Romanticism

TIME LINE

1781	Immanuel Kant publishes the *Critique of Pure Reason*
1790	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe publishes the first part of *Faust*
1798	William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge publish *Lyrical Ballads*
1812-1815	The Grimm brothers publish their collection of German folk tales
1819-1824	Lord Byron publishes *Don Juan* Percy Bysshe Shelley publishes *Prometheus Unbound*
1820	Sir Walter Scott publishes *Ivanhoe*
1830	Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* has its first performance
1831	Victor Hugo publishes *Norre Dame de Paris* Alexander Pushkin publishes *Boris Godunov*
1842	Nikolai Gogol publishes *Dead Souls*
1844	Alexandre Dumas publishes *The Three Musketeers*
1859	Alfred Lord Tennyson publishes *Idylls of the King*
1871	Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Aida* has its first performance
1876	The four operas comprising Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* have their first performance

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the movement known as romanticism emerged as a dynamic expression of the creative energy of European civilization. While romanticism was a complex and diverse phenomenon, romantic thinkers, writers, artists, and composers were united in reaction against what they regarded as the Enlightenment's excessive emphasis on the supremacy of reason in human affairs. Instead, the romantics emphasized feelings and emotions, faith and intuition, and imagination and spontaneity. Many of the romantics rejected the Enlightenment's optimistic belief in the perfectibility of human beings and human society, although they

continued to emphasize the importance and value of the individual and to promote individual freedom.

In their literary and artistic activity, the romantics rebelled against the formulism of eighteenth-century classicism and the rigid rules that classicism applied to the creative process.

The romantics also manifested a reverence for the past and an awareness of the emotional ties which joined the present with the past and gave a sense of order and stability to society and its institutions.

In particular, many romantics had a fascination for the culture of the Middle Ages, an age of faith, which stood in contrast to the eighteenth century age of reason.

Literature

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and ***Friedrich von Schiller*** (1759-1805)

In Germany, the late eighteenth century was a golden age. The works of two major writers of this period, Goethe and Schiller, were infused with the spirit of romanticism.

Born in Frankfurt, Goethe took up residence in 1775 in Weimar, a major center of German culture during the *Sturm und Drang* ("storm and stress,') period in the late eighteenth century. In the romantically sensitive novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), Goethe wrote of a young man involved in a tragic love affair who ends his life in suicide. In his poetic masterpiece Faust, Goethe retold the traditional German legend of the man who sold his soul to the devil in return for earthly knowledge and pleasure. The first part of Faust was published in 1790, and the work was completed in 1831,the year before the author's death.

A friend of Goethe, Schiller also resided in Weimar. He is best known for his dramas, which reflected his idealism and intense belief in the cause of human freedom. *In Die Räuber* ("The Robbers," 1781), Schiller delivered a powerful attack on political tyranny. The romantic heroes and heroines of his later dramas

include William Tell, the Swiss fighter for freedom; Mary Queen of Scots; Joan of Arc; and Wallenstein, a great general of the Thirty Years' War.

Jakob (1785-1863) and ***Wilhelm*** (1786-1859) ***Grimm***

The ranks of German romantic writers also include the Grimm brothers, Jakob and Wilhelm, who delved into the German past to collect traditional folk stories, which they published as *Grimms' Fairy Tales* (1812-1815).

Heinrich Heine *(1797-1856)*

Heine was a central figure in the revolutionary literary movement known as Young Germany. In his lyrical poetry, he reflected the roman tics' concern for individual experience. Heine published several collections of his poetry, including the *Buch der Lieder* ("Book of Songs," 1827).

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and ***Samuel Taylor Coleridge*** (1772-1834)

The romantic era was a great age for English poetry. In 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge published *Lyrical Ballads*, the first major work of English romantic literature. The volume contained Wordsworth's poem "Tintern Abbey."

While Wordsworth found inspiration in nature, Coleridge was fascinated by the mystical and exotic. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a somber tale of a sailor burdened by ii curse after killing an albatross, was his major contribution to *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge expressed the same fascination in his later poems, including "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan."

Lord Byron (1788-1824), ***Percy Bysshe Shelley*** (1792-1822), and ***John Keats*** (1795-1821)

During their short lives, three other English romantic poets – Byron, Shelley, and Keats – gave free rein to the expression of their emotions. Byron and Shelley were ardent advocates of political liberty, and Byron died in Greece, where he had gone to help the Greek fight for independence. Perhaps the most popular of

England's romantic poets, Byron is best known for *Childe Haro1d's Pilgrimage* (18121818), *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816)' and his masterpiece, *Don Juan* (1819-1824).

One of Shelley's most important works, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), was inspired by *Prometheus Bound*, by the ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus. In Shelley's poem, Prometheus, who represents what is good in life, is locked in struggle with Jupiter, the symbol of tyranny and evil.

Keats wrote some of the most beautiful romantic poetry in the English language, including "The Eve of St. Agnes," the "Ode to a Nightingale," and the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," all published in 1820.

William Blake (1757-1827)

Blake was an accomplished painter and engraver in addition to being a poet. He demonstrated his imaginative, sensitive, and mystical genius in such poems as "The Lamb," "The Tiger," and "The Mental Traveler."

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) and ***Robert Browning*** (1812-1889)

Two other English poets, Tennyson and Browning, are classified as writers of the Victorian period, although they expressed the romantic spirit in their work. In *Idylls of the King* (1859), Tennyson reflected his fascination with the Middle Ages in retelling the story of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table.

Browning wrote several verse dramas and dramatic monologues, including "My Last Duchess" (1842).

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

Scott holds a preeminent position among romantic British novelists. Inspired by a fascination with the Middle Ages and his native Scotland, he wrote more than thirty historical novels. *Ivanhoe* (1820), his best-known novel, is set in the twelfth century, in the time of King Richard the Lionhearted and the Crusades.

Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), ***Alexandre Dumas*** (1802-1870), and ***Victor Hugo*** (1802-1885)

Balzac, Dumas, and Hugo emerged as major figures in French romantic literature. Balzac's early novels reflected his interest in the Middle Ages, but he soon turned his attention to his own time, writing in a more realistic fashion about the French bourgeoisie. His almost one hundred novels and stories, known collectively as *The Human Comedy*, present a broad analysis of the human character.

Dumas wrote exciting romantic tales, such as *The Three Musketeers* (1844) and *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1845), while Hugo is known for his novel *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), set in the late Middle Ages in the time of King Louis XI. Hugo later turned to realism, writing *Les Misérables* (1862), a powerful story of the suffering human masses.

Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) and ***Nikolai Gogol*** (l809-1852)

Pushkin and Gogol were the most prominent Russian authors of the early nineteenth century. Pushkin was the first major author to write in Russian, rather than in Slavonic, the language of the Russian Orthodox Church. The great-grandson of an African who served as a general in the army of Peter the Great, he turned to the national past for inspiration. *Eugen Onegin* (1825-1831), a novel in verse, and *Boris Godunov* (1831), a tragic drama, were based on the life and exploits of great figures of Russian history.

Regarded as the father of Russian realism, Gogol first won recognition with two volumes of stories based on his childhood in the Ukraine and published in the early 1830s. He then became a figure of controversy with his satirical drama *The Inspector-General* (1836). After emigrating to Italy, he wrote his most famous work, *Dead Souls* (1842), a bitter novel condemning serfdom.

Painting

During the first years of the nineteenth century, classicism continued to dominate European painting. Jacques-Louis David

(17481825), who had gained prominence during the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon ,remained the foremost classical painter. Gradually, however, romanticism began to take hold among Europe's artists.

Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863)

The French painter Delacroix used color and light to achieve dramatic effects. His flamboyant paintings manifested his rejection of classicism's insistence on restraint and order. In *The Massacre of Scio*, Delacroix depicted Turkish violence during the Greek war for independence, while in *Liberty Leading the People*, he painted a romantic celebration of the French revolution of 1830.

Landscape Painters

In France, Camille Corot (1796-1875) and other members of the Barbizon school, which flourished from about 1830 to 1870, painted romantic landscapes.

English romantic artists, including John Constable (1776-1837) and J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851), also became known for their landscapes.

Francisco Goya (1746-1828)

The Spanish artist Goya gained recognition both for his revealing portraits of the decadent Spanish Bourbons and for his powerful portrayals of the brutal French repression of the Spanish rebels against Napoleon in 1808. Paintings such as *The Third of May* 1808 stand as powerful condemnations of war's cruelty.

Architecture

Architecture during the romantic period was dominated by the neoclassical and neo-Gothic styles, as well as by a fascination with the exotic. Inspired by ancient Greek and Roman architecture, the neoclassical style had won acceptance in the eighteenth century and remained popular in the romantic era. Romantic architects, reflecting the fascination with the Middle Ages that was characteristic of romanticism, promoted a revival of Gothic architecture. Following a fire in 1834, the reconstruction of the

British Houses of Parliament in the neo-Gothic style began in 1840. Elsewhere, medieval Gothic cathedrals and churches were restored, including Notre Dame in Paris.

Other architects found their inspiration in the more exotic styles of the Orient, ranging from the Middle East and Persia to China. The Royal Pavilion in the seaside town of Brighton, built for Britain's prince regent, the later George IV (r. 1820-1830), is a memorable example of this style.

Music

Ludwig van Beethoven *(1770-1827)*

Beethoven was the major figure in the transition from classicism to romanticism in music. Born in Bonn in the German Rhineland, he moved to the Austrian capital of Vienna in 1792, remaining there for the rest of his life. His compositions include piano and violin sonatas, piano concertos, string quartets, and nine symphonies, as well as one opera, *Fidelio* (1803-1805), and one mass, the *Missa Solemnis* (1818-1823).

German Romantic Composers

Following Beethoven, Germany produced a host of romantic composers. Car1 Maria von Weber (1786-1826), a pianist and composer, is recognized as the creator of the German romantic opera. Of his ten operas, *Der Freischutz* (1821) and *Oberon* (1826) are the best known. Franz Schubert (1797-1828) joined piano and voice in over 600 *Lieder* (poems set to music). Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) composed works for piano and violin, as well as chamber music and choral music. Of his five symphonies, the best known are the Scottish (1830-1842), the Italian (1833), and the Reformation (1830-1832). Robert Schumann (1810-1856) composed a wide variety of romantic music, including symphonies and piano concertos.

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

German romantic music reached its culmination in the operas of Wagner, an ardent German nationalist who found inspiration in

the epics of the Germanic past. The four operas known collectively as *The Ring of the Nibelung – Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* ("The Valkyries"), *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* ("The Twilight of the Gods") – had their first performance in Bayreuth in 1876.

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

Berlioz, France's major romantic composer, wrote the explosively emotional *Symphonie Fantastique*, which was first performed in Paris in 1830.

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) and ***Giacomo Puccini*** (1858-1924)

The Italian Verdi was a prolific composer of romantic operas, including *Rigoletto* (1851), *La Traviata* (1853), *Il Trovatore* (1853), and *Aida* (1871). Another major Italian composer of romantic operas was Puccini, whose best-known work is *La Bohème* (1896).

Influences of Folk Music

Franz Liszt (181 1-1886) was regarded by his contemporaries as Europe's greatest concert pianist. He composed a host of works for the piano, many of them inspired by the folk music of his native Hungary.

Traditional folk music also inspired the compositions of Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) and Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). The first of the Russian nationalist school of composers, Glinka is best known for two operas, *A Life for the Tsar* (1836) and *Russian and Ludmilla* (1842). The latter was based on a poem by Pushkin. A Polish composer, Chopin wrote graceful works for the piano, including the concertos in E minor (1833) and F minor (1836).

Philosophy and Religion

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Kant, a German philosopher, began the revolt against extreme rationalism in philosophy. A professor at the University of Konigsberg in East Prussia, Kant wrote the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1790). While reason could neither prove nor disprove the existence of God, he argued, faith and intuition can lead one to an understanding of spiritual

truths, including the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and rewards and punishments after death.

G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831)

Hegel, a professor at the University of Berlin, was Kant's most important follower. For Hegel, history represented the unfolding of God's plan for the world. He contended that change in history occurred as the result of a dialectical process, which involved a series of conflicts. In these conflicts, the established order (the thesis) encountered a challenge (the antithesis). Out of the conflict arose a new ordering of society (the synthesis), which represented a further step in the advance of human progress.

Pietism

In religion, many eighteenth-century Enlightenment intellectuals had embraced deism, which they regarded as the religious expression of rationalism. At the same time, however, millions of Christian believers were influenced by Pietism, which reaffirmed the importance of faith, emotional religious experience, and personal devotion to Jesus Christ.

Lutherans

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Pietism flourished among the Lutherans and Moravian Brethren of Germany. Philipp Spener (1635-1709), a Lutheran pastor, rejected religious formalism and urged his followers to develop a more intense personal religious faith.

Moravians

Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), a German Lutheran influenced by Pietism, offered the Moravian Brethren refuge on his estate in Saxony. The Moravian Brethren, also known as the Bohemian Brethren, were a small band of surviving followers of the early-fifteenth-century religious reformer John Hus. Like the pietistic Lutherans, the Moravians stressed personal piety rather than formal doctrine. Migrating to America, Zinzendorf established Moravian communities in Bethlehem and other towns in Pennsylvania. A number of Moravians migrated to the southern

colonies, and an important Moravian center was established in Salem (now Winston-Salem), North Carolina.

Quakers

In mid-seventeenth century England, George Fox (1624-1691) established the Society of Friends, popularly known as the Quakers. Like the German Pietists, Fox opposed religious formalism and emphasized the inner light of Jesus Christ that illumined the soul of the believer. Because the Quakers opposed war and the taking of oaths, they suffered persecution at the hands of the civil authorities. One of the best-known early Quakers was William Penn (1644-1718), the founder of the Pennsylvania colony.

Methodists

In the eighteenth century, John Wesley (1703-1791), an Anglican priest, founded the Methodist movement. Methodism opposed the formalism of the established Church of England and emphasized the development of personal piety, evangelism, and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The Methodists also worked to reduce social evils, campaigning against alcohol and the slave trade. John Wesley, his brother Charles (1707-1788), and other Methodist leaders, including George Whitefield (1714-1770) and Francis Asbury (1745-1816), won many converts in England and America. While Methodism began as a movement within the Church of England, it had become a separate denomination by the end of the eighteenth century.

The Catholic Revival

In the early nineteenth century, the romantics' emphasis on the mystical and supernatural led to a revival of traditional religious belief. Symbolic of this revival of religion was the pope's reestablishment of the Society of Jesus in 1814. The Jesuit Order had been suppressed in 1773 at the height of the Enlightenment. In France, the resurgence of traditional Catholicism received a powerful expression in *The Genius of Christianity* (1802), written by Francois René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848).

The Oxford Movement

In England, a group of Anglicans, known as the Oxford Movement, reasserted Catholic elements in the faith and practice of the Church of England. The Oxford Movement proved influential in the development of Anglo-Catholicism within the English church, although some of its leaders, including John Henry Newman (1801-1890), became converts to Roman Catholicism.

History

The romantics' sense of an organic union between the present and the past led to the writing of romantic national histories, which emphasized the uniqueness of a people's development and their historical mission, Major romantic historians included the Englishman Thomas Babington Macauley (1800-1859), the Frenchman Jules Michelet (1798-1874), and the Prussian Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-1896).

The romantic revolt against the extreme rationalism of the Enlightenment had an enduring impact on European culture. The romantics' love of nature and their willingness to break the bonds of artistic convention helped give birth to the movement of impressionism in painting later in the nineteenth century. Their emphasis on national traditions encouraged the growth of nationalism, the most powerful ideology to develop in Europe during the nineteenth century.