

# The development and impact of romanticism on the eupropean world assignment

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## The Development And Impact Of Romanticism On The European World

Romanticism, in a way, was a reaction against rigid Classicism, Rationalism, and Deism of the eighteenth century. Strongest in application between 1800 and 1850, the Romantic Movement differed from country to country and from romanticist to romanticist.

Because it emphasized change it was an atmosphere in which events occurred and came to affect not only the way humans thought and expressed themselves, but also the way they lived socially and politically. (Abrams, M. H. Pg. 13) " Romanticism emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental,"(www. go. grolier. om/romanticism) Among the characteristic attitudes of Romanticism were the following: a deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature; a general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the senses over intellect; a turning in upon the self and heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities; a preoccupation with genius, the hero, and the exceptional figure in general, and a focus on his passions and inner struggles; a new view of the artist as a supremely individual creator, whose creative spirit is more important than strict adherence to formal rules and traditional procedures; an obsessive interest in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, and the medieval era; and a fondness for the exotic, the remote, the mysterious, the weird, the monstrous, the diseased, and even the satanic. (Barzun, Jaques.

Pg 157-159) Romanticism was preceded by several related developments from the mid-18th century that can be called Pre-Romanticism. Among such <https://assignbuster.com/the-development-and-impact-of-romanticism-on-the-european-world-assignment/>

trends was a new appreciation of the medieval romance, from which the Romantic Movement derives its name. (Abrams, M. H. Pg. 261) The romance was a tale or ballad of chivalric adventure whose emphasis on individual heroism and on the exotic and mysterious was in clear contrast to the elegant formality and artificiality of widespread Classical forms of literature, such as French Neoclassical tragedy. This new interest in relatively unsophisticated but emotional literary expressions of the past was to be a dominant note in Romanticism. Frenz, Horst and Stallknecht, Newton P. pgs 70-73) Romanticism in English literature began in the 1790's was the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* written by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Wordsworth's "Preface" to the second edition (1800) of *Lyrical Ballads*, in which he describes poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," became the manifesto of the English Romantic Movement in poetry. (Thompson, E. P. Pgs 33-34) The first phase of Romantic Movement was in Germany, which was marked by the innovations in both content and literary style and by a preoccupation with the mystical, the subconscious, and the supernatural. (Abrams, M. H. Pg. 8) The most momentous national movement was Germany's. The Germans rebelled not only against Napoleonic rule but against the century old upper hand of French civilization. They rebelled not only against the French armies but against the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment. "The years of the French Revolution and Napoleon were, for Germany, the years of its greatest Cultural Efflorescence." (Abrams, M. H. Pg. 73) Germany became the most "romantic" of all countries, and German influence spread throughout Europe.

In the nineteenth century, the Germans came to be widely regarded as intellectual leaders, like the French had been a century before.

Most of the German thought had come from nationalism in a broad sense. A wealth of talents, including Friedrich Holderlin, the early Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Jean Paul, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, A. W. and Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and Friedrich Schelling belong to this first phase. In Revolutionary France, the Vicomte de Chateabriande and Mme de Stael were the chief initiators of Romanticism, by virtue of their influential historical and theoretical writings. (Abrams, M. H. Pg. 81) While Wordsworth and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads are generally taken to mark the formal beginning of English romanticism, important elements of the movement were formed throughout the 18th century.

The British landscape and deep past were explored and reinvented in diverse ways by James Thomson, Thomas Gray, James Macpherson, and Thomas Chatterton, helping to establish the tastes for balladry and nature on which Wordsworth and Coleridge drew. (Thompson, E. P. Pgs 111-113) William Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge constitute the early romantics. They join together primarily because their art and thought developed in direct response to the French Revolution. Early adherents to the Revolution's precepts, all three writers were repulsed by its violent extremes under the Terror and its reversion to strongman rule under Napoleon. Their social philosophies developed distinctly religious casts, emphasizing spiritual development rather than direct political action.

The younger romantics are Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats, whose political attitudes were distinctly more liberal than the later views of their forerunners, especially Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Robert Southey, by whom they were clearly influenced but of whom they were often scornfully critical. (Thompson, E. P. Pgs. 127-136) English romanticism is distinguished for its lyric poetry: Blake's *The Tyger* and *London*, Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* and his *Intimations* ode, Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight* and *Dejection*, Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* and *Adonais*, Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and Byron's *She Walks in Beauty* are among the most celebrated poems in the language.

English romantic poets also aspired to creation on a greater scale, as seen in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, the 14-book narrative of his own poetic development, Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and Shelley's ambitious verse-drama *Prometheus Unbound*. English romanticism is also remarkable for its prose writing, especially its literary criticism and its fiction. Romantic criticism is best represented by Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817), which develops his theory of the imagination; Shelley's *Defense of Poetry* (1821), which articulates the role of the poet as the unacknowledged legislator of mankind; and *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) by William Hazlitt, which in a series of profiles which traces the connections among politics, society, and the arts. English romantic fiction is dominated by three figures.

Sir Walter Scott was already an enormously successful poet when he published his first novel, *Waverley*, in 1814. The string of *Waverley* novels that followed feature historical settings and central characters caught

between two cultures. With the possible exception of Byron, Scott exerted more worldwide influence than any other British romantic writer. The world represented by Jane Austen is smaller in scale but equally important. "Austen perfected the domestic novel, concentrating on details of character and carefully nuanced dialogue." *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) remains one of the world's best-loved novels. Finally, in *Frankenstein* (1818), Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley invented the form known today as science fiction.

Thompson, E. P. Pgs. Many) The second phase of Romanticism, comprising the period from about 1805 to the 1830s, was marked by a quickening of cultural nationalism and a new attention to national origins, as attested by the collection and imitation of native folklore, folk ballads and poetry, folk dance and music, and even previously ignored medieval and Renaissance works. Sir Walter Scott, who invented the historical novel, translated the revived historical appreciation into imaginative writing. At about this same time English Romantic poetry had reached its zenith in the works of John Keats, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. (Thompson, E. P. Pg. 43)

Despite having been both the country whose political events most clearly shaped European romanticism and the working home of the movement's philosophic progenitor, Swiss-born Jean Jacques Rousseau, France experienced a late flowering of romanticism, which did not reach its peak until the 1830s and '40s, when its force had weakened in England and Germany. (Barzun, Jaques. Pg. 124) Reasons for this lie in France's having been the center of the Enlightenment thought and its having served throughout the Revolutionary period as a test bed for progressive ideology. Bitter controversies involving political and religious loyalties accompanied

the emergence of romanticism in France. The main fight took place in the theater.

It included disruptions of performances of William Shakespeare's plays in 1822 and culminated in the notorious battle between the warring parties on the opening night of Victor Hugo's drama *Hernani* (1830). The lyric poetry of Alphonse de Lamartine, Musset, and Hugo was romantic in its pronounced personal emotionality and led, inevitably, to Charles Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, perhaps French romanticism's most extreme expression. (Barzun, Jacques. Pgs. Many) A famous by-product of the Romantic interest in the emotional were works dealing with the supernatural, the weird, and the horrible, as in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and works by C. R. Maturin, the Marquis de Sade, and E. T. A.

Hoffmann. Achim von Arnim, Clemens Brentano, J. J. von Gorres, and Joseph von Eichendorff dominated the second phase of Romanticism in Germany. (Abrams, M. H. Pgs 362-363) By the 1820s Romanticism had broadened to embrace the literatures of almost all of Europe. In this later, second, phase, the movement was less universal in approach and concentrated more on exploring each nation's historical and cultural inheritance and on examining the passions and struggles of exceptional individuals. (Frenz, Horst and Stallknecht, Newton P. Pgs 289-290) A brief survey of Romantic or Romantic-influenced writers across the Continent would have to include Thomas

De Quincey, William Hazlitt, and the Bronte sisters in England; Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Stendhal, Prosper Merimee, Alexandre Dumas (Dumas Pere), and Theophile Gautier in France.

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Alessandro Manzoni and Giacomo Leopardi in Italy; Aleksandr Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov in Russia; Jose de Espronceda and Angel de Saavedra in Spain; Adam Mickiewicz in Poland; and almost all of the important writers in pre-Civil War America. (Frenz, Horst and Stallknecht, Newton P. )

Romanticism destroyed the clear simplicity and unity of thought which characterized the eighteenth century. There was no longer one philosophy, which expressed all the aims and ideals of Western Civilization. Romanticism provided a more complex, but truer, view of the real world.