

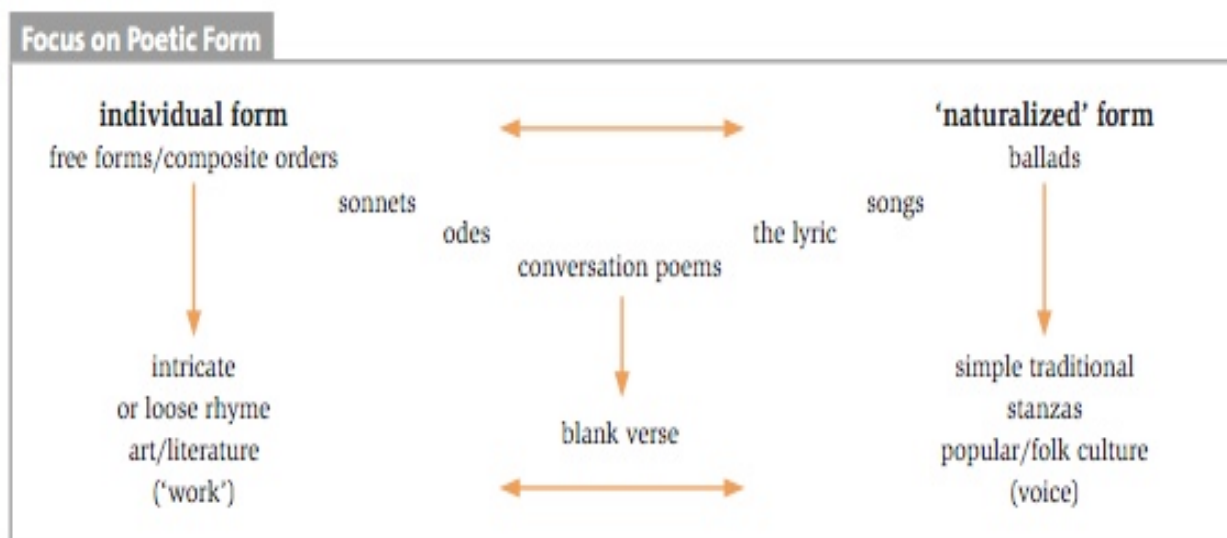
Romanticism

Part 3: Genres of Romantic Literature

Lecture 6: Romantic Poetry I: Ballads and Songs

1) Lyrical Ballads

2) Songs and the Lyric



(Reinfandt 2012, 52)

1) Lyrical Ballads

Traditional Ballad:

e.g. "Bonny Barbara Allan"
(Child, no. 84. From a miscellany 1740)

It was in and about the Martinmas time,	a
When the green leaves were a-fallin';	b
That Sir John Graeme in the West Country	c
Fell in love with Barbara Allan [...]	(b)

Romantic Ballad:

e.g. Wordsworth's "Goody Blake, and Harry Gill" (1798)

Oh! What's the matter? what's the matter?	a
What is't that ails young Harry Gill?	b
That evermore his teeth they chatter,	a
Chatter, chatter, chatter still [...]	b

Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia, or the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-96)

I received good information of the truth of the following case, which was published a few years ago in the newspapers. A young farmer in Warwick-shire, finding his hedges broke, and the sticks carried away during a frosty season, determined to watch for the thief. He lay many cold hours under a hay-stack, and at length an old woman, like a witch in a play, approached, and began to pull up the hedge; he waited till she had tied up her bottle of sticks, and was carrying them off, that he might convict her of the theft, and then springing from his concealment, he seized his prey with violent threats. After some altercation, in which her load was left upon the ground, she kneeled upon her bottle of sticks, and raising her arms to Heaven beneath the bright moon then at the full, spoke to the farmer already shivering with cold, "Heaven grant, that thou never mayest know again the blessing to be warm." He complained of cold all the next day, and wore an upper coat, and in a few days another, and in a fortnight took to his bed, always saying nothing made him warm, he covered himself with very many blankets, and had a sieve over his face, as he lay; and from this one insane idea he kept his bed above twenty years for fear of the cold air, till at length he died.

'Advertisement' prefaced to *Lyrical Ballads* 1798

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire.

'Preface' to the *Lyrical Ballads* 1800

[F]ew persons will deny, that of two descriptions either of passions, manners or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once [...] In consequence of these convictions I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE and HARRY GILL, which is one of the rudest of this collection. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated as a ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in ballads.

William Wordsworth, *Goody Blake and Harry Gill: A True Story*

Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter?
What is 't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
I'll fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling:
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage;
But she, poor Woman! housed alone.
'Twas well enough, when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the canty Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead:
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vowed that she should be detected -
That he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
- He hears a noise - he's all awake -
Again? - on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps - 'tis Goody Blake;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill!

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
Stick after stick did Goody pull:
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way back again to take;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, »I've caught you then at last!«
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm -
»God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!«
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
Young Harry heard what she had said:
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he:
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
»Poor Harry Gill is very cold.«
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere

In seven parts

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the Tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

I

It is an ancyent Marinere,
And he stoppeth one of three:
»By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye
Now wherefore stoppest me?

The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide,
And I am next of kin;
The Guests are met, the Feast is set, -
May'st hear the merry din.«

But still he holds the wedding-guest -
There was a Ship, quoth he -
»Nay, if thou'st got a laughsome tale,
Marinere! come with me.«

He holds him with his skinny hand,
Quoth he, there was a Ship -
»Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon!
Or my Staff shall make thee skip.«

He holds him with his glittering eye -
The wedding guest stood still
And listens like a three year's child;
The Marinere hath his will.

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,
He cannot chuse but hear:
And thus spake on that ancyent man,
The bright-eyed Marinere.

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd -
Merrily did we drop
Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
Below the Light-house top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the Sea came he:
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the Sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon -
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath pac'd into the Hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry Minstralsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot chuse but hear:
And thus spake on that ancyent Man,
The bright-eyed Marinere.

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,
A Wind and Tempest strong!
For days and weeks it play'd us freaks -
Like Chaff we drove along.

Listen, Stranger! Mist and Snow,
And it grew wond'rous cauld:
And Ice mast-high came floating by
As green as Emerald.

And thro' the drifts the snowy cliffs
Did send a dismal sheen;
Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken -
The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,
The Ice was all around:
It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd -
Like noises of a swound.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the Fog it came;
And an it were a Christian Soul,
We hail'd it in God's name.

The Marineres gave it biscuit-worms,
And round and round it flew:
The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit,
The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

And a good south wind sprung up behind,
The Albatross did follow;
And every day for food or play
Came to the Marinere's hollo!

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud,
It perch'd for vespers nine,
Whiles all the night thro' fog-smoke white,
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

»God save thee, ancient Marinere!
From the fiends that plague thee thus -
Why look'st thou so?« - with my cross bow
I shot the Albatross. [...]

Victorian Ballad:

e.g. Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" (1832/42)

On either side the river lie	a
Long fields of barley and of rye,	a
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;	a
And through the field the road runs by	a
To many-towered Camelot;	b
The yellowleaved waterlily	c
And up and down the people go	c
The greensheathed daffodilly,	c
Gazing where the lilies blow	c
Tremble in the water chilly,	c
Round an island there below,	c
Round about Shalott.	b
The island of Shalott.	b

Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott": Endings

1832:

They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest.
There lay a parchment on her breast,
That puzzled more than all the rest,
 The wellfed wits at Camelot.
*'The web was woven curiously
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not - this is I,
 The Lady of Shalott.'*

1842:

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot.
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott.'

2) Songs and the Lyric

From a welter of shorter poetic genres, lyric gradually emerged [in the Renaissance] as the most common catchall category, and only in the nineteenth and twentieth century was it mythologized as the purest and oldest of poetic genres and thus transformed into a nostalgic ideology marker [...]

But lyric did not conquer poetry: poetry was reduced to lyric. Lyric became the dominant form of poetry only as poetry's authority was reduced to the cramped margins of culture [...] Poetry was pushed into a lyric ghetto because prose fiction became the presumptive vehicle for narrative literature.

(Jeffreys 1995, 197/200)

Key terms:

subjectivity/individuality, immediacy, authenticity, organicism

► narrative recounts an event, lyric poetry strives to be an event.

<p>William Blake In his "Introduction" to his <i>Songs of Innocence</i> (1789), the poet, painter and engraver William Blake reflects upon the gap between being and representation by introducing the figure of a piper whose art moves from the realm of innocent involvement to the realm of representation. Interestingly, this fall from grace is inaugurated by a child who urges the piper to broaden the functional potential of his art by enriching first its affective and then, in a move from pure music to singing and writing, its semantic and representational potential:</p> <p>Piping down the valleys wild Piping songs of pleasant glee On a cloud I saw a child, And he laughing said to me;</p> <p>"Pipe a song about a lamb"; 5 So I piped with merry cheer. "Piper, pipe that song again—" So I piped, he wept to hear.</p>	<p>"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe, Sing thy songs of happy cheer." 10 So I sung the same again While he wept with joy to hear.</p> <p>"Piper sit thee down and write In a book that all may read—" So he vanished from my sight. 15 And I plucked a hollow reed, And I made a rural pen, And I stain'd the water clear, And I wrote my happy songs Every child may joy to hear. 20</p>
	<p>In the course of the poem, the fall from grace is clearly depicted as a fall into language which has the capacity to add joy to the world (lines 12, 20) but lets the world vanish from sight (15). Writing about the world is necessarily at a distance from the world, it "stain[s]" (18) its original being. In Blake's frontispiece for the collection, the piper/writer is depicted in the act of stepping out of the world of original being into experience.</p>

(Reinfandt 2012, 50)

William Wordsworth:

Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as *a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation*, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible, – the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification, – as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, *the music of the poem*; – in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman;

He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

(Preface to *Poems* 1815, emphasis added)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden 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.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1804; 1807)

I travelled among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed. (1801; 1807)

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
- Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me! (1798; 1800)

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees. (1798; 1800)

**George Gordon, Lord Byron:
Stanzas for Music**

I.

They say that Hope is happiness;
But genuine Love must prize the past,
And Memory wakes the thoughts that bless:
They rose the first - they set the last;

II.

And all that Memory loves the most
Was once our only Hope to be,
And all that Hope adored and lost
Hath melted into Memory.

III.

Alas! it is delusion all:
The future cheats us from afar,
Nor can we be what we recall,
Nor dare we think on what we are.

(1816; 1829)

**Percy Bysshe Shelley:
A Song: "Men of England"**

Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat - nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed, - but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth, - let no impostor heap;
Weave robes, - let not the idle wear;
Forge arms, - in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;
In halls ye deck another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre. (1819; 1839)

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