

Degree - 1  
English (Hons.)  
Paper 1

## Romanticism

(Lecture - 2)

### Major Poets of the Romantic Age

Romantic Poets are divided into two major groups i.e., First Generation Romantics and Second Generation Romantics

#### First Generation Romantics Poets

The first generation's writings were inspired by the Battle of Bastille and the French Revolution. They wrote at a time of revolutionary favour. The main poets belonging to this generation were William Blake, William, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Robert Southey.

#### William Blake (1757-1827)

He was an outstanding poet of early romantic era. He played a tremendous role in the development of romantic poetry. Blake's first printed work, *Poetical Sketches* (1783), is a collection of apprentice verse, mostly imitating classical models. The poems protest against war, tyranny and King George III's treatment of American colonies.

In 1787 Blake produced *Songs of Innocence* (1789) as the first major work in his new

process, followed by Songs of Experience (1794). The magnificent lyrics in these two collections carefully compare the openness of innocence with the bitterness of experience. They are a milestone because they are a rare instance of the successful union of two art forms by one man.

Works such as The French Revolution (1791), America, a Prophecy (1793), Vision of the Daughters of Albion (1793) and Europe, a Prophecy (1794) express his opposition to the English monarchy and to 18th century political and social tyranny in general. Theological tyranny is the subject of The Book of Urizen (1794). In the prose work The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790-93), he satirised oppressive authority in Church and State.

Among his best lyrics today are The Lamb, The Tyger and London.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) is a great nature poet and living philosopher in the arena of English poetry in the History of English language. Wordsworth is a true nature poet. He is known as a priest and a great worshipper of nature. He made his debut as a writer in 1787, when he published a sonnet in The European Magazine.

Wordsworth was reunited with his sister Dorothy in 1794. He moved with his sister to Racedown Lodge on the Devon/Somerset border and it was here that he met the poet St. Coleridge and moved closer to Coleridge at Alfoxden House where they collaborated on and published Lyrical Ballads (1798), which began

with Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and ended with Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". Around 1798, Wordsworth began writing a large and philosophical autobiographical poem, completed in 1805 and published posthumously in 1850 under the title *The Prelude*.

His other collections are *Poems in Two Volumes*, which include the poems: *Ode to Duty*, *Resolution and Independence* and *Intimation of Immortality*; *The Excursion* and *Ladnamia*. In 1843, Wordsworth succeeded Robert Southey (1774-1843) as England's poet laureate. ~~He~~ Wordsworth died in 1850 and was buried in Gramere Churchyard.