

Art's Divine Nature: Romantic Landscape Painting and the Quest for Transcendental Meaning

Oct. 2 – Oct. 7

The rise of Romanticism; concepts of the self, the Romantics' struggle for unity, freedom as authentic self-expression, communion with nature and communion with men; religious revival; issues of land and its possession; landscape and the question of an embodiment of national identity

Section I: Germany (among others, Friedrich, Runge, Carus, Blechen),

Section II: France, England, America (among others, Valenciennes, Corot, Palmer, Turner, Constable, Martin, Bierstadt, Church).

Art's Divine Nature (Section I):

Oct. 2

Readings:

Vaughan, Ch. 5 "Transcendent landscapes," pp. 132-183.

Ramdohr, Friedrich Wilhelm Basilius von. "Remarks Upon a Landscape Painting Intended as an Altar Piece by Herr Friedrich' 1808"; Friedrich, Caspar David. "On the Cross in the Mountains, Letter to Schulze 1809"; Brentano, Clemens. "Various Emotions before a Seascape by Friedrich' 1810"; Kleist, Heinrich von. "Emotions before Friedrich's Seascape' 1810." In *Art in Theory, 1648-1815*, pp. 1012-1013, pp. 1023-1032.

Kant's notion of the Sublime

- _ aesthetic experience as palpable experience of freedom
- _ experience of natural sublime >> makes us -- according to Kant -- aware of the *sublimity of our moral capacities and vocation*:
- "two things will always fill the mind with renewed und increasing wonder and awe ... the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me." (Kant 1993 p. 166)
- the 'mathematical' sublime: focus on quantitative features
- the 'dynamical' sublime: focus on might

The Burkean versus the Kantian sublime in art:

Comparison of:

- Joseph Anton Koch, *Der Schmadribachfall*, 1811
- Philip James de Loutherbourg, *Avalanche in the Alps*, 1803

Mark Cheetham: “aesthetic of particularity”

Kant:

“When in intuiting nature we expand our empirical power of presentation (mathematically or dynamically) then reason the ability to [think independent and absolute totality never fails to step in and arouse the mind to an effort although a futile one to make the presentation of the senses adequate to the idea of totality. [That] this effort ... is unable to attain to that idea is itself an exhibition of the subjective purposiveness of our mind ... for the mind’s supersensible vocation.”

Further examples of the Burkean and the Kantian sublime in art:

- Joseph Mallord William Turner
- Ferdinand and Friedrich Olivier

Romanticism:

Two examples for Romantic painting

- Stubbs
- Delacroix

The basis for this new role of art within philosophical discourse was the development of “*expressivism*.”

Enlightenment:

- objectivist anthropology > intimately linked to a view of the cosmos as the objective domain of entities bound together by mechanical laws of cause and effect.

Expressivist theory in Romanticism

- centered on the notion of self-realization as the essence of human existence.
- Theodor Rehbenitz

This new theory of man, whose core formed the quintessentially modern idea of self-defining subjectivity

four categories that embody Romantic thinking:

1. unity
2. freedom as authentic self-expression
3. communion with nature
4. communion with men

Philipp Otto Runge, *Wir drei*, 1804 and *Hülsenbeck Children*, 1805

Caspar David Friedrich (Greifswald, 5 Sept 1774; Dresden, 7 May 1840).

- “Stand then upon the summit of the mountain, and gaze over the long rows of hills. Observe the passage of streams and all the magnificence that opens up before your eyes; and what feeling grips you? It is silent devotion within you. You lose yourself in boundless spaces, your whole being experiences a silent cleansing and clarification, your I vanishes, you are nothing, God is everything.” [from Carl Gustav Carus, *Nine Letters on Landscape Painting*, composed between 1815 and 1824; one year written after Friedrich, Carus’ friend, informal teacher and mentor had painted the *Wanderer*.]
- August Strindberg

PIETISM:

- a late-17th- and 18th-cent. movement within (primarily German) ***Protestantism***

Jakob Spener (1635–1705), *Pia Desideria* (1675; *Pious Desires*)

PIETISM

German Pietismus

an influential religious reform movement that began in German Lutheranism in the 17th century. Emphasizing personal faith in protest against secularization in the church, Pietism soon spread and later expanded its emphases to include social and educational concerns.

Throughout Christian history, pietistic movements have arisen in revolt whenever religion has become divorced from experience. By the beginning of the 17th century, Lutheranism had hardened into a scholastic system useful for contending with Roman Catholic and Reformed opponents but not for spiritual nourishment. Out of the devastation wrought upon Germany by the Thirty Years' War there appeared some notable signs of renewal. Interest was awakened in devotional literature and the pious mystical tradition. Influences of English Puritanism reached the European continent through the translation of works by Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, and others. Religious exiles in the Netherlands, among them William Ames, generated a distinctive brand of Dutch Pietism that soon spread into Germany as part of the reform movement that had already begun to take shape in German Lutheran circles as “Reform Orthodoxy.” The “pectoral heart theology” of these orthodox Lutherans found its highest expression and

widest audience in the writings of Johann Arndt (1555–1621). Lutheran hymnody of the period also contributed significantly to the atmosphere of spiritual renewal.

The various streams of the renewal movement converged in the life and work of Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705). Upon assuming an administrative pastorate in Frankfurt am Main, Spener became distressed by the degenerate life of the city and organized the first *collegia pietatis* (“assembly of piety”), in which lay Christians met regularly for devotional reading and spiritual exchange. The practice quickly became characteristic of the movement, and those who attended the conventicles acquired the name Pietists.

In his most famous work, *Pia Desideria* (1675; *Pious Desires*), Spener assessed contemporary orthodoxy's weaknesses and advanced proposals for reform. His proposals were: (1) greater private and public use of the scriptures, (2) greater assumption by the laity of their priestly responsibilities as believers, (3) the importance of bearing the practical fruits of a living faith, (4) ministerial training that emphasized piety and learning rather than disputation, and (5) preaching with the aim of edification. The *collegia pietatis* was the ideal instrument for such reforms.

From Spener, the leadership of German Pietism eventually passed to August Hermann Francke (1663–1727) of the University of Halle. Francke's capable leadership made Halle a thriving institutional centre of Pietism. Among the illustrious figures sent out from Halle was Henry Melchior Mühlberg (*see* Muhlenberg family), the organizer of colonial American Lutheranism.

Another Halle alumnus, Nikolaus Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf (1700–60), founded the Moravian church (*q.v.*) among Pietist-influenced Moravian refugees on his estate in Saxony. In contrast to the Halle Pietists' demand for penitential remorse, Zinzendorf's followers preached belief in Christ's atonement as the only requisite for salvation. It is perhaps through the efforts of Zinzendorf that Pietism exerted its greatest direct influence outside Germany.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, received his salutary inspiration among the Moravians and incorporated important pietistic elements, such as the emphasis on saving grace, into his fledgling evangelical movement. Other denominations felt the influence of Pietism on pastoral theology, mission activity, and modes of worship. The zenith of Pietism had been reached by the mid-18th century, but the movement continued to exist and still survives, both explicitly in parts of Germany and in the Moravian church elsewhere and implicitly in evangelical Protestantism at large. The religious revival movements of the 19th and 20th centuries were connected directly or indirectly with Pietism, which in its turn received stimulation from them.

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