

Age of Sensibility

1745 - 1789

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INTRODUCTION

The birthing of Romantic spirit

Cracks in the wall of Classicism

Also called “The Age of Transition”

Who is Samuel Johnson?



Born in 1709 and died in 1784

Poet, critic and author of fiction

Questioning optimistic assumption

The importance of using knowledge, not
faith and superstition

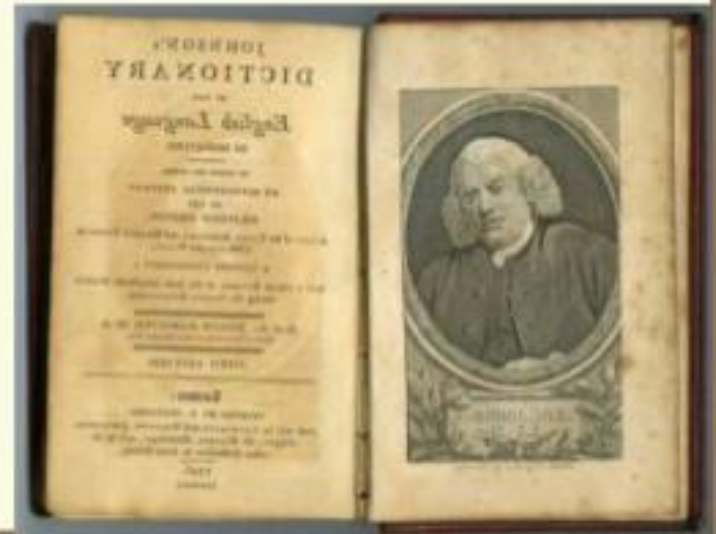
A series of Tory pamphlets


Literary ruler

A Dictionary of the English
Language

Famous lexicographer

Criticized for imposing his
personality



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Poetry of the Age of Johnson

Age of transition and experiment

Both the classical spirit and romantic revival

Johnson, Boswell, Gibbon, Robert Burns,
Thomas Gray, Cowper, Crabbe...

Robert Burns

He is the greatest song writer in the English language.



He had great love for nature, and a firm belief in human dignity and quality, both of which are characteristic of romanticism

*Give me a spark of Nature's fire,
That is all the learning I desire;
Then, though I trudge through dub and mire
At plough or cart,
My Muse, though homely in attire,
May touch the heart*

Thomas Gray



He is famous for his poem *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

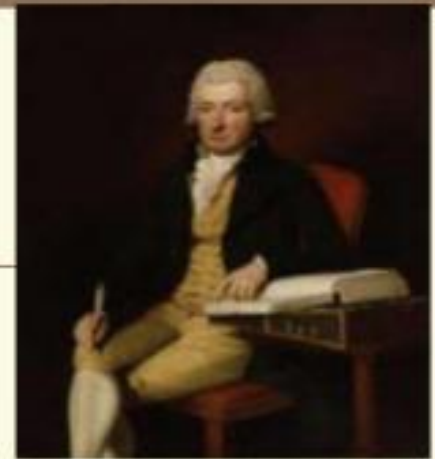
Unlike classical poetry this poem is the manifestation of deep feelings of the poet.

Classical model, romantic spirit

William Cowper

His poetry describes the homely scenes and pleasures and pains of simple humanity.

His longest poem, *The Task* and others are *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture* and *Alexander Selkirk*.



Samuel Johnson in poetry



“London” and *“The Vanity of Human Wishes”*

Both poems are modeled on Juvenal’s satires.

London describes the various problems of London

The Vanity of Human and Wishes “even the most desired things such as being beautiful or living a long life could turn to be tragic ones”

Oliver Goldsmith



Greatest supporter of Dr. Johnson

Classical spirit in his works

The Traveler, The Deserted Village, The Ballad

Prose of the Age of Johnson

18. Century is the age of aristocracy.

A literary style founded on logical and lucid thoughts

Opposed to inaccurate and trivial things

Johnson, Burke, Gibbon and Boswell

Samuel Johnson in prose

Rhythm, balance and ludicity

*Best-known works : **Dictionary** , *Lives of Poets**

*Some important aticles : *The Rambler, The Idler, Rasselas**

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a cream-colored page. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text is written on the page.

Dictionary (1747-1755)

One of the most famous dictionaries in history

Incomprehensible words to the average reader

He is even believed to have made up some words.

Edmund Burke



The most important member of Johnson's circle

The greatest political philosopher that ever spoke in the English Parliament

In *Thoughts on the Present Discontent* (1770), he advocated limited monarchy.

Restrained, philosophical, dignified, obedient to law and order, free from exaggeration and pedantry as well as from vulgarity and superficiality.

Edward Gibbon



The first historian of England who wrote in a literary manner

His greatest historical work—*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

Its importance in literature is on account of its prose style which is the very climax of classicism.

James Boswell in prose

A lawyer, diarist, author

Best known for biographies such as Samuel Johnson's Biography

Owing his succes to Samuel Johnson

The Significance of The Dictionary

- **Johnson's Dictionary is the work that defined the English language.**
- **Witty definitions.**
- **Dictionary explicitly accomplished prescriptive goals.**
- **Apt quotations.**
- **Johnson inserted dictionaries into literary culture.**