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What is the difference between romanticism and realism

Realism involves representing real life. In this image, my birthday is represented by the wearing of high heels and the consumption of special products that have meaning to me.Eliza's imagesYes! There are codes, conventions and defined sets of conditions that tell us if a text is using Romanticism or Realism or elements of both.If only someone could write them down ...Look at the picture on the right. It only takes moments for the experienced eye to appreciate that this is an image of realism. The author of the image, myself, wanted to capture my birthday in London through a still life photograph of elements that would remind me of realistic events of the day. The shoe represents that I always wear high heels on my birthday, and these ones finally don't hurt my feet anymore. The Burger Rings represent my favourite snack purchased from the Australian shop in London. So that was special. The yellow bag is full of similar treats, perhaps representing that I love all world cultures and cuisine. The Belgian beer on the right represents future plans to visit, and the glass of ale represents my boyfriend who was with me. Inside my handbag you can just see my new Kindle which he gave me for my birthday. Wow. Did you get all that?Realism definition: Realism texts are authored. This means that a set of realistic elements are combined to create an impression of real life.Is Your Author a Realist or a Romanticist?Realist authors - 1820 to 1920:Realism emerged in literary work in the 19th century. Key authors include George Eliot, Guy De Maupassant, Emile Zola, Gustave Flaubert, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Key to understanding their authorship is the idea that the literary was political. Realist authors wanted to expose the conditions of the working class, the lack of luxury and pomp in real life, and the triumph of the ordinary man over circumstance. Think Russian Revolution. They found a way to communicate great stories that lay in the banal and ordinary.If you look back at the image of my birthday you can really appreciate how much meaning can be communicated from ordinary life. It is certainly not an image of luxury, but there is great meaning in it. Today many people write blogs and articles detailing how they found the extraordinary through the ordinary. Reality television follows the narrative that ordinary people have extraordinary gifts and talents to share if only given the chance. Realism endures today.Romantic Authors 1798 to 1870:Realism rebelled against John Keat's much quoted line "beauty is truth and truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know." (1820 from Ode On A Grecian Urn). Realists believed that the working class needed to find their own treasures, and that appreciating beauty and waxing about how it alone satisfied the soul was a load of "Romantic" nonsense.The year of publication is significant. 1820 is also regarded as the beginning of the movement of realism. Looking closely at Ode On A Grecian Urn we can see that it discusses the soul, eternity, nature and art and alludes to conquered civilizations and conjectures about their feelings. Key romantic authors; Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, William Blake, John Clare and William Wordsworth all admired landscapes, nature, art and human emotions and saw that there was great wisdom in appreciating the idea that everyone could access the divine in the things of beauty they saw in the world.Today romanticism is a feature of travel writing where we can see articles appealing to the sense of experience and emotion received when on holiday. Our Romantic authors became enraptured by the newly discovered spoils of world wide travel by sea and rebelled against Puritan ideas that God had separated Himself from the world. Blake asked in his early writing in The Tyger (1794) "What Immortal hand or eye did frame thy fearful symmetry?" Which ushered in the Romantic age where discovery was paramount. Romanticism instills a sense of entitlement. All are capable of accessing truth. There are no class boundaries. Karl Marx Author of CommunismNarrative - Realist or Romantic?Realist Narrative:The impetus for the Russian Revolution was the chasm between landowners and aristocracy and the peasants that worked the fields. The industrial revolution posed key problems for Russian society, which needed to upgrade agricultural methods in order to trade competitively. New modes of travel and cargo freight meant the doors had opened to international markets and Russia found itself in a dilemma. Uneducated, illiterate peasants could not operate complex machinery unless they were convinced it would be to their betterment. They wanted more of a share in the spoils of efficiency as they could see that their masters needed to educate them. With this education came aspiration, and the result was a series of uprisings leading to the overthrow of the Tsar Royal Family in 1917 and the installation of a communist regime.Prior to this the authors of the Realism movement delved into the reality of life for peasants and the picture they painted was anything but romantic. Far from enjoying landscapes, nature and art, the reality for those working the fields involved long hours of toil, shorter lifespans and subsistence lifestyles at the behest of an aristocracy that saw their subjects as less-than.Realists painted images that exposed the hardships and inflicted guilt upon the ruling classes, who could no longer claim to be in ignorance of the plight of the common man. Tolstoy's War and Peace (1869) tells the story of Napoleon's French Invasion of Russia and claims the philosophical writing of Shopenhauer as a major influence.Shopenhauer wrote that human will was the main impetus for change. That society did not function under zeitgeist, or collective consciousness, and in fact, each individual made decisions that suited them first and foremost. Realism in philosophy proposed that human will was fickle and those without the knowledge of "greater society" best be controlled through an ordered system of distribution that recognised that base urges could be satisfied, but man's desires could never be completely satisfied.Karl Marx wrote The Communist Manifesto in 1848 and agreed that all societies experience class struggle in order to progress. He saw capitalism as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie who ran the system for their own benefit and unable to form a caring society as it was essentially, a disordered system that relied on the benevolent will of individuals. The ideal society would have a system of government with a collection of ordinary people representing the majority to ensure income was distributed evenly.In realist narratives today we see this most apparent in the function that documentaries play in our modern culture. Documentaries aim to bring to the public eye a problem society faces, and offer solutions that are real and achievable. Documentaries provide experience of guilt and frequently evidence for the plight of the less fortunate that cannot be ignored. Other texts that emphasise realism include soap operas, where the current social issues of the day are tackled through the lives of ordinary people. The aforementioned reality TV texts present individuals in pursuit of a "need" that is difficult to attain, a dream that can become a reality if they "win". In order to "win" the contestant must display enough skill to be admitted into the "society of leaders", which itself is comprised of ordinary people who have excelled in some manner. (eg Louis Walsh, Simon Cowell, Sir Alan Sugar etc).The Princess Bride - Elements of RomanticismRomantic Narrative:The Romantic movement had its philosophical roots in Europe and its literary expression in England. The 17th and early 18th century saw rapid social change as agricultural lifestyles were displaced by the introduction of machinery, leading to many works lamenting the loss of the beauty of the countryside.Religious change from Catholicism to unbridled Protestantism saw the removal of images of God, which had been a hallmark of Catholic expressions, best remembered by detailed stained glass windows and renaissance art expressing biblical stories. Puritanical Christianity had put down roots, and freedom of religious expression was limited to the gift of being able to read the Bible.The innovation of world wide travel caused many to question Puritan viewpoints. Romanticism gave birth to fantasy worlds in texts like Kubla Khan by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Exploring the exotic world of belief systems and writing poems with the lyricism of rhyme and classical structural forms sought to legitimise the idea that there was more than one world faith.Romanticists turned to the natural world and applied fantasy elements, with John Keats regarded as the key writer of the movement, with works that endure today including the famous odes; Ode to a Nightingale, Ode to Psyche, Ode on a Grecian Urn, To Autumn, Ode on Indolence and Ode on Melancholy; representing the key aspects of Romanticism. Keats referenced myths and legends in his work, as do all Romantic writers, in order to explore higher concepts of divine wisdom.Romanticism can be summarised as the triumph over human understanding of experience and is in line with concepts such as self actualization, where it is possible to achieve the desires of the heart.Without Romanticism, we would not enjoy texts such as romantic comedy, where the beauty of the "wronged" female is finally recognised and results in the expression of pure and perfect love. The phenomenon of Disney movies, where animals, fantasy characters and heroes are pitched against villains follow "discovery templates" which can be represented through travel, discovery of the exotic, appreciation of art or nature, and/or the benefit of seeking out new experiences. The Romantics endure because they taught us to become great explorers.Codes of Realism and RomanticismKey Text Realist (RE) Romantic (RO)Codes/Conventions and Features(RO) Kubla Khan - Samuel Taylor ColeridgeMyth and legend: Xanadu, Ghengis Khan, biblical Canaan lands(RO) Ode on a Grecian Urn - John KeatsObject contains divine properties. Omniscient narrator.(RO) The Tyger - William BlakeSubject "the tiger" from exotic travelling causes the writer to question Puritan viewpoints.(RO) Tintern Abbey - William WordsworthLoss of God as Image. Poet explores what replaces this as an inner sense of the magnificent.(RO) The War Song of Dinas Vawr - Thomas Love PeacockRefers to the French Revolution using comparison to the English invasion of Wales in the 13th century.(RO) She Walks in Beauty - Lord ByronThe romantic concept of beauty as the ultimate way to recognise pure love.(RO) England in 1819 - Percy Bysshe ShelleyThe rejection of monarchy as wise and the dawn of humanism as opposed to Puritan thought.(RO) Frankenstein - Mary ShelleyThe unexpected conclusion that all life's creatures desire love over materialism.(RE) Anna Karenina - Leo TolstoyThe persistence of a woman adulterous to her husband, her society and ultimately herself. Shopenhauer's assertion that the will is supreme and can lead to self destruction if not controlled.(RE) War and Peace - Leo TolstoyThe French Invasion of Russia used to discuss the future of the peasant class in an industrial world.(RE) Middlemarch: A study of Provincial Life - George EliotMultiple plots and interlocking narratives exposing real people's lives and social issues.(RE) The Brothers Karamazov - Fyodor DostoyevskyMultiple plots surround four brothers who commit many banalities. Questions God, free will and the role of faith in an organised society.(RE) The Cherry Orchard - Anton ChekhovCommunism - The futility of aristocratic rulers. The aristocratic family behave idly and end up selling their cherry orchard to a serf.(RE) Madame Bovary - Gustave FlaubertStyle: Flaubert loathed pretty prose and flowery description, searching for the most accurate turn of phrase and avoidance of cliché.(RE) La Comedie Humane - Emile ZolaAnti Capitalism: The novel explores violence, alcoholism and prostitution which increased remarkably during the industrial revolution.(RE) The Necklace - Guy de MaupassantAnti bourgeoisie and reality: A woman imagines herself as important, but in reality is a lowly clerk's wife.(RE) The Turn of the Screw - Henry JamesWomen facing oppression and abuse as they try to embody the capitalism of the new Americas.(RE) 1930s French cinemaNote that literary realism grew into the poetic realism movement in French cinema from the 1930s onwards.The Style of Realists and RomanticsThe style of the Romantics tends to borrow formal poetic conventions and structures from classical literary movements. So poetic techniques and forms are present and varied in all of the Romantic texts. Realists decry exposition and try to describe as accurately as possible that a thing is a thing - to put it generally. The literary contribution of realism is the transformation of political and philosophical thought through storytelling that is deliberately authored. Never forget, a text that purports to be "real", is in fact, only a representation of the real, edited by a skilled author.The Underbelly of RealismThis content is accurate and true to the best of the author's knowledge and is not meant to substitute for formal and individualized advice from a qualified professional.© 2012 Lisa McKnightCommentsIan Stuart Robertson from London England on December 22, 2014.They say truth is sometimes stranger than fiction' Realism may be cold and blunt however romanticism gives us the opportunity expand on the original and perhaps give the story a moral ending.Lisa McKnight (author) from London on October 30, 2014.They say there's a little bit of the writer in every story :)Ian Stuart Robertson from London England on October 28, 2014.I yearn for those fabled lands created by authors in addition to the realms I have created myself. The theory of a parallel universe is also an interesting concept too.Lisa McKnight (author) from London on May 02, 2012:Thanks wayseeker. I felt it was really important to try to define the conventions of realist and romantic narratives and explain these using famous texts as examples. People often know the theory naturally, it is nice to help people understand they had it right all along!wayseeker from Colorado on April 20, 2012:Eliza,I love romantic and realism literature, though I don't have quite as much time to read it as I'd like, but then, who does? I love the depth of passion that these writers all brought to their work and the richness of description they used, though in very different ways and for very different purposes.I had never really considered their differences in this much depth, nor did I really understand their roots. This article is so well written with such wonderful detail--bravo!Definitely valuable for the information provided, and a rich resource for anyone who might be specifically researching these topics.Voted up, useful and interesting!wayseekerLisa McKnight (author) from London on April 19, 2012:Thanks charmike4. I enjoy the subject and the burger rings too. I used to put them on all ten fingers and eat them one by one :)Lisa McKnight (author) from London on April 19, 2012:Thank you fpher48! A am truly touched by your comments - you have made my week!Michael Kromwyk from Adelaide, South Australia on April 18, 2012:Eliza thanks for helping us to understand realism & romanticism in such a simple way - the example picture of your birthday was genius.'I'm a huge fan of burger rings - when I was a uni student I used to have Burger Rings for dinner every night because they were under 50c (30p) for the large bag...glad to have found another fan! Cheers MichaelSuzie from Carson City on April 18, 2012:Eliza.....Positively fabulous. Voted Up and all (not funny). Only 3 months with us here on Hubpages? Welcome. You are definitely a wonderful addition.This has to be one the most interesting and informative hubs I have come across in my 11 months on board.You will love it here and I can see you will have much success!!! Count me as a follower.

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