

The map of **ROMANTICISM** in Europe

GERMANY

The form of Romanticism in Germany is called "*Sturm und Drang*", so "passion and feeling". They were linked together by fantasy and imagination. The most famous writer was Goethe. The German Romanticism shows a rejection of classical rules (famous in the Age of Enlightenment) to look for inspiration in the national history with the use of modern language.

FRANCE

The French Romanticism developed later than in other countries. In fact it was created by Madam De Staël, who introduced the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity. The most famous writer was Victor Hugo.

ENGLAND

In England, Romanticism was preceded by a period called Pre-Romanticism, while Romanticism was divided into 2 different periods: 1st and 2nd generation.

• **PRE-ROMANTICISM**

Poetry in Pre-Romanticism had 3 main ideas:

1. introspection: where the poet reveals inner feelings and emotions
2. sensibility: where the poet in particular shows the passions created by love
3. love for nature: where the poet is alone in the countryside showing his feelings in contact with nature.

There are 3 kinds of poetry

1. Poetry of nature
Came from the poetry of Elizabethan period. The main concept was the love of nature.
2. Graveyard school
Where the main concepts were introspection and sorrow for the death of someone. There is also an interest for life after death, coffins and corpses.
3. Gothic poetry (mediaevalism)
There is an interest for the past and for supernatural events. The past is more attractive.

• **ROMANTICISM**

Romantic period goes from the second half of the XVIII century to the first half of the XIX century, so from George III to Queen Victoria.

The most important historical event is the French Revolution with the three ideals of equality, fraternity, liberty. There is also the Industrial Revolution with the fight between the employers and the workers; in fact there is lack of work because of the introduction of new machineries in place of human work. Connected to this, there is the Agricultural Revolution. So the workers grouped together in working-class-movements.

For literature, Romanticism was just opposite of the Enlightenment:

ENLIGHTENMENT	ROMANTICISM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a static vision of the world • there is conservatism • there is rationality • there is uniformity of ideas • the most important subjects are physics and maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a dynamic vision of the world • there is a revolution • there are sentiments or feelings • there is diversity of ideas • the most important subjects are biology and, later, genetics.

→ THE FIRST GENERATION OF ROMANTIC POETS

The most important poets are William Blake, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

The most important concept is nature, in fact the poet looks for isolation in nature, because this causes intense emotion. Very often nature was compared to God, so there is Pantheism. Life in the countryside was the best for its simplicity and humble way of living. The best place in England considering the countryside was the Lake District, in northern England. Two poets live there: Coleridge and Wordsworth, so they were called the *Lake Poets*.

Another important concept is the "sublime". Sublime means freedom in expressing feelings. There is also spontaneity in expressing feelings. These feelings come from the contact of the poet with the beauty of nature, so there is introspection, another keyword of this generation. Introspection is a way to reveal the inner feelings and thoughts of the poet, so reality and thought are subjective.

The structure of the poem is called *first person lyric*, so the poems are written in first person to express better the personality and the experiences of the poet.

→ THE SECOND GENERATION OF ROMANTIC POETS

There are 3 important poets: George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats. All of them died tragically when they were still young. So there is the creation of the romantic stereotype, where the poets are considered 3 myths.

These poets were against the society because of its injustices. This created sorrow and suffering. That's why they tried to escape from society travelling all around the world. They refused the real world and often they created a different one, sometimes using drugs.

THE GOTHIC NOVEL

The Gothic novel is particular in its setting and characters. In fact the setting is composed of ancient ruins in a wild scenery.

In art the best exponent was Giovanbattista Piranesi with his pictures "*Carceri*", showing the interiors of a medieval castle with a lot of machines of tortures.

The main features of the Gothic novel are: terror, suspense, supernatural, black magic, mystery.

The best exponent is Mary Shelley, the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Her surname was Mary Godwin. She met Shelley when she was 16, and Shelley left his wife to marry her. Her novel "Frankenstein" was published without her name because in that period it was impossible for a woman to be a writer. The novel "Frankenstein" shows two main characteristics:

1. elements of the Gothic novel
2. effects of science on human being.

Dr Frankenstein can be compared to Dr Faustus by Christopher Marlow, because both of them were scientists, they wanted to overcome every limitation, and they wanted to be omnipotent.

FRANKENSTEIN JUNIOR by Mel Brooks

It is a parody for two reasons:

1. it is a parody of the novel of Mary Shelley, in particular for the Creature, the blind man, the music and Elizabeth
2. it is a parody of the horror movies of 1940s-1950s, in black and white, with some comic sketches, in particular with Igor and his hunch, and other sketches based on the masculinity of the Creature.

The protagonist of the film, so the Creature, shows the same characteristics as in the novel. He is the misfit, so unaccepted by the society and condemned to live alone.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Samuel Taylor Coleridge lived between the end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. His father died when he was only 8, so he was sent to a Charity School. When he was young he had a lot of problems because he was dissatisfied with his society and life in general. He married Sara Friake, but he wasn't able to find a job, so she left him.

In this period he started to have Laudanum (a combination of alcohol and opium), so he became addicted to drug.

He went to the Lake District where Wordsworth lived, and their friendship started. He had a love affair with Sara Hutchinson, the sister of the future wife of Wordsworth.

He had a lot of physical problems because of chronic rheumatism, so he went on to have drugs. He went to Malta to cure himself, but he worsened. He came back to England and was left by Sara Hutchinson, so he got much more drugs addicted, and he quarrelled with Wordsworth.

The main themes of his poems, concern dream world with the presence of supernatural. In general he uses the form of the ballad; in fact the ballad tells the story, it has a simple language, and it has a lot of figures of speech, so the language is figurative.

The most common figures of speech in a ballad are repetitions, similes, metaphors. It has a fixed narrative technique, with a fixed form generally divided into quatrains.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

This long poem is a sort of nightmare sea voyage. It is a combination of metaphysical elements (for example "Death and Life-in-death who are playing dice on a ghost ship"), supernatural elements (for example the *Watersnake*), and elements of the real world.

The protagonist is the Ancient Mariner. He has no name, he is only called "the Ancient Mariner". The adjective "ancient" is important because it is referred to an old person with a lot of experiences, so old and wise, while an old person concerns only the age.

At the beginning the Ancient Mariner stops 3 men who are going to a wedding party and he starts telling them his story. At this point there is the beginning of a long flashback about the story of the Ancient Mariner.

The Ancient Mariner was on his ship with his sailors, when a storm sent the ship to the South Pole, in the ice, where it was trapped (this is the same beginning of Frankenstein). Suddenly an Albatross arrives and it is the symbol of freedom and joy, so the ship is magically free, but the Ancient Mariner kills the Albatross with an arrow.

So the ship was sent to the Equator to burn in the sun. One night a ghost ship appeared: on this ship there are Death and Life-in-death who are playing dice. Life-in-death wins the Ancient Mariner and Death wins all the sailors. So the Ancient Mariner remains alone.

At the end the Ancient Mariner will survive forever, but he has a task: he has to teach everybody the love for all the creatures of God.