

Exercises on analysing 18th century romantic poetry

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Romanticism

Romanticism refers to a poetic movement of the late 18th and early 19th centuries in which English poets, such as William Wordsworth, produced work that celebrated creativity and the connection of human emotion to nature. This contrasted the preceding Enlightenment era's focus on scientific enquiry and logic.

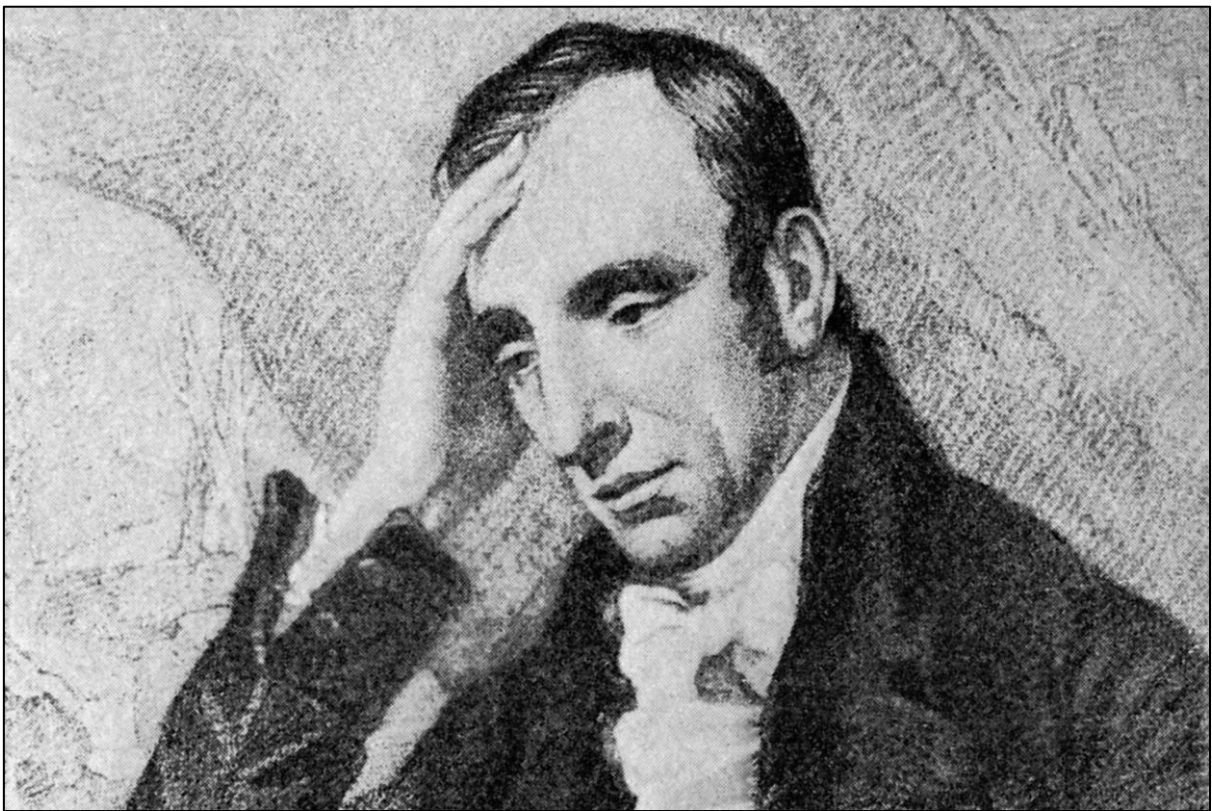


Figure 1. William Wordsworth

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Lines Written in Early Spring (1798)

William Wordsworth

1770-1850

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made

It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,

To catch the breezy air;

And I must think, do all I can,

That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,

If such be Nature's holy plan,

Have I not reason to lament

What man has made of man?

Exercises

Given the two following questions, please:

1. Form a thesis (main argument)
2. Form two key ideas (supporting arguments)
 - i. State two pieces of evidence from *Lines Written in Early Spring* that support each key idea, briefly explaining why they do so.

Q1

How does *William Wordsworth* interpret the human relationship to nature in his 18th century romantic poem *Lines Written in Early Spring*?

Thesis	
Key idea 1	
Evidence 1	
Evidence 2	
Key Idea 2	
Evidence 1	
Evidence 2	

Q2

On the Dickinson College Department of English's Romantic and Victorian Poetry blog, an internet user under the alias *Curb* argues that in *Lines Written in Early Spring*,

"Wordsworth presents a covert existential crisis within the narrator regarding what man really, truly, is ..." [[view full essay](#)]

To what extent do you agree with *Curb's* position?

Thesis	
Key idea 1	
Evidence 1	
Evidence 2	
Key Idea 2	
Evidence 1	
Evidence 2	