

Romanticism

“Romanticism” is the term used to describe the character of many works of literature, painting, music, architecture and criticism produced by Western civilization over a period from the late 18th to the mid-19th century.

Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality that typified late 18th-century Neoclassicism. It was also a reaction against 18th-century rationalism and physical materialism in general. Romanticism emphasized the individual, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary, and the transcendental.

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 a heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities; a preoccupation with the 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 emphasis upon imagination as a gateway to transcendent experience and spiritual truth; an interest in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, and the medieval era; and a liking for the exotic, the remote, the mysterious, the weird, the occult and the monstrous.