

## THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANTICISM ON MODERN POETRY.

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**Introduction:** *Romanticism, emerging as a reaction to the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, placed a premium on the subjectivity of experience, the expression of intense emotion, the celebration of nature, and the idealization of the individual. Figures such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats rejected the strict formalism of the neoclassical tradition and sought to explore the inner life of the poet, making their works more personal and introspective. This shift in the poetic form and focus would have lasting effects, influencing not only subsequent generations of poets in the 19th century but also laying a foundation for many of the themes and concerns that would surface in modern poetry.*

**Key words:** *romanticism, enlightenment, poets, revolution*

### ROMANTICISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL POET

Romantic poets were deeply concerned with the notion of the individual self and its potential for self-expression. For instance, Wordsworth's focus on the poet as a "man speaking to men" in Preface to Lyrical Ballads highlighted the belief that poetry was a personal and emotional endeavor. Modern poets, such as Walt Whitman and Sylvia Plath, would similarly explore the relationship between personal identity and language. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* reflects the Romantic ideal of individualism, with its expansive vision of the self as both universal and unique. Plath's work, especially in *Ariel*, channels Romantic introspection into more confessional and often darker expressions of the self. The notion of "the poet as an individual voice" remains a central concern in much of modern poetry, suggesting a direct lineage from the Romantic emphasis on personal subjectivity.

### NATURE AS A MIRROR OF THE SELF

One of the most enduring legacies of Romanticism is the use of nature as both a setting and a metaphor for human emotions. The Romantics believed that the natural world had a deep connection to the human soul and often depicted it as a reflection of the inner workings of the mind. Wordsworth's depiction of nature in poems like *Tintern Abbey* illustrates nature as a source of spiritual solace and moral clarity. Modern poets, such as Ted Hughes and Mary Oliver, continue to use nature as a framework for exploring human emotion and existential themes. For example, in Hughes's *Crow* and Oliver's *American Primitive*, nature is not only a setting for personal reflection but also a space for confronting the darker aspects of life. The romantic view of nature as a repository of emotional truth and as a source of renewal continues to influence how modern poets engage with the environment in their work.

### EMOTION, IMAGINATION, AND THE SUBLIME

Romanticism's focus on the expression of intense emotion and the cultivation of imagination as a source of knowledge was revolutionary in its departure from the rationalism of the Enlightenment. The Sublime—a concept associated with both awe and terror—was central to Romantic aesthetics. Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* and Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* are prime examples of poetry that sought to invoke a powerful emotional response through vivid imagery and the exploration of overwhelming natural forces. In modern poetry, writers such as Rainer Maria Rilke, W. B. Yeats, and even contemporary poets like Derek Walcott and Louise Glück continue to engage with the idea of the Sublime, albeit in more varied and nuanced ways. Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, for example, reflects a modern engagement with the vastness of existence and the relationship between the self and the universe, drawing directly from Romantic themes of awe and mystery.

#### THE CRITIQUE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND ALIEANATION

Another important aspect of Romanticism was its critique of the industrial revolution and its impact on human life, a theme that resonates in modern poetry's critique of technological advancement and its dehumanizing effects. William Blake's prophetic poems such as *Songs of Experience* expressed concern over the alienating effects of industrialization, a theme revisited by modern poets like T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, where the mechanization of life is reflected in the fragmented, disillusioned state of the modern world. The modern cityscape, alienation, and loss of personal connection to nature echo Romantic critiques of the Industrial Revolution, highlighting the continued relevance of these concerns in contemporary poetry.

#### THE ROMANTIC LEGACY MODERN POETIC FORMS AND TECHNIQUES

Though modern poetry often breaks away from the Romantic emphasis on form and meter, the freedom to experiment with poetic structure can also be seen as a direct continuation of Romantic ideals. The Romantics were pioneers in loosening the strictures of classical form, which opened the door for the free verse and innovative structures seen in the works of modern poets. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Emily Dickinson's unorthodox punctuation are examples of Romantic innovations in form that paved the way for 20th-century free verse poets like Ezra Pound, Allen Ginsberg, and Langston Hughes. These modern poets, like their Romantic predecessors, use form as a tool for self-expression, often seeking to capture the immediacy of their emotional or intellectual states.

#### CONCLUSION

The influence of Romanticism on modern poetry is profound and multifaceted. From the emphasis on individualism and personal expression to the use of nature as both a literal and metaphorical backdrop for exploring the self, the themes and techniques established by the Romantics continue to shape how poets approach language, emotion, and identity. In many ways, modern poetry can be seen as a continuation, revision, or reaction to the core tenets of Romanticism, engaging with its central ideas in new and innovative ways. As such, the Romantic period remains a pivotal moment in the evolution of poetry, with its legacy still alive and well in the works of contemporary poets.



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