

Classic vs Romantic

Aug. 30, 1977

(1)

Opposition to the Classical demands came from artists like Delacroix, Chassériau, Baron Gros and others in France. The tyranny of the regimentation of the Classic "Culture" was too much, so the Romantists asserted their "aesthetic" which was simplistically, the loosening-up and the personalizing of forms, composition, figures, themes etc, which made up the substance of art themes and subject-matter of the times. Brush-work became freer (Delacroix was accused of painting with a "drunken Brush";) Rigid drawing as expounded by David gave way to expressive, highly felt drawing. Color was now important. Also as regards subject-matter, the tired old antique themes of the Roman & Greek Heroes were replaced by subjects derived from everyday life, customs, and scenes as well as attitudes toward habits of the people living at that time.

So when one speaks now of Classicism and Romanticism in art criticism, I for one, must assume that if these terms are spelled with the Capital (C) and the Capital (R) they have reference to the specific period (the 19th Century in art when these terms had

The terms Classic and Romantic emerged during the 19th century - particularly in France. They are primarily critical terms in the sense that they have to do with Art Criticism chiefly and by the term Art Criticism reference is made primarily to the visual arts - not necessarily the performing arts - this type of reference coming into practice in our optical parlance of the earlier and present 20th Century when as we now do speak of Dance, Music & Theatre as being Romantic or Classic.

There's nothing about the above which escapes the understanding of any student or follower of art Criticism today.

It was Jacques Louis David who became the Classical Archetype in France. He promoted the Classic Revival during the reign of Napoleon - in painting design dress furniture etc etc. The classic form style etc even the literature & the language of Classical Antiquity assumed priority in all respects.

3.

specific and unique meaning. But
however, it finally was Delacroix who
himself sought the position of leader-
ship of the Classic (Academy) of French
art all his life. (I think he started it
about 1870.)

Now my own use of the term Romanticism
has more to do with rebelling against a
status quo of art expressions agreed
with the perpetuation of out-worn concepts
of art, outdated and academized beyond
any fresher meaning and useful purpose
in the on-going development of new ideas.
Any art form can become Classicised or
academized. Even now Delacroix may be
called the Classic example of Romanticism!

So, in a sense, all art can and perhaps ^{often} does,
become classic. But it is when it becomes
dull and repetitive that newer visions
must move in & give it new meanings, not
by destroying the former art & its tradition but
by learning from that tradition. I believe in tradition.
But tradition does not mean that you wear your
grandfathers overcoat - rather, you design
and tailor a new one. (over)

Again

Classic with the Capital (C) has to do with the 19th century critical use of the term. So does Romantic with Capital (R).

The lower case (c) and (r) has to do in my way of thinking, with the use of ^{the} classic and romantic terms in a more general sense.

It must also ~~be~~ be understood that the Classicists + Romantics of 19th Century France were not so far apart. Perhaps it was style of painting that caused their disagreement as much as anything else.



Mrs. Winifred Stelling #23-A
3022 Chapel Hill Road
Durham, North Carolina,
27707