

# 18<sup>th</sup> century Poetry

(1700 – 1800) the age of novelst

Three main types of poetry dominated during the 18<sup>th</sup> century

1. Neoclassical Poetry.
2. Preliminary Romantic Poetry.
3. Romantic Poetry.

## 1. Neoclassical Poetry.

### Features of Neoclassical Poetry:

1. Neoclassical poets wrote poems similar to these, which were written by the classical (Greek & Roman) poets.
2. Neoclassical poets believed that poetry was the product of mind not by heart.
3. They dealt with philosophical and critical themes in their poems.
4. They talked about the human nature, not about external nature.
5. They used couplet in their poems.
6. Poetic diction was used in neoclassical poetry.
7. The concept of (wit) was a major topic in neoclassical poetry.
8. Different meters and rhythms were used in neoclassical poetry.
9. Neoclassical poets used such figures of speech like:
  - A. A personification.
  - B. Repetition.
  - C. Assonance.
  - D. Alliteration.
  - E. Images.
  - F. Metaphors in their poems.
10. Neoclassical poetry was didactic (poets wrote poems to each moral lessons through them.

11. Satire and Irony were used in neoclassical poetry.

## Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744)

One of the famous English poets. He was a neoclassical poet because he imitated the classical Greek and Roman poets. Pope wrote many poems. He entitled some of them as ((Essay)) in order to cope with the spirit of the age "An Essay on criticism" is one of his famous poems.

Judge = a literary critic

Work of wit = text

Writ = written

Line 1, 2:

Work                      will                      wit

Alliteration means the repetition of consonant sounds in a line of poetry.

Will                      wit

Assonance means the repetition of vowel sounds in a line of poetry.

Same                      Spirit:                      Alliteration

Spirit                      its                      writ:                      Assonance

Line 3,4:

Survey                      Seek                      Slight:                      Alliteration

Figures of speech

Faults Find Where Warms: Alliteration

Mind Moves: Alliteration

Slight find: Assonance

### *An Essay on criticism*

The poem is one of the best long poems written by Alexander Pope. The poem was first published in 1711. It has all the features of neoclassical poetry such as:

1. The title of the poem itself suggests the classical nature of the text. An Essay is more a prosaic type text than a poetic text. Classical writers valued arguments and that is why they called their poems as essays.

In addition to that, the word essay reflects the spirit of the age because the 18<sup>th</sup> Century was also called the age of prose.

2. The poet also uses the classical elements like:
  - Poetic diction.
  - Couplets
  - Arguments.
  - Besides the lessons which he delivers to the critics.

1/ The general meaning of the poem:

This text is but a small part, a number of 20 lines, taken from a very long poem. In the poem, pope gives his own instructions for the critics as how to criticize a literary text.

2/The detailed meaning of the poem:

In the poem, Alexander Pope gives the following instructions for critics:

Line 1 to 4:

Here he says that a good critic must read that text as if he were the author himself. In addition to that pope asks the critics not to search for small faults.

Line 5 to 11:

Pope says that poetry is a mixture of both delight and wit and the good critic must study both of them.

Line 12 to 20:

In these lines pope argues that a good critic will look at the text as a united piece of work. Good critics do not examinic particular parts of the text.

The theme of the poem:

Imitating the classical writers, pope wrote "An Essay on criticism" to deal with such topics as:

1. Poetry must contain both wit and pleasure.
2. Nature means: the imitation of classical writers and the description of human nature.
3. A critic must deal with any text as a collective piece, he /she must not try to find faults with text. They must look at the text keeping the author in their (the critics) mind.

## **2. Preliminary Romantic Poetry**

Stands for the poetry which was written before the appearance of the Romantic Movement.

Two major English poets were considered Preliminary Romantic poets: they were Thomas Gray and William Blake.

Features of preliminary Romantic poetry:

1. The use of simple language, the preliminary Romantic Poets did not use poetic diction.
2. They talked about external nature.
3. This type was not write (writing) in couplets.
4. Beautiful natural images and symbols were used in that type poetry.
5. They talked about emotions. They thought that poetry was the product of heart not mind.
6. They did not deal with themes related to philosophical and classical ideas; they only dealt with themes regarding creative imagination.
7. That type of poetry was simple in structure and in theme.
8. Preliminary Romantic Poets were in interested in simple life, especially
9. There were dramatic elements in that type of poetry like:
  - A. Dialogue.
  - B. Conversation.
  - C. Characterization.
  - D. Abrupt beginning.
  - E. Action.

## The Lamb (from songs of Innocence)

William Blake

1. This poem is one of the famous poems written by William Blake.
2. The poem is taken from the famous volume of Blake: songs of innocence.

3. The poet use many figures of speech in the poem like:
  - A. Alliteration : Lamb Little
  - B. Assonance : Dost Know who
  - C. Repetition: I'll tell thee  
I'll tell thee
4. All the features of preliminary Romantic Poetry can be found in the poem.
5. The structure of the poem: the poem consist of two stanzas, each stanza contains 10 lines. The poem is written in the from of a question and answer. The first stanza poses the question and the second stanza gives the answer.
6. The dramatic elements in the poem : there are many dramatic elements in the poem like:
  - A. The poem begins abruptly.
  - B. There are questions and answers.
  - C. There is a speaker in the poem.
  - D. There is action and movement in the poem.
7. The main images in the poem: there are many natural images in the poem; some of them are:
  - A. The stream and the mead. Line (4)
  - B. The wooly clothing of delight. Line (5)
  - C. The tender voice:( audial image related to the sense of hearing)  
line (7)
8. Symbolism in the poem: the child and the lamb are associated with the beauty, purity, meekness, and innocence of Jesus Christ.

Stream = a small river

Meal = a green area

Delight = happy

Rejoice = feel happy

Meek = nice, simple

Mild = moderate

9. The general meaning of the poem: the poem deals with the nature of goodness which can be found everywhere on earth, beauty, purity meekness, and simplicity can be seen in the meads, in the streams, in a lamb and its wool, and in a child and it's a speech, god's mercy can be found at only time at any place.

10. The detailed meaning of poem: The poems consist of two stanzas. It is written in the form of a question and its answer. The first stanza stands for the question with the boy asks for the lamb. The boy asked the lamb about who created him and gave him the nice clothing of wool and also the tender voice. He also asks creator who makes and around the nice vales of course, the boy himself answers these.

Question in stanza two of the poem. Stanza two gives the answer take the question raised in stanza one of Course, the boy himself answers the question about the nature of goodness and purity and how god created them, he says that the speaker Himself (the boy) and the little lamb are very pure, they are associated With the purity of Jesus Christ, the stanza talks about the beauty, purity, And goodness which are created by god.

10. The theme of the poem: god is the creator of everything; he created goodness which is represented by the things described in the poem. The nature of god is every when it stands against evil which the poet describes in the other poem (the Tiger).

## *The Tyger (from songs of Experience)*

*William Blake*

1. Symmetry = the beautiful link of parts to a complete thing.
2. Deeps = Hell.  
Skies = Heaven.
3. Aspire = wishes.
4. Furnace = oven.
5. Anvil = a large block of iron which a smith hammers hot metal to shape it.

### *Criticism of "The Tyger"*

1. Figures of speech: many figures of speech are used in the poem; some of them are :
  - A. Repetition: the word (Tyger) is repeated many times in the poem.  
Stanza one itself is also repeated at the end. Repetition is used in poetry for certain purposes: it creates rhythm, it achieves a musical impact, and it also emphasizes ideas.
  - B. Alliteration is also used in many lines like:  
Tyger! Tyger burning bright
  - C. There are also many images in the poem such as the image of the burning eyes of the Tyger inside the forest at night the quick movement of the Tyger itself is also another kind of image.