

# Music, Literature, Dance and Fashion | Literature | From rationalism to European romanticism, the first half of the 19th century

Industrialisation and advances in science and technology did not bring relief to the masses, and as the creative minds of Europe tried to find an alternative inner source for aesthetic experience the “mysterious East” became crucial.

Romanticism in literature was an intellectual movement that has been seen as a response to the negative side of the Industrial Revolution and to rationalism in the arts. Romanticism manifested itself variously in different countries, so while it is closely associated with nationalism in Central Europe it was associated with the revolutionary ideals of the French Revolution in Western Europe. The Romantics searched for aesthetic experience in emotions, and held up folk art, whether European or “Oriental”, as exemplary. Translation of the Arabian Nights and the foundation of a new literary genre the “Oriental Tale” had a powerful influence on its development. Among the most renowned Romantic writers are H. de Balzac and A. Dumas (France); E. A. Poe (USA); Sir W. Scott, T. Chatterton and Lord Byron (UK); J. W. von Goethe (Germany); and A. Pushkin (Russia). Prominent motifs of Romanticism are nature, the supernatural, folk art, mythology and travel. Romanticism was followed by Naturalism towards the end of the 19th century.



**Working Number:** PD 021

**Name:** Lord Byron

**Holding Museum:** The Library of Congress

**Date:** c. 1840 (date of publication)

**Materials:** Lithograph

**Curator Justification:** The English poet Lord Byron was a pre-eminent figure of European romanticism best known for his narrative poems Don Juan and Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and the short lyrical poem “She Walks in Beauty”.



**Working Number:** PD 022

**Name:** Morrison's original production of Faust

**Holding Museum:** The Library of Congress

**Date:** c. 1896 (date of publication)

**Materials:** Colour lithograph

**Curator Justification:** Faust is a tragic drama in two parts written by the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe that explores universals such as good and evil, God and the devil and sexuality and mortality.



**Working Number:** AT 038

**Name:** Poem

**Holding Museum:** Austrian State Archives

**Date:** 1869

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Monarchs from all over Europe arrived to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, including Empress Eugenie of France, Emperor Franz-Josef I of Austria-Hungary and the Prince and Princess of Wales. To commemorate the occasion medals were issued, opera

houses were built and odes were written to pay honour to the imperial guests.



**Working Number:** PD 023

**Name:** Honoré de Balzac

**Holding Museum:** The Library of Congress

**Date:** c. 1899

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** The French novelist and playwright Honoré de Balzac is considered among the founders of realism in Literature. Among his best-known works are the novel cycle known as La Comédie humaine in which he draws a panoramic view of post-1815 France.



**Working Number:** FR 127

**Name:** Émile Zola. J'accuse! ... 11-13 January 1898

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** 1898

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Émile Zola was a French writer and a nominee for the Nobel Prize in Literature whose work represents the Naturalism school, which although focused on events from daily life tried to define the underlying factors of social behaviour, such as hereditary and social environment. Among his famous works was the novel cycle Les Rougon-Macquart.



**Working Number:** FR 093

**Name:** Théâtre du Châtelet. Germinal

**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** 1880

**Materials:** -

**Curator Justification:** Émile Zola was a French writer and a nominee for the Nobel Prize in Literature whose work represents the Naturalism school, which although focused on events from daily life tried to define the underlying factors of social behaviour, such as hereditary and social environment. Among his famous works was the novel cycle Les Rougon-Macquart.



**Working Number:** FR 122

**Name:** Victor Hugo at Casteret

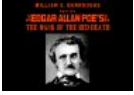
**Holding Museum:** National Library of France

**Date:** 1852–1855

**Materials:** -

**Curator** Victor Hugo was a French dramatist, novelist and poet associated with European Romanticism.  
**Justification:** Among his best-known works are the novels Notre Dame de Paris (The Hunchback of Notre-Dame) and Les Misérables, the latter of which focuses on social misery and injustice.

---



**Working Number:** PD 026

**Name:** Poster of "The Mask of the Red Death: A Fantasy", by Edgar Allan Poe

**Holding Museum:** -

**Date:** 1842 (publication of the short story)

**Materials:** -

**Curator** Edgar Allen Poe was an American poet, writer and critic whom many consider the father of the detective story. One of Poe's common themes was death and loss: since it was published in 1842, "The Mask of the Red Death: A Fantasy" has been adapted to many forms including the 1964 motion picture.  
**Justification:**



**Working Number:** PD 020

**Name:** Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin, half-length portrait

**Holding Museum:** The Library of Congress

**Date:** Between 1880 and 1886

**Materials:** -

**Curator** Aleksandr Pushkin was a Russian poet and dramatist of the romantic school whom many consider the founder of modern Russian literature. Among his many works are the poem "The Bronze Horseman", the drama The Stone Guest, about the fall of Don Juan, and the verse-novel Eugene Onegin.  
**Justification:**

---