

**English 219: The Age of Romanticism.**  
FINAL EXAMINATION

Spring 1998  
Time: 2 Hours

Choose one of the following questions.

1. One critic has said about Romanticism that

it was a health-restoring revival of the instinctual life, in contradistinction to eighteenth-century restraints that sought to sublimate the instincts in the united names of reasons and society.

Explain the above view then demonstrate the degree to which it holds both for the first and second-generation romantics. Refer in depth to three poets.

2. English poets of the fifties were notoriously anti-Romanticism. In a poem appropriately entitled "Against Romanticism," Kingsley Amis explains the reasons.
- i. Analyze the excerpts from the two poems in depth.
  - ii. Explore the main thoughts in the first poem, then defend or counter this anti-Romantic sentiment, making use of images and ideas from Wordsworth's *Prelude*.

"Against Romanticism"

A traveller who walks a temperate zone  
- Woods devoid of beasts, roads that please the foot-  
Finds that its decent surface grows too thin:  
Something unperceived fumbles at his nerves.  
To please an ingrown taste of anarchy  
Torrid images circle in the wood,  
And sweat for recognition up the road.  
Cramming close the air with their bookish cries.  
All senses then are glad to gasp: the eye  
Smear'd with garish paints, tickled up with ghosts  
That brandish warnings or an abstract noun;

Melodies from shards, memories from coal,

Or saws from powdered tombstones thump the ear;  
Bodies rich with heat wiggle to the touch,  
And verbal scents made real spellbind the nose;  
Incense, frankincense; legendary the taste  
Of drinks or fruits or tongues laid on the tongue.  
Over all, a grand meaning fills the scene,  
And sets the brain raging with prophecy,  
Raging to discard real time and place  
Raging to build a better time and place  
Than the ones which give prophecy its field  
To work, the calm material for its rage,  
And the context which makes it prophecy.

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From *The Prelude*

It was a splendid evening, and my soul  
Once more made trial of her strength, nor lacked  
Aeolian visitations; but the harp  
Was soon defrauded, and the banded host  
Of harmony dispersed in stragglings sounds,  
And lastly utter silence! 'Be it so;  
Why think of any thing but present good?'  
So, like a home-bound labourer I pursued  
My way beneath the mellowing sun, that shed  
Mild influence; nor let in me one wish  
Again to bend the Sabbath of that time  
To a servile yoke. What need of many words?  
A pleasant loitering journey, through three days  
Continued, brought me to my hermitage.  
I spare to tell of what ensued, the life  
In common things the endless store of things,  
Rare, or at least seeming, every day  
Found all about me in one neighbourhood—  
The self-congratulation, and, from morn  
To night, unbroken cheerfulness serene.  
But speedily an earnest longing rose  
To brace myself to some determined aim,  
Reading or thinking; either to lay up  
New stores, or rescue from decay the old  
By timely interference: and therewith  
Came hopes higher, that with outward life  
I might endue some airy phantasies  
That had been floating loose about for years,  
And to such beings temperately deal forth  
The many feelings that oppressed my heart.