Marquette University
e-Publications@Marquette

Bachelors' Theses

Dissertations, Theses, and Professional Projects

6-1929

Diction in Certain English Neo-classic and Romantic Writers

Helen Alice O'Neill

Follow this and additional works at: https://epublications.marquette.edu/bachelor_essays

 Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

T635

DICTION IN CERTAIN ENGLISH NEO-CLASSIC AND ROMANTIC WRITERS

By

HELEN ALICE O'NEILL

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree of Bachelor of Arts

0378.82
On2l

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY JUNE 1929

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

"DICTION IN CERTAIN ENGLISH

NEO-CLASSIC AND ROMANTIC WRITERS"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DICTION IN CERTAIN ENGLISH NEO-CLASSIC AND ROMANTIC WRITERS

INTRODUCTION

It is a truism that literary form changes with the changing ideas and emotions of different literary eras. Neo-classic regularity commences the age of rationalism and intellectual enlightenment. A certain formalism limits the freedom of literary speech and characterises our age of mere opinion and chaos. The Neo-classic and Romantic eras in English literature are from the viewpoint of form diametrically opposite. In other aspects they are not so widely different but in form and expression we find a distinct variance.

Diction is an essential element in form and it is upon this that we shall concentrate our efforts. We shall attempt to discover wherein the choice of language of the Neo-classic writers and the Romantic writers differ and to trace the origin and influences which brought about the difference. For example of varying diction we

shall take the representative authors of each period and by certain of their works reveal the vast difference in the selection of words for the expression of an idea.

Disagreeing as to what constituted good literature it was inevitable that the authors of the two eras should produce poetry and prose which was so widely different in many aspects. The Neo-Classicists did not conceive that every word in the language as being adaptable to poetry or even to excellent prose. Reacting against this narrowness, the Romantics came forth with a more free and naturalistic conception of what was necessary for literature.

The question was no means a new one. It had been discussed in the time of Horace; it had been raised in France by the Pleiad, and afterward discussed by every French critic; it was familiar in England since the publication of Lyly's "Euphues"[1].

The language used by poets very largely changes according to the age in which they live. The writings of the various ages show that poetry like politics is an outward mode of expressing the active principles of

1. Courthope, John. "Life in Poetry, Law in Taste"

social life. Romance was heard in the voice of Wordsworth sending out his thought into the heart of nature; in the voice of Byron, rebellious against the laws of Society; in the voice of Shelley dreaming of the destinies of humanity. For universal conceptions such as these, Romance has been the fitting vehicle of expression.

Men have always differed in the choice of language for their subjects. The controversey continued through the ages of English literature. We shall pause at the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to make a survey of the representative authors and writings of the period to show that the problem had not been settled and that there were still wide variances in the matter of diction.

The obligations to such works as William John Courthope's "Life in Poetry, Law in Taste", Oliver Eltons "Survey of English Literature," Dr. Harko G. De Maar's "History of Modern English Romanticism", and Louis Cazamian's "History of English Literature" are acknowledged with appreciation and gratitude.

PART I

DICTION IN ENGLISH NEO-CLASSICISM

PART I

Chapter 1 Survey of Neo-classic Period

The change from one ideal of life to another is always gradual. The alteration is not noticeable for a time but at length the transformation is perceptible. So it was in England after the Restoration.

The theatres opened again and were crowded with gay spectators. The old plays were revived--Shakespeare's and Jonson's and the romantic dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher. Yet, one day, men became conscious of change. They responded less eagerly to the burning idealisms of the Elizabethan period. The dramas of Shakespeare seemed, indeed, the work of genius, but it was a mild and romantic genius in need of restraint. For nearly a hundred years following the Restoration there was a reaction against the romanticism that had been the chief characteristic of literature and life in England before that time. Violent emotions, undue enthusiasms, were to be repressed, or if they were suffered to appear, it must be with due regard to good form and in accordance with stated rules. The Elizabethans had been interested in story and character. They had

not thought much about strict rules of form. The new age was interested in character but not in individuality. It preferred people who were types--the typical lover, the typical king, the typical heroine.

The names by which periods of literature designate themselves, or which they receive from the succeeding age, are not always those which a distant posterity would choose for them, with the help of the perspective of centuries. It is for the sake of convenience, and according to a tradition which dates back to the end of the eighteenth century, that we still term "classical" the generation of which Pope is the center, and so to say the symbol. Yet this title "classical" answered to their deepest desires; it well defines the nature of their doctrines, their effort and their faith.

Thus the phase of literary history to which this name has been given strives to live up to the ideals set for itself. Certain temperaments and certain individuals, come to the fore in time for the complete realization of this age. Pope, and the group of poets who acknowledge or tolerate his superiority are naturally the center of a literature so attentive to the laws of form, that the cadenced and compact ex-

pression of an idea is more precious in their eyes than the idea itself. The word, the manner of expression, and the form are wholly dominant over any intrinsic value that the subject might have.

Chapter 2. Alexander Pope

Foremost among the representatives of this classic era in English literature is Alexander Pope. Gifted for clear thinking, his agile mind grasps the characteristic angles of things. The intimate and essential quality, the subtle shades also, which establish fine transitions between them, the complexities, and the depths often escape him; but no one better possesses the definite and accurate mental images whence there springs of itself a striking relation of terms--an idea. Rationality thus consists here, before all, of keen and luminous perceptions.

"The writer knows how to convey the easy, happy exercise of intelligence, how to render it by the most suitable, the briefest and most telling words; and thus the pleasure which the poetry of Pope procures for us rises primarily from a joyous

intellectual activity which moves among ideas, seizes them, combines them, arranges them into groups with so much ease that it seems to rise above the uncertitude and confusion of human thought."[1]. Pope, however, like the other Neo-classicists lacked color and imaginative appeal in his diction. There is no strangeness, no remoteness, no sense of mystery. It is all clear, precise, and brilliant, but not suggestive or picturesque. He portrays the hard perfection of Augustan diction.

"Those rules of old discovered, not
devised,
Are nature still, but nature methodized;
Nature, like liberty is but restrained
By the same laws which first herself
ordained.

(Essay on Criticism)

His poetry contains cadence and rhythm but yet it appeals to the reader as a mere formula devoid of color and emotion. It is beautiful in its intellectuality but yet too severe a beauty.

1. Cazamian--History of English Literature--Vol. 2

"Language", Pope says, "ought to be the vestment of thought, nothing is more dangerous than false eloquence, where the foliage of words abound, the fruits of sense are scarce."[1].

A true exemplar of the age, Pope is a poet of artificial manners rather than of feeling. His works were written for an artificial and conventional society. They speak the language not of the world but of the city. We may find in them strokes or worldly good sense and acuteness, a delicate and polished irony, a neatness and distinctness of diction, but we search in vain for any of the higher attributes of the creative intellect. He is polished, urbane, and select, a master of language and form. We have a passage from his "Essay on Criticism" which is typical of his opinion in regard to expression.

"Expression is the dress of thought,
and still
Appears more decent as more suitable.

1. Hist. of Engl. Lit. Cazamian--Vol. II
p. 95.

A wile conceit in pompous words
expressed
Is like a clown in regal purple dressed."

Chapter 3. John Dryden and Other Contemporaries

The greatest writer in the latter half of the seventh century is John Dryden. It was due to his contributions to English prose that the secret of adjusting the style of prose-writing to that of well-bred and modern conversation was discovered. However, he could drop into verse when he so desired. Because of this, the eighteenth century was tempted to make a decided distinction, not merely between prosaic and poetic diction, but between usage and applications of the dictions themselves. It treated in poetry a great many subjects which would have been much better treated in prose; if clearness and straightforwardness were attained they considered the whole duty of prose accomplished and that any further attraction was a kind of trespass on the rights of poetry.

To correct this limitation was no doubt one of the main objects of the notable Periodical Essay

which followed. In "The Tattler", Swift has a direct attack on vulgarisms, especially colloquial expressions and slang. But Steele's and still more Addison's way, was not an attack but the indirect exposure of vulgarity and inelegance by the practice of elegant and refined writing.

Dryden's work is all couched in clear, flaming, rather loosely jointed English, carefully avoiding rhetoric, and striving always to reproduce the ease and flaw of cultured conversation, rather than the more closely knit style of "literary" prose. As an example of this, we may take the first few sentences from "An Essay on Dramatic Poesy" on Shakespeare.[1]

> "To begin then with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too."

1. Greenlaw-Miles---"Literature and Life"

Dryden's methods were the methods of the four great prose writers who followed him, Defoe, Addison, Steele, and Swift.

Something had happened to the English language. The assimilation of latinisms and the revival of obsolete terms of speech had ceased; it had become finally a more or less fixed form, and acquired a grammatical fixity which it had not possessed in Elizabethan times. What they did for prose these classic writers did even more exactly for verse. As the period progressed an increasing habit of wilful difficulties in language and versification was evident.

Defoe, especially, has the gift of perfect lucidity. No matter how complicated the subject he is expanding, the matter is set forth so plainly and so clearly that the least literate of readers could understand it. Yet the form is fixed and Neo-classic in construction.

Chapter 4. Samuel Johnson

The middle years of the eighteenth century did not show any distinct cleavage in the history of ideas or in that of form. Classicism continues to

rule after the age of Pope. The doctrine seems to be definitely established. Although society has become more and more middle-class there still reigns a rational literature, in which the dominant stamp is that of its aristocratic origins. The central figure in this age of bourgeois classicism is Samuel Johnson.

He attempted various types of writing before he finally became a success. His outstanding work is the "Dictionary of the English Language." The grammarian was a great deal more successful than the essayist. His design is above all to "preserve the purity, and determine the sense of our English idiom"; while the value of words and their pronunciations are still in a state of instability, he hoped to put an end to variations which his instinct condemned; the need of a set urle, a purely classical need is the impulse he obeys.

Chapter 5. Summary of Neo-classic Diction

Viewed as a whole we find Neo-classic works rational in their inspiration. The authors of the period do not choose subjects of concrete nature

and treat them accordingly. To the contrary their themes incline towards abstraction. The choice of terms, the quality of the style, are determined by a deep preference of the mind.

> "Classical art is a priesthood by virtue of which the Modern Mind can raise itself, through deliberate imitation to the level of the august quality of ancient literatures."[1].

Since the Neo-classicists desired to raise the standard of literature to the highest level of nobleness, that of an equality with the Ancients whom they venerated, the problem presented itself as to the location of this nobleness. The subject about which to be written undoubtedly enters but noble subjects call for noble language and it is through language that this ideal of nobleness and dignity could be felt. Because of the intrinsic content, some subjects must be familiar and simple but here intervenes another effect of the classical ideal. Stress is

1. Cazamian--Hist. of Eng. Lit.--Vol. II--p. 95

not placed upon the originality of the idea, but upon the value of the form. It is a systematic search for verbal intensity which lies within the limits imposed by serene and correct taste. The Neo-classicists refused to select a language for their thought which contained an expressive force of concrete, familiar terms which are realistic and descriptive of life. They permit an aristocratic purism to take possession of literature---it is selective language and distinction of form which counts. They lose all connection with Nature and reality, and the language isolates itself from the necessary sources of realistic expression. It is this loss of connection which the Romanticists attempted, and accomplished, to re-establish.

Stereotyped expressions transmitted from poet to poet constitutes the poetic diction of the eighteenth century. The author no longer considers the internal aspect of the subject, but the work is a mere verbal creation which answers to a mechanical art. The Ancients were the object of the utmost veneration and it was upon their accomplishments that the Neo-classicists placed all their ambitions of imitation. Literary motives were substituted

for spontaneous impulses and writing became purely mechanical. Gradually mechanism almost completely replaced life, and the authors became mere subjects of a set rule. And thus the spirit of verbal affectation contributed to the formation of a set of epithets, phrases, and terms, which from the time of Pope, and especially after his day, overloaded poetry with unbearable elegance. Poetic diction is easily perceptible in the Pope of Windsor Forest to whom shepherds are decidedly "swains", fish, "the scaley breed", the sea, "the watery plains". The affected diction is especially prevalent in Pope, but it develops in many of his followers. This smooth, lucid, polished, urbane formula existed for a century as the language of the writers. And because of the outstanding intellectual fruitions of the century it is known in history as the Augustan Age of English Literature.

PART II

DICTION IN ENGLISH ROMANTICISM

PART II

Chapter 1. Diction in English Romanticism

Described by Edwin Greenlaw as "a return to the medieval, as a return to nature", and as a "rebirth of wonder", English Romanticism marks a changing current in the trend of literature. A revolution in form and style, it stands out in marked antithesis to the strictness and artificiality of the preceding Neo-classic period.

The Neo-classicism of the Augustan Age had been so fixed and immutable; it had been adapted strictly to what good breeding and good manners had demanded. The influence of the contemporary political conditions was so pronounced. John Dryden had been a Court poet, ever careful to sway his allegiance with the changing monarchy. Pope, likewise, had been intimate with the great people of his day and his followers too had enjoyed the patronage of many noble lords. The effect of this was to give the prestige of social usage to the

1. Greenlaw-Miles "Literature and Life"

verse in which they wrote and the language they used.

> "There was", said Dr. Johnson, "before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar or too remote to defeat the purpose of a poet."[1].

This poetic diction, refined from the grossness of domestic use, was the standard poetic speech of the eighteenth century. The heroic couplet in which it was cast was the standard metre. So that the first object of the revolt of the Romantics was the purely literary one of abandoning the evil of an unreal and artificial manner of writing. The desired simplicity both in language and in style.

1. Modern English Literature--G. H. Mair

Chapter 2. Robert Burns

New currents were beginning to sway men's minds and sweep away the conventions of the Augustans. Representing a complete break with the ideals of the Augustans, we have the poet and singer, Robert Burns. He wrote about simple themes, topics that Pope and his school would not have regarded as fit subjects for poetry. Pope wrote about fashionable life, or put into finely polished verse, theories about literature or the moral reflections of his time. Burns wrote about dogs, mice, the field daisies, the life of peasants. In his poetry, the language of unlettered men took the place of the artificial language of people whose language was as formal as their lives. Burns also wrote about love, in a series of poignant lyrics such as English poetry had not known since the Elizabethan period. He expressed a sense of the dignity of simple life everywhere. He made no apology for his cottager; indeed, he assented that the true greatness of his native Scotland was to be sought in such life as he described in "Cotters' Saturday Night." Burns selects as his words

those of universal appeal, devoid of urban artificiality. One cannot imagine Pope writing this:

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy
green braes;
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in
thy praise.
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream;
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not
her dream."

Burns possessed a supreme gift of song which he had inherited from those musical ancestors who had gone before. All his life he was the singer of a parish, the last of a long line of forebearers who had used the Scottish lowland vernacular to rhyme in, about their neighbors and their scandals, their loves, and their church. If he is to be considered as an innovator in England it is because he brought with him the highly individual style of Scottish local vernacular verse; he was no innovator to his own people, but a fulfillment. He brought pathos and romance into lyric and song. This Scottish poet is not original. In most all of his works there are some traces of the Scottish vernac-

ular school. What he did accomplish, however, was to pour into these forms the incomparable richness of a personality whose fini and brilliance and humor transcended all tradition. It was a personality which towered over the formalism and correctness of his time. His use of familiar forms explains more than anything else, his immediate fame. He was the pride of his countrymen because they could hail him on the instant as something familiar and at the same time more splendid than anything they knew. He spoke in a tongue they could understand.

"Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' Sorrow and Care,
I gie them a skelp as they're creeping alang,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats and an auld Scottish
sang.
Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come ease or come travail, come pleasure or pain,
My warst word is "Welcome, and welcome again!"

(Contented Wi' Little)
(Stanzas 1 and 3)

Because English was a foreign tongue to Burns, only the weakest side of his character, his

his sentimentalism, finds expression in it. In the vernacular, he wrote the language he spoke, a language whose natural force and color had become enriched by literary use. It held within it an unmatched faculty for pathos, a capacity for expressing a kindly humor, a power of descriptive vividness that English could not give. It is hard to conceive of any of the Neo-classicists writing:

"Ha! whaur ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly;
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho', faith! I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place."

(To A Louse)
(Stanza 1.)

The accent, the rhythm, the air of it are all Scottish, and it was a Burns thinking in his native tongue who wrote it.

Chapter 3. William Wordsworth

A true nature poet and typical exemplar of the Romantic revival is William Wordsworth. When the

Lyrical Ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge were published in 1798, the preface which Wordsworth wrote as their manifesto hardly touched at all on the poetic imagination or the attitude of the poet to life and nature. The only question is that of diction. He writes:

> "The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with the view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure."
>
> (Preface---First Edition)

And in the longer preface to the second edition, in which the theories of the new school on the nature and methods of the poetic imagination are set forth at length, he returns to the same point.

> "The language, too, of these men (that is those in humble and rustic life) has been adopted---because such men hourly communicate with the least objects from

> which the best part of language is originally derived, and because from their rank in society, and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple unelaborated expressions."
>
> (Preface---Second Edition)

It was Wordsworth's object in his poetry to destroy the armour which concealed the deepest thoughts and feelings and for this reason he chose the language of the common people. He considered it the most sincere expression of the deepest and rarest passion. He aimed to find a suitable language for the new territory of human life which he was conquering, or regaining, for poetic treatment. This was the life of humble but not ignoble men and women with their tragic or pathetic fates, their patience and dignity of character, and their occasional instinct for rightness of expression. He felt he had, not a mere territory, but a whole world, to recover for poetry. The desire once there, the problem then was---what language was he to use? He wanted it to be such that the supposed

speakers therein would use; and also that the diction of the poet, when speaking about such characters should not be discordant with theirs. He did not mean that all such men might say was fitted to poetry, or congenial to metre and to the effect it produces on the feelings. When he spoke of language he actually meant vocabulary, the individual words admitted into verse. Nor did he consider that the speech of the simple need be vulgar or trifling, but proved that in practice it could be raised to actual nobility.

Some readers consider Wordsworth often sentimental and insincere but in the majority of his works there seems to be no lack of genius.

"No Nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides."

(The Solitary Reaper)

His selection of descriptive words for his poetry is excellent. They are simple, comprehensive, yet adaptable and beautiful. We may find this especially well portrayed in the following:

"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hill,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
and twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten-thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in Sprightly dance."

(I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud)

When discussing the excellence of Wordsworth's descriptive powers and choice of diction we must not overlook:

"The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;

Waters or a starry night
are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where 'er I go
That there hath past away a glory from the
earth."

(Ode--Intimations of Immortality)

Wordsworth is often considered inconsistent in his theories and practice as regards diction. Coleridge writes that much of his best poetry, even when his subjects are realistic, escapes from his definition. It must be admitted that often times his words are inane and meaningless. His characters speak the language far beyond the limits of their position. Despite this infrequent inconsistency, Wordsworth does possess the command of exalted and elaborated style. He did misapply his theories of diction at various points in his writings but the excellence and genius of his work overwhelm these misapplications and his position as a truly great poet cannot be disputed.

Chapter 4. Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats

Contemporaries of Wordsworth, and likewise

outstanding representatives of the period, we have in Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats.

Coleridge is really more noteworthy for what he suggested to others than for what he did in himself. He is capable of large tracts of dreariness and flatness, and he seldom finished what he began. The "Ancient Mariner" is really the only completed thing of the highest quality in the whole of his work. Yet, he donated a great portion to the pioneer work and aided much in the development of Shelley and Keats. His works are to a great extent filled with the spirit of the supernatural and his choice of words is governed by this factor.

"Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare, Life-in-Death, was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

(Ancient Mariner)

Of all the English poets the most completely lyrical is Percy Bysshe Shelley. He does not often speak of the implements he employs in his art or muse upon the power of words in themselves but he appears to write naturally and from the very emotions of his own heart. His highest or his most characteristic sort of language has great purity and magnificence. He attains great heights both in form and beauty of expression and thought.

"What then was I? She slumbered with the
dead.
Glory and joy and peace had come and gone.
Doth the cloud perish when the beams are
fled
Which steeped its skirts in gold? Or,
dark and lone,
Doth it not through the paths of night,
unknown,
On outspread wings of its own wind
upborne,
Pour rain upon the earth? The stars are
shown
W'en the cold moon sharpens her silver
horn

Under the sea, and make the wide night
not forlorn.

(Revolt of Islam)

In the greater part of his poetry, his language is poured out, lavished, and rushes forth like a stream, but this does not detract from its excellence or purity. His diction is his own and marks that of a truly great poet. He perhaps has an over-fondness for certain words but this was only a part of his nature. No poet is richer in terms descriptive of the elements and their attributes.

"That orbed maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn."

(The Cloud)

The objects he chooses to describe have a universal appeal and the profuseness of adjectives which he possesses represents them cleanly and vividly.

"The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;

Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou are unseen, but yet I hear
thy shrill delight.
(To A Skylark)

A Romanticist, but yet widely different from his contemporaries is John Keats. More dependent on his predecessors, his works bear the marks of Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, and Chapman. He was thoroughly familiar with these authors and he was especially influenced in his writings by Milton and Spenser. He drew on their diction, borrowed epithets, formations, and compounds are intermingled. This may be true in a great many of his works, but yet definite traces of other poets are seldom found in his greater passages. His aim is to find words which will enable him to pass on to us, with the least of loss, the precise kind of pleasure, including painful pleasure, that he has received. He achieves this aim, not all at once. No words but his own could express the profound satisfactoriness, the cordial and intimate effect, that Keats, owing to his gift, attains in his best moments.

"I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree
wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on the summer eves.
(Ode to a Nightingale)

CONCLUSION

By a study of certain English Neo-classic and Romantic authors and their works we have discovered how widely opposed is their choice of language and their manner of expression. We have the restricted and limited diction of Dryden, the polished and severely intellectual selections of Pope with whom the period reached the zenith of its perfection.

Neo-classic authors convey nothing but what they say and what they say is complete. It is always

vigorous and direct, never merely suggestive, never given to half-statement and never obscure. One feels that it is an instrument of expression, sharp, polished, and shining, always bright and defined in detail.

However, in diametrical opposition to this are the flowing, descriptive words of the poet Wordsworth, the realistic and simple diction of Shelley, Coleridge, and Keats. The works of the Romantics contain half-spoken suggestions of hints that imagination will piece together, of words that contain deeper and hidden meanings, subjects that stir the longings and memories of men.

The Neo-classicists were not realists as were the Romantics. Caring only for uniformity they had no desire to stress truth in detail. They liked the broad, generalized descriptive style of Milton better than the style of Shakespeare. Out of this grew the "poetic diction" of the eighteenth century, a special treasury of words and phrases deemed suitable for poetry, providing poets with a common fund of imagery, remaining from them the necessity of seeing life and nature each for himself. The poetry which Dryden and Pope wrote was polished, urbane,

formal, and intellectual. Their followers sought to follow this pattern. Thus poetry became reduced to mere formula, devoid of the emotions and individual possions of men.

The essential element in the matter of poetic diction is its quality--whether it is sincere and capable of expressing powerfully and directly one's deepest feelings. In the history of literature, we find poetic diction, special vocabularies and forms for poetry, that have these qualities; the diction of the Greek choruses, of the ballad writers of Scottish poets who followed Chaucer. The writers of the Augustan Age did not select a diction of that quality. Words were chosen as they added to perfection of form, not as they expressed the author's emotions and feelings.

Consequently, with the entrance of Romanticism and the return to nature the current of literature swerved from this polish and correctness to the more simple and rustic and portrayed nature and its elements in the spoken language of men.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Albert, Edward

History of English Literature

New York---Thomas Crowell Co.---1924

pp. 190-450

2. Beatty, Arthur

William Wordsworth--His Doctrine and Art in Historical Relation.

Madison---1927

pp. 55-68

3. Beers, Henry R.

A History of English Romanticism in Nineteenth Century

New York---Henry Holt and Co.---1901

pp. 48-89

This volume is a sequel to the volume "A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Centruy." The author attempts to show that the medievalising literature of the nineteenth century is at least twenty times as great as that of the eighteenth century, both in bulk and value. He does not confine himself to

English Romanticism but includes the romantic epoch in France and Germany.

4. Beeching, H. C.

"Paradise of English Poetry"

New York--Macmillan and Co.---1893

pp. 1-123

5. Cazamian, Louis

"History of English Literature"

New York---Macmillan Co.---1927

pp. 83-

This book is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the origins, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the second with the Modern and Contemporary periods. This entails obvious difference of presentment and method. English literature has been presented in a genetic order, and divided into periods, each of which corresponds with a broad phase in the moral history of England; and with her social history as well, in so far as the facts of society and those of intellectual life, offer a natural harmony.

6. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor.
"Biographia Literaria"
Cambridge University Press---1920
pp. 201-205

7. Courthope, William John
"Life in Poetry, Law in Taste"
New York and London---Macmillan Co.---1901
pp. 1-298
The author sets forth principles and doctrines of outstanding authors both of ancient and modern times to illustrate the essentials of good poetry. He quotes from Horace and Milton extensively.

8. Crawshaw, William H.
"The Making of English Literature"
New York--D. C. Heath and Co.---1907 and 1924
pp. 179-328

9. De Maar, Dr. Harko G.
"A History of Modern English Romanticism"
London---Humphrey Milford---Oxford University Press
1924
pp. 125-131
This book is devoted to a discussion of the relations between Elizabethan Romanticism and the rise of Modern Romanticism. He discusses

the meanings of the terms "romantic" and "classic". He criticises and quotes Spenser and Milton and their influence on later Romanticists. He likewise compares Elizabethan and Modern Romanticism.

10. Elton, Oliver.
"A Survey of English Literature" 1780-1830
London---Edward Arnold---1912
Vol. II; pp. 88-93; 220-224; 252-256; 267-271; 327-331; 343-344.
Book is concerned chiefly with the outstanding poets of the Romantic period in English Literature. He discusses the quality of their work and illustrates by their writings. He also includes some dramatists but with these we are not concerned.

11. Gasse, Edmund.
"English Literature"
New York--Grasset and Dunlap---1903
pp. 176-223

12. Greenlaw, Edwin; and Miles,Dudley.
"Literature and Life"
Chicago, Atlanta, New York---Scott, Foresman and Co.
1924
pp. 263-448

13. Mair, G. H.

"Modern English Literature"

New York---Henry Holt and Co.

London: Williams and Norgate---1914

Entire Book

14. Newcomer, Alphonso; and Andrews, Alice.

"Twelve Centuries of English Poetry"

Chicago, New York---Scott, Foresman and Co.

1910

pp. 428-496

15. Saintsbury, George.

"The Peace of the Agustans"

London---G. Bell and Sons, Ltd.---1916

pp. 9-212

This is considered a survey of English Literature as a rest and refreshment. It is a survey of the literary work of the eighteenth century made more attractive by the author bringing out a particular and systematic view of some of the authors and their works. He also discusses the novel to quite an extent.

16. Shaw, Thomas B.

"Outlines of English Literature"

New York---Sheldon and Co.---1852

pp. 209-228

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
T635

17. Roberts, W. Rhys.
"Longinus on the Sublime"
Cambridge---University Press---1907
pp. 186-211

18. Woods, George Benjamin, Ph. D.
"English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement"
Scott, Foresman and Co.
Chicago, Atlanta, New York---1916
pp. 317-327
This book is concerned with the best and most characteristic work of the men who made the years 1798-1832, one of the notable epochs of English Literature; and to add to this body of prose and verse, on which critical appreciation has set its approval, a history of the growth, contrast, and feelings of the movement.

APPROVED:

Thomas P. Whelan Major Professor

W. J. Grace, Sq. Dean

Date May 1, 1929

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY