* **Wordsworth as a critic**
* Wordsworth was primarily a poet and not a critic.He left behind him no comprehensive treatise on criticism. The bulk of his literary criticism is small.Though the core of his literary criticism is as inspired as his poetry.
* There is utter sincerity,earnestness,passion and truth in his poetry as well as criticism. He knew about poetry in the real sense and has not said even a single word about poetry says “Chapman" “which is not valuable,worth thinking over”.
* **Herald of the romantic movement.**
* Wordsworth’s criticism is of far reaching historical significance. When he took to writing, it was the Neoclassical criticism, which held the day.Critics were preoccupied with poetic genres;poetry was judged on the basis of rules devised by Aristotle and other ancients and interpreted by the Italian and French critics. They cared for rules, for methods, for outward form, and had nothing to say about the substance, the soul of poetry.
* Wordsworth’s criticism is of far reaching historical significance. He is the first critic to turn the form of the poetry to its substance. He is the first critic who builds the theory of poetry and gives an account of the nature of the creative process.
* **Rejection of the old.**
  + Wordsworth through his literary criticism demolishes the old and the faulty and opens out new vistas and avenues.He discards the artificial and restricted of approved 18th century poetry.Disgusted by the “gaudiness and inane phraseology”, of many modern writers, he castigate poets who, “separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation".Discarding formal finish and perfection, he stresses vivid sensation and spontaneous feeling. He says “AH good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". He discards Aristotelian doctrine. For him, the plot or situation, isn’t the first thing. “It is the feeling that matters"
* **Stress on simplicity.**
  + Reacting against the artificiality of 18th century poetry, he advocates simplicity both in treatment and theme. He advocates a deliberate choice of subjects from “humble and rustic life". Instead of being pre-occupied with nymphs and goddesses, he portrays the emotions of village girls and peasants. There is a health realism in his demand that thepoet should use “the language of common men" ,the language of prose when prose is well-written, and that he should aim at keeping, “the reader in the company of flesh and blood.
* By confining himself exclusively to rustic life, he excluded many essential elements in human experience. In this way, he narrowed down his range. “His insistence on the use of a selection of language really used by men is always in danger of becoming trivial and mean”. Coleridge demonstrate that a selection of language as advocated by Wordsworth would differ in no way from the language of any other man of common sense.
* **Historical significance.**
* All the same, the historical significance of his criticism is very great . It served as a corrective to the artificial and inane phraseology of contemporary poetry and emphasized the value of a simpler and more natural language. By advocating simplicity in theme, he succeeded in enlarging the range of English poetry. He attacked what was old, outdated and trivial, and created a taste for the new and the significant.
* He emphasized the true nature of poetry as an expression of emotion and passion, and so dealt a death blow to the dry intellectuality of contemporary poetry. In this way he brought about a revolution in the theory of the poetry, and made popular acceptance of the new poetry, the romantic poetry possible.
* **His achievements.**
* Wordsworth is the first English critic consider at length, the nature of poetry, and the creative process. He is a great pioneer in this field. Wordsworth is a romantic in his emphasis on spontaneity, imagination, intuition, and inspiration. But unlike other romantics, he also lays stress on the element of thought in poetry.
* He has a high conception of his own calling, and so knows that great poetry cannot be produced by a careless or thoughtless person. “Poems to which any value can be attached, he says, “were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. “Poetic process is a complex one .Great poetry is not produced on the spur of the moment. It is produced when the emotion is tranquility, and the poet passions a new.
* Wordsworth goes against the neo-classical view that poetry should both instruct and delight, and when he stresses, that the function of poetry is to give pleasure , a pleasure of noble and exalted kind, pleasure which results from increased understanding and sympathy.
* According to Wordsworth, the poet is essentially a man who differs from men not in kind , but only in degree. He is essentially a man speaking to men. He has a more lively sensibility, a more comprehensive soul, greater powers of observation, imagination and communication. He is also a man who has thought long and deep. Wordsworth emphasizes his organic oneness as also the need for him of emotional identification with other men. It will not do for him to sit high and alone in his ivory tower; he must come out into the light of common day, share in the joys and sorrows of common men and women and write for their pleasure.