A Comparison between the poetry of Keats and Rossetti to illustrate the development of romanticism

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Abstrak

The meaning of the term 'Romantic' is vague. People tend to use it as a definition for anything which has to do with indivi_dualism and emotionalism. In the field of literature people ge_nerally use this term to indicate the whole period of the 19th Century as a mere historical label to describe its imaginative literature. Poets of the early part of the 19th Century - early Romantics like Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley - as well as of the later part -- Victorians like Tennyson and Ross etti - are all classified under the term 'Romantics'. It is sigaifi cant that Graham Hough in treating this first group of poets calls his book The Romantic Poets and in treating the second, The Last Ronan-tics, and that Oswald Doughty entitles his critical biography of Rossetti A Victorian Romantic. So, if this loose term is worth using at all, a definition is certainly needed.In fact the term 'Romantic' has more than an historical sig_nificance; it can also denote the kind of work the 19th Century poets produced because they have some things in cocoon which are characteristic of their time. This essay attempts in the first place to define what these things are. I shall then show how this term 'Romantic' applies to Keats as a representative of the early Romantics on one hand, and to Rossetti as a representative of the Victorians on the other. By comparing their poetry I will show what similarities and diffe_rences there are in these two poets: similarities, which will justify the use of the same term 'Romantic', and differences which will indicate the development of Romanticism during the 19th Century.Of course it might be said, that any other two poets could have been chosen as representatives of earlier and later Roman-ticism of the last Century, but in my opinion Keats and Rossetti are the best examples since each is really typical of his own period_