SAMENVATTING ROMANTIC PERIOD

## The romantic period

From 1798 – 1837   
The period started with the publication of the *lyrical ballads* in 1798 and ended when Queen Victoria came to the throne. She gave her name to the period that followed; the Victorian Period

The Romantic Period was only two generations of writers long, but it was by far the most important period in the history of the English Literature.

There were two events that had a lot of influence on the literature in the Romantic Period  
- Industrial revolutions, because of the invention of the steam engine. Many of the big writers were unhappy about the change. They began to write about how good pre-industrial England was. Also because of the new inventions the stories could spread easily.   
- The French Revolution. You see a lot of ‘wanting freedom and rejecting the authority (macht mensen)’ in the literature of this period. Their attitudes changed to this because of the ideas of the French people. They wrote a lot about this new kind of thinking.

Poetry was the most important and used literature form of this time. Prose (gewoon een verhaal) and drama were less used in this period. There were also a few book writers but they wrote mainly about the 18th century and they didn’t follow the Romantic Period characteristics.

*First generation leading poets* were William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey. The first generation gave shape and substance to the romantic ideals.

*Second generation poets* were John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Bryon. The second generation wrote further in the romantic ideals and they gave full expression to them.

## Characteristics of the Romantic Period

1. *Focus on the power and grandeur of nature.*Focus op de kracht en grootheid van de natuur.
2. *Superiority of emotion over intellectual thought. Science had brought only misery!*Dat emoties boven het intellectueel nadenken (vermogen om te leren, begrijpen en te leren) stonden. Wetenschap had alleen maar ellende gebracht!
3. *Superiority of imagination over logic. Mysterious and frightening subject matter was also addressed.*Dat ingebeelde dingen boven logica stonden. Ook mysterieuze en beangstigende onderwerpen kwamen voor.
4. *Originality was prized and slavish reproduction despised. All earlier literary forms, such as the mediaeval ballad or the Renaissance sonnet were adapted to the style of the day.*Originaliteit werd erg gewaardeerd en het nadoen van iets of iemand totaal niet. Alle vroegere literaire vormen zoals, Middeleeuwse ballads of het sonnet uit de Renaissance, werden aangepast aan de stijl van de tijd.
5. *There was great interest in history, especially mediaeval history. The middle ages were celebrated as a time before the world was spoilt by industrialisation. Consequently, much of the poetry and prose of the Romantic Period is set in the past.*Er was veel interesse in geschiedenis, vooral in Middeleeuwse geschiedenis. De Middeleeuwen werden gezien als een tijd voordat de wereld werd verpest door industrialisatie. Een gevolg daarvan is dat veel verhalen en gedichten uit de Romantic Period zich afspelen in het verleden. 🡪 industrial revolution
6. *There was also a fascination with the exotic (particularly anything oriental) and the unfamiliar.*Er was ook een fascinatie voor het exotische (vooral alles wat oosters was (Turkije, Irak, Iran)) en het onbekende.
7. *Much Romantic literature is anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment. Parents, royalty, government, church leaders, teachers and others are cast as the agents of oppression and exploitation.*Veel Romantic literatuur is anti-bazig en anti-overheid (niemand mag de baas zijn). Ouders, leden van het koningshuis, overheid, kerkleiders en anderen werden als agenten van onderdrukking en uitbuiting gezien. 🡪 door French Revolution
8. *Common people are portrayed as possessing a form of nobility deriving from their closeness to nature; concepts such as the noble workman and the noble savage emerge.*Normale mensen worden afgebeeld als mensen die een vorm van adel bezitten, door hun verbondenheid met de natuur; denk aan een nobele werkman of nobele wilde verschijning (nobel is groots, ridderlijk, edelmachtig)
9. *Much Romantic poetry is about children. Poets such as Wordsworth regarded children as innocents, uncorrupted by knowledge and therefore closer to nature than adults.*Veel Romantic gedichten gaan over kinderen. Dichters zoals Wordsworth zagen kinderen als onschuldig, ze waren nog niet veranderd door kennis en daarom dichter bij de natuur dan volwassenen.

## La belle dame sans merci

1819, poem written by John Keats

First the speaker asks the unnamed knight why he is wandering all alone the lake in his near-death state. The knight explains that he met a mysterious woman in a meadow (weide). The woman is really beautiful and she has wild eyes. The knight becomes obsessed with her, gives her flowers and carries her away on his horse. He cannot understand her but he loves her and her songs. Together they go to her fairy grot and she cries, he comforts her by kissing her eyes. After this he falls asleep and he gets a nightmare. In the nightmare there are kings, princes and warriors warning him. All of them have been enslaved (tot slaaf gemaakt) by the fairy and now it is happening to the knight. From that day he can never be happy; he has to walk around the bleak hillsides (sombere heuvels), alone, crying and pale.

* Focus on the power and grandeur of nature
* Common people are portrayed as possessing a form of nobility deriving from their closeness to nature

John Keats lived from 1795 – 1821. He was one of the most admired poets of the Romantic Period, but only after his death his work became widely appreciated. His father died in a car accident, because of that his family struggled. His mother also died, but she died because of tuberculosis, a very serious disease. His little brother Tom also died because of this disease later in his life. The four siblings got two new guardians, under who Richard Abbey. Richard Abbey hid the fact that John earned a lot of money from his grandfather. John studied for doctor, but he gave up the idea of that career and followed his love for literature. His first two collections flopped. He wanted to give up on poetry so he went on a trip, on this trip he started getting sick and it was the start of a decline in his health. John fell in love with a girl named Fanny Brawne, but the relationship wasn’t happily and easy, maybe that was his inspiration for the poem ‘la belle dame sans merci’. In 1820 he published his latest collection with a lot of good poems such as *la belle dame sans merci* and *On a Grecian Urn.* After that Keats became extremely sick, because of tuberculosis. He stopped working and moved to Italy to another writer Shelley. They were friends but didn’t had a lot in common. Keats was the first poet to truly see and experience the beauty of the world and when he wrote about a sound, you could practically hear the sound.

## The rime of the ancient mariner

1798, written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The rime of the ancient mariner was part of a collection of lyrical ballads, which was produced by William Wordsworth and Coleridge. They wanted to bring the natural world (Wordsworth) and supernatural world (Coleridge) together. To be precisely the rime of the ancient mariner was an art ballad, it was based on a mediaeval ballad but with characteristics from the Romantic Period. He got a lot of inspiration for this poem by reading stories from other people.

The story starts with the meeting of the old sailor and three man, who are on their way to a wedding. The old man wants to tell a story to them, but the wedding guest doesn’t want that. So at the beginning of the poem the mariner has to try really hard to make the wedding guest listen. The wedding guest eventually sat on a stone and listened to the man who tells his story.   
The ships started sailing from England and it had to go around Cape Horn. Because of this the ship is now in really hard conditions and it is a rough time for the crew. As they continue their trip, an albatross, a lucky one, starts following their ship. Because of the albatross the ice split and suddenly there was perfect wind. Then suddenly really unexpected the ancient mariner kills the albatross. At first it seems like there a no consequences to this really stupid thing, but eventually they stranded at a place without wind and really strong sun. Now the whole crew is thirsty and dried out, they go through hell. They blame the man who killed the albatross and hang the corps of the bird around his neck so he can be reminded of it every single second of the day. In the distance they see another ship and they get excited, but it is a ghost ship. On the boat there a two creatures one is death and the other one is living death. The creatures are playing dice and eventually living death wins and she gets the central character (the one who shot the bird). Death gets the other crew members. They disappear and suddenly the whole crew dies except for the man who got living death. He is stuck at see, all alone, with a ship that doesn’t move. As he is staring into the water there are snakes swimming in the water and he blesses them, because of that everything turns out for the better. The dead crew members become ghosts and they sail the ship to the starting point. The ship sinks with al the other crew members. The mariner his sins are forgiven by a holy man, but he has to spend his whole life travelling the world telling this story. In the hope that other people learn that you have to respect nature and everything that God has created for you.   
The wedding guests continue their trip to the wedding.

* Focus on the power and grandeur of nature.
* Superiority of imagination over logic.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge lived from 1772 – 1834. He grew up in a poor family with a lot of siblings and his childhood was not a happy one. His parents were distant and soon his father died, he also got bullied by one of his siblings. Soon two siblings of him died and he himself got serious ill. He developed an addiction. He won a place at university Cambridge and he met Sara (girlfriend) and William Wordsworth (they collaborated with The Rime of the Ancient Mariner). Coleridge wrote lyrical ballads and romantic movement. Later in his live he got divorced and his addiction became worse and he quit poetry.

## The schoolboy

1789, by William Blake

The schoolboy is a poem about how books and lessons isolate him from nature and thus prevent him from enjoying life and having fun. In the poem there are a lot of metaphors such as a bird in a cage and the buds from flowers getting nipped.

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* Much romantic literature is anti-authoritarian, anti-establisment. Parents, royalty, government, church leaders, teachers and others are cast as the agents of oppression and exploitation.
* Much romantic poetry is about children. Poets such as Wordsworth regarded children as innocents, uncorrupted by knowledge and therefore closer to nature than adults.

As a child he didn’t initially go to school, but roamed around London and the adjacent countryside. During his wanderings, he observed a great deal, which he was later to incorporate into his writing and drawing. He illustrated his poems at first, but later he stopped doing that.

First major collection: songs of innocence: reflect the joy of growing up in a secure setting: a theme reinforced by the accompanying illustrations of children at play, flowers and beautiful trees.

Songs of experience: he portrays the child as arrested in its development by social and religious oppression. The tone of the collection is anger and protest. It is an threatening mood of death, misery and grief.

## I wandered lonely as a cloud

1804, William Wordsworth

In this poem the beauty of nature and the influence on human feelings an behaviour is described. The poet is walking on his one, feeling alone and suddenly he sees beautiful daffodils (narcissen) on the side of a lake. Because they are so ‘happy and cheerful’ he asks himself how he could possibly continue feeling low. Also after he has left the hills and he is home alone on his couch, the nature cheers him up.   
The poem is written in the form of a flashback of the joy he felt when he saw the daffodils.

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He lost his mother at a very young age and after that his father also died soon. He was really disappointed to witness how the French revolution had degenerated into an ugly bloodbath. He spent a lot of time with ordinary people: beggars, children, unmarried mothers etc. these are the central characters in the dark poetry and reflections that he wrote in this phase of his life. He received recognition after his death for his works.

He collaborated with Coleridge which took English literature in a new direction.

He wrote short lyrical poems about simple things that can make people happy: birds, flowers, ordinary people, the countryside 🡪 in short, nature. He wrote in a natural everyday language. Sometimes his poetry became a little bit darker because he was in a darker period in his life.

## Pride and prejudice

1813, by Jane Austen

The family Bennet had five daughters, because of this their cousin Mr. Collins gets everything when their father dies. Mr. Collin wants to be nice and give one of the daughters a bright future to marry him, he chose Elizabeth the second daughter. So he proposes to her, but she declines the offer and he marries someone else.   
When a new family bought the land next to the land of the Bennet family, they get invited to a party. The family is Mr. Charles Bingley with his two sisters and best friend Mr. Darcy. At the party Elizabeth doesn’t get good vibes from Mr. Darcy she thinks he is arrogant. Jane the oldest daughter develops a crush on Mr. Bingley and they are clearly attracted to each other.   
After that the family meets a man Wickham who tells a story that puts Mr. Darcy in a bad light. So now Elizabeth his view of him has become worse. She also hears that Mr. Darcy has sabotaged the relationship between Jane and Mr. Bingley by taking Bingley away to London. So now her view of Mr. Darcy has become even more worse.   
Suddenly after hearing nothing of the family for a while, Mr. Darcy proposed to Elizabeth. She declined and told him how she felt about him. Darcy was very sad and upset about his so he left again. He did sent a letter explaining everything. He also said that Wickham is the bad guy in the story.   
A few weeks later Elizabeth is on a trip with her uncle and aunt and she comes across the castle of Mr. Darcy and she decided to go in. They had a normal conversation and after this they started seeing each other again. Also Jane and Mr. Bingley get married right after they see each other again. Suddenly they get a message that Lydia (a sister) has run away with Wickham. Mr. Bennet and her uncle go to London to search for her. Eventually they find her and inform the others that they are happily married and all Wickham his debts are paid for. After a while Elizabeth finds out that not her uncle took care of the incident but Mr. Darcy. He probably did it for her.   
Darcy took the risk to propose to her again and this time Elizabeth said yes.

* Superiority of emotion over intellectual thought.
* Superiority of imagination over logic.

She had a happy childhood without trouble. Austen remained single until her death.

She wrote about the balls and parties she had attended and it was mostly about small groups of people who, like her, were isolated from the rest of society. The characters in Austen’s novels were like her: middle class, looking for a marriage partner.

## The tell-tale heart

The narrator took care of the old man with the crazy eye. The man became so mad every time he saw the eye and wanted to kill him. He went every night at 12 o clock into the old mans room and looked with a light at the eye, but every night it was closed, but not on the last night. When the man looked through the door with his light he saw the eye wide open and the hart of the old man started beating and he killed him. With the matrass he killed the man and he hid the old mans body under the floor boards. The narrator was driven crazy by his guilt feelings and eventually confessed to the cops.

* Superiority of emotion over intellectual thought. Science had brought only misery!

The author is Edgar Allan Poe. He is born at the 19th of January 1809 and he sadly died at the 7th of October 1849. So he became 40 years old. He lived in Boston in America.

A few facts about Edgar.

* Between 1815 and 1820 Edgar was educated in England.
* In 1826, Edgar was accepted at the University of Virginia, but remained there only a year. He started drinking, gambling, could no longer pay his many depths.
* In 1836 Edgar married Virginia, who was 13 at the time.
* He wrote a lot of stories and poems, but with little success.
* But in 1845 he wrote the poem The Raven, with which he gained his literary recognition.
* After the death of Virginia, in 1847, he struggled with alcohol and drugs and in 1848 he attempted suicide.
* In 1849 he went missing in Baltimore (Maryland) and 3 days later he died without any explanation of his death.

## Literary terms

simile a figure of speech comparing two unlike things using ‘like’ or ‘as’  
metaphor a figure of speech comparing two unlike things without using ‘like’ or ‘as’  
mood the overall feeling or atmosphere created by a pierce of literature   
symbolism an object, a person, a situation, or an action that has a literal meaning in a story but   
 suggest or represents other meanings.   
onomatopoeia a word or phrase that imitates the sound it describes   
assonance the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words *no pain no gain*  
consonance the repetition of consonant sounds in nearby words *Liesje leerde Lotje lopen…*  
imagery the use of specific details or vivid language that appeal to the senses to create a   
 mental image  
genre a category of literature   
pars-pro-toto a literary device in which a part of something is used to represent the whole   
hyperbole a deliberate exaggeration or overstatement   
characterization a technique used by writers to create and develop characters  
setting the specific time and place in which a story takes place   
turning point the moment in a poem when a significant change occurs.   
synecdoche a broad term that includes literary devices like pars-pro-toto and totum-pro-parte  
perspective the point of view from which a story is told  
personification the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something no-human  
theme a universal idea, lesson, or message explored throughout a work of literature   
tension the sense that something ominous is right around the corner