

PPT Presentation on *Characteristics  
of Romanticism in English Literature*  
for B.A English Honours Semester 1

by

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- Romanticism refers to a movement in art, literature, and music during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Romanticism is characterized by the 5 “I”s
  - Imagination
  - Intuition
  - Idealism
  - Inspiration
  - Individuality

# *Imagination*

- Imagination was emphasized over “reason.”
- This was a backlash against the rationalism characterized by the Neoclassical period or “Age of Reason.”
- Imagination was considered necessary for creating all art.
- British writer Samuel Taylor Coleridge called it “intellectual intuition.”

# *Intuition*

- Romantics placed value on “intuition,” or feeling and instincts, over reason.
- Emotions were important in Romantic art.
- British Romantic William Wordsworth described poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”

# *Idealism*

- Idealism is the concept that we can make the world a better place.
- Idealism refers to any theory that emphasizes the spirit, the mind, or language over matter – thought has a crucial role in making the world the way it is.
- Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, held that the mind forces the world we perceive to take the shape of space-and-time.

# *Inspiration*

- The Romantic artist, musician, or writer, is an “inspired creator” rather than a “technical master.”
- What this means is “going with the moment” or being spontaneous, rather than “getting it precise.”

# *Individuality*

- Romantics celebrated the individual.
- During this time period, Women's Rights and Abolitionism were taking root as major movements.
- Walt Whitman, a later Romantic writer, would write a poem entitled "Song of Myself": it begins, "I celebrate myself..."

# Origins

- Romanticism began to take root as a movement following the French Revolution.
- The publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1792 is considered the beginning of literary Romanticism.



# The Arts

- Romanticism was a movement across all the arts: visual art, music, and literature.
- All of the arts embraced themes prevalent in the Middle Ages: chivalry, courtly love. Literature and art from this time depicted these themes. Music (ballets and operas) illustrated these themes.
- Shakespeare came back into vogue.

# *Visual Arts*

- Neoclassical art was rigid, severe, and unemotional; it hearkened back to ancient Greece and Rome
- Romantic art was emotional, deeply-felt, individualistic, and exotic. It has been described as a reaction to Neoclassicism, or “anti-Classicism.”

# *Music*

- “Classical” musicians included composers like Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Franz Josef Haydn.
- Romantic musicians included composers like Frederic Chopin, Franz Lizst, Pyotr Il’yich Tchaikovsky

# *Literature*

- In America, Romanticism most strongly impacted literature.
- Writers explored supernatural and gothic themes.
- Writers wrote about nature – Transcendentalists believed God was in nature, unlike “Age of Reason” writers like Franklin and Jefferson, who saw God as a “divine watchmaker,” who created the universe and left it to run itself.