1918, p. vi.
58 Ibid., p. 2.
59 Ibid.

he passed up love stories and domestic tales in favor of adventure and romantic stories. He read books like the Castle of Otranto and made up tales of battles and legends of the maraculous and martial. All this made up his education in romance. To it he added an interest in military history and the medieval antiquities present in London and Rome.

"The key to Scott's Romanticism is his intense local feeling,"[60] according to Mr. Beers. In Scott, it was a passion and it supplied the stimulus which set his imagination to work. It was the source of all his reverence for antiquity and his absorption in the past. The only deep feeling in his poetry is that of patriotism. Significant of this is his treatment of landscapes. He had the Romantic's love of natural beauty, but it was complete only when he could connect it with some local legend. Scott liked to base his stories on historical fact or at least upon legend. Even in one of his fantasies he lays the scene near his own home. Coleridge, Beers believed, was just the opposite. When his "moonlit, vapory enchantments touched the ground, the contact precipitated the whole solution."[61]

The precise nature of Scott's Romanticism is further illustrated by a comparison of some of his poems with some of Wordsworth's which touch upon common ground. "Helvellyn" by Scott and "Fidelity" by Wordsworth tell the story of a young man who was lost and perished in the Cumberland mountains. He was found three months later, his faithful dog by his side. Now Scott loved dogs in particular, while Wordsworth had a love of animal creation in general. Yet, in drawing the thought of the poem, Wordsworth centers on the mysterious divineness of instinct, while Scott reflects that nature had given the man a more stately funeral

60 Ibid., p. 8.
61 Ibid., p. 10.

than the church could. "A comparison," says Beers, "dragged in seemingly for the sake of a stanzaful of his (Scott's) favorite Gothic imagery."[62]

Another comparison is afforded by the "White Doe of Rylstone." It is based on a ballad which recounts a tale of an insurrection against Elizabeth. All the elements are present for a display of feudal pomp and Scott would have dwelt upon this. But Wordsworth, true to the rule of his preface, treats all this action as subordinate to the real purpose of his poem, the study of the discipline of sorrow, of ruin, and of bereavement.

The essential characteristic of Scott's Romanticism may be said to be this, that "the most romantic scene was not romantic enough for Scott till his imagination had peopled it with the life of a vanished age."[63]

Another important Romantic of the nineteenth century was Coleridge. According to Mr. Beers, his contributions to Romantic poetry are few and make up only a small part of his immense influence on his own and the following generations.

Coleridge's romantic impulses failed him in 1800, but his German biographer has treated him under this special aspect. Alois Brandl did not like the term "Lake School" commonly given to Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey. He proposed to call them the "Romantic School." His reasons for so designating them demonstrate his belief in the definition of Romanticism as the antithesis of Classicism. He attributed to the school an aversion to monotony, and dogmatic rules, a desire to avoid rationalism and unbending uniformity, and a wish to be individual and to develop the inner life. Thus, for Brandl, the term "romantic" implied a breaking away from the Classical path. This is what he thought the Lakers did.

62 Ibid., p. 12.
63 Ibid., p. 21.

Their immediate predecessors, Cowper, Burns and Chatterton, adhered to Classical tradition. So did their immediate successors, Byron, Keats and Shelley, who, though they imbibed a warm form of thought and feeling from the Romantic school, still regarded the antique as their parent. These poet's he regarded as the Classical members of the "Romantic School." Wordsworth, Coleridge and Scott he regarded as having taken nothing from Classical literature, but instead as having drawn all their inspiration from the Middle Ages.

Mr. Beers disagrees with these distinctions. For Byron and Shelley he admits, grudgingly, that the criticism might suffice. For Chatterton and Keats he thought it was misleading. The criticism of Wordsworth he found wholly unsuitable. He thought "Michael" and "The Brothers" were as classical as "Hyperion" or "Laodamia." "But," he says, "whatever may be true of the other members of the group, Coleridge at his best was a romantic poet. 'Christabel' and 'The Ancient Mariner', creations so exquisitely sprung from the contact of modern imagination with medieval beliefs, are enough in themselves to justify the whole romantic movement."[64]

One of the chief influences affecting the early writings of Coleridge was the work of one Reverend William Lisle Bowles. By Coleridge's own admission, Bowles' work led him away from a too exclusive devotion to metaphysics. But Bowles is perhaps most important for being the central figure around which the Pope controversy revolved. This was actually the battle between Classic and Romantic. Bowles edited a book of Pope's works in which he included an essay on Pope's poetical character. Pope, he maintained, was a poet of the second order, inferior in nature description and lyrical poetry, and a poet of artificial manners and didactic maxims,

64 Ibid., p. 54.

rather than of passions. Bowles felt that images drawn from nature excelled those drawn from art and that the passions of the heart which belonged to nature were better suited to a higher species of poetry than those derived from manners. The admirers of Pope joined issue with Bowles, maintaining that subject matter was nothing in poetry, but that execution was all, that the classes of poetry were all equal in rank and that poets should be ranked according to their excellence as artists. The controversy revolved around these arguments, but despite the fact that he had a host against him, Bowles' views prevailed. His antagonists included Disraeli, Gifford, Byron, and William Roscoe, but they were pleading a lost cause. Pope's poetry failed to satisfy the heart and the imagination because of his imperfect sense of beauty and his deficiency in the highest qualities of the poet's soul. Or, as Coleridge maintained, Pope's poetry contained not poetic thoughts, but thoughts translated into the language of poetry.

This controversy, which resulted in the prevalence of Bowles' views, tends to point up the fact that a change in taste had taken place, that the aesthetic revolt begun in the 1750's had succeeded by 1800.

Mr. Beers believes that "The Ancient Mariner" represents the high-water mark of Romantic poetry. It is a narrative ballad which tells its story in the homely diction of old popular minstrelsy. The poem contains the mystery, indefiniteness and strangeness which are characteristic of Romantic art. The moral theme, penance, and the dramatic effects are taken from Catholicism. The bridal scene and the wedding guest are taken from old balladry. Likewise, the indefiniteness of place and time belong to ballad poetry also. Thus, the poem contains all the marks of Romantic poetry, according to Mr. Beers' standards.

Mr. Beers' discussion of the two parts of "Cristabel" serves to

illustrate further his conception of Romantic poetry. "Christabel" is distinctly medieval and contains many Gothic elements, a feudal baron, a moated castle, and a sorceress. In it, Coleridge displays his art in the use of the supernatural and develops a romantic tale created in a fairyland. The second part of the poem falls down however. Instead of leaving the setting in the fairyland of the first part, Coleridge changes it to familiar Lake Country localities. By doing so he loses what are, for Mr. Beers, the romantic qualities of the poem.

Keats and Leigh Hunt also display phases of early nineteenth century Romanticism which are worth noting. According to Mr. Beers, Keats is the poet of romantic emotion, contrasted to Scott as the poet of romantic action. History and the pomp and grandeur of the Middle Ages mattered little to Keats. He sought after beauty and his sensitive imagination thrilled at every touch. He delighted in the romantic scenes of the "Faerie Queene." The heroes of his poems never do anything and his poems are often visions of loveliness rather than pieces of action.

Hunt's Romanticism took two forms. The first was his rebellion against eighteenth century tradition and his assertion of impulses against rule. The second was his return to the medieval for inspiration. Hunt probably did more than any poet of his time to popularize Italian romances, and especially did he popularize the works of Dante.

Mr. Beers, then, distinguishes two characteristics of Romanticism, a return to the Middle Ages and a rebellion against rules. This concept, of course, is also inadequate since it disregards certain other, admittedly, romantic qualities. It does, however, represent a phase of Romantic criticism which has been given serious thought.

Shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century, a change in

the philosophy of nature brought about the rehabilitation of Romanticism. This new philosophy held that science is limited in what it can ascertain, that it cannot reduce nature to the definitely knowable and predictable, and hence, those fields of human experience and methods of inquiry which the Romantics believed in reassumed their former dignity.

One definition written in this period is that of W.A. Neilson. It is interesting because it more or less establishes a common ground between those we have considered above.

Poetry in general, according to Mr. Neilson, exhibits three fundamental qualities, reason, imagination, and sense of fact. By sense of fact is meant the act of observation and recollection or, more simply, the working of the memory. Imagination is the process by which facts are selected, modified, arranged, and heightened in order to bring them into accordance with a mental conception. Finally, reason denotes the qualities necessary for the adept use of the means to artistic effectiveness such as, the sense of probability, proportion, fitness, harmony and coherence. There are other factors that enter into the production of poetry, but these three are considered essential.

The history of poetry exhibits a number of tendencies, the most notable of which are Romanticism, Classicism and Realism. In defining these three tendencies, the practice generally followed is to use this division of the faculties used in poetry: Romanticism is defined as the tendency for imagination to predominate over reason and sense of fact; Classicism as the predominance of reason; and Realism as the predominance of the sense of fact.

Though these definitions may appear too simple and mechanical, it should be noted that the three important terms used each contain a central

idea, have a number of manifestations, and are almost never found in isolation. Thus, to speak of a romantic period is to speak only of a time when the imaginative element in poetry was predominant, not of a period in which reason and sense of fact had vanished.

Imagination is commonly regarded as the faculty which presents images of things not actually present to the mind. Mr. Neilson believes that imagination goes beyond this. Unlike the memory, imagination does not present a passive recollection, but acts upon the object recollected. It may also be present in the original perception of the object recalled by the memory. For example, the botanist, in describing a daisy, would note only details important to rational classification. The personal element would enter in only negatively through the rejection of non-essential facts. Contrasted to this method is that of an imaginative observer such as Wordsworth.

> Oft on the dappled turf at ease
> I sit, and play with similes,
> Loose types of things through all degrees,
> Thoughts of thy raising:
> And many a fond and idle name
> I give to thee, for praise or blame,
> As is the humor of the game,
> While I am gazing.
>
> A nun demure of lowly port;
> Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
> In thy simplicity the sport
> Of all temptations;
> A queen in crown of rubies drest
> A starveling in a scanty vest;
> Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
> Thy appellations.[65]

His active imagination does not allow him to observe the daisy passively. From the flower he receives many suggestions and impulses to his thoughts. Furthermore, while he sees the flower in many guises, they

65 W. Wordsworth, "To the same Flower," ll 9-24, as quoted by Neilson, p. 34.

are not arbitrarily chosen, but each suggests another. While these stanzas demonstrate how the imagination is present in the perception, they also demonstrate its presence in the recollection. Some of the comparisons Wordsworth uses to describe the flower are with recollected objects. But most of them, such as the nun, the cyclops, a queen crowned with rubies, are things he had never seen. Thus, the flower evoked images from the poet's mind which had been stored there by the working of the imagination on materials supplied by previous perception and memory, some of which never had any but imaginary existence.

The imagination has another facet which is called the creative. The perceptive side of the imagination depends on intuition to discover the hidden meanings and relationships in the ordinary objects of experience. The creative side reveals these hidden elements as parts of a new synthesis. This synthesis is spontaneous and intuitive, not the result of labor. It is a creation, an organism formed within the personality of the artist. An example of the growth of this intuitive power and its use to interpret nature is found in Wordsworth's "Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey." He—

> 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
> 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 spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.66

66 "Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey," ll 88-102, as quoted by W.A. Neilson, p. 42.

Imagination manifests itself in poetry in still another way. This phase appears in the power of imagination to evoke the consciousness of a certain mood or atmosphere, or ecstasy in the reader. The poetry which exhibits this side of imagination is characterized by a technical excellence, but more important is the substance. Such poetry is concerned with the great simple things fundamental in human life such as fate, death, life, time, and beauty. It is the revelation of the ultimates of life, death, and the universe to the emotions and the intellect, a sense of contact with the infinite which this poetry brings home to us. It makes man aware of himself as a part of nature and of his dignity as a spiritual being. It is in these senses that Mr. Neilson uses the term imagination when he discusses its relation to Romanticism.

Romanticism has been used to describe a large variety of poetic qualities. Three definitions which have been especially popular, speak of Romanticism as a return to nature, as a return to the Middle Ages, and as a growth of subjectivity. These definitions do not exhaust the variety of tendencies, but they are representative enough to test the validity of the formula that Romanticism is a predominance of the imagination. These definitions are also incomplete in that they mistake results and manifestations of Romanticism for the force that lies behind it.

The conception of Romanticism as medievalism is too simple in itself. The Middle Ages do not offer a simple set of characteristics, but instead are as complex as any other age. Thus, the term is unsuitable to describe Romanticism unless it is qualified. There are many phenomena in the Medieval period which can be used to justify the definition. The Medieval romances of adventure provide one instance.

These works are characterized by their abundant use of the imagination and the modern reader of the nineteenth century was fascinated by the remoteness and strangeness of the life represented. The romances contained many supernatural and miraculous elements, but the dominant strain was that of the devotion to objects of the imagination. And it was this highly imaginative quality which interested the nineteenth century Romantics. In the religion of the Middle Ages this element of imagination is to be found in the preference for the imperfect, inspired by the dim objects of the spiritual vision.

There was however, a revival of interest in the Medieval which Mr. Neilson thinks of as psuedo-romanticism. This appeared in the form of the Gothic novel. This type, which does embody all the paraphanalia of supernaturalism, lacks an enthusiasm for the true spirit of any phase of Medieval life. Instead of being imaginative interpretations, they are merely imitations, using external trappings and failing to comprehend the essence of Medieval life. On the other hand lie the Gothic romances of Sir Walter Scott. He too used externals, but he added to them the vitality of his own imaginative sympathy. In his personal life he possessed a sense of chivalry and a pride of ancestry, Medieval qualities which, highly colored by a vision of the past, found their way into his work.

Thus, we see that Romantic writers were stirred by Medieval elements which had a high degree of ideal aspiration, or, in other words, by Medieval conceptions in which imagination predominated. In this sense certain aspects of Medievalism, when genuinely sympathetic, may be regarded as a true phase of Romanticism.

The second conception of Romanticism which Mr. Neilson discusses is that of Romanticism as subjectivity. The turmoil in the world and especially in France in the years preceding the nineteenth century had a great effect on this phenomenon. Men were weary of the press of external affairs, and they had all but lost their hope of security. So they turned to the inner world, to seek the solace and satisfaction which the external world could not give, in the spiritual realm. This resulted in an increase in the sense of the importance of the individual soul. In poetry, this subjectivity moved the center of interest from society to the individual, and in the individual, to his moods and emotions. The forms most used to express this was the lyric, of all forms of poetry, the most purely the outcome of the desire for self-expression. Its essence is the outpouring of emotion. In eighteenth century England, this form of utterance, particularly the condensed lyric, the sonnet, almost entirely died out. The Romantic movement revived the popularity of the personal utterance and along with it the sonnet. This one of Keats' is a good example.

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has gleanⁿd my teeming brain,
Before high piléd books, in charactery,
 Hold like rich garners the full ripenⁿd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starrⁿd face,
 Huge cloud symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love; - then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.67

67 John Keats, "When I Have Fears," as quoted by Neilson, p. 64.

Here is an example of a Romantic poet occupied with himself, but the important thing here is the faith which such poets had that such intimate matters were important enough to give to the world in splendid verse. This then, should explain the meaning of subjectivity as used by those who regard it as the essence of Romanticism.

Mr. Neilson does not use subjectivity and Romanticism as equal terms because he maintains that subjective utterances are not always Romantic. Subjective literature such as the sentimental, often does make use of the imagination, but only as a tool, never as its master.

However, Romanticism is always subjective because of the nature of its dominant factor, imagination. All objects of a poet's interest must be subject to the working of his personality. Now, a poet's reason, so far as it is rational, and his facts, so long as they are mere facts, can belong to anybody, but his imagination is singular. It is his own. Thus, it is evident that in a period in which imagination is predominant, poetry will have a tendency to be self-conscious and introspective. And hence, subjectivity takes its place along side an interest in Medieval life as a phase of the predominance of imagination.

The return to nature, the third quality of Romanticism, has had a long and varied history. The term seems to have as many meanings as the word "nature" itself. For instance, the new astronomy of Copernicus, the new science of Bacon, the art of Michelangelo, are examples of the return to nature. Likewise, eighteenth century neo-classicism was a return to nature, for in that rationalistic age restraint was natural. Both in the Renaissance and in the age of Pope, this return to nature exhibits all the tendencies of a reaction against a prevailing tradition which limited free expression of individual impulses. The term also

became the battle-cry of the "Age of Wordsworth," but as a common element uniting all phases of Romanticism, reaction is inadequate since it appears in all literary movements.

In the nineteenth century, the return to nature had two applications; one to human nature; one to external nature. The return to human nature had for its chief element subjectivity. The interest in one's own inner workings has been shown to be closely allied to the activity of the imagination, and therefore may be regarded as a phase of Romanticism. On the other hand, the assertion of the rights of emotion is a more complicated matter. To say that this removal of restraint in the nineteenth century is a mark of Romanticism is not enough. There must be examples of emotions in which imaginative and romantic elements are discernable. The democratic attitude is one. When held passionately, this attitude was often due to some ideal vision of humanity. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth sympathized with the struggle to vindicate the rights of man, and this sympathy was evoked in them by imaginative pictures of hardship and injustice. Another is the new sense of the worthiness of humble life as a theme of poetry. Wordsworth's aim was to color incidents from common life with the imagination, to give them the charm of novelty. This aim was the legitimate purpose of the imaginative artist and he carried it out to such an extent that his poems of humble life contain so great a degree of imagination as to be justly called Romantic. However, some of his poems of rustic life are not predominately imaginative, indicating that the importance of this as a phase of Romanticism has been exaggerated.

The return to nature which is exhibited in the worship of the noble savage is also to be regarded as Romantic. It possessed an imaginative

element and it was Romantic in the sense that it was unreal. And, even though much of this idealization of the savage failed to reach the heights of great literature, it is, nonetheless, important in the intellectual life of the time, and because of its predominant imaginative quality, it is a notable factor in the Romantic revival.

By far the most important sense of the phrase "the return to nature," lies in the increased prominence of scenery in the poetry of the time. This does not mean, however, that any type of scenery description is entitled to the name "Romantic." Certain types of scenery must be discriminated in order to unite it with such phases of Romanticism as Medievalism and Subjectivity.

Certain types of landscapes are more stimulating to the imagination than others. The vaster objects of external nature such as mountains, clouds, deserts and oceans have this effect. The wilder, the more distant, the less familiar they are, the more apt are they to arouse a sense of wonder and mystery, and to stimulate imaginative speculation. In the presence of such aspects of nature, the imagination causes the soul to rise above the external world to all that is universal and eternal. No other aspect of the poetry of this period is so generally regarded as Romantic.

It should be noted however, that although the imaginative element is the force which unites the Romantic poets, each expresses this element in a different manner. In Scott and Coleridge, descriptions of nature are often impersonal, the effect being transferred from the poet to some character in his poems. In Byron, nature is introduced as an object of contemplation by a soul, usually his own, alienated from society. To Shelley, the grander aspects of nature were full of a

metaphysical significance. In Wordsworth, description of nature embodies the action and reaction between nature and spirit, as well as the imaginative treatment of detail. Thus, in these ways, the imaginative treatment of nature may be recognized as a Romantic quality, and the return to nature recognized as an aspect of Romanticism.

These, then, are the three phrases which Mr. Neilson has selected as the more familiar attempts to define Romanticism. While his discussion has not been exhaustive, in each of the phrases he has found an element of truth, and in none of them a sufficient breadth of application. Yet he has shown, beyond a doubt, that Romantic poetry is characterized by the predominance of imagination over reason and the sense of fact.

Not all criticism of the Romantics in the twentieth century has been favorable however. Paul Elmer More is a representative of the anti-Romantic, Humanist school of criticism. His definition of Romanticism states that it is the discovery of the infinite in nature itself rather than apart from nature. This assumption of an illusion, which Mr. More and other anti-Romantics take for granted, is the result of the scientific thinking of the last half of the nineteenth century. These men believed that science had failed to show that there was any spiritual or ideal purpose in nature. To them the question was one of dualism. "Is there, or is there not," asks More, "some element of man's being superior to instinct and reason, some power that acts as a stay upon the flowing impulses of nature, without whose authoritative check reason herself must in the end be swept away in the dissolution of the everlasting flux?"[68] The Romanticists said there was not. The Humanists say there is.

68 Paul Elmer More, The Drift of Romanticism, p. xiii.

Mr. More thinks Romanticism was a drift towards disintegration and disease. He does not, however, mean to imply that he is insensible to the beauty and the magic commonly connected with Romanticism. He determined two uses of the word. One he understood to mean certain attributes of all poetry "when it rises from the common level to the climaxes of inspiration,"[69] which includes wonder joined with beauty and awe of the other world. This he called the narrow or absolute sense of the word, examples of which use can be found in both classical and romantic poetry. The other use of romantic he termed the Historical, because it is associated with an historical movement of modern Europe. By this use of the word he means, "the wonder and strangeness that go with the dissolving together of the human soul and nature, the vague revery that takes the place of insight, the pantheism that has forgotten the true surprise of the supernatural."[70] It is in this sense that he uses the term in his essays.

The person whom Mr. More chose to represent his conception of early nineteenth century English Romanticism was one William Beckford of Fonthill. He capriciously suggests that his reason for choosing Beckford was because he had been reading a current edition of Beckford's letters. The real reason however, seems to be that Beckford's life and his important work, Vathek, illustrate better than that of any other author of the period, the disease and disintegration with which Mr. More charges Romanticism.

Beckford's life was probably as eccentric as any of the period. Born in 1760 of wealthy parents, he came, at an early age, under the

69 Ibid., p. ix.
70 Ibid., p. xii.

influence of women who encouraged his bent for wild brooding and fantastic dreaming. He was educated by a clergyman, and at seventeen he evinced all the symptoms of living in a world of reverie. While abroad completing his education, he wrote some letters to his step-sister in which he shows his preoccupation with wild musings on darkness, dark clouds, night, supernatural shrieks and moans. This, Mr. More attributes to the influence of Ossian, which Beckford was apparently reading at the time.

Once back in England, he continued his wild revolt, vowing to seclude himself from the world, and writing his first book, Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters. In this book he displayed his sense of grotesque humor by attributing certain paintings in his galleries to such artists as Og of Basan and Herr Suerewasser of Vienna. In this union of sentiment and burlesque in the same mind, Mr. More sees the desire to escape from reality.

After another trip to the continent, Beckford returned to England in 1781 to celebrate his coming of age in a manner befitting a man in possession of an enormous fortune. The festivities, which lasted a week, seem to have influenced the rest of his life. In one of his letters, Beckford describes the balls, concerts and illuminations which took place at Fonthill. Over ten thousand people attended the celebration, thousands of lamps and numerous fires on the downs lighted the night, and rockets and mortars were discharged. The final scene, which Beckford describes, consisted of a temple among tall oaks. The fires made the temple glow and the people before it appeared to him devilish by contrast. These scenes, ending as they do with a touch of diabolism, combined with his reading of the Arabian Nights to inspire his Vathek.

The great hall at Fonthill, which Beckford admitted inspired the Hall of Eblis in Vathek, did not long content him. For twenty years he amused himself by constructing a new group of buildings which was one of the wonders of the age. At one time he employed a gang of five hundred men to work around the clock on the humanitarian pretext of creating work for men in distress. His methods and the result caused much gossip, and small wonder. Here was a man ready to satisfy his whimsical taste and disorganized fancy at any expense. The spectacle was like something out of the Arabian Nights. Mr. More thinks it is likely that these wild doings at Fonthill entered into Coleridge's vision of Kubla Khan.

Beckford's pleasure dome consisted of galleries, halls and chambers devoted to every refinement of luxury, and contained a large collection of rare treasures. The dominant feature of the structure was a tower three hundred feet high. It was hastily and poorly constructed, and one day it was blown by the wind. Beckford immediately replaced it with another which was also blown down. Of it Mr. More says, "The whole thing is like a chapter in romanticism written in wood and mortar."[71]

Beckford continued his eccentric activity by erecting a twelve foot wall eight miles long around his park. He explained that it was to keep the neighbors from riding to hounds across his land, but actually he had developed a mania for seclusion and he went to great lengths to preserve it. And Mr. More continues, "anyone who is familiar with human nature, and particularly human nature under the warping stress of uncontrolled emotions, would prophesy, from the young man's outcry for sympathy from his complaints of the world's inability to appreciate him, that just such a loveless, lonely old age would be his end."[72]

71 Ibid., p. 15. 72 Ibid., p. 17-18.

In 1822, due to his shrinking fortune, Beckford was forced to sell Fonthill. He retired to Bath where he erected Fonthill in miniature, with a tower one hundred thirty feet high. There he became a notable figure, he eccentricities the occasions of endless scandals until his death in 1844. "He was a man of many accomplishments and a vein of true genius, one of the great personalities of the age, and in his virtues as well as his errors a striking type of the romantic enthusiasm that in his early formative years was springing up all over Europe."[73]

After this short history of a man whom Mr. More took to be a typical Romantic, he launches into a discussion of the sources of Romanticism because he believes that it still bears the mark of its sources. He maintains that the place to begin searching for these sources is the meeting of Eastern religion with western philosophy under the influence of the Roman Empire. The first thing to note is the difference in meaning in the Oriental and Occidental mind of infinity and personality. To the people of the East, that is the Orientals, infinity implied association with the divine. Escape from bounds, implied by exaggeration, meant complete independence of the finite. To the people of the West, that is the Greeks, the idea of infinity was repugnant. They sought the divine in the qualities of restraint, limitation and proportion. For them infinity was expressed in self-completeness and central control.

Along with this difference in sentiment towards the infinite, went a difference in the idea of personality. The West thought of the Ego as a sharlpy defined, active, emotional entity. To the east, this entity remained always a name for an ephemeral group of sensations.

73 Ibid., p. 19.

It was the work of the first Christian centuries to merge these Oriental and Occidental conceptions. Under the Roman Empire the Occidental sense of the Ego and the Oriental sense of infinity as escape from limitations emerged together. To this alliance Mr. More attributes the birth "of a sense of an infinite, insatiable personality, that has brought so much self-torment and so much troubled beauty into the religion and literature of the modern world."[74] And here he finds the source of Romanticism.

This alliance took place in Alexandria and in that city new literary forms and new philosophies developed. Neo-Platonism started there as did the pastoral poem, the tale of idealized love and the romantic epic, all of which have a distinctly romantic tinge. But these things are only surface signs of the revolution in sentiment which was taking place. To understand what was happening in the depths, one must look to the unorthodox philosophies which were developing from the amalgamation of Eastern and Western religious creeds.

One good example is the philosophy developed by Valentinus of Alexandria. To explain the origin of the world he used a system of Aeons, or mystical powers which dwelt aloft in couples. One of the Aeons, Wisdom, lacking her counterpart, Will, fell into a passion. This passion was a search for the Father whose greatness she wished to comprehend. From this passion of Wisdom, which is identical with desire without Will, sprang the world. From Wisdom's pain came the spiritual elements, from her fear the psychic, and from her ignorance, matter. In this identifying of the intellect with desire, in its divorce from the will, and in the vague yearning for the Father, and in the birth of the world from

74 Ibid., p. 26.

emotion, Mr. More sees the heart of what was to be called Romanticism—"the infinitely craving personality, the usurpation of emotion over reason, the idealization of love, the confusion of the sensuous and the spiritual, the perilous fascination that may go with the confusions."[75] He likens it to a fever, both malign and beautiful.

Thus was Romanticism introduced into Christianity, and with it, descended to the nineteenth century. However, before Romanticism attained its full force, the Christian faith and the authority of the classics had to give way to the tide of naturalism which arose in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the spirit of Romanticism prevalent in the nineteenth century was akin to that at work in ancient Alexandria.

This discussion seems to have led pretty far afield from Beckford and his important work, Vathek. But Mr. More introduced it in order to explain the Romantic egotism which supplies the theme of the book.

Vathek, little read today, was popular in its time. Its theme, like that of Faust, is the insatiable craving for experience, and the self-torturing egotism which were beginning to appear in European literature. The story concerns an Eastern prince who possesses all the pleasures and powers of the world. Dissatisfied with this, he adds five wings to his palace in order that he may enjoy each of the five senses separately. He also has a great thirst for knowledge, wishing to know everything. Thus, he is able to command everything in his earthly paradise but content. A tempter then enters the story and, in return for a monstrous crime, offers Vathek possession of the palace of subterranean fire in which the talismans that control the world are located. After a space of time, the prince and his princess are led by the tempter to the

75 Ibid., p. 30.

palace. In the Hall of Eblis they come upon the sight of the vast, unresting multitude which roams about heedlessly, in furious agony or in rapt absorption, avoiding one another, and each clasping his right hand over his heart. They are then led to the throne of the great Soliman, who also has his right hand over heart. He tells them of his torments and his doom. Then he raises his hands in supplication to heaven, and Vathek and his princess are enabled to see through his bosom to his heart which is enveloped in flames. Horrified, Vathek cries out for mercy. The tempter replies that there is none, that they are in the abode of vengeance and despair and that their hearts will be kindled like those of the other votaries of Eblis. There the story ends. It is not to be compared with Faust. Beckford's genius was fitful and seldom under control, and he was no philosopher. But, he did symbolize a great and everlasting truth better than any other man of his age.

Romanticism has contributed much of beauty and sublimity to the world. It has been defined as a sense of strangeness and wonder, but these qualities may be found in all great literature. "Insofar as they are peculiar to Romanticism and distinguish it from the universal mode which we call Classic, they will be found to proceed from, or verge towards, that morbid egotism which is born in the union of an intensely felt personality with the notion of infinity as an escape from limitations."[76] "If we look below the surface of things," says Mr. Nore, "and penetrate through many illusions, we shall perceive in Beckford's vision of the restless throng, moving ever with hand pressed upon flaming heart, the essential type and image of the Romantic life and literature."[77]

76 Ibid., p. 36. 77 Ibid.

This, then is representative of the Humanist conception of Romantic life and literature. That the Humanist viewed Romanticism as a corruptive agent is evident. Whether or not they were right in their conceptions will be discussed later.

Now let us examine one of the basic problems in the criticism of the Romantic Period, that of the antithesis between Romantic and Classic. There are many solutions to the question, all perhaps equally valid. This, by Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, takes a fresh and different approach to the subject.

Nothing has done more to obscure the meaning of the word than the common assumption that there is an antithesis between Romanticism and Classicism. There is actually no antithesis because Classicism is a different order of things from Romanticism. The latter is an element, not in the sense of a simple and unanalyzable substance like oxygen, but rather in the sense of a characteristic state. It is an element of art which contributes to the whole a characteristic state of things and which sometimes predominates.

Classicism on the other hand, is a mode of combining the elements, and not an element at all. Using the ancient theory of the humors, Classicism is the equilibrium of the elements of art. Classicism, then, has no element, and thus there can be no antithesis between it and Romanticism. In fact, Romanticism is one of the elements which, in concert with others, makes up the equilibrium which is Classicism. To carry out the analogy, Classicism is the health of art. The opposite of Romanticism is Realism, another of the elements. It is between these two that the true antithesis exists.

Classicism, as the health of art, would suggest that no dominating

tendency is present. Hence, in the period designated as Classic, there were Romantic and Realistic tendencies. And likewise, in the Romantic movement, all the elements are noticeable, but they are over-shadowed by the one domineering tendency, Romanticism.

Romanticism expresses itself in many ways, but its nature may be suggested by discovering certain qualities of sentiment, thought or image, which may be recognized as Romantic.

By far the best known of these is the sentiment for views. The fashion for views developed concurrently with the fashion for Romantic feeling. Thomas Campbell expressed the sentiment for views in his, "The Pleasures of Hope."

'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view![78]

He is warning his readers not to get too close to things for they are sure to disappoint one. This sentiment for views is used to indicate a theory of living, and likewise, Romanticism may be used for the same purpose. What Campbell likes in this sentiment is the actual distance itself. He finds remoteness peculiarly satisfactory.

There is then, a tendency in Romanticism, as evidenced by Campbell, away from actuality. It is a tendency of the spirit of the mind to withdraw from the outer world in order to rely on things within itself. This leads to the Romantic theory of living which holds that life is most satisfactory when the mind withdraws from actuality and turns in upon itself. It is this habit of mind which Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie calls Romanticism.

This view shows Romanticism in a negative sense, a drawing away from things perceived. To put it in a positive light we must discover

78 Thomas Campbell, "The Pleasures of Hope," Hope Abideth, l 7.

what gives Romanticism its confidence in things conceived—that inner experience on which it tends to concentrate.

Fairies, like the feeling for views, are not romantic in themselves. But, they become Romantic because they are an element of inner experience, when this inner experience is emphasized over the outer.

Fairies, as such, have a long history of development. In ancient Irish poetry they had human stature and an air of specious and vivid reality. Later, in the Elizabethan age, they lost their stature but retained their reality. Finally, in Romantic poetry they are strange, shadowy, perplexing and unapproachable. But at the same time the manage to suggest a certain probability of existence. There is not much detailed information about them, and yet the reader is expected to believe in them because the poet does so. Thus, "fairies are Romantic when they are the fairies a Romantic believes in."[79]

Fairies do not exist because they have been imagined, nor do they take their reality from poetry. Rather, the imagination approaches in them, "an existence superior to anything the senses can know."[80] Thus, the poet turns his belief inward and withdraws from the life of the senses. And, when he turns to this inner existence, it is because the images of sense have begun to hint of a reality hidden by the sensual world; a reality to which only the inner life can respond. Thus, Romanticism, in the matter of fairies, exhibits a sort of transcendental quality.

Mr. Abercrombie maintains that Romanticism has no peculiar subjects or topics. Instead, it is an affair of the temper. To illustrate this

79 Lascelles Abercrombie, Romanticism, p. 59.
80 Ibid.

point we need only examine the "Return to Nature." As a definition for Romanticism, the term is a misnomer. Nature may be returned to in many different ways, and nature itself may be all things to all men. But let nature be something definite as flora and fauna, or mountains and clouds contrasted with the works of man, and it is no more Romantic than it is Classic. Such nature is a valid topic for Classicism. However, the contemplation of such things can become Romantic in much the same way as Campbell's regard for views and the importance of distance to them, is Romantic. When nature is Romantic it suggests "majesty, awe, Arcadian innocence, idyllic happiness, remoteness, loneliness, melancholy or wildness."[81] Or, it may be Romantic according to the doctrine of sublimity as Burke understood it. Burke's doctrine emphasizes obscurity as opposed to clearness, since obscurity fosters enthusiasm which is freedom of the inner life, stimulated but not bounded by reality. It is a yearning towards infinity, a desire to know the unknowable. This is possible in the sublime since the appearance of things does not hamper the mind and the imagination can expand indefinitely. It is actually inner experience substituting itself for incomprehensible outer experience.

Mr. Abercrombie believes that this doctrine of the sublime "especially when nature is the topic, is an exact type of what Romanticism always has been."[82] For nature is nowhere more Romantic than in Old English poetry, and it is Romantic because it fits Burke's sense of the sublime--misty, shadowy, stormy, unseizable and shapeless.

Old English poetry suggests the importance of ruins to the Romantic nature. They have been a part of it from the inception of English

81 Ibid., p. 128. 82 Ibid., p. 130.

poetry. Musing over ruins is akin to the mysterious charm of the moonlight, or Byron's melancholy pleasure in being alone at the seashore. "The thing common to all these experiences is that they are valued for their power of stimulating and echoing the life within: in 'nature' the Romantic poet sees and feels himself beautifully displayed--his desires and aspirations, his joys and his griefs."[83] Thus, nature is a symbol of the Romantic's own life, and important to him for just that reason.

Mr. Abercrombie believes that nature meant something different to Wordsworth. In nature he found an infinite being he knew, and not merely imagined, to be greater than his own. And when his imagination acted upon this infinite being, it was not to create a semblance, but to discover its positive existence and to unite it with his own spirit. His imagination found its expansion in the knowledge of reality. Thus, for Wordsworth, nature was "experience perfectly combining sense and spirit, perfect equipoise of self against the manifestly more than self."[84] In such a way is Romanticism an affair of the temper, and as such it manifests itself in innumerable ways.

The most obvious manifestation of Romanticism is egoism, that is, the inordinate consciousness of self-importance. Mr. Abercrombie warns that it is not a form necessary to Romanticism. There is none of this egoism in Shelley, though he lived almost wholly in his inner experience. Byron did too, but his life was directed inwards to feed, not only his self-consciousness, but also his conscious self-importance. He was a man of the world and knew well the facts of life, and he could embody this knowlegde in poetry. But, "the wealth of his knowledge and the splendor of his objectifying energy have no other purpose than to de-

83 Ibid., p. 130-131. 84 Ibid., p. 133.

clare his own inordinate self-importance."[85] His poetry is certainly the pageant of this. Nevertheless, this does not meant that his poetry constitutes an autobiography. Rather, his egoism is dramatized, as in Manfred, by projection not by creation, "for the figure of Manfred simply collects and magnifies its author's own life and affairs."[86]

Romanticism has two other forms which can be discussed here. One is pessimism, the other is the belief in the possibility of life made perfect on earth. Both of these forms are mutually associated and are also closely connected to egoism. Romantic pessimism takes its form in "the utter disvaluation of the apparent world by belief in the reality of the mere unpurposed energy of existence."[87] The vision of perfectible life may be expressed in two ways. It may be simply a turning away from the actual to dwell in the imaginary, or it may take the practical form of revolutionary politics. In Shelley and Byron, as in others, it meant the translation of the inner convictions into action. The belief back of it is the faith that not only man's mode of life, but man himself, is capable of improvement. This type of revolution is found in two forms. One is the visionary revolution illustrated by Shelley's "The Revolt of Islam." The other is illustrated in Byron's plays by their concern with the realities of revolution. Byron's theme is liberty and the complete sacrifice necessary to obtain it. But it is a liberty which has no value in itself. Romanticism was able to value it only as a means to an end, which end was the realization of some perfection believed to be inherent in man. Man can always envision a better life for himself. Rid of the bonds of law and custom, man can

85 Ibid., p. 136.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., p. 149.

be what he can conceive. The Romantics, believing in the inner life, went one step further and assumed that, in liberty, man will be what he can be. "Hence the vigor of revolutionary liberty in Byron's poetry as a motive for tragic action, this frequent concern with setting free man's ideal power fixes a notable color to the sum of his romanticism."[88]

Mr. Abercrombie, then, defines Romanticism as the antithesis, not of Classicism, but of Realism. As he understands it, Romanticism is the withdrawing from the world of reality to the world of inner experience in which higher order of reality is found. Though he does not state it bluntly, there is something of the anti-Romantic attitude in Mr. Abercrombie's criticism which he suggests by averring that Romanticism's most obvious manifestation is an inordinate consciousness of self-importance.

Another phase of the subject at hand is found in Mr. Frederick E. Pierce's criticism. He takes a still different approach to the subject by classifying Romantic tendencies according to the author's attitude toward life.

No one will deny that the Romantic movement was a chaos of divergent and often conflicting forces. They were not all equally good, neither did they all have all the same faults. And, even though in some way each force may be shown to be a reaction against the eighteenth century, it does not make them all alike. Emotion, upon which these forces are based, runs the gamut from the highest to the lowest of human experiences, and is always found with some form of intellectual reaction, which makes countless combinations possible.

88 Ibid., p. 159.

Mr. Pierce divides Romanticism into four general tendencies which he calls Popular, Exploratory, Mystical-Ethical, and purely Aesthetic.

The eighteenth century struggle for popular rights was of such a nature as to inevitable influence literature. It gave a political voice to the middle and lower classes and it likewise gave these people a voice in literature. Before the revolution, authors, critics, and audience had all belonged to the aristocratic class or had been adopted by it, and literature reflected the views of that class. After the revolution, authors, critics and audience came from all classes. Noblemen and scholars disregarded ancient tradition and heard the utterances of the poor. "Poetry under Queen Anne had interpreted the sharpened wits and blasé mood of an upper class; under George III vast tracts of poetry interpreted the life of the humble, in which thought was stunted and feeling ran riot."[89]

This upheaval let loose various forces. Among them were the love of melodrama and clap-trap, the love of adventure and excitement and the spirit of nationalism. This latter gave rise to a passionate medievalism which glorified the past of such countries as Ireland and Scotland. There was also the peasant's love for the soil which affected the poetry of scenery.

The chief product of the popular tendency in literature was sentimentalism. It is rare among people who suffer hardships or among the wordly-wise who are disillusioned. It is commonly found among well-to-do laborers and peasants and part of the middle class, those who live a secluded life. The rise of sentimentalism in literature is due to

89 Frederick E. Pierce, "Romanticism and Other Isms," JEGP, p. 454.

these people and especially to the growing influence of women, supposed to be more sentimental than men, which was, at this time, unquestionable.

Not all Romantic literature was sentimental, but an enormous amount of sentimental literature was written during the period. A good deal of it was bad, especially that which was nothing more than a bath of tears. There was much self-deceiving hypocricy too, but not all sentimentalism was bad. When it was bad, it was because the perceptions of truths were blinded or perverted.

In the eighteenth century, the dominant spirit was one of common sense. The school of Pope held that the resources of the mind were to be directed towards such ends as the study of man, his environment and methods of restraining his follies and developing his virtues. In contrast to this, the Romantic period emphasized another mental activity, "the explorer's love of ransacking vast fields of truth, not for practical results, but for the sake of the discoverer's joy."[90] This was an attitude comparable to that of the preceding age because it meant concentrated mental activity. But it differed in that its mental action was accompanied by a deep wave of emotion, the explorer's delight. It is this emotion which is characteristic of Romanticism, and in this case it appears as the shadow, not the destroyer of thought.

This exploratory tendency in England followed the two channels of history and geography. The two outstanding authors of this type of literature were Byron and Scott, who produced much antiquarian travel literature. There were others such as Thomas Warton, Gray and Landor who belong on the list. However, this type of literature was doomed to eventual obscurity by the advance of science in the nineteenth

90 Ibid., p. 456.

century. There was, as the nineteenth century progressed, an increasing emphasis on scientific accuracy in investigation, a condition under which Romantic tendencies could not operate. Thus, the exploratory tendency sank into the background or evolved into realism.

The third group of tendencies grew out of the nineteenth century poetic absorption of the teachings of Plotinus. A third century philosopher, he developed a philosophy based on that of Plato. One teaching of his philosophy was that divine truth could be immediately perceived in moments of ecstacy. The medieval mystics took over this conception and it was revived again in the nineteenth century. Poets who exhibit this mysticism include Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley. Like the ancient mystics, these men sought the revelation of the presence of God in the external world. From a religious point of view they were undergoing the deepest of human experiences, and from the psychological, they were undergoing the highest of psychic adventures. However, only the more religious of the poets called the object of this immediate perception God. Other, more philosophically inclined, called that great moment the intuitive perception of the true values and realities of life. Authors of this type were usually not sentimentalists, but were original philosophers exploring the recesses of their own souls.

Other teachings of Plotinus are evident among the poets of this period. His belief that lower forms of mind emanate from higher forms appears in some of Blake's poems. And, his belief that sex love could lead to nobler spiritual attitudes runs throughout the poetry of Shelley.

Another characteristic of this type of poets is their moral earnestness. They were convinced that ethical problems were the most important problems of life and were the noblest subjects for poetry. For

Wordsworth they were the old, conventional, moral standards. Blake and Shelley, on the other hand, taught revolutionary ones. But no matter what the standard was, they insisted on the importance of moral earnestness, and the necessity of some code for a spiritual life.

This type of poetry was never popular. Some poets did not care for popularity and others could not bridge the intellectual gap between themselves and the public. They seldom attempted to make their thought acceptable by putting it into popular form, as the exploratory writers did. For these reasons this type of poetry grew rare after 1850.

The purely aesthetic tendency, which has for its chief characteristic, the cult of beauty, appears more strongly defined in the later Romantics. It was an off-shoot of the mystical-ethical attitude which transferred to art the worship which earlier Romantics had reserved for nature. This cult of beauty is represented by Keats and his contemporary, Shelley.

This type started out all right, but it drifted from its original intention. That it had richness of style is not questioned, but that it eventually became a cultured hedonism is evident. In the first place it admired the beauty of tangible objects experienced through the senses, not the beauty of ideas, so dear to Plato. Furthermore, it took an a-moral and sensuous attitude towards life. Ethically its greatest virtue was the power it had to inspire the artist to work for his ideal, but always that ideal was the gratification of his own desire. Thus, the rapture of the senses were allowed to grow out of the activity of the intellect and the will, and the subject matter became hollow and empty. However, the fault lay, not in the over-emphasis of beauty, but in the under-emphasis on the rest of life. These nineteenth century

aesthetes emphasized the georgeous vision at the expense of the divine and their sense of civic duty.

Each of the tendencies discussed here represent attitudes toward life, and as such may be found existing together in one writer, especially if his career was long. Futhermore, each had its own circle or period in which it predominated. And these four tendencies are what make up nineteenth century Romanticism. They were not new, but were revivals of old moods and beliefs which were fundamental in the history of the race.

This discussion affects old definitions of Romanticism by splitting them four ways, which shows that they are inadequate to explain the deeper workings of the mind. For example, the definition of Romanticism as the return to nature would break down in this manner: the sentimentalist returned to nature because it passively received his outpourings of woe; the exploratory type of mind studied nature for accurate detail, especially details that were interesting because they were foreign; for the mystic, nature was the revelation of the deity; and for the aesthete, nature existed only in its beauty of outline and color.

A similar division takes place for the return to the Middle Ages. The sentimentalist fled from relaity to a dream world of castles and knights. The exploratory author delighted in restoring a past of realities. The mystics revived the mood of the ascetics of the Middle Ages. And the aesthetes borrowed the richly picturesque from the Medieval painter and chronicler.

The sense of the infinite played a small part in the second and fourth categories. For the sentimentalist it is the desire to give way

to unrestrained expression of emotions. Contrasted to this, the mystic felt infinity to be the infinite opportunity to think, to act and to improve.

On the basis of his discussion, Mr. Pierce concludes that the two good tendencies are the mystical-ethical and the exploratory. The other two, the sentimentalism and the cult of beauty, in Mr. Pierce's opinion constitute the real danger to literature.

The next definition which we will consider is that of Mr. Louis Cazamian. His definition parallels that of Mr. Herford, considering the thought and feeling, rather than subject matter, as the attributes of Romanticism. However, Mr. Cazamian's definition is novel because he divides the Romantic Movement into two distinct and antithetical periods.

During the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, certain characteristics of literature, which had been developing for a long period of time, took on a new intensity. Emotional and imaginative literature threw off the restraining bonds of reason. This achievement, brought about by an inner progress, was nonetheless influenced by the social and moral environment. Perhaps the most influential force which, together with the industrial revolution and the religious awakening of Methodism and evangelism, affected English thought, was the French Revolution.

The new age in literature is customarily dated from the publication of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads. These men possessed an ardor of generosity which is the origin of poetic idealsim and the revolutionary faith which moved them is the source of authority for their doctrines. The spiritual quality of these men, who appear at the beginning of English Romanticism, helps to point out its nature and the

mental forces governing it. "Romanticism can be defined only in terms of pure psychology. Any other formula alters or limits arbitrarily its very essence."[91]

A negative approach will help define the limits of English Romanticism. It does not consist of the conflict between two artistic principles. Nor is it the clear affirmation of a novel aesthetic creed as opposed to orthodox art. English literature had not been codified and disciplined like that of France. It followed no strict rules, nor had it been incorporated into manners and upheld by an academy. A new type of poetic creation was taking shape, with an independent attitude toward the past.

Moreover, it is not the triumph of the self. The poet's personality is important to it because imagination and sensibility are the essence of individuality. Classicism stressed the impersonal side of the mind; the new literature stressed the individual. However, this is not a cause, it is a consequence.

Furthermore, English Romanticism did not consist primarily in a return to a national tradition. In one sense it did, but those poets who reanimated the past did so only occasionally and then not merely for its national quality, but also for the intrinsic values and moral attributes they saw in it.

Finally, English Romanticism is not the result of foreigh influences. They are a secondary force in the development of literature from 1798 to 1830.

91 Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature, p. 1026

This, then, is what Romanticism is not. Positively, it is the revival of a creative impulse long dormant. According to Mr. Cazamian, "the Romantic spirit can be defined as an accentuated predominance of emotional life, provoked or directed by the exercise of imaginative vision, and in it turn stimulating or directing such exercise."[92] The poetry of the period is characterized by an exaltation of intense emotion and a display of intense imagery. It is this interpretation which forms the connecting link between those works customarily called Romantic.

This definition does not perfectly describe the Romanticism of 1820. There are other Romantic ages recognizable in English literature, the Elizabethan for example. Wherein lies the difference? Partly in the immediate happenings and near historical influences. The French Revolution was a powerful influence on nineteenth century Romanticism. But the main difference is of a more inner nature. The nineteenth century Romantics knew and felt that their Romanticism was a revival and not an innovation. They were under the influence of "a moral life which had formerly been lived, and which memory would fain recapture."[93] They experienced a feeling of nostalgia in their search for a mood which belonged to the past, and this feeling was essential because they were able to grasp the reality of the mood and not just an image. Through their use of spiritual will-power and intuition they could revive the past from its dormant state. Thus, the "wonder" of the Romanticists is ..."the progressive lighting-up of an inner horizon, which extends beyond the limits of clear consciousness; it is the perception of objects in the magic garb with which our tired eyes invested them of yore, and which our tired eyes had forgotten. The obsession of distant centuries

92 Ibid., p. 1028. 93 Ibid., p. 1029.

is the mysterious attractions of strong modes of feeling of which the collective memory had preserved a confused recollection, and which it naturally associates with remote phases of its experience."[94] These tendencies of Romanticism indicate the psychological attitude of the writers. That of the general public was somewhat different.

In the first place, at the time of the appearance of Romanticism, there was no sudden, general change of thought, nor was there a general exuberance or interest in emotion. Instead, there was an unrest and lack of balance in society. The sentimentalism of the eighteenth century was opposed by a cynical scepticism. The mass was interested in industrial and commercial expansion, following the emerging standard of utilitarianism. Thus, the state of society provides no explanation for Romanticism. On the other hand, it does throw light on the details and internal divisions of the movement.

The politics of this period have a definite relation to the course of its literature. There must be recognized two successive generations of Romantics. The first coincides with the revolutionary turmoil which ended in about 1815. During this time, England was making a national effort against France. This centering of interests stirred a feeling for national traditions, and the first Romanticism took the form of a reaction against the revolutionary ideal.

The representatives of the first group, Wordsworth and Coleridge, based their poetical reforms on a mysticism which found its justification in a national idealism. The elements of this idealism include an interest in the poor which the Lake poets justified by adhering to

94 Ibid., p. 1030.

the doctrine of the noble simplicity and the moral dignity of a peasant race attached to the soil. Thus, they viewed the political turmoil with feelings of hostility and defence.

In 1815 the situation changed. With the passing of the French conflict, the Tory reaction had no object. A movement began for more middle class representation in government, and for agricultural and financial reforms. This internal unrest provided fule for attacks on the oligarchic regime.

It was in such a state of society that the second generation of Romantic poets lived and flourished. They represent a moral revolt. Refusing to recognize the prestige of tradition, they criticized the fear of progress prevalent among the people. They inherited revolutionary thought and linked it with ideals of liberty, independence, and justice, and with a cult of the beautiful.

The first generation of poets was in harmony with most of the people. Their Romanticism was a sort of purification and deepening of normal existence. Their emotions were emotions common to all and when they did stimulate them, it was only in order to idealize them into poetry. The second generation was just the opposite. They set up an opposition between the artist and his environment. They carried emotion to a point which seemed, to the average person, an imbalance of personality. They raised, against the established order, a protestation which appealed to "the vital forces of the soul against the rule of interests and cold calculation."[95] Thus, Romanticism became the literature of social conflict. It attracted the young and the zealous, but it also provoked the average man.

95 Ibid., p. 1033-1034.

Romanticism did coincide with an intellectual movement which had some success, that of philosophical radicalism. But, it failed to meet the conditions necessary for durability. It exceeded the average powers of the public and thus, being the literature of the few, it never became really popular. The public could not accept it because it advocated a creed which they were determined to wipe out. "To be more widely accepted, it had to wait until a reactionary movement towards balance had set in against it; and until with the evidence of its decline there was effaced the danger with which it had seemed to threaten society, a society which above all desired to live."[96]

We come now to consider three more or less modern instances of Romantic criticism. The first, by Mr. Lawrence Hyde, is anti-Humanist. He explains the Humanist point of view, a very important one in the twentieth century, as it concerns Romanticism, and then demonstrates how he believes it is in error.

The nineteenth century, according to Mr. Hyde, is characterized by its preoccupation with institutions, the external conditions of existence, and the problems of social and political freedom. The cry of the age was for Liberalism, and its great task was the emancipation of humanity from external limitations.

Now, the twentieth century represents the fruition of this nineteenth century aim. The democratic ideal has more or less been realized. Woman enjoys equality with man and the individual possesses the freedom to trade, worship, express his convictions and educate his children as he thinks fit. However, the solution to this nineteenth century problem

96 Ibid., p. 1035.

has left a greater one in its stead. Modern man is free, but how can he be prevented from exercising this liberty in a destructive, wasteful and ignoble fashion? The task then, is to pursuade a free people to impose voluntary restraints on themselves. Everyone is free to do as he likes, but this has only proved to mean a slow but sure vulgarization of the values of life. "Everything tends to be dragged down to the level on which it is comprehensible or emotionally satisfying to the man who has neither purified his perceptions, disciplined his will, nor cultivated his mind."[97]

Modern critics in the period since the first World War have become acutely aware of this threat to culture. Believing that the basis of all external forms lies in the integrity of the individual, they have become interested in the psychological aspects of the situation rather than the political or social. Consequently, they are engaged in exploring the spiritual foundations of modern civilization.

The nineteenth century regarded man as an animal of exceptional intelligence which had the power to transform the world into a liveable place. He was by nature good rather than bad, and if bad, it was due to external conditions. They thought that by modifying his environment man could be infinitely perfectible. This attitude is called Humanitarianism. The opposite attitude, held by the modern critics, is called Humanism. This new attitude stresses the opposition between man and nature. While these critics agree that man is a part of nature, they believe that he has something within him which is other than natural, that in him the natural and the other than natural are united. To support their contention, they cite man's power of exercising free-will

97 Lawrence Hyde, The Prospects of Humanism, p. 10.

and his power of veto over instinctive desires.

The modern Humanists contend that the dangers implied in the vulgarization of culture can never be resolved until man has achieved a disciplined individuality. Thus, man cannot hope to control his environment until he can control himself, and this control can only be exercised from a center above the plane of the flux.

Opposed to this attitude of the Classical Humanists is that of the neo-Romantics. These critics reject Humanism on the ground that it results in an unresolved dualism. They contend that what is needed "is a radical synthesis between the discordant elements in our being, as a result of which the tension between the instincts and the ethical will is completely overcome."[98]

The Romantic presents a curious combination of ideas. On the one hand, he is naturalistic in regarding man as essentially the same as other forms of life. On the other, he is like the Classical Humanists in stressing the necessity of the recreation of the individual.

In addition to these two groups of critics, there is one other group called the New Humanists. This group includes such critics as Irving Babbit, Paul Elmer More, T.E. Hulme and T.S. Eliot. These men, though they hold diverse opinions, have some tenets in common. They are all in reaction against the optimism of the nineteenth century. They all realize that man, though free, is the slave of certain base inclinations, and they believe that the only solution is the imposition of an inner discipline. Finally, they are all dissatisfied with existing standards of values.

98 Ibid., p. 11.

One striking fact about these critics is that their philosophy is definitely Humanist rather than religious. Instead of finding a center for their thinking in the fact of God, they put all their trust in the native power of man. They believe that man has the power to order his affairs without consciously looking upward to a supra-human region for inspiration. Consequently, they are forced to make a substitute and the Humanists have chosen to rely on reason, ethics and art. They believe that if people can "be induced to exercise their reason in a proper fashion, to respect the moral law, and to respond to the elevating influence of art, then we may perhaps one day enjoy the privilege of living in a harmonious and stable type of society."[99] If not, the cause will be lost, since there is nothing else upon which we can depend.

This, then, is a sketchy outline of the philosophy of the Humanists. It will, I think, serve to explain more fully the anti-Romantic attitude of these critics. We will now examine some of the criticism of these writers as it applies to Romanticism in the nineteenth century.

Of course, not all of the modern critics are Humanists, and the views of some of these writers will also be noted. Mr. Hyde is a representative of this group which rejects the tenets of Humanism. He takes the Humanists to task on the grounds that they erect too sharp a barrier between the moral and natural elements in man, and because they are too anti-religious. One representative of the Humanist point of view is Mr. Irving Babbit, whose book Rousseau and Romanticism, Mr. Hyde uses to illustrate the Humanist philosophy. In this book, Mr. Babbit comes out against any movement away from the egoistic self. He regards the inner light and the inner check as one and the same thing.

99 Ibid., p. 15.

Mr. Hyde maintains that, while the conscience usually admonishes one to abstain, it often impels one to go forth. He sees in Mr. Babbit's emphasis of the negative side of intuition, a deep-rooted fear of the emotions. "He has failed," says Mr. Hyde, "to attain to that deeper consciousness in which the head and the heart are one. And the result is that once he leaves the intellectual phase he has no center left from which to control his experience."[100] Therein lies the key to Mr. Babbit's philosophy. He refuses to meet the obligation we all face of putting faith in a wisdom "which is only to be acquired at the cost of transcending that plane on which the intellectualistic self is supreme."[101]

Mr. Babbit's attitude towards illusion is illustrative of this point of view. Illusion he regards as both feminine and romantic. Spontaniety confuses him because it does not belong to a world of clear definition. Says Mr. Hyde, "that which eludes classification and description and can only be apprehended by the imagination belongs for him to the realm of illusion."[102]

The most decisive indication of Mr. Babbit's fear of the emotions is found in his treatment of the Romantic problem. His analysis of the weaknesses of the Romantics, the egoism, the naturalistic self-indulgence, and the pseudo-idealism is outstanding in the field of criticism. However, he has failed to understand the deeper significance of the movement.

There are, according to Mr. Hyde, two sides to the Romantic Movement. On one side, the Romantics sought for unity, exhibited a nostalgia for a mythical Greece or slipped away from life into an idealized

100 Ibid., p. 97.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., p. 98.

Middle Ages. From this point of view, the Romantics seem remarkably foolish. On the other hand, Romanticism does not always mean this escape from reality. It may also mean a distorted expression of the search for a deeper reality. Being mystically minded and intuitive, the Romantic is capable of conceiving a unity and beauty of life which ordinary man cannot. He cherishes an image of what might be, that is, he perceives the potential which is just as real as that which is manifest.

Being a seer however, makes the Romantic liable to be misunderstood. He has a tendency to generalize what is only true under certain conditions. "He idealizes human beings, maintaining in the face of all evidence that they are perennially what in actuality they are only capable of being for a season."[103] At the same time he is unable to bear the strain of holding in his mind both the ideal vision and the image of the actual. Thus, he takes flight. But, although he pursues mirages, it should be remembered that a mirage "is an illusory picture of something which is deeply and legitimately desired."[104] It is only those who are capable of realizing the sublime that can attain such emotional heights.

From Mr. Hyde's point of view, the most important element of the Romantic attitude is the sense of the unity which underlies the diversity of life. The basic force behind the Romantics is the urge to transcend the limits of personality. The Classic ideal is a world of justice, where every person respects the rights of every other person. But the Romantic, deeply moved by a sense of the Whole, demands more. "He

103 Ibid., p. 100.
104 Ibid.

is intuitively aware that in so far as we emphasize the separateness of our individualities at the expense of the unity which they together constitute, we cut ourselves off from the deeper levels of being."[105] For him, the Whole is the only true reality, and the individual is truly alive when he becomes one with the Whole. This is the reason for the Romantic's desire to blend his being mystically with that of his fellow man.

Now, one of the puzzling aspects of this tendency is the fact that the manifestation of it bears close resemblance to the manifestation of naturalistic expansion on a biological plane. The distinguishing difference is to be found in the diction and this can be recognized only by one whose consciousness is of the same order as that of the author. "It needs indeed, an exceptional delicacy of imagination to distinguish, on occasion, between fruits of Rousseauistic phantasy and those of a responsiveness to the true infinite. Yet the one represents a pathetic failure in adaptation; the other a vision of the highest possibilities before the race."[106]

It is on this point that Mr. Hyde is dissatisfied with Mr. Babbit's treatment of the Romantics. Though he insists on the importance of imagination, Mr. Babbit repeatedly demonstrates his insensitiveness to it. He is so concerned with his ideal of control that "he comes to regard every movement of expansive sympathy, on whatever level, with the most undisguised mistrust."[107] He views every manifestation of the Romantic impulses as the instinct to throw off not only the outer and artificial

105 Ibid., p. 102.
106 Ibid., p. 102.
107 Ibid., p. 103.

restraints, but all limitations. Thus, he puts Browning, Keats, Wordsworth and Rousseau all on the same plane because they were concerned with merging mystically into something beyond themselves, "a procedure which the Classical Humanist can only contemplate with the greatest misgivings."[108]

The second of the last three definitions which we will consider is that of F.L. Lucas. In his book, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, Mr. Lucas has given us another example of anti-Romantic criticism.

He begins his discussion by examining some of the better known definitions and giving his reaction to them.

Goethe's definition of Romanticism as disease and Classicism as health merely leaves Mr. Lucas with the loose ends of the problem. "For after all," he says, "is 'The Ancient Mariner' really diseased? Is Faust not Romantic?"[109] Likewise he cannot accept Stendhal's use of Romanticism as a synonym for up-to-date, since it leaves the language poorer, not us any wiser. He does not like the definition of Romanticsim as the opposite of Classicism because he believes that Classicism has more opposites than one. Nor can he agree with Victor Hugo that Romanticism is to be identified with the grotesque, since he can find nothing grotesque in Wordsworth's "Highland Maid" or in Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci." Heine saw Romanticism as a reawakening of the spirit of the Middle Ages and of Christianity, yet Mr. Lucas finds little that is Medieval in Werther, little that is religious in Byron.

Brunetiere viewed the Romantic movement as a blind wave of literary egotism. "But," counters Mr. Lucas, "is 'The Ancient Mariner,' that

108 Ibid.
109 F.L. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, p. 9.

invaluable example, egotistic?--is it not, on the contrary, a sermon against egotism?"[110] Another definition of the Romantic revolt sees it as emotion opposed to reason. But, Mr. Lucas cites Scott as a monument to sanity, honesty and self-control in the nineteenth century, and Johnson, who could not face the ending of King Lear, as an example of eighteenth century emotionalism.

Other definitions concern the general atmosphere of Romanticism. Pater's the addition of strangeness to beauty Mr. Lucas finds inadequate because Romanticism often aimed at the terrible or the grotesque. Watts-Dunton's "The Renascence of Wonder," in which mystery and aspiration play a large part, Mr. Lucas also finds inadequate since he feels that there is little mystery and often little aspiration in writers like Byron and Burns. Professor Abercrombie's definition of Romanticism as the opposite of realism Mr. Lucas finds some truth in, but he also believes that it tends to exaggerate and omit. Mr. Lucas finds much that is realistic in the low life of Scott's novels and in Keats "The Eve of St. Agnes." In fact, the Romantics pursued violent feelings which they found in crude reality as well as in dreams.

Thus, it is evident that there still is no agreement on the nature of Romanticism. The first thing that Mr. Lucas attempts is to find the origin of the two words, Classic and Romantic. Romantic has its roots in Latin. There developed, in the Roman Empire, a barbarized vernacular called lingua Romanicus. Its adverb Romanice has given us the word romance. This term was first applied to the old French vernacular, fictitious stories in verse and prose. In the seventeenth century, from

110 Ibid., p. 11.

its fictitious meaning, romance came to mean fable. Today, romantic is used to indicate the false or the strange and dream-like. This, then, is the history of the word Romantic. Classic has had a somewhat different development. In Latin, classis originally meant a host. Under the Empire, classicus was used to distinguish a first-class writer from one of the proletarius. During the Renaissance, when standard Greek and Latin writers were read in class at school, the idea developed of classic as meaning any Greek or Roman writer. Thus, classical means standard, that is anything which conforms to the standards of classical antiquity.

Romantic has two usages. First, it is used in a historic sense to designate a literary movement. Second, it is used to denote a feeling which we get from such things as "La Belle Dame sans Merci," or "The Ancient Mariner." In order to discover the nature of the latter, Mr. Lucas employs a bit of free association to determine the qualities which Romance calls to mind. These he discovers to be "Remoteness, the sad delight of desolation, silence and the supernatural, winter and dreariness; vamperine love and stolen trysts, the flowering of passion and the death of beauty; Radcliffe horrors and sadistic cruelty, disillusion, death, and madness; the Holy Grail and battles on the Border; the love of the impossible."[111]

Mr. Lucas repeats the same experiment with the terms Classicism and Classical. The qualities these terms call to mind he finds are, "Grace, self-knowledge, self-control; the sense of form, the easy wearing of the chains of art hidden under flowers, as with some sculptured group that fills with life and litheness its straitened prison in the triangle of

111 Ibid., p. 25.

a pediment; idealism steadied by an unfaltering sense of reality; the lamp and midnight-oil, rather than wine-cup."[112] This seems to indicate a simple antithesis between reason and emotion. However, the human mind is more complex than that. There are psychological differences behind the association of these two words.

There are three conflicting forces in man, which it is the task of life to reconcile. First, the instinctive impulses; second, the influences of other human beings by which certain ideals of behavior are built up in him. "Thirdly, his intelligence presents him a shadow-show of what he calls reality."[113] Freud has designated these three forces which work upon the ego as the "Id", the "super-ego", and the "reality-principle".

These forces act upon the ego in this manner. The instinctive "Id" motivates the ego to gain some desired object. If the object is unattainable, the reality-principle tells the ego it cannot be obtained. If it is forbidden, the super ego tells the ego that the act of obtaining is not condoned. Thus, the ego is torn between a triangle of forces. Of course, it has the power to repress certain impulses that are too difficult to meet, but these go on writhing in the unconscious.

It seems, then, that a great deal goes on under the surface of the consciousness. And these ideals and impulses, held under the consciousness, seem to be released into our dreams. Here they are expressed in two ways: first, normally conscious impulses seem to create imaginary situations which allow the dreamer to go on sleeping; second, the dream may appear in disguise which may require analysis to reveal the impulse

112 Ibid., p. 28.
113 Ibid., p. 29.

beneath. Mr. Lucas maintains that the lives of men and their art depend, "on how strict and oppressive, or relaxed and easy going, are their sense of reality and their sense of the ideal, their consciousness and their conscience."[114] Different periods vary in this, and it is important because there appears to be something common between all artistic creation and dreaming. Dreaming formed the setting for much of Medieval poetry and many other poets down through the ages such as, Crabbe, Stevenson, Coleridge, Pope and Dryden have exhibited or admitted the fact that dreams played a great part in their creations. "So considered, the differences between Classicism, Romanticism, and Realism turn out, I think, to be differences mainly of degree; depending on the strictness with which, if we may call them so, the reality and the super-ego control and censor such emanations from the unconscious mind."[115] The Realist sacrifices everything to his sense of reality. The Classicist cultivates certain forms of unreality as good taste, but they are dominated by a social ideal of a civilized class. On the other hand, the Romantic "has no such qualms of pedantic honesty."[116] For example, in defiance of Astronomy, some Romantics can hardly admit a night without a moon. The Romantic, then, is a dreamer. He can be vividly realistic or sometimes ruled by a social ideal of conduct, but essentially he is a dreamer who believes in allowing his impulses and ideals full rein. Romanticism is like intoxication, "though there are varying degrees of it, just as there are day-dreams, night-dreams, nightmares, drink-dreams, and drug-dreams."[117] Mr. Lucas attempts a concise

114 Ibid., p. 31.
115 Ibid., p. 35.
116 Ibid., p. 36.
117 Ibid.

definition of Romanticism in this manner: "Romantic literature is a dream-picture of life; providing sustenance and fulfillment for impulses cramped by society or reality."[118]

In contrast to the dreamy nature of the Romantics, the Classicists were wide awake and sober. They believed that things were what they were and that their consequences could not be changed. They could not see any reason, therefore, for wishing to deceive themselves. To this the Romantics answered that things as they were left so much to be desired. And so their solution was to take refuge in a dream world.

This began in England with Walpole's Castle of Otranto and Macpherson's Ossian. And, it was carried on by the Romantics of early nineteenth century England, Coleridge, Keats, De Quincey, Shelley, and Byron. Witness, for example, "Kubla Khan", and "The Ancient Mariner", or Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci", or De Quincey's opium reveries, or Byron's "Dream". All of these arose from dreams. "Romanticism, in a word," says Mr. Lucas, "was the Sleeping Beauty dreaming of the Fairy Prince; unfortunately the Fairy Prince is apt to lose his way; and the Sleeping Beauty may then console herself with other spirits that come, like the Arabian kind, out of bottles, but end all too unromantically in delirium tremens."[119]

The eighteenth century paid heed to two voices, one saying, "That is not intelligent", the other, "That is not done." "Romanticism," says Mr. Lucas, "seems to me, essentially; an attempt to drown these two voices and liberate the unconscious life from their tyrannical repressions."[120] In this sense, Romanticism is revolution and the views of the

118 Ibid., p. 35-36.
119 Ibid., p. 42.
120 Ibid.

writers of the period confirm this. The Romantics believed in inspiration. Witness Wordsworth's definition of poetry quoted previously. Burns admitted he could not write when he forced himself. Shakespeare never blotted a line and others like Scott and Byron, steadfastly refused to revise and polish their work. The Classicists sniffed at this idea. They held firmly to the belief that a man could write if he set himself to it. In short, the Romantics created in a semi-trance, and found it hard to combine with this the opposite mood of self-criticism.

These, then, are the qualities which Mr. Lucas attributes to Romanticism. In the light of these views he finds it possible to assemble the diverse theories examined previously into an intelligible whole.[121]

First, Romanticism is not a disease. "It is intoxicated dreaming." Such auto-intoxication, however, can become unhealthy. Secondly, Romanticism is not a simple revolt of Emotion and Imagination against Reason. The revolt against the sense of reality and the sense of society can be either passionate, or imaginative, or both. Thirdly, Romanticism, desiring to be free, throws off all rules, and thus becomes literary Protestantism, Libdralism, or rule of <u>laissez-faire</u>. Fourthly, the Middle Ages, by their qualities of mystery and remoteness, were the spiritual home of Romanticism, but theywere no essential part. Lastly, Romanticism was only partly opposed to Realism. Its true opposition was with the hackneyed and humdrum present. Snatches of realism are present in the work of the Romantics, for instance, in the language which Wordsworth proposed to use.

Other features of Romanticism arise from its relaxation of censorship over the Unconscious or the Preconscious. First, the symbolism

121 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 46.

employed in dreaming had the effect upon Romantic literature of enriching its imagery. The Romantics, weary of the worn metaphors and similes of the Classicists, produced a whole wealth of new images. Second, Romantic writers used language in a dreamy way. They gave the language vague overtones and new associations, which seem the antithesis of the bare, literal meaning on which the eighteenth century concentrated. Third, the Romantics used a meter designed to be an intoxicant. The aim of this meter was to drug the reader's sense of reality, heighten his power of suggestion and leave him in a dreamy trance. Fourth, in the choice of subject matter, the Romantics favored the remote, since remoteness is associated with dreaming, and also because remoteness makes it easier to dream by avoiding brute fact. It may be the remoteness of space or of time of of the undiscovered regions of the mind. "The Romantics found this terra-incognita of the soul their happy hunting ground."[122]

"These, then, seem to me the essential effects of the wine of Romanticism. Naturally they vary enormously with the strength of the dose. One glass will quicken a man's intelligence and observation; a dozen will undermine them. 'Dry light is best;' but too dry a life may not be—at least in matters of the imagination. The eighteenth century carried dryness to excess. The Romantic reaction was healthy; but, like most reaction, it became extravagant and so unhealthy in its turn. The Romantic writer, squeezing 'Joy's grape' against his palate, grows more eloquent, more magical in the music of phrase and imagery, more impressive in the frank intensity of his feeling and imagination, in the atmosphere that only passion can create. He can be a bewitching companion.

122 Ibid., p. 52.

But he loses more and more, as his intoxication increases, the balance, the proportion, the control, the power of the world; the quiet sympathy a writer needs in order to observe and delineate characters other than his own or shadows of his own--that exaggerated ego which in the Romantics often grows as bolated as an ant-queen among her crawling subjects; fertile, but grotesque. Such, for better and for worse, seem to me the symptoms of Romanticism, this dream-gift of Dionysus, who brings release for the soul in chains, but for those that follow him too far, new chains heavier still; who has wrecked life after life, and yet immeasurably enriched the world."[123]

We come now to the last of the critics to be considered in this study. This definition by Mr. Ernest Earnest can be classified as one of the appreciative criticisms of the Romantic Movement. I have included it in order to present a rounded picture of the question being considered.

The use of the term "Romantic" to describe a literary movement is unsatisfactory according to Mr. Earnest. The seventeenth and eighteenth century critics used it as a term of disapproval and even today it carries with it a sense of the foolish or the false. Even the term Romanticism, though it has fewer unpleasant connotations, still suffers from its association with "Romantic."

Definitions of this literary phenomenon are endless and they are so partly because of the varied nature of the materials commonly called Romantic. But Mr. Earnest distinguishes two groups in the Romantic period which he calls the "Miniver Cheevy School" and the "Intimations School."[124] The first group which includes such works as "Lochinvar,"

123 Ibid., p. 53-54.
124 Ernest Earnest, "Infinity in the Palm of your Hand," p. 548.

Ivanhoe, "The Bride of Abydos," and The Castle of Otranto, he so named because,

> Miniver sighed for what was not,
> And dreamed and rested from his labors;
> He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
> And Priam's neighbors.125

The type of literature represented by this school was reactionary. It was the literature of escape and such critics as Irving Babbit, F.L. Lucas, and H.G. Wells, regard it as the central theme of the Romantic Movement. However, Mr. Earnest believes that the more important Romantic writers were not trying to escape from reality, but instead were searching for that very thing. They objected to the preceding age on the grounds that its poetry was artificial and unreal, and that its verse style and its intellectual and emotional horizons were limited. For example, Coleridge thought that the writers who preceded Wordsworth exhibited a falsity in poetic style. And Wordsworth thought that these poets had used a language which did not resemble the real language used by men. In fact, the basis for his discussion on the proper language for poetry is the need for greater accuracy of expression. One cannot call his striving for the language actually used by men in the search for a dream world.

To demonstrate that the Romantics were more interested in truth than beauty, it is only necessary to quote from the "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads," often regarded as the Romantic declaration of independence. "The powers requisite for the production of poetry are; first those of Observation and Description, - i.e., the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to

125 E.A. Robinson, "Miniver Cheevy," ll 9-12, as quoted by Earnest, p. 348

describe them unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer."[126] Professor Lowes in The Road to Xanadu has shown the factual quality of descriptions in "The Ancient Mariner," and Shelley constantly searched for a scientific basis for his philosophy. Thus, we can see that some of the chief Romantics were as interested in the actual as they were in the wonderful.

Some critics have also charged that Romanticism meant disapproval of contemporary interests. This is easily disproved. Blake was a friend of Tom Paine, and saved him from hanging for treason; Keats was a friend of Leigh Hunt, for a time a political prisoner; Shelley had to leave Ireland because of his agitation for liberation there; and Byron was killed in a Greek war for independence. Every one was deeply interested in political thought, and if they were dreamers they did not use their dreams to escape from reality.

The reason for the misunderstanding of the Romantic view of life, for the critics' lumping together the Miniver Cheevy and Intimations schools when the poets distinguished between them, lies in the temper of the present age. This era recognizes inductive reasoning from objective data as the only approach to truth while the Romantics used a different method. They spoke from within, regarding the fact as part of themselves and therein Mr. Earnest finds the common element linking all Romantic poetry. While the rationalist understood only the world of concrete measurement, the Romantic used intuition as the approach to truth. And today, in our more or less rational world, this type of approach is suspect.

126 W. Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads," Complete Works of William Wordsworth, p. 878, as quoted by Earnest, p. 349.

Blake is one of the Romantics who had visions of truth. His world was that of imagination and, though not opposed to the intellect, he thought it saw things as separate entities, while the imagination perceived the unity of the universe. The sense of immediate perception of truth is found throughout Romantic poetry. One form is the mystic's belief that he has communed with the divine principle of the universe. One example is "Tintern Abbey" where Wordsworth tells of

> 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 the human blood
> 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. 127

Here Wordsworth shows that he believed that he had perceived reality directly. He was looking for a working philosophy of life and he found, or thought he found, anunderstanding of the unifying principle of the universe. This was the aim of Romantic literature, and Shelley, who had sensed this same unifying principle, thought the purpose of poetry was to express it. Thus, rather than being a fashion of the day, Romanticism was an attempt to meet the problems of life.

It is easy to illustrate how the Romantics came upon this concept of unity. It was, as has been stated, an intuituve rather than a rational experience. The intellectualization of the experience came afterwards. But the intuitive experience required certain conditions. Two things seem to be essential, a solitude for musing and an aesthetic experience. Wordsworth found his solitude and experience along the river Wye, Coler-

127 William Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey," ll 41-49, as quoted by Earnest, p. 354.

idge on a frosty midnight "when the world was"

> ...so calm, that it disturbs
> And vexes meditation with its strange
> And extreme silentness. 128

Shelley, who had searched ruins for the solution to the riddle of life, found it

> When musing deeply on the lot of life, at the
> Sweet time when winds are wooing
> All vital things that wake to bring
> News of birds and blossoming, --
> Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
> I shrieked and clasped my hands in ecstasy. 129

Wordsworth had a similar experience when walking home late one night.

> I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated spirit. 130

Such experience however, can be explained in terms other than those of mysticism. Keats experienced such ecstasies, when the imagination seemed to discover the truth, even though he did not believe in divine or supernatural visions.

The difference between the Romantic intuition and religious mysticism lies in two things. First, there is no preparatory ritual in using the intuition, and second, ecstasy is reached by means of an aesthetic experience, not by ascetic means. Rather than denying or conquering the body to live in the spirit, the Romantics found bodily enjoyment necessary to the full development of the intellect and the imagination.

128 Samuel Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight," ll 8-11, as quoted by Earnest, p. 356.

129 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," ll 55-61, as quoted by Earnest, p. 356.

130 William Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book IV, ll 334-37.

This intuitive approach to reality was important in the great Romantic poets, but it has been neglected in our age because the achievements of rationalistic science have caused us to abandon other approaches to truth. Also, it may be that our industrial world provides fewer aesthetic experiences and less solitude than that of the early nineteenth century.

In concluding his article, Mr. Earnest defines the Romantic temper as "a sense of the mystery of the universe and the perception of its beauty through intuition or imagination."[131]

In conclusion, then, let us review the definitions we have examined and attempt to discover the pattern which they make.

The Romanticists of the early nineteenth century were concerned with three problems: the nature of poetry, the method of evaluating the works of Shakespeare, and the problem of correctness in poetry. To the first they answered that poetry was the means of expressing emotion and of interpreting experience. It was, for them, an imitation of nature, shaped and formed by the most important poetic faculty, the imagination. The second question they answered by concluding that Shakespeare's art was organic, that the laws governing an organism are inherent, and therefore, that Shakespeare was a law unto himself. Finally, by correctness in art, the Romantics understood the right to disregard arbitrary rules and to base their principles in truth and human nature.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, there grew up a threat to Romanticism. Based upon a misunderstanding of Darwin's theories, the new philosophy held that the universe showed no evidence of design. It

131 Ernest Earnest, "Infinity in the Palm of Your Hand," p. 359.

was the result of a growing materialistic philosophy and as such, it eclipsed Romanticism for a number of years.

Near the end of the nineteenth century there began an attempt to rehabilitate the reputation of Romanticism. Pater maintained that Romanticism is strangeness added to beauty and he was one of the first to insist that Romanticism was not the antithesis of classicism, but really a principle in artistic temperament which is to be found in all literature. William Lyon Phelps follows Pater in this view.

Around the turn of the century, Mr. C.H. Herford developed the concept of Romanticism as the development of the imaginative sensibility. This sensibility, acting upon the world of sense and thought, called forth a new response from man, and hence, the essence of Romanticism is found, for Mr. Herford, in its speculative elements.

We have, in Mr. H.A. Beers' definition, a somewhat narrow reaction to Romanticism. He limits his concept strictly to the return to the Middle Ages. And he cites sufficient evidence to back up his assertions, providing one neglects, as he does, a considerable segment of early nineteenth century English poetry.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the reputation of Romanticism continued to climb, due to a recognition by scientists and philosophers that there are certain limitations to the attainments of scientific method. Mr. W.A. Neilson's definition of Romanticism as the predominance of imagination over reason and the sense of fact is a product of this period.

There is, however, another development paralleling this favorable view of Romanticism. It is that of the anti-Romantic school of criticism. This school, represented by Paul Elmer More and others, views

Romanticism as the expression of a morbid egotism, brought about by an intensely felt personality and the idea of infinity as the escape from all limitations. They regard it as a corruptive agent, and something to be avoided at all cost.

Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie has taken a different approach to the subject. He has attempted to show that Romanticism is not the antithesis of Classicism, but of Realism. He has demonstrated that Romanticism is a withdrawing from actual life, to an inner world in which a higher reality is realized.

Likewise, Mr. F.E. Pierce has chosen a different approach by dividing Romanticism into four tendencies, two good and two bad. The two good he labels the Mystical-Ethical and the Exploratory tendencies. The two bad he names the Sentimental and the Cult of Beauty. This is a more or less middle-ground definition, an attempt to understand Romanticism rather than to criticize it.

The definition of Romanticism by Mr. Cazamian is an attempt to understand the phenomenon by means of psychology, Considering Romanticism as the predominance of emotional life, Mr. Cazamian distinguishes two generations of Romantics. Both of these generations, he shows, were products of an emotional reaction to the social and political environment of the early nineteenth century.

Mr. Lawrence Hyde, it has been shown, is an anti-, anti-Romantic. He castigates the Humanists for taking what he considers to be a narrow view of Romanticism. He defines Romanticism as the sense of the unity which underlies the diversity of life. To the Humanist contention that Romanticism is escape from reality, he opposes his belief that Romanticism was a search for the Whole which is the only reality.

Mr. F.L. Lucas, an anti-Romantic, defines Romanticism as a relaxation of censorship over the unconscious mind. He characterizes it as auto-intoxication - healthy if kept within bounds, corruptive and destructive if allowed to get out of hand.

Finally, Mr. Ernest Earnest distinguishes two schools of Romanticism. One school he defines as that which produced mainly the literature of escape. The other he describes as that which employed intuition to perceive reality directly. This latter he understands to be the true Romanticism.

The pattern, then, which Romantic criticism has taken is this: First, the Romantics of the early nineteenth century were occupied with establishing and developing novel, but not new, doctrines of art. With the rise of materialism, Romanticism lost favor. By the turn of the century, progress in knowledge re-established the reputation of Romanticism. This re-establishment took the form of defining Romanticism according to thought and feeling, or subject matter, or according to psychology. Paralleling this favorable development were the unfavorable tenets of the anti-Romantic Humanists. And, finally, in the last decade or so, there has been a renewed attempt to re-establish the appreciation of Romanticism.

What the future holds for Romanticism is hard to predict. Its reputation is apparently closely tied to the circumstances of the times. It is evident, however, that at the present there is a fuller and deeper critical appreciation of Romanticism than ever before.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL

Bateson, Frederick W., Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. New York: Cambridge U.P., 1941.

Bernbaum, Ernest. Guide Through the Romantic Movement. New York: Ronald Press, 1949.

Cambridge History of English Literature. ed. A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller, New York: Ptunam, 1907-1917.

BACKGROUND

Bernbaum, Ernest. Guide Through the Romantic Movement. New York: Ronald Press, 1949.

Courthope, W.J.. A History of English Poetry. New York: Macmillan, 1926.

Lovejoy, A.O.. "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," PMLA, XXXIX, 229, 1924.

Saintsbury, George. A History of Nineteenth Century Literature. New York: Macmillan, 1896.

BOOKS

Abercrombie, Lascelles. Romanticism. New York: Viking Press, 1927.

Alden, Raymond. Critical Essays of the Early Nineteenth Century. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.

Babbit, Irving. Rousseau and Romanticism. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1919.

--. On Being Creative and Other Essays. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1932.

Beers, Henry A.. A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Henry Holt, 1918.

Brooks, Cleanth. Modern Poetry and the Tradition. Chapel Hill: North Carolina U.P., 1939.

Buck, Philo, M. Jr.. Literary Criticism: A Study of Values in Literature. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930.

Cabell, James Branch. Beyond Life. New York: McBride, 1921.

Eliot, T.S.. The Sacred Wood. London: Methuen and Co., 1932.

—. The Use of Poetry and Criticism. Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1933.

Empson, William. Seven Types of Ambiguity. London: Chatto and Windus, 1930.

Grierson, H.J.C.. The Background of English Literature. London: Chatto and Windus, 1925.

Herford, C.H.. The Age of Wordsworth. London: George Bell, 1899.

—. "Romanticism in the Modern World," English Association Essays and Studies. VIII, 109; 1922.

Hyde, Lawrence. The Prospects of Humanism. Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1926.

Knight, G. Wilson. The Starlit Dome: Studies in the Poetry of Vision. London: Oxford U.P., 1941.

Lucas, F.L.. The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal. New York: Macmillan, 1937.

More, Paul Elmer. The Drift of Romanticism. Shelburne Essays, Eighth Series, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1913.

Neilson, William A.. Essentials of Poetry. Lowell Lectures, 1911, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912.

Pater, Walter. Appreciations With An Essay On Style. Fourth Thousand, London: Macmillan, 1890.

Phelps, William Lyon. The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement. Boston: Ginn, 1893

Legouis, Emile, and Cazamian, Louis. A History of English Literature. trans. by Helen D. Irvine, W.D. Mac Innes and Louis Cazamian, New Edition, New York: Macmillan, 1929.

Richards, I.A.. Principles of Literary Criticism. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928.

Smith, Logan Pearsall. Four Words: Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1925.

Symons, Arthus. The Romantic Movement in English Poetry. New York: Dutton, 1909.

Tate, Allen, ed. The Language of Poetry. Princeton U.P., 1942.

ARTICLES

Ash, David. "Creative Romanticism," CE. IV, 100; 1942.

Bernbaum, Ernest. "The Practical Results of the Humanistic Theories," EJ. XX, 103; 1931.

Earnest, Ernest. "Infinity in the Palm of Your Hand, A Study of the Romantic Temper," CE. II, 347; 1941.

Kaufman, Paul. "Defining Romanticism," MLN. XL, April, 1925.

Weisinger, Herbert. "English Treatment of the Classical-Romantic Problem," MLQ. VII, 477; 1946.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Coleridge, Samuel T.. The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. ed. W.G.T. Shedd, New York: Harper and Brothers, Vol. III, 1884.

De Quincey, Thomas. The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey. ed. David Masson, London: A.C. Black, Vols. X-XI, 1897.

Hazlitt, William. The Complete Works of William Hazlitt. ed. P.P. Howe, London: J.M. Dent, Vol. V, 1930.

Hunt, Liegh. Imagination and Fancy. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1844.

Lamb, Charles. The Collected Works of Charles Lamb. ed. Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, Philadelphia: Parry and Macmillan, 1859.

Macualay, Thomas Babington. Miscellaneous Works of Lord Macaulay. ed. Lady Trevellyan, New York: Harper and Brothers, Vol. I, 1880.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. ed. Roger Ingpen and W.E. Peck, New York: Scribner's, Vol. VII, 1930.

Wordsworth, William. Wordsworth's Prefaces and Essays on Poetry. ed. A.J. George, Boston: D.C. Heath, 1892.