

Class 15: Romantic Art of the 18th and 19th century



Romanticism (c. 1790-1850)

Does **not** simply mean an interest in romantic love.

Viewed the Enlightenment interest in logic, rationality, and science as inadequate to understand the complexity of human beings. Also following the terrors of the French Revolution (17,000 executed in one year), Enlightenment ideals seem to have failed on many counts.

Rather than the Enlightenment emphasis on objective rules, standards, and logic, the Romantic movement stressed subjective qualities like the emotions, the imagination, dreams, fantasy, mystery, the exotic, etc. It also emphasized the individual and notions of uniqueness in art. Romantics believed that artists shouldn't copy other artists or past style (esp. the classical or Neoclassical styles), but should explore their individual genius. Neoclassical styles still persist within the academic system, but artists are expected to express more personal ideas. For the first time, art begins to be viewed as the expression of the artist's personality or state of mind. The artist is often regarded as an individual alienated from society [These ideas were not common to the Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, or Neoclassical periods]

**Fuseli, *The Nightmare* (1781), 40" x 50",
London, Romantic**

