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# Unit III – Romantic Period

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2. Coleridge’s Lyrical Ballads, Biographia Literaria

Coleridge

Life:
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on 21 October 1772 in Devonshire, England.
- He was called as Estese (S.T.C).
- He attended Christ’s Hospital School in London, where he met lifelong friend, Charles Lamb.
- He entered Jesus College, University of Cambridge in 1791.
- He studied philosophy at Göttingen University and mastered the German language.
- He was physically unhealthy, which may have stemmed from a bout of rheumatic fever and other childhood illnesses.
- He was treated for these conditions with laudanum, which fostered a lifelong opium addiction.
- He married the sister of Southey’s fiancée Sara Fricker in 1795.
- After drifting away from his own wife, he later fell in love with Sara Hutchinson, the sister of Wordsworth’s future wife.
- He spent the last eighteen years of his life at Highgate, near London, England, as a patient under the care of Dr. James Gillman.
- He died on 25 July 1834 in Highgate, England.

Career:
- Coleridge was an English lyrical poet, literary critic and philosopher.
- He was a founder of the Romantic Movement in England with his friend William Wordsworth.
- He was one of the members of the Lake Poets.
- He was called as ‘Sage of Highgate’.
- He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1824.
- He coined many familiar words and phrases, including ‘willing suspension of disbelief’.
- He was influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson and American transcendentalism.
- Coleridge and Robert Southey were influenced by Plato’s Republic, developed a plan for a ’Pantisocracy (equal government by all)’.
It is a vision of an ideal community to be founded on the banks of the **Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania** in America.

Coleridge and Southey envisioned the men sharing the workload, a great library, philosophical discussions, and freedom of religious and political beliefs.


He travelled to London to enlist in the 15th Dragoons, using the pseudonym **Silas Tomkyn Comberbache**.

**Works:**

**Poetry:**

- **Christabel**
  
  It is a fragmentary tale which is known for its musical rhythm, language, and Gothic tradition.

- **The Conversation poems:**
  - The Eolian Harp (1795)
  - Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement (1795)
  - This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison (1797)
  - Frost at Midnight (1798)
  - Fears in Solitude (1798)
  - The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem (1798)
  - Dejection: An Ode (1802)
  - To William Wordsworth (1807)

The eight of Coleridge's poems listed above are now often discussed as a group entitled "**Conversation poems**".

The term itself was coined in 1928 by **George McLean Harper**, who borrowed the subtitle of *The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem* (1798) to describe the seven other poems as well.

- Fears in Solitude (1798)
- Kubla Khan Or A Vision in a Dream, A Fragment
Sibylline Leaves: A Collection of Poems (1817)
Dejection: An Ode (1802)
The Devil’s Walk: A Poem (1830)

Prose:
- A Moral and Political Lecture (1795)
- Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly Character (1825)
- Conciones ad Populum, or Addresses to the People (1795)
- On the Constitution of Church and State (1830)
- Seven Lectures upon Shakespeare and Milton (1856)
- The Plot Discovered, or an Address to the People Against Ministerial Treason (1795)
- A Lay Sermon (1816)
- Zapolya: A Christmas Tale (1817)

Drama:
- Remorse (1813):
  - It is a tragedy in five acts which is a revision of a drama called Osorio.
- The Fall of Robespierre (1794):
  - It is a historical drama written by Coleridge and Southey.

Periodicals:
- The Watchman:
  - Coleridge edited the liberal political periodical ‘The Watchman’ in 1796.
- The Friend:
  - Coleridge edited with Sara Hutchinson the literary and political magazine ‘The Friend’ in 1809-10.

Coleridge’s poetry was first recognised, winning the Browne Gold medal for an ode on the slave trade.
His poems Christabel; Kubla Khan, a Vision; The Pains of Sleep were published together in 1816.
His critical work, especially on William Shakespeare, was highly influential, and he helped introduce **German idealist philosophy** to English-speaking culture.

He gave several series of lectures, mainly on **William Shakespeare** and other literary topics.

He wrote on a wide variety of subjects, which he recorded in his **Notebooks** – daily meditations on life.

He used the phrase ‘**Motiveless Malignity**’ in his ‘**Lectures on Shakespeare**’.

According to Coleridge……

- **Primary imagination** is the power of receiving impressions of the external world.
- **Secondary imagination** is the power of creating impressions of the internal mind.
- **Imagination** is a chemical compound which dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate.
- **Fancy** is a mechanical operation of mind which has fixities and definites.
- His theory of imagination is called as ‘**ESEMPLASTIC**’.

**Quotes:**

- Coleridge wrote an Epitaph for himself in 1833:
  
  “That he who many a year with toil of breath
  Found death in life, may here find in life in death”

- “No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher.” - Coleridge

- “I am not fit for public life; yet the light shall stream to a far distance from the taper in my cottage” – Coleridge.

- “Shakespeare, no mere child of nature; no automaton of genius; no passive vehicle of inspiration possessed by the spirit, not possessing it” – Coleridge

- “Coleridge’s face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an Arch angel a little damaged.” - Charles Lamb

- “Coleridge was called as hooded eagle among blinking owls” – Shelley

- “Coleridge’s mind moves not from thought to thought but from image to image” – T.S. Eliot
Lyrical Ballads, with a few Other Poems (1798)


The collection is considered the first great work of the Romantic school of poetry and contains Coleridge’s famous poem, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.”

The volume contained nineteen of Wordsworth’s poems and four of Coleridge's poems.

It opened with Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and ended with Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey".

These poems were composed at Alfoxden, Quantock Hills.

The four poems contributed by Coleridge are The Foster-Mother’s Tale, The Dungeon, The Nightingale, and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

The poem titled Love was included only in 1800 edition.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner:

Coleridge’s famous extended ballad “The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere” is the first poem in the 1798 edition of “Lyrical Ballads.” The poem relates the story of a sailor who suffers terribly after he shoots an albatross, and finally learns that “He prayeth best, who loveth best/All things both great and small;/For the dear God who loveth us/He made and loveth all.” “The Ancient Mariner” remains in the 1800, 1802 and 1805 editions of “Lyrical Ballads.” However, its title spelling is modernized, and it appears as the second-to-last rather than the first poem in subsequent editions. In its place at the beginning is Wordsworth’s “Expostulation and Reply.”

The Foster-Mother’s Tale:

The second poem in the 1798 edition is a “dramatic fragment” from Coleridge’s 1797 play “Osorio,” called “The Foster-Mother’s Tale.” The titular speaker recalls the story of a baby found in the woods and raised into a boy whose love of nature and disrespect for cultural constraints eventually leads to his imprisonment: “He had unlawful thoughts of many things:/And though he prayed, he never loved to pray/With holy men, nor in a holy place.” The youth finally escapes and sails to the “new world” to live “among the savage men.”
The Nightingale:

The 1798 edition also includes Coleridge’s poem “The Nightingale, a Conversational Poem,” in which the speaker meditates on the bird’s song as a reminder that “In nature there is nothing melancholy”; any interpretation of the song as carrying notes of sadness stems from human corruption. “The Nightingale, a Conversational Poem” is retained in subsequent editions of “Lyrical Ballads,” with its name changed to “The Nightingale, written in April, 1798,” and appearing later in the collection than it did in the 1798 edition.

The Dungeon:

Coleridge treats human corruption much more directly in “The Dungeon” than in any other poem in “Lyrical Ballads.” The poem is a bitter polemic against the “cure” society has chosen for its ills. This poem too, in keeping with Coleridge’s themes in the first three, valorizes nature’s ability to heal prisoners with its “soft influences ... of love and beauty.” “The Dungeon” appears again in the 1800 edition, but is absent in the 1802 and 1805 editions.

Love:

Coleridge’s ballad “Love,” in which a speaker recalls winning a lady’s heart, is added to the 1800 edition to replace Wordsworth’s poem “The Convict.” The 1800 edition of “Lyrical Ballads” has two volumes, but all of the poems in the second volume are by Wordsworth.

Biographia Literaria

- Biographia Literaria, in full Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions, work by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, published in two volumes in 1817.
- Coleridge’s daughter Sara appended notes and supplementary biographical material to this work which was published in 1847.
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge intended Biographia Literaria to be a short preface to a collection of his poems, Sibylline Leaves (1817), explaining and justifying his own style and practice in poetry.
The work grew to a literary autobiography, including, together with many facts concerning his education and studies and his early literary adventures.

It is an extended criticism of William Wordsworth's theory of poetry as given in the preface to the Lyrical Ballads (a work on which Coleridge collaborated), and a statement of Coleridge's philosophical views.

It is expanded into a two-volume autobiography, mixing memoir, philosophy, religion and literary theory.

It was heavily influenced by German criticism, the evaluation and interpretation of literature.

It is the book that Coleridge wanted to write for a long time, examining the relationships between literature and philosophy.

It began as a conversation between Coleridge and his neighbor, William Wordsworth, although the book did not appear for another seventeen years.

It was the most important work of literary criticism of the English Romantic period, combining philosophy and literary criticism in a new way, and it was lastingly influential.

The first volume of the book recounts the author’s friendship with poets Robert Southey and William Wordsworth.

Coleridge goes on to describe the influences on his philosophical development, from his early teachers to such philosophers as Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, and Friedrich von Schelling.

In the second volume Coleridge concentrates on literary criticism and proposes theories about the creative process and the historical sources of the elements of poetry.

Coleridge himself described Biographia Literaria as an ‘immethodical miscellany’ of ‘life and opinions’.

In 1906, the poet Arthur Symons called the work ‘the greatest book of criticism in English, and one of the most annoying books in any language’.

It has 23 chapters which analyze the philosophical principles of literature ranging from Aristotle to Schelling.
Poetic Theory in Biographia Literaria

- *Biographia Literaria* includes some of the most important English writing on poetic theory.
- Some of it is a response to ideas of poetry advanced by his close friend and collaborator William Wordsworth, first in the 1800 preface to their joint publication *Lyrical Ballads* and then in the preface to *Wordsworth’s Collected Poems (1815)*.
- Referring to the latter, Coleridge says he wants in *Biographia Literaria* to make clear ‘*on what points I coincide with the opinions in that preface, and in what points I altogether differ*’.
- Chapter 4 discusses Coleridge’s relationship with Wordsworth and their publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which initiated the Romantic Movement in England. Chapter 14 returns to the Lyrical Ballads and ends with philosophical definitions of a poem and of poetry, and chapter 18 explain the difference between poetry and prose.

**Imagination and Fancy:**

- In one of the most famous passages in *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge offers a theory of creativity.
- Drawing on the German philosopher Kant’s distinction between understanding and reason, Coleridge distinguishes between fancy and imagination.
- Imagination is a chemical compound which dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate.
- It is organic, a “*synthetic and magical power*” which can predetermine and transfigure sensory data, and give us knowledge of ultimate truths.
- He divides imagination into primary and secondary.

**Primary imagination:**

- Primary imagination is common to all humans: it enables us to perceive and make sense of the world.
- It is a creative function and thereby repeats the divine act of creation.
- It is the power of receiving impressions of the external world.
Secondary Imagination:

- The secondary imagination enables individuals to transcend the primary imagination not merely to perceive connections but to make them.
- It is the creative impulse that enables poetry and other art.
- It is the power of creating impressions of the internal mind.

“The Imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.”

Fancy is a mechanical operation of mind which has fixities and definites.
- It is a mechanical human faculty, the ability to manipulate sensory data, to categorize and generalize about the natural world.

“Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory he Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.”

Eemplastic Power:

At first an adherent of the associational psychology of David Hartley, Coleridge came to discard this mechanical system for the belief that the mind is not a passive but an active agency in the apprehension of reality. The author believed in the "self-sufficing power of absolute Genius" and distinguished between genius and talent as between "an egg and an egg-shell". The discussion involves his definition of the imagination or “esemplastic power,” the faculty by which the soul perceives the spiritual unity of the universe, as distinguished from the fancy or
merely associative function. Coleridge defines imagination as the ‘esemplastic power’ which means having the ability to shape diverse elements or concepts into a unified whole:

Willing Suspension of Disbelief:

- The term ‘suspension of disbelief or willing suspension of disbelief’ has been defined as a willingness to suspend one's critical faculties and believe the unbelievable; sacrifice of realism and logic for the sake of enjoyment.
- The term was coined in 1817 by the poet and aesthetic philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Chapter XIV.
- He suggested that if a writer could infuse a "human interest and a semblance of truth" into a fantastic tale, the reader would suspend judgement concerning the implausibility of the narrative.
- Suspension of disbelief often applies to fictional works of the action, comedy, fantasy, and horror genres.
- Coleridge says that although his characters were ‘supernatural, or at least romantic’, he tried to give them a ‘human interest and a semblance of disbelief’ that would prompt readers to the ‘willing suspension of disbelief… which constitutes poetic faith’.

“It was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.”

Form of Poetry:

Biographia Literaria is concerned with the form of poetry, the genius of the poet and the relationship to philosophy. Coleridge feels that all of the great writers had their basis in philosophy because philosophy was the sum of all knowledge at this time. All education at that time consisted of a study of philosophy. Coleridge examines issues like the use of language in poetry and how it relates to everyday speech. He looks at the relationship between the subject of poetry and its relationship to everyday life.
Coleridge examines the sources of poetic power which relates to the brilliance of the poet. This involves the use of language, meter, rhyme, and the writing style or the poetic diction. The poet, he feels, should write about subjects that are outside his own sensations and experiences. This is where the poetic genius comes from. If the poet confines his poetry to subjects within his own experiences, then the work is mediocre. Coleridge feels that the purpose of poetry is to communicate beauty and pleasure. This is an expression of the brilliance of the poet.

Criticism and Other Writers:

A great deal of Coleridge’s works was the analysis and criticism of other writers. There are many passages from various authors in Biographia Lieteraria and much of the book examines the works of Wordsworth and Shakespeare, both contemporaries of Coleridge, as Coleridge examines the link between literature and philosophy. He also examines the views of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, as well as other philosophers. He uses this approach to examine the source of the poet's imagination. The brilliance of the poet must elicit feelings of excitement and emotion in the reader and Coleridge examines how this process functions and why some writers are more popular than others.

Coleridge also addresses the issue of literary critics, some of whom he had problems with regarding his own works. He feels that the critics must find something wrong with a literary work in order to sell reviews. Therefore, many reviews are unfair and the result of personal animosity. Coleridge accomplishes his goal of examining the relationship between philosophy and literature in this book.

Coleridge Refuses Wordsworth’s Theory:

The later chapters of the book deal with the nature of poetry and with the question of diction raised by Wordsworth. While maintaining a general agreement with Wordsworth's point of view, Coleridge elaborately refutes his principle that the language of poetry should be one taken with due exceptions from the mouths of men in real life, and that there can be no essential difference between the language of prose and of metrical composition. A critique on the qualities of Wordsworth's poetry concludes the volume.
2. Coleridge’s Lyrical Ballads, Biographia Literaria

1. Poems included in "Lyrical Ballads" (1798) were composed at------
   a) Cockermouth       b) France
   c) River Wye          d) Alfoxden, Quantock Hills

2. The first poem in the collection "Lyrical Ballads" is ---------
   a) The Rime of Ancient Mariner by Coleridge
   b) Tintern Abbey by Wordsworth
   c) Kubla Khan by Coleridge
   d) Immortality Ode by Wordsworth

3. How many poems were there in "Lyrical Ballads (1798)"?
   a) 24  b) 23  c) 22  d) 19

4. How many poems did Wordsworth contribute in Lyrical Ballads"?  
   a) 4   b) 18   c) 19   d) 23

5. In the poem "The Rime of Ancient Mariner" the Mariner Shot the Albatross with
   his______.
   a) Gun  b) Arrow  c) Cross bow  d) Knife

6. In which poem do these lines occur""

   "He prayeth best, Who loveth best
   All Things both great and small:
   for the dear God Who loveth us
   He made and loveth all".

   a) Tintern Abbey  b) The Rime of Ancient Mariner
   c) Immorality Ode  d) Dungeon
7. "The Nightingale" by Coleridge is a/an -------?
   a) Lyric poem  
   b) Elegy
   c) Conversational poem 
   d) Ballad

8. "The Foster Mother's Tale" by Coleridge is a dramatic fragment from the play-------?
   a) Remorse
   b) The Fall of Robespierre
   c) The Dungeon
   d) Osorio

9. "Lyrical Ballads" was published in the year -------?
   a) 1795
   b) 1798
   c) 1800
   d) 1802

10. In which poem does Coleridge treat human corruption much more directly than in any other poem?
    a) The Dungeon
    b) The Nightingale
    c) Kubla Khan
    d) The Rime of Ancient Mariner

11. Who wrote the following Epitaph for himself in 1833?
    ‘that he who many a year with toil of breath
    found death in life, may here find in life, in death”
    a) Lord Byron
    b) Keats
    c) Coleridge
    d) Charles Lamb

12. "Coleridge's face when he repeats his verse hath its ancient glory, an arch angel a little damaged"? Whose words are these?
    a) Shelly
    b) Charles Lamb
    c) Thomas De Quincy
    d) Byron

13. Who Coined the Term "ESEMBLASTIC"?
    a) Coleridge
    b) Wordsworth
    c) Keats
    d) Byron
14. Who was called as "Sage of Highgate"?
   a) Robert Southey  
   b) Byron  
   c) Keats  
   d) Coleridge

15. Which among the following poems was left incomplete by Coleridge?
   a) Christabel  
   b) Dejection: An Ode  
   c) Kubla Khan  
   d) Fears in Solitude

16. Biographia Literaria by Samuel Taylor Coleridge was published in the year _______.
   a) 1818  
   b) 1819  
   c) 1816  
   d) 1817

17. Biographia Literaria is most often expanded as ______
   a) Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions  
   b) Biography of the Literature  
   c) Biography of Literary criticism  
   d) Biography of Literary theory

18. Initially Biographia Literaria was intended to be a short preface to a collection of
   Coleridge's poems titled.............
   a) The Devil’s Walk.  
   b) Sibylline Leaves.  
   c) Fears in Solitude.  
   d) This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison

19. Who used the phrase ‘Motiveless Malignity’ in his ‘Lectures on Shakespeare’?
   a) Lord Byron  
   b) Shelley  
   c) Keats  
   d) S T Coleridge

20. What is a mechanical operation of mind which has fixities and definities?
   a) Fancy  
   b) Fantasy  
   c) Esemplastic  
   d) Imagination
21. According to Coleridge............... is a chemical compound which dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate.
   a) Fantasy  
   b) Primary Imagination  
   c) Imagination  
   d) Secondary Imagination

22. Who opined on Coleridge’s thinking as “Coleridge’s mind moves not from thought to thought but from image to image”?
   a) Matthew Arnold  
   b) T.S. Eliot  
   c) William Empson  
   d) Jacques Derrida

23. "Coleridge was called as hooded eagle among blinking owls" - Whose words are these?
   a) Byron  
   b) Keats  
   c) James Thompson  
   d) Shelley

24. Biographia Literaria was heavily influenced by.................
   a) Greek Criticism  
   b) French Criticism  
   c) Indian school of criticism  
   d) German Criticism

25. Who in 1906 called the Biographia Literaria as "the greatest book of criticism in English, and one of the most annoying books in any language".
   a) Arthur Symons  
   b) T S Eliot  
   c) Arnold  
   d) Cleanth Brooks

26. Who described Biographia Literaria as an ‘immethodical miscellany’ of ‘life and opinions’?
   a) Robert Southey  
   b) Terry Eagleton  
   c) Coleridge Himself  
   d) Byron

27. How many chapters are there in Biographia Literaria?
   a) 21  
   b) 20  
   c) 22  
   d) 23
28. Which work of Coleridge does contain the first instance of the phrase ‘Willing suspension of disbelief’?
   a) Remorse
   b) Sibylline Leaves: A Collection of Poems
   c) Biographia Literaria
   d) The Watchman: The Periodical

29. Who developed a plan for a ’’Pantisocracy (i.e) equal government by all’’?
   a) Wordsworth and Coleridge
   b) Coleridge and Robert Southey
   c) Robert Southey and Byron
   d) Wordsworth and Shelley

30. Which periodical/periodicals was/were edited by Coleridge?
   a) The Watchman
   b) The Friend
   c) A and B
   d) Blackwood Magazine

31. Coleridge belongs to the ___________ school of poets. (PT – 2012)
   (A) Romantic
   (B) Revolutionary
   (C) Classical
   (D) Neo-classical

32. The phrase ‘Willing suspension of disbelief’ is associated with _______ (PT - 2012)
   (A) Wordsworth
   (B) Coleridge
   (C) Keats
   (D) Byron

33. The bird is referred to in ‘The Rime of Ancient Mariner’ is _______ (PT – 2012)
   (A) Cuckoo
   (B) Nightingale
   (C) Albatross
   (D) Sparrow

34. “The ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around”. From which poem have these lines been taken? (PT – 2012)
   (A) Dover Beach
   (B) To a Skylark
   (C) The Rime of Ancient Mariner
   (D) Tintern Abbey

35. In Coleridge’s poem ___________ play dice for the ancient mariner.
   (A) two polar spirits
   (B) Death and the Pol
   (C) Death-in-Life and the polar spirit
   (D) Death and Death-in-Life

36. ‘Kubla Khan’ is known as a ___________ (PT – 2012)
   (A) dream fragment
   (B) realistic poem
   (C) philosophical poem
   (D) romantic poem
37. In Coleridge’s poem, the ancient mariner tells his tale to ________ (PT – 2006)
(A) the holy hermit  (B) the pilot  (C) the musicians  (D) the wedding guest

38. “A damsel with a dulcimer; In a vision I saw”. Whose vision is this? (Engg – 2016)
(A) Shelley’s  (B) Wordsworth’s  (C) Keats’s  (D) Coleridge’s

39. Where were the three gallants going in ‘The Rime of Ancient Mariner’? (Engg – 2016)
(A) Funeral  (B) Market  (C) Wedding  (D) To The Races

40. Coleridge’s ‘The Rime of Ancient Mariner’ is a _________ (DIET – 2016)
(A) Gothic ballad  (B) epic  (C) elegy  (D) an ode
### 2. Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads, Biographia Literaria

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