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Романтизм (первая половина XIX века). Пафос индивидуализма

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Аннотация. Публикация продолжает серию очерков, рассматривающих Классическую эпоху. Данный очерк посвящён проявлениям мировой художественной культуры в пределах такой исторической эпохи, как Романтизм (первая половина XIX века – 1810-е – 1840-е годы). Будучи определяющим творческим методом, давшим название данной эпохе, романтизм в своих проявлениях сопровождался также традициями классицизма (характерными для предыдущего периода – эпохи Просвещения) и реалистическими устремлениями (которые будут доминировать в последующую эпоху Постромантизма). Предлагая системно-кластерное освоение всей суммы артефактов эпохи Романтизма с точки зрения смысловых сущностей, автор раскрывает её наиболее яркие и важные проявления: появление программности в музыкальном искусстве, обращение к миру личности, устремление к сокровенному, божественному, идеальному, байронизм и связанные с ним явления, сила чувств и характеров, романтический энтузиазм, развитие сферы сказочно-фантастической образности, обращение к всякого рода экзотике, выдвижение творцов искусства из народа, а также – в завершение эпохи – саморазвенчание, спад и свёртывание романтических «программ».

EN

Romanticism (the first half of the 19th century).
The pathos of individualism

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Abstract. This publication continues a series of essays examining the Classical era. This particular essay is dedicated to the manifestations of global artistic culture within the historical period known as Romanticism (the first half of the 19th century – the 1810s to the 1840s). As the defining creative method that gave its name to the era, manifestations of Romanticism were also accompanied by the traditions of Classicism (characteristic of the preceding period – the Age of Enlightenment) and realistic aspirations (which would dominate the subsequent Post-Romanticism). Offering a systematic and cluster-based exploration of the entire body of artifacts belonging to Romanticism from the perspective of their semantic essences, the author reveals its most vivid and important manifestations: the emergence of programmatic elements in musical art, a turn towards the world of the individual, a striving for the intimate, the divine, and the ideal, Byronism and related phenomena, the power of emotions and characters, Romantic enthusiasm, the development of fairy-tale and fantastic imagery, an attraction to all kinds of exoticism, the rise of artists from among the common people, and finally – towards the end of the era – the self-disillusionment, decline, and winding down of Romantic “programs”.

Введение

Romanticism is a very interesting and rich in its results historical era. This word also denotes a type of artistic thinking, a method of artistic creativity and, more broadly, a worldview, a way of life.

When people talk about a romantic nature, they usually mean a person who tends to exalted feelings and thoughts, who is inclined to contemplation and dreaminess, who lives more in a world of imagination than in the sense of the real order of things.

As a type of artistic thinking and a method of artistic creativity, romanticism existed both before the era to which it gave its name and after it. The era in question received this name in many ways because romanticism was first recognized and given this name during it.

That is why we will distinguish between *Romanticism* as a very specific era and *romanticism* as a universal (a type of thinking, a method of artistic creativity) that can be found in the art of different eras. In order to distinguish between these two concepts, we will use the word with a capital and lowercase letters.

And one more necessary explanation. The era of Romanticism is one of the components of *the Classical era*, which became its designation because in many areas of art, criteria and standards for basic ideas about artistic classics were created during its course.

Therefore, we compare the state of this classics of various historical periods with the “matrices” and stereotypes that were developed in the art of the Classical era. And in the same way, we just as naturally compare the Romantic trends of different times with what was during the time of *classical romanticism*, that is, the romanticism of the Romantic era.

It remains to note the time coordinates. Within the Classical era, Romanticism was preceded by *the Enlightenment* and was followed by *Post-Romanticism*.

The formation of the Enlightenment began in the middle of the 18th century and it passed its final phase at the turn of the 19th century (1790 – 1800s). At the same time, at the turn of the 19th century, a new artistic system was formed, which went down in history under the name of *Romanticism*. In its entirety, it developed from the 1810s until the 1840s – we will call that time the first half of the 19th century and the era of **Romanticism**.

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While it is fair to call the first half of the 19th century the era of Romanticism, it is nevertheless necessary to keep in mind that Romanticism was the defining but not the only artistic trend of those decades. It was accompanied, on the one hand, by realistic aspirations, which were to become dominant in the era of Post-Romanticism, and on the other hand, by the traditions of *classicism* inherited from the Age of Enlightenment.

These traditions fruitfully developed in the first half of the 19th century, representing a kind of a mighty rock that connected the past and the present and quite organically grew into the culture of Romanticism. This artistic array was created mainly by those who went through the initial part of their creative career during the Age of Enlightenment. The most significant of such figures are Goethe and Beethoven.

The main work of *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* (1749-1832) is the tragedy **Faust**. It equally belongs to both the Enlightenment and Romanticism, even from the chronological point of view, since the poet had been working on it almost all his life: the last three decades of the 18th century (from 1771) and the first three decades of the 19th century (to 1831). And the path of its main character is the path of an inquisitive, thinking European from the 18th to the 19th century.

Such Faust, “projected” into that historical dimension, is a man of a strong, daring mind, the personification of desire for knowledge. Having absorbed the spiritual experience of the Enlightenment, he faced a range of problems posed by the new century. And the fact that he is standing at the turn of the century allows him to reach an objective, proved wisdom in his ideas about the world and man.

In the conditions of the complex, contradictory reality of the first decades of the 19th century, when many things pushed the Romantics to very gloomy assessments, Goethe remained optimistic. This had its roots in the Enlightenment. After a long search, his character comes to the conviction that the meaning of life is in action, in serving people, in an indefatigable craving for knowledge and the relentless movement forward.

He also adds to this list a very important truth hatched after much contemplation: *He only earns his Freedom and Existence, // Who is forced to win them freshly every day!* (Goethe I. W. Faust. 2003. https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/FaustIIActV.php#Act_V_Scene_VI).

This is the formula of human existence, which the author regarded as “*the last word Wisdom ever has to say*” (Goethe I. W. Faust. 2003. https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/FaustIIActV.php#Act_V_Scene_VI).

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) asserted the optimism of the Enlightenment even more insistently in the conditions of the new century. The composer, whose work largely prepared the way for the birth of Romanticism in music and anticipated almost all the individual styles of the first half of the 19th century (from Rossini, Weber, Schubert and Mendelssohn to Schumann, Chopin, Liszt and Wagner), in his most important works of the first decades of that century most decisively defended the enduring importance of the ideals of the Enlightenment.

In this regard, his last **Symphony No. 9** (1823) stands out most of all with its grandiose, global scale, with its call for the unity of people of good will. For complete clarity of his concept, the composer, for the first time in the history of the symphonic genre, introduces soloists and a choir into the finale with the text of Schiller’s ode “To Joy”, where the key phrase is “*Be embrac’d, ye millions yonder!*” (Schiller F. To Joy. 1988. https://archive.schillerinstitute.com/transl/schiller_poem/ode_to_joy.pdf).

This brightly innovative moment is one of the signs of the Romantic in the Symphony No. 9 – we are talking about program music, which was a great achievement of Romanticism.

The Romantic principle widely enters the figurative texture of this work in its other aspects as well. If we turn to its third movement as an example, we will see that the majestic-sublime way of thinking with its objective structure and all-encompassing fullness coming from the Enlightenment is combined here with the aspiration for the secret, the divine, with soaring into the heights of the ideal, characteristic of the Romantics. And one more important touch. Meditative lyricism was also widely represented in Beethoven’s works of previous years but this time it appeared in landscape tones, and the motif of *the man alone with nature* created here became a favorite one in Romantic art.

Goethe and Beethoven are representatives of German culture, which was moving from the Enlightenment to Romanticism. Of course, similar phenomena arose in other national art schools, including Russia. Let us note two such equivalents.

The first of them is **The History of the Russian State**, the crown of *Nikolai Karamzin*’s achievement (1766-1826). He was working on the book in the first decades of the 19th century, from 1803 and until the end of his life. This grandiose twelve-volume edition turned into a true literary and historical monument, written in a lofty style, giving a multifaceted and, as rightly noted, Shakespearean in spirit depiction of the events and characters of Russian life from its very origins.

The second is the artistic legacy of *Ivan Krylov* (1769-1844), who with his work summed up the traditions of not only Russian but perhaps the world fable as a whole (from Aesop to La Fontaine), having created its pinnacle examples, at least for the Russian national consciousness.

Nikolai Gogol gave a profound and reasonable assessment of Krylov's work. According to Gogol, *he chose the form of a fable, disregarded by everyone, as something old, unfit for use and almost a child's toy – and in this fable he managed to become a national poet. In his book there are lessons for everyone, for all degrees in the state, starting from the head and down to the last worker.*

Let us, following Gogol, highlight two most important moments. When he says that *there are lessons for all degrees in the state*, he means the didactic, moralizing function of Krylov's fables, and this is a purely *educational* emphasis. And the words *"he managed to become a national poet"* mean a deep insight into the national spirit, which was precisely the remarkable achievement of *Romantic art*.

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Classicism of the first half of the 19th century, rooted in the Age of Enlightenment, found its most distinct stylistic expression in architecture and sculpture.

It retained a leading role in these arts almost until the middle of the century (that is, until the end of the Romantic era), where Romanticism (as an artistic movement) did not create serious competition for it and did not even try to put forward anything independent. Classicism retained such an impressive influence due to its ability to impressively respond to those phenomena that required solemn, majestic-sublime artistic solutions.

For Russia, the main phenomenon was the Patriotic War of 1812, after which the pan-European Napoleonic conquests ended with the entry of Russian troops into Paris. The awareness of this war as an epochal event in the history of Russia and of all Europe gave rise to a natural desire to glorify and immortalize the feat of the people.

On the occasion of the victory of Russian arms, triumphal gates were erected in St. Petersburg and Moscow, a tradition that dates back to the times of ancient Roman architecture. They were erected in the Empire style – a late version of classicism, which emphasized the features of grandeur, solemn imposingness and often included all kinds of military emblems.

One of such monuments is **the Triumphal Gate** in Moscow (1834, on Kutuzovsky Prospekt), built according to the design of *Joseph Bové* (1784-1834), whose name we will soon meet again.

They are made in the form of a grandiose passage arch with typical Empire heavy forms. In accordance with its memorial function, the structure is decorated with allegorical sculpture, bas-reliefs and is crowned with the chariot of Glory (the memorial decor was created by sculptors Giovanni Vitali and Ivan Timofeev).

A temple could also become a monument. One of such examples is **the Kazan Cathedral** in St. Petersburg, *Andrey Voronikhin's* best work (1759-1814). As we can trace it later, the strict solemnity, massiveness of forms and gigantic scale that come from the Empire style are combined with features of Romanticism. Romanticism consists primarily in the original spatial solution: a majestic colonnade forms a semicircular square.



Illustration 01. *The Kazan Cathedral (Andrei Voronikhin, architect). 1801-1811. Marble, granite, limestone, metal. Height 71.5 meters. Nevsky Prospekt, St. Petersburg, Russia*

There is a noteworthy chronological detail, which will be noted a little later in relation to the monument to Minin and Pozharsky: although the construction of the temple began in 1801 and finished shortly before the Patriotic War of 1812, subsequently its appearance became associated with the victory of Russian arms in the battle against Napoleon's invasion.

This "aberration" turned out to be especially natural when the statues of Barclay de Tolly and Mikhail Kutuzov, the commanders of the past war, were installed in front of the cathedral. Both monuments were created by *Boris Orlovsky* (1796-1837).

The monument to Mikhail Kutuzov (1832) gives a complete idea of the sculptor's style. There is a portrait resemblance but only in the most general terms, not matching the appearance of the real-life field marshal in either

height or posture. The requirements of sublime classicism prompted the author to combine a Russian military uniform with an antique toga. And, finally, the combination of majestic severity with the obvious heroization of the image speaks of the Romantic spirit in his interpretation.

The artistic intuition, which is meant under the chronological “aberration” discussed in relation to the Kazan Cathedral, can stay ahead of the times and anticipate real events. In such cases, art often relies on what is usually defined as an *allusion* – when present events are conveyed through their correlation with similar facts, events, images and plots of the past.

An example of such an approach is the **monument to Minin and Pozharsky** on Red Square in Moscow, the most outstanding creation of *Ivan Martos* (1754-1835).

The sculptor began his work on it in 1804. His intuition prompted him to turn to the events of two centuries ago (the Polish intervention of 1612) in anticipation of the upcoming cataclysm. And when the work was completed in 1818, the historical motif was perceived as a monument to the valor of the Russian people, shown in the war with Napoleon’s army.

In this work we again observe a combination of classicism and Romantic trends. The noble precision of the sculptural plasticity, the ideal sublimity of the images come from classicism. Romantic trends declare themselves in the free arrangement of figures and in the recreated pathos of a noble civil act – pointing with an outstretched hand to the Kremlin (a call to save the Fatherland), Minin is handing Pozharsky a sword.



Illustration 02. *The Statue of Minin and Pozharsky (I. Martos, architect). 1818. Copper, granite. Height 8.5 meters (group of sculptures – 4.5 meters). Red Square, Moscow, Russia*

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Speaking about classicism and the Empire style, as its most monumental version, we are not accidentally turning to Russian art, because it gave the most significant artistic results at that stage. It was on the basis of classicism and the Empire style that the formation of the *classical* appearance of both capitals of Russia was completed in the first half of the 19th century.

In this regard, the activities of *Joseph Bové*, who supervised the reconstruction of Moscow after the Fire of 1812, were of decisive importance in the first capital. With his participation, Red Square was reconstructed (1815) and new architectural ensembles were created around the Kremlin.

They were built in Moscow Empire style, which, in contrast to the emphasized severity and grandeur of architectural forms in St. Petersburg, tended to greater softness and warmth of outlines. Among Bové’s creations is the ensemble of Theater Square with **the Bolshoi Theater** (1824).

This is one of the best theater buildings in the world. The building matches the general appearance of *white-stone Moscow* in everything. Its configuration is distinguished by the façade with a majestic colonnade of an eight-pillar portico and a copper quadriga of Apollo above the pediment.

This four-horse chariot, driven by the Sun god, the patron of the arts, was cast according to the model of the sculptor *Peter Clodt von Jurgensburg* (1805-1867), the designer of the famous horse sculptures on the Anichkov Bridge in St. Petersburg.



Illustration 03. State Academic Bolshoi Theater of Russia (Osip Bové, architect). 1824.
Teatral'naya ploshchad' [Theater Square], Moscow, Russia

Like Joseph Bové in Moscow, **Carlo Rossi** (1775-1849) made an equally fundamental contribution to completing the formation of the classical appearance of St. Petersburg. The exceptional scope and impressive force of his urban planning ideas prompted his contemporaries to say that he was born to build cities.

One of his architectural ensembles in the city center is Arts Square with **the Russian Museum** (former Mikhailovsky Palace, 1825). The entire building and especially the main façade are a concentrated expression of the best features of Russian palace architecture: noble simplicity and at the same time majestic, solemn splendor.

Another famous St. Petersburg ensemble by Rossi is Palace Square with **the General Staff Building** situated on it (1829). The General Staff Building is a grand structure consisting of two buildings connected by an arch and forming a semicircle that embraces Palace Square with the bow-shaped façade (it is in tune with the spatial concept of the Kazan Cathedral).

The arch spans the entire street. It is richly decorated with bronze sculpture (military attributes, figures of warriors and flying goddesses of war) and is crowned with a solemn chariot of Glory – all this is filled with power, grandeur and sounds like a hymn of victory.

In general, the solemn composition of the arch, in the creation of which sculptors Vasily Demut-Malinovsky and Stepan Pimenov took part, was intended and is perceived as a symbol of the heroism of 1812.

In commemoration of the same victory, **the Alexander Column** (1834), mentioned in Pushkin's poem *The Monument*, was erected on Palace Square as its compositional center.

The column is a monolith of dark red granite (it is about 50 meters high and weighs about 500 tons), on which a colossal bronze figure of an angel holding a cross is installed (the sculptor of the figure is Boris Orlovsky).

The architect of the Alexander Column is **Auguste de Montferrand** (1786-1858, French by birth, had lived in Russia since 1816). According to his design, the construction of **St. Isaac's Cathedral** in St. Petersburg began in 1818, and the architects Andrei Mikhailov and Vasily Stasov, the father of the outstanding art critic of the second half of the 19th century Vladimir Stasov, took part in creating its final appearance.

This grandiose building can accommodate up to 14 thousand people, it is one of the tallest structures of this type in Europe (over 100 meters high) and is topped with a huge gilded dome. The temple is abundantly decorated with sculpture (Ivan Vitali, Alexander Loganovsky, etc.), mosaics, paintings (including those by Karl Bryullov).

This luxurious monument of the "Golden Age" of Russia became the last large building of classicism (in the late Empire style) and the final chord in the creation of classical Petersburg as the most beautiful city in the world.

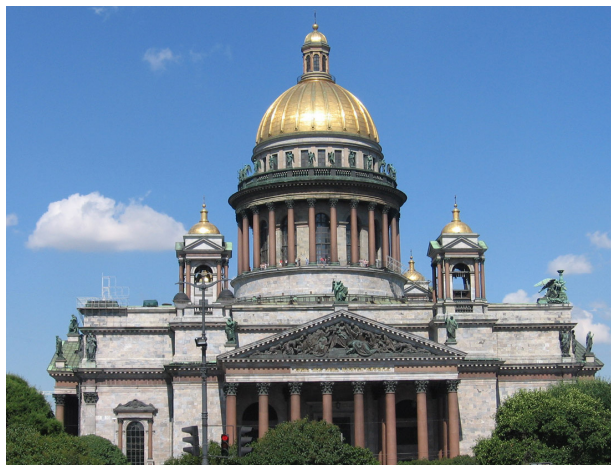


Illustration 04. St. Isaac's Cathedral (O. Montferrand, architect). 1818-1858.
Marble, malachite, porphyry, lapis-lazuli, mudstone, bronze, gold. Height 101 meters. St. Isaac's Square, St. Petersburg, Russia

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As we have seen, the traditions coming from the previous era were very significant and often acted in organic interaction with Romantic trends. At the same time, Romanticism in its most important aspects appeared on the historical scene in sharp opposition to both classicism and the Enlightenment as a whole.

One of the strongest differences was in the attitude to *the world of the individual*. The art of the Enlightenment was mainly interested in the man *in general*, and in his or her depiction the emphasis was placed on objective and universal aspects. The art of the Romantic era experiences heightened attention to the individual, with his unique characteristics, and hence the corresponding appeal to the sphere of the *individual-subjective*.

Thanks to this, the world of the individual appears in the richest detail, in the subtlest psychological nuances, which primarily concerned the recreation of the complex inner life of the man.

Let us listen to the poem “**Well, Thou Art Happy**” (1808) by *George Gordon Byron* (1788-1824). This is an appeal to a beloved who married another man (one of the common motifs of Romantic poetry, widely developed by Heinrich Heine in particular).

*Yet was I calm: I knew the time
My breast would thrill before thy look;
But now to tremble were a crime
We met, – and not a nerve was shook.*

*I saw thee gaze upon my face,
Yet meet with no confusion there:
One only feeling could'st thou trace;*

The sullen calmness of despair (Byron G. Well, Thou Art Happy. 1808. <https://www.poetry.com/poem/15313/well!-thou-art-happy>).

What tremendous psychological tension and how paradoxical the shades of emotional states! Outwardly he is restrained (“*And not a nerve was shook*”); internally there is a tragic breakdown in the proud soul of the rejected (“*The sullen calmness of despair*”).

The Romantic poets often faced the limited capacity of artistic expression in an effort to comprehend the depths of the soul, the hidden and elusive in its life, which corresponds with the categorical statement of the Russian poet *Fyodor Tyutchev* (1803-1873) “*A thought once uttered is a lie*” (Tyutchev F. Silentium. <https://ruthenia.ru/tiutcheviana/publications/trans/silentium.html>).

That is why the Romantics preferred music to other art forms. *Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann* (1776-1822) called it *the most wonderful art in the world* and claimed that *music is a special world, capable of revealing to a person the meaning of his or her feelings and passions, comprehending the nature of the mysterious and inexpressible*.

The most important and attractive thing for the Romantic is *to comprehend the nature of the mysterious and inexpressible*. And what cannot be expressed in words or depicted on canvas was accessible to music, which is capable of conveying with amazing spontaneity and liveliness everything that happens in the human soul.

But music, in turn, sought to push the boundaries of the power given to it through active contacts with other types of art, primarily with literature. This led to the rapid flowering of *program music*. The French composer *Hector Berlioz* (1803-1869) developed its principles with particular consistency.

He made a fundamentally important breakthrough in the sphere of Romantic program music in the **Symphonie fantastique** (1830). In addition to the titles for each of the five parts, we find here an expanded text that conveys the plot of the entire novel in a condensed form.

To a large extent, thanks to the programmatic nature, there was a colossal enrichment of musical expressiveness aimed above all at an exceptionally sensitive, detailed depiction of the individual.

In this regard, it is enough to listen to the beginning of the *Symphonie fantastique*, where the poetics of the lyrical languor of the soul is conveyed through the filigree sound of its innermost impulses in exquisite gradations of emotional shades. The state is presented as something extremely changeable, spontaneously unpredictable, including through capricious tempo change from complete inhibition to rapid movement.

Let us turn to Byron again. It was he who discovered the theme of *conflict between the individual and the environment* for Romantic art. Almost everything that became the keynote of many of his works is embedded in his early poem “**I Would I Were a Careless Child**” (1807).

Servile hands, slaves that cringe around, lies everywhere – this is what the disappointed Byron finds in the society of his days. The inevitability of a break with that society became obvious to him already from his youth: “*Few are my years, and yet I feel // The world was ne’er designed for me*” (Byron G. I Would I Were a Careless Child. 1808. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Works_of_Lord_Byron_\(ed._Coleridge,_Prothero\)/Poetry/Volume_1/I_would_I_were_a_Careless_Child](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Works_of_Lord_Byron_(ed._Coleridge,_Prothero)/Poetry/Volume_1/I_would_I_were_a_Careless_Child)).

After Byron, the conflict between the individual and the environment was developed in all sorts of variations. The most famous embodiments of this theme in Russian literature are Alexander Griboyedov’s verse comedy **Woe from Wit** (1824), Alexander Pushkin’s **Eugene Onegin** (1831) and Mikhail Lermontov’s novel **A Hero of Our Time** (1840).

The world and the man often appeared in a collision of sharp contrasts in the vision of the Romantic writer. *Robert Schumann*’s (1810-1856) piano cycle **Carnaval** (1835) is a classic example of this.

As a result, the combination of completely different images forms the colorful tapestry of life felt by the composer. For illustration, it is reasonable to listen to three of the twenty adjacent pieces that make up *Carnaval* – these are No. 5 Eusebius, No. 6 Florestan and No. 7 Coquette.

The first two are connected with a fundamentally important moment for Schumann. He not only realized but also in every possible way cherished the “split” of his nature, personified by two characters he created:

- Eusebius is a dreamy-contemplative beginning with a corresponding soft plasticity of contour and slowness of movement;

- Florestan is not only a stormy temperament and explosive impulsiveness but also sharp changes in state.

These characters are united by a serious mood, a spirit of emphasized poetry. And the third of these plays sounds even more sharply in contrast with its whimsical, fluttering character, with its lightness and extravagance.

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The world of a Romantic personality is the whole universe and *the sphere of lyricism* is its most important “galaxy”.

Lyricism was most directly reflected in the character of artistic expression: it is emotional, very sincere, heartfelt and confidential when the expression of personal feelings of the soul poured out into true confessions. It is characteristic that one of the novels of that time was called **The Confession of a Child of the Century**. This is the most famous work of the French writer *Alfred de Musset* (1810-1857).

Romantic art discovered completely unknown before possibilities of communication with its audience. Thus, *Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann* often addresses the intended reader, directly appealing to his or her empathy and life experience.

The lyricism of the soul was projected onto everything and everyone, and it found a source for itself everywhere. Such a source for the Romantic was *nature*.

The feeling of nature entered especially widely into Russian poetry. Its first heartfelt images were given in the early works by *Vasily Zhukovsky* (1783-1852). The poet’s soul, enchanted by the world around him, expresses itself in the gentle melodiousness of the language. That is where “*sweetness of his magic verse*” (Pushkin A. Under a Portrait of Zhukovsky. 1916. <https://ruverses.com/alexander-pushkin/under-a-portrait-of-jukowsky/>) (according to Alexander Pushkin) comes from, and it found itself in the fascinating melody of the speech pattern.

While contemplating nature, misty dreams were awakened in the soul.

The most subtle and tender lyrical outpourings arise in the soul of the Romantic in harmony with the landscape. This corresponds, for example, to the early poetry of *Heinrich Heine* (1797-1856). All the best of his youthful lyrics was absorbed in *Robert Schumann’s* song cycle “**Poet’s Love**” (1840).

A concentrated idea of the peculiarities of such natural emotionality can be given by a romance from another Schumann’s song cycle called “**Myrtles**” (myrtle is an evergreen plant, here it becomes a synonym for an ever-living feeling).

The title of this romance is “The Walnut Tree”, and its lyrics gave the composer the opportunity to reveal the organic combination of the landscape image and the lyrical mood of high spiritual joy born from it (“The walnut tree stands near yonder door, shedding, spreading sweets from its branches the house before... They speak of a tender maiden, who dreams oft and seems oft still dreaming by day”) (Mosen J. The Walnut Tree. 1938. <https://archive.org/details/walnuttreedernus00schu/page/10/mode/2up14>).

Such music is full of *dreaminess*. Indeed, the lyrical nature of the Romantic soul often found itself in such states. “*Daydreams – passions*” (one of the titles of the **Symphonie fantastique** by Hector Berlioz) allowed the Romantics to rise above everyday cares, above ordinary existence.

Soaring *high in the sky*, the Romantic was often in a languor for the ideal. The reflection of the ideal could illuminate a living person, especially the female face. Then some special feeling appeared, which was expressed, for example, in the poem by *Alexander Pushkin* (1799-1837) “**I remember a wondrous instant...**” (the poet called it “**To *****”, 1825) and in the romance of the same name by *Mikhail Glinka* (1804-1857). It is precisely *the instant* when “*heavenly features*” and “*a genius of beauty’s light*” can be discovered in a real person (Pushkin A. To ***. <https://ruverses.com/alexander-pushkin/to/13154/>).

“*A genius of beauty’s light*” is one of those categories in which the Romantic thirst for the ideal, the divine, declared itself. In music, this desire fostered the flourishing of *bel canto* (Italian: *beautiful singing*).

In a free interpretation, this is a broad, flexible cantilena in general, a kind of “the infinite melody”, which could also apply to instrumental genres (such as, for example, Chopin’s piano melodics).

In a narrower sense, this word refers to vocal art and defines the beauty of the chant of a great breath (one of the examples is Schubert’s **Ave Maria**, where the feeling of the divine is recreated).

Finally, in the most direct sense, this phenomenon is usually associated with the artistic practice of Italian opera of the early 19th century (Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, later Verdi).

The standard of *bel canto* can be considered **Norma’s Cavatina** from the opera **Norma** (1831) by *Vincenzo Bellini* (1801-1835). Here, through the melodiousness of boundless breath, a delightful feeling of beauty is conveyed, and a special, incomparable charm arises due to the nature of sweet melancholy. The first words of this scene are “*Casta Diva*” (“*Oh, goddess...*”), which was the impulse for the embodiment of the divine ideal.

Nostalgia for the heavenly, the divine and the feeling of unfulfilled dreams is one of the underlying reasons for Romantic sadness and grief, presented in the range from melancholy and an elegiac feeling to tragedy.

It should be immediately noted: the reason for the tragic perception of life was often not real state of things but the subjective feeling of events.

The lyrical nature of the Romantic with its characteristic acute experience of everything responded to negative external and internal impulses with a strong flood of painful emotions (anxiety, confusion, bewilderment, fear, despair).

This tension of inner life was primarily intended to be conveyed by the genre of *Romantic ballads*, presented both in poetry (for example, the ballads "Ludmila", "Svetlana" by Vasily Zhukovsky) and in music, where the work of the Austrian composer **Franz Schubert** (1797-1828) was especially notable. In a number of his ballads, written for voice and piano, we find a feverish pulsation of emotions, dreadful unreal visions, stressful situations and states of a nervous breakdown.

An example of the embodiment of such psychological tone can be the ballad "**The Erlking**" (1816, based on the poem of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe). The fierce pressure of negative influences, expressed through the thunderous surges of the piano texture with its almost convulsive rhythm, evokes a tragic reaction, revealed in the poles of sharp contrasts of a faint hope, ghostly light and relentlessly coming disasters.

* * *

To confirm the observations made on the basis of literature and music, let us turn to visual arts. If we take, for example, the **Portrait of Arseny Tropinin, Son of the Artist** (1818), painted by **Vasily Tropinin** (1776-1857), we will notice the desire for a lively, direct characterization of the depicted person as in any other portrait by this master.

The artist emphasizes the features of sincerity and openness in the appearance of the teenager. The head is casually turned, the mouth is slightly open, lively, intelligent eyes look with interest at the world.

From the point of view of openness of character, such a detail as a wide-open collar is also noteworthy. There is a lot of sun in the picture, it is painted in Tropinin's favorite golden-yellow tones, which gives the portrait a special softness and warmth.

The noted softness and warmth, as manifestations of lyricism, were often complemented by a special poignance. It could leave its mark even on images that seemed far from such a mood.

Let us imagine Shakespeare's Hamlet, this intellectual, obsessed with irresistible reflexion. More than two centuries have passed since the appearance of this image, and the French artist **Eugène Delacroix** (1798-1863) recreates in colors "his" Hamlet in a large cycle of illustrations to the famous tragedy (1834-1843).

One of them is **Hamlet with Horatio (the gravedigger scene)** (1839), where Shakespeare's character more resembles Romeo and is presented as a gentle, impressionable nature, full of youthful charm, poetry and almost feminine grace.

It was said above that an important hypostasis of Romantic lyricism were *dreams*. That is why the figure of a *dreamer* took such a place in art. It could also be an image of a completely real person.

Orest Kiprensky (1782-1836) in the **Portrait of the Poet V. A. Zhukovsky** (1816) recreates the image of his peer as a poet, completely captivated by the dreams of the imagination, revealing the deep lyricism of his nature.

And now, using examples of fine art, we will move on to the next phenomenon of Romantic art, which is defined by the concept of *Byronism*.

Artists also discovered the Byronic type of nature in Russian faces. The French artist **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres** (1780-1867) in his **Portrait of Count Nikolay Guryev** (1821) presents the model as if he were a lord (as if recalling *Lord Byron*) emphasizing in him a sense of self-esteem and self-importance (not without a hint of arrogance).

But the main thing is that this great master of highly characteristic portraits managed to convey superbly the proud estrangement and great tension of the inner life of the character, which is shown in its own way by the background of the painting (distant mountains and the darkened sky).

And another parallel with Byron. **Pierre-Jean David d'Angers** (1788-1856) was a sculptor but he gained the greatest fame as a medalist. He executed over half a thousand portrait medals with images of famous people of his time in the rare genre.

Napoleon became a striking model of the Byronic manner for him. He gave the features of Romantic turbulence and gloomy demonism to the appearance of the "genius of war".

Shown from this perspective, the great commander closely resembles our ideas about the no less great violinist Paganini, whom the French medalist also sculpted in metal with his characteristic sharp individualization of the image.

Much in Byronism led to rebellious manifestations and could result in *revolutionary civil motifs*. Their qualitatively new artistic development in visual arts was carried out by the Spanish graphic artist and painter **Francisco José de Goya** (1746-1828). Based on his impressions of the events of the French intervention, he painted the picture **The Third of May 1808** in 1814.

The purely Romantic character of this canvas begins with the exceptional nature of the depicted situation: the ominous yellow light of a lantern pulls out of the night darkness a group of rebels pressed against the slope of a hill, at whom soldiers aim their guns, that is, an extremely tense moment before the next volley. This is complemented by a purely Romantic conjugation of contrasts.

The group of captives is shown in a free scattering of figures, through individual poses and faces and is contrasted with a solid, impersonal line of soldiers. In addition, a variety of possible reactions is reproduced in their images – from fear, despair and submission to contempt, anger and hatred.

The extreme contrast is given in the juxtaposition of the murdered man lying in blood with his arms outstretched helplessly, and the peasant in a white shirt, who has raised his hands. His gesture expresses a proud challenge to the executioners, the greatness of an unbroken spirit. It is no coincidence that this heroic image is in the center of the canvas.

A completely different perspective but also a purely Romantic interpretation of the revolutionary theme is given by the famous painting **Liberty Leading the People** (1830) by **Eugene Delacroix**. The passionate inspiration of a large human mass, united by a common impulse, is captured in a stormy movement growing from the depths of the canvas, in the energetic rhythm of arms, sabers and guns rising upward.

This impulse and this movement culminate in the allegorical figure of Liberty, who calls the rebels forward raising the banner with an imperious gesture. Her appearance clearly shows features that come from the ideas of antique beauty, and at the same time she is a woman from the Parisian suburbs.

A similar symbiosis of reality and sublime symbolism can be seen in other details of the painting. The clothes of the man, who is intensely peering into the face of Liberty, repeat the colors of the flag of revolutionary France (red, white, blue), and his pose conveys the following meaning: he, as the personification of the country, must rise from his knees.

Delacroix gave his own features to the intellectual in the top hat, shown on the left. It has a symbolic subtext: the artist and art in general are together with the rebellious people.



Illustration 05. Eugene Delacroix. "Freedom at the Barricades". 1830. Canvas, oil. 260×325 cm. Louvre, Paris, France

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To the extent that the preceding Age of Enlightenment can be called the time of Voltaire and Voltaireanism (that is, what developed under the banner of Voltaire's ideas), to the same extent the Age of Romanticism can be called the time of Byron and *Byronism*. Under the influence of Byron's work, and to a certain extent under the influence of Byron's life image, public opinion and an entire movement arose in various national literature.

The English poet was a "master of our hearts", according to Alexander Pushkin (Pushkin A. To the Sea. 2024. <https://rvb.ru/pt/pushkin/0346c-ru-en.html>). Pushkin admitted that many of his works were inspired by reading Byron. Mikhail **Lermontov** (1814-1841) felt his spiritual kinship with Byron from his youth. Here are a few lines (the poem "To ***", 1830) confirming this:

*I am but young, and sounds are coming from
My burning heart, Byron is my true ideal;
We have a single soul and common sorrows;
I wish we could share our lot!... (Lermontov M. To ***. 2016. <https://www.tretyakovgallerymagazine.com/articles/2-2016-51/i-am-standing-shakespeare>).*

The starting point of Byronism was disappointment in life or disillusionment. **Lermontov** created a kind of a swan song of Byronism at the end of his life.

*Boring and sadly. And no one can give me a hand
In time of spirit adversity.
Desire. What benefit of pointless demand?
When best time has gone solidity.
Be in love. But who can give me that feelings?
For limited time – it's possible, really.
Eternal people's love – impossible achieving.
If you look inside yourself: it's too chilly.
What passion? Eventually this sweet ill
Will leave you according the minds deal.
And feeling the world's surdity,
The life will introduce itself as an absurdity (Lermontov M. Boring and Sadly. <https://ruverses.com/mikhail-lermontov/i-m-lonely-and-sad/11963/>).*

The verdict on the life we are accustomed to sounds calm, without pathos, and the realization that our existence is meaningless sounds more shocking.

The hostile attitude of the Romantics to the vices and emptiness of real life was so strong that their disappointment easily grew to protest and fierce resistance. For example, *Heinrich Heine* in the poem “**Anno 1829**”, watching with disgust “**polished men**” and “**polished women**” in “**polished salons**”, began to be indignant.

*If they but had some human vice,
Some lust too terrible to see –
But not these flabby virtues, not*

This cheap and smug morality! (Heine H. Anno 1829. 1829. <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/anno-1829>).

This sharp rejection of the so-called decent life carried the strongest anti-bourgeois pathos. It largely determined the rebellious spirit of Byronism. The goal of such rebellion is freedom by all means, at any price. This is freedom for yourself and for those who are violated.

A special edge of Byronism was associated with the demonic principle. Although it was thoroughly biased and purely hostile, let us not forget that Byron was once called the head of the “*Satanic school*” of poets.

In Russian literature, this theme first appeared in the poem “**Demon**” (1823) written by the young *Alexander Pushkin*.

It was in this work that the main features of the image of the Demon were formed in their entirety. Later, Lermontov completed the image of his Demon with all his attractive and repulsive features.

The above-mentioned brings us closer to the paradox of the duality of the Byronic personality, to the phenomenon of its attractiveness, despite obvious costs (for example, contempt for the “crowd” or the ethics of life-negation) and even vices.

Let us look from this point of view at the features of Lermontov’s Pechorin (the novel **A Hero of Our Time**, 1840), as Vera, his only true affection, characterizes him in her last letter to him.

We are parting forever; but you can be sure, I'll never love another; my soul is exhausted with you all its treasures, their tears and hope. Fond of times you can not see without some contempt on the other men... But your nature is something special, peculiar to you alone, something proud and mysterious... in whom the evil is not so attractive, no one's gaze does not promise so much happiness... (Lermontov M. A Hero of Our Time. 1841. <https://mihail-lermontov.ru/rasskazy/geroj-nashego-vremeni/28>).

Vissarion Belinsky, the first outstanding Russian literary critic, spoke up in defence of Pechorin. He understood the importance of Lermontov’s work before anyone else. Belinsky mercilessly reveals the essence of the differences between the Byronic personality and the “well-behaved” common man.

The Byronic personality is distinguished by strength of spirit and will power. This can be heard in many works by the Hungarian pianist and composer *Franz Liszt* (1811-1886), including his piano **Etude in F minor**.

This composition presents a full range of purely Romantic manifestations: prideful power and titanic efforts to overcome life problems at the very limit of tension, rebellious and stormy pathos, turbulent impulses and feverish excitement, ecstatic emotions and reflections of the demonic principle in Liszt’s characteristic interpretation through “Mephisto”.

* * *

Much of what has been discussed so far allows us to assert that the Romantic era was characterized by *an increased intensity of life manifestations*. Almost a century later, Alexander Blok, reflecting on the nature of romanticism, described it as the desire to live a life ten times more fulfilling.

The strength of feelings and the strength of character – this is how this quality first of all declared itself. The French writer *Stendhal* (real name Marie-Henri Beyle, 1783-1842) considered *the thirst for strong feelings* the distinctive feature of his time. He put passion, as a character trait, before all else.

Passions that completely captivate a person gave rise to the genre of Romantic drama, in which everything is taken to the extreme:

- if you love, then love until death;
- if you are insulted, then challenge your offender to a duel;
- if you revenge, then revenge until the very end, even if it costs life.

These statements can be found in the dramas of *Victor Hugo* (**Hernani**, **Ruy Blas**, etc.). We find the same in Lermontov’s **Masquerade** (1835): revenge, poison, madness and a strong personality in the center.

The strength of feelings and the strength of characters determined the corresponding emotional intensity, sublime expression and pathos in Romantic art, thanks to which a special exalted state was conveyed.

If we turn to the **Etude in C minor (op. 25, No. 12)** by the Polish composer *Frederic Chopin* (1810-1849) as an example, we will find a brilliant illustration of everything that has just been said.

The overall mood is gloomy but victorious in spirit, and it becomes a reflection of the mighty rise of human forces, power and titanism of dramatic heroism. The author’s note *molto allegro, con fuoco* (*very quickly, with fire*) to some extent contains a reference to the essence of this music: the boiling lava of the energy of life battles, a rebellious storm, peals of thunder.

The intensity of life manifestations was often associated with such a quality of the Romantic nature as *maximalism of aspirations*.

If we begin with the creative process, then the most striking example is the epic of *Honoré de Balzac* (1799-1850) **La Comédie humaine** (The Human Comedy), which includes about a hundred novels and short stories, united by a common idea and characters moving from one work to another.

People of all classes and estates live and act in it, all human types are shown, a swirl of passions is depicted, so that the writer can rightfully say that *he had a whole society into his head*.

The art of Romanticism put forward a type of character who is eager to achieve the maximum in life and therefore often completely subordinates himself to his plans. This all-consuming determination reaches its ultimate expression in the type of the predator man described in literature. Observing his habits, Balzac in the novel **Eugénie Grandet** (1833) notes the following.

Financially speaking, Monsieur Grandet was something between a tiger and a boa-constrictor. He could crouch and lie low, watch his prey a long while, spring upon it, open his jaws, swallow a mass of louis, and then rest tranquilly like a snake in process of digestion, impassible, methodical, and cold (Balzac H. de. *Eugenie Grandet*. 2016. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1715/1715-h/1715-h.htm>).

Balzac presents Mr. Grandet as an extraordinary figure, even majestic in the thirst for enrichment that has taken hold of him and in the skill with which it is carried out. It is not for nothing that he gives him a corresponding surname: from *grand* – big, great.

Continuing our consideration of the intensity of life manifestations characteristic of the art of the early 19th century, let us turn to the concept of *Romantic enthusiasm*. The words *enthusiasm*, *enthusiast*, *enthusiastic* are from the lexicon of the Romantics (for example, Hoffmann calls his active and creative characters enthusiasts).

And the Romantic, who so keenly felt the imperfection of the world and the tragedy of life, at some moments of his existence could sometimes experience incredible inspiration, upsurge, burning. The Russian poet *Pyotr Vyazemsky* (1792-1878) defined this state with the line “*To live, it hurries, and to feel it hastes*” (Pushkin A. Eugene Onegin. 1979. https://lib.ru/LITRA/PUSHKIN/ENGLISH/onegin_j.txt) (poem “**First Snow**”, 1819).

If we listen to the familiar music of the **Overture** to *Mikhail Glinka's* opera **Ruslan and Lyudmila** (1842), its main theme reveals a large-scale image of Russia in rapid motion, as if on the rise. What Peter the Great had conceived a century ago, became reality after the Patriotic War of 1812 – the country loudly declared itself on the world stage.

Glinka managed to convey this “sovereign” feeling superbly, which made the overture a calling card of Russia to a certain extent. And one can feel that the action takes place in grandiose spaces.

So, Romantic enthusiasm is a cheerful excitement, a passionate thirst for activity, life inspiration, the overflow of energy. It is worth recalling an extract from *Pushkin's* poem **Poltava** (1828), where all such feelings are presented in a specifically battle version.

*Our men across the smoking plain
March quick to front the fierce assault,
The shock of great Poltava's day!
Amidst a shower of red-shot hail,
That strikes and breaks the wall of flesh.
Each time a rank falls out, fresh rank
Supplies its place, and heavy clouds
Of horsemen, scudding to the sound
Of clattering arms, in maddened fray,
Around them deal fast blows of death.
The fiery balls fly here and there,
And, spreading death, heap pile on pile
Of heroes slain, or soil dig up,
Or hissing fall in streams of blood.
The mingled foes strike, hew, and wound:
And naught is heard save beat of drum,
The roar of cannon, cries of rage,
The heavy tramp, and dying groan;
And death and hell hold feast unchecked* (Pushkin A. *Poltava*. 2017. <https://oceanofpdf.com/authors/alexander-pushkin/pdf-epub-poltava-by-alexander-pushkin-download/>).

The poet paints a bloody picture. But this is a righteous battle associated with the defense of the Fatherland. That is why Pushkin's verse sounds so loudly, with such ardor and enthusiasm.

*Each moment nears the happy hour;
Our men push on, the Swedes retire;
We charge, and they disrouted flee;
Headlong pursuit our horsemen give.
The swords grow blunt with slaughter's work,
The plain is covered thick with dead,
As with a swarm of locusts black* (Pushkin A. *Poltava*. 2017. <https://oceanofpdf.com/authors/alexander-pushkin/pdf-epub-poltava-by-alexander-pushkin-download/>).

The Italian composer *Gioachino Rossini* (1792-1868) conveyed the energy of that time in his own way, with a very special “nerve” and pressure. In his work, world comic opera attained its perfection (the highest achievement was **The Barber of Seville**, 1816).

These were achievements both in terms of comedy, as well as theatricality, melodic richness, pointedness and wittiness of characterizations, and in regard to dynamism, which literally poured out into a “volcano” of vital energy with its incredibly rapid pulse.

One of the many illustrations of this can be the **Quintettino** (a small quintet, i. e., an ensemble for five singers) from the opera **Cinderella** (1817).

This work clearly displays the characteristic features of composer’s virtuoso writing style: extraordinary liveliness and impetuosity, concise eventivity and exciting, irrepressible Rossini *crescendi* (a gradual increase in sound). It is no coincidence that the composer was called “*Monsieur Crescendo*.”

As one can see in the previous exposition, Romantic enthusiasm is inextricably linked with a mood that is not only bright but also joyful. The so-called *light verse*, which glorified friendship, love, wine and praised the “philosophy of sybaritism”, became an expression of the joy of life.

The founder of this trend in Russia was *Konstantin Batyushkov* (1787-1855). One of his poems is called very symptomatically: “**The Merry Hour**”. In another poem “**Elysium**” (1810; *Elysium* in the old days meant *a heavenly place, a blissful corner*) he calls on the readers to enjoy life while they are young.

* * *

Now let us briefly turn to the beginning of our exposition. Strength of character and strength of feeling were, of course, also characteristic of the creators of the artistic culture of those years. We can find confirmation of this in the surviving images. For clarification, let us turn to two portraits painted by *Eugène Delacroix*.

His excited, tense art demanded radical transformations in the very basis of painting technique. Delacroix went down in history as an outstanding master of color and this is no accident, since he consciously put forward the problem of color as the main expressive means. He gave the color an active emotional interpretation (it is often talked about the *passion* of Delacroix’s pictorial language).

This expression of colorful layer in the **Self-Portrait** (1837) conveys the strength of character together with the energetic brushstroke. The artist reveals the same feature through the principle of complete *artistic freedom*.

From this point of view, the reflections of light on his hair (they look like gray strands, although there were none) attract attention here. There is something willful and unpredictable about this touch and (thanks to the unexpectedness and paradoxical nature of this technique) it gives the picture an additional tension that the viewer can feel.

Like Romantic writers, Eugene Delacroix drew inspiration from music. He often painted portraits of composers, which reflected his own, subjective perception of the model.

His **Portrait of Frederic Chopin** (1838) hardly corresponds to the image of the Polish composer that we have used to see. Apparently, the artist did not strive for an absolute portrait resemblance; it was important for him to reveal the dramatic tension of his creative self.

That’s why he uses a dark palette, “stretches” the face vertically, presents it in such close-up and introduces sharp breaks in the lines.

As if appealing to the famous aphorism “Music begins where words end”, the artist strives to convey Chopin’s unconditional belonging to this special, “non-objective” form of art through the uncertainty of the contours, the seemingly chaotic blurriness of the background, the moving light spots and the fluttering brushstrokes.

The Romantics wanted to enhance the strength of character and the power of emotions by introducing an *exceptional* situation. The subject of the painting **The Raft of the Medusa** (1819) by the French artist *Théodore Géricault* (1791-1824) was a real fact: “Meduse” is the name of a frigate that sank in 1816; the people who survived on the raft were carried around the ocean for twelve days before they saw the sail of the ship on the horizon that took them on board.

Géricault, who is considered the founder of Romanticism in French painting, gives a concentrated expression of the new artistic style in this painting.

He presents the situation from the height. It gives the viewer the opportunity to see what is happening on the raft, and to reconcile the opposites: hard truth (full credibility of the image of the pyramid group farthest from the viewer) and theatrical exaltation (the picturesque scattering of figures in the foreground of the canvas).

The same goes for the dialectics of the contradictory interweaving of death (the bluish hue of the dying people) and the impulse to life (those who are trying to attract the attention of the distant sailboat), despair and courage.

The excitement of feelings determines high expression and the corresponding dynamics of the composition with its characteristic energetic modeling of volumes and with tense contrasts of light and shadow.

We find an equally vivid Romantic interpretation of strong passions generated by an exceptional situation in a famous painting **The Last Day of Pompeii** (1833) by *Karl Bryullov* (1799-1852). To a certain extent, the author sought to give an artistic reconstruction of a real event: the Roman city of Pompeii was destroyed during the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 followed by an earthquake.

The artist visited the excavations and the received impressions helped him a lot in his work on this enormous canvas (it occupied the whole wall in the exhibition of the Russian museum).

Turning to historical material allowed him to emphasize the idea of the need to preserve humanity and nobleness at the most critical time. The faces of the antique type are beautiful, the plasticity of the bodies is magnificent

despite everything. The sublimity of the imagery of the picture undoubtedly comes from the traditions of classicism. But this is a *romanticized* classicism, and the Romantic principle prevails here.

Thus, the tragic dynamism of what is happening is emphasized in every possible way: people are rushing about in confusion and horror, buildings are collapsing, statues are falling from their pedestals. The pathos of bright, strong emotions acquires theatricality inherent in Romanticism. This is conveyed by sharp contrasts of light and darkness (the bloody glow of a volcano, lightning in the blackness of the stormy sky), as well as literally burning colors.



Illustration 06. Karl Bryullov. "The Last Day of Pompeii". 1830-1833. Canvas, oil. 456×651 cm. State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Let us move on to a phenomenon that can be described as follows: *Romantic artistry*. The origin of this artistic direction in Russian painting should be considered the **Portrait of Evgraf Davydov** painted by Orest Kiprensky in 1809. The brother of the legendary hero and the partisan of the Patriotic War of 1812 Denis Davydov is presented as a brilliant hussar officer in an elegant military uniform.

He is a *hussar* from top to toe, as the phrase goes. He exudes courage, valour, bravado. The ease of the spectacular pose and the predominance of red color in the painting speak of the Epicurean inclinations of the character. It is easy to assume that he is a dashing reveler, the life of the party, a merry fellow and knows how to enjoy life.

Let us note that the brightness of these features stands out against the landscape with the stormy sky. This was done not only to make the image look brighter and more expressive but to introduce a subtext of the coming trials of the approaching Patriotic War.

Portrait of Nikolai Gogol (early 1840s) painted by Fyodor Moller demonstrates how strong was the desire to the artistic presentation of the appearance of a real person.

Just as the above-mentioned portrait of Chopin by Delacroix does not coincide with our usual idea of the composer's appearance, so this painting is quite far from the stereotypical images of the writer, whose appearance is rather embellished here.

Nevertheless, the work is undoubtedly successful. It emphasizes in Gogol's personality not only a sense of humor, liveliness and sharpness of mind but also the subtlety of features, their unique originality, as well as the fact that he was by no means averse to the *éclat* of the social life. Some of the remarkable details in this regard are a bright reflection of light on smooth hair and a long silver chain.

The greatest master of the portrait genre of the Romantic era was Karl Bryullov, whose works are distinguished by a special artistic charm. Two of them will give an idea of the range of aspects in the implementation of this line.

Portrait of Nestor Kukolnik (1836) depicts a well-known writer of that time, who was better known as a bright representative of St. Petersburg bohemia. This is clearly seen in the picture – before us is a man of pleasure, a dandy.

But the artist also notes his intelligence, irony, observation skills, as well as undoubted talent, which gave him the right to be friends with such people as Mikhail Glinka and Karl Bryullov.

Karl Bryullov's **Self-Portrait** (1848) impresses with its organic synthesis of hardly compatible qualities: it is both brilliant and deeply spiritual.

The spirituality is highlighted by intense contrasts of light and shadow, emphasized by energetic brushstrokes, so that there is no doubt: a man of great feelings and a strong mind is depicted here.

The brilliant artistic presentation is combined with obvious aristocracy. This is emphasized by the fact that the image is placed in the original arch of the frame, and the noble pallor of the face is enhanced by the background (a black suit, a red chair), and the artist's subtle, expressive hand attracts attention.

According to the works of art, the aristocracy of Russian society took on its definite forms in the first half of the 19th century when everything that was at the heart of the life of the high society appeared in all its splendor and diversity.

To feel this completeness and perfection, it is enough to look at the **Portrait of Natalia Nikolaevna Goncharova** (1831). This watercolor was painted by Karl Bryullov's brother. Alexander Bryullov was a famous architect (1798-1877) and the depicted woman can be considered the highest standard of a high-society beauty of Pushkin's time (soon she would become the poet's wife).

* * *

In the sphere of musical art, the appearance of the figure of the Romantic *virtuoso* became a striking fact of artistry. It was the starting point of *musical performance* as a separate and special area of artistic creativity.

This concerned mainly the sphere of instrumentalism (primarily violin and piano performance), as well as orchestral conducting, in which Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner made a radical revolution.

The Italian violinist and composer Niccolò **Paganini** (1782-1840) stood at the origins of Romantic performance. The **24 caprices for Solo Violin** (1807) demonstrated many aspects of his stunningly virtuoso manner. Paganini sought to show enormous expressive power of this predominantly monophonic instrument.

Caprice is the same as whim: the author wanted to emphasize with this name the free, whimsical nature of the pieces, sometimes with features of willful invention and piquancy.

This was a variant of *concert etude*, which later widely entered the practice of Romantic art as a genre of “top performance” (primarily in reference to the etudes of Liszt and Chopin).

Starting with Paganini, the leading quality of Romantic artistry became *brilliant virtuosity*. Virtuosity implied perfect technique of performance, the highest degree of mastery. Brilliance is the utmost refinement of sound and that special quality that in pianism began to be designated by the term *brillante* (literally translated from Italian: *brilliant*).

All possible shades of the quality in question are widely represented in **Frederic Chopin's** piano compositions. He outdid other composers in the embodiment of the highest form of artistry – the spirit of *aristocracy*.

From this point of view, the **Fantasia-Impromptu in C-sharp minor op. 66** (1834) can be considered the encapsulation of Chopin's style. It organically combines what seems difficult to combine.

On the one hand, there is some rapid dancing plasticity of the waltz – easy, brilliant (the same *brillante*!) with charming lighthearted spirit (in the “scattering” of graceful piano touch, that is, the way of touching the piano keys) and in the character of *impromptu* (as if free improvisation).

On the other hand, there is high spirituality, poetry, subtlety, sophistication and an excited impulse (it is worth recalling the above-mentioned line from Vyazemsky's poem “*To live, it hurries, and to feel it hastes*”)

Let us take as our point of departure the title of Chopin's *impromptu* and turn to a world of *fantasy*, which meant so much to the art of the first half of the 19th century. Two reasons caused its flourishing: the ardor of imagination characteristic of the Romantics and the rejection of the life that surrounded them.

Rejecting seemingly colorless and prosaic reality, they strove for something unusual and extraordinary. For example, **Victor Hugo** frankly admitted that he created his novel **The Hunchback of Notre-Dame** (1831) as the product of *imagination, whim and fantasy*.

The gift of unrestrained imagination is also endowed to the characters of literary works. A striking example of this quality in a buffoonish metamorphosis is Khlestakov from **Nikolai Gogol's** comedy **The Government Inspector** (1836), who warrants his surname given by the writer. The character is bragging before the provincial audience in the central act of the play.

Khlestakov. *I frequently meet literary men. I am on an intimate footing with Pushkin. I often say to him: “Well, Pushkin, old boy, how goes it?” “So, so, partner,” he'd reply, “as usual.” He's a great original.*

Anna Andreyevna. *So you write too? How thrilling it must be to be an author! You write for the papers also, I suppose?*

Khlestakov. *Yes, for the papers, too. I am the author of a lot of works – The Marriage of Figaro, Robert le Diable, Norma. I don't even remember all the names. I did it just by chance. I hadn't meant to write, but a theatrical manager said, “Won't you please write something for me?” I thought to myself: “All right, why not?” So I did it all in one evening, surprised everybody (Gogol N. The Government Inspector. 2013. <https://gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3735/pg3735.epub>).*

As we can see, Khlestakov reckoning on the provincials' ignorance, attributes to himself the most popular works of the theatrical repertoire of that time: Beaumarchais's play *The Marriage of Figaro*, Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* and Bellini's *Norma*.

Inspired by Romantic fantasy, the *fairy tale* genre experienced a high flowering in the first half of the 19th century. This flowering was prepared by the works of **Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann**. The most famous is the fairy tale **The Nutcracker**, which inspired Tchaikovsky to create a ballet of the same name.

Almost at the same time, the **Children's and Household Tales** (1814) appeared, collected by the German philologists the Brothers **Grimm** (Jacob, 1785-1863, and Wilhelm, 1786-1859). They adapted the folklore material so skillfully that the collection became an outstanding literary monument. Their titles familiar to anyone from childhood point to this: *The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids*, *The Brave Little Tailor*, *The Bremen Town Musicians*, etc.

A little later, the great Danish storyteller **Hans Christian Andersen** (1805-1875) appeared. Being close to the world of folk art, he sought to discover the miraculous, unexpected, poetic nature in everyday objects and phenomena, to awaken deepest feelings in a human soul and to show human weaknesses and vices with gentle humor. These aspirations are manifested in different aspects in such fairy tales as *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Snow Queen*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

In the sphere of fairy tale and fantasy imagery, a special place is held by numerous scherzos by **Felix Mendelssohn** (Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 1809-1847). They evoke various associations:

- the world of fairies, elves and other fairy tale creatures;
- the atmosphere of children's games and pranks;
- the poetic whirlwind of life, its colorful hustle and bustle and amusing turmoil.

The composer first discovered this world at the age of eighteen when he made a brilliant debut with the overture **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (1825).

Many years later, while composing music for Shakespeare's comedy of the same name, he supplemented this work with a series of numbers, including the **Scherzo** (1842), which confirmed everlasting freshness of Mendelssohn's fantasy with its fluttering rhythms, intricate syncopation (the alteration of the regular rhythmic pattern), with its sparkling texture and iridescent shimmers of sun glare.

The world of fantasy often came in touch with all sorts of *exotics*, which was so attractive to the Romantics. They discovered it in their search for a wonderful world sparkling with a richness of color, opposing it to the gray monotony of everyday life. Driven by their imagination, they found exotics even on the territory of quite civilized Europe.

For example, northerners were attracted by southern countries – Italy or Spain. The above-mentioned German composer **Felix Mendelssohn**, the author of the **Symphony No. 4** (1833), which he called "Italian", wrote in one of his letters: *"This is Italy! And now has begun what I have always thought... to be the supreme joy in life. And I am loving it"* (Mendelssohn to Abraham Mendelssohn, from Venice, 10 October 1830. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._4_\(Mendelssohn\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symphony_No._4_(Mendelssohn))).

In the work of Russian artists, a whole movement developed that received the appropriate designation "*Italian genre*". **Karl Bryullov** also paid tribute to this genre in his early works. In his Italian series, among other things, he sought to show southern nature at different times of the day (a similar idea anticipated impressionists' creative quest in some ways).

One of such works is **Italian Midday** (1827). The painting is full of bright light, the rays of the sun permeate the leaves, the juicy bunch of grapes; the reflections of light dance on the dark skin of the Italian. She is presented almost in Rubensian tones, personifying abundance, the fullness and joy of life.

Portrait works in the "Italian genre" tended to emphasized colorfulness. **Neapolitan Girl with the Fruits** (1831), by **Orest Kiprensky**, like many other paintings by this outstanding Romantic artist, attracts attention with the intensity of the color scheme. Here it serves to convey the enchanting beauty of the young southerner as vividly as possible.

The Russian master also presents her colorful costume in the same vivid way highlighting the unusually tied scarf as an exotic detail. The girl is shown against the background of the sea with a sail in the distance, which is reminiscent of Lermontov's poem *"A lonely sail is flashing white // Amidst the blue mist of the sea!..."* (Lermontov M. Sail. <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8527707-Sail-by-Mikhail-Yuryevich-Lermontov>).

* * *

Let us go back to Russia in order to turn to a phenomenon that opposed romanticism to a certain extent. From the point of view of the method of artistic creativity, in such cases we usually speak of a *realistic trend*, which developed in the first half of the 19th century along with the dominant romanticism.

This type of art avoided exceptional characters and situations and sought to capture everyday life in its natural contours. To specify the essence of the differences, let us compare two portraits of **Pushkin**. They both were painted in 1827 and are among the most famous lifetime images of the poet.

The portrait by **Orest Kiprensky** delighted his contemporaries. The artist brings a touch of dreaminess to the image: the poet is gazing into the distance (almost like in the portrait of the young Zhukovsky he once created). And what is especially important, he emphasizes the Romantic spirit.

Here we can see the traditional pose of poets (the arms crossed over his chest) and the traditional attribute of their art (a statuette of an ancient muse with a lyre in her hands) and softened features of Byronism (at the same time, such a detail as Scotch plaid on the shoulder has its own semantic meaning).

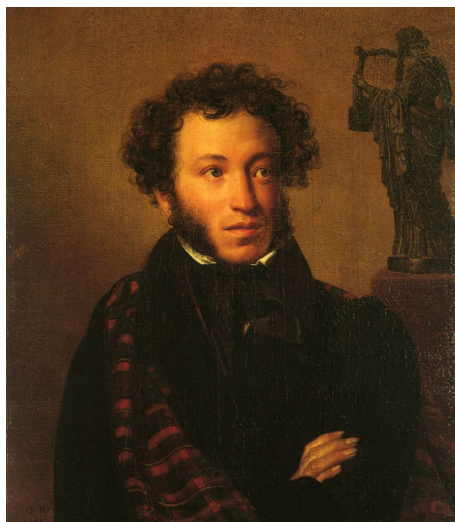


Illustration 07. Orest Kipryensky. "The Portrait of Alexander S. Pushkin". 1827.
Canvas, oil. 63×54 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

The portrait by **Vasily Tropinin** was painted in the same year but his Pushkin seems older, more mature and profound. In comparison with Kiprensky's work, this image has noticeably more internal energy but the poet keeps it within the strict limits of intellectual discipline (fingers closed together).

There is another important detail: Pushkin is wearing a dressing gown, that helps to avoid excessive romanticization. Everything is focused on conveying the essence, concentrated in the general appearance of the poet, who is ready for creative acts.

One of the most consistent and strong supporters of the realistic approach in Russian art of his time was *Alexey Venetsianov* (1780-1847). He was the first to depict peasant life not only in Russian but also in the world art.

Striving for maximum truthfulness, he painted from life, including in the open air (in contrast to the guidelines of the Academy of Arts, which required artists to work only in the studio). And his palette tended to objectivity – soft, calm tones prevail in it.

In the extensive gallery of types created by Venetsianov, the images of young peasant women are especially expressive. In the painting **Girl in a Checkered Shawl** (1830s), he admires his model, conveying the charm of youth and beauty through the masterful depiction of soft blush, silky hair, large blue eyes, the charm of a slight smile on a pretty face. The following detail is also very important: the peasant's shawl is thrown on in such a way that it looks like a jeweled headpiece.

One of the artist's most profound and heartfelt works is **A Peasant Girl with Cornflowers** (1830s). The seated peasant woman is depicted against the background of the gloomy sky, which symbolizes the eternal nasty weather and hopelessness of Russian life. The female figure grows out of this background, like "a ray of light in the kingdom of darkness" (as Nikolay Dobrolyubov would later say about Katerina from Alexander Ostrovsky's play *The Storm*).

The extreme modesty of her appearance is emphasized, in which there is nothing deliberate, ostentatious. There is a heap of wild flowers on the girl's knees. They symbolize a tiny piece of light and poetry she is allowed to have.

Tired of endless worries, she thoughtfully dropped her hands on the flowers – patient, quiet, submissive. Isn't that the most intimate and deepest in the nature of a Russian woman?!

In conclusion of our viewing of the "picture gallery" of the Romantic era, let us turn to *Alexander Ivanov's* main work (1796-1858) **The Appearance of Christ Before the People**.

The plot of the painting is easy to interpret: the appearance of the Messiah before the people being baptized in the waters of the Jordan when John the Baptist draws people's attention to the approaching Jesus. However, there is a lofted idea behind this easily perceived gospel plot.

The canvas depicts many people, which personifies the image of humanity as a whole. Thus, we can see all sorts of reactions to the event: from the expectation of a miracle to skepticism and mockery, fear and confusion, from willingness to believe to complete indifference.

The main idea of the depicted action is connected with the call to rise above the "vanity of vanities" of ordinary existence to a significant, spiritual life. The ablution, as part of this process, symbolizes the purification of the soul.



Illustration 08. Alexander Ivanov "The Appearance of Christ before the People". 1837-1857.
Canvas, oil. 540×750 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

This outstanding monument of Russian painting, associated with deep reflections on existence and executed in an objectively restrained manner, is endowed with a truly universal significance, which became possible due to the reliance on a comprehensive artistic experience. Indeed, Ivanov synthesizes the principles of classicism and the achievements of Romantic art and to a certain extent foresees the horizons of the next historical period.

The canvas is the result of twenty years' work begun in 1837 and completed in 1857 when its author had already passed into the second half of the 19th century. Of course, no matter how large the painting was in size (it occupies the whole wall in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow), it is quite unlikely that the brilliant artist would have needed so much time to complete it. However, the highest responsibility in relation to the chosen theme prompted him to make many preparatory studies.

These studies have an intrinsic and extremely high artistic value. Take for example **The Head of a Boy**. The sharpness and relief of the drawing, the subtle and precise color palette, allowing to convey the model in all its lifelike authenticity, provided absolutely incomparable expressiveness.

Let us look at another study – **The Head of John the Baptist**, the central character of the painting, who expresses its leading idea. Severe asceticism and the power of conviction is emphasized in his appearance. We can see an inspired prophet, personifying the moral imperative, that is, the highest call of the spirit.

Ivanov sought the possibility of expressing the universal principle in this face. He found prototypes for it and for other characters of his “timeless” canvas in Italy, where he spent most of his life. Undoubtedly, he spent it driven by the desire to learn “eternal” questions of the universe.

Concluding our examination of the realistic aspirations that formed the opposition to the dominant body of Romantic art, we note that the tendency toward a more objective and balanced view of the world found a fertile field in the *life of the people*.

It is symptomatic that in the first half of the 19th century, people began to produce creators of art directly from their ranks. First of all, this concerned poets.

In France, such a poet was *Pierre-Jean de Beranger* (1780-1857), who believed that his muse was the people. In this regard, Vissarion Belinsky added that the people’s poet is someone who is known by the people, just as Beranger is known by all of France.

Beranger chose the most popular genre of the people – a song, and raised this folklore form to the level of professional art. His favorite character is a commoner, and on his behalf, Beranger gives expression to the social issues of that time, with plebeian directness and tart humor, often in rebellious opposition to authorities.

In Russia at that time, *Alexey Koltsov* (1809-1842) was a real national poet. Like Venetsianov, the essence of his work is the poetry of peasant labor and life. But if Venetsianov, being an artist-intellectual, came to this theme “from the outside”, then Koltsov knew it “from the inside” and recreated the motifs of peasant life in the corresponding folklore forms.

His poems were extremely close to folk prototypes and this is one of the reasons why many of them became songs. For the first time in Russian poetry, he managed to convey the peasants’ worldview, the generosity of their spirit, and their longing for freedom.

This is perceived as originally national: a short line with a kind of resilient rhythm, blank (unrhymed), sonorous and very melodious verse. This is the reason why Koltsov’s creative work became the source of a great tradition in Russian literature – Nikolay Nekrasov, Sergei Yesenin, Alexander Tvardovsky ...

* * *

Despite its considerable significance, the “poetry of reality” was nevertheless on the periphery of the art of the early 19th century – it was to take the leading positions in the second half of the century, in the era of Post-Romanticism. In the meantime, the main thing came from the qualities of the Romantic nature and this nature put forward its own, deeply original vision of the world and man.

One of the sides of this vision was connected with the *idea of the life path*. It got its concentrated expression in musical art. Music with its unique power of a generalized display of existential processes recreated in sounds a real story about life with its worries, vicissitudes of fate, dramatic confrontations and rare moments of calm, peace, spiritual joy.

A remarkable version of this story is the movement of a lonely traveler through the obscure periods of life, constantly threatening with strokes of fate. *Franz Schubert* developed this version more actively than others, which resulted in his song cycle with a very symptomatic title **Winter Journey** (1827), and the classical embodiment of such imagery can be considered the **first movement of the Symphony No. 8**, known under the title “Unfinished”.

Everything has a beginning and inevitably has an end. Naturally, this also concerned the era of Romanticism. Its denouement began with *self-debunking*. Moreover, it took place in several stages. Each generation of the Romantics most often repeated approximately the same evolutionary curve: a quick rise, a bright flash of Romantic mood, then a decline and closing-down of Romantic “programs”.

This tradition was established by the first generation of the Romantics led by *Byron*. He died in 1824 when the era of Romanticism was still to exist for about a quarter of a century. Nevertheless, its leader departed from Romanticism and from *Byronism* in the last years of his life, strongly condemning the direction of his work of previous years. He mercilessly scourged himself believing that he contributed to the degradation of public taste.

In his last work, the verse novel **Don Juan** (1824), Byron openly mocks such signs of romanticism as enthusiasm and exaltation. Here his young hero, forced to leave Spain, bitterly cries about his first “passion”:

And Juan wept, and much he sigh’d and thought, While his salt tears dropp’d into the salt sea.

It is quite easy to feel the mocking irony and the obvious decline of the image. But there is more to come. The poet literally destroys the pathos of Don Juan’s appeals to his involuntarily abandoned beloved with the physiology of his reactions to the seasickness (the text contains the names Battista and Pedro – they are the young master’s servants):

‘And, oh! if e’er I should forget, I swear –
But that’s impossible, and cannot be
Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of any thing excepting thee;
A mind diseased no remedy can physic
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick).

*Sooner shall heaven kiss earth (here he fell sicker),
O, Julia! what is every other wo?
(For God's sake let me have a glass of liquor;
Pedro, Battista, help me down below.)
Julia, my love! (you rascal, Pedro, quicker) –
O, Julia! (this curst vessel pitches so) –
Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!
(Here he grew inarticulate with retching.)* (Byron G. Don Juan. 2012. <https://liteka.ru/english/library/55-don-juan#48>).

At the final stage of their life path, the Romantics often experienced a kind of sobering up and the calming of the spirit with it. *Mikhail Lermontov* in his poem “**I Loved in the Old Days...**” (1841), having listed the turbulent romantic passions of previous years, assures the reader that now he loves clear weather and quiet conversation (and this is said by the author of *The Demon*!).

Thus began the farewell to Romanticism, which often resulted in surges of nostalgia and a mournful groan of the soul. Because the era was leaving that had promised so much and where the individual was so pleased with all his subjective mood, with all his dreams and fantasies. *Heinrich Heine* exclaims with longing in one of his last works (the poem *Bimini*, after 1851):

*Faith in miracles! – Blue flower
That has vanished now, how radiant
In the hearts of men it blossomed
In the days of which we sing!* (Heine H. Bimini. 1905.
https://archive.org/stream/worksofheinrichh12hein/worksofheinrichh12hein_djvu.txt).

Nevertheless, in the middle of the 19th century, another historical reality and the following era corresponding to it, which with sufficient reason is called *Post-Romanticism* (that is, literally – *after Romanticism*), began to assert itself more and more insistently. This reality had to be accepted as inevitable and submitted to.

Among the striking examples of nostalgia for a bygone era and at the same time, the submission to historical necessity is the opera *Tannhäuser* (1845) by *Richard Wagner* (1813-1883).

In its *Overture*, which absorbed the main semantic motifs, the problem of the freedom of the Byronic type of personality in its confrontation with impersonal regulations that acquire the status of the highest moral imperative is posed in a generalized symphonic form.

In the course of an intense search, after painful reflections and going from one extreme to the other, the character bows before the law of necessity – this is the result of the *Overture* and the opera as a whole.

Благодарность | Acknowledgements

RU Автор выражает благодарность переводчику Кристине Васильевне Соловьёвой, преподавателю иностранных языков Музыкального училища при Саратовской государственной консерватории имени Л. В. Собинова, заведующей отделением «Гуманитарные дисциплины», преподавателю первой квалификационной категории, за помощь в подготовке публикации.

EN The author expresses gratitude to Kristina Vasilievna Solovyova, translator, foreign language teacher at the Music College of the Saratov State Conservatory, Head of the Humanities Department, and teacher of the first qualification category, for her assistance in preparing this publication.

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Информация о статье | About this article

Дата поступления рукописи (received): 15.06.2025; опубликовано online (published online): 01.07.2025.

Ключевые слова (keywords): мировой художественный процесс; Романтизм; Классическая эпоха; реалистические устремления; традиции классицизма; world artistic process; Romanticism; Classical era; realistic aspirations; traditions of classicism.