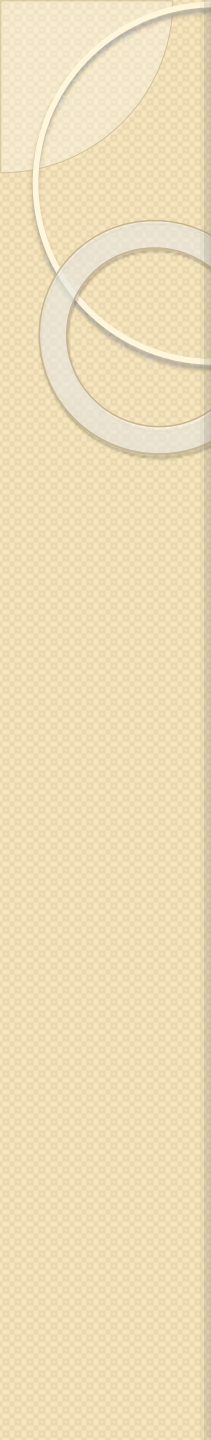
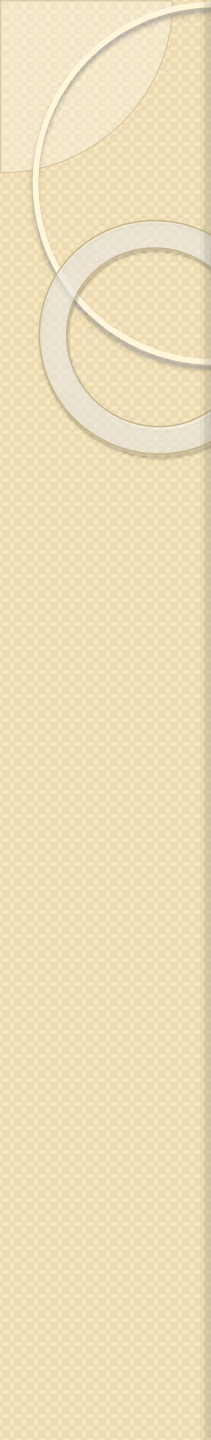


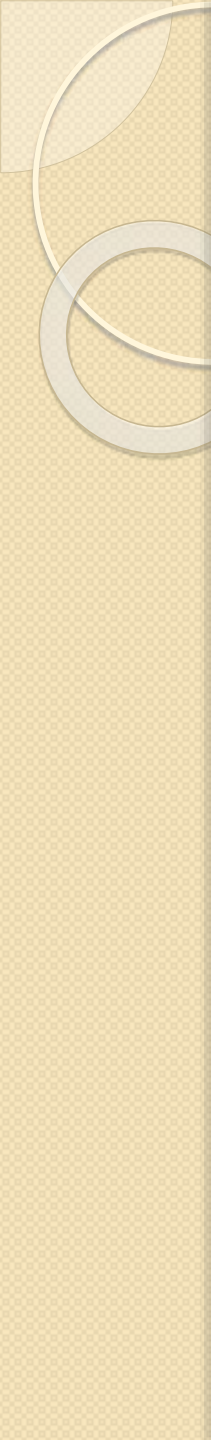
Preface to Lyrical Ballad by William Wordsworth





The collection of poems published as *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) has traditionally been seen as the birthplace of English Romanticism.

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- **A romantic movement**
 - **A guide which shows how a poem should be**
 - **A transition line between Neo-classical era and Romantic era**
 - **A transition from scientific logic to nature**

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- **We can analyse lyrical ballads under three headlines;**
 - 1. Qualifications of a poet**
 - 2. Language of a poem**
 - 3. Topics of poem**

Life of William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth was born in 1770 in a little town in the Lake District in the north-west of England.

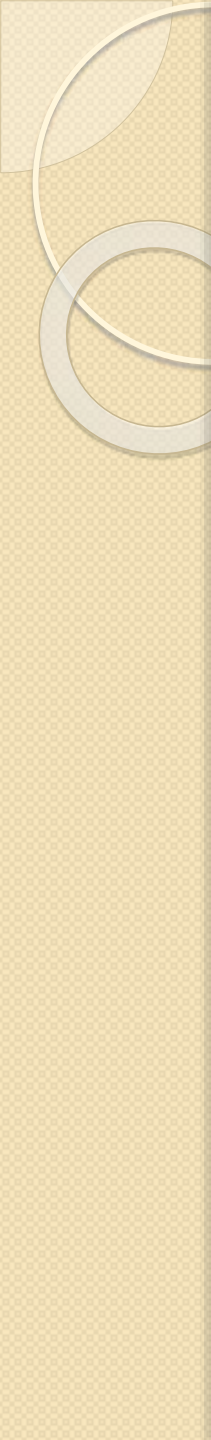


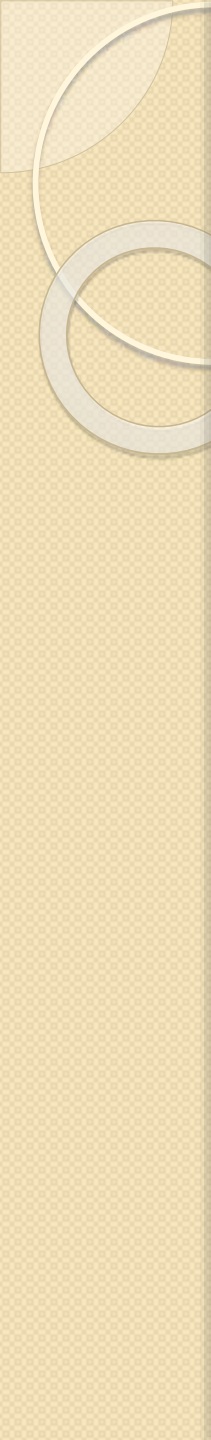
In 1787 he entered Cambridge and while still a university student he went on a three-month walking tour of France, the Swiss Alps and Italy, and was greatly impressed by the beauty of the landscape.



When he finished his degree he returned to France and became a passionate supporter of the democratic ideals of the French Revolution.



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- **In 1794 he went to live with his sister Dorothy in a small village in Dorset.**
 - **In the same year he met Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a poet with similar radical political and literary views. This friendship had a lasting impact on both poets.**

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- **William and Dorothy went to live close to Coleridge. Together they discussed political issues, read, wrote, exchanged theories on poetry and commented on each other's work. In this period of intense creativity they produced the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), a collection of poems. The second edition of 1800 contained Wordsworth's famous Preface, which was to become the Manifesto of English Romanticism.**

- **In 1799 William and Dorothy moved to Grasmere, one of the loveliest villages in the Lake District, a region that Wordsworth immortalised in his poetry.**





❖ **His life can be divided into four major periods:**

❖ **Childhood and youth (1770-87)**

❖ **University life; travels around the world and revolutionary experience (1787-97)**

❖ **The Great Decade (1797-1808)**

❖ **The final period (1808-50)**



❖ Three things clearly emerges from of his poems:

❖ Firstly: he loved to be alone, and never felt lonely in Nature

❖ Secondly: he felt the presence of some living spirit, real though unseen

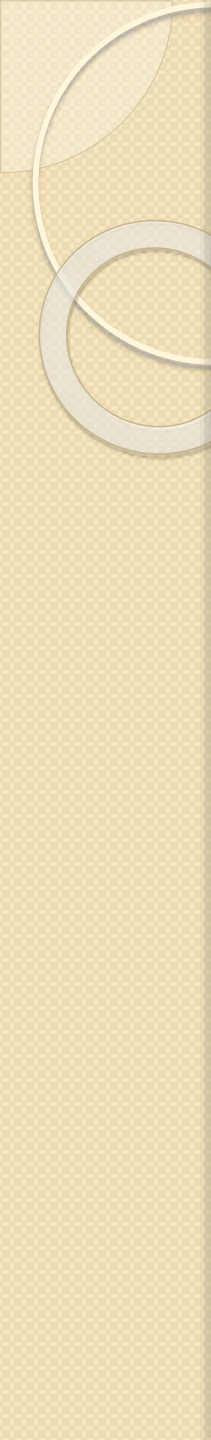
❖ Thirdly: his impressions of Nature were delightfully familiar

Wordsworth as a Poet

- ❖ One of the giants of English Poetry
- ❖ Plenty of inferior work written by him
- ❖ His historical importance
- ❖ His theories of poetry and the revolution he effected
- ❖ As a poet of Nature
- ❖ As a poet of childhood
- ❖ As a poet of reflection and philosophical thought
- ❖ His lyrical gift

The Preface to The *Lyrical Ballads*

- ❖ **Primarily laws of human nature**
- ❖ **Low and rustic life**
- ❖ **The language of rustic people**
- ❖ **Conceptions of the poet and poetry**
- ❖ **Revolutionary and democratic sentiment as the basic of his poetic theory**

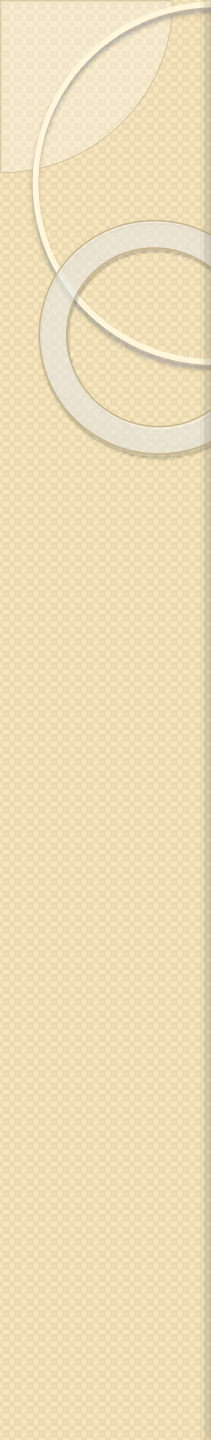
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- ❖ **Theory of poetic diction (the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society; a selection of language really used by men)**
 - ❖ **Coleridge's criticism**
 - ❖ **Lessening the range of emotion**
 - ❖ **Poetry as spontaneous overflow of emotion**
 - ❖ **Poetry as the expression of emotion recollected in tranquility**
 - ❖ **The service done by Wordsworth to poetry**
 - ❖ **Meter and poetry**

The Lyrical Ballads

- ❖ **The lyrical aspects of the volume**
- ❖ **The metaphysic of the imagination**
- ❖ **The life of the sense**
- ❖ **A challenge to the general poetry reading habits**
- ❖ **Wordsworth's democratic sympathies**
- ❖ **Blank verse poems**
- ❖ **The disintegration brought about the volume**

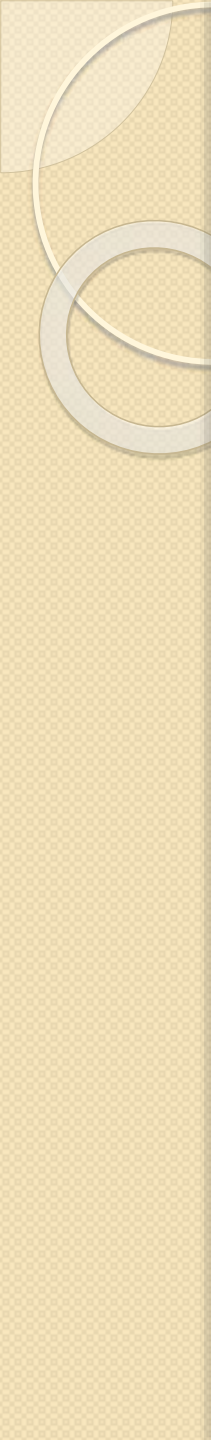
Wordsworth as a poet of Nature

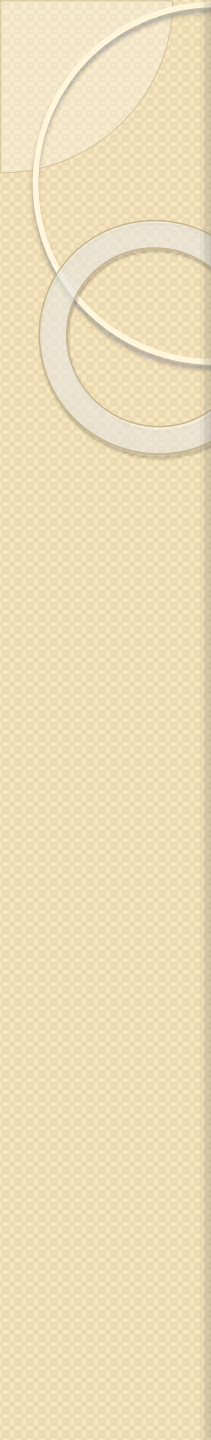
- **Wordsworth was a great innovator.**
- **He found his greater inspiration in nature.**
- **His poetry offers an account of the interaction between man and nature, of the influences, emotions and sensations which arise from this contact.**
- **His main interest is the poet's response to a natural object.**
- **One of the most consistent concepts in his poetry is the idea that man and nature are inseparable.**

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- **Man is an active participant in the natural world.**
 - **Nature is something that includes both inanimate and humane nature, each is a part of the same whole.**
 - **Nature comforts man in sorrow.**
 - **Nature is a source of pleasure and joy.**
 - **Nature teaches man to love and to act in a moral way.**
 - **Wordsworth's poetry celebrates the lives of simple rural people, he sees them more sincere than people living in cities.**

Concept of Poetry

- **Wordsworth believed that intuition, not reason, should guide the poet.**
- **Inspiration should come from the direct experience of the senses.**
- **Wordsworth exploited especially the sensibility of the eye and ear.**

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- **Poetry, he wrote in the *Preface*, originates from ‘the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’ which is filtered through ‘emotion recollected in tranquillity’.**
 - **Memory plays a fundamental role in the creative process of poetry.**
 - **Poetry results from the active relationship of present to past experience.**

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- **Through the re-creative power of memory, the emotion is reproduced and purified in poetic form so that a second emotion, ‘kindred’ to the first one, is generated.**


The entire process would be:

**object → poet → sensory experience →
emotion → memory → recollection
in tranquillity — ‘kindred’ emotion**

→ poem

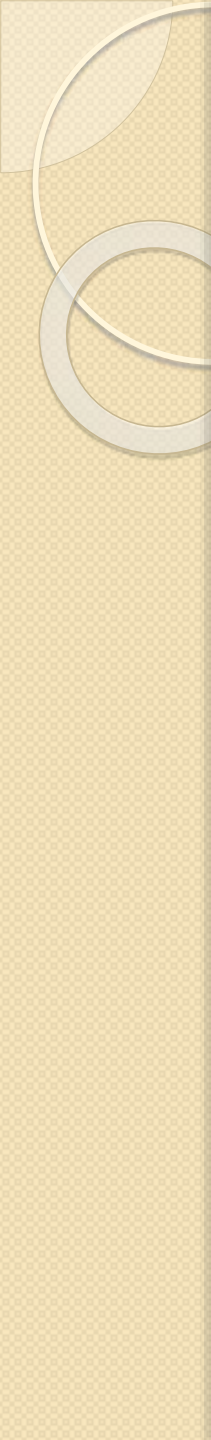


reader emotion

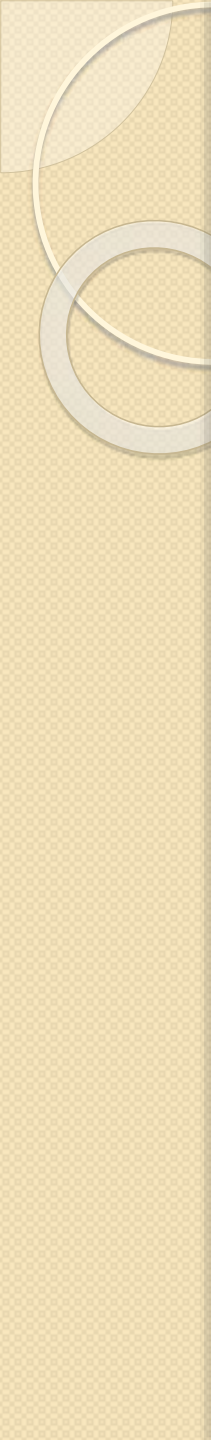
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- **The poet has greater sensibility and the ability to penetrate to the heart of things.**
 - **The power of imagination enables him to communicate his knowledge.**
 - **The poet becomes a teacher who shows men how to understand their feelings and improve their moral being.**
 - **The poet's task consist in drawing attention to the ordinary things of life, to the humblest people, where the deepest emotions and truths are to be found.**

Features of Preface to Lyrical Ballad

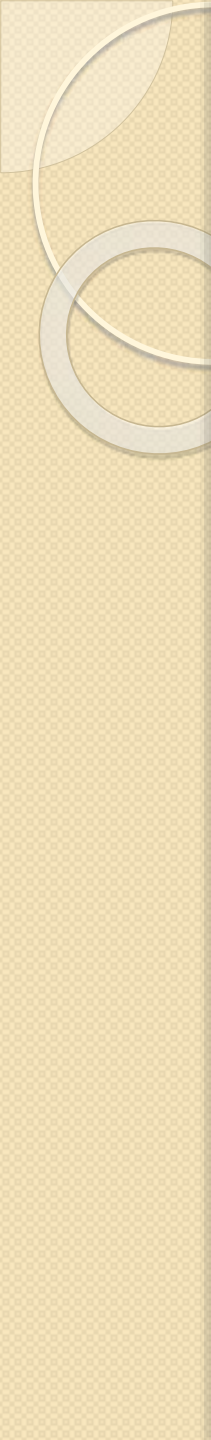
The chief aim in the composition of poems in the Lyrical Ballads has been to choose “incidents and situations from common life” and at the same time throw over them a colouring of imagination, whereby the ordinary things would be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.

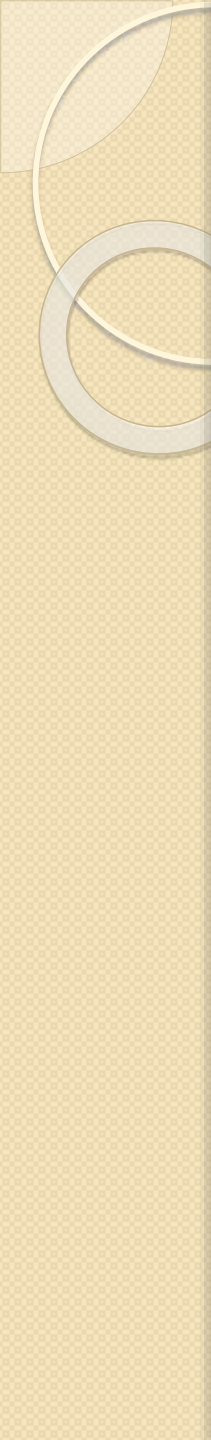


The preface to *Lyrical Ballads* was mainly written to explain the theory of poetry guiding Wordsworth's composition of the poems. Wordsworth defends the unusual style and subjects of the poems (some of them may have been actually composed by Samuel Taylor Coleridge) as experiments to see how far and accurately popular poetry could be used to convey profound feeling.



In the “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*”, Wordsworth wanted to express his theory of poetry. The Preface is therefore a justification of that theory and of the themes and styles of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads*.

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- In his “Preface to Lyrical Ballads” (1800), Wordsworth sets himself in opposition to 18th century poets like Pope. He claims they imposed artificial conventions on the free and natural development of poetry.



Quote from *Lyrical Ballads*

"Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science."

William Wordsworth

Motto of written lyrical ballad

- "Return to nature" was their motto. They turned away from the artificial urban life and found refuge in the country life and nature. They worshipped nature. Love of nature for them meant love of mankind, humanism and a more world view that encompassed the idea of freedom and equality.

The Preface to Lyrical Ballads

The preface can be splitted in four main parts:

- The content.
- The language.
- The poet.
- The poetry.

Lyrical Ballads

- ❑ **Lyric:** In ancient Greece, a lyric was a song to accompany music from a lyre (a stringed instrument). Later the word was used for any short poem in which personal moods and emotions were expressed. Nowadays the words of popular songs are called lyrics.
- ❑ **Ballad:** A ballad is a poem or song which usually tells a story in the popular language of the day, and has associations with traditional folk culture.
- ❑ An experiment
- ❑ Varied in form
- ❑ Broke with the traditions of the neo-classical era that preceded
- ❑ Scenes of “common life” vs. epic literature

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