



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Impact of Romanticism on Modern Literary Thought

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| ARTICLE INFO   | ABSTRACT  |
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| Received: Nov 19, 2024<br>Accepted: Jan 28, 2025   | This study explores the enduring influence of Romanticism on contemporary literary theory, criticism, and history. Romanticism, with its emphasis on emotion, individualism, and the sublime, marked a significant departure from the rational ideals of the Enlightenment, offering new frameworks for understanding literature. The movement's focus on the subjective experience and the imagination reshaped how literature was both created and analyzed. Romantic ideas continue to resonate in modern literary thought, particularly in how literary works are critiqued, interpreted, and connected to broader social and psychological contexts. The study highlights Romanticism as a foundational force in the development of key aspects of modern literary theory, including the importance of emotional experience, creativity, and the writer's imaginative expression. It also examines how Romantic ideals influenced the evolution of literary criticism, shifting it toward more affective and personal interpretations, as opposed to strictly formal or structural readings. Furthermore, the study addresses the role of literature in reflecting individual consciousness and fostering social change, a perspective that laid the groundwork for later critical theories, including Marxism and psychoanalysis. In its conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for further exploration of Romanticism's influence, particularly through its integration into literary curricula and the examination of its global impact on non-Western literary traditions. It also recommends a renewed focus on the psychological and social dimensions of literature, drawing from Romantic ideals to deepen the understanding of literary works in contemporary criticism. |
| <b>Keywords</b><br>Romanticism<br>Modern Literary Thought<br>Literary Theory<br>Literary Criticism |   |
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### INTRODUCTION

The validity of romanticism is an important part of the history of western thought, except that reading the works of romanticists at the present time, while ignoring the introductions and the accompanying literary criticism, is a debate experience worth pondering. In this context, the researchers adopt a modern approach in exploring these works, trying to build a personal and critical vision based on deep understanding and thoughtful analysis.

This experience is like a real surprise, as the reader's first impression quickly turns into the satisfaction of the content that what we read exceeds the initial expectations. It is clear that these works are more complicated than simple texts.

The works of these poets are still alive and raise continuous questions, which makes them rich resources for academic discussion. It seems that these works gained a new depth of understanding in the second half of the 20th century, as if the period that was long considered a period of literary stagnation has now begun to regain its literal meanings and recover its intellectual values.

Romanticism is one of the most important intellectual and literary movements that emerged in Europe at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Romanticism was a reaction against the rationalism and traditionalism that dominated literary and technical thought in the Enlightenment era. The purity of romanticism is definitely on emotions, imagination and nature, and its focus on individuality and personal freedom, which greatly affects many literary and intellectual fields.

And the publication and publication of romance outside of Europe to influence the world literature, including Arabic literature. The study of the influence of romanticism on modern literary thought is a very important topic to understand the deep transformations witnessed by literature in recent decades, and how this movement helped to form new concepts about divinity, freedom, nature, and the love between man and the world.

This study aims to explore the enduring influence of Romanticism on contemporary literary theory, criticism, and practice. It examines how the movement's core ideas have shaped modern approaches to literature, fostering a more holistic and dynamic understanding of literary works. By delving into the intersection of Romanticism and modern literary thought, this study highlights the lasting legacy of Romantic ideals and their continued relevance in the way we engage with literature today.

### **Study problem:**

The main problem of the study is the extent of the influence of romanticism on modern literary thought, and how this movement affected the development of new literary styles and writing styles, as well as how to reconstruct the concept of literature in general. It is also possible to determine the extent of the influence of romanticism on contemporary Arabic literature and whether this movement contributed to the stimulation of literary innovations in this context.

### **Study questions:**

The study endeavors to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of romanticism and how are they different from previous literary movements such as classicism?
2. How did romanticism affect the development of modern literary thought in general?
3. To what extent can the effects of romance be observed in modern Arabic literature?
4. What are the most important themes of romantic themes in modern literature?
5. How did modern literature restore the idea of the relationship between man, nature, individual and society thanks to romanticism?

### **Importance of study:**

The importance of this research lies in highlighting the pivotal role played by romance in stirring the stagnant waters of western and world literature, and providing a new vision of individual emotions and experiences. Also, the understanding of the effects of romanticism in the modern literary thought helps to analyze the evolutions of the martyrs of the literature in the later periods, and how this movement helped in the formation of new standards of literary creativity. In the Arabic context, the research contributes to determining the extent of the use of Arabic literature by this movement and its profound effects on contemporary literature.

### **Objectives of the study:**

1. Analysis of romantic characteristics and effects in modern literary thought.
2. Exploring the romantic period in the reconstruction of literary writing styles.
3. Studying the effects of romance on contemporary Arabic literature.
4. Highlighting the recurring themes and symbols in romantic literature and the influences in modern writing.
5. Presenting an interpretation of the changes in literature's view of nature, the individual, and the collective due to romantic influences.

## **Previous Studies**

### **Mariyam study (2023) entitled exploring the Essence of Romanticism in literature.**

This study aims to explore the extent to which the essence of Romanticism has been explored in literature, and to demonstrate the profound and lasting influence of the Romantic movement. Romanticism, which flourished in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was characterized by its emphasis on emotion, imagination, individualism, and transcendence. Through a detailed exploration of its core elements, such as the celebration of emotion, the power of creativity, and the importance of nature, this article reveals the heart of Romanticism. Prominent Romantic authors such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, and Jane Austen are examined in the context of their contributions to the movement.

These authors created literary masterpieces that continue to fascinate readers with their themes of love, rebellion, and exploration of the human soul. Furthermore, this article highlights the lasting legacy of Romanticism in modern literature, music, visual arts, and popular culture.

From the works of contemporary authors who drew inspiration from Romantic ideals to the enduring presence of Romantic themes in contemporary entertainment, the influence of this literary movement is undeniable. At its core, *Exploring the Essence of Romanticism in Literature* highlights the enduring power of Romanticism in shaping our understanding of human emotion, creativity, and the eternal connection between humanity and the natural world.

### **Sofia study (2021) entitled Importance of Romantic period in Modern Day English.**

The aim of this research paper is to analyse the significance of romantic era in English Literature. This era brought a revolutionary change in English Literature and transformed English Literature to a vast extent. Romanticism era began spanning approximately 1800-1850. This was totally in contrast to existing idea of English literature and it emphasised individual heroism that changed the overall concept of humanity. It stressed upon human emotions and individual feelings instead of stressing upon cultural artificiality.

This study has provided a constructive overview on ways this era influenced area of English Literature. It is based upon a secondary research method that aided in finding relevant literature on romantic era. By reviewing those articles this research paper has been developed to provide a clear concept of ways romanticism marks a milestone for starting a new era in English Literature.

### **Petru study (2021) entitled The Romantic Critical Thinking: Theoretical Incoherence of a Unitary Movement.**

This study aims to reveal the importance of the emergence of expressive theory in the literary movement known as Romanticism. The study also focused on Romanticism's emphasis on subjective experience and its disregard for creative work as one aspect of its rejection of the principles of the Enlightenment and neoclassicism. Moreover, although Romanticism was bound to time and place and arose in connection with the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, the proponents of Romanticism were escapists rather than rebels in an attempt to improve social conditions.

These are some of the reasons why critics have considered Romanticism an artistic rather than a social movement, and have hesitated to speak of Romantic ideology in Marxist terms in relation to the socio-historical position of literature, especially when referring to the great Romantic literary criticism expressed in Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Coleridge's literary biographies, and Shelley's defense of poetry.

These texts represent the main interest of the present study, which aims to have two aspects: first, to distinguish ideas and principles concerning the origin of poetry, its subject matter and language, the role of the poet, and poetic imagination, and second, to present the ways in which these ideas are or are not embodied in literary practice, specifically in Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey and Shelley's To the Lark.

## ROMANTICISM

Romanticism is the pioneer of the modern era in thought and literature, as it occupies great importance in the history of modern thought. It included many principles and trends and paved the way for it in the eighteenth century, as it facilitated the human being in obtaining his private rights, and was the reason for paving the way for his contemporary revolutions, and after that it worked to pave the way for all the literary schools that followed it, and in containing the public, and these principles were opposed to the classical tables on which romanticism was built in the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries in Europe.

The first emergence of romanticism was in England first and then in Germany, France, Spain and Italy, as the philosophical trend on which romanticism is based is the emotional trend represented in emotional philosophy in the face of rational philosophy, which had an influential role in supporting the classical school.

The Romantics were mostly from the middle or bourgeois classes, and the middle class rose in the era of the Romantics, and its goal was to obtain political and social rights. Individuals relied on writers, read them, depended on them, and were satisfied with them.

The writers themselves were at the heart of these classes, and they preferred to express their class and live in the heart of their issues and problems, instead of continuing to live like their ancestors, on the margins of an aristocratic class that they did not belong to. Therefore, the writers denied themselves the humble position in the society in which they lived, and expressed values that did not represent the needs of their social class. However, the writers' feelings were in line with their human feelings, and their awareness was in order to lead them to the liberation battle against the parasites of the aristocrats. Their literature was an introduction and accompaniment to the revolution, and their expression of freedom and humanity with its human messages (Hilal. 1962, p: 380).

Romanticism is considered the essence of revolution and freedom for medicine from the control of ancient Thunan and Latin literatures. The word romanticism is originally a word derived from the word Romanus, which was applied to the languages and literatures that branched off from the ancient Latin language and which were considered, throughout the Middle Ages, global dialects of the language of ancient Rome.

Romanticism is one of the dialects specific to Switzerland, and by choosing this term the Romantics intended it to be the title of their doctrine, which is to distinguish between their history, literature and national culture, which is Romanticism, and the history, literature and culture of ancient Greece and Latin, which dominated classicism (Muhammad, N.D, p: 97).

Romanticism is a psychological state and an expression of that state more than a literary doctrine that replaces some artistic principles with other principles, since its essence is the dissolution of all principles and restrictions and the easing of their shackles, in order to liberate human genius and set out according to its mood. Poetry and literature at that time were like the singing of a bird and the gurgling of something, the thunder of winds and a thunderstorm, which cannot be subject to rules and do not result from voluntary, alert action and voluntary power, since its sole control is through the innate orientation to nature and the feeling of it.

### **The concept of romance:**

Romanticism is a cultural and artistic movement that originated in Europe at the end of the 18th century and continued until the mid-19th century. Romanticism is believed to be a reaction against the classical principles that dominated art and literature in the previous eras, such as those that embody rationality, organization, and tradition in the arts. Romanticism, by its concepts, seeks to exceed the classical principles and their abstractions, which are of great importance to reason, and the fact is that the concept of romanticism cannot be captured. According to many of us, it is said that "Kone la does not mean anything specific in the opinion of the critics, except that there are many common and common characteristics between the meanings.

"Romanticism" is the first use of the word romanticism by John Jacques Rousseau during his description of the lakes of Switzerland, saying: "The devil of Bayan Lake is the wildest, and my romance is the devil of Geneva Lake, because the rocks and forests are the closest to the waters (Mahfooz, 2007: 65).

Therefore, romance can be exalted by art in general and literature in particular, and it can be said that "wherever art was glorious, it was romance" (Deeb, 2006: 29) (1). Romanticism does not belong to literature, but to music and painting.

### **The origins of the romantic movement:**

Therefore, romance can be exalted by art in general and literature in particular, and it can be said that "wherever there was art, there was romance." Romanticism does not belong to literature, but to music and painting.

The reasons for the emergence of romance can be summarized as follows:

- The bourgeois class, represented by the class of merchants and industrial war lords during the industrial revolution and the Napoleonic revolution in France, and later on, the people lost their sense and felt the impact of the strict classical system, where they rebelled against the sacred rights that the kings claimed for themselves and the church fathers and the religious community, and wanted the development to flourish. The order of this class and the connection of the revolution with all of us is based on these rights with limitations and obligations (Marzooq, 2004: 14).
  - The troubled psychological state that was the main component of the French in the light of the upheavals in the French country, including the political, economic, and social conditions, the internal rift and the suffering, in addition to the emigration of some great writers to England and Germany, and the extent to which they were influenced by the customs of the country and the intellectual and cultural data, this is a falsehood. Revelations with great epicness and admiration (Dmitriev, 2007: 19).
  - The discovery of Shakespeare's literature, which did not adhere to the three unities of time, place, and hadith, and these genres did not adhere to the principle of separation between the genres that the Greeks and the new classics adhered to, and the ability to analyze and describe human emotions and human morals, in addition to the views of Jacques Rousseau, who referred to nature and nature. (Ferst, 1982: 182).
  - Basically, we can reach the emergence of two main trends that represent the Romantic movement:
  - That the philosophical trend calls for the initiation of thought and freedom from all the previous rules and concepts. This trend leads philosophers published in Europe such as John Jacques Rousseau, Blake, Hegel, Chateaubriand and Voltaire.
  - The anxiety of political and social conditions, and the creation of anxiety is the result, Europe has witnessed major events: the industrial revolution, the French revolution, the struggle for colonies and wars, and the result of this is the spread of the so-called disease of the age, which is the feeling of discouragement and depression.

Romanticism, therefore, appeared with the effects of the roots in the history of European thought at the end of the Renaissance era, and the expansion of the civilizational development at that time, which began with the advancement of science and the expansion of knowledge, and the manifestation of strong influences in the visual arts, music, architecture, and literature. the end As the influence of romanticism had a profound effect on history, education, natural sciences, and a large and complex influence on politics, romanticism in this sense became the tendency of the people, the goals of the edification of the people or this class of the developing bourgeoisie, including intellectual submission, political and economic submission to parents, all of them (Marzouq, 2004, 11).

Romanticism with essential roots does not begin with a specific century, and looking at our history before the 18th century, we find that the history of romanticism is older than what Europe knew in the 12th century, and its vitality remained until after the middle centuries.

Also, the name of our pre-romantic book, which preserves the ideas and style of pre-romantic writers and thinkers such as Rousseau, Yonck, McPherson, is the line of development during the entire 18th century, as it paved the way for the crystallization of the term romanticism. Thus, despite the fact that romanticism was a literary revolution in its decisive deviations, it was in fact the result of an extended process of development over the decades (Frost, 1982: 181). So when we don't talk about the term romance, we don't talk about romantic manners, as well as the Elizabethan romance and the romance of the Najds even in the 19th century novels.

## **LITERARY STUDIES AND LITERARY THEORY**

The sheer attempt to providing clear definitions to critical terms that constitute Literary Studies proves impossible, mainly illustrating the impossibility of reaching agreement among critics, which in turn, feeds into the urgency of discussing the issue. My attempt to monitor the relationship between the concepts of "literary theory" and "literary criticism" requires an understanding of these two terms in terms of their definition and handling in the literary lesson.

Our definition of both literary theory and literary criticism must be preceded by talking about the concept of "literary study" first, a concept that represents a great incubator for everything that can be said about literary theory or literary criticism. We can say that literary study does not mean "literature" itself; Literature is a creative activity that pours into art, while that study is concerned with understanding and treating literature. The literary study by its nature is divided into three sections. Literary theory, literary criticism, and literary history. In a quick overview of these three concepts, we can say that literary theory deals with the principles, classifications, and levels in literature, while criticism deals with the study of specific literary works, and literary history comes to monitor the movement of these literary works with influence and influence.

### **Literary criticism and literary history**

The necessity of abstraction when engaging with literary theory leads to the incorporation of two other essential concepts: literary criticism and literary history. In their referenced work, René Wellek and Austin Warren address both of these concepts, stating that the study of a literary work can be understood through one of two approaches: either literary criticism or literary history. Literary criticism focuses on the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of a work, whereas literary history examines the development of the text and its influence on preceding works.

This distinction implies that literary theory is not confined to a particular literary work but rather explores broader literary concepts, while literary criticism and history aim to offer a more specific analysis of a single text, employing the foundational concepts established by literary theory (Wellek, 1991).

The disagreement surrounding the nature of concepts related to literary theory inevitably leads to divergent views on the definition of literary criticism. If literature is subject to debate rather than consensus, then criticism will similarly be contested. As criticism is subordinate to literature, as previously mentioned, scholars' definitions of it vary in attempts to understand its function. Ahmed Amin defines criticism as "a review of literary works to discern their merits and flaws" (Amin, 1952), while Muhammad Ghunaimi Hilal emphasizes that the essence of critical work "is primarily based on revealing the aspects of artistic maturity in literary production, distinguishing them from others through explanation and clarification, followed by a general judgment" (Hilal, 1997).

It is evident that while Amin views criticism as a tool primarily concerned with distinguishing the good from the bad in a literary text, Hilal's concept expands the scope to include an examination of artistic maturity, focusing on exposition and reasoning. The general evaluative judgment, according to Hilal, comes at a later stage.

If we seek to adopt a comprehensive definition of literary criticism that remains impartial to all existing definitions, we can draw on Stanley Hayman's work *Literary Criticism and Its Modern Schools*. This book categorizes the various tasks performed by literary criticism, encompassing

interpretive criticism, evaluative criticism, follower criticism, biographical criticism, folklore-based criticism, psychological criticism, idealistic criticism, and realistic criticism, among other approaches.

These categories collectively focus on the analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and comparison of literary works. Recognizing the complexity of the critic's role, Hayman defined literary criticism in a manner that underscores its challenging nature, stating that criticism is "an organized use of non-literary techniques and knowledge also non-literary in order to gain insight into literature" (Hayman, 1958).

### **Literature and criticism**

The relationship between criticism and literature has been widely discussed, and as indicated in the previous section, this relationship primarily appears to be one of dependency.

Literature precedes and necessitates criticism; we cannot imagine the emergence of criticism without the establishment of the literary work. As Howaidi (1998) states, "Expressing a human's emotional experience takes precedence over an analysis, tasting, and judgment of it," which supports the idea that literature takes precedence over criticism. However, several differences can be observed between the two.

One key distinction is that criticism operates within the realm of science and method, while literature belongs to the domain of art and does not always adhere to a systematic approach. Imbert (1991) further elaborates, noting that "literature revolves around the orbit of art and does not always comply with the curriculum, whereas criticism, in contrast, is the precise cultural study of that expression." This distinction does not, of course, imply a complete separation between literature and criticism; rather, both seem to complement and necessitate each other.

As Imbert (1991) suggests, "In every poet lies a critic who helps him take care in constructing his poem, and within every critic lies a poet who teaches him to empathize with the text from within what he reads."

### **Literary theory and criticism**

We divided the study of literature into three main, overlapping sections: literary theory, literary criticism, and literary history. These sections are more complex and interrelated than they may initially appear, as literary theory must provide solid and robust foundations for literary criticism. Literary criticism begins its analysis of literary works from a specific approach, relying heavily on the general rules and principles established by literary theory.

In this sense, literary theory offers a broad framework for understanding literary criticism, which itself is informed by the critical perspectives taught in literature.

The overlap between the terms "literary theory" and "literary criticism" does not, however, obscure the fact that many individuals working in the field of literature have been critics without being theorists, and vice versa. For instance, Aristotle was a proponent of literary theory, particularly his theory of catharsis, which posits that literature serves primarily to purify our emotions. However, he was not a critic, as he did not apply his theory to specific texts.

In contrast, contemporary theory, such as the "San Historical interpretation of literature" (Wellek, 1991), emphasizes a different approach.

It is important to note that many of those we consider theorists or scholars in literary theory were simultaneously critics. A critic must develop or adopt their own theoretical framework that underpins their critical approach.

If we accept that literature precedes criticism and thus stimulates it, we must also recognize that criticism serves as a significant catalyst for the development of literary theory. It is unimaginable for a critic to lack a broader perspective that seeks to deepen and explore literature. In reality, every

advancement in literary theory inevitably influences criticism, and vice versa; developments in criticism also contribute to the evolution of literary theory.

Any literary theory, whether ancient or modern, should always be subject to rigorous debate because it is intrinsically linked to literature and art, domains that resist simplification or unquestioned assumptions.

As K.M. Newton (1996) suggests, a thorough understanding of any literary theory- whether classical or contemporary-requires not only familiarity with the arguments supporting it but also an awareness of alternative perspectives that may either explicitly or implicitly challenge that theory. To illustrate the validity of this view, one need only examine any literary theory, past or present, to observe the considerable controversy surrounding its interpretation and application.

Plato introduces the theory of the world of forms, which he claims is distorted by poetry, presenting an ancient view that Aristotle later critiques with his theory of catharsis. Aristotle emphasizes the importance of considering poetry in terms of its fulfillment of psychological functions, which have social implications. Meanwhile, the Formalists differ from the Marxists on the necessity of viewing literature solely as an aesthetic structure.

In contrast to these positions, the Polish critic Roman Ingarden offers a novel approach, arguing that criticism should not focus on the literary work as an object but instead adopt a phenomenological perspective that centers on the intentionality of feeling (Ibid, 1996). Given the diversity of viewpoints, it is evident that any attempt to examine the influence of literary theory on modern and contemporary criticism requires an exploration of the history of literary theory since the Renaissance in Europe and America, which provided the foundation for contemporary efforts in literary criticism.

A historical examination of the connection between literary theory and criticism does not necessitate reference to the ancient Arab contributions, as this would divert from the study's focus and lead to unnecessary temporal and spatial comparisons. It is widely accepted among critics that "modern criticism" emerged first in Europe and America, before influencing the literary environment of the Arab world in the early 20th century and subsequently shaping the analysis and practice of texts in other periods.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The investigation into Romanticism and its influence on modern literary thought highlights the profound impact of this intellectual movement on the development of contemporary literary theory, criticism, and history. Romanticism, with its emphasis on emotion, individualism, and the sublime, challenged the prevailing norms of the Enlightenment and introduced a new perspective through which literature could be interpreted. The ideas of Romanticism continue to resonate in contemporary literary thought, influencing how we engage with, critique, and analyze the social and psychological dimensions of literary works. By focusing on the imagination, subjective experience, and the transcendental elements of life, Romanticism laid the groundwork for numerous modern literary movements and critical methodologies.

## **RESULTS:**

1. Romanticism established key conceptual foundations for many aspects of modern literary theory, particularly its focus on subjectivity, emotional experience, and the significance of the writer's creative imagination. These ideas have been integral to the development of various literary schools of thought, including existentialism, psychoanalysis, and postmodernism.
2. Romanticism significantly influenced the nature of literary criticism, as critics adopted its ideals of emotion, intuition, and personal interpretation in analyzing literary works. This shift moved criticism away from formalist or structural readings toward more holistic, affective approaches that consider the emotional and psychological impact of literature.



- Romanticism emphasized the psychological and social functions of literature, recognizing literary texts not only as reflections of individual consciousness but also as vehicles for social change. This perspective has been crucial to the development of subsequent critical theories, particularly those of Marxism and psychoanalysis.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Further Exploration of Romanticism's Influence: Scholars and critics should continue to explore the multifaceted influence of Romanticism on contemporary literary theory and criticism. Further research into the intersections between Romantic ideals and modern literary movements, such as Modernism and Postmodernism, will deepen our understanding of how these foundational concepts have evolved over time.
- Integration of Romanticism in Literary Curricula: Given the lasting relevance of Romantic ideas in modern literary criticism, it is recommended that Romanticism be more prominently featured in literary studies curricula. This would enable students to gain a deeper understanding of the historical and intellectual context of modern literary thought and its ongoing significance.
- Cross-Cultural Examination of Romanticism's Impact: Since Romanticism significantly influenced both European and American literary traditions, exploring its impact on non-Western literary traditions would offer valuable insights into the global reach of Romantic ideals. This approach would expand the scope of Romanticism's influence and provide a more inclusive understanding of its legacy within world literature.
- Emphasizing the Psychological and Social Functions of Literature: Contemporary literary criticism could benefit from a renewed emphasis on the psychological and social dimensions of literature, drawing on Romantic ideas about the individual's inner life and its connection to broader social and cultural movements. This focus would offer new methods for engaging with literary texts and understanding their societal relevance.

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