



THE ROMANTIC AGE

From the Augustan Age to the Romantic Age

- The Augustan Age emphasised the **Reason** as the *supreme faculty* by which all things were knowable → man had reason and so was in the position to understand that his environment functioned mechanistically;

Vs.

- The Romantic Age, on the contrary, emphasised the **subjective experience** and **individual perception** → man had an intimate perception of reality and so was capable of understanding the truth, the mysterious essence of the universe.

The Augustan Age: the literary production

The favourite genre was the *novel*

- **Comedy of Manners** = a critical and clear observation of the society with a moralizing aim through a mocking tone;
- **Realistic novel**= a matter-of-fact style and a nonintrusive narrator (*Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels...*) → critical description of society (Swift's satire); a celebration of the emerging middle class (Defoe's works).
- **Epistolary novel or sentimental novel**= an exploration of the inner world of the characters in a epistolary form (*Pamela...*) → description of the ordinary middle-class people with a moralizing aim

The Romantic Age

The favourite genre was the *poetry*

The Romantic poetry was



expression of the **inner** world of the poet (*emotions, feelings and sensations*)

IMAGINATION (= the creative power of human perception)



the means through which feelings and emotions

are translated into **POETRY**



The poet is able to make the best use of this faculty and therefore -among men- he is the best to unlock the mysteries of life and experience the truth (Poet= **PROPHET**)

NATURE= had the power of inspiring strong emotions and putting the artist in touch with the infinite and the divine



Nature = expression of the immanent presence of God in the world (PANTHEISM)

The great Revolutions and the Romantic Age

The great revolutions which took place during the 18th century influenced the birth of this new literary movement (from the late 18th century to the coronation of Queen Victoria 1837)

❖ The escape into Nature

The Industrial Revolution created a new environment where man's place was completely different. The progressive mass-organization of society generated a *feeling of estrangement*.

❖ The new idea of Freedom

Thanks to the French Revolution a new idea of **Freedom** began to circulate. It led man to break the old patterns. In the **social** field it meant the push to demand more right and democracy (Reforms).

In the **private** field, it represented to break the limits to express the private self and the emerging of the spontaneous and genuine emotions of the soul.