

Three artists, Francisco de Goya, Caspar David Friedrich, and Joseph Mallord William Turner, shared not only the world of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Europe, but also illustrated common artistic characteristics which distinguished them as Romantic painters. Each painter approached his work with "an assertion of subjective experience and feeling in opposition to the form and objectivity of classicism." (Sporre, 462) The emphasis on self expression grew throughout the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries as artists sought to paint externally their interpretation of an internal reality. Friedrich reflected on this aspect, "Close your physical eye, so that you see your picture first with the spiritual eye. Then bring what you saw in the dark into the light, so that it may have an effect on others, shining inwards from outside." (Hofmann, 270) These artists also brought a fresh spirituality to their work, again with a focus on the individual. A final commonality exhibited was the depth of feeling and emotional intensity that set these artists apart from those who preceded them.

Nice

Because individual expression became of such great importance to painters of the Romantic period, the works of Goya, Friedrich, and Turner vary greatly. Francisco Goya, the earliest of the three painters, clearly demonstrated the evolution from Baroque painting, with its focus on technique, to Romantic painting, with its predominant aspect of emotionalism. Born a quarter century after Goya, Caspar David Friedrich visually expressed the spiritual yearning and emphasis on nature that portray the essence of Romanticism. Finally, Joseph Mallord William Turner who lived until the mid-Nineteenth Century, painted a wide variety of art from the traditional landscape to the dissolved subject that communicated primarily emotional responses. His work would

greatly influence the coming movement of Impressionism. These three painters illustrate the great breadth, variety, and uniqueness of the Romantic period in art.

Goya's works closely reflected his life in Spain toward the close of the Eighteenth Century. Beginning as a court painter, "Don Manuel Osorio, Son of the Count of Altimira" (ill. 1) was completed in 1787 before the artist had reached the age of forty. (Myers, 34) His supreme control of technique shows in the delicacy of the lace at the boy's neck and waist, and the lifelike rendition of the child's pet magpie. (34) Don Manuel's position in the center of the canvas, with the triad effect of the three cats to the left and the birdcage to the right illustrate the classical elements of symmetry and balance. But Goya goes further to infuse the painting with Romantic elements. An emotional rendering of the subject takes prominence, as Goya portrays Don Manuel with great affection and tenderness. The red of the child's outfit with its gorgeous color, the satin of the shoes and cummerbund that gleam with the softness of this lustrous fabric, and the dramatic effect of placing the child against a backdrop of darkness and luminous light all serve to show a painter moving towards increased Romanticism in his painting style. The use of color, the dramatic use of light placement, and the emotion portrayed make the painting of Don Manuel Osorio a masterly example of Goya's early work.

*good description
(+ supposition)*

The Spanish political upheavals beginning in the early Nineteenth Century are an important subject of Goya's maturing art, reflecting the brutality and chaos of his life experiences. One example depicts the utter confusion of political forces vying for supremacy at the expense of the common townsfolk. (Myers, 38) In 1814 Goya painted "The Citizens of Madrid, fighting Murat's Cavalry in the Puerta del Sol, May 2nd, 1808" (ill. 2). The scene shows great movement and energy with fighting covering two-thirds of

the canvas, and with the action appearing to continue off both sides of the painting. The action of battle is so intense that men killed are trampled underfoot while the fighting continues over their prostrate bodies. Dramatic action continues with cavalry dragged off their horses as they meet death from the townsfolk, and the combatants use knives to attack each other at close range. The more distancing, and less passionate, aspect of rifles appears in the background rather than the foreground of the painting. Goya used color deliberately with the red trousers of the slain cavalry member emphasizing his blood drenched body. The white of the horses' bodies accentuate the vivid colors of the cavalry's costumes. Goya witnessed this historical event in 1808, but did not portray it until sixteen years later when the political climate would allow such a statement of violence and bloodshed. (Myers, 38) "The Citizens of Madrid" shows the fullness of

✓ Goya's Romantic style: a tremendous emotional quality, the use of color to create an emotional response, and the predominant impression of energy and movement.

✓
violet!

✓
you make it sound like Delacroix.

Friedrich, born the same year Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, grew to maturity during the height of German Romanticism. Like Goethe's character Werther, Friedrich's belief that the divine nature of God could be sensed in His creation dominated the artist's work. "The Wanderer above a sea of Mists" (ill. 3) in many ways serves as a visual representation of Werther's thoughts and attitudes. (Hofmann, 10) Standing silent and alone in nature, the wanderer reflects Werther's conviction that "solitude is precious balm to my heart . . ." (Goethe, 26) As the subject of the painting gazes out at a mist-filled landscape, so too Werther contemplates "Oh, distance is like the future: before our souls lies an entire and dusky vastness which overwhelms our feelings as it overwhelms our eyes, and ah! We long to surrender the

whole of our being . . . our souls longing for the elusive balm." (Goethe, 44) The Romantic qualities of longing, nostalgia, and eternal yearning towards the unattainable find forceful expression in Friedrich's paintings. And Werther's thoughts give language to these feelings:

From the most inaccessible of mountains . . . breaths the spirit of the eternal Creator . . . Ah, how often in former times did I long for the wings of a crane that passed overhead, to fly to the shores of the measureless sea, and there drink the full joy of Life from the foaming goblet of the Eternal, and taste, if only for a single moment . . . one drop of the blessed serenity of that Being who makes all things, in Himself and through Himself. (Goethe, 65,66)

Friedrich's art departed from the earlier paradigm of painting with realistic naturalism as he began to create works with a spiritual meaning infused into a portrayal of natural subjects. Friedrich illuminated the wanderer's unfulfilled longings toward the eternal, toward destiny, and toward quiet nostalgia in an evocative style that still resonates with viewers. *especially me!*

With an equally strong emphasis of intertwining spirituality with nature, "Winter Landscape with Church" (ill. 4) distils Friedrich's views. (Hofmann, 71) The man shown in supplication does not exercise his prayers in the church, but rather seeks the shelter and solace of the trees and the crucifix, stepping into nature to communicate with God. The Romantic emphasis on feeling is evident in the quiet solitude of the work, the empty spaces which evoke the sublime view of nature with its greatness that dwarfs mere man, and the spiritual vision of personal connection with the Infinite. Friedrich's familiarity with, and love of nature are eloquently portrayed in the delicacy with which he painted the trees – snow resting lightly on the individual boughs, fragile spires of the uppermost branches echoed with the design of the idealized church in the background. Nature always held a compelling quality for Friedrich, and *(he) spoke of it: artist?*

Nice weather.

F. said
this?

... like a member of his family. He talks about it as he paints it, without rapture but with originality; there is no rapture in his paintings, either; on the contrary it is their truth that appeals to us, for each of them awakens the memory of something we know. . . the painter does not look at nature like an 'artist' who is seeking only a subject for his brush, but like a human being of feeling and imagination, who finds a symbol of human life everywhere in nature. (Hofmann, 265)

Friedrich's works show the German interpretation of Romanticism with its solitude, its spirituality, and its yearning for an ephemeral 'something' that rejects the constrictions inherent in definition. ✓

Turner, who lived to the age of seventy-six and exhibited his artwork for sixty ✓ years, illustrates the evolution of Romanticism to that of Expressionism and Impressionism. While Turner's work expressed the Romantic characteristics of color usage, energy and movement, and emotion, the artist uniquely added a new element. In "The Slave Ship" (ill. 5) the violent movement of the storm-tossed sea, the bright purples, reds, and oranges that elicit an emotional response and the exotic subject matter all speak ✓ of a Romantic painting. (Growing, 32) However, Turner did not paint "The Slave Ship" in a realistic style, instead he sought to express his convictions and insights through his painting of indistinct subject material, using light, color, and illusion to create an atmosphere of great emotion. The helpless drowning of the slaves thrown overboard, the capricious violence of the sea, the ship in great distress and the blazing sun sinking in the west, all communicate with an emotional intensity. Turner eloquently expresses the great themes of life's inherent cruelty and the indifferent forces of nature in "The Slave Ship".

Far from the harshness and cruelty of life, "Festive Lagoon Scene, Venice" (ill. 6) articulates joy, calm peace, and celebration. Contrasted with "The Slave Ship", the Venice scene demonstrates an even greater use of a dissolved subject with dominance instead given to light and color. The upwardly rising cloud formations repeated in the

good.

raised hands and arms of the celebrants, and the fountain plumes surging and spouting upwards each communicate the emotions of delight. The painting glows with soft color and light, giving the impression of its subject rather than a realistic rendition. Turner's technique "achieved vibrant representations of forces such as the strength of the sea and the rhythm of rain by rendering objects as indistinct masses within a glowing haze of color." (Turner, Encarta) His scene of Venice displays the characteristics that would so

Impressionists would tend to avoid this

influence the Impressionistic painters of the future: a fascination with the portrayal of light, a dramatic movement away from realistic painting, and the ability to communicate expressively and impressionistically with his art.

The Romantic painters Goya, Friedrich, and Turner added unique contributions to the world of Romantic art, illustrating the wide scope that artists would take during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Goya demonstrated masterly control of both the Classical style that prefaced his work and the coming Romanticism with its importance on feeling and emotion. Friedrich eloquently expressed the spiritual yearning that established the cornerstone for all Romantic artists. Finally, Turner took the elements of Romanticism and enlarged upon them to create a style that would profoundly influence artists in the future. These three artists exemplify the broad scope of Romantic art with common characteristics: emotionality, personal expressiveness, and spiritual yearning.

Good essay, indeed excellent one despite a somewhat disappointing ending. You show a knack for analyzing the character of each artist.

And your color reproductions are excellent - your writing is focused & graceful.

Good work.

A+ (wonderful reproductions)