

Charlotte Smith (1749–1806)

Written in the Church-Yard at Middleton in Sussex

Press'd by the Moon, mute arbitress of tides,
While the loud equinox its power combines,
The sea no more its swelling surge confines,
But o'er the shrinking land sublimely rides.
The wild blast, rising from the Western cave,
Drives the huge billows from their heaving bed;
Tears from their grassy tombs the village dead,
And breaks the silent sabbath of the grave!
With shells and sea-weed mingled, on the shore
Lo! their bones whiten in the frequent wave;
But vain to them the winds and waters rave;
They hear the warring elements no more:
While I am doom'd—by life's long storm opprest,
To gaze with envy on their gloomy rest.

*On Being Cautioned against Walking on an Headland Overlooking the Sea,
Because It Was Frequented by a Lunatic*

Is there a solitary wretch who hies
To the tall cliff, with starting pace or slow,
And, measuring, views with wild and hollow eyes
Its distance from the waves that chide below;
Who, as the sea-born gale with frequent sighs
Chills his cold bed upon the mountain turf,
With hoarse, half-utter'd lamentation, lies
Murmuring responses to the dashing surf?
In moody sadness, on the giddy brink,
I see him more with envy than with fear;
He has no *nice felicities* that shrink
From giant horrors; wildly wandering here,
He seems (uncursed with reason) not to know
The depth or the duration of his woe.

-

Charlotte Smith

(1749 – 1806)



Elegiac Sonnets

- Includes “Written in the Church-Yard,” “On Being Cautioned”
- First published in 1784
- Nine expanding editions in the following 16 years

elegy (adj. *elegiac*)

a formal and sustained lament in verse for the death of a particular person, usually ending in a consolation

sonnet

From the Italian word *sonnetto*, meaning “little song,” a **lyric** poem that almost always consists of 14 lines (usually printed as a single stanza) and that typically follows one of several conventional **rhyme schemes**

lyric

In the most common use of the term, a lyric is any fairly short poem, uttered by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling.

Although the lyric is uttered in the first person, the “I” in the poem need not be the poet who wrote it.

lyric

In the original Greek, "lyric" signified a song rendered to the accompaniment of a **lyre**.

In some current usages, lyric still retains the sense of a poem written to be set to music.

cf. *lyrics* (the words of a song)

rhyme

In English versification, standard rhyme consists of the repetition, in the rhyming words, of the last stressed vowel and of all the speech sounds following that vowel:

Examples: *lard / shard; drinking / shrinking*

End rhymes, by far the most frequent type, occur at the end of a verse line. **Internal rhymes** occur within a verse line.

rhyme scheme

The pattern of end rhymes in a stanza, usually notated with lowercase letters:

the first line and all subsequent lines that rhyme with it are **a**, the first line not to rhyme with **a** are **b**, and so on.

On Being Cautioned against Walking on an Headland Overlooking the Sea, Because It Was Frequented by a Lunatic

Is there a solitary wretch who **hies** **a**
To the tall cliff, with starting pace or **slow**, **b**
And, measuring, views with wild and hollow **eyes** **a**
Its distance from the waves that chide **below**; **b**

Who, as the sea-born gale with frequent **sighs** **a**
Chills his cold bed upon the mountain **turf**, **c**
With hoarse, half-utter'd lamentation, **lies** **a**
Murmuring responses to the dashing **surf**? **c**

In moody sadness, on the giddy **brink**, **d**
I see him more with envy than with **fear**; **e**
He has no nice felicities that **shrink** **d**
From giant horrors; wildly wandering **here**, **e**

He seems (uncursed with reason) not to **know** **b**
The depth or the duration of his **woe**. **b**

Two major types of sonnets

① the Italian, or *Petrarchan*, sonnet (named after the 14th- century Italian poet Petrarch)

Ex. "Written in the Church-Yard"

② the English, or *Shakespearean*, sonnet

The rhyme scheme of "On Being Cautioned" is

abab acac dede bb: *Shakespearean* sonnet (with variations)

Shakespearean sonnet

The Shakespearean sonnet, which has 14 lines, is divided into three **quatrains** and a **couplet**, rhyming *abab cdcd efef gg*.

- * quatrain: a stanza containing four lines.
- * couplet: two successive lines of rhyming verse

sonnet revival

The sonnet as a form, after its great flourishing in the Renaissance, dropped out of fashion in the eighteenth century.

Its revival toward the end of that century—by Coleridge in the 1790s; Wordsworth; and in the next generation, Shelley and Keats—was largely the result of [Smith's influential refashioning of the sonnet as a medium of mournful feeling](#).

(See [The Norton Anthology](#), p. 53)

The Poet and “I”

What is the relationship between the “I” of the poem and Charlotte Smith herself?

Passion for the Sonnet

Why did Romantic poets find the confined space of the sonnet so congenial? The extraordinary popularity of the form during the Romantic period seems something of a paradox. In an age that breathed the spirit of liberty, its poets enthusiastically embraced the 14-line sonnet with its emphasis on discipline, tightness, and wholeness.

The sonnet's compression could release the essence of a thought, feeling, or situation; and the formal variations possible within its structure gave opportunities for shaping an idea in new ways.

- David Fairer

Sources

- M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 10th ed., Wadsworth, 2011. (Slides 3, 5-7, 10)
- Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. (Slides 4, 11)
- J. A. Cuddon and M. A. R. Habib, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 5th ed., Penguin Books, 2015. (Slide 8)
- Stephen Greenblatt, general editor, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 2, 9th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2012. (Slide 12)
- David Fairer, "The sonnet," *An Oxford Guide: Romanticism*, edited by Nicholas Roe, Oxford UP, 2000. (Slide 14)

History of Modern British Literature

Fall 2021

T & Th 10:30 - 11:45 am

Professor Sunghyun Jang
sunghyun-j@korea.ac.kr

Office: West Hall 221
Phone: 02-3290-1982
Office hours: Mon 2-5 pm
Other times by appointment.

Course Description

This course is a survey of British literature from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. Reading materials are divided into three segments: the Romantic era (ca. 1785 - 1832), The Victorian age (ca. 1830 - 1901), and the Modernist period (ca. 1901 - 1939). Not only does the course supply general information about the historical and intellectual background essential to studying the literature of each period, but it also encourages students to produce an in-depth critical analysis of the given text (whether a poem or a prose work) from his or her own perspective. Students will be able to understand how *modern literature* has arisen in the broader context of social and cultural changes in Britain.

Required Text

Greenblatt, Stephen, gen. ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 9th ed. Vol. 2. Norton, 2012. [Available on Union Store and Kyobo online bookstore]

- I recommend purchasing this anthology, but you can also copy the texts from *The Norton Anthology* held by Main Library.
- You might also want to compile the poems on the Web. I recommend the following two websites: <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>> and <<https://www.bartleby.com/verse/>>. But please note that online texts of the poems we're studying may have different punctuation from *The Norton Anthology*.

Policies

- This course is conducted online in real time throughout semester. Log into Blackboard (BB) and click Collaborate at 10:30 am for each class. The video recording of each class will be available on BB.
- The edited versions of this course's recordings will be uploaded to KU-OCW (Open Courseware).
- Attendance is both important and required. With more than eight absences (1/3 of the semester, including excused ones), your grade will be an automatic F. If you missed a class due to sickness or official university activities, submit a document provided by a doctor or a formal letter from your department. In the case of a serious emergency, notify me in advance. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your final grade. Three occasions of tardiness are equal to one absence; and being more than 20 minutes late for class is considered an absence, too.
- Please participate actively in class discussions. Complete the assigned readings before class and come prepared to make comments on them. Feel free to ask any questions about hard-to-understand passages and expressions in the text.
- Do not use a smart phone during class time. Please do not be distracted by KakaoTalk & SNS messages.

Grading

- Attendance/Class Participation: 5%
 - Group Presentation: 8%
 - Quizzes: 12%
 - Reading Response: 10%
 - Midterm & Final Exams: 65% (32.5% each)
-
- ✓ Each of you will be part of a group that offers to the class a general introduction of the author of your interest and a detailed analysis of his or her work listed on the syllabus. In the presentation, briefly introduce the author and the historical and/or intellectual background against which the work was written, and then analyze the form and content of the work. This presentation should be 12-15 minutes long. One person from the group e-mails me the PowerPoint or PDF file by 9 pm of the day before the presentation. I'll upload the presentation file on Blackboard. Details will be followed.
 - ✓ You will submit a response paper in the first week of December. It should be 800-900 words in English (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double space), or 2½ - 3 pages in Korean (10-point font, 180%). The paper must be grammatically correct and submitted on or before the due date. In this paper, try to make interpretive and critical comments on the poem rather than paraphrase or summarize it. An original interpretation of the poem with textual evidence will be much appreciated. Using secondary sources is OK, but not mandatory. Further instructions will be given.
 - ✓ Currently, I am planning to conduct the Midterm (10/28) and Final Exams (12/16) in a large classroom. They will be in-person exams.
 - ✓ There will be three reading comprehension quizzes on Burke & Paine (4%), Walter Pater (4%), and T. E. Hulme (4%). These quizzes will be taken online. A quiz missed due to lateness or absence will not be made up.
 - ✓ Final grades are non-negotiable.

Schedule of Readings

- This schedule is subject to change.
- It is possible that some of the poems listed below are dropped.

WEEK 1

- Sep 2 (Th): Introduction to the course: requirements, expectations, grading policy.
- Sep 7 (T): Introduction to the Romantic period; Anna Letitia Barbauld, "The Mouse's Petition" (The text will be provided)

WEEK 2

- Sep 9 (Th): Charlotte Smith, "Written in the Church-Yard at Middleton in Sussex," "On Being Cautioned against Walking on an Headland Overlooking the Sea, Because It Was Frequented by a Lunatic" (The texts will be provided)
- Sep 14 (T): William Blake, "The Lamb," "The Tyger"

WEEK 3

- Sep 16 (Th): Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man* (exerpts). Quiz #1
- Sep 21 (T): Chuseok

WEEK 4

- Sep 23 (Th): William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"
- Sep 28 (T): "Tintern Abbey" continued

WEEK 5

- Sep 30 (Th): S. T. Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"
- Oct 5 (T): P. B. Shelley, "England in 1819"

WEEK 6

- Oct 7 (Th): John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale"
- Oct 12 (T): John Clare, "I Am"

WEEK 7

- Oct 14 (Th): Introduction to the Victorian age; E. B. Browning, "How do I love thee?"
- Oct 19 (T): E. B. Browning, "The Cry of the Children"

WEEK 8.

- Oct 21 (Th): Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses" [previous recording]
- Oct 26 (T): No Class

WEEK 9

- Oct 28 (Th): **Midterm Exam** (in-person)
- Nov 2 (T): Robert Browning, "The Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister"

WEEK 10

- Nov 4 (Th): John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (excerpt)
- Nov 9 (T): Matthew Arnold, "The Scholar Gypsy"

WEEK 11

- Nov 11 (Th): "The Scholar Gypsy" continued
- Nov 16 (T): Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (excerpt). Quiz #2

WEEK 12

- Nov 18 (Th): G. M. Hopkins, "God's Grandeur"
- Nov 23 (T): Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush," "The Convergence of the Twain"

WEEK 13

- Nov 25 (Th): Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth"
- Nov 30 (T): T. E. Hulme, "Romanticism and Classicism." Quiz #3

WEEK 14

- Dec 2 (Th): W. B. Yeats, "Easter, 1916." Response Paper Due (12/3)
- Dec 7 (T): W. B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium"

WEEK 15

- Dec 9 (Th): T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
- Dec 14 (T): "Prufrock" continued [previous recording]

WEEK 16

- Dec 16 (Th): **Final Exam** (in-person)