

Elements of Romanticism

What Is Romanticism?

NO, not like Valentine's Day...

- Literary movement in 1770-1860
- Revolt against Age of Reason
- Celebrated imagination/intuition rather than reason/calculation
- Valued individualism over conformity
- Overlaps in America with the Victorian Era (1830-1880)

Elements of Romanticism

Romantics believed...

- Imagination was the ultimate power
- Imagination allowed them to "read" nature
- Emotion was necessary for logical reasoning
- Nature had healing powers and was a source of refuge from artificiality
- Nature and mythology had deep symbolism
- The mind reached consciousness through art and literature

Romantics were interested in...

- The nature of the hero
- The misunderstood or eccentric "genius" or artist
- Intuition, instincts, and emotions
- Exotic, unfamiliar, or distant ideas

Major Romantics

- Walt Whitman
- Emily Dickenson
- Washington Irving
- Herman Melville
- Edgar Allan Poe
- Nathaniel Hawthorne

Major Ideas

- Highly imaginative and subjective
- Emotional intensity
- Escapism
- Common man as hero
- Nature as refuge, source of knowledge and/or spirituality