

English 3500, Nineteenth Century Literature in English  
Paper 1, due in class Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>  
Three pages, double spaced, typed. Cite any actual references used.

Select either option A or option B:

In either option, feel free to imitate a great prose stylist like Samuel Johnson, if you can, or write in a completely modern idiom if you can't. But even in the latter case, try to replicate the critical terminology and critical values of an erudite reader from the Enlightenment who has caught the early signs of the Age of Sensibility.

Option A:

Imagine you are Charles Wyndham, the 2nd Earl of Egremont, a country gentleman in 1757 (or his wife, Lady Egremont, Countess of Egremont). You think Alexander Pope was the greatest of English critics and his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) embodies enduring standards of decorum. An aspiring young poet submits his manuscript of a book of poetry to you and appeals for your patronage in getting it published, offering to dedicate it to you, if you'll finance its printing. Write a short letter back to the poet trying to explain in a friendly manner whether his sort of poetry represents the kind of thing you will support with your wealth. Consider the overall poetic form, the subject, the lyric persona, the verse form, the images, poetic diction, tone, etc. Make reference to the poets living and dead whom you would like this poet to study more thoroughly. What elements of these great poets are most worth emulating? Tell the young poet what you think to be the purpose of a career in poetry at this time.

Option B:

Imagine you are a student of Jonathan Edwards in 1750 and have been called to preach to a congregation in western Massachusetts on the following text: "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously" (Psalm 96: 9-10). Write a short sermon that replicates the kind of style and thought you've learned from your teacher.



Thomas Bewick (1753-1828): The Road-Mender (woodcut)