Romanticism Vs. Neoclassicism Essay, Research Paper

Throughout history, the arts and literature have been a form of rationalization of the minds and thoughts of an artist or writer. The progression or regression of knowledge over a period of time can be chronicled or mapped with the use of the literature and arts of these artists. More specifically, the major shift in thinking from 18th-century Neoclassicism to 19th-century Romanticism can be seen in the works of Alexander Pope and William Wordsworth. A deliberation on the works of these two authors show the differences, if not complete opposites between the Neoclassic and Romantic concepts. The purpose of a poem can vary from poet to poet, but for the Neoclassic poet the main purpose was to educate the reader. During this time, Newton and other famous intellects were springing forth new ideas. Ideas such as explanations being formed in terms of moving particles.Pope shares this idea with the reader in An Essay on Man (stanza2?): A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain . Pope s manner of writing is very straightforward. He makes firm statements instead of questionable presumptions and he does this as if he is teaching something with a purpose. This Neoclassic quality of teaching is seen in portions of his poem such as, His knowledge measured to his state and place, his time a moment, and a point his space. (lines71-73) These uses of ideas and teaching in the poem make the poem less pleasurable for the reader to read as it allows no room for imagination and personal reflection. This islikely intentionally done by Pope as it was common in his time to write with a direct purpose rather than to please the reader. The purpose in writing for the Romantic poet is quite different from that of the Neoclassic poet. The Romantic poet wrote to please the reader rather than to educate. This can be seen in Wordsworth s poem Ode: Intimations of Immortatlity from Recollections of Early Childhood. , especially in his use of language throughout the poem. Language such as, The Moon doth with delight (line12) and Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song! (Line168) It is this extensive use of vivid language that force the reader to use their imagination and visualize the events or images in the poem. They can then relate to these events orimages and in turn become an active participant in reading the poem.