

Revolts Against the Old Order: 1815-1850

Romanticism

During the nineteenth century, art, music, literature, and religion were dominated by Romanticism. An intellectual movement in direct opposition to the logic and linear nature of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, Romanticism emphasized emotion, faith, love, nature, melancholy, exoticism, and the past.

In style and subject matter, Romantic artists were in direct opposition to the Neoclassicists. Painters such as Caspar David Friedrich and J.M.W. Turner used their art to show the glories of nature. Others, such as Eugene Delacroix and Theodore Gericault, painted the exotic and the scandalous.

Romantic writers, such as William Wordsworth, also focused on the beauty of nature, whether calm or dramatic. They also aligned the love of God with the love of nature, a religious focus in direct conflict with the logic of the Enlightenment and the deist belief in the uninvolved watchmaker view of God.

Romanticism also found expression in music – for example, Ludwig van Beethoven's driving, emotional pieces. Others, such as Hector Berlioz, showed the powerful nature of love. Romanticism also left its mark on religion, both Catholicism and Protestantism. Especially through the work of François de Chateaubriand, Catholicism was linked to God through nature rather than doctrines and mandated beliefs. Protestantism also looked to a natural connection to God, one based on finding emotional intensity in everyday experiences.

Powerful forces behind the events during the first half of the nineteenth century, nationalism and liberalism continued to fuel political change during the second half. This was especially the case with unification in Germany and Italy and the continued fragmenting of the Austrian Empire. Socialism, begun by the utopian socialists, was further developed by the scientific socialists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who adapted it to fit their analysis of the repercussions of the Industrial Revolution.