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**Mind Games
 Survival Course
 Manual**



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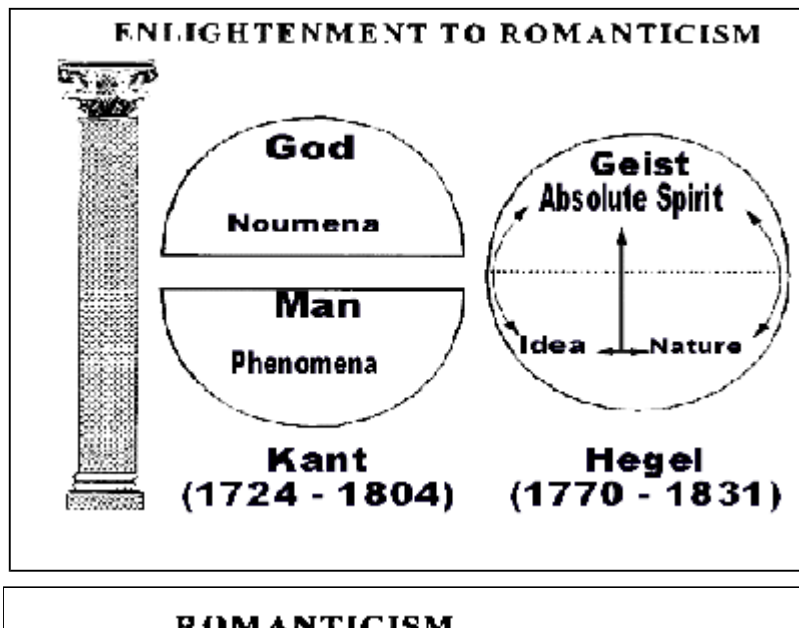
The Flow of Western Culture

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ENLIGHTENMENT TO ROMANTICISM (1700--1800)

I. Philosophy

The Enlightenment represents the peak of the Renaissance goal to make man the measure of all things. In the period from roughly 1700 to 1800 man's reason became the measure of all things, and whatever was not reasonable was not true. "Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another." {28} This is Kant's answer, which he applies most rigorously to religion. There can only be enlightenment when scholars are free to question any religious or church matters. "It is absolutely forbidden that they unite into a religious organization that nobody may for the duration of a man's lifetime publicly question." {29} Biblical Christianity, which requires that believers be bound by the Scriptures, is expressly outlawed by Kant, and yet some today consider him a champion of Christianity.



ROMANTICISM

A. Immanuel Kant (1724--1804)

Kant spent all of his life in Germany, most of it in his native Königsberg. His servant claimed that in thirty years Kant never failed to rise at five o'clock in the morning, and it is said that the people of Königsberg could set their watches by the time Kant came by their house. (It is an interesting psychological insight that the one time he seems to have been so distracted that he did not even take his afternoon walk was when he began reading Rousseau's *Emile* [1762].){30}

Kant saw the problem that Hume posed for the possibility of knowing anything, and made it his life work to provide an answer that would "save religion." Part of Kant's answer was that indeed there was no "principle of cause and effect" in the knowable world. But, Kant said, there are categories in our minds, categories that each of us possess. One of those mental categories is "cause and effect!" So, Kant saves our sense that there is an external world, but only by making the reality come from the way our brains process our sense data.

For Kant, there is a noumenal world of "things in themselves," a world we can never know. And in that world Kant placed God. Real, but unknowable. We are stuck in the world of the phenomena, but that is all we can know, the surface of things, not their intrinsic reality. It was a great cost to pay for saving reality. And since Kant, most philosophy has assumed that he was right, and gone on from there. If God exists, He is unknowable, and in fact, we can only know the world of appearances.

In Kant's construction, even the laws of nature depend on the mind and thus knowledge of any independent world, external to the mind, must be given up. To save the laws of nature, we must give up any hope of knowledge of reality. From then on, philosophy, or at least epistemology, has had to reckon with the mind itself as a constituent of reality.

But if we cannot know things as they are, metaphysics is impossible, for that is what metaphysics is, an attempt to probe into the nature of things in themselves, into being itself. Kant excluded this. This exclusion would set the course for philosophy into the twentieth century.

2. Hegel (1770--1831)

Hegel was born in 1770, the same year as both Beethoven and Wordsworth, and like both of them was deeply influenced by the initial optimism of the French Revolution. Both Hegel and Beethoven were even drawn to Napoleon, despite his conquest of Germany. Beethoven went so far as to dedicate his epochal 3rd symphony to Napoleon, though he tore up the dedication page and rewrote the title once Napoleon declared himself emperor. Hegel is the high point of what is called German Idealism. (By idealism is meant the philosophy that places ideas as being higher than material substance. Plato, with his eternal Forms or Ideas, would be considered an idealist.)

Hegel's system may be the most comprehensive, and difficult philosophical system in history. {31} In his system, there is a world spirit, a *Geist*, that is realizing itself in the unfolding of world history. Ideas and nature are in constant tension, and out of their conflict comes the history of man. The very process of history is the realization of the Ultimate Spirit.

Parts of Hegel's system are used by many different system builders, notably Karl Marx, but few if any thoroughgoing Hegelians exist. His system also has about it a sense of yearning that seems somehow to have given encouragement to Romanticism.

3. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712--1778)

Chronologically, Rousseau belongs to the Enlightenment, but his influence is the catalyst that sets in motion the next step in European cultural history. As much a political thinker as a philosopher, Rousseau set the tone for the Romantic movement, and his thinking is as alive today as it was in the French Revolution. It is to Rousseau that we owe the idea of the natural man, neither savage nor fully civilized, who is fully happy and fully good. Rousseau brings feelings into the discussion of man, and places man's feelings above his reason (much as the counter-culture of the 60s did).

Much modern educational theory sounds like Rousseau, who felt that children would learn best in an environment of freedom, with as few constraints as possible. Because man is basically good, if we would just leave him alone, he will come out just fine. This is a wonderful world view until put into practice.

2. The Arts

Now painting came to the service of a new ideology: autonomous man. Having been set free from the "repressive" service of the church, painters sprang to life in the service of Man. And as reality lost its independent quality, the quest in painting ceased to be to paint a reality "out there" but rather the sense or sensation of something out there, or more nearly, our response to the sensations that came to our eyes.

A. Jacques-Louise David (1748--1825)--*Death of Marat* (1793, 5'3" x 4'1").

A Neoclassicist (who desired to return to the heroic spirit and look of Greek and Roman art), David here paints what amounts to a propaganda picture. His art, he said, was intended to "electrify and plant the seeds of glory and devotion to the fatherland." {32} Of this same picture, Sir Kenneth Clark says, "Few propa-ganda pictures make such an impact as a work of art." {33} The picture itself is of the French anti-aristocracy leader, Marat, who was murdered in 1793 while in his bathtub. (He needed to spend most of his days in a bathtub filled with medicine because he had developed a terrible case of psoriasis in the Paris sewers while hiding from the police.) The letter he holds is from the woman who murdered him, Charlotte Corday, and you can see her name on the letter.

If Humanism has replaced Christianity, then here David paints Marat as its

Christ. The drape of the figure is so like a Pietà, that it cannot be accidental, and in fact, Marat's writing box (prominent in the painting), the bloody towel, and the knife that killed him were to be revered as had been the purported nails from the Cross. This painting is Neoclassicism in service to the revolutionary spirit still alive at the time.

2. Eugene Delacroix (1798--1863)--*Liberty Guiding the Troops, 1830* (1830--31, 10'8" x 8'6").

Fifty years younger than David, Delacroix is still celebrating the Revolution as an act of freedom from Tyrants, but while most people think this picture is of the French Revolution, it is actually the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris, which merely replaced a reactionary Bourbon king with his more forward-thinking relative, who bought this very picture when it was shown in the Salon in 1831.

While Liberty's head may be Neoclassical, with its Phrygian cap (originally worn by freed slaves in Rome, and picked up as a symbol by those in the first French Revolution), the rest of the picture is pure Romanticism. Liberty is no weak Greek goddess. She is effortlessly carrying a musket in one hand and holding aloft a large tricolor in the other. She is also not floating over the scene but walking over the bodies of the dead and wounded at her feet. Her bare breasts are the only other thing that identify her as an allegorical figure, and not an actual woman of the streets. The figures around her are representative of the various classes joining together to cast off tyranny. The young child on her left is surely too young to understand the significance of the events but is caught up in playing the "cops and robbers" of the day, while the bourgeois man in the top hat and coat, and the rather more humble figure behind him, show the two classes united in struggle. The play of the colors of the flag throughout the picture is both a unifying theme, and typically Delacroix. As an atmospheric touch we see the towers of Notre Dame rising through the smoke at the right.

3. Francisco de Goya (1746--1828)--*The Third of May, 1808* (1814--15, 8'8" x 11'4").

If Delacroix's is the Romantic version of war, Goya's is the futile, senseless, brutally realistic and therefore horrible view. On this huge canvas Goya pictures Napoleon's soldiers shooting the Spanish peasantry almost like a horrific stage set. The people are lit with a garish light from a lantern in front of the soldiers, and the hopelessness of their faces is matched by the facelessness of their murderers. A monk in the foreground prays, but the church and the town in the background are dark. The man in the center throws out his arms, perhaps in supplication, perhaps Christ-like. But in the end they are only people. They are not heroes dying for a great cause or criminals killed for their crimes. They are just peasants being shot by anonymous soldiers. The heroes of Romanticism are already dead for Goya, though they continue far longer for others. "He has depicted the irrationality of this seemingly rational world." {34}

Goya's "styles" range from early paintings in a late Venetian Baroque to his last paintings that are precursors of late Expressionism. He fits no period and rises above them all. His early infatuation with court life gave way to a

distrust of the whole Romanticism around him. From 1794--99 he did a series of paintings and prints called *Los Caprichos (The Caprices)*. One particularly striking and prophetic one was *The Dream of Reason*. {35} This was originally to be the frontispiece of the book, and on the print is written "The author dreaming. His only purpose is to banish harmful ideas commonly believed, and with this work of Caprichos to perpetuate the solid testimony of truth." {36}

Behind a man asleep terrifying creatures lurk and fly, and the text says: "The dream of reason produces monsters." Goya, in much of his later work is reacting against the insanity of war and revolution that is taking place not only all across Spain, but Europe as well. The point seems to be that when reason sleeps, as was evidenced all around him, then the monstrosities of war arise and prevail against "the solid testimony of truth." Goya did another series of etchings collectively called the *Disasters of War*, which depicts the barbarity and inhuman cruelty of war more graphically than any other artist has dared to put on paper. These are the "monsters" that Goya saw playing on the fields of Spain as reason was eclipsed by human greed and nationalism.

4. **Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775--1851)--*Rain, Steam, and Speed--The Great Western Railway (1844, 35" x 48")*.**

A precocious child, Turner was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools at age fourteen. He made the grand tour of the continent to see all the famous places and works. But by the time he was thirty, he was introducing a new and revolutionary approach to landscape, showing luminosity and atmosphere. Once loved as the eccentric but brilliant painter of English pastoral scenes, Turner became more controversial and criticized for his paintings of the power of nature, which lacked the form and decorum so loved by the English.

By the 1830s he was developing the more abstract conceptions of his last years, when his brushwork became breathtakingly free. He became more and more of a recluse. Ruskin, a friend and admirer destroyed many erotic drawings that he found among Turner's works which he thought tainted his hero's memory. He made entirely new advances in the expression of atmospheric space and luminosity through color; Constable wrote "He seems to paint with tinted steam, so evanescent and so airy." {37}

This painting, a late Turner, is more like Impressionism than anything painted for the next thirty to forty years. His later paintings show the first real separation of form and color.

One must remember that for centuries objects were thought to be real because they were solid. . . And all respectable art aimed at defining this solidity, either by modeling or by a firm outline. [But Turner was] . . . transforming everything into pure color, light rendered as color, feelings about life rendered as colour. {38}

Turner was not well-educated, but he struggled through Goethe's *The Theory of Colour*, and found a kinship with Goethe's Romanticism. In fact,

Turner's use of color for conveying the emotion of a real scene is still characteristic of many paintings today.

Although Turner never considered himself an abstract painter, paintings discovered after his death contain no recognizable subject whatsoever, just swirling masses of radiant color. His discovery of the power of pigment had an enormous influence on the course of modern art. . . His last works anticipate modern art in which paint itself is the only subject. {39}

5. Claude Monet (1840--1926)--*Saint-Lazare Railroad Station* (1887, 29 1/2" x 25 3/16").

Monet painted this station at least a dozen times, and the series marks a new departure in art, painting the same scene as it looked in different lighting. That the play of light and shadow is his subject is clear: everything else but a few locomotives sets undifferentiated in the background. As Turner had done, Monet is showing us what the eye sees. Not Reality with a capital R, but only sensations of light and color, "an atmospheric study in blues and greens." {40} The Impressionists wanted to paint what could be seen, with little attempt at interpretation. As Cezanne said: "Monet, he's only an eye, but my God what an eye!" {41}

Impressionism comes as a result of trying to follow the philosophical program of the Enlightenment. There is no external reality, all we can know is what we experience. And so the objects of experience lose importance as we concentrate on our experience of them, our impression of what we experience. What we experience is color and shape, not some external reality that painting merely copies as best it can.

6. Vincent Van Gogh (1853--1890)--*Self Portrait* (1889, 25 1/2" x 21 1/4").

Of the forty or so self-portraits Van Gogh did, this is one of the last three, done less than a year before he shot himself to death. The face is still strong but there is an anger or resentment in the eyes, perhaps a tiredness from his confinement in the Asylum at Saint-Remy.

Van Gogh had earlier in his life intended to be a missionary to poor workers, and felt a heavy sense of duty to follow in his father's path as a pastor. His letters to his brother, the only person in the world whom he felt he could really unburden himself to, show the struggles he went through as he tried the missionary life.

. . . it is a delightful thought that in the future wherever I shall be, I shall preach the Gospel; to do that well, one must have the Gospel in one's heart; may the Lord give it to me. {42}

Theo, woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel; if I did not aim at that and possess faith and hope in Christ, it would be bad for me indeed, but now I have some courage. {43}

As to the religious work, I still do not give it up. Father is so

broad-minded and so many-sided, and I hope in whatever circumstances I may be, something of that will unfold in me.
{44}

Theo, if only I might succeed in this, if that heavy depression because everything I undertake fails, that torrent of reproaches which I have heard and felt, if it might be taken from me, and if only there might be given to me both the opportunity and the strength needed to come to full development and to persevere in that course for which my father and I should thank the Lord so fervently!{45}

After unsuccessfully trying to train for the ministry, in 1878 he went south to the Borinage coal mining district in Belgium. In this cold and desolate area he tried to be an example by giving away all that he had to the poor. As a result he lost his job as an evangelist for not maintaining the proper "distance" from the poor.

Giving up his goal to minister to the poor, he instead began to paint their misery. This became for him his new ministry, and he steadfastly worked at it with all his strength for the rest of his short life.

From 1881--85 he lived in the Netherlands, but he moved to Antwerp in 1885, and then to Paris in 1886 where he met Pissarro, Degas, Gauguin, Seurat, and Toulouse-Lautrec.

His stay in Paris exposed him to Impressionism and the newly popular Japanese wood block paintings, and he combined these influences to form his own unique style.

At this time his painting underwent a violent metamorphosis under the combined influence of Impressionism and Japanese woodcuts. He began to use color, not as the Impressionists, for the reproduction of visual appearances, atmosphere, and light, but rather as he stated it, "Instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use colour more arbitrarily so as to express myself more forcibly."{46}

As poverty, sickness, and a very melancholy temperament took their toll, Van Gogh was more and more incapacitated, but he struggled with his painting and his desire to succeed, to paint the vision he saw, until he finally took his life at age thirty-seven. He left about 800 paintings, although he sold only one of them during his lifetime.

7. Paul Gauguin (1848--1903)--*The Spirit of the Dead Keeps Watch* (1892, 28 5/16" x 36 3/8").

Gauguin's work was a reaction to the Impressionists, whom, he said ". . . heed only the eye and neglect the mysterious centers of thought."{47} Caught up by the mythical "noble savage" ideas of Rousseau, Gauguin first went abroad to Panama and Martinique in April--May 1887. Returning to France, he stayed first in Paris, moved to Pont-Aven in Brittany and then

Arles, with Van Gogh. His fascination with the South Seas continued to grow, however, as in his imagination it became the place where he might finally be free of social and financial pressures.

May the day come, perhaps very soon, when I'll bury myself in the woods of an ocean island to live on ecstasy, calmness and art. With a new family, and far from that European struggle for money. (This was written to his wife about Feb. of 1890. A thoughtful man to be sure.){48}

I am going soon to Tahiti, a small island in Oceania, where the material necessities of life can be had without money. I want to forget all the misfortunes of the past . . . There, at least, under an eternally summer sky, on a marvelously fertile soil, the Tahitian has only to lift his hands to gather his food; in addition he never has to work. When in Europe men and women survive only after unceasing labor during which they struggle in convulsions of cold and hunger, a prey to misery, the Tahitians, on the contrary, happy inhabitants of the unknown paradise of Oceania, know only sweetness of life. To live, for them, is to sing and to love.{49}

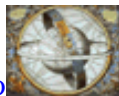
Gauguin left for Tahiti in April 1891, finding it far from the tropical paradise he had imagined it to be. He lived in Tahiti for the rest of his eleven years, except for two years in Paris (August 1893 to June 1895). As he moved around, he lived with a series of girls, generally thirteen or fourteen, by whom he had a number of children, whom he generally abandoned. He also spread his syphilis wherever he went.

Gauguin left Paris as much to create his own myth of himself as the "savage artist" in the sense of Rousseau's noble savage, as he did to escape the rigors and pettiness of France for an idyllic life in the South Seas. He was a relentless self-promoter, and constantly cultivated friendships he hoped we would create and continue his success.

He was one of the first to find visual inspiration in the arts of ancient or primitive peoples, and reacted vigorously against the naturalism of the Impressionists and the scientific preoccupations of the Neo-Impressionists. As well as using colour unnaturally for its decorative or emotional effect he reintroduced emphatic outlines forming rhythmic patterns suggestive of Japanese colour prints. . . . the forms and patterns in his pictures were meant to suggest mental images or ideas and not simply to record visual experience.{50}

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