

The Origins of Romanticism

Professor Jonathan Bate

Gresham Lectures on Rhetoric

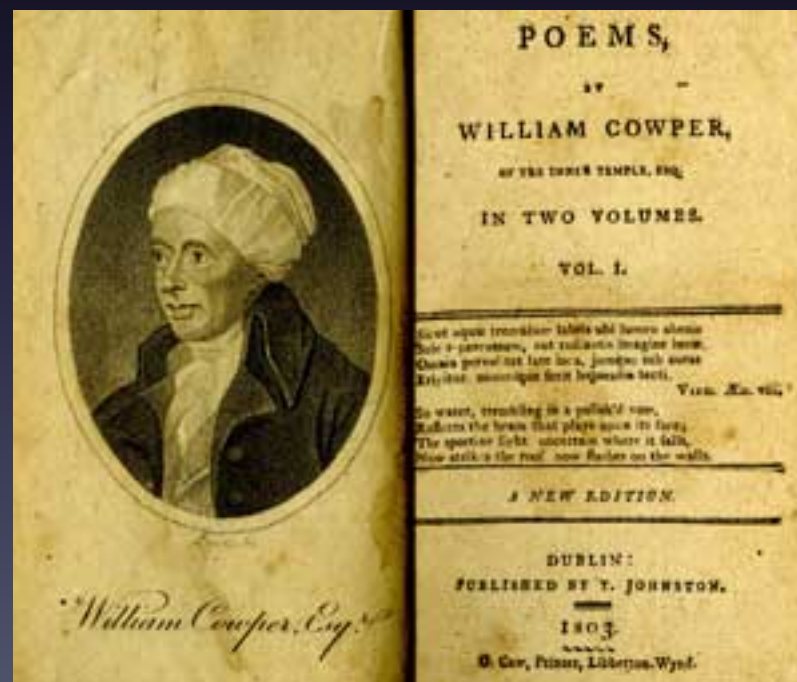
Series 2: Wordsworth & the Romantics













SAMUEL JOHNSON.

*From the original Picture
in the Possession of James Boswell Esq.*

Engraved April 10. 1791. W. D.

THE
L I F E
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

COMPREHENDING
AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STUDIES
AND NUMEROUS WORKS,
IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER;
A SERIES OF HIS EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE
AND CONVERSATIONS WITH MANY EMINENT PERSONS;
AND
VARIOUS ORIGINAL PIECES OF HIS COMPOSITION,
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.
THE WHOLE EXHIBITING A VIEW OF LITERATURE AND LITERARY MEN
IN GREAT-BRITAIN, FOR NEAR HALF A CENTURY,
DURING WHICH HE FLOURISHED.

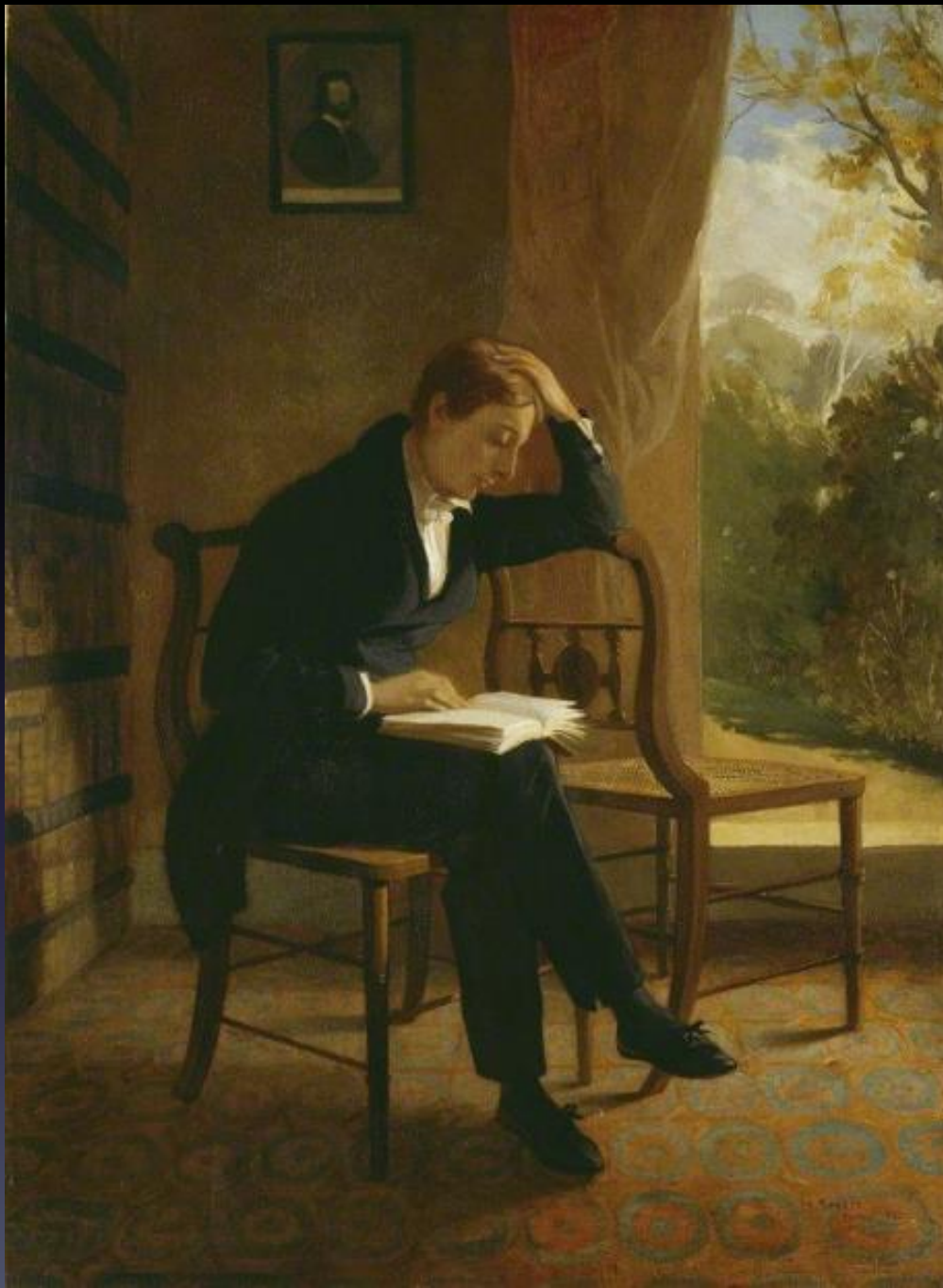
IN TWO VOLUMES
BY JAMES BOSWELL, ESQ.

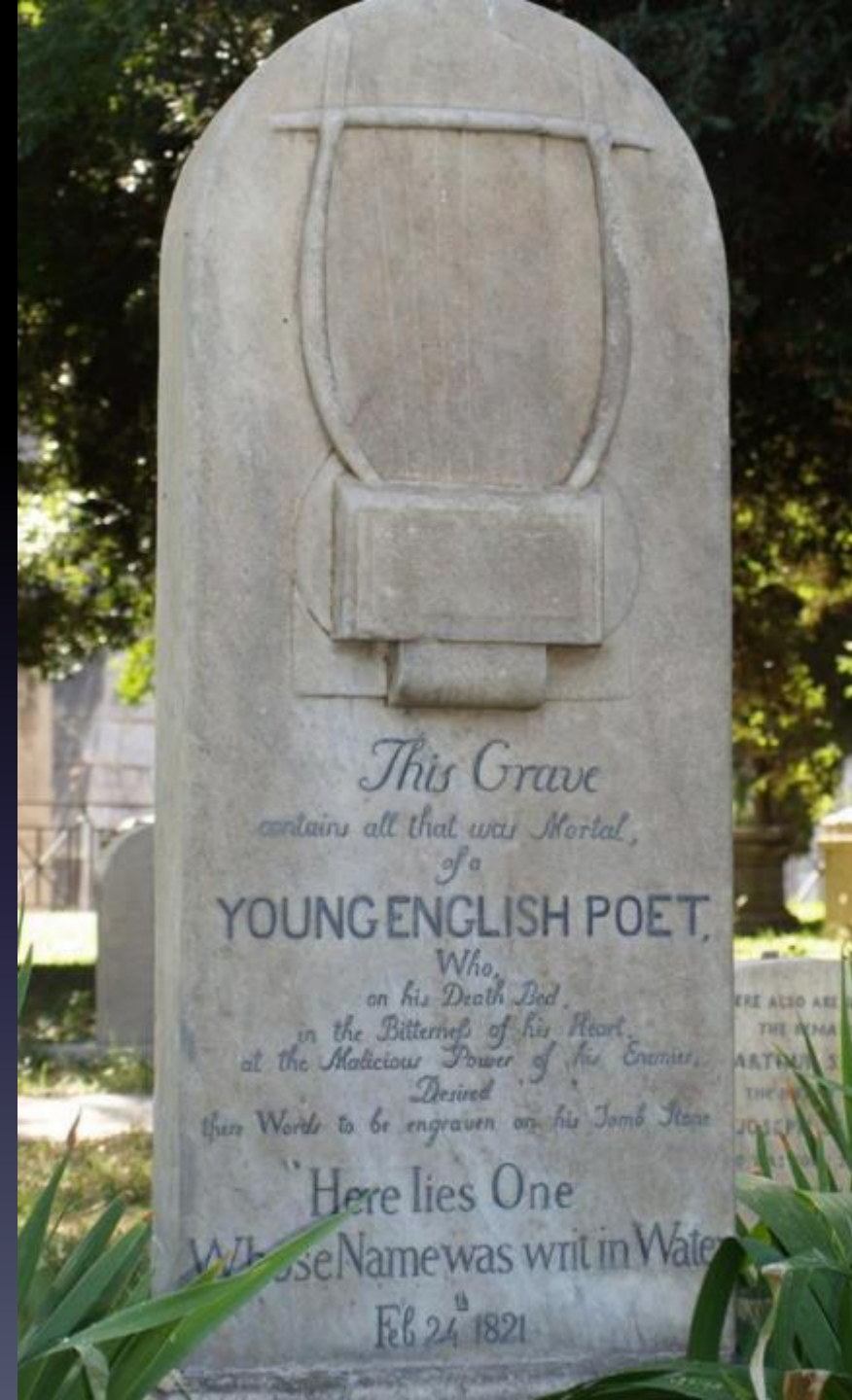
— *Quæ se ut omnia
Ficta parent soluti descripta soluta
VITA TERRE* — HURAY.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HENRY BALDWIN,
FOR CHARLES DILLY, IN THE FOULTRY.
MDCCLXXII.









The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave
their stations;

The grave is burst, the spices shed, the linen wrapped up;
The bones of death, the cowering clay, the sinews shrunk & dryd.
Reviving shake, inspiring move, breathing! awakening!

Spring like redeemed captives when their bonds & bars are burst:

Let the slave grinding at the mill, run out into the field:

Let him look up into the heavens & laugh in the bright air:

Let the chained soul shut up in darkness and in sighing,

Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty weary years:

Rise and look out, his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open,

And let his wife and children return from the oppressors scourge:

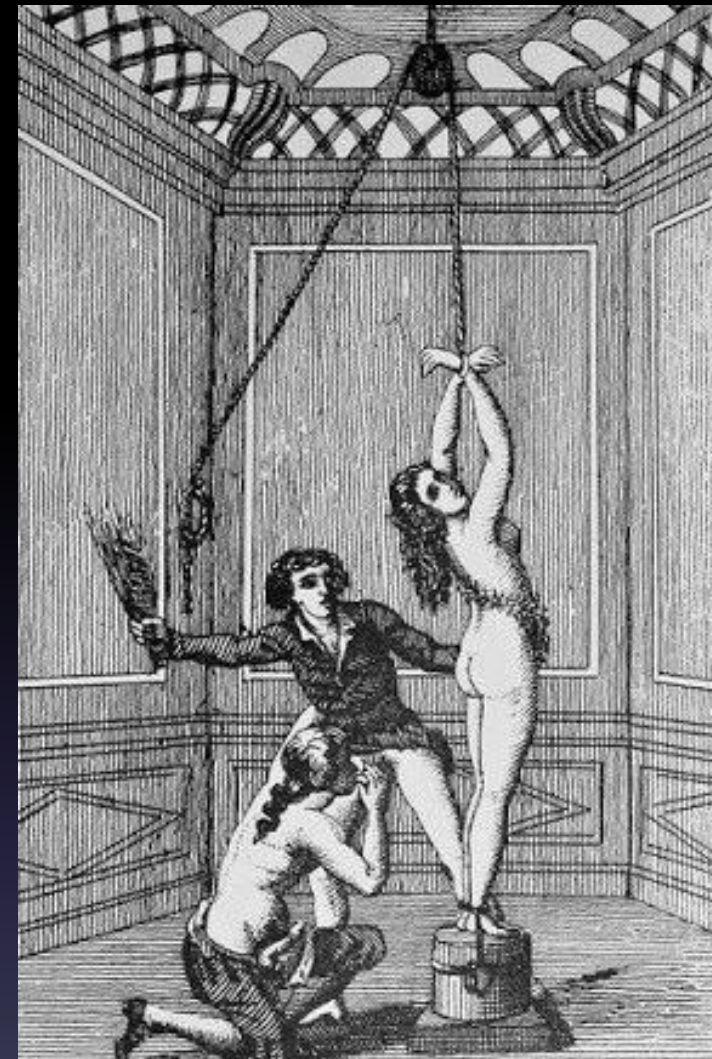
They look behind at every step & believe it is a dream.

Singing, The Sun has left his blacknels, & has found a fresher morning

And the fair Moon rejoices in the clear & cloudless night;

For Empire is no more, and now the Lion & Wolf shall cease.





[LEFT:] Illustration from 1797 French translation of M G Lewis' *The Monk*, as read by the Marquis de Sade, whose *Juliette* (above) was published and banned the same year

This attempt to describe the effects of the Sublime & Wonderful is dedicated to M. G. Lewis Esq. M.P.



J. Gillray, del. &c.

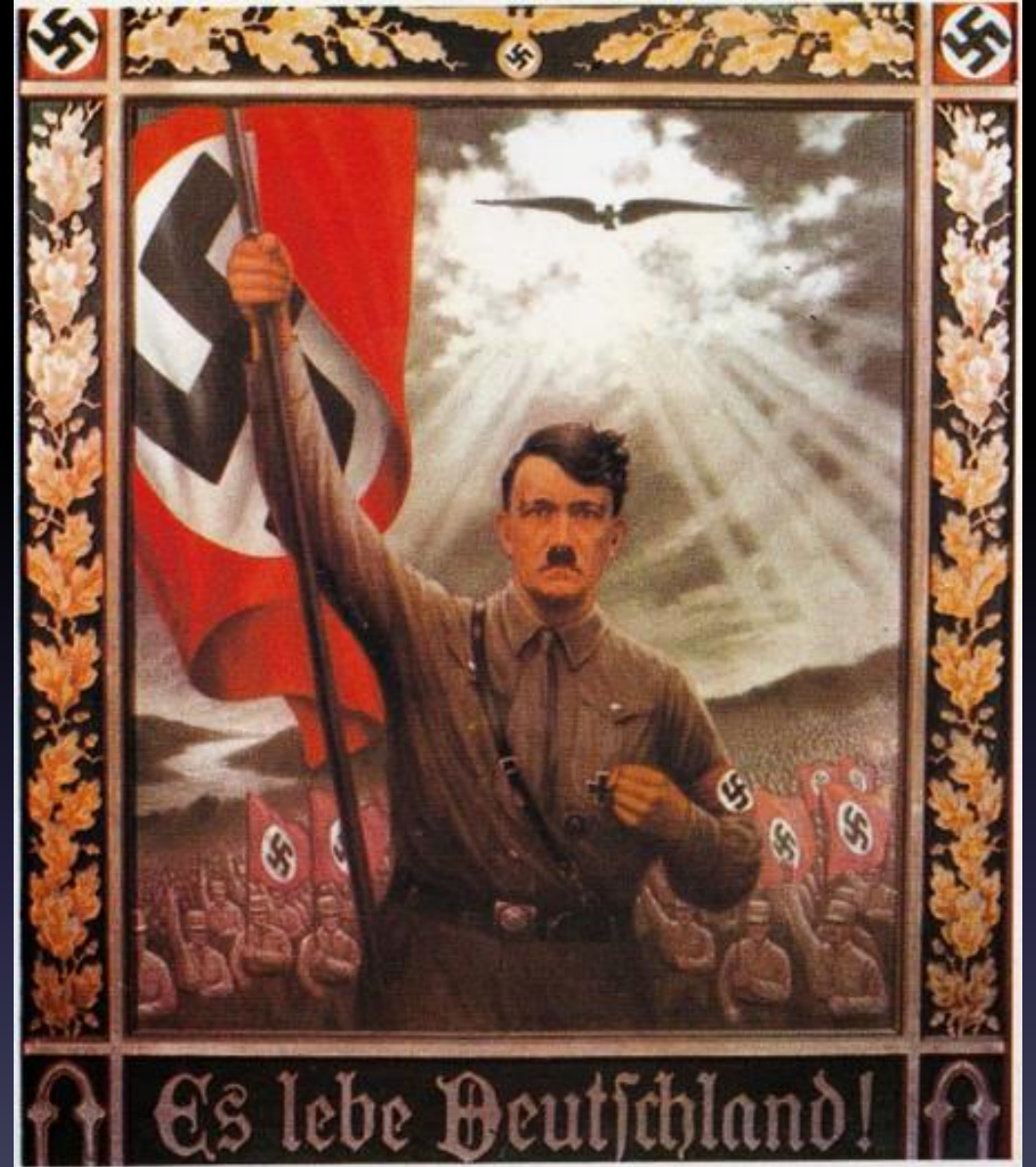
TALES of WONDER !

Published Feb'y 1786. by H. Humphreys at J. Jansons's Street, London.

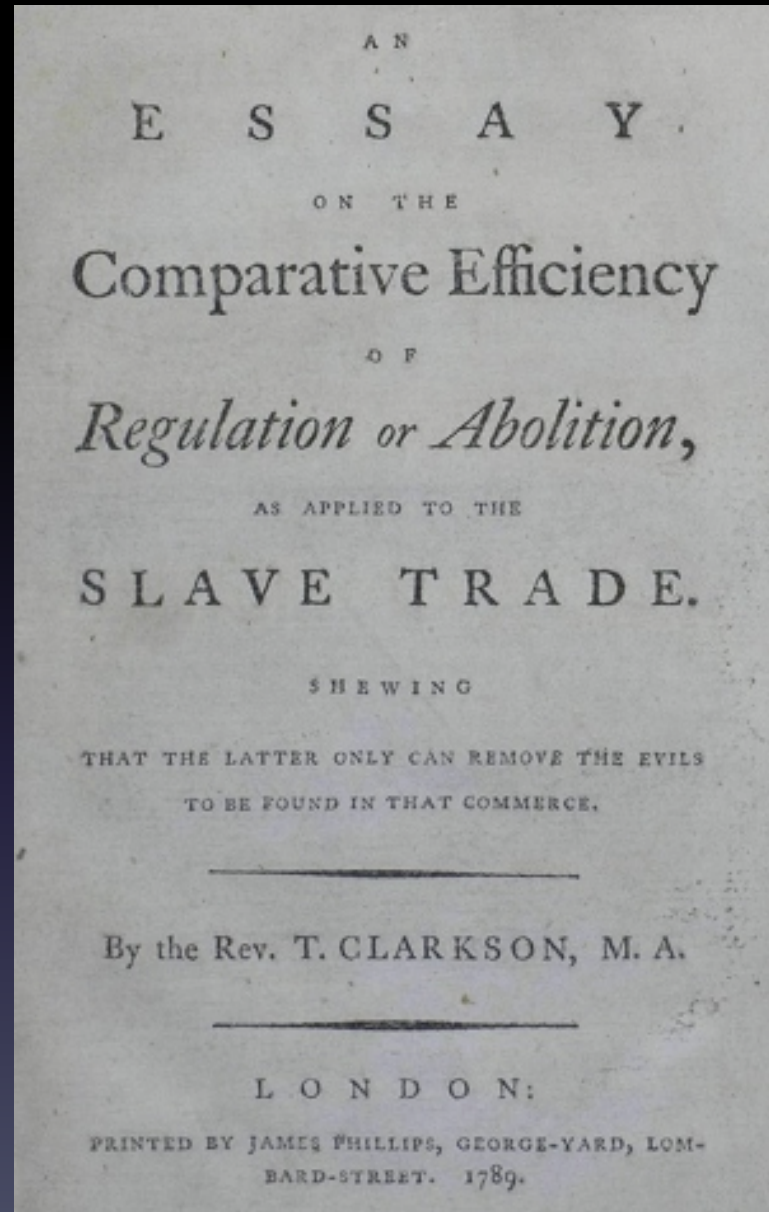


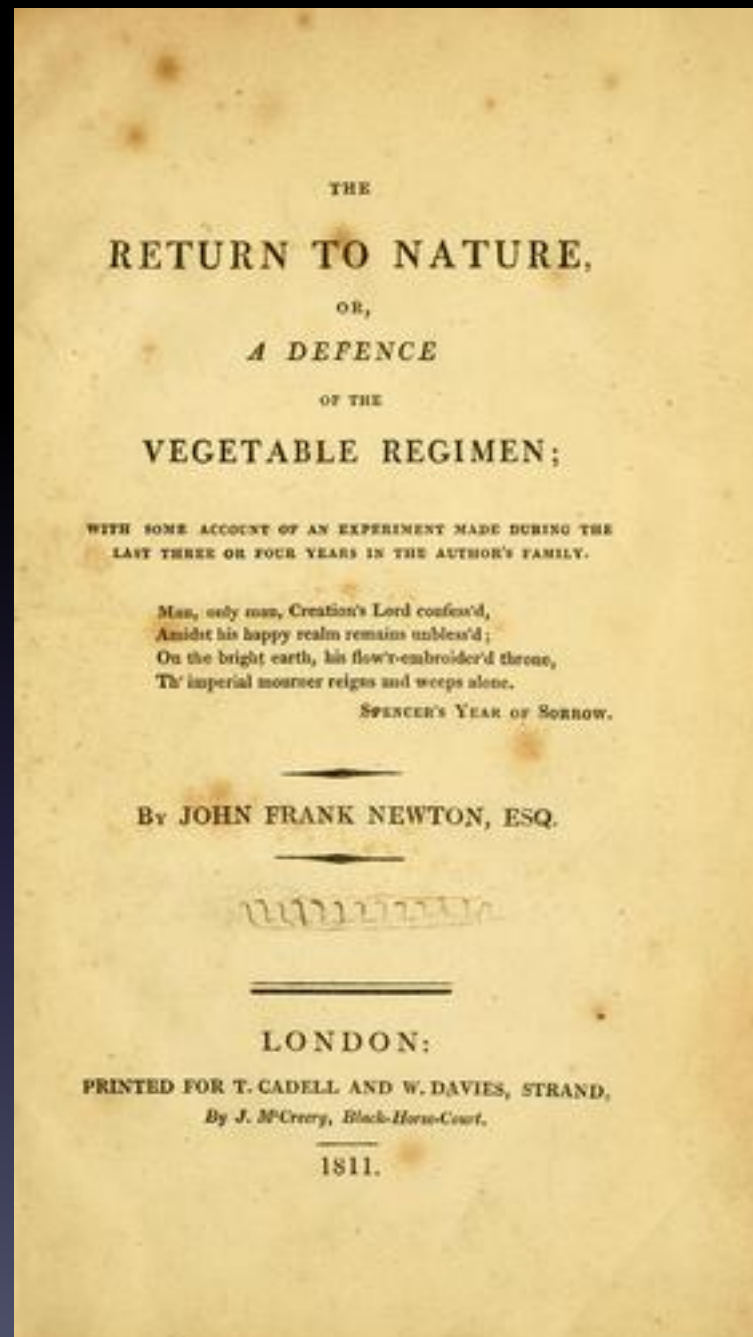
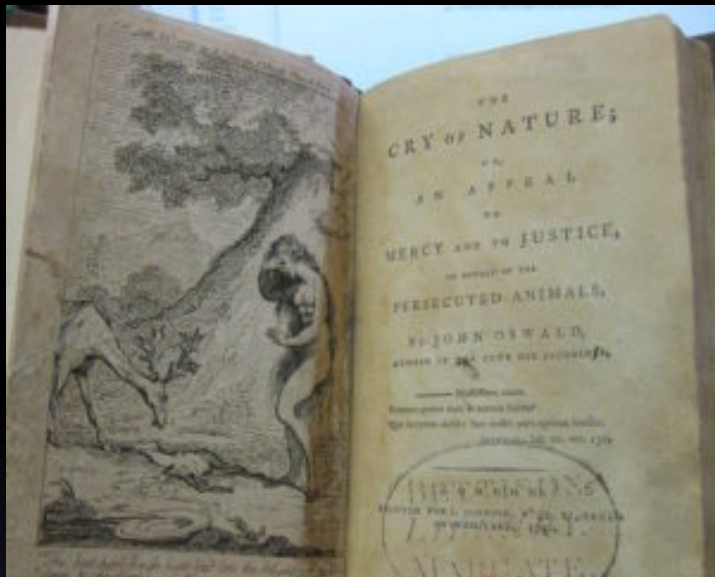


First Bayreuth production of
Parsifal (1882), dove descending



Poster from the Third Reich,
dove descending





Partly from ill-health, & partly from an unhealthy & reverie-like vividness of Thoughts, & (pardon the pedantry of the phrase) a diminished Impressibility from Things, my ideas, wishes, & feelings are to a diseased degree disconnected from motion & action. In plain & natural English, I am a dreaming & therefore an indolent man——. I am a Starling self-incaged, & always in the Moulting, & my whole Note is, Tomorrow, & tomorrow, & tomorrow. The same causes, that have robbed me to so great a degree of the self-impelling self-directing Principle, have deprived me too of the due powers of Resistances to Impulses from without. If I might so say, I am, as an acting man, a creature of mere Impact. 'I will' & 'I will not' are phrases, both of them equally, of rare occurrence in my dictionary.—This is the Truth—I regret it, & in the consciousness of this Truth I lose a larger portion of Self-estimation than those, who know me imperfectly, would easily believe—/ I evade the sentence of my own Conscience by no quibbles of self-adulation; I ask for Mercy indeed on the score of my ill-health; but I confess, that this very ill-health is as much an effect as a cause of this want of steadiness & self-command; and it is for mercy that I ask, not for justice.

[ST COLERIDGE to WILLIAM GODWIN, 22 Jan 1802]





John Philip Kemble
As Hamlet

Romantic poetry is a progressive, universal poetry. Its aim isn't merely to reunite all the separate species of poetry and put poetry in touch with philosophy and rhetoric. It tries to and should mix and fuse poetry and prose, inspiration and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature; and make poetry lively and sociable, and life and society poetical; poeticize wit and fill and saturate the forms of art with every kind of good, solid matter for instruction, and animate them with the pulsations of humour. It embraces everything that is purely poetic, from the greatest systems of art, containing within themselves still further systems, to the sigh, the kiss that the poetizing child breathes forth in artless song. ... It alone can become, like the epic, a mirror of the whole circumambient world, an image of the age. ... it opens up a perspective upon an infinitely increasing classicism. Romantic poetry is in the arts what wit is in philosophy, and what society and sociability, friendship and love are in life. Other kinds of poetry are finished and are now capable of being fully analyzed. The romantic kind of poetry is still in the state of becoming; that, in fact, is its real essence: that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected. It can be exhausted by no theory and only a divinatory criticism would dare try to characterize its ideal. It alone is infinite, just as it alone is free; and it recognizes as its first commandment that the will of the poet can tolerate no law above itself. The romantic kind of poetry is the only one that is more than a kind, that is, as it were, poetry itself: for in a certain sense all poetry is or should be romantic.

Die Leiden
des
jungen Werthers.

Erster Theil.



Leipzig,
in der Weygandschen Buchhandlung.
1774.

C. W. A. Bergmann:



Please not to allow any soft paper or dust to get on the surface.

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.



THE GARDEN OF FORTY FORTS

The Garden of Forty Forts, where the Poets of the North and South
of the North and South of the North and South of the North and South
of the North and South of the North and South of the North and South



Il retourne chez ses Égaux.
Voyez la Note 13. p. 259.

DISCOURS

SUR L'ORIGINE ET LES FONDEMENTS
DE L'INEGALITE PARMÍ LES HOMMES.

Par JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

CITOTEN DE GENÈVE.

Non in depravatis, sed in his quæ bene secundum
naturam se habent, considerandum est quid sit na-
turale. ARISTOT. Politic. L. 2.



A AMSTERDAM,

Chez MARC MICHEL REY.

M D C C L V.

160 R

6917

④



Dessiné par M. de La Harpe.

Thetis, Liv. I.

Gravé par M. de La Harpe.

É M I L E,
O U
DE L'ÉDUCATION.
P A R
JEAN JAQUES ROUSSEAU,
Citoyen de Genève.

Sanabilibus ægrotamus malis; ipsaque nos in rectum
genitos natura, si emendari velimus, juvat.

Sen: de irâ. L. II. c. 13.

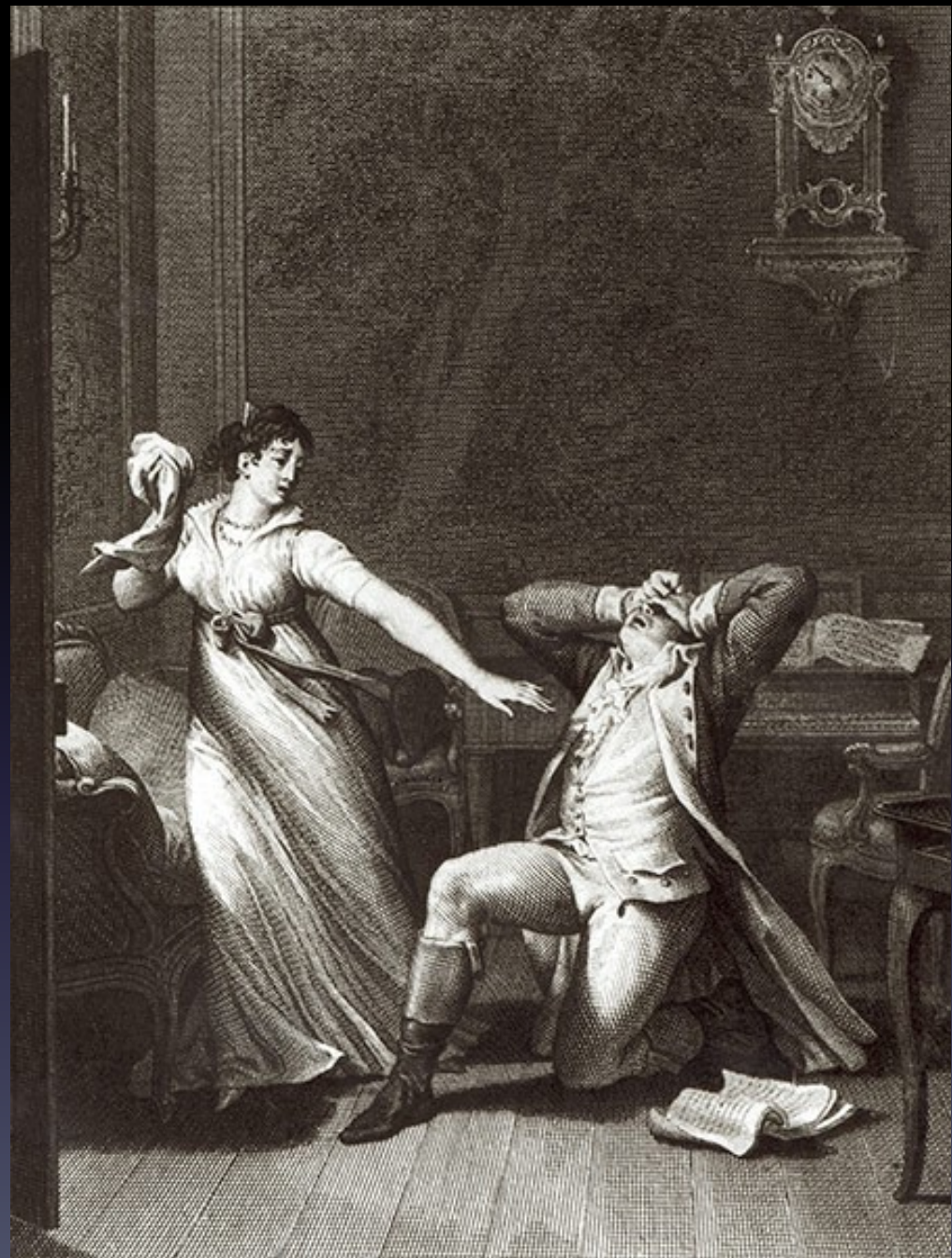
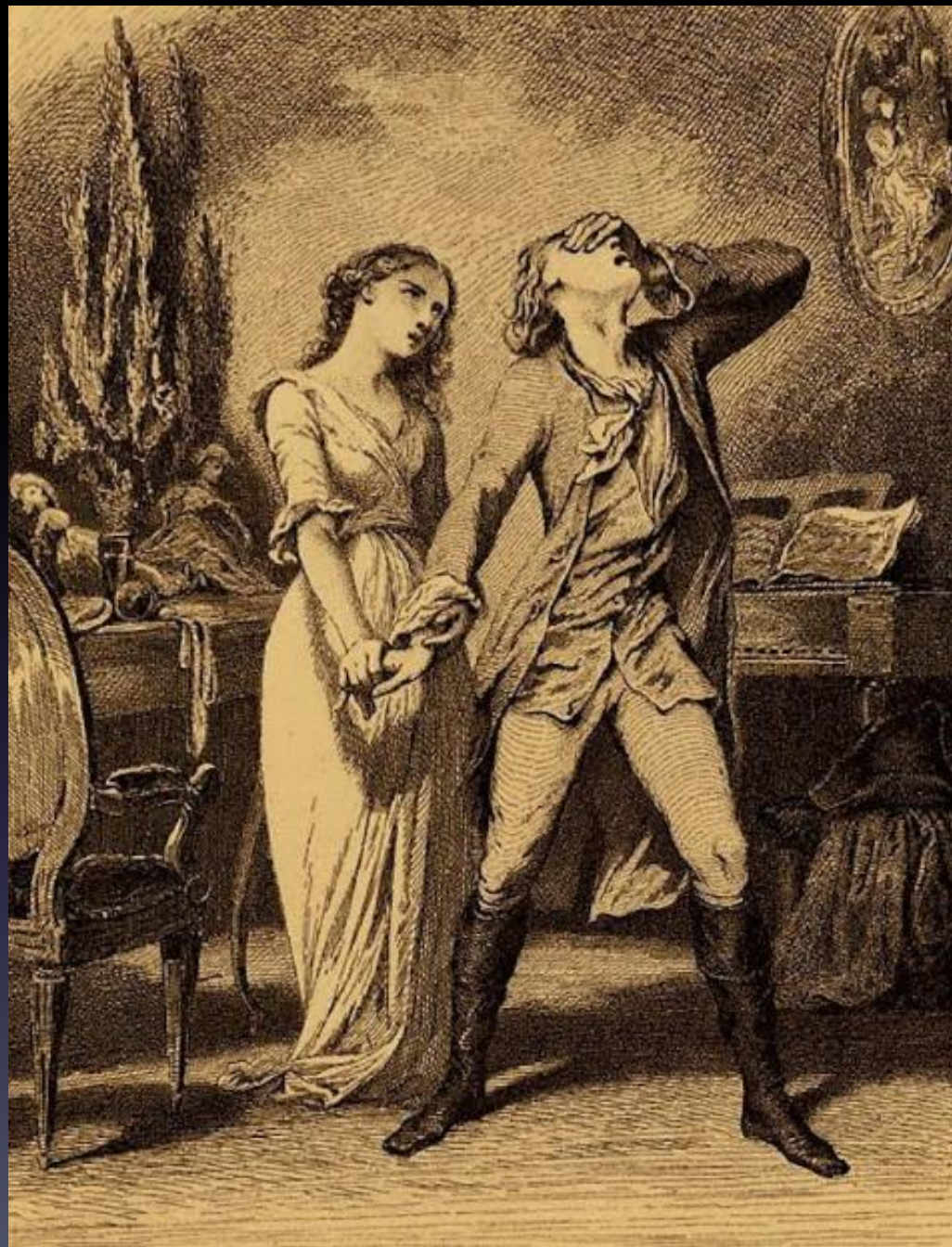
TOME PREMIER.



A AMSTERDAM,
Chez JEAN NÉAULME, Libraire.

M. DCC. LXII.

Avec Privilège de Nosseigneurs les Etats
de Hollande & de Westfrise.



F I N G A L,

A N

ANCIENT EPIC POEM,

In S I X B O O K S:

Together with several other POEMS, compiled by

OSSIAN the Son of FINGAL,

Translated from the GALIC LANGUAGE,

By JAMES MACPHERSON,

Pectus felle patrum.

VIRGIL.



L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BARNES and F. A. DE HENRY, in the Strand.

M D C C L X L

gal, who was himself upon the point of obtaining a complete victory, sends Carril to congratulate that hero on his success.

B. V.

IN the mean time Fingal and Swaran meet; the combat is described: Swaran is overcome, bound and delivered over as a prisoner to the care of Ossian and Gaul the son of Morni; Fingal, his younger sons, and Oscar, still pursue the enemy. The episode of Orla a chief of Lochlin, who was mortally wounded in the battle, is introduced. Fingal, touched with the death of Orla, orders the pursuit to be discontinued; and calling his sons together, he is informed that Ryno, the youngest of them, was killed. He laments his death, hears the story of Lamdarg and Gelchoffa, and returns towards the place where he had left Swaran. Carril, who had been sent by Cuchullin to congratulate Fingal on his victory, comes in the mean time to Ossian. The conversation of the two poets closes the action of the fourth day.

B. VI.

NIGHT comes on. Fingal gives a feast to his army, at which Swaran is present. The king commands Ullin his bard to give the
song

FERCHIOS! replied the chief of Cromla, no noise meets the ear of Lamderg. No sound is in the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my sight. No panting dog pursues. I see not Gelchoffa my love, fair as the full moon setting on the hills of Cromla. Go, Ferchios, go to Allad* the gray-haired son of the rock. His dwelling is in the circle of stones. He may know of Gelchoffa.

THE son of Aidon went; and spoke to the ear of age. Allad! thou that dwellest in the rock: thou that tremblest alone, what saw thine eyes of age?

I SAW, answered Allad the old, Ullin the son of Cairbar. He came like a cloud from Cromla; and he hummed a furly song like a blast in a leafless wood. He entered the hall of Selma.—Lamderg, he said, most dreadful of men, fight or yield to Ullin. Lamderg, replied Gelchoffa, the son of battle, is not here. He fights Ulfada mighty chief. He is not here, thou first of men. But Lamderg never yielded. He will fight the son of Cairbar.

LOVELY art thou, said terrible Ullin, daughter of the generous Tuathal. I carry thee to Cairbar's halls. The valiant shall have Gelchoffa. Three days I remain on Cromla, to wait that son

* Allad is plainly a druid: he is called the son of the rock, from his dwelling in a cave; and the circle of stones here mentioned is the pale of the druidical temple. He is here consulted as one who had a supernatural knowledge of things; from the druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the second fight, which prevailed in the highlands and isles.





"Ossian Singing" by Danish artist Nicolai Abildgaard (1787)



Ossian plays a harp and sings of Fingal to Malvina, a name probably made up by MacPherson that became popular in northern Europe as a result of the cult of the Ossian poems (1810 painting by Johann Peter Krafft)





LEFT: Illustration to Thomas Gray's 1757 poem "The Bard" by John Martin (1817)

RIGHT: "Wanderer above the Sea of Fog" (*Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*) by Caspar David Friedrich (c. 1818)