

Romanticism

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Dominant cultural tendency in the Western world in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It caused a re-evaluation of the nature of art and the role of the artist in society. Significantly, from the 1790s it was a self-proclaimed movement, the first such, and so initiated a tradition that has remained in Western culture since. Romanticism was rejected or ignored by most of the major artists later seen as associated with it, but it nevertheless identified several key tendencies of the period. Though hard to define precisely, it essentially involves: 1) placing emotion and intuition before (or at least on an equal footing with) reason; 2) a belief that there are crucial areas of experience neglected by the rational mind; and 3) a belief in the general importance of the individual, the personal and the subjective. In fact it embodies a critique of that faith in progress and rationality that had characterized the main trend of Western thought and action since the Renaissance. This resulted in an opposition to the dominant contemporary values and social structures. Romanticism started as a literary movement but soon came to include the visual arts, particularly painting, the most notable exponents being Blake, Delacroix, Friedrich, Gericault, Goya, Philipp Otto Runge and Turner. To a lesser extent it also affected the graphic arts, sculpture and architecture. By the 1840s it was being superseded by Realism, though many of its ideas persisted throughout the 19th century and into the 20th.

1. The movement.

Romanticism emerged as a movement in literary circles in the 1790s but soon spread to the other arts, including the visual arts. The first definition of 'romantic poetry' was given in 1798 by the German critic Friedrich Schlegel in the magazine *Athenaeum*, which he ran with his brother August Wilhelm Schlegel. It appeared in the first issue and hailed Romantic poetry as 'progressive, universal poetry' that is 'always becoming, never completed', a characteristically heady and imprecise definition. The word itself was drawn from the medieval literary form, the

'romance'. What Schlegel did in effect was to turn the irrational and fantastic qualities of these tales into positive values and to assert that they represented the essential features of the modern (i.e. post-classical) tradition. Following Schlegel's pronouncement, the term gradually gained ground in Germany over the next decade and was then exported elsewhere. It reached England and France primarily through the French author Mme de Staël, whose *De l'Allemagne* (written in 1810, but published in London in 1813) was an apologia for contemporary German culture. By 1820 it had currency throughout Europe and North America as the term for a contemporary cultural movement.

Probably the best way to understand Romanticism is as a reaction to the rationalist ideals of the 18th-century Enlightenment. The belief in the perfectability of man on logical principles that this movement had promoted received a severe blow from the events of the late 18th century. The programme of political and social reform supported by the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment most dramatically culminated in the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. In its aftermath there was first a period of horrific terror in France itself and then a period of European-wide war that ended only in 1815. Such turmoil seemed to many contemporaries to undermine the idea that society could be improved simply by removing old, corrupt conventions. Equally important were the changes taking place in commerce. The rapid economic development in the period, the Industrial Revolution, was interpreted by many as a sign of man's weak control over his own destiny even when subject to rational planning. On all sides, therefore, political, social and economic changes seemed to emphasize the helplessness of the individual when confronted by fate.

Stimulated by such experiences, Romanticism can be seen as a reaction to an earlier confidence in the power of reason. Like most reactions, it took a multiplicity of forms. Some favoured retreat, clutching at past traditions and evoking the 'good old days' of the Middle Ages. Others turned to worlds beyond the reach of civilization, to the contemplation of the 'primitive' in the natural world. This tendency underpinned the great outburst of 'nature' poetry of the period, and in the visual arts it led to a re-evaluation of the natural world. It encouraged a taste for more informal landscape gardens, for the depiction of rural and primitive life and, perhaps most significantly of all, for more ambitious and challenging forms of landscape painting. It is no exaggeration to say that Romanticism was responsible for one of the greatest moments in Western landscape painting, evident particularly in the work of such artists as Constable, Friedrich and Turner. For many, spiritualism or mysticism was the means of opposing the rationalism of the previous age. This can be seen in the prophetic works of Blake and in the more fantastic aspects of Goya's art. It is symptomatic of the oppositional nature of Romanticism that it had no clear political message, apart from that of criticizing the status quo. Some of those associated with the movement espoused an extreme political conservatism, as was eventually the case with Friedrich Schlegel. Others (such as Blake) supported heady forms of radicalism. Though it is hard to find a common denominator in all these reactions, it can

perhaps be seen in the widespread endeavour to discover something beyond immediate experience, whether distanced by time (in the past or the future) or by space (in the cultures of distant lands).

2. Aesthetics.

The Romantic Movement depended on the changes in the concept of art and aesthetic experience that had taken place in the preceding decades. In the late 18th century aesthetic experience began to be seen as something independent of practical or moral restrictions, a view pioneered by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his *Aesthetica* (1750–58) and endorsed by Kant in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790). For the generation of the 1790s such autonomy encouraged an idealized view of art as a realm that could inform and ennoble mankind by virtue of its very independence of necessity. This view, implicit in Kant, was popularized by the German writer Friedrich Schiller in his *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen—in einer Reihe von Briefen* (1795). Later it led the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley to claim that poets were the ‘unacknowledged legislators of the world’. These theories underpinned the idea of the autonomy of aesthetic feeling and the heroic role of the artist. New categories of experience were also developed, greatly expanding the range of the aesthetic. To the traditional concept of beauty was added a radical new understanding of Sublime, the. This concept had, of course, been available since Classical antiquity, but it now took on a new meaning. From being a rather mystical image of ‘supreme beauty’, it became a dynamic and powerful force. The greatest encouragement for this change of meaning came from Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). This presents the Sublime as an overpowering experience based on fear, an interpretation widely criticized by those such as Kant and Blake, who saw it as divinely inspired. Nevertheless, the notion stimulated an interest in the overpowering—whether fear-driven or spiritual—which thus became an accepted part of aesthetic experience.

The new understanding of the Sublime was essential both to the taste for horrific subjects (evidenced, for example, in the dramatic violence of paintings by Fuseli such as *Thor Battering the Midgard Serpent* (1790; London, RA) and the general taste for such disaster scenes as shipwrecks, as in the work of Turner, and to the idea of the struggling, heroic artist. Another important aesthetic development was the concept of the Picturesque, which first became current in late 18th-century Britain. Unlike the Sublime, which was literary in origin, the Picturesque was largely a visual movement. Based on the idea of travel, it promoted an interest in the quaint, the Old World and the irregular. Perhaps most importantly it encouraged associationism, the notion that aesthetic experiences could evoke ideas and sensations while remaining autonomous. Thus the contemplation of nature, of ruins and of the past could inspire heady poetic experiences, as well as more tangible cultural feelings such as nationalism.

For, while Romanticism began as a movement concerned with personal experience and enrichment, it ended in most cases with the reinforcement of traditional culture and nationalism.

3. Manifestations in art.

(i) General.

As Romanticism is so readily identified with themes and attitudes it is often believed to have no characteristic visual form. Unlike Neo-classical art, there is no clearly definable 'style' in Romantic art, which seems rather to take almost any form. It is most usually associated with a broad painterly manner, as in the work of Delacroix and other French Romantic history painters. However, there are also Romantic paintings that show a precise and meticulous style, as in the landscapes of Friedrich (e.g. *Chalk Cliffs at Rügen*, 1818; *Winterthur*, Samml. Oskar Reinhart

Perhaps the most significant visual interest among the Romantics was that of colour. This was explored both for its optical effects and for its symbolic associations. Many artists associated with the movement (e.g. Delacroix and Turner) were interested in colour theory, and Runge wrote a book on the subject, *Die Farbenkugel* (Hamburg, 1810). This interest in colour and association led most Romantic theorists (e.g. August Wilhelm Schlegel) to see painting as the quintessential Romantic visual art. Schlegel in fact argued that sculpture, with its emphasis on form, was essentially classical but that painting, with its emphasis on colour and illusion, was essentially Romantic. Though Schlegel's division was not accepted by all, sculpture was far less affected by the Romantic Movement than painting. Indeed, Romanticism in the visual arts centres largely on painting and the graphic arts. Romantic ideas also strongly influenced architecture, where the tendency towards association led to the forging of a new attitude to style, whereby different styles stood for different values. Indeed the Romantic Movement caused the baffling historicism that led to the revival of virtually every historical style before the end of the 19th century. As in sculpture, however, the classical style was pre-eminent throughout the Romantic period, the only exception occurring in Britain, where the Gothic Revival was strongly favoured.

(ii) Painting.

As in the other arts, Romanticism emerged in painting as a means of opposing the academic and the classical. This opposition was made all the more intense in the late 18th century because it occurred at the time of a vigorous revival of classical principles and the academic hierarchy that supported them. In the traditional hierarchy history painting was pre-eminent

and, although accounting for only a tiny fraction of the paintings of this period, its prestige was such that major developments tended to crystallize around it. In the late 18th century Neo-classical principles triumphed in this genre, particularly in France, where David emerged as the leading painter. At the same time there were challenges, and in general there were two main alternatives: the treatment of exotic (and usually medieval) historical themes or of modern-life subjects. Both types encouraged a colourful, painterly treatment that contrasted with the severity of the classical mode. In France the medievalizing tendency can be seen in work by Jean-Simon Berthélemy and François-Guillaume Menageot from the 1780s. In England the medieval and the fantastic can be seen in the work of John Hamilton Mortimer and Fuseli and among those artists who also pioneered a rigorous classicism, such as James Barry and Benjamin West. English history painting was strongly influenced by the literary revival of medieval and national themes. One of the principle focuses for history painters in this period was the Shakespeare Gallery in London, which opened in 1789 and for which John Boydell commissioned a series of history paintings on Shakespearian themes. More important in international terms was Benjamin West's innovative and heroic treatment of contemporary historical subjects in modern dress, notably in his *Death of General Wolfe* (1770; Ottawa, N.G.). This tendency was later developed in France, notably by David, Gros and Gericault.



Henry Fuseli: *The Nightmare*, oil on canvas, 755×65 mm, 1790 (Frankfurt am Main, Goethemuseum); Photo credit: Snark/Art Resource, NY

Of all these, Fuseli is the most firmly related to a pre-Romantic ideology. Swiss by birth, he settled in England after wandering in Germany and studying art in Rome. He started his career as a literary figure and was closely related to the German *Sturm und Drang* movement, which took the English nature poets as its model and emphasized the elemental and self-expression. His most famous work, *The Nightmare* (1781; Detroit, MI, Inst. A.), combines violence, eroticism and fear of the unknown. Though an adherent of expression, Fuseli was a rationalist

and was sceptical of religious and visionary experience. In this sense he fell short of the Romantic sensibility, and it is perhaps significant that his paintings show almost no interest in colour. He was, however, a great stimulus to a slightly younger generation who adopted the Romantic concept of the artist as prophet and visionary. From the 1780s Blake produced publications that combined his own poetry with Gothic-inspired illustrations. He was an absolute defender of the importance of vision and once exclaimed: 'Talent thinks, genius sees'. His pictures, with their striking imagery and unconventional technique, exemplify his dedication to originality and imagination. In his painting and poetry he elaborated a complex personal mythology, and this highlights the importance of myth to the Romantics, who saw it as a kind of primitive narrative encapsulating experience not accessible to the rational mind.



Aquatint and etching by Francisco Goya: *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 215×150 mm; pl. 43 of *Los Caprichos*, 1799 (London, Victoria and Albert Museum); photo credit: Victoria and Albert Museum, London/Art Resource, NY

Blake was far from being the only artist of the period to create his own mythology. In Germany the somewhat younger Runge elaborated a heady nature mythology around his uncompleted cycle the *Times of Day* (1803–10; e.g. *Morning*, 1808; Hamburg, Ksthalle), in which he sought to convey an ecstatic vision of the universe ‘when everything harmonizes in one chord’. Another creator of a form of personal mythology was Goya, who in 1799 produced the *Caprichos*, a series of etchings in which bizarre nocturnal creatures emerge from the sleep of reason (see fig.). Each of these ‘visionary’ artists produced a highly individualistic art, yet they are united by

their belief in the importance of personal vision and in their critique of the rational. They also believed in the didactic and political role of art. In their different ways, their apocalyptic art forms are reactions to the political uncertainties of the period of the French Revolution and its aftermath. Goya's position was the most paradoxical, because as well as being a private visionary he was also the court painter to Charles IV and then Ferdinand VII. But his public works maintain an ambiguity and seem always to have a private side. His most moving painting, the Third of May, 1808 (1814; Madrid, Prado), shows Spanish insurgents being executed by the French during their invasion of the country. Yet what is most clear in these martyrs is not their heroism but their fear of death: Goya cut through the rhetoric to express the personal emotion.



Antoine-Jean Gros: Bonaparte Visiting the Victims of the Plague at Jaffa, 11 March 1799, oil on canvas, 5.23x7.15 m, 1804 (Paris, Musée du Louvre); photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY

Unlike Blake and Goya, Runge was in contact with a programmatic Romantic movement. He lived in Dresden while the circle of 'Dresden Romantics' around Friedrich von Schlegel was active and he was particularly close for a time with one member of that group, the poet and novelist Ludwig Tieck. Yet Tieck effectively abandoned Runge, whose ideas and work developed

beyond the sphere of the Dresden Romantics. A more programmatic relation between painting and literary Romanticism came with the medievalist movement, the interest in depicting medieval subjects in a style recalling the Middle Ages. Admiration for the Gothic had been growing since the mid-18th century and was widespread among Romantic sympathizers. Blake, for example, once declared 'Grecian art is mathematical form, Gothic art living form'. This medieval revival was already having an impact on subject-matter in the 1780s, but it was not until 1800 that it took a definitive form. To a certain extent it was fundamentally linked with programmatic Romanticism, for the very choice of the word 'romantic' referred back to medieval literary romances. More importantly, it was supported by the reaction against the excesses of the French Revolution (and, by implication, of classically inspired rationalism). This occurred in France as much as anywhere. Originally it was a protest movement, fanned by such defences of tradition as François-René Chateaubriand's *Le Génie du Christianisme ou beautés de la religion chrétienne* (1802). It then received a kind of official promotion when Napoleon, with great prescience, re-established Christianity in France and took the title of Emperor. Napoleon's court (and in particular his wife Josephine Bonaparte) favoured a chivalric medievalism that came to be known as the Troubadour style, and many French history painters of the day, such as Anne-Louis Girodet and Pierre-Paul Prud'hon, exploited this mood. Most intriguing of all was the use made of it by Ingres, who, though later seen as the bastion of classicism, was one of the most subtle interpreters of the Gothic at this time, as shown by the tender portrait of *Mlle Rivière* (1806; Paris, Louvre). Equally striking in the Napoleonic period was the promotion of a vivid, painterly style for heroic modern subjects. David himself made attempts in this direction, particularly with his record of the *Coronation of Napoleon in Notre-Dame* (1805-7; Paris, Louvre). But it was Antoine-Jean Gros who mastered this style with his celebrations of Napoleon's exploits, most notably that of Bonaparte Visiting the Victims of the Plague at Jaffa (1804; Paris, Louvre).

Such works seem to be Romantic in all but name. However, the leading artists of this period were strongly opposed to Romanticism later and were also defenders rather than critics of the status quo. The promotion of medievalism as a protest against the contemporary situation took place elsewhere, largely in Germany and in England. It was most overt in central Europe, where, in particular, a group of students at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna formed the Lukasbrüder in 1809, in emulation of a medieval guild. The Nazarenes (as they later became known after their leaders, Friedrich Overbeck, Franz Pfors and others, moved to Rome in 1810) saw art essentially in terms of morality and placed sincerity of vision above technical accomplishment. In this sense their artistic ideals accord with those of such German literary Romantics as Tieck and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, whom they admired, even though their art has little of the pictorial sensuousness normally associated with Romanticism. They were also representative of the movement in the way that they banded together to make their protest. They were not quite the first 'breakaway' group to be formed (that honour can probably be given to the Primitifs, a group of students active in David's studio c. 1800), but they were the first to make their protest successful. They thus established a pattern that has become

one of the stereotypes of the modern art world, that of the avant-garde outburst that settles down to become the new orthodoxy. The Nazarenes' pious medievalism eventually brought them international fame. In the reactionary climate of post-Napoleonic Europe their traditionalism had a strong appeal, particularly in the authoritarian regimes of central Europe. Despite this, 'protest' medievalism remained a strong current in 19th century art, particularly in Britain where it stimulated both the Pre-Raphaelite movement in painting and the decorative arts and the Gothic Revival in architecture.



Théodore Géricault: *Charging Chasseur*, oil on canvas, 2.92×1.94 m, 1812 (Paris, Musée du Louvre); Photo credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

The emergence of a fully fledged genre of Romantic history painting occurred in France following the fall of Napoleon. This might be seen as a result of the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, since Troubadour painting was vigorously promoted by the new regime, as shown in pro-Bourbon historical subjects by Gros and François Gérard (e.g. Gérard's *Entry of Henry IV into Paris*, exh. Salon 1817; Versailles, Château). In fact the new history painting was largely motivated by disillusion and a spirit of opposition, as is clear from the career of Géricault, arguably the greatest painter of the first half of the 19th century. He began his career celebrating the heroism of Napoleonic France in such dramatic modern-life works as the *Charging Chasseur* (1812; Paris, Louvre); after the confusion of the Restoration (and many personal disappointments), he painted the monumentally anti-heroic work the *Raft of the Medusa* (exh. Salon 1819; Paris, Louvre), which combines all the uplifting visual qualities of the best history painting with a theme of utter despair. Géricault died young in 1824: both the tragedy of his death and still more the vistas opened up by his art left a vivid challenge to other French artists. The growing discussion of Romanticism in literary circles at the time, as embodied in the philosophy of Victor Cousin and the writing of Stendhal and Victor Hugo, also provided a new and convenient rallying-point for their protest. By far the most intelligent and skilled of this younger generation was Delacroix. In later years he was disdainful of the term Romantic, but in the early 1820s he seemed happy enough to accept it. His major Salon paintings of the 1820s, notably the *Massacres at Chios* (1824; Paris, Louvre) and the *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827; Paris, Louvre), combine the subversiveness of Géricault, though usually subtly mediated, with a more dedicated exploration of colour as the means of conveying sensation.

A large number of other artists emerged at this time who combined sensationalism with the portrayal of exotic, modern or medievalizing themes, notably Horace Vernet, Eugène Delacroix, Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps and Léopold Robert. The new interest in sensationalism led to an unprecedented attention to English art, including the naturalism of Constable. A number of English and Anglo-French artists profited from this concern, the most remarkable being Richard Parkes Bonington, a brilliant watercolourist who did much to establish a new form of informal historical painting that appealed to the Romantic interest in the anti-heroic. With the July Revolution of 1830 Romantic history painting came of age in France and received much official support under the government of Louis-Philippe. It is characteristic of Delacroix that he should have benefited from this new mood by gaining a prodigious number of state commissions for murals (most notably those for the library of the Palais du Luxembourg in Paris; *in situ*) while distancing himself increasingly from programmatic Romanticism. Nevertheless, the reflective pessimism of his later work and his deepening exploration of colour effects show him to have been working within the spirit of the movement at a

profounder level. Other history painters of the Romantic generation showed little capacity for development, and the field of fashionable history painting was soon given over to such academic artists as Paul Delaroche, Théodore Chassériau and Thomas Couture, who attempted to achieve a *juste-milieu* by creating a rapprochement between Romantic and classical and/or Realist tendencies.



Washington Allston: *Hermia and Helen*, oil on canvas, 737×635 mm, c. 1818 (Washington, DC, National Museum of American Art); photo credit: Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC/Art Resource, NY

The impact of French Romantic history painting spread throughout Europe from the late 1820s. At that time the two dominant historical schools were acknowledged to be those of Paris and of the Nazarene-inspired history painting of Germany, as represented in particular by the work of Peter Cornelius. In Belgium the tendency was more towards the French school, notably in the work of Gustaf Wappers and Antoine Wiertz. In England William Etty's work showed the strong influence of French artists, while such later artists as Daniel Maclise and William Dyce looked more towards the Germans. In Italy the Roman-based Purismo Movement (whose leading figure was Tommaso Minardi) showed the impact of the Nazarenes, while in the north Francesco Hayez painted in a more individual mode that had strong affinities with elements of the work of Ingres and Delacroix. In Germany itself the Düsseldorf school constituted a middle road between Nazarene and Parisian history painting (particularly in the work of Karl Friedrich Lessing). A similar combination can be seen in the art of eastern Europe, as in the history painting of Karl Bryullov and Sergey Ivanov. History painting also began to gain ground in the USA: Washington Allston was strongly influenced by English art (e.g. *Hermia and Helen*), while the work of such later painters as Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze reveals the impact of the Düsseldorf school.

Parallel with the development of individualism, medievalism and modernity in history painting came the challenge of other genres for a status similar to that of history. The strongest came from genre painting, as the growing power of the bourgeoisie throughout Europe at this time did much to stimulate its popularity. To some extent this had been initiated by the genre scenes of the French painter Jean-Baptiste Greuze. The sentimental attitude to the simple, moral life articulated in his works created a taste that was exploited by such other painters of the rural and domestic as George Morland in England. In the early 19th century the Scottish painter David Wilkie achieved an immense success in London with his Dutch-inspired portrayals of domestic life. In France the depiction of simple domestic virtue was carried on by Louis-Léopold Boilly. In Germany it developed a sentimental direction, particularly in the post-Napoleonic Biedermeier style, when Moritz von Schwind, Ludwig Richter and Carl Spitzweg treated the theme with varying degrees of fantasy and humour.

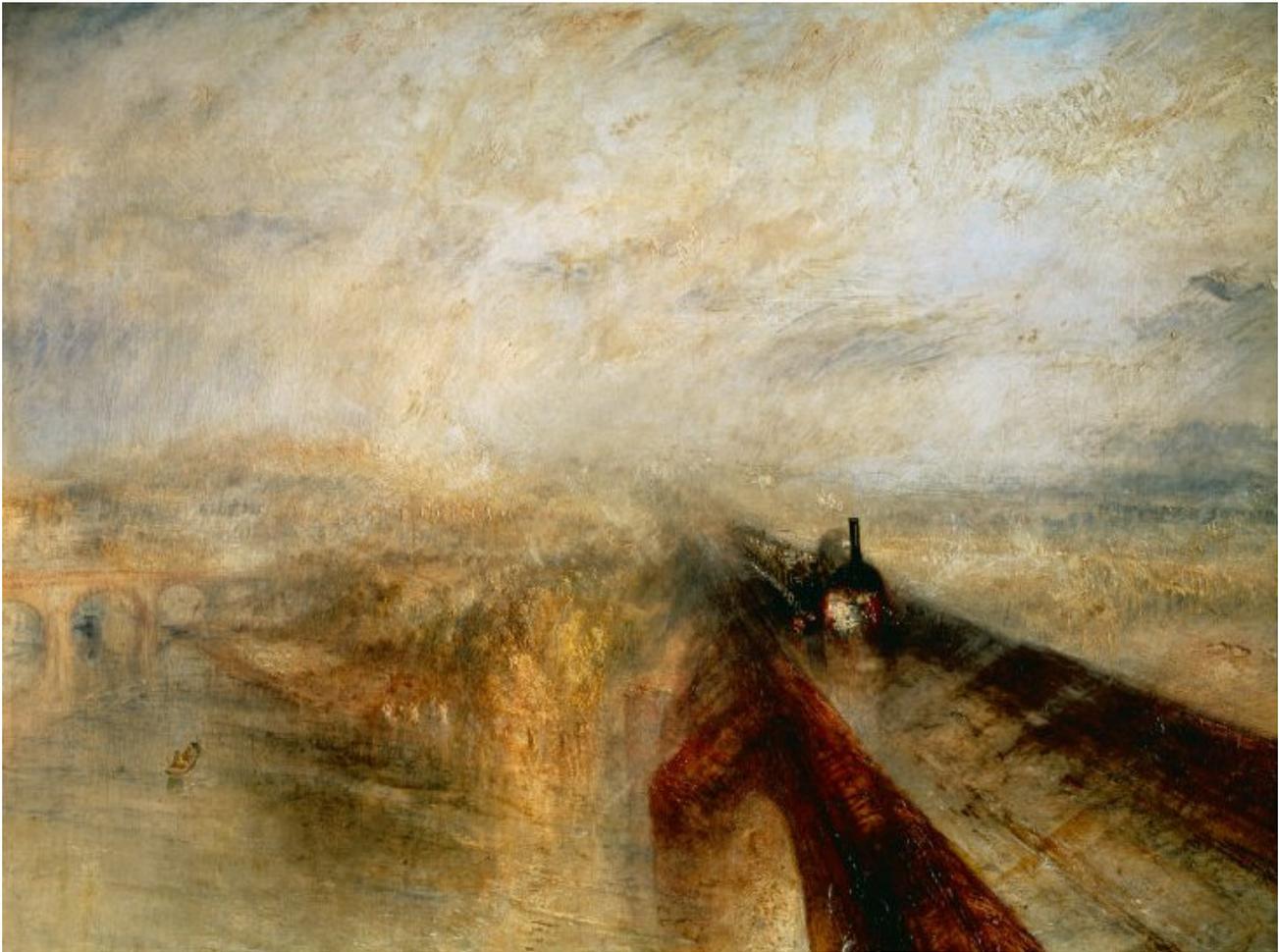


Francisco de Goya: Family of Charles IV, oil on canvas, 2.80×3.36 m, 1800 (Madrid, Museo del Prado); Photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY

Another figurative genre that took on new dimensions at this time was portraiture. The Romantic interest in individualism and temperament had its effect at both the fashionable and the more private level. At the former it led to a new kind of suave society portrait, which was mastered most effectively by the English painter Thomas Lawrence, who became the most sought-after portrait painter in Europe. At a deeper level it led to the profoundly paradoxical portraits of Goya (such as the group portrait of the Family of Charles IV, 1800; Madrid, Prado

The perception of nature as a living entity certainly underpinned one of the most remarkable and original developments in the Romantic era, namely the re-evaluation of landscape painting. The change was both external and internal. Externally it led to the claim that the subject of landscape was as important as that of history painting. This is a view that was supported by the development of 'nature' poetry in the 18th century, with its refocusing on nature as the source of spiritual inspiration. The writings of the Swiss-French philosopher

Jean-Jacques Rousseau were also significant because of their insistence that man and society were at their best in the natural state. A new enthusiasm for landscape—in particular the representation of wild and evocative scenery—was prevalent throughout Europe at this time. Probably the most famous landscape painter of this period was Joseph Vernet, who both reintroduced works of idyllic calm based on the work of the 17th-century landscape painter Claude and innovatively painted scenes of wild storms that drew their inspiration from the current interest in the Sublime. Wild landscape scenery became a vogue in England too, promoted by Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg and by Gainsborough in some of his later work. This led to a re-evaluation of the wilder parts of the British Isles, such as the Lake District and north Wales. On the Continent the high mountain scenery of the Alps began to be appreciated in a new light, as shown in the work of the Swiss landscape painter Caspar Wolf. The new taste for travel in search of the Picturesque (generated by the writings of William Gilpin, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price) also led to a wider interest in topography. The growing concern with direct observation is symptomatic of this interest and led, among other things, to the promotion of the *plein-air* oil sketch and to the development of watercolour painting. The British proved to be particularly adept at the latter, and many of the greatest landscape painters of the period, including Thomas Girtin and John Sell Cotman, practised largely or exclusively in this medium.



J. M. W. Turner: Rain, Steam and Speed: The Great Western Railway, oil on canvas, 911×1220 mm, 1844 (London, National Gallery); photo credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY

It was the generation who came to maturity around 1800 who took Romantic landscape painting to its height. This occurred for the most part in Britain. In general there seem to have been two major tendencies, one to explore the dramatic and fantastic, the other to become immersed in the minutiae and in a sense of the local and particular. Trained as a watercolour painter, Turner aimed to master all forms of landscape, but he was at his best in extremes, in dramatic scenes of disasters (such as his early *Shipwreck*, 1805; London, Tate) and in quiet moments of intense lyricism. He penetratingly explored the effects of nature as shown in *Rain, Steam and Speed: The Great Western Railway* (1844; London, N.G.), in which he also ironically included a hare running ahead of the train, so suggesting the limitations of technology. He was equally concerned with modes of representation and in his later works achieved transcendent visions of colour effects. Other painters, notably John Martin and Francis Danby, emulated his dramatic tendencies, but none could equal his late, near abstract work. The other major landscape painter of the period, Constable, aimed at depicting local scenery on a grand scale. Like the poet William Wordsworth, he was deeply attached to the scenes of his childhood. His *The Haywain* (1821; London, N.G.) has subsequently become a symbol of idyllic English rural

life, but he himself became increasingly depressed by the collapse of the rural society of his childhood, and his later works are stormy and pessimistic. As well as these depictions of tranquil rural life, there was a more visionary interpretation of the countryside, represented most strongly in the work of Samuel Palmer, a follower of Blake. This attitude is, however, more evident in Germany, where there was a greater interest in the expression of religious and philosophical ideas through landscape. Runge represents this tendency at its most extreme, but it was Friedrich who most successfully combined such concerns with actual experiences of nature.

Up to 1820 these developments took place largely in England and northern Europe. After that, there was a growing tendency in France to view landscape more seriously. To some extent this was part of the response to English art of the period, and such painters as Paul Huet largely based their style on that of the English. Others, such as Georges Michel, looked to the great Dutch landscape painters of the 17th century. There was also a reassessment of an indigenous tradition: Pierre Henri de Valenciennes had done much to promote *plein-air* painting, as well as the prestige of the genre in general. The most important beneficiary of this was Corot, who studied in Rome (1825–8) and developed a quiet, meditative form of naturalism that is positively Franciscan in its pantheism. The search for a wild ‘national’ naturalism (so much a keynote of Romanticism in every country) was answered largely by the Barbizon painters, who from c. 1830 began to settle in the village of that name in the forest of Fontainebleau. Although most of this group are more closely associated with Realism, its leading figure, Théodore Rousseau, was still deeply affected by the Romantic quest for the spiritual in nature. A similar combination of naturalistic and spiritual interests can be found in the numerous other groups of landscape painters who proliferated around Europe after 1820. Pride of place must be given to the artists of the Danish school, in particular Christen Købke. In Germany there were major centres in Dresden, where the Norwegian J. C. Dahl reigned supreme, in Düsseldorf and in Berlin. In the last named place Karl Blechen gave a new dimension to Romantic landscape painting through his exploration of ironic effect. Romantic landscape painting was also one of the most successful visual exports to the New World. In the USA there was a distinguished tradition of practitioners, including Thomas Cole, who developed the fantastic along the line of Turner and Martin, and such other members of the Hudson River school as Asher B. Durand, who were involved in a more direct celebration of American nature.

(iii) Graphic arts.

In many ways Romanticism in the graphic arts can be seen as an extension of that in painting: many of the major Romantic painters, such as Blake, Goya, Gericault and Delacroix, also practised the graphic arts. There were also some individual developments, however. During the Romantic period there was a constant introduction of new techniques, such as aquatint, lithography and steel engraving. These can be seen as side-products of the Industrial

Revolution, because they made use of new technology as well as catering for a new mass audience. This proliferation tended to emphasize the distinction between 'creative' painting and the use of graphic arts for reproduction. Reproductive engraving developed as an industry, both for the reproduction of works of art and for the illustration of books and periodicals. By the 1840s there was already a form of journalism that depended on mass illustration, as witnessed by the emergence of the *Illustrated London News* in 1842.

However, vigorous and inventive graphic art also developed. Perhaps the most notable innovation associated with Romanticism is the emergence of political caricature. The exploration of fantasy prevalent in the late 18th century encouraged the underlying association of exaggerated portraiture with allegory. The practice first emerged in Britain, where James Gillray was the principal master. The political cartoon later became a major form in French graphic art, most notably in the work of Honoré Daumier. In France in particular etching was also developed as a creative medium, for example in the fantastic work of Louis Boulanger and the urban views of Charles Meryon. Revivalism also had its impact on the graphic arts, encouraging interest in the striking graphic modes of the 16th century; perhaps the most successful use of these was made by the German artist Alfred Rethel.

(iv) Sculpture.

Partly because Romantic theorists thought that sculpture was quintessentially classical and concerned primarily with form, Romanticism had relatively little impact on sculpture until around 1830. Before this Romantic themes were sometimes explored by sculptors, and there were even tendencies towards sensuality that can be associated with the movement. Thus the leading Neo-classical sculptor of the period, Antonio Canova, certainly has more than a classical eroticism in his work, and such sculptors as Joseph Chinard, Antonio Bosio and Antoine-Denis Chaudet, who were associated with the Napoleonic court, also exploited this mode, but this can hardly be seen as more than a tendency. In the next generation the leading Neo-classical sculptor, the Dane Bertel Thorvaldsen, also had dramatic moments, perhaps most strongly in his *Lion of Lucerne* (modelled 1819; executed in the cliff at Lucerne by Lucas Ahorn, 1819–21), a monument that shows a lion emerging from a rock. Funereal and memorial monuments can generally be associated with Romanticism, but this is perhaps because of the inevitable pathos of their subject. Certainly a number of the memorial monuments of the English sculptors John Flaxman and Francis Chantrey can be seen in this light.

It was in France in the 1820s, in the context of the development of an overt Romantic Movement, that sculpture with a more direct relationship to Romanticism emerged (*see France, Republic of*, §IV, 5). The most prominent sculptor associated with it was Pierre-Jean David D'Angers, who made spirited, temperament-filled studies of the great men of his age. Other major practitioners were Auguste Préault, Jehan du Seigneur and François Rude. All these sculptors attempted emotive subjects, but they were also linked to Romanticism by their move

away from the smooth surfaces of classical sculpture to rougher and more individualistic effects—a formal equivalent to the impassioned brushwork of Delacroix. This is perhaps most clear in the *animalier* sculpture of Antoine-Louis Barye, whose scenes of animal violence (e.g. *Lion Attacking a Serpent*, bronze, 1832; Paris, Louvre) fit both formally and in terms of subject-matter with the concepts of Romanticism.

Outside France, and to some extent inspired by developments there, Romantic styles of sculpture gained ground in the 1830s. Most countries had their national representatives, such as Ludwig von Schwanthaler in Germany. Of these the most successful was probably the Italian Carlo Marochetti, who gained an international reputation for his swashbuckling representations of heroic historical figures (e.g. *Duke Emanuel-Philibert of Savoy*, bronze, 1833–7; Turin, Piazza San Carlo). Perhaps because of the public nature of the medium, there was relatively little development of the more private and reflective sides of Romanticism in sculpture. However, in this context it is worth mentioning the marvellous modelled caricatures (e.g. *Ratapoil*, plaster, c. 1851; Buffalo, NY, Albright-Knox A.G.) that Daumier made for his own use and the gentler mood evident in the work of the English sculptor Alexander Monro (1825–71), who was inspired by the Pre-Raphaelites.

(v) Architecture and planning.

Romanticism in architecture, planning and design represents the most directly social aspects of the movement. In general, Romantic ideas first began to affect these areas through élitist groups who wished to distance themselves in one way or another from contemporary society. In the later period this sense of distancing remained but took on the character of a moral distancing, a means by which the values of the modern world could be censured.

Landscape gardening is arguably the area in which Romantic ideas first became manifest. Throughout the 18th century there was a growing vogue in England for laying out gardens in an informal manner, which contrasted with the formalism of French and Italian gardens. First pioneered by William Kent, the habit was expanded by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and later by Humphry Repton. Encouraged by the Picturesque movement, by the end of the 18th century an extreme wildness was fashionable, such as can be seen in the woods around Fonthill Abbey, Wilts, the house built by the eccentric William Beckford. This move towards informality and the fantastic also became popular on the Continent.

While principally a manifestation of the cult of nature, this tendency was accompanied by a taste for the fantastic in architecture, either as follies within a park setting or as rural retreats to live in. Often this was part of the revival of medieval styles, which appealed because of their chivalric associations. Horace William Walpole's Gothick house at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, constructed from 1748 onwards, was the most important of these. As with the taste for natural gardens, this tendency was also found on the Continent, particularly among

reclusive aristocrats, as shown by the Désert de Retz (1774–94) near Marly in France, laid out by François-Nicolas-Henry Racine, Baron de Moinville (1734–97), assisted by François Barbier (fl 1764–75), and the Löwenburg (1793–8) in Kassel, Germany, by Heinrich Christoph Jussow.

In the last decades of the 18th century architectural idealism took on a more social dimension, particularly in France, where Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and Etienne-Louis Boullée designed idealist architectural structures that were, for the most part, not executed. Based on a geometricized classicism, their architecture can be seen as Romantic principally in its scale and ambition. The style they promoted, often known as Romantic Classicism, had affinities elsewhere in Europe, where it led to the actual realization of buildings. In England it can be seen in the work of John Soane and John Nash (i). In Germany it affected the work of such leading classicists of the day as Friedrich Gilly, Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Leo von Klenze.

The growing nationalistic mood of the early 19th century encouraged grandiose redevelopments of major capital cities. Napoleon set the pace with his remodelling of Paris (largely through the agency of the architects Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine), and in England his activities were emulated by the Prince Regent (later George IV), who commissioned Nash to redesign the West End of London. In Berlin similar schemes were supervised by Schinkel. The dominant style for these was classical, but medievalism gained ground because of its nationalistic and religious associations. The concept of style as symbolic (something that Ledoux had paved the way for when he talked of *architecture parlante*) took on a new power. It can be seen in the Gothic war memorials constructed after the Napoleonic Wars, particularly in Prussia. To some extent this linked in with the chivalric Gothic Revival of the 18th century (as can be seen, for example, in James Wyatt's remodelling of Windsor Castle, Berks, c. 1824–37). The movement gained a new moral dimension in the 1830s. This was the period in which A. W. N. Pugin pioneered a thorough-going Gothic Revival on the grounds that it would be a means of resurrecting the spiritual values of the Middle Ages. Pugin was mainly concerned with religious architecture (and was a major force in the reintroduction of Gothic for church buildings), but the revival was also secular, as can be seen by the decision to build the New Palace of Westminster in the Gothic style for reasons of national association. The Gothic Revival became so powerful in England that it was virtually the national style in the period c. 1845–75. Elsewhere the revival of styles was broader. In Germany the *Rundbogenstil* was favoured, largely because of national associations with the Romanesque.

This stylistic revivalism was accompanied by a growing knowledge of historical styles from archaeological and antiquarian research. As well as encouraging the use of more scholarly and detailed revivalism, this also promoted the fantasy that the spirit of past ages could in some sense actually be reconstructed. This element took on a growing importance at a time when such architectural theorists as John Ruskin were emphasizing the need for architecture to take a moral stand against contemporary values. The fantasy of a medieval 'golden age' also affected attitudes to design. This was the area in which the impact of the Industrial Revolution

had been most direct, leading to the mass-production of goods and the need to separate the process of design from the process of production. One of the outcomes of this was a reactionary move to preserve traditional craft practices, something that was promoted by Ruskin and which formed the mainstay of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

4. The legacy.

Strictly speaking, the Arts and Crafts Movement lies outside the period of Romanticism. However, this emphasizes the fact that Romanticism was effective far beyond the time when it constituted a dominant cultural movement. In the 1840s Romanticism seemed to be giving way to a new movement, Realism. However, the latent subjectivity involved in the latter—and the cult of personality indulged in by the leading figures associated with it (notably Courbet)—suggests that many attitudes pioneered by Romanticism had persisted. Since the late 19th century there have been several artistic movements that have reaffirmed Romantic ideas in one way or another: the Aesthetic Movement, Symbolism, Expressionism, Surrealism and (from the 1930s to the early 1950s) Neo-Romanticism. Post-modernism seems to be emulating the Romantic Movement's concern for stylistic revival and association aesthetics. These continuous re-emergences seem to emphasize the extent to which Romanticism stood not just for a movement but also for a set of principles.

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See also

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