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Defining, Defending, and Teaching the Romantics

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Defining, Defending, and Teaching the Romantics

One of the characteristics of the British Romantic writers (c. 1760-1830) is that they set impossible goals for themselves. In keeping with that philosophy, I have also set some impossible goals by choosing to focus on three separate but related topics indicated by my title: Defining, Defending, and Teaching the Romantics.

One of my main focal points will be the general historical setting of British Romanticism, a topic that bears repeated inquiry not only because it helps us understand the writers, but also because we live during a time when many pedagogical approaches to the Romantics are by habit, design, or necessity, ahistorical or even antihistorical. High-school and college teachers suffer in some ways under the legacy of the New Critics; and I suspect we suffer even more under the demand of never having enough time to try to teach anything — and when something has to go, I suspect that it is extra-textual, historical and ideological material that goes first. Historical inquiry can help restore our sense of the many dialogues, interacting characters, and controversial qualities of Romanticism.

It is also worth examining, however briefly, the impact of ideas as well as the impact of events on the Romantics. They were primarily poets, but were also deeply and self-consciously philosophical, particularly concerned with analyzing structures of consciousness, exploring the processes by which one can arrive at or create “truths,” determining properly human and humane ethical bases for individual and social life, and so on. They took ideas seriously, and constructed their philosophies, as all philosophers must, partially by absorbing and partially by reacting against various philosophical systems and ideas current during their time.

It may also be helpful to try to define Romanticism by listing some recurrent themes, images, concerns, gestures, and so on — and simultaneously offer some ways of organizing classes or sections on British Romanticism. The poles of the attempt to define Romanticism have been set by two distinguished scholars. Some years ago A.O. Lovejoy suggested that we must speak of “romanticisms,” because there are in fact many types of romantic literature and philosophy

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that are as notable for their differences as for their similarities.¹ René Wellek countered Lovejoy by summarizing much recent scholarship and concluding that there does seem to be a core of what can legitimately be called “romanticism,” revolving around a few key notions: the attempt to unify subject and object, a revived understanding of our relationship to nature, a persistent quest for harmony, and so on.² I cannot resolve this dilemma: the categories that I will discuss later attempt to do justice both to the similarities among and the very real differences that more than occasionally separate or “discriminate” the British Romantics.

Finally, it may sound odd that I set as one of my tasks that of “defending” Romanticism. What are the dangers? Who are the enemies? Generally, I think Romanticism is endangered in the sense that it is too frequently oversimplified, misunderstood, and trivialized. Surely Romanticism deserves better than to be understood in only the caricatured form that is current, especially among our students: the Hallmark Hall of Fame/As the World Turns school of Romanticism, for lack of a better term.

More seriously, though, Romanticism is under political and ideological attack. Allan Bloom’s polemic *The Closing of the American Mind* must rest heavily on any teacher’s mind. Its popularity is curious — and, I should add, no sure sign of its cogency. As I read and read about this book, I frequently recall Ambrose Bierce’s definition (in *A Devil’s Dictionary*) of applause as the echo of a platitude. Bloom’s book is widely applauded — and smugly platitudinous. I occasionally refer to Bloom’s troubling book, in part because I interpret it as, among other things, a thinly veiled attack on Romanticism, involving rather stunning distortions or unsympathetic restatements of what Romanticism is all about. Just as I suggested a moment ago that we must tell our students that Romanticism is most assuredly not a philosophy that claims that “love is all you need,” I believe that it is extremely important that we tell Professor Bloom and his followers that Romanticism is not a philosophy that claims calmly and simply that everything is permitted. Bloom raises serious questions about deficiencies in modern American education, but I suggest that we can learn somewhat more from the Romantics than from Bloom about how to serve democracy and recover the “impoverished souls of today’s students.” (I am alluding, of course, to his subtitle: “How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and

Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students.”)

So when I mention in the last part of my title that I want to discuss how to teach the Romantics, I have more in mind than reviewing backgrounds, interpretations of poems, and course syllabi and curricula. I also want to discuss somewhat more basic questions: For what purposes should we/do we include Romantic poetry in our classes? Is it a diversion? An unexamined requirement passed on from higher, inscrutable authorities — principals, department chairpersons, or the editors of the Norton Anthology? Or is it deeply felt, enjoyable as well as educational “equipment for living”? I surely hope it is the latter.

Much of the poetry of the Romantics is characterized by its rootedness, its intimate bond with social, political, and economic events and circumstances. This is all described so well by Marilyn Butler in her recent study *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries* that I will simply refer you to her for proof of my assertion that we need to pay as much attention to these qualities as we do to the Romantics' much more frequently celebrated attempts to transcend the world of mutability and repression.³ Even this attempted transcendence may itself be a deeply political and historically-influenced strategy. In any event, it simply will not do to think of these writers as Matthew Arnold imagined Shelley: as an “ineffectual angel” vainly beating his wings in the air.⁴

What was happening during this time period? What became more than the background but rather the substance of the poetry and dialogic context of their ideas?

French Revolution: No one questions the centrality of the French Revolution to at least the first generation of Romantic poets — and the second generation endured the consequences of the French Revolution: Napoleon, war with France, and so on. But the impact of the Revolution was subtle and indirectly registered as well as obvious and far-reaching. The French Revolution embodied an all-important dynamic of hope and despair. The Victorian trivialization of this dynamic is voiced by Dickens in *A Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Even in some of most deeply personal or psychological poems of the time period — Blake's “The Mental Traveller,” Wordsworth's “Resolution and Independence,”

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even Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" — there is the haunting presence of the political events in France in the idea that complete imaginative fulfillment may contain within itself the seeds of its own overthrow; more simply, that happiness is intrinsically short-lived, vulnerable, reversible. The French Revolution thus provided the age with not only particular events and characters, but also a psychological paradigm.

Repression and Reaction: Sometimes we think of this as an age of revolution, without also reminding ourselves that it was more consistently an age of repression and political conservatism. Blake was arrested after a scuffle with a soldier walking across his lawn, and he feared being tried for treason, for which the punishment at this time was death; Wordsworth and Coleridge were followed by government spies and informers; Shelley was expelled from college for writing on atheism and religious freedom; Keats was hounded by the reactionary literary quarterlies for being an uppity "Cockney" daring to write "serious" verse; Byron was exiled from England for moral improprieties. Letters were intercepted, newspapers were censored, writers and printers were jailed, especially during the period of war with France when the *habeus corpus* laws were suspended, and citizens could be imprisoned simply by official accusation.⁵ In short, when the Romantics defined writing and the life of the imagination as heroic, called for artists to be the legislators of mankind, and wrote about the need for liberty and an end to political repression and suppression, they were keen and experienced thinkers, not woolly-headed, childish, or naive illusionists.

Economic conditions: It would take more time than I have available to do justice to this subject, but I can at least briefly mention the social dislocations caused by enclosures and the increasing industrialization and urbanization of England. Enclosure refers basically to the practice of consolidating small, individually owned or occupied strips of land into larger units, delineated and protected by fences or hedges, which could then be farmed or used as pasture-land more efficiently. The result was not only the disappearance of the so-called "commons" or "village green," but also the displacement of many erstwhile farmers, grazers, or squatters whose lands were taken away or bought. Throughout the poems of the period we notice displaced people, homeless and poor. They were

not, of course, simply projections of the Romantic imagination: frequently, they were refugees of the enclosure movement.⁶

Industrialization and urbanization are discussed frequently, and Blake's powerful poem "London" says more than I could ever hope to, so I simply refer you to it. But we should also note that the Romantic poets not only protest the poverty, social injustices, and overall cheapening of the quality of life that resulted from industrialization and urbanization: they offer profound analyses of how these processes affect us culturally. Wordsworth, for example, far more insightfully and constructively than Allan Bloom in our own time, relates the contemporary rise in sensational tales and mind-numbing entertainments to changed living conditions (see his *Preface* to the *Lyrical Ballads*), and he suggests that modern Romantic poetry can combat Gothic romances and violent spectacles, thereby educating as well as healing us. The Romantic poets not only respond deeply to economic changes, but use these concrete circumstances as a starting point as they offer various critiques of modern culture. Ironically, Bloom holds the Romantics responsible for some of the cultural developments that they attempted to combat.

Workers' Movements: The Romantics felt that imaginative literature could help combat the worst evils of industrialization; but there were of course other, somewhat more practical means as well. The late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century marked the beginning of what we now call the "labor movement." There was a certain amount of anti-machine violence and terroristic threats, but the most important development was that the workers in the factories slowly began to form associations and "combinations," although these were against the law and sometimes ruthlessly suppressed. Newly espoused ideas on the dignity and rights of even the common man (features of much Romantic writing, including of course the American *Declaration of Independence* and *Constitution*) coupled with organizational experience gained in church affairs helped further the drive for the expansion of political and economic rights and powers. There were many setbacks, not the least of which came in the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, when a peaceful demonstration of a large group of workers and citizens was broken up by government officials, killing at least six people and injuring scores more. But there were also notable high points, including the passage of the First Reform Bill in 1832 — a modest advance by modern standards, but momentous by contemporary

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standards. The history of the so-called Chartist movement — named after the charter of demands that the disenfranchised citizens hoped to see met — is usually consigned to the Victorian period, but it is a Romantic phenomenon.

I have left out a great deal: the impact of war, a constant threat or reality during this period; the controversy over slavery; the call for prison reform; the fact that the nominal King in the first two decades of the nineteenth century was insane; and so on. These and other events and circumstances figure in the poetry, and I regret having to skip over them. But I do want to move quickly to situate the Romantic period in a philosophical context. Many scholars emphasize the importance of German philosophy on the Romantics, especially Coleridge. As important as this influence is, I would like to focus instead on several other philosophical movements, particularly indigenous British schools of thought, that help us understand some of the contemporary allies and enemies of Romanticism.

The Romantic period is framed by two philosophical movements against which Romanticism rebelled, empiricism and Utilitarianism. Empiricism is of course the belief that reality is basically a collection of material phenomena, and that ideas are a product of sensory experience. Compare this with Blake's visionary question in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way, / Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?" There is a great deal of emphasis in Romanticism on the importance of enhanced sensory perception: Keats of course comes to mind. But there is a far greater stress on the active, creative powers of the human mind which instead of passively receiving impressions of the world in fact shares in the construction of the world. Imagination thus becomes the essence, and in effect the measure of a person, and this places Romanticism inevitably on a collision course not only with empiricism but also with Utilitarianism, a system of thought characterized by a practical, materialistic, rationalistic, quantifying mentality. The Romantics were not unconcerned with arriving at the greatest good for the greatest number of people, the credo of Utilitarianism, but they wanted nothing to do with the essentially cold and impersonal "moral calculus" of Bentham and Mill.⁷

I have been focusing on the antagonists of the Romantics, but there were of course systems of thought that were much more congenial to them. Philosophies of optimism were absolutely crucial to the Romantic poets. Rousseau is perhaps the key source of these ideas of optimism, but the poets were influenced by British adaptations and extensions of optimistic philosophy, expressed by William Godwin in his *Inquiry Concerning Political Justice*, and also by Thomas Paine in his enormously popular *The Rights of Man*. In short, their emphasis is on perfectibility: the notion that through human labor, physical and intellectual, we can improve ourselves, and ultimately regain if not a state of Eden, then at least a much better state than we currently enjoy — or endure. Original sin is banished, and the emphasis is on the way human beings construct the world and their consciousness, and then face the consequences of their creations: for better and for worse. Rather than blaming Adam — or, more likely, Eve — for our fallen state, Romanticism often incorporated a new critique of the ways by which we are subjected to old chains but also continue to manufacture new ones, “mind-forg’d manacles,” to use Blake’s phrase from “London.”

Allan Bloom, like most conservatives, misrepresents Rousseau as being too idyllic. Rousseau and other Romantics had a profound sense of sin: indeed, much of the best work of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and even Byron is obsessed with sin and guilt, and analyzes these subjects very insightfully. But they generally view sin as a human creation, not as original or inherited. Sin is thus not inevitable, and it may indeed be avoidable — but the wisest of the Romantics knew that it was likely. In teaching the Romantics I think it is absolutely vital to convey their belief that one can be optimistic without being a moral simpleton.

The last system of thought that I want to mention is feminism. Mary Wollstonecraft is now justifiably having more of an impact than her abstruse, unscrupulous, and rather unlikable husband, Godwin, and although her influence in her own time was not as great as his, we must not minimize the importance of her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, one of many answers to Burke’s conservative manifesto, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. One of the distinctive features of Romantic poetry and philosophy is the enhanced image of women. In this early form feminism emphasizes the shameful fact that such a large percentage of the human

population — women — were oppressed and under-utilized: Wollstonecraft argues for an end to the imposition of political, social, and sexual restrictions on women, criticizes the caricaturing of women as silly creatures needing protection (images which, she says, become traps for women as they become internalized and believed), and looks forward to an era when women can join men as full participants in a march toward social progress that cannot be achieved by one sex alone. Perhaps it will come as no surprise to note that one of the recurrent themes of Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* is his denigration of feminism, accomplished mostly by exaggerating and misrepresenting feminist arguments, and also by claiming that the struggle for equality has already been won. He is simply wrong.

It is important of course that we define Romanticism in concrete as well as abstract terms, and move from context finally to texts. I do not want to pigeonhole the Romantics, nor am I attempting to come up with a definition of a kind of trans-historical essence of "Romanticism." Quite the contrary: in what follows I emphasize the many differences that become apparent when we examine these poets, and the ways in which "Romanticism" is directly related to historical circumstances. But I envision the Romantics as sharing a language or vocabulary and sharing in a dialogue about common themes, events, and circumstances. These features, rather than any absolute agreement in their observations or the conclusions they arrive at, make the Romantics a "group," and well worth studying alongside one another. In short, what I am setting out is a Romantic agenda, not a Romantic consensus. Each of the following topics (lightly annotated and listed not necessarily in order of importance) is illustrated by a cluster of poems, and these could be the basis of a class discussion or series of assignments. The works I list are generally accessible and frequently anthologized.

The Image of the Child

The Romantic poets differed from earlier writers in the attention they paid to childhood, for a variety of reasons well-documented in Philippe Ariès classic study *Centuries of Childhood*.⁸ Many of the

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writers expressed a new belief in innocence and were suspicious of experience, sensing that wisdom is something more often lost than found. Children were used as images to evoke the idea that there are non-rational, intuitive ways to truth; but children also appear throughout the literature of the time as pathetic victims, focal points of ever-present oppression.

Blake: "The Lamb" and "The Chimney Sweeper"
(from *Songs of Innocence*, showing naivete,
natural generosity of spirit), but also "Holy
Thursday" and "The Chimney Sweeper" (from
Songs of Experience, for the child as focus of
spiritual and political oppression)

Wordsworth: "We Are Seven" (intuitive wisdom of
child); *The Prelude*, Book 5, ll. 399-425 ("A
race of real children; not too wise, / Too
learned, or too good..."); "Intimations Ode"

Coleridge: "Frost at Midnight" (memories of
childhood, turned to hope for his child)

Growing up / Growing Old

Romantic poetry is typically focused on process, growth, and change. Many of the individual lyrics as well as the longer works are poems of crisis revolving around the passage from one stage of life to another, and describe dramatic moments of loss and gain. Telling one's story is a defining mark of Romantic poetry: not only for purposes of self-analysis and self-expression, but also because of the deep sense that one person's story is almost inevitably valuable to another person.

Blake: "The Sick Rose"; *The Book of Thel* (a parable
of tremendous immediacy, especially for young
men and women)

Wordsworth: "Three Years She Grew"; "Nutting";
"Intimations Ode"; "Tintern Abbey"

Coleridge: "Dejection: An Ode"

Shelley: "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"

Keats: "When I have fears that I may cease to be";
"To Autumn"

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Varieties of Heroes / The Hero as Eccentric

The hero has traditionally been defined as the exemplary servant and representation of the culture or country to which he or she belongs. The Romantic hero is more often than not an outsider, an eccentric, and in some ways not even an attractive or enviable role model. Sometimes this is so because the hero is in fact a citizen of a culture yet to be born, and thereby estranged from his or her contemporary environment. Other times the Romantic hero is a victim, but dignified more by continuing struggle or survival rather than success. Allan Bloom decries the trivialization of heroes and the even more devastating abandonment of heroes. I would suggest that the Romantics offer some valuable insights into the process of making and responding to heroes, and offer a broad and useful range of heroic models.

Blake: Focus on Orc, the rebel, as he appears in *America: A Prophecy* (Plate 8, which can be read separately from the rest of this difficult political poem)

Wordsworth: "Michael"; "Resolution and Independence" (The Leech Gatherer as street person, bag-person, survivor)

Coleridge: "The Ancient Mariner" (hero as wrong-doer, exemplary sufferer, artist)

Byron: "Prometheus" (perhaps the most accessible picture of the Byronic hero)

Fantasies and Fantastic Voyages

While Romanticism certainly involved a new respect for the commonplace, the simple, homely facts of life, there was also a pull toward the exotic, and a search for and acceptance of the "new" in life. The expanding landscape of Romantic poetry included distant places, supernatural imagery and characters, and also the transformation of the commonplace into the "unfamiliar."

Blake: "The Mental Traveller"

Wordsworth: "I traveled among unknown men"

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(expresses love of returning home, much in contrast with the wanderings that characterize many other Romantic poems)

Coleridge: “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”;
“Kubla Khan”; “Christabel”

Keats: “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer”;
“Ode to a Nightingale”; “La Belle Dame Sans
Merci”

Shelley: “Ozymandias”

Political Poems / Critiques of Contemporary Culture and Society

There have always been poems on political affairs and satires on culture and society, but perhaps it was not until the Romantic era that artists conceived of themselves as fundamentally in opposition to the society in which they lived. But this is not necessarily sheer negativism or superficial contrariness, as Allan Bloom suggests. The Romantic poets — and I am thinking especially of Blake — are much more willing than Bloom to admit that dialectical struggle is the essence of life, productive rather than merely troublesome: “Without Contraries is no Progression,” Blake says in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. One would think that for all Bloom’s references to Plato and Socrates as his unerring models he would be more receptive to the Romantic notion of the artist as gad-fly.

Blake: “London”; “The Human Abstract”

Wordsworth: “The world is too much with us”; and almost any section from Book 7 of *The Prelude*, “Residence in London” (esp. ll. 671-721 on Bartholomew Fair)

Shelley: “England in 1819”; “Ozymandias”

Byron: *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto 3, stanzas 17-28 (self-contained section on war, Waterloo, and so on)

On Poetry / The Artist / The Imagination

The Romantics re-defined humans as primarily imaginative beings, and the powers of the imagination are by no means restricted to the artist — although it is the artist who is either born with or somehow

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develops his or her sensitivity and has the courage to live up to the demands of the imagination. In defining and praising the life of the imagination, the Romantics simultaneously offer a powerful critique of societies that turn their members in other directions, especially toward the acquisition of material things. This is, of course, one of the great legacies of Romanticism, but we should not forget that for the Romantics the imagination was problematic: demanding and painful as well as rewarding and joyous.

Blake: "The Tyger"

Wordsworth: *The Prelude* throughout (It is difficult to find short poems by Wordsworth on these subjects.)

Coleridge: "The Eolian Harp"; "Kubla Khan"; "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (focusing especially on the Mariner as the exemplary artist, in possession of painful truths)

Keats: "When I have fears that I may cease to be"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; "Ode to Psyche"

Shelley: "Ode to the West Wind"; "To a Skylark"

(Prose writings by the poets would work particularly well in this section: selected letters by Blake and Keats, Wordsworth's *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*, Coleridge's brief essay on "Organic Form" (from one of his notebooks), and Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*. The most well-known and useful extracts are easily available in the Norton and Oxford anthologies.)

Presentation of Women and Love

Romanticism is frequently confused with "romance," and this needs to be addressed. Some poems indeed focus on distant women spurning men whose desires are thus doomed to remain unfulfilled; these poems are often set in dreamy, exotic, or fairy-land places; and magic is frequently a fact of life therein. But many Romantic poems offer much more realistic views of love, criticize old habits of courtship and seduction as silly or destructive games, and look at the

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consequences of both the expression and the repression of sexual energy in the lives of men and women.

Blake: "The Sick Rose"; "The Garden of Love" (dangers of repression); *The Book of Thel* (dangers of sexual experience); *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (a difficult poem, but it presents a remarkably heroic woman, Oothoon, and an argument for free love and sexual honesty); "The Crystal Cabinet" (fascinating to compare this fable with Keats's version of the "Romantic Agony" of love in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci")

Wordsworth: "She was a Phantom of Delight"; "The Solitary Reaper"

Coleridge: "Christabel"; "The Eolian Harp" (woman/wife as impediment to imaginative freedom); "Kubla Khan"

Keats: "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"; "The Eve of St. Agnes"

Nature

One of the great distortions of the Romantic poets comes when they are referred to rather simply as Nature poets. On the one hand, we must not underestimate the importance of their turn to nature as a subject and as a setting. But it is one thing to picture a poet romping in the flowers, and quite another to understand, for example, how in Wordsworth's words "One impulse from a vernal wood / May teach you more of man, / Of moral evil and of good, / Than all the sages can" ("The Tables Turned," ll. 21-24). Furthermore, we must do justice to the intimidating force wielded by Nature: Nature is both ally and enemy in Romantic poetry because it sometimes supports, sometimes overwhelms our imagination.

Wordsworth: "Lines Written in Early Spring"; "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," and the boat-stealing episode from *The Prelude*, (Book 1, ll. 357-424), "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (use these to explore Wordsworth's

notion of moral education by nature); but also discuss his fear of being overwhelmed by nature, the dangers of simple sense experience, and the tension between the imagination and sensory experience (see *The Prelude*, esp. Books 6, 11, 12, 14)

Coleridge: "Frost at Midnight"; "Kubla Khan" (a landscape of greenery but also frightening natural energy and a lifeless ocean)

Byron: ending of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto 4, stanzas 167-86 (vision of indifferent Nature as capable of crushing humans; this is frightening, but consoling, because it insures that Nature is inviolate, beyond human control — of which Byron is contemptuous)

Shelley: "Ode to the West Wind"

Keats: "On the Grasshopper and Cricket"; "To Autumn"

I've spoken about many details, historical and philosophical backgrounds, and a few classroom strategies, but I would like to conclude by talking briefly about why I teach the Romantics, why I want to defend them, and what I hope to share with my students and want them to remember about these poets.

Yeats was wrong when, early in the twentieth-century, he said "We are the last romantics." Others have followed. But now, late in the twentieth-century, we might be right if we were to make that same statement, because we live during a time when Romanticism is being trivialized and attacked, and may wither away into a kind of historical curiosity or, even worse, a merely academic subject. I think there is a kind of residual Romanticism, in our students and perhaps in our culture at large, that we can work with: Bloom would like to eradicate it, I would like to nurture and develop it. I frequently tell my students that if they don't at least at some point in their life envision themselves as artists, then they are missing something very important. Their responses always charm and pain me: I always think I see a few poets out there who will never forget what I have

said, and many others who will never understand what I have said. I believe that if we as educators are not helping to create poets — not necessarily writers of verse but people who value and exercise their imagination — then we are failing one of our most important tasks. As a teacher — of Romantic literature and of other subjects as well — I feel that part of my responsibility is to help my students take seriously some of the claims of the Romantic poets: that poetry can and should be a celebration and an interrogation of life; that men and women are primarily makers — of poems, but also of increasingly better laws, conventions, and societies; that art can be not only therapeutic but educational, bringing knowledge, moral wisdom, and pleasure; and that just as, according to the classical maxim, “An unexamined life is not worth living,” figuratively speaking “An unimaginative life is not worth living.” Certainly it is one of my main efforts, in class as well as in this essay, to try to demonstrate that — again, figuratively speaking — we need more poets and fewer Porsches; more Blakes and fewer (Allan) Blooms.

Notes

¹Arthur O. Lovejoy, “On the Discrimination of Romanticisms,” in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1948), pp. 228-53.

²René Wellek, “The Concept of Romanticism in Literary History,” *Comparative Literature*, I (1949), 1-23, 147-72. See also “Romanticism Re-examined,” in *Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 107-33.

³Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982).

⁴Matthew Arnold, “Shelley,” in *The Portable Matthew Arnold*, ed. Lionel Trilling (New York: Viking, 1949), p. 405.

⁵See E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1963).

⁶There is disagreement among economic historians as to whether or not enclosures resulted in an overall and ultimate increase or decrease in the standard of living in nineteenth-century England. But it is unquestionable that the disruption in traditional patterns of land use and styles of community living was a harrowing experience for many people, registered in much of the literature of the period. See Raymond Williams, *The Country*

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and the City (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973).

⁷The clash of Romanticism and Utilitarianism is well-described in such works as John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* and Dickens' *Hard Times*. See also Raymond Williams, "Mill on Bentham and Coleridge," in *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958), pp. 49-70.

⁸Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Random House, 1962).