

4

THE ROMANTIC AGE

(1760-1837)

Extra Material

William Blake

‘The Chimney Sweeper’ (c.1793)



BEFORE READING

In the 18th and 19th centuries small children were often used to clean the chimneys of large houses. The children would have to climb up inside these chimneys to clear away the black soot. What adjectives would you use to describe this job?

Listen to the poem and see if you were right.



‘The Chimney Sweeper’



This poem, from Songs of Experience, exposes the suffering of the powerless and weak, and the selfishness of society.

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying weep, weep in notes of woe!¹
‘Where are thy father and mother, say?’
‘They are both gone up to the church to pray.

5 Because I was happy upon the heath²
And smiled among the winter’s snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

10 And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise³ God and his Priest and King
Who make up a heaven of our misery.’

1. **woe:** afflizione.
2. **heath:** brughiera.
3. **praise:** rendere lode.



OVER TO YOU

① Read the poem and answer the following questions.

1. Who or what is ‘the thing’ of the first line? How do you know?
2. What does the adjective ‘little’ tell us? Is this description consistent with how you imagined the chimney sweep?
3. Where are his parents?
4. Where is he and what is he doing?
5. What did his parents do for him?
6. Who does ‘our’ refer to in the last line?

William Wordsworth

'My Heart Leaps Up' (1807)



BEFORE READING

In this shorter poem by Wordsworth we find the famous line: 'The Child is father of the Man'. This may seem like a paradox but can you think of any ways in which 'the child' could be 'father of the man'? Discuss in pairs and compare your answers.

Listen to the poem and say whether its rhythm makes it seem positive or negative.



'My Heart Leaps Up'



My heart leaps up¹ when I behold²
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
5 So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound³ each to each by natural piety.⁴

1. **leaps up:** fa un salto, si riempie di emozioni.
2. **behold:** [arc., see].
3. **bound:** legati.
4. **piety:** devozione, amore.



OVER TO YOU

- 1 How does the poet feel when he sees a rainbow?
- 2 Write the words the poet uses to refer to the different stages of his life which correspond to in the table below.
 1. Birth
 2. Adulthood
 3. Old age
 4. Death
- 3 What does he desire for his future?
- 4 For the poet the rainbow symbolises the natural world and he would prefer to die if (choose from the following).
 - he never saw a rainbow again
 - he lost his enthusiasm for such things while growing older
 - the rainbow disappeared

- 5 In lines 3, 4 and 5 Wordsworth uses inversion. What effect is gained by this?
- 6 Go back to the line 'The Child is father of the Man'; now that you have read the whole poem, what do you think Wordsworth is saying?
- the adult can learn from the child
- the adult is the result of his childhood
- 7 Discuss in pairs a definition of the stages of man referred to in the poem.
1. When does childhood end?
 2. When do we truly become adults, what defines an adult?
 3. When does old age begin, is it the same for everyone?
- 8 'Act your age!' Parents often say this to teenagers along with expressions like; 'Grow up!'; 'Stop being childish!', etc. But adults can often be childish themselves. Think of any famous people you know who do not 'act their age'. Try and find at least three.

Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1812-18)

The poem, made up of four cantos independent in content and structure, deals with the travels of the young nobleman Harold, the first Byronic hero, the term 'Childe' meaning a young noble awaiting knighthood. The main character is 'shown' rather than developed in a lot of exciting and adventurous situations. His boredom and disillusionment with life bring him to leave England and go to picturesque and exotic countries, like Spain, Portugal, Albania and Greece, which are the settings of the first two cantos, while the background of the third canto is Central Europe and in the fourth canto the narrator describes the nature and the sea of Italy, using the first person. The stanzas you are going to read are taken from the second canto where Childe Harold is travelling in Greece. Byron's classical education had prepared him to see this as a land of 'lost gods and godlike men'; its actual population he found degraded by their long servitude to the conquering Turks. Some Greeks dreamed of regaining their freedom by 'foreign arms and aid'. A decade later, in fact, when the Greek struck the first blows in their War of independence, Byron himself was to bring them assistance.



BEFORE READING

- 1 What is a pilgrimage? Look for a definition of the term and say if today there are different forms of pilgrimages.



Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

TEXT 1

(XXI)

The moon is up; by Heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand!
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids¹ believe:
5 Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion²'s restless³ hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love:
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure⁴ featly⁵ move,
10 Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove⁶.

(...)

(XXIII)

'Tis night, when Meditation bids⁷ us feel
We once have loved, though love is at an end:
15 The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal⁸,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend⁹,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?

1. **lads and...maids:** giovanotti e fanciulle.
2. **Arion:** Arione, poeta che visse a Corinto alla fine del VII sec a.C, famoso per la sua abilità nel suono della cetra. Narra Erodoto che Arione andò in Sicilia per una competizione poetica e quando, carico di doni, stava per tornare a Corinto, su una nave di Corinzi, questi volevano gettarlo in mare per prendere le sue ricchezze. Arione chiese di poter cantare un'ultima volta e quando terminò si gettò in mare, dove un delfino, affascinato dal suo canto, lo prese sul dorso e lo portò a capo Tenaro, il punto più a sud del Peloponneso, dove di Arione in groppa al delfino esiste tuttora una statua votiva in bronzo.
3. **restless:** irrequieta.
4. **measure:** ritmo.
5. **featly:** abilmente.
6. **rove:** vagare.
7. **bids:** impone.
8. **lone ... zeal:** l'unico a lamentarsi del suo frustrato ardore.
9. **bend:** piegarsi.

10. **Alas:** ahimé.
 11. **mingling:** che si uniscono.
 12. **blend:** fondersi.
 13. **laving:** che si bagna.
 14. **gaze:** contemplare.
 15. **Dian:** Diana.
 16. **schemes:** progetti.
 17. **claims:** reclama.
 18. **flashing pang:** dolore acuto e lancinante.
 19. **weary:** stanco.
 20. **albeit:** sebbene.
 21. **divest:** liberare.
 22. **muse:** meditare.
 23. **fell:** brughiera collinosa.
 24. **shady:** ombrosa.
 25. **dwell:** abitano.
 26. **trackless:** senza sentieri.
 27. **flock:** gregge.
 28. **fold:** ovile.
 29. **steeps:** dirupi.
 30. **foaming falls:** cascate spumeggianti.
 31. **to lean:** sporgersi.
 32. **hold converse:** tenere conversazione.
 33. **stores unrolled:** tante bellezze spiegate.
 34. **hum:** rumore.
 35. **roam:** vagare.
 36. **denizen:** cittadino.
 37. **minions:** servi.
 38. **shrinking:** che si ritrae.
 39. **with kindred ... endued:** dotato di una simile consapevolezza.
 40. **flattered:** lusingava.
 41. **sued:** implorava.

- Alas¹⁰! when mingling¹¹ souls forget to blend¹²,
 20 Death hath but little left him to destroy!
 Ah, happy years! once more who would not be a boy?
 (XXIV)
 Thus bending o'er the vessel's lav¹³ing side,
 To gaze¹⁴ on Dian¹⁵'s wave-reflected sphere,
 25 The soul forgets her schemes¹⁶ of Hope and Pride,
 And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
 None are so desolate but something dear,
 Dearer than self, possesses or possessed
 A thought, and claims¹⁷ the homage of a tear;
 30 A flashing pang¹⁸! of which the weary¹⁹ breast
 Would still, albeit²⁰ in vain, the heavy heart divest²¹.
 (XXV)
 To sit on rocks, to muse²² o'er flood and fell²³,
 To slowly trace the forest's shady²⁴ scene,
 35 Where things that own not man's dominion dwell²⁵,
 And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
 To climb the trackless²⁶ mountain all unseen,
 With the wild flock²⁷ that never needs a fold²⁸;
 Alone o'er steeps²⁹ and foaming falls³⁰ to lean³¹:
 40 This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
 Converse³² with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled³³.
 (XXVI)
 But midst the crowd, the hum³⁴, the shock of men,
 To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
 45 And roam³⁵ along, the world's tired denizen³⁶,
 With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
 Minions³⁷ of splendour shrinking³⁸ from distress!
 None that, with kindred consciousness endued³⁹,
 If we were not, would seem to smile the less
 50 Of all that flattered⁴⁰, followed, sought, and sued⁴¹:
 This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!



OVER TO YOU

1 Answer the following questions.

1. Where is the poet?
2. What is he doing?
3. What is the setting like?

2 Fill in the following passage with the missing words.

solitude · joy · sky · meditation · music · nature · past · evening · forest · crowd · citizen · sea · mountains · noise · sorrow · rocks

The moon is up in the (1) and its light is reflected on the (2) . It is a lovely (3) and the sailors hear the (4) evoked by Arion and listen to it with (5) . In his (6) the poet feels love is finished. Remembering his (7) he is affected by strong (8) he would like to get rid of. Sitting on (9) , walking in the (10) and climbing the (11) is not (12), but it means to be in communion with (13). Being in the (14), listening to their (15), wandering around as a (16) of the world is solitude.

3 Answer true or false.

1. The beautiful light of the moon was reflected on the water.. T F
2. Sailors listen to the music and move with it.. T F
3. When it is night the poet doesn't feel like meditating.. T F
4. The poet regrets the happy years of youth.. T F
5. The memory of each backward year arouses happiness.. T F
6. To sit on rocks or to climb mountains means to enjoy nature.. T F
7. Solitude is not to be in contact with nature, but to be amidst the crowd. T F

4 Underline the expressions referring to the natural landscape and the poet's attitude. Fill in the following chart.

The natural landscape	The poet's attitude
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

5 Focus on stanza XXVI and explain in your own words what the poet means by solitude.

6 How would you define the poet in these stanzas? (Choose.)

- thoughtful reflective sorrowful happy
 passionate lonely regretful mysterious

7 Which of the following elements contribute to the tone of the poem? (Choose.)

- the beauty of the landscape the poet's sorrow
 the poet's personal meditation the sense of solitude
 the memory of the past

8 Consider the structure of the poem. How many lines are there in each stanza? What is the rhyme scheme?

Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1812-18)

The ship, after passing through some calm and then rough seas, happens to pass through the islands of Calypso¹ which reminds the poet of his love for Florence, his lady. She is a new Calypso, but the poet neither dares to bring his offerings to her shrine nor ask her to suffer for him.



BEFORE READING

If you consider Harold as presented in the stanzas above - the romantic solitary and mysterious hero - what do you expect his relationship to love and women is? Check your expectations reading the following stanzas.

1. **Calipso** è una Ninfa, figlia di Oceano e di Teti, regina dell'isola Ogitia, dove accolse Ulisse dopo il naufragio. Per sette anni tenne nascosto l'eroe greco di cui si era innamorata e a cui aveva promesso, se l'avesse sposata, l'eterna giovinezza. Ma Ulisse preferì tornare a Itaca e la ninfa dovette lasciarlo andare dietro ordine degli dei. Lo aiutò a costruire la zattera e quando l'eroe fu partito, morì di dolore.

1. **deemed:** pensava.
2. **beam:** luce, sguardo.
3. **harmless:** in modo innocuo.
4. **aloof:** lontano.
5. **albeit:** sebbene.
6. **votary:** devoto, fedele seguace.
7. **worshipper:** adoratore.
8. **bosom:** desiderio, amore.
9. **ancient sway:** antico regno.
10. **in sooth:** in verità.
11. **amaze:** stupore.
12. **withstand:** sosteneva.
13. **lustre:** luminosità.
14. **hailed:** salutavano.
15. **doom:** destino.
16. **bondsmen:** schiavi.
17. **raw:** inesperto, immaturo.
18. **feigned:** fingeva.
19. **oft-told flames:** consuete fiamme (d'amore).
20. **frown:** fanno accigliare.
21. **anger:** irritano.
22. **withheld:** trattenuto.
23. **not unskilful in the spoiler's art:** non inesperto nell'arte del seduttore.
24. **snare:** trappole.
25. **pursuit:** caccia.
26. **ought:** qualsiasi cosa.
27. **relied:** si fidava.
28. **had he doted:** se fosse diventato matto.
29. **lover's whining crew:** schiera degli amanti lamentosi.
30. **kens:** conosce.
31. **ween:** credo.
32. **wanton thing:** oggetto immorale.
33. **careth she:** le importa.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

TEXT 2

(XXXI)

Thus Harold deemed¹, as on that lady's eye
He looked, and met its beam² without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless³ by:

- 5 Love kept aloof⁴, albeit⁵ not far remote,
Who knew his votary⁶ often lost and caught,
But knew him as his worshipper⁷ no more,
And ne'er again the boy his bosom⁸ sought:
Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
10 Well deemed the little god his ancient sway⁹ was o'er.

(XXXII)

Fair Florence found, in sooth¹⁰ with some amaze¹¹,
One who, 'twas said, still sighed to all he saw,
Withstand¹², unmoved, the lustre¹³ of her gaze,

- 15 Which others hailed¹⁴ with real or mimic awe,
Their hope, their doom¹⁵, their punishment, their law:
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen¹⁶ claims:
And much she marvelled that a youth so raw¹⁷
Nor felt, nor feigned¹⁸ at least, the oft-told flames¹⁹,
20 Which, though sometimes they frown²⁰, yet rarely anger²¹ dames.

(XXXIII)

Little knew she that seeming marble heart,
Now masked by silence or withheld²² by pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art²³,

- 25 And spread its snares²⁴ licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit²⁵ had turned aside,
As long as ought²⁶ was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied²⁷;
And had he doted²⁸ on those eyes so blue,
30 Yet never would he join the lover's whining crew²⁹.

(XXXIV)

Not much he kens³⁰, I ween³¹, of woman's breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing³² is won by sighs;
What careth she³³ for hearts when once possessed?

- 35 Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes,
But not too humbly, or she will despise³⁴
Thee and thy suit³⁵, though told in moving tropes³⁶;
Disguise³⁷ e'en tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence still best with woman copes³⁸;
- 40 Pique her and soothe in turn³⁹, soon Passion crowns⁴⁰ thy hopes.
(XXXV)
'Tis an old lesson: Time approves it true,
And those who know it best deplore⁴¹ it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo⁴²,
- 45 The paltry prize⁴³ is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted⁴⁴, minds degraded, honour lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
If, kindly cruel, early hope is crossed⁴⁵,
Still to the last it rankles⁴⁶, a disease⁴⁷,
- 50 Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.

34. **will despise:** disprezzerà.
35. **suit:** preghiera.
36. **moving tropes:** versi commoventi.
37. **disguise:** maschera.
38. **copes:** fa fronte, tiene testa.
39. **Pique ... in turn:** feriscila e consolala alternativamente
40. **crowns:** coronerà.
41. **deplore:** deplora.
42. **woo:** corteggiare.
43. **paltry prize:** misero premio.
44. **youth wasted:** gioventù sciupata.
45. **crossed:** ostacolata.
46. **rankles:** brucia.
47. **odisease:** malattia.



OVER TO YOU

1 Match parts in A with parts in B to rebuild the meaning of the text.

A

1. Harold looked at his lady's eyes and
2. Florence was amazed as
3. She tried to trap him but
4. You cannot conquer a woman through sighs:
5. It is better to woo than

B

6. he no longer relied on her arts.
7. show your brisk confidence instead.
8. was taken by a feeling of admiration.
9. conquer a lady through successful passion.
10. Harold didn't feel any love for her.

2 Answer the following questions.

1. What feeling did Harold have for Florence?
2. How did Love consider Harold?
3. Why was Florence surprised at Harold's behavior?
4. How did Harold react to Florence's charms and snares?
5. What according to Harold is the best way to conquer a woman?

3 Find the expressions used to describe Florence and say what they convey.

4 Various images and names are used to define Harold: find them and draw a portrait of this lover.

5 Whose point of view is expressed in the stanzas?

6 In the last two stanzas the first person is introduced and the tone changes. Explain why.

7 *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* can be compared to a sort of 'Grand Tour', a long journey through Europe and in particular in Italy, which was considered a necessary step for the education of the intellectual and noble, upper-middle class young people in the XVIII and XIX centuries. Do you know anything about the 'Grand Tour'? Make your own research.

8 Focus on Harold as a Byronic hero and discuss what his main features are in the light of all the stanzas you have read from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

'Ode to the West Wind' (1819)



BEFORE READING

- 1 Can you remember a storm you have witnessed? Try to remember the colours, the sounds and the natural elements involved and describe how you felt.
- 2 Now read the introduction to the poem by Shelley and say what natural phenomenon inspired the poem you are going to read and where the poet was.

This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts¹ the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours² which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions. [...]

- 3 Listen to and read the text and say whether the rhythm of the poem is slow or quick. What effects does this have?



'Ode to the West Wind'

This ode has been compared to a 'symphony' for the variety of sounds and images it creates. The West Wind, the addressee and the protagonist of the ode, is a vital force that can affect both nature and mankind.

I
O Wild West Wind, thou¹ breath of Autumn's being²
Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter³ fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic⁴ red,
Pestilence-stricken⁵ multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest⁶ to their dark wintry bed
The wingèd⁷ seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring⁸ shall blow

Her clarion⁹ o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds¹⁰ like flocks¹¹ to feed in air)
With living hues¹² and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

1. **skirt:** costeggia.
2. **vapours:** vapori, nuvole.

1. **thou:** [arc., you].
2. **being:** essenza.
3. **enchanter:** mago, incantatore.
4. **hectic:** vivo, intenso.
5. **pestilence-stricken:** colpita dalla pestilenza.
6. **chariotest:** conduci (come in un cocchio, chariot).
7. **wingèd:** alati.
8. **Thine...Spring:** il vento primaverile, lo Zefiro.
9. **clarion:** tromba.
10. **buds:** germogli.
11. **flocks:** greggi.
12. **hues:** colori.

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion¹³,
Loose¹⁴ clouds like earth's decaying¹⁵ leaves are shed¹⁶,
Shook¹⁷ from the tangled boughs¹⁸ of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels¹⁹ of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge²⁰,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad²¹, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith²²'s height,
The locks²³ of the approaching storm. Thou dirge²⁴

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome²⁵ of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with²⁶ all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken²⁷ from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil²⁸ of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baia²⁹'s bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering³⁰ within the wave's intenser day³¹,

All overgrown with azure moss³², and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers³³

Cleave themselves³⁴ into chasms³⁵, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy³⁶ woods which wear
The sapless foliage³⁷ of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest³⁸ bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant³⁹ beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed⁴⁰
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore⁴¹ need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

13. **mid...commotion:** nel tumulto del profondo cielo; mid: amid, tra.
14. **loose:** sciolte, disperse.
15. **decaying:** che marciscono.
16. **are shed:** sono fatte cadere.
17. **shook:** shaken, scosse.
18. **tangled boughs:** rami intricati.
19. **angels:** (qui) messaggeri.
20. **airy surge:** onde d'aria.
21. **Mænad:** Baccante, sacerdotessa del dio Bacco, dalla mitologia greca.
22. **zenith:** il punto più alto del cielo.
23. **locks:** riccioli.
24. **dirge:** canto funebre.
25. **dome:** cattedrale.
26. **vaulted with:** cui fa da volta.
27. **didst waken:** [woke].
28. **lulled...coil:** cullato dalla spirale.
29. **Baia:** Baia, sul golfo di Pozzuoli, località termale degli imperatori romani.
30. **quivering:** tremolanti.
31. **day:** luce.
32. **moss:** muschio.
33. **level powers:** correnti costanti.
34. **cleave themselves:** si dividono.
35. **chasms:** abissi, gorgi.
36. **oozy:** fangosi.
37. **sapless foliage:** vegetazione senza linfa.
38. **mightest:** might.
39. **a wave to pant:** (se fossi) un'onda che ansimava sotto il tuo potere.
40. **to outstrip...speed:** superare la tua velocità celeste.
41. **sore:** estremo.

42. **bowed**: fatto piegare il capo.
 43. **tameless**: indomito.
 44. **lyre**: lira, strumento musicale.
 45. **what if**: che importa se.
 46. **withered**: appassite.
 47. **scatter**: spargi.
 48. **hearth**: focolare.
 49. **ashes**: ceneri.
 50. **unawaken'd**: sopita, addormentata.

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed⁴²
 One too like thee: tameless⁴³, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre⁴⁴, even as the forest is:
 What if⁴⁵ my leaves are falling like its own!
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered⁴⁶ leaves to quicken a new birth!
 And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter⁴⁷, as from an unextinguish'd hearth⁴⁸
 Ashes⁴⁹ and sparks, my words among mankind!
 Be through my lips to unawaken'd⁵⁰ earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?



OVER TO YOU

- 1 Read the first three sections of the poem, then match each of the following with the correct section.
 1. The wind blows the dead leaves in autumn; in winter it scatters the seeds all around the earth and takes them to their resting place i.e. underground; the spring wind, the Zephyrus, brings everything back to life, with new colours and perfumes. Section
 2. The wind wakes the mediterranean sea, it stirs it from its rest; then makes gullies in the Atlantic ocean and shakes the vegetation under the sea. Section
 3. The wind makes the clouds run in the sky; the clouds gather and form a kind of vault full of vapour from which a storm of rain and hail will fall. Section
- 2 Can you now say what natural elements the wind affects in these three sections?
- 3 Focus on section IV: who/what does the poet address? What does he wish?
- 4 Focus on section V: match each sentence with the corresponding line/s.
 1. He asks the wind to deliver his words to mankind so that people can make a new life for themselves. Lines
 2. He wants the wind to be his spirit. Lines
 3. The poet wants to be an instrument of the wind: its 'lyre'. Lines
 4. He asks it to scatter his thoughts and his words all over the world. Lines

- 5 In the first section images of life and death are contrasted. Underline the words associated with the leaves, seeds and nature in spring, then fill in the following table.

Life	Death
.....
.....
.....
.....

- 6 Can you now say why the wind is both a preserver and a destroyer?
- 7 In lines 16-17 a complex metaphor recalls an image of the previous section: what is it? Can you explain the metaphor?
- 8 Towards the end of the second section the atmosphere becomes more menacing: what metaphor does the poet use to evoke the approaching storm?
- 9 What is the dark, stormy sky compared to? What image of violence concludes the second section?
- 10 Where can you detect a change in tone in section III? Is the effect of the wind as strong as in the previous section? What new effect does it provoke?
- 11 How do these three sections end? Why?
- 12 In section IV the poet's voice is heard for the first time as he recalls images from the first three sections. What are they? What relationship is established between him and the wind?
- 13 The poet then contrasts his present situation with his childhood: find the reference, quote from the text and explain how he has changed and why.
- 14 In the final section the poet identifies himself with the wind and nature: can you explain how?
- 15 The poem ends with a question. What is the poet asking?
- 16 What qualities does Shelley attribute to his ode and to poetry in general? Do you find his aims consistent with the 'spirit of the age'?
- 17 The wind is often used as a symbol for change: for example the German band, the Scorpions, used it in their song 'Wind Of Change' from the album *Crazy World*. Do you know any other songs, films or paintings which use the theme of 'wind of change'? Do some research on the Internet and prepare a summary to explain how your text, film or painting develops the theme. Discuss in class.

Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice (1813)



Pride and Prejudice

TEXT 2

Darcy is very much in love with Elizabeth but he is no 'more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride' saying he wants to marry her 'despite' her lower social class. She refuses him, and Mr Darcy, who did not expect this reaction, 'in a voice of forced calmness' says:

'And this is all the reply which I am to have the honour of expecting! I might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so little endeavour¹ at civility, I am thus² rejected. But it is of small importance.'

5 'I might as well enquire,' replied she, 'why, with so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character? Was not this some excuse for incivility, if I was uncivil? But I have other provocations. You know I have. Had not my own feelings decided against you, had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt
10 me to accept the man, who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?'

[...] With assumed tranquillity he then replied, 'I have no wish of denying that I did everything in my power to separate my friend from your sister, or that I rejoice in my success. Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself.'

15 [...] 'You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way that would have tempted me to accept it.'

Again his astonishment was obvious; and he looked at her with an expression of mingled incredulity and mortification. She went on.

20 'From the very beginning, from the first moment I may almost say, of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit³ and your selfish disdain⁴ of the feelings of others, were such as to form that ground-work of disapprobation, on which succeeding events have built so immovable a dislike; and I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be
25 prevailed on to marry.'

'You have said quite enough, madam. I perfectly comprehend your feelings, and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been. Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time, and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness.'

30 And with these words he hastily⁵ left the room, and Elizabeth heard him the next moment open the front door and quit⁶ the house.

1. **endeavour:** sforzo.
2. **thus:** così.
3. **conceit:** presunzione.
4. **disdain:** disprezzo.
5. **hastily:** affrettatamente.
6. **quit:** lasciare.



OVER TO YOU

- ❶ Look at the text again and make a list of the reasons why Elizabeth rejects Darcy's marriage proposal.
- ❷ What opinion does Elizabeth express about Darcy? Underline the key words and phrases she uses.
- ❸ What feelings would you attribute to Elizabeth and Darcy?
affection · anger · irritation · surprise · interest
 1. Elizabeth
 2. Darcy
- ❹ How does their meeting end?
- ❺ 'Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself' says Darcy. What does he mean by this?
- ❻ Here the reader can clearly see 'pride' and 'prejudice': complete the following statements.
 1. We can see Darcy's pride because
 2. We can see Elizabeth's prejudice because
- ❼ In 2003 the BBC programme 'The Big Read' asked viewers to vote for their favourite novel. It quickly developed into a reading craze involving thousands of viewers and many celebrities. Finally a 'Top Ten' of books was created and you may be surprised to learn that *Pride and Prejudice* came second (*The Lord of the Rings* came first). What would be your top-ten list of favourite novels?
- ❽ Why do you think *Pride and Prejudice* is still so popular today?

WRITER'S CORNER

- ❶ Writing a marriage proposal: from what we have learnt of the characters so far it is hardly surprising that Elizabeth rejects Darcy's proposal. But what do you think the ingredients of a successful marriage proposal are? How would you like to propose/be proposed to?
 - First of all think of a person you would like to address the proposal to. If you can't think of anyone imagine someone famous.
 - Would you write the traditional letter with pen and paper? Or would you prefer to send an e-mail or something even shorter like a text message? Choose whatever medium you like but remember that your proposal must be convincing.
 - What can you write in a marriage proposal? For example, why you want to marry him/her; how you came to this decision; even, if you like, some plans for the future.
 - If you're romantic, the tone will be intense and moving. If you see yourself as a playful character, then the tone will be light and funny. Are you more of a serious type? Then your proposal will follow a more traditional model.

Jane Austen

Emma (1815)

Emma was Jane Austen's fourth published novel, and the last to appear before her death. Because of this it is often considered the novel of her artistic maturity, in which she shows an improved mastery in narrative structure and characterization than in her previous novels. We can also find a contrast in the storyline. In her previous novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*, the female characters emerged from their inferior social position to triumph as heroines. The character of Emma, on the contrary, is a 'princess who has to be humiliated before finding her real happiness.'

The plot

Emma has two interconnecting plots. The 'outward' plot concerns the life of a small circle of well-born people in the provincial town of Highbury; the 'inward' plot revolves around the mind of the novel's heroine, Emma Woodhouse, and her development from a self-satisfied and arrogant young lady, to a person who develops self-knowledge and common sense, although she has to go through several humiliating experiences in order to achieve this. Emma lives with her widowed father and as she loves him very much she decides not to marry since marriage would mean her leaving him. When her governess, Miss Taylor, marries Mr Weston, one of their neighbours, Emma feels lonely and attaches herself to Harriet Smith, a pretty girl who is, however, not very intelligent and socially inferior. Emma plans a match between Harriet and Mr Elton, the young vicar, thus estranging Harriet from Robert Martin, a tenant farmer, who loves her. Her interference results in confusion and humiliation as Mr Elton proposes to Emma and cares nothing for Harriet. Emma, however, is praised and loved on all sides and unable to see herself in the wrong. The only person who finds any fault with her match-making is Mr Knightley, her brother-in-law's brother, whose long acquaintanceship with Emma allows him to warn and accuse her at various times in the story, trying to make her reflect on her mistakes and conceitedness. An interesting development is the arrival in the neighbourhood of Frank Churchill, Mrs Weston's stepson, whom Emma has never met, but in whom she has a long-standing interest. She tries to make herself fall in love with Frank largely because everyone says they make a handsome couple, but she is deeply upset when she discovers that Frank is engaged to another girl, Jane Fairfax. In the meantime Harriet, spurred on by Emma to find a suitable husband, has hopes of marrying Mr Knightley, but when Harriet confides that she thinks Mr Knightley is in love with her, jealousy forces Emma to realize that she loves him herself. The novel concludes happily with Mr Knightley proposing to Emma and Harriet returning to her first love, Robert Martin.



BEFORE READING

Before she began the novel, Austen wrote: 'I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like.' This seems to be a strange thing for a writer to say and one which would not be very appealing for a reader! In the very first paragraph of the novel, Austen introduces this 'heroine', the protagonist, Emma Woodhouse. Read it quickly and say what your first impressions of the character are. Does this introduction make you interested in learning more about Emma and her world?

Emma

TEXT 1

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition¹, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex² her.

5 She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses, and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a

10 mother³ in affection.

Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr Woodhouse's family, less a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between them it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly

15 allowed her to impose any restraint⁴; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.

The real evils indeed of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy⁵ to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means

20 rank⁶ as misfortunes with her.

1. **disposition:** carattere.
2. **with very little... vex her:** senza quasi conoscere dispiaceri o contrarietà.
3. **had fallen little short of a mother:** era stata quasi una madre.
4. **restraint:** controllo.
5. **threatened alloy:** minacciavano di rovinare.
6. **did not...rank:** non erano considerate.

17



OVER TO YOU

1 Fill in the chart with the information about Emma.

Name	.....
Age	.....
Physical appearance	.....
Social status	.....
Family situation	.....
Personality	.....
Portia makes	.....

2 Which aspects of Emma's character are presented as positive and which are presented as negative?

3 What kind of narrator is employed here? Is the technique used the one of 'telling' or 'showing' a character? Can you identify any particular tone in the passage?

4 Emma's tendency to think a little too well of herself is a negative aspect of her character which could have negative consequences for her. What do you think the heroine will have to do to overcome such a 'flaw'?

1. Two techniques of characterization are 'showing' and 'telling'. In the first case, characters are shown going about their daily life and the reader is left to draw conclusions from what they do and say. In the case of 'telling', the writer gives detailed description of their personality, appearance, and the motives for their behavior; the reader is required to take on trust everything the writer says about a character.

Jane Austen

Emma (1815)



BEFORE READING

Emma's awareness of the mistakes she has made when acting as a matchmaker comes to its climax when she feels guilt for having encouraged Harriet to care for Frank Churchill, then horror that she loves Mr Knightley and finally shock when she discovers that she herself loves him. At this point Emma goes through a phase of self-analysis and criticism: she has arrogantly arranged other people's affairs, has been 'universally mistaken', and has done wrong to Harriet, to herself, and probably to Mr Knightley. How do you think she feels? Check your predictions by reading the following text.



Emma

TEXT 2

The blunders¹, the blindness² of her own head and heart! - she sat still, she walked about, she tried her own room, she tried the shrubbery³ - in every place, every posture, she perceived that she had acted most weakly; that she had been imposed on by others⁴ in a most mortifying degree; that she had been imposing on herself in a degree yet more mortifying; that she was wretched⁵, and should probably find this day but the beginning of wretchedness.

To understand, thoroughly understand her own heart, was the first endeavour⁶. To that point went every leisure moment which her father's claims⁷ on her allowed, and every moment of involuntary absence of mind.

10 How long had Mr Knightley been so dear to her, as every feeling declared him now to be? When had his influence, such influence begun? - When had he succeeded to that place in her affection, which Frank Churchill had once, for a short period, occupied? - She looked back; she compared the two⁸ - compared them, as they had always stood in her estimation, from the time of the latter's⁹ becoming known to her - and as they must at any time have been compared by her, had it - oh! had it, by any blessed felicity, occurred to her, to institute the comparison. - She saw that there never had been a time when she did not consider Mr Knightley as infinitely the most dear. She saw, that in persuading herself, in fancying, in acting to the contrary, she had been entirely under a delusion¹⁰, totally ignorant of her own heart - and, in short, that she had never really cared for Frank Churchill at all!

20 This was the conclusion of the first series of reflections. This was the knowledge of herself, on the first question of inquiry, which she reached; and without being long in reaching it. She was most sorrowfully indignant; ashamed of every sensation but the one revealed to her - her affection for Mr Knightley. - Every other part of her mind was disgusting.

25 With insufferable vanity had she believed herself in the secret of everybody's feelings; with unpardonable arrogance proposed to arrange everybody's destiny.

1. **blunders:** errori madornali.
2. **blindness:** cecità.
3. **shrubby:** boschetto.
4. **that she is...by others:** che era stata ingannata dagli altri.
5. **wretched:** infelice.
6. **endeavour:** tentativo.
7. **claims:** richieste.
8. **the two:** Mr Knightley e Frank Churchill.
9. **the latter:** Frank Churchill.
10. **delusion:** convinzione errata.



OVER TO YOU

1 Answer true or false.

1. Emma is happy and satisfied with herself.
2. She compares the two men, Frank Churchill and Mr Knightly.
3. She does not care about either of them.
4. She criticizes herself for being a matchmaker.

T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F

2 Fill in the chart with the detailed content of Emma's reflections. Quote from the text.

Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4
The blunders, the blindness of her own head and heart!	To understand was the first endeavour	How long had Mr Knightly been so dear to her?	This was the knowledge of herself
.....
.....
.....

3 In the light of your findings, what adjectives would you use to describe Emma in this moment? Give reasons for your choice.

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-reproachful | <input type="checkbox"/> aware | <input type="checkbox"/> reflective | <input type="checkbox"/> indignant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> proud | <input type="checkbox"/> ashamed | <input type="checkbox"/> calm | <input type="checkbox"/> sad |

4 Focus on two sentences in the text which are particularly meaningful as they mark Emma's change from the beginning of the novel. Read them carefully and comment on them.

1. 'To understand, thoroughly understand her own heart'
2. 'With insufferable vanity.; with unpardonable arrogance proposed to arrange everybody's destiny'

5 Which narrative technique is used in the passage? Whose point of view is conveyed? How?

6 In the novel Emma the happy ending celebrates marriage, but it is made clear throughout that where there is inequality of social rank, education or ability there cannot be true love. Read what Emma says about marriage and her intentions, in a lively dialogue she has with with Harriet.

'I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed, it would be a different thing! But I never have been in love; it is not my way, or my nature; and I do not think I ever shall. And, without love, I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine. Fortune I do not want; employment I do not want; consequence I do not want. I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house, as I am of Hartfield; and never, never could I expect to be so truly beloved and important; so always first and always right in any man's eyes as I am in my father's.'

[...] 'Never mind, Harriet, I shall not be a poor old maid; and it is poverty only which makes celibacy contemptible to a generous public! A single woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! the proper sport of boys and girls; but a single woman, of good fortune, is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else.'

How do Emma's views on marriage reflect those of the society she lived in? Are they in any way 'modern'?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- 7 If you have already read extracts from *Pride and Prejudice*, you can now compare the two heroines, Elisabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse. In particular focus on their process of self-realization and mark any similarities between the two. You can use the following chart to organize your findings.

Elisabeth Bennet	Similarities	Emma Woodhouse
.....
.....
.....

WRITER'S CORNER

- 8 Emma is usually considered a 'lifelike heroine', who lives in a realistic social setting and has to cope with the problems of everyday life. Imagine you are Emma and write an entry in your diary about your ideas and feelings about what is going on around you. Use your imagination and add as many details as you like but try to be faithful to the character.

Mary Shelley

Frankenstein (1818)

Frankenstein

TEXT 2

The creature disappears and two years pass. Victor hears of some murders in the countryside near the Frankenstein estate and is suspicious of the creature's involvement. On a solitary hike in the mountains, Victor comes face to face with the creature, who begins to tell Victor what has happened to him since he fled his laboratory.

I perceived, as the shape came nearer (sight tremendous and abhorred?) that it was the wretch whom I had created. I trembled with rage¹ and horror, resolving to wait his approach, and then close with him in mortal combat. He approached; his countenance bespoke bitter anguish², combined with disdain³ and malignity, while
5 its unearthly⁴ ugliness rendered it almost too horrible for human eyes. But I scarcely observed this; rage and hatred had at first deprived me of utterance⁵, and I recovered only to overwhelm⁶ him with words expressive of furious detestation and contempt⁷. 'Devil,' I exclaimed, 'do you dare approach me? And do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked⁸ on your miserable head? Begone⁹, vile insect!
10 Or rather, stay, that I may trample you to dust¹⁰! and, oh! that I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!' 'I expected this reception,' said the dæmon. 'All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn¹¹ me, thy¹² creature, to whom thou art¹³ bound by ties¹⁴
15 only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. How dare you sport thus¹⁵ with life? Do your duty towards me, and I will do mine towards you and the rest of mankind. If you will comply with¹⁶ my conditions, I will leave them and you at peace; but if you refuse, I will glut the maw¹⁷ of death, until it be
20 satiated with the blood of your remaining friends.' 'Abhorred monster! Fiend¹⁸ that thou art! the tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! you reproach me with your creation; come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark¹⁹ which I so negligently bestowed²⁰. My rage was without bounds²¹; I sprang on him, impelled by all the feelings
25 which can arm one being against the existence of another. He easily eluded me, and said - 'Be calm! I entreat you to hear me before you give vent to your hatred on my devoted head. Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery? Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I
30 will defend it. Remember, thou hast made me more powerful than thyself; my height is superior to thine²²; my joints more supple²³. But I will not be tempted to set myself in opposition to thee. I am thy creature, and I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which

1. **rage:** rabbia.
2. **his...anguish:** dalla sua espressione traspariva un'amara angoscia.
3. **disdain:** disprezzo.
4. **unearthly:** inumana.
5. **utterance:** parola.
6. **overwhelm:** sopraffare.
7. **contempt:** disprezzo.
8. **wreaked:** levato.
9. **begone:** vattene.
10. **I...dust:** ti posso calpestare fino a ridurti in cenere.
11. **spurn:** disprezzi.
12. **thy:** your.
13. **thou art:** you are.
14. **bound by ties:** stretto da legami.
15. **how...thus:** come osi prenderti gioco così.
16. **comply with:** soddisfi.
17. **I...maw:** consumerò la vendetta.
18. **fiend:** nemico.
19. **spark:** scintilla.
20. **bestowed:** concedetti, infusi.
21. **without bounds:** senza limiti.
22. **thine:** yours.
23. **supple:** flessibile.

24. **thou** owest: you owe.
 25. **disdain**: disprezzare.
 26. **I** deserve: merito.
 27. **wickedness**: malvagità.

- thou owest²⁴ me. [...] Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous.’
- 35 ‘Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall.’
- ‘How can I move thee? [...] Let your compassion be moved, and do not disdain²⁵ me. Listen to my tale: when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve²⁶. But hear me.’
- 40 [...] he led the way across the ice: I followed. [...] For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness²⁷. These motives urged me to comply with his demand. We crossed the ice, therefore, and ascended the opposite rock. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend: we entered
- 45 the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen, and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.



OVER TO YOU

1 What mood does the creature’s face express?

2 Answer true or false.

1. Victor’s creature says that people hate him.
2. The creature, on the contrary, loves everybody.
3. He accuses his creator of never taking care of him.
4. He talks to Victor as though he were his father.
5. He threatens to kill Victor at once if he doesn’t do what he asks him.
6. He begs him to follow him and listen to him.

T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F
T	F

3 How do Victor’s feelings change in the course of the story? Complete the following with the correct ending. From rage and contempt he turns to:

- compassion
 love and affection
 understanding and sense of responsibility

4 Why does Victor accept to follow the creature? Choose from the following.

- he is afraid of him
 he feels partly responsible for him
 he wants to kill him
 he is strongly interested in what he is going to tell him

5 Read through the text and find at least three different names Victor uses for the monster.

6 What do these names tell us about Victor’s feelings for his creature?

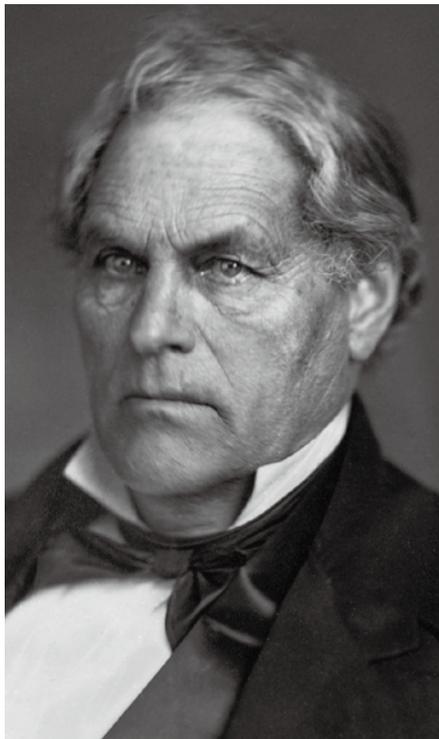
7 ‘For the first time, also, I felt what the duties of a creator towards his creature were, and that I ought to render him happy before I complained of his wickedness.’

8 This is a very important statement. Which of these themes would you link it with?

- the ethical problem of the scientist
 the overcoming of human limits
 the sense of solitude of the ‘outcast’

James Fenimore Cooper

(1789-1851)



James Fenimore Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey in 1789. He grew up in Cooperstown, a frontier settlement in New York State. He was sent to Yale at thirteen and expelled three years later. He then joined the navy and went to sea. His father's death in 1809 left him financially independent and in 1811 he married and settled down to the life of a gentleman farmer. Cooper became a popular novelist and is considered to be the first major US novelist. His novels are adventure stories which focus on the American world and society. He was a supporter of the American principles of democracy, but after his stay in Europe he adopted a conservative attitude that made him unpopular among his people. In particular he was noted as the author of the novels of frontier adventure known as the Leatherstocking Tales. The Last of the Mohicans is the best known of these tales. Cooper died in 1851.

Main works

- *The Pioneers* (1823)
- *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)
- *The Sea Lions* (1849)

Influenced by the frontier-landscape in which he grew up and the experiences of his life at sea, James Fenimore Cooper re-created some of the myths of the new world in his novels and used America as the setting for all his works.

The Last of the Mohicans

The novel is set in north-west America in the period 1756-59, during the French and Indian War, when France and Great Britain battled for control of the American and Canadian colonies (ending with the defeat of the French). The two main characters of the story are Nathaniel 'Natty' Bumppo (known as 'Hawkeye' throughout the novel), the 'American hero', and Chingachgook, who belongs to the tribe of the Mohicans. Hawkeye and Chingachgook struggle together against the French and their allies, the Hurons, enemies of the Mohicans. The two men, together with Uncas, Chingakoo's son, save two pioneer sisters from the wicked Magua, chief of the Hurons, allied with the French against whom they are fighting. In the end, Hawkeye shoots and kills Magua. This confirms Hawkeye and Chingachgook's friendship, and at the end of the novel they wander off together.

The Indian issue

The protagonist of the novel is Hawkeye who can be seen as the archetypal American hero who instinctively escapes the restrictions of a civilised world in search of a relationship with nature. He is courageous and responsible and represents the

authentic spirit of the West. A rebel, heroically opposed to an industrial world, who never married or changed his ideals.

The Last of the Mohicans is also important for its characterisation of the opposing tribes who gave Cooper the opportunity to create a contrasting image of the Indian that was part of the American consciousness for almost two centuries: on the one hand we have Chingachgook who represents the 'good' Indian while on the other there is the wicked Magua, who is a gothic type and can be associated with Milton's Satan.

The novel is seen as the prototype of the American adventure story and has had a long-lasting influence.

The Last of the Mohicans (1826)



BEFORE READING

Read the text below. The character speaking here is a Mohican. What elements suggest that he is an 'Native American'? Who do you think Uncas is?

1. blossoms: fiori.



'Where are the blossoms¹ of those summers! - fallen, one by one: so all of my family departed, each in his turn, to the land of spirits. I am on the hill-top and must go down into the valley; and when Uncas follows in my footsteps there will no longer be any of the blood of the Sagamores, for my boy is the last of the Mohicans.'



The Last of the Mohicans

The following passage includes a dialogue between the main characters of the story: Hawkeye and Chingachgook.

1. **loiterers:** (persone) che sostavano.

2. **accoutrements:** equipaggiamento.

3. **complexion:** carnagione.

4. **I am willing to own:** sono pronto ad ammettere.

5. **cowardly boaster:** spaccone codardo.

6. **Alligewi:** [people living there before them].

While [...] one of these loiterers¹ showed the red skin and wild accoutrements² of a native of the woods, the other exhibited, through the mask of his rude and nearly savage equipments, the brighter, though sun-burned and long-faced complexion³ of one who might claim descent from a European parentage. [...] 'I am not a prejudiced man, nor one who vaunts himself on his natural privileges, [...] and I am willing to own⁴ that my people have many ways, of which, as an honest man, I can't approve. It is one of their customs to write in books what they have done and seen, instead of telling them in their villages, where the lie can be given to the face of a cowardly boaster⁵, and the brave soldier can call on his comrades to witness for the truth of his words. [...] . But every story has its two sides; so I ask you, Chingachgook, what passed, according to the traditions of the red men, when our fathers first met? [...]' 'We came from the place where the sun is hid at night, over great plains where

the buffaloes live, until we reached the big river. There we fought the Alligewi⁶,
 15 till the ground was red with their blood. [...] The first pale-faces who came among
 us spoke no English. They came in a large canoe, when my fathers had buried
 the tomahawk⁷ with the red men around them. Then, Hawkeye⁸, he continued,
 betraying⁸ his deep emotion, only by permitting his voice to fall to those low,
 guttural tones, which render his language, as spoken at times, so very musical;
 20 'then, Hawkeye, we were one people, and we were happy. The salt lake gave us its
 fish, the wood its deer⁹, and the air its birds. We took wives who bore us children;
 we worshipped¹⁰ the Great Spirit; and we kept the Maquas beyond the sound of
 our songs of triumph.'
 'Know you anything of your own family, at that time?' demanded the white.
 25 'But you are just a man for an Indian and as I suppose you hold their gifts¹¹, your
 fathers must have been brave warriors¹², and wise men at the council-fire¹³.'
 'My tribe is the grandfather of nations, but I am an unmixed man¹⁴. The blood of
 chiefs¹⁵ is in my veins, where it must stay forever. The Dutch landed, and gave my
 people the fire-water; they drank until the heavens and the earth seemed
 30 to meet, and they foolishly thought they had found the Great Spirit. Then they
 parted with their land. Foot by foot, they were driven back from the shores, until
 I, that am a chief and a Sagamore, have never seen the sun shine but through the
 trees, and have never visited the graves¹⁶ of my fathers.'

- 7. **tomahawk:** [an axe typical of the native Americans].
- 8. **betraying:** tradendo.
- 9. **deer:** cervi.
- 10. **worshipped:** adoravamo.
- 11. **you hold their gifts:** tu hai le loro virtù.
- 12. **warriors:** guerrieri.
- 13. **council-fire:** fuoco del consiglio.
- 14. **an unmixed man:** un purosangue.
- 15. **chiefs:** capi.
- 16. **graves:** tombe.



OVER TO YOU

1 Who speaks in the passage?

	Character 1	Character 2
Names
Description
Origins

2 Hawkeye says he does not approve of some 'customs' of his people. What examples does he give of these customs in the text (ll. 7-10)?

3 What is the consequence of this 'bad fashion' according to Hawkeye?

4 Note down the information given in the passage about the history of the Mohicans. Include information about each of the following points.

Origins	.....	.....
War	.....	.....
Civilisation	.....	.....
Fall of their civilisation	.....	.....

- 5** What kind of narrator does Cooper employ?
- 6** Choose the correct alternative.
- Focus on the two characters. What do they have in common?
 - wisdom
 - aggressiveness
 - sensibility
 - a good education
 - courage
 - intelligence
 - sweetness
 - How would you describe Cooper's narrative style?
 - symbolic
 - descriptive
 - realistic
 - fantastic
 - ironic
 - detached
 - dramatic
 - The language spoken by Hawkeye is
 - simple and effective
 - vulgar and low
 - full of metaphors and impressive language
 - literary and refined
- 7** Chingachgook often uses a symbolic language. Can you give examples of this?
- 8** The 'pale faces' and the Indians are traditionally the characters of a certain type of film which became very popular. What is its name?
- 9** In what ways is *The Last of the Mohicans* representative of the new American literature?
- 10** *The Last of the Mohicans* has become a classic in the adventure story genre. Do you like adventure books? Have you read any other adventure books? Can you quote any titles? Discuss in class.
- 11** When Christopher Columbus 'discovered' America in 1492 the population of Native American Indians was the same as the population of Britain. How and why did they almost disappear? Do some research on the Internet.

REVIEW

- 1** Answer the following questions about James Fenimore Cooper.
- What kind of novels did Cooper generally write?
 - What did he do when he was young?
 - What is the main setting of his novels?
 - What is the title of his most famous novel?
 - Where and when is it set?
 - Who is the main character? What does he represent?
 - Who represents 'the good Indian'?

Edgar Allan Poe

‘The Tell-Tale Heart’

(1843) (complete story)



BEFORE READING

This is the opening of the short story ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’ (Il cuore rivelatore). Read it and say what these two initial lines suggest about the protagonist. Then read the rest of the complete story and see if your ideas were right.

True! nervous, very, very dreadfully¹ nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad?

1. **dreadfully:** terribilmente.

‘The Tell-Tale Heart’

[...] The disease had sharpened¹ my senses - not destroyed - not dulled² them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then am I mad? Hearken³! and observe how healthily, how calmly, I can tell you the whole story.

5 It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain, but, once conceived, it haunted⁴ me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture⁵ - a pale blue eye, with a film⁶ over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood

10 ran cold; and so by degrees - very gradually - I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of⁷ the eye for ever.

Now this is the point. You fancy⁸ me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely⁹ I proceeded - with what caution - with what foresight¹⁰, with what dissimulation I went to work! I was

15 never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch¹¹ of his door and opened it - oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in¹² my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly¹³ I thrust it in! I

20 moved it slowly very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! - would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid¹⁴ the lantern cautiously - oh, so cautiously - cautiously (for the hinges creaked¹⁵) - I undid it just so much

25 that a single thin ray¹⁶ fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long

1. **the disease had sharpened:** la malattia aveva acutizzato.
2. **not dulled:** non li aveva logorati.
3. **hearken!:** ascoltate!
4. **it haunted:** ossessionava.
5. **vulture:** avvoltoio.
6. **film:** membrana.
7. **thus rid myself of:** così da liberarmi di.
8. **fancy:** pensate.
9. **wisely:** saggiamente.
10. **foresight:** preveggenza.
11. **turned the latch:** giravo la maniglia della porta.
12. **thrust in:** far entrare/affacciare.
13. **cunningly:** con destrezza.
14. **undid:** comincio a schiudere.
15. **for the hinges creaked:** la sua cerniera cigolava.
16. **ray:** raggio.

17. **boldly:** audacemente.
 18. **hand:** lancetta.
 19. **deeds:** azioni.
 20. **I fairly chuckled:** ridacchiavo tra me e me.
 21. **as if startled:** come se si fosse spaventato.
 22. **drew back:** mi ritirai.
 23. **as black as pitch:** nero come la pece.
 24. **thick:** fitta.
 25. **shutters:** imposte.
 26. **steadily:** costantemente.
 27. **my...fastening:** il mio pollice scivolava sul metallo della serratura.
 28. **sprang up:** saltò.
 29. **death watches:** il letale rodere dei tarli.
 30. **slight groan:** gemito sommesso.
 31. **pain or of grief:** dolore o pena.
 32. **low...awe:** suono sordo e soffocato che scaturisce dal fondo dell'anima sopraffatta dal terrore.
 33. **welled...bosom:** era sgorgato dal mio petto.
 34. **distracted:** turbavano.
 35. **he had been lying awake:** era rimasto sveglio.
 36. **a cricke...chirp:** un grillo che ha emesso il suo strido.
 37. **had stalked:** si era avvicinata furtivamente.
 38. **enveloped:** aveva avvolto.
 39. **mournful:** funereo.
 40. **crevice:** fessura.
 41. **stealthily:** furtivamente.
 42. **dim:** pallido.
 43. **thread:** filo.
 44. **I gazed upon:** vidi.
 45. **dull:** opaco.
 46. **hideous:** orribile.
 47. **chilled...bones:** mi agghiacciava le ossa fino al midollo.
 48. **the damned spot:** il punto maledetto.

nights - every night just at midnight - but I found the eye always closed, and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly¹⁷ into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

30 Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand¹⁸ moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night, had I felt the extent of my own powers - of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds¹⁹ or thoughts. I fairly chuckled²⁰ at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled²¹. Now you may think that I drew back²² - but no. His room was as black as pitch²³ with the thick²⁴ darkness (for the shutters²⁵ were close fastened through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily²⁶, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening²⁷, and the old man sprang up²⁸ in the bed, crying out -
 45 'Who's there?'

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; - just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches²⁹ in the wall.

50 Presently I heard a slight groan³⁰, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief³¹ - oh, no! - It was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe³². I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom³³, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted³⁴ me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake³⁵ ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself, 'It is nothing but the wind in
 60 the chimney - it is only a mouse crossing the floor,' or, 'it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp³⁶.' Yes, he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching him had stalked³⁷ with his black shadow before him, and enveloped³⁸ the victim. And it was the mournful³⁹ influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel - although he neither saw nor heard - to feel the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little - a very, very little crevice⁴⁰ in the lantern. So I opened it - you cannot imagine how stealthily⁴¹, stealthily - until at length a single dim⁴² ray, like the thread⁴³ of the spider shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.
 70 It was open - wide, wide open - and I grew furious as I gazed upon⁴⁴ it. I saw it with perfect distinctness - all a dull⁴⁵ blue, with a hideous⁴⁶ veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones⁴⁷; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot⁴⁸.

And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses? - now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick

sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating⁴⁹ of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the

80 beating of a drum⁵⁰ stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still⁵¹. I scarcely breathed⁵². I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo⁵³ of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder, every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew

85 louder, I say, louder every moment! - do you mark me well⁵⁴? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence⁵⁵ of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst⁵⁶. And now a new anxiety

90 seized⁵⁷ me - the sound would be heard by a neighbour! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell⁵⁸, I threw open the lantern and leaped⁵⁹ into the room. He shrieked⁶⁰ once - once only. In an instant I dragged him⁶¹ to the floor, and pulled⁶² the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed⁶³ so far done. But for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound⁶⁴. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man

95 was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse⁶⁵. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more. If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise

100 precautions I took for the concealment⁶⁶ of the body. The night waned⁶⁷, and I worked hastily⁶⁸, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings⁶⁹. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly⁷⁰, that no human eye - not even his - could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out - no stain⁷¹ of any kind - no blood-spot whatever⁷². I had been too wary⁷³ for that. A tub had caught all - ha! ha!

105 When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock - still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour⁷⁴, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart, - for what had I now to fear?

There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused⁷⁵; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises⁷⁶.

115 I smiled, - for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome⁷⁷. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search - search well.

120 I led them, at length⁷⁸, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures⁷⁹, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse⁸⁰ of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease⁸¹. They sat and while I answered cheerily⁸², they chatted of familiar things.

125 But, ere long⁸³, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears⁸⁴; but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of⁸⁵ the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness⁸⁶ - until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

49. **beating:** battito.
 50. **drum:** tamburo.
 51. **kept still:** rimasi immobile.
 52. **I scarcely breathed:** non respiravo quasi.
 53. **hellish tattoo:** marcia infernale.
 54. **do you mark me well?:** mi seguite con attenzione?
 55. **amid the dreadful silence:** nel silenzio terribile.
 56. **burst:** scoppiare.
 57. **seized:** afferrò.
 58. **with a loud yell:** con un urlo fortissimo.
 59. **threw...leaped:** mostrai la luce della lanterna per intero e balzai.
 60. **shrieked:** urlò.
 61. **I dragged him:** lo tirai giù.
 62. **pulled:** rovesciai.
 63. **the deed:** il fatto.
 64. **with a muffled sound:** con un suono sordo.
 65. **corpse:** cadavere.
 66. **for the concealment:** per nascondere.
 67. **waned:** passava.
 68. **hastily:** in fretta.
 69. **took...scantlings:** tolsi dall'impiantito tre assi e nascosi tutto tra i regoli.
 70. **cunningly:** con destrezza.
 71. **stain:** macchia.
 72. **no...whatever:** nessuna traccia di sangue.
 73. **wary:** accorto.
 74. **As...hour:** quando l'orologio segnò l'ora.
 75. **suspicion...** aroused: era sorto il sospetto di un qualche delitto.
 76. **deputed...premises:** erano stati mandati a ispezionare il quartiere.
 77. **bade...welcome:** diedi il benvenuto ai signori.
 78. **at length:** infine.
 79. **his treasures:** i suoi tesori.
 80. **upon...corpse:** proprio nel luogo dove si trovava nascosto il cadavere.
 81. **at ease:** a mio agio.
 82. **cheerily:** allegramente.
 83. **ere long:** fra poco.
 84. **fancied...ears:** mi pareva di sentire un ronzio nelle orecchie.
 85. **to get rid of:** liberarmi.
 86. **gained definitiveness:** divenne più distinto.

87. **heightened voice:** a voce alta.
 88. **enveloped:** avvolto.
 89. **gaped for breath:** respiravo a fatica.
 90. **arose...trifles:** mi alzai e cominciai a parlare di argomenti futili.
 91. **in a high key:** ad altissima voce.
 92. **paced...strides:** camminavo su e giù a passi pesanti.
 93. **foamed:** mi agitavo.
 94. **raved:** smaniavo.
 95. **swore:** bestemmiavo.
 96. **swung:** scuotevo.
 97. **grated it:** facevo scricchiolare.
 98. **Almighty:** onnipotente.
 99. **they...of:** si stavano prendendo gioco.
 100. **dissemble no more!:** non fingete più.
 101. **tear up the planks!:** togliete quelle assi.

130 No doubt I now grew very pale - but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened⁸⁷ voice. Yet the sound increased - and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound - much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped⁸⁸ in cotton. I gaped for breath⁸⁹ - and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly - more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued
 135 about trifles⁹⁰, in a high key⁹¹ and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides⁹², as if excited to fury by the observations of the men, but the noise steadily increased. O God! what could I do? I foamed⁹³ - I raved⁹⁴ - I swore⁹⁵ I swung⁹⁶ the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it⁹⁷ upon the
 140 boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder - louder - louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty⁹⁸ God! - no, no? They heard! - they suspected! - they knew! - they were making a mockery of⁹⁹ my horror! - this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable
 145 than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! - and now - again - hark! louder! louder! louder! louder! - 'Villains!' I shrieked, 'dissemble no more!¹⁰⁰ I admit the deed! - tear up the planks!¹⁰¹ - here, here! - it is the beating of his hideous heart!'



OVER TO YOU

- ① Fill in the chart below about the murder with information from the text.

Victim	.....
Time and place	.....
Motive	.....
Weapon	.....

- ② Now answer these questions.

1. What does the reader know about the protagonist of the story (ll. 1-6)?
2. What is the relationship between the protagonist and the victim? (ll. 7-8)?
3. The protagonist has an obsession. What haunts him? Is it this obsession that leads him to kill (ll. 8-12)?
4. What does the protagonist do for a whole week at night (ll. 17-35)?
5. The protagonist stands still for almost an hour in the room. What does he do? What pushes him to commit the murder in the end (ll. 125-30)?
6. The old man is dead. What does the protagonist do (ll. 136-44)?
7. Why do the policemen come into his house? (ll. 149-52)?
8. How do they discover he is the murderer (ll. 209-14)?

- ③ Although there is no real description of the setting of the story it contributes towards creating a particular atmosphere. How would you define it? Choose from the following.

- thrilling
 frightening
 melancholic
 exciting
 nightmarish

4 What appears to be the character's main concern? Choose from the following.

- make the reader believe that he is not mad, but that he has acted rationally
- make his story credible justify his crime and win the reader's sympathy

5 How does the character feel after his crime? Choose from the following.

- He is full of remorse.
- He is proud of himself.
- He is happy.
- He is indifferent.
- He is afraid of being discovered.

6 In the final part three police officers come into the protagonist's house. How are they presented? Do they play an important role?

7 The story is told by the protagonist. How does his point of view influence the narrative? Choose from the following.

- It makes the story credible and obvious.
- It creates a scary atmosphere.
- It obscures the facts.
- It emphasises the protagonist's obsessions.

8 In Poe's tales there are often, predominant motives. What is/are the motive/s in this story?

- fear
- panic
- perversion
- love
- the sense of guilt

9 What genre does this short story belong to?

10 Poe was strongly influenced by a literary movement born in England in the previous century. Which one?

11 Do you think that the protagonist of this story is mad? Give evidence from the text.

12 Have you read any other stories written by Poe?

13 Poe's works have always been very popular (and still are). Why do you think they appeal so strongly to the reader?