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英国浪漫主义 文学选读

ENGLISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE:
A READER

■ 蒋显璟 主 编



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蒋显璟 主编

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序 言

英国浪漫主义是发端于18世纪末，终结于19世纪30年代的一场文学运动。学界通常把华兹华斯在1798年发表的《抒情歌谣集序言》看作其滥觞，它的产生与当时欧洲的意识形态巨变是密不可分的。这种巨变被美国大批评家亚伯拉姆斯（M. H. Abrams）称作“时代精神”。

那么这种“时代精神”（德语为 *Zeitgeist*）究竟是什么呢？在很大程度上，它就是法国大革命及其背后一系列启蒙主义思想家，如伏尔泰、卢梭、狄德罗等为反对蒙昧的宗教迷信、腐朽的教会和专制的旧制度（法语为 *ancien régime*）在他们的诸多著述和言论中所表达的当时最先进的人类思想。

正如雷蒙·威廉斯（Raymond Williams）在《文化与社会》一书中所说的那样：“浪漫主义是遍及全欧洲的一场运动，把此时兴起的新观念与欧洲的整个思想体系放在一起讨论，是完全行得通的。”^①

亚伯拉姆斯的《自然的超自然主义》（1971）一书，就是把英国浪漫主义与欧洲当时的哲学思想体系联系起来探索的学术巨著，至今仍有极为珍贵的参考价值。

曾有一种流行的看法，认为浪漫主义是向中世纪的怀旧复古倾斜，比如海涅曾给德国的浪漫主义下过这样的定义：“德国浪漫派不是别的，就是中世纪诗情的复活。”^② 这种认为浪漫主义是复古情调的看法，显然并不适用于英国浪漫主义。艾登·戴伊（Aidan Day）在《浪漫主义》一书中也持相似观点。他认为，把德国浪漫主义看作对启蒙运动的理性主义和唯物主义倾向和针对法国革命的反动，这倒更为合适。

相反，英国浪漫主义的大多数作家都曾经或一直积极关注时政，民生和国家大事。浪漫主义并非多愁善感的“遁世文学”。（当然，有些次要诗人或早夭诗人也写过一些复古怀旧的作品，如托马斯·查特顿（Thomas Chatterton），但他们并非英国浪漫主义的主流。）

如果说英国浪漫主义有什么自己独特的表征的话，编者以为，首先进入人们头脑的就是它对人类精神的肯定。这是与英国17、18世纪的经验主义哲学和实用主义哲学针锋相对的，是对物质主义和机械论的抵制。而在浪漫主义诗人看来，人类精神中最高尚的不是理性，而是想象。布莱克曾断言：“想象的世界即永恒的世界。”济慈也说：“我唯独确定的就是心灵感情的神圣和想象的真实。”（I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections, and the truth of imagination.）

其次，英国浪漫主义与当时的激进主义（radicalism）也有很密切的联系。布莱克与

① 雷蒙德·威廉斯，《文化与社会》，高晓玲译，吉林出版集团，2011年，第46页。

② 海涅，《浪漫派》，薛华译，中国法制出版社，2010年，第7页。

托马斯·潘恩(Thomas Paine)私交甚密,都对英国当时腐朽的国教安立甘教派深恶痛绝,还暗中给潘恩通风报信,使他及时逃离了英国警察的追捕。拜伦曾投笔从戎,毁家纾难,帮助希腊人民推翻奥托曼帝国对这块西方文明源头国度的野蛮统治。他写的《哀希腊》一诗成为脍炙人口的名篇。雪莱尤其崇信《政治正义论》的作者威廉·葛德文(William Godwin)的学说,甚至成为他的女婿。早在他牛津求学的少年时期,雪莱就公开发表了《无神论的必要性》小册子,并拒绝学校当局要求他撤回自己观点的命令,因此被开除学籍。

英国浪漫主义作家都深受《圣经·新约》中《启示录》的影响,把当时欧洲大陆的革命巨变看作世界末日的预兆和一个新世界来临之前的阵痛。例如,当时的激进派哲学家、科学家约瑟夫·普利斯特利(Joseph Priestley)在1791年发表了他回复柏克《反思法国大革命》的书信,宣称美国革命与法国革命是两千年前被预言的普世幸福与太平的开端。华兹华斯在其代表性长诗《序曲》中曾如此赞叹道:“在那破晓时分活着就是至福,而年轻时代就是天堂!”(Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!)诗中的“破晓时分”指的就是法国革命后新时代的降临,而华兹华斯当时正是在法国求学的年轻学子。

亚伯拉姆斯(Abrams)在其名著《镜与灯》中把浪漫主义界定为“表现说”,与新古典主义的“模仿说”相抵牾。书名中的“镜”象征着模仿说,而“灯”则象征着表现说。对这种表现说最好的解释,莫过于赛亚·柏林的话:“对于浪漫主义者而言,活着就是要有所为,而有所为就是表达自己的天性,表达人的天性就是表达人与世界的关系。”^①因此,作者的自我主体性得到充分的张扬,而社会陈规旧俗对个人的约束与作者表现自我的迫切需求,这两者间的张力就成了浪漫主义时期文学的一大特征。

英国浪漫主义作家对自然的崇拜与热爱,早已被诸多评家论述过了。华兹华斯对英国湖畔风景的描述脍炙人口,并且促使国内有些研究者把他的诗歌与陶渊明的山水诗作比较。但是我们必须注意,浪漫派的自然诗是深受宗教的影响的,自然并非僵死的物质,可供人类去贪婪开发获利,而是有着泛神论意义的、能与人类有心灵交流的一种中介,它是一种积极的“能指”,以具体的意象把诗人的观照引向那超验的、玄学意义上的“所指”。近年来生态批评也从新的人与自然和谐共存的角度去研读浪漫主义的诗歌,取得了一些可喜的进展。

由于篇幅所限,关于英国浪漫主义典型特征的论述不能充分展开,希望读者在读完了本书中的选篇后自己再去独立探索。

文学史上通行的做法,就是把英国浪漫主义分为老一辈作家,即所谓的前浪漫主义诗人威廉·布莱克和“湖畔派诗人”威廉·华兹华斯、S. T. 柯尔律治和骚塞,和“年轻一代的浪漫派诗人”拜伦勋爵、雪莱和济慈。另外,比较著名的浪漫主义散文作家也有诸如查尔斯·兰姆、威廉·黑兹利特等。近年来,西方学界比较注意发掘被湮没的女性浪漫主义作家,如本书所收录的安娜·莱蒂茜娅·巴博尔德、夏绿蒂·斯密和玛丽·罗宾逊等。

当前国内英国文学的教材数量甚多,但专门针对英国浪漫主义时期的教材则不多

① 以赛亚·柏林,《浪漫主义的根源》,译林出版社,2008,第107页。



序 言

见。这本教材就是针对这种需求而编写的。本书中所选的材料均为课堂上反复教过多轮的，并且为了方便读者，添加了详细的注释。本教材中的文本均选自国外权威版本，注释也参照了多本国外教材，希望对读者理解有所裨益。

在本书出版之际，编者首先要感谢自己的博士时期导师，北京大学英语系已故教授赵萝蕤先生。是她激发了我对文学的热爱，教导我求真务实的科研与教学态度。其次要感谢对外经济贸易大学研究生院对本教材的出版资助和前期的项目资助，也感谢对外经济贸易大学出版社和英语学院为本教材出版提供的各种便利，最后要感谢编者教过的历届研究生，是他们在教学相长的过程中，使我了解学生的需求，因而使得本教材更贴近教学。

最后，编者祝愿读者在这喧嚣浮躁的时代能从这本小小的书中获取心灵的宁静和灵魂的慰藉。

编 者

2014 年于惠园“一统斋”

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Introduction

I

Romanticism refers to the profound shift in Western attitudes to art and human creativity that dominated much of European culture in the first half of the 19th century, and that has shaped most subsequent developments in literature—even those reacting against it, such as the opinions of T. S. Eliot and T. E. Hulme.

The task of providing a viable definition for the cultural and literary phenomenon called “Romanticism” has never been easy, as it is, the vexed question of what salient attributes constitute this literary phenomenon has been answered in a variety of ways by different literary critics in England and America, but no solution has been satisfactory to all subsequent critics and readers. Isaiah Berlin, in his lectures entitled “The Roots of Romanticism”, wisely evades the problem of generalizing or defining romanticism. He quotes Northrop Frye’s statement to the effect that any generalization on romanticism would be met with “countervailing evidence” from great writers of antiquity.^① On the contrary, he contents himself with only assessing the importance of this literary movement by stating that “the importance of romanticism is that it is the largest recent movement to transform the lives and the thought of the Western world.”^②

This critical opinion on the difficulty of defining romanticism is nothing new at all. As far back as the beginning of the 20th century, the American critic Arthur O. Lovejoy in a paper complained of the large variety of senses of this term, stating that “by itself it means nothing.”^③ Perhaps this difficulty proves the fact that in academic and intellectual matters, one should never be content with ready-made text-book answers but instead, should lean backwards to scrutinize the bewildering maze of romantic literature.

Originally, the term “romanticism” was unknown to the writers now we commonly include in this category of writing. As Aidan Day rightly points out in his book *Romanticism*: “Certainly those writers that are now thought of as part of a Romantic movement in Britain

① Berlin, Isaiah, *The Roots of Romanticism*, edited by Henry Hardy, Pimlico, 2000, p. 1.

② Ibid.

③ Quoted from Wellek, René, “The Concept of ‘Romanticism’ in Literary History. I. The Term ‘Romantic’ and Its Derivatives”, *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 1. No. 1 (Winter, 1949), p. 1.

never thought of themselves as such.”^① What is more, the adjective “romantic” had pejorative connotations: “when it first appeared, described... what were perceived as the fictions of the old tales, with their enchanted castles, magicians, ogres and their representation of inflated feelings and impossible passions.”^② Anyway, it was associated with the medieval chivalric romances as opposed to classical proprieties. To the mind of a contemporary individual, the term “romantic” was equated with “fanciful”, “light”, or even “inconsequential”.^③ Byron confessed his ignorance of the term in the following rejected *Dedication to Marino Falters*, dated 14 August 1820: “I perceive that in Germany as well as in Italy there is a great struggle about what they call ‘Classical and Romantic’ terms which were not subjects of Classification in England—at least when I left four or five years ago.”

In etymology, “romantic” was derived from the word “romance”, originally a descriptive term, referring to the verse epics of Tasso and Ariosto.^④ Subsequently, the term was applied to fiction, often European in origin. The idea was popularized in a lecture course delivered by August Wilhelm Schlegel at Berlin, 1801–1804, in which he made the “classical and romantic” distinction mentioned by Byron. Schlegel held that romantic literature first came into being in the Middle Ages, and found expression in the work of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. He saw romanticism as a reaction to classicism and identified progressive and Christian views in this movement. Schlegel anticipated some 20th-century critics of romanticism in his discovery that romanticism was “organic” and “plastic” in opposition to the “mechanical” tendencies of classicism.^⑤ He further stated that “there is in man a terrible unsatisfied desire to soar into infinity, a feverish longing to break through the narrow bonds of individuality.”^⑥ Schlegel thus defined romanticism as “literature depicting emotional matter in an imaginative form.” The French romantic writer Victor Hugo’s phrase “liberalism in literature” is also apt. “Imagination, emotion, and freedom are certainly the focal points of romanticism. Any list of

① Day, Aidan, *Romanticism*, Routledge, 1996. p. 84.

② Ibid., p. 79.

③ Wu, Duncan ed., *A Companion to Romanticism*, Oxford, 1998, p. 5.

④ Torquato Tasso: (born March 11, 1544, Sorrento, Kingdom of Naples — died April 25, 1595, Rome) Italian poet. The son of a poet and courtier, Tasso became a courtier of Duke Alfonso II d'Este at Ferrara. In a period of intense poetic activity he produced the pastoral drama *L'Aminta* (1581; performed 1573), a lyrical idealization of court life. In 1575 he completed his celebrated masterpiece on the First Crusade, *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581; *Jerusalem Delivered*), a heroic epic in ottava rima that blends historical events with imaginary romantic and idyllic episodes. He developed a persecution mania and from 1579 to 1586 was incarcerated in a hospital by order of the duke. *Gerusalemme* was translated and imitated in many European languages, and Tasso was the subject of literary legend for centuries. He is regarded as the greatest Italian poet of the late Renaissance. / Ludovico Ariosto: (born Sept. 8, 1474, Reggio Emilia, duchy of Modena [Italy]—died July 6, 1533, Ferrara) Italian poet. His epic poem *Orlando Furioso* (1516) is regarded as the finest literary expression of the Italian Renaissance. It enjoyed immediate popularity throughout Europe and was highly influential. He also wrote five comedies based on Latin classics but inspired by contemporary life; though minor in themselves, they are among the first of the imitations of Latin comedy in the vernacular that would long characterize European comedy. He also composed seven satires (1517–1525) modeled after those of Horace. (Source: *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*)

⑤ Cf. Abrams, M. H. *The Mirror and the Lamp, Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, Oxford University Press, 1953.

⑥ Berlin, Isaiah, *The Roots of Romanticism*, edited by Henry Hardy, Pimlico, 2000, p. 15.



particular characteristics of the literature of romanticism includes subjectivity and an emphasis on individualism; spontaneity; freedom from rules; solitary life rather than life in society; the beliefs that imagination is superior to reason and devotion to beauty; love of and worship of nature; and fascination with the past, especially the myths and mysticism of the middle ages.”^① The great American literary critic M. H. Abrams, in his much celebrated handbook “A Glossary of Literary Terms”, identifies five salient characteristics of romanticism: 1) “the prevailing attitude favored innovation over traditionalism in the materials, forms, and style of literature.” Abrams sets forth the new poetic theory advanced by William Wordsworth in his groundbreaking preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, hailing it as a poetic ‘manifesto’ for the emerging school of poetry in England. Abrams points out Wordsworth’s innovations in his poetic practice, such as his rejection of the “upper-class subjects and the poetic diction” of the 18th century, and his choice of “common life” and the vernacular language spoken by rustics as “language really used by men”. 2) the romantic preference for the poet’s own genuine emotions as the essential subject of poetry over “the artful manipulation of means to foreseen ends”, as stipulated by the neoclassic critics such as Alexander Pope. Romantic poets see the process of composing poetry as the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” rather than slavish imitation of ancient precepts. 3) the romantic cult of nature as the fit subject of poetry. Although acknowledging the importance of nature “the landscape, together with its flora and fauna”, Abrams warns against mistaking the romantic poets for “nature poets”, as their chief interest was not in describing nature for nature’s sake, but in using the landscape as a stimulus for meditation on “central human experiences and problems”, in what Harold Bloom called the “internalization of the quest romance”. 4) The majority of romantic poets engage in describing themselves in their poetry. This persona is not set in the organized society as its members, but “as solitary figures engaged in a long, and sometimes infinitely elusive, quest”, often as “social nonconformists our outcasts”. The Byronic hero and Prometheus are typical examples of such figures. 5) Many romantic writers echoed the poetical liberals in seeing the French Revolution, with its “infinite social promise”, as heralding the apocalyptic new beginnings and high possibilities of humanity.

Known as the Romantic Movement or Romantic Revival, romanticism in its most coherent early form emerged in the 1790s in Germany and Britain, and in the 1820s in France and elsewhere, with its chief emphasis upon freedom of individual self-expression: sincerity, spontaneity, and originality became the new standards in literature, replacing the decorous imitation of classical models favoured by 18th-century neoclassicism.

The Romantics put a premium on the emotional directness of personal experience and the boundlessness of individual imagination and aspiration, dismissing the ordered rationality of the Enlightenment as mechanical, impersonal, and artificial. Increasingly independent of the

① Morner, Kathleen and Ralph Rausch. *NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group, 1997.

declining system of aristocratic patronage, they saw themselves as free spirits expressing their own imaginative truths; some of them found a group of admirers who worshiped them as geniuses or prophets.

Instead of the restrained balance valued in 18th-century culture, the Romantic writers favored emotional intensity, often taken to extremes of rapture, nostalgia (for childhood or the past), horror, melancholy, or sentimentality. A few Romantic writers cultivated the appeal of the exotic, the bizarre, or the macabre; almost all showed a new interest in the irrational realms of dream and delirium or of folk superstition and legend. The creative imagination was exalted to the supreme position in Romantic views of art, and the “mechanical” rules of conventional form were superseded with an “organic” principle of natural growth and free development, borrowed from the discipline of biology.

The rise of Romanticism as a new cultural phenomenon has been attributed to several developments in late 18th-century culture, including a strong antiquarian interest in ballads and medieval romances (from which Romanticism takes its name). The transcendental philosophy of Kant and Fichte, which stressed the creative power of the mind and allowed nature to be seen as a responsive mirror of the soul, was an important inspiration for the first self-declared Romantics—the German group including the Schlegel brothers and Novalis. This new German philosophy found its way to Britain via S. T. Coleridge and to France via Mme de Staël, eventually shaping American Transcendentalism. English Romanticism had emerged independently with William Blake’s then little-known anti-Enlightenment writings of the 1790s and with the landmark of William Wordsworth’s 1800 *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. In a second wave after the Napoleonic wars, Romanticism established itself in France and across Europe; by the 1830s the movement extended from Pushkin in Russia to Poe in the USA. Romanticism drew some of its energies from the associated revolutionary movements of democracy and nationalism, although the “classical” culture of the French Revolution actually delayed the arrival of French Romanticism, and a strong element of conservative nostalgia is also evident in many Romantic writers.

Parallel to the revolution in politics, Romanticism also started a revolution in the realm of literature. As Hazlitt wrote so memorably in his essay on Wordsworth: “It (Wordsworth’s poetry) partakes of, and is carried along with, the revolutionary movement of our age: the political changes of the day were the model on which he formed and conducted his poetical experiments. His Muse ... is a levelling one. It proceeds on a principle of equality, and strives to reduce all things to the same standard.”^①

The literary rebellion started by Wordsworth in England and Victor Hugo in France brought to an end the artificiality of older conventions, breaking up the 18th-century system of distinct genres and of poetic diction. Lyric poetry underwent a major revival led by Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Pushkin, Leopardi, Heine, and others; narrative verse took on a

① Hazlitt, William, *The Spirit of the Age: Contemporary Portraits*, <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/11068>, (accessed 2009-8-25). ②



new subjective dimension in the work of Wordsworth and Byron. In fiction, Hoffmann and Poe pioneered the tale of terror in the wake of the Gothic novel, while the historical novels of Walter Scott, Alessandro Manzoni, Victor Hugo and James Fenimore Cooper combined bold action with nostalgic sentiment. A new wave of women novelists led by Mary Shelley, George Sand and the Brontë sisters broke the imposed restraints of modesty in works of powerful imaginative force. The astonishing personality of Byron provided Alfred de Musset, Mikhail Lermontov and other admirers throughout Europe with a model of the Romantic poet as tormented outcast. The growing international cult of Shakespeare also reflected the Romantic hero-worship which, in the writings of Thomas Carlyle and R. W. Emerson, became a “heroic” view of history as the product of forceful personalities like Napoleon.

Despite the challenge posed by the rise of realism and naturalism in the second half of the 19th century, Romanticism has in some ways maintained a constant presence in Western literature, providing the basis for several schools and movements from the Pre-Raphaelites and Symbolists to expressionism and Surrealism. In a broader sense, the term “romantic” may be applied to works and authors of other periods, by explicit or implicit comparison with a “classical” standard: thus Shakespeare is more romantic than Molière or Ben Jonson, both because he disregards the structural models of Greek drama and because he exploits freely the supernatural elements of folk legend; and in a different way, W. B. Yeats and D. H. Lawrence are more romantic than W. H. Auden and E. M. Forster, because they assert the absolute primacy of their personal visions, rejecting common norms of objectivity.

II

Confining our scrutiny to English Romanticism, we can state with some measure of certainty that its beginning was marked by the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), a joint effort between Wordsworth and Coleridge. The small volume of poetry announced a new literary departure and was refreshing to contemporary readers, though not without some sense of strangeness and discomfort. William Hazlitt expressed his appreciation of the poems in the *Lyrical Ballads* in the glowing laudation: “the sense of a new style and a new spirit in poetry came over me”. The effect on him was analogous to “the turning up of the fresh soil, or of the first welcome breath of spring”^①. Roughly speaking, the various Romantic writers can be divided into the following schools: “the Lake School” (Wordsworth, Coleridge and Robert Southey), “the Cockney School” (Leigh Hunt, William Hazlitt and John Keats), and “the Satanic School” (Byron, Shelley and their disciples). It is also customary to group them into the Older Romantics and the Younger Romantics—the former referring to the Lake School Poets and the latter to Byron, Shelley and Keats. The odd one out is William Blake, who is sometimes referred to as a pre-Romantic poet, because he was born much earlier than the rest

① Abrams, M. H. & Stillinger, Jack, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 7th edition, Vol. 2, 2000, p. 220.



of this “visionary company”.

The fame of the six canonical Romantic writers, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats, according to Duncan Wu, is chiefly due to two factors in the 20th century. Firstly, the publication of their works was little known to the reading public in their own day, and secondly, the turn in critical opinion. The appearance of a number of authoritative works on English romanticism in the 20th century laid a solid foundation for the pre-eminence of the canonical writers. Of particular note are John Livingston Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu* (1927), Jacob Bronowski's *A Man without a Mask* (1944), Northrop Frye's *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), M. H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp* (1953) and *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971) and Harold Bloom's *The Visionary Company* (1971).

Although the writers of the romantic period did not formally organize themselves into any kind of club or party, yet there is ample evidence to show that they had frequent social gatherings to exchange ideas and information. Wordsworth and Coleridge went to Germany together on a study tour and, later on, even chosen their residences at neighbouring locations. Byron and Shelley were exiles in Italy and often met for social gathering and compared ideas about politics and poetry. Mary Tighe's *Psyche* exerted a formative influence on Keats; and Dacre's *Zofloya* was a novel that appealed much to Shelley.

As M. H. Abrams claimed in his essay “English Romanticism: the Spirit of the Age”, English Romantic poets “were centrally political and social poets”, dismissing the notion of escapism ascribed to this literary movement. Living in an age of domestic troubles and revolutions in Europe, the Romantic writers naturally received their inspiration from the dramatic events in France and embraced the revolutionary ideals of *liberté*, *fraternité*, and *égalité*. They especially cherished the idea of universal brotherhood and looked forward to a better world. To quote Abrams again: “the Romantic period was eminently an age obsessed with the fact of violent and inclusive change, and Romantic poetry cannot be understood, historically, without awareness of the degree to which this preoccupation affected its substance and form.”^① Hazlitt associated the renewal of letters with the renewal of the world in his celebrated book of essays called *The Spirit of the Age*.

Influenced by the Bible, the Romantic poets entertained a kind of apocalyptic expectation, regarding the events in France as harbingers of a drastic change to the corrupt world they were in. The majority of them were radical thinkers on the matter of religion, directing their strong criticism and satire against the Established Church for its insensitivity to the suffering poor and its collusion with the oppressive Tory government. William Blake created a Urizenic figure in his self-created mythology to parody the conventional God; Wordsworth replaced God with some vague “presences” in nature; Byron led a life of dissolution and irreverence in order to defy the conventional religious morality; Shelley openly advocated atheism and was expelled from Oxford; Keats leaned more towards Hellenistic paganism and hedonism, with

① Bloom, Harold, *Romanticism and Consciousness*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1970, p. 92.



scant attention paid to the official religion. But interestingly, most of them admired Jesus the man and drew their inspiration from the Bible.

The most prominent theorists of the new poetry were Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley, who expressed their critical opinions in prefaces, essays or books. Byron had little to do with theory, and Keats uttered his immature, scattered, though often insightful critical views in his letters. According to Abrams, the most conspicuous shift of critical focus was from the neoclassical theory of mimesis to the Romantic theory of expression. The typical eighteenth-century metaphor for poetry was the mirror—an imitation of human life. Borrowing Hamlet's phrase "to hold... the mirror up to nature", the neoclassical writers believed in the faithful copying of nature (not the external landscape, but "the universal and permanent elements in human experience"), which "consists of the enduring, general truths that have been, are, and will be true for everyone in all times, everywhere."^① For the Romantics, the dominant figure for poetry is the lamp, which stands for the human mind. As a matter of fact, the very term "expression", as analyzed by Abrams in *The Mirror and the Lamp*, connotes some inner pressure demanding release. As the editors of *Norton Anthology of English Literature* point out, "Other Romantic theories, ...concurred by referring primarily to the mind, emotions, and imagination of the poet, instead of to the outer world as perceived by the senses, for the origin, content, and defining attributes of a poem".^② As a result of this emphasis on the inner states of the mind, the Romantic poets favoured the lyric poem as a medium to convey their emotions and meditations. Thus this previously minor genre was elevated to the pride of place in critical estimation. The first person speaker "I" in such lyric poems often differs from the conventional abject Petrarchan lover and the gallant in Cavalier poems. What the lyric speaker confesses to the audience often reflects the true experiences and states of mind of the poet. The general preference among Romantic writers for the ego is also manifest in the contemporary prose: Lamb, Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt all enjoyed talking about themselves in their familiar essays, especially in the "currency of spiritual autobiography" as shown in the fictionalized work of Carlyle (*Sartor Resartus*) factual work by Coleridge (*Biographia Literaria*).

Coleridge, the most philosophical of the Romantics, introduced from Germany the organic theory of poetry modeled on the growth of a plant. The conception and composition of a great work of literature are compared to the growth of a seed which evolves into an organic whole, in which the total unity is larger than the sum of the disparate parts. According to Frye, "In Romantic thought the superiority of the organism to the mechanism is a central

① Abrams, M. H. & Greenblatt, Stephen ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, seventh edition, Vol. 1, W. W. Norton & Co. 2000, p. 2055, p. 2056.

② Abrams, M. H. & Stillingier, Jack, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, seventh edition, Vol. 2A, *The Romantic Period*, W. W. Norton & Co. 2000, p. 7.