

PART 1 Expressions of the Heart

The Age of Romanticism

Why It Matters

At the end of the 18th century, a movement called **Romanticism** began to influence the social and political life of Europe. The Romantics rejected science and reason and instead embraced nature, emotion, and individual experience. These rebellious ideas inspired the Romantics to champion the rights of the common people. Eventually, Romanticism's revolutionary spirit inspired a desperate struggle for freedom and reform.

For Links to Romanticism, click on:



1

Enlightened Ideas France was the birthplace of Romanticism's spiritual father, **Jean Jacques Rousseau** (shown here). His ideas echoed those expressed earlier by England's **John Locke**, who declared that all humans are created equal.



KINGDOM OF DENMARK AND NORWAY

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

4

A Time of Upheaval

The Romantic period was a time of rebellion and revolution. As many Europeans tried to bring about political and social changes, the boundaries of countries were torn apart and redrawn.

London

2

Paris

1

FRENCH EMPIRE

CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE
SWITZERLAND
ITALY

PORTUGAL

Madrid

SPAIN

CORSICA

SARDINIA

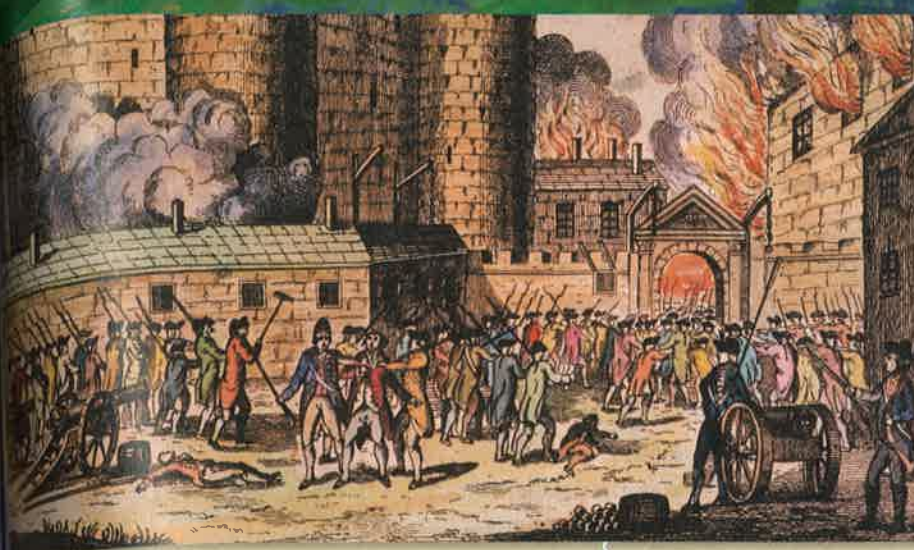
Mediterranean Sea

AFRICA



4

Idealized Nature Romantic artist **John Constable** drew inspiration for many of his paintings from his homeland, the countryside of southeastern England. Like many other Romantic artists, Constable idealized nature, creating landscapes that glorified its tranquillity and beauty.



2

Revolutionary Fervor Defending equality and human rights, the **French Revolution** inspired revolutions across Europe. The French Revolution began in Paris in 1789, after peasants stormed the Bastille, a prison and a hated symbol of royal oppression.

Moscow

RUSSIAN EMPIRE

3

The Spread of Nationalism

Feelings of **nationalism**—devotion to one's nation rather than to a ruler—were stirred throughout Europe when **Napoleon Bonaparte** attempted to impose French rule on the continent. Eventually this nationalistic spirit inspired the people of Greece to wage a successful struggle for their independence.

Black Sea

Constantinople

Athens

OTTOMAN EMPIRE



250 500 miles
250 500 kilometers



Historical Highlights

To understand the enormous impact of Romanticism on the social and political life of Europe, it is important to know about the events that led up to and occurred during the movement.

Roots in the Enlightenment

Romanticism is rooted in the **Enlightenment**, a movement of the 18th century that championed science and reason. Enlightenment philosophers believed that the power to reason was equal in all people and defended human dignity and worth.

In the 17th-century, English philosopher John Locke had declared that people had rights to life, liberty, and happiness. In the 18th century, Locke's ideas were echoed by Jean Jacques Rousseau. The French philosopher believed that laws and government should reflect the people's will. Rousseau's ideas influenced the leaders of the French Revolution. With his belief in people's natural goodness and in the value of the individual,

Rousseau also foreshadowed Romanticism.

Revolution in France

Although Rousseau's ideas helped inspire the French Revolution, outrage at the social and economic conditions in France in the second half of the 1700s actually ignited the conflict. In 1788, taxes on the poor were raised just when wages dropped and food supplies were scarce. Tensions finally exploded on July 14, 1789, when a mob of Parisians seized the Bastille. The French Revolution had begun.

At first, the revolution brought about positive change. Feudalism in France was ended, the country was declared a republic, and a new constitution was drafted. Tragically, the revolution also produced the **Reign of Terror**, led by a group of revolutionaries. From 1793 to 1794, this group executed anyone judged to be an enemy of the new French republic. Tens of thousands of people were executed by guillotine.

Rise and Fall of Napoleon

Beginning in 1792, the new republic engaged in a series of wars to defend and spread the ideas of the French Revolution. With all citizens involved in the war effort, a sense of nationalism arose throughout the French republic. Leading the battles was the young, heroic general Napoleon Bonaparte, who would crown himself emperor of France in 1804.

In time, it became clear that Napoleon's ambitions extended well beyond the borders of France. He wanted to conquer all of Europe. To prevent French domination, European allies mobilized forces against Napoleon. Fearful that Russia would join the alliance, Napoleon invaded that country in 1812. The decision proved disastrous. Napoleon lost more than 500,000 men. His losses encouraged his enemies to attack. In 1815, Napoleon suffered a decisive defeat at the **Battle of Waterloo** in Belgium.



Napoleon's army retreats from Russia.

Struggles for Independence

Inspired first by the French Revolution's ideals of freedom and later by opposition to the Napoleonic invasions, national movements gained momentum in 19th-century Europe. These movements often led to revolutions for independence.

Greece waged the first successful revolution in 1830. That same year, Belgium also gained its independence. Not all of the bids for freedom were successful, however. When a group of young Russian aristocrats called the Decembrists led a rebellion against Czar Nicholas I in December 1825, the uprising was quickly crushed.

Revolutionary fervor was kindled in 1848, when France once again rose up against its king. Soon, ethnic uprisings had swept across Europe, sparking revolts in Austria, Hungary, and Germany. Although these uprisings were suppressed by the ruling powers, people's dreams of freedom were not crushed.

Revolution in Industry

While political and social revolutions erupted in France and swept across Europe, rebellion was repressed in Great Britain. Those in power had moved decisively to keep Britain from falling victim to the violence and anarchy they saw in France. Instead, Great Britain was involved in a different kind of revolution that had begun in the 1700s—an industrial revolution, which changed the economy from one mainly centered on agriculture to one driven by industry.

Industrialization would eventually greatly improve people's standards of living and opportunities. In the early 1800s, however, the rapid pace of

industrialization caused many serious problems, including unsafe working conditions, child labor, and unhealthy urban living conditions. Reformers sought to correct the labor and social problems caused by industrialization, but their efforts were often equated with revolution and crushed. Largely as a result of these reformist efforts, Romanticism faded in England, and a new movement called **realism** began to emerge. Realists focused on everyday life, often bringing social problems to public attention.

History to Literature

Events that occurred during the Romantic age inspired writers of the time as well as writers throughout the 19th century.

EVENT IN HISTORY

French Revolution

Napoleon's invasion of Russia

EVENT IN LITERATURE

English novelist Charles Dickens uses the French Revolution as the background of his 1859 novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, which is set in London and Paris.

In a narrative poem called "The Expiation," about the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, French writer Victor Hugo vividly describes the French army's retreat from Moscow.

