

"ROMANTIC"

1. The Romantic impulse emphasizes the individual, and especially individual consciousness. The crucial contact is that between the self and "Nature" (or between the Me and the Not-Me): a complex and ambiguous intersection.

2. A primary interest is psychological states and emotional responses -- the inner self or the mind is the real "landscape" of the work. Memory and imagination are central psychic operations. "Intellect" (of a rational, logical, analytic sort) is not absolutely bad, but it is usually questionable.

3. The truth is to be found in the ideal and the abstract (especially as this shows through the visible and actual). The writer will try to transcend the recognizable and everyday, even at the risk of seeming (to her readers) to be indulging in exaggeration or "romancing."

4. The goal (of writing and of life) is synthesis. Images of unification, identity, correspondence, analogy, and the like represent the fundamental (but often hard-to-perceive) unity of Nature and of human existence. To represent this, the Romantic writer places a high positive value on images of organic natural process (flowering, etc.).

5. The personal and the "subjective" is at the heart of things. "Scientific objectivity" is an illusion -- and probably a harmful one.

6. Symbols are essential -- and they exist. That is, they are to be found and explored, rather than made up. The problems of symbol-finding and symbol-reading (which is always a highly personal, even eccentric, process) are often the central subject of the work. It is through symbols that we may perceive the true "unity" of life.

7. To "represent" truly is to isolate, to abstract, to exaggerate, and to interpret. A "representative" figure is likely to be more eccentric than normative -- someone who summarizes, unifies, symbolizes. A hero is "representative" precisely because he/she is not "common" -- or even particularly recognizable.

"REALIST"

1. The Realist pays great attention to context, and may prefer to observe groups of people. External forces (society, economics, politics, history) tend to have a determining effect on individual lives.

2. The primary focus is likely to be on behavior and action. The "inner self" may be completely opaque (to the characters and to their creator); or a belief in unique inner consciousness may appear as a prevalent human delusion. Mental processes cannot of course be ignored, but the most valid and reliable ones are those which approximate pragmatic/empirical "common sense."

3. Behavior (and plot and character...) are grounded in the actual and the probable. Exaggeration or "unreality" is likely, if present, to be intended for comic effect, or to show the weakness of some character. The idea of some abstract Truth or moral framework is, at best, highly arguable.

4. The primary task is analysis and description -- to define things as they are, by identifying actual constituent parts (or "facts") A common source of imagery for "the nature of things" is likely to be categorization, mechanization, even fragmentation.

5. The writer must above all be "objective," and will often claim the position and methods of the scientist, especially a Darwinian natural historian -- an observer of facts arranging themselves in laws and rules.

6. Symbols may be used, but the way in which symbols are manipulated, the way they miss the point, and the way in which they are misinterpreted is likely to be a basic concern of the work. "Details" however are crucial -- primarily not for their symbolic value so much as for their value in allowing us to place a character or situation in a context (historical, cultural, socio-economic, etc.).

7. To "represent" truly is to record things as they are. A representative figure is likely to be very nearly a statistical norm (the man/woman in the street).