

## 1. The Romantic Legacy in Victorian Poetry:

Victorian poetry is in many ways a transition or a bridge between Romantic and Modernist poetry.

The Victorian poets were working within the tradition of Romantic poetry especially in the early decades of the Victorian age. The early poetry of Tennyson and other major Victorian poets was deeply Romantic in tone and vision. It was a poetry that is characterized by idealism and an escape from social reality into art and nature. Even later when these poets developed a characteristically Victorian poetic voice, their poetry combines the Victorian high moral seriousness with the traditional Romantic ideas of poetic beauty as realized in rich imagery, evocative language, melodious sound, and established poetic forms. With the passage of time this sort of escapist and idealistic poetry was increasingly becoming irrelevant to the pressing realities of the Victorian age. So, Victorian poets started to develop a distinctive sense of social and ethical responsibility in their mature poetry.

Gradually, the traditional technical elegance of Romantic poetry was displaced by a more prosaic register and by eccentric innovations and sensuous experimentation. On the one hand, Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold, in particular, were noted for the prosaic register of their blank verse poetry which they found more apt to dramatize psychological exploration of eccentric personalities and cultural analysis of the Victorian age. On the other hand, Charles Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic movements championed sensuous experimentation by espousing poetry with the visual arts, notably, painting. Gerard Manly Hopkins and Lewis Carol produced eccentric metrical and technical innovations, especially with the visual shape and the metrical pattern of the poem.