University of Guelma Mrs. BRAHMIA

English Department

1st year

**Literary Movements: Romanticism**

**Movement origin:**

Romanticism as a literary movement lasted from 1798, with the *publication of Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth to the death of Wordsworth in 1850. During this period, emphasis shifted to the importance of the individual's experience in the world and one's subjective interpretation of that experience, rather than interpretations handed down by the church or tradition.

William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Blake were the principal poets of the Romantic Movement in England. Romantic poetry had reached its zenith in the works of John Keats, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

**Major elements of romanticism**

1. It traces individual subjective experience.
2. It draws heavily on imagination.
3. The green countryside became more attractive as a place of recreation and an escape from the ever-increasing filth and disorder that industry brought to towns.
4. There was a growing suspicion of the established church and a turn toward pantheism (the belief that God is a part of the created world rather than separate from it).
5. Feeling and emotion were viewed as superior to logic and analysis.

**Themes:**

**-Pantheism:**   Pantheism, which is the belief that there is no difference between the creator and creation, holds that God is not separate from the world, but manifested in it. This idea was popular among romantics.

        -**The Self:**

       This idea was developed during the twentieth century as part of modern psychological theory, but at the time of the romantics it was a novelty. Previous writers had focused on politics, business, trade, and the lives of royalty or other famous people. The lives of ordinary people had been deemed unworthy of general interest. However, the romantics believed the ordinary individual had the same rights and worth as any leader. They focus more on the experiences of ordinary people.

**-Emotion and Feeling:**   In keeping with an emphasis on the individual self, the romantics valued emotion, intuition, and feeling over logic.

**Style:**

**-Rejection of Rigid Poetic Form:** In keeping with their glorification of the unlimited freedom and potential of the individual, the romantics rejected old poetic convention and asserted the value of the language spoken by ordinary people. They believed that the form of a verse should be shaped by the subject matter, in contrast to the neoclassicists before them, who used rigid forms and shaped their material to fit them.

**Emphasis on Poetry** : An interesting aspect of the romantic period was the emphasis on poetry. Most of the great romantic writers were poets instead of novelists

**Representative authors and works:**

**Nathaniel Hawthorne** (1804-1864), American novelist, whose works are deeply concerned with the ethical problems of sin and punishment. Powerful symbolism and psychological complexity distinguish the fiction of Nathaniel Hawthorne. His works explore the darker side of human nature, especially themes of guilt and efforts at reconciliation. Among his best known works is: The Scarlet Letter (1850).

***Jane Austen :( 1775-1817)*** Austen began writing as a teenager and initially shared her writing only with family and friends. When she eventually published, she did so anonymously. Her best-known works are *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *Emma* (1816). She influenced many later writers, including Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell. Austen's books have endured into the twenty-first century as some of the few classics widely read for pleasure. She died from illness on July 18, 1817, in Winchester, England.

**William Blake** (1757–1827), William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* (1789)and *Songs of Experience* (1794) are his best-known works of poetry and have had a lasting influence on children’s literature. It explores the innocence of children’s understanding of God and the natural world. Some of these poems celebrate the joyful potential of childhood, for, like Wordsworth, Blake believed children are closer to the divine than adults are. In *Songs of Experience*, by contrast, Blake provides the street-wise cynical perspective that only children who have suffered in the world or been betrayed by adults can possibly know or understand. Blake came to be known as a leading romantic poet and philosopher, influencing other poets such as William Butler Yeats.