A Current Study and Comparison of Realism and Romanticism

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Abstract

The following paper is a comparative study of the artistic movements of Realism and Romanticism in early 19th century Europe. The object is to analyze how each movement affected politics and social hierarchy. The movements are linked to other genres; Romanticism is coupled with Classicism, and Realism is associated with Idealism. The paper explains how both movements faced criticism due to a conservatism of mass taste and a shock of subject matter. Despite the obstacles, the movements prevailed to be considered innovative in context and style. The most compelling arguments found within the current scholarship outlines the opposition that the artists faced from an emerging middle class, and the new and creative forms of methodology employed. The introduction will serve as historical background for the visual composition and political beliefs of the era. The essence of this research is to explain how the movements were a catalyst for social change.
I. Introduction

Realism and Romanticism vary in terms of visual goals and political agenda. The distinctions between the movements denote that their inspirations evolved from artistic styles of the past, but were responsive to the changing political climate. Both movements evolved and shaped the affairs of state. Similarly to how Romanticism flowered during the royal restoration of Napoleon Bonaparte’s reign from 1815 to 1830, Realism gained political fervor during the Revolution of 1848. Each movement led social change, but differed in terms of compositional goals. While Romanticism glamorized foreign lands and idealistic landscape, Realism depicted the struggles of the working class and Europe’s socio-economic inequality. Stokstad indicates, “Romanticism describes not only a style but also an attitude. It is chiefly concerned with imagination and the emotions, and is often understood as a reaction against the focus on rationality” (Stokstad, 2008:956). Romanticism is derived from the language of Latin, and bases its objectives on a poetic or melancholic spirit. Whereas Realism, “reflected the positivist belief that art should show unvarnished truth, and realists took up subjects that were generally regarded as not important enough for a serious work of art” (Stokstad, 2008:1017). In hindsight, both movements challenged the artistic limitations of the time.

Just as Napoleon Bonaparte’s power was at its zenith, a book appeared in France that introduced a new cultural ideology through the innocuous title of Germany. Germaine de Staël’s book was banned in France, but that did not stop the French public from acquiring illegal copies. Chu indicates, “the book was meant to acquaint Staël’s readers with German culture and ideas, most notably with the new romantic movement, which she officially launched in France and on the broader European scene” (Chu, 2006:207). Madame de Staël questioned France’s cultural base, as the country was sandwiched between Germany and the Mediterranean. Guy Hubbard indicates, “romantic artists distort the shapes of people and animals, while buildings and landscapes are frequently seen to be magical or mysterious—and often threatening” (Hubbard, 2001:31). The upper class generally favored the balanced styles of Classicism, but this style did not appeal to the middle and lower classes. Staël emphasized the importance of cultural roots when she claimed that, “classicism has gone as far as it could in France, but romanticism still had a way to go” (Chu, 2006:207). The movement reverted back to France’s medieval past, and the return to Christianity. Coincidentally, de Staël’s agenda for Romanticism paralleled that of the Restoration regime, “both Louis XVIII and Charles X traced their roots back to the Middle Ages to prove their hallowed royal pedigrees. Both kings saw the Roman Catholic Church as a crucial buttress to the principle of divine right” (Chu, 2006:207). The Romantic
Movement returned to the medieval past of northern Europe, engaged itself in modern times, and experimented with Orientalism, “which was the fascination with cultural domains beyond the confines of western culture” (Chu, 2006:208). Napoleon facilitated the fascination with eastern customs, as seen in the works of Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House at Jaffa* (see appendix). These works emphasized the difference between the East and West, “the orient, racially, religiously, and culturally “other” than the West, came to be perceived as a place of excessive passion, violence, and cruelty—imagined characteristics that would soon provide justification for European imperialism in the region” (Chu, 2006:208). Napoleon was portrayed as a fearless leader, when in reality his bravado was merely propaganda for his reign. The chaotic portrayal of the East led to colonization in northern Africa and further attempts around the Arab world.

Romanticism adopted characteristics of Classicism as seen in Jacques-Louis David’s *Oath of Horatii* (see appendix). The stage for Romanticism was set, as it shared characteristics with Classicism. Chu explains, “David got the opportunity to construct a picture with minimum action and maximum drama” (Chu, 2006:59). The dramatic content of a painting was heavily valued by Classicists as well as Romantics. Art work was often commissioned by the ruling Monarchy, and heavily emphasized issues of public morality, and an individual’s obligation to the empire. Political propaganda played a significant role in an artist’s success, “Napoleon and the Bourbon kings before were keenly aware of the propagandist power of art” (Chu, 2006:227). Romanticism idealized not only the monarchy but also mythological characters, as seen in Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson’s classic work *The Burial of Atala* (see appendix). His work was Romantic in the terms of its emphasis on emotions, rather than philosophical meditation. Romantics would mystify a composition by slightly contouring shapes to create visual intrigue. Trioson’s painting daringly represents, “religion and passion, binding the two figures with the theme of death and burial” (Tansey and Kleiner, 1996:935). Authors Tansey and Kleiner indicate that, “while romanticism dominated the early decades of the century with its goals of expressing dramatic emotion or ideal beauty in its subject matter, taken for the most part from scenes outside common, everyday experience, another vein of expression also was beginning to address the century’s growing appreciation of the representation of optical fact in art” (Tansey and Kleiner, 1996:957). This new form of art was known as Realism.

The July Monarchy under King Louis-Philippe ended in 1848 with a revolt in Paris. The uprising escalated into a wave of revolutions across Europe. Chu indicates, “before the end of the year, the German states, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia (Czech Republic) all experienced complete political upheaval” (Chu, 2006:257).
The political backdrop of Realism was defined by the Revolution of 1848. An uneasy coalition of socialists, anarchists, and workers overthrew the July Monarchy. As Stokstad explains, “the revolts began in February of that year, initially over government corruption and narrow voting rights, but they soon spread to a dozen major cities across Europe” (Stokstad, 2008:1017). The revolts led to the installation of Napoleon III (the nephew of Bonaparte) and entered a new constitution with broadened suffrage rights. The Second Republic was proclaimed, and a provisional government was led by poet Alphonse de Lamartine. By December 1848, Louis Napoleon III was elected President.

During these political changes, the poet and journalist Charles Baudelaire wrote a book reviewing the Salon (which was a place in which artists made their exhibition debut). He criticized Romantic and Classical artists for always depicting the past and neglecting the present. He challenged artists to, “paint the ordinary aspects of modern life and to find in them some grand and epic quality” (Chu, 2006:258). Gustave Courbet responded to Baudelaire’s challenge. He opted to depict a middle class burial in the French provinces. Unlike his Romantic predecessors, Courbet’s *Burial at Ornans* (see appendix) does not dramatize death. Instead he opted to portray death for what it was, a recurrent event. His work caused a scandal at the Salon of 1850, “its lineup of provincial bourgeois in black suits was said to be dull and boring” (Chu, 2006:260). However, his work was a reminder to Parisian visitors that the provincial bourgeois was a new force to be reckoned with. The revolution of 1848 brought universal male suffrage, and voting rights were no longer restricted to the rich. Courbet’s *Burial* (see appendix) represented a new mass of people who could change the political atmosphere within France. Since Courbet was inspired by the revolt of 1848, his work is often attributed as democratic art, “by the common man, and for the common man” (Chu, 2006:267). *The Stonebreakers* (see appendix) was one such work which commented on the grinding poverty that had become prevalent during the July Monarchy. Chu states, “Louis-Philippe’s policy of improving the economy by encouraging the industrialist middle class to “get rich” had led to a rapidly widening gap between rich and poor” (Chu, 2006:263). Realism portrayed how the monarchy valued industrial men only for the work they performed, rather than their human individuality. Louis Napoleon III even wrote a pamphlet in 1844 entitled *Extinction du Paupérisme* (Extinction of Pauperism), in which he addressed the widening gap between rich and poor. Napoleon’s pamphlet helped him win the French Presidency.

The political climate was merely a fraction of each movement, but the employment of new and innovative methodology was revolutionary. Using the realities of modern life as the prime focus, Realism reacted against...
Romanticism and created a new style, “although it came into being slowly and at first combined with some of the qualities of romanticism, realism eventually became the dominant style of art during the middle part of the nineteenth century” (Tansey and Kleiner, 1996:957). The goal was to show exactly what the artist saw, and to prove it in composition, regardless of social acceptance. Art stood for what the eye could see and believe in, “the supremacy of cold fact and made it the basis of esthetic truth and personal honesty” (Tansey and Kleiner, 1996:974). Stokstad explains, “Millet, Courbet, Bonheur, and the other realists who emerged in the 1850s are referred to as the “Generation of 1848,” because of their sympathy for the working class” (Stokstad, 2008:1020). Realism expanded beyond France due to rapid industrialization and urbanization. A new concern for the peasantry was evolving into a social platform for Realists.

Regardless of differences in political agenda, it is the thesis of the paper that the current scholarship will more effectively portray. Romanticism and Realism revolutionized artistic techniques. Both movements evolved from political restorations or revolutions. Furthermore, each movement employed distinctive tools of expression and lighting to explain the social dynamic of the era. Stokstad states, “romantics argued that humans possess deep and not always rational longings for self-expression, understanding, and identification with their fellows” (Stokstad, 2008:988). While Romantics focused on the power of the monarchy and idealism of the mind, Realism focused on the struggles of the ordinary man. Stokstad explains, “before 1848 ordinary people had only been shown in modestly scaled paintings, while monumental canvases had been reserved for heroic subjects and pictures of the powerful” (Stokstad, 2008:1018). Realism set out to depict the difficulties of rural existence. Although employing different techniques, both movements were indicative of political change.
II. Current Scholarship

In order to have a better understanding of the Realist and Romantic artist movements and their affect on the social hierarchy and political agenda during the 18th and 19th century, I analyzed four articles which address the topic. The first study, “Realist Iconography: Intent and Criticism” was written by Bernard Goldman. For this study, I will address and analyze the thesis, arguments, rationale and strengths and weaknesses of the rationale theorized by the author.

i. Thesis

In this article Goldman explores how Realism was criticized for its heavy use of Naturalism, and for being too radical in composition for the French middle class. The Realist movement was seen as grotesque in form and composition, depicting people as ugly life forms with no refinement. The thesis of this article is that the realist movement of the nineteenth century faced criticism due to a conservatism of mass taste and a shock of subject matter, but still prevailed to be considered revolutionary art. Bernard Goldman focuses on the art work of Gustave Courbet, and explains that, “Courbet represents people as they are, and that he invents nothing and that no abstract, moralizing principles guide his hand” (Goldman, 1959:187). The main issue was that society during the third quarter of the nineteenth century did not want to see compositions which were deemed as distasteful by the growing middle class. Goldman quotes Arnold Hauser when he states, “romanticism was already an essentially bourgeois movement which would have been inconceivable without the emancipation of the middle classes” (Goldman, 1959:186). Therefore, one can see that social hierarchy played a fundamental role in what movement of art was widely accepted.

ii. Arguments

The first argument that supports the thesis is that it was not the content of what Courbet chose which was controversial, but how the composition portrayed informality in the middle class. The author explains how the composition was controversial when he states, “Courbet’s deliberate selection of middle-class, heavy-bodied women lying in casual disarray, enjoying a brief sunny afternoon of flower gathering. Their significance was no greater than that of two good white cows with russet markings” (Goldman, 1959:188). The subject matter of the middle class
was not the object of contention, but the depiction of middle class women inappropriately displayed created a sense of contention within the middle class. The unsuitable composition caused uneasiness in the social structure of the rising bourgeoisie. As Goldman states, “Courbet was no humble peasant; he chose the bulk of his paintings people drawn from the social stratum of the newly emerging middle-class, and the critics were acutely aware of this change in motif” (Goldman, 1959:188). This argument supports the thesis by showing how the middle class had gained political clout and only supported a flattering Romantic composition of their class to denote their social prowess.

The second argument that supports Goldman’s thesis is that contrary to the Realists, Impressionists preferred to portray the “good life” of the resurgent middle-class, and were therefore favored considerably by the French public. The author explains, “the key to the thematic material of these new realists is the immediate scene recorded without concern for the propriety or the significance of the subject” (Goldman, 1959:190). The author supports this argument through historical evidence. He states, “the accusation of “vulgarity” made by Chaumelin, and even worse the defamation of the artists by the English critic Hamerton, who insisted that the supposed indecency of the paintings must be products of “vulgar men,” demonstrate by the acuteness of the reactions the novelty of the Impressionists’ themes” (Goldman, 1959:191). This argument supports the thesis by showing how Realism fostered other art forms such as Impressionism, and thus can be viewed as revolutionary.

iii. Rationale for Arguments

There are two main arguments which I found. In argument one, there are two forms of rationale. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author denotes, “like Courbet, the impressionists did not use the motif to arrive at philosophic interpretation” (Goldman, 1959:189). This form of rationale supports the argument by indicating that new artistic styles were starting to gain momentum despite the controversial subject matter. One can logically deduce that Courbet paved the way for the Impressionists to explore different methodology. Goldman states, “the impressionists claimed no interest in the conceptual side of painting, even when their pictures seemed to be the most anecdotal, when the figures in the paintings were clearly identifiable” (Goldman, 1959:189). The author’s use of this quote proves that artists such as Manet were criticized for their lack of symbolism within art. Many artists were expected to have a hidden meaning within their art, but Realists portrayed subject matter merely as it were. From this statement one can logically deduce that Realist art was criticized by the middle class.
Therefore, this supports the first argument because it shows how informality within an art piece was viewed as offensive.

The second rationale that supports the first argument is historical examples. The author states, “in addition to the wealth of portraits and outing scenes, there are the many “candid camera” type of subjects that were received by the critics as “subjects of repulsive vulgarity, types without character, scenes deprived of all interests” (Goldman, 1959:190). From this statement one can logically deduce that subject matter was of great importance and contention for the different social classes. Since the growing middle class wanted to be taken seriously any depiction of vulgarity offended their social and political rise. This rationale supports the first argument by proving that critics had a lot of clout in France during the Realist movement, and were able to temporarily restrain the movement’s growth.

In argument two, there are two forms of rationale. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author states, “Renoir openly branded Gauguin a revolutionary and refused to exhibit with him in 1882. Pissarro read into Gauguin’s themes a retrograde action, a return to the very concepts of paintings that the Impressionists had so long fought against” (Goldman, 1959:190). But the author tends to criticize the Impressionistic bias against Realists when he states, “the realists of the latter half of the nineteenth century had, thus, developed a new iconography” (Goldman, 1959:192). By stating this one can logically deduce that the Impressionism was trying to create images which only pleased the middle class. This rationale supports the argument by showing how Realists were being shunned due to their revolutionary thought and that society as a whole preferred Impressionists.

The second form of rationale that supports the second argument is logical deduction. The author states, “the countryside pictures of Manet and the impressionists are paintings of Sunday outings, boating parties, walks in the fields, picnics, the watering places, race tracks, public gardens, and the woods on the outskirts of Paris. The people who occupy these scenes are rarely the natives” (Goldman, 1959:188). The Impressionists are seen as portraying the middle-class as the nouveau-rich, and therefore one can logically deduce that Impressionists would be favored by the society they catered to. This rationale supports the argument because it depicts how the resurgent middle class had a lot of clout during the nineteenth century.

iv. Strengths/Weaknesses of Rationale

In the rationale there are two strengths. The first strength regarding the rationale is Goldman’s focus on the Realist artist Gustave Courbet. By focusing on him the reader is given a vast amount of knowledge on the Realist
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movement. A prime example of this is when Goldman states, “Courbet’s work, on the other hand, was shocking not because of his themes of solemn burial and honest labor were unclear, but because his motifs were so different; he refused to apply in his work the standard symbols common to the nineteenth century” (Goldman, 1959:184). By discussing Courbet the author allows to reader to grasp the importance of Realism. This strength supports the rationale by showing the critical sentiment towards Realism and what Courbet had to overcome in order to make the movement revolutionary.

The second strength of the rationale is the descriptions the author provides about movements such as Impressionism. Distinction between each movement helps draw a better understanding of Realism. Goldman states, “both the impressionists and the Barbizon painters used the motif of a man against the land, but to quite different purposes. Like Courbet, the impressionists did not use the motif to arrive at philosophic interpretation” (Goldman, 1959:189). He continues to state, “the impressionists claimed no interest in the conceptual side of painting, even when their pictures seemed to be the most anecdotal” (Goldman, 1959:189). By comparing movements and contrasting them the author creates a strong backdrop. This strength supports the rationale because it gives the reader extensive information on the differences pertaining to each artistic movement.

For the rationale, there are also two weaknesses. The first weakness in the author’s rationale is that he does not deeply describe the different artists and art critics. He briefly discusses the friendship of Courbet and Proudhon, but does not elaborate on Proudhon’s purpose to the realist iconography. He states, “his friendship with Proudhon and his official position in the short-lived Paris Commune demonstrate a social attitude that is reflected in his choice of middle-class and country subjects” (Goldman, 1959:187). By leaving out a proper introduction of Proudhon, Goldman is assuming that the reader has a vast knowledge of art history within France. These comparisons did not benefit the rationale because it convoluted the article.

The second weakness in the author’s rationale was his inability to properly discuss political and societal norm of the eighteenth and nineteenth century before drafting his comparisons. He leaves the logical deduction up to the reader when he states, “it is interesting to note that the ascendancy of the contemporary over antique that appeared in painting is also apparent in the other art forms of the 1860s” (Goldman, 1959:189). Goldman needs to elaborate on societal norms rather than believing that the reader understands the political climate of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. He continues to discuss artists such as Offenbach, and Wagner without giving a proper history of their inspiration and technique. He states, “Offenbach, for example, not only used contemporary scenes,
but also filled the theater night after night with an approving audience with his farce that ridiculed the classical theme. Wagner on the other hand, was hooted out of the Paris Opera” (Goldman, 1959:189). The rationale was weakened by Goldman’s inability to provide the socio-political background of each artist within the comparisons.

The second study in this section is “The Self Pictured: Manet, the Mirror, and the Occupation of Realist Painting”, which was written by Gregory Galligan. For this study, I will again address and analyze the thesis, arguments, rationale, and strengths and weaknesses of the rationale theorized by the author.

i. Thesis

Author Gregory Galligan explores the new forms of methodology employed by painters such as Édouard Manet to transition Romantic art into the Realist and Impressionist movements. Galligan emphasizes Manet’s importance to art by stating, “Manet’s self portraits of 1878 are doubly important. While both pictures present the painter reflecting on his success in society, perhaps they are more significant for how to paint Manet as an implacable peripatetic of visual cognition” (Galligan, 1998:138). The author explains how the concept of reflection, as well as the male gaze was pivotal to the Realist movement. The thesis is that by employing the artist’s gaze into the painting as well as using mirrors in self-portraiture Realism developed two pivotal concepts which differentiated from its predecessors. These concepts were controversial because they were not recognized by the artists of the past. Galligan states, “I take that reflexive scrimmage of looking depicted in Self-Portrait with a Palette as an underlying premise for much of Manet’s realist enterprise” (Galligan, 1998:138). By stating this one can see how the use of mirrors and the artist’s gaze were vital to the Realist movement.

ii. Arguments

The first argument that supports the thesis is that the use of women as the main focal point in Realist art depicts their control over the viewer, but also revealed certain aspects of gender inequality. Galligan indicates the idea of the masculine gaze as being noticed by the feminine subjects in Realist art, but not confronted with opposition. He explains how the gaze was used in Manet’s paintings when he states, “neither Nana nor the woman with the parrot necessarily confronts the gaze of a trespasser before her, in whose place the beholder of the picture is presumed to be standing. Rather, either figure may be engaged in a subtle act of self picturing, perhaps in
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anticipated of a male gaze of desire but, at least for the moment that Manet has provided us, not in confrontation with it” (Galligan, 1998:156). The female subject in the Manet’s painting, Young Lady in 1866, is aware of the viewer but does not oppose the male gaze. During this time the male gaze was defined as viewing women from a distance with objectification. The author states, “as Manet employs this mode of the gaze in his pictures, he is referring to both a scanning, panoramic sweep as well as suspended, focal stalling” (Galligan, 1998:155). This argument supports the thesis by showing how the masculine gaze was considered important to the Realist movement.

The second argument that supports the thesis is that Realists used the concept of the reflexive mirror in ways which marked a historical shift in visual theory, but was still reminiscent of Classical and Romantic art pieces. The author indicates, “we might now appreciate the visual import for Manet of Titan’s Venus of Urbino of 1538, which Manet copied during a trip to Florence in 1857” (Galligan, 1998:159). Galligan points out how artworks of the Classicist and Romantic era were influential in Manet’s Realist agenda. He states, “Manet studied the mode of looking he found in Titian’s Venus to consider what implications it might have for his own painting, and he was not averse to disclosing his debt to it” (Galligan, 1998:159). This argument supports the thesis by indicating how the model of reflection was adopted by the Realist movement to revolutionize Manet’s artistic thoughts.

iii. Rationale for Arguments

There are two forms of evidence or rationale to support the first argument. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author describes how the use of looking at women was a male’s vocation when he states, “this distrust was engendered directly out of painters’ practical experience with everyday conundrums of looking” (Galligan, 1998:145). By discussing the everyday conundrums of looking one can logically deduce that the author is discussing how the masculine gaze was an integral part of the Realist movement. This supports the first argument because it shows how the gaze was so integral to men of the 18th and 19th century. Galligan further supports the argument by stating, “perhaps most important, the visual shuttle of such painting implies a conscripting of the beholder’s gaze, whereby it implicates that gaze as an integral in the field of representation itself. This is a context within which the beholder must establish a secure footing, and thereby stake a claim to his own embodiment as occupier of a spatial continuum” (Galligan, 1998:149). From this statement one can logically deduce that the gaze was essential to the Realist movement, and this further supports the first argument.
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The second rationale to support the first argument is logical deduction. Galligan uses the symbolism of flowers being held by one of the figures in Manet’s work to describe gender identity. He states that, “here even gender itself is indexed as a mode of selective representation, that is, a program or mask to be assumed and discarded at will. The figure with flowers not only lacks a social identity but also seems to be lacking a clearly gendered identity, in stark contrast to the rest of the women at this event” (Galligan, 1998:158). From this statement one can logically deduce that gender identity was strongly emphasized in Realist art and therefore is questioned when seemingly not present. This rationale supports the first argument by indicating how the gaze compartmentalized subjects as either objects of desire, or with sexual suspicion. Galligan states, “gender in this painting is therefore a highly unstable notion itself, a first premise, or decoy, whose reading is a slippery and subjective act of decoding perpetually shifting representation of the self” (Galligan, 1998:158). This rationale supports the thesis through the discussion of gender roles.

There are also two forms of rationale to support the second argument. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. Galligan states, “most important, this mode of looking ultimately places the viewer in an especially problematic position: although standing before the canvas, the beholder is implicitly situated within the field of representation in conflation with the objects—or model—depicted” (Galligan, 1998:159). One can logically deduce that the mirror in Manet’s painting Olympia is playing with the viewer’s level plane. This rationale supports the second argument because it shows how Realism marked a historical shift in theory by employing a different angle and focal point. Manet used different optical angles to play with the concept of reflection.

The second piece of rationale in regards to the author’s second argument is logical deduction. Galligan states, “Manet comes to realize the world seen only as an imperfect, oblique transcription, “as I can,” by a process of looking in two directions, or a perpetual turning of the gaze both forward and toward his original prospect, that of the self” (Galligan: 1998:162). One can logically deduce that Realism played with the idea of the foreground and background in a painting, and therefore revolutionized the concept of positioning within a painting. Galligan continues by stating, “in replacing the painter before the canvas, we find that our gaze is forcefully conscripted, even under the pretense that we retain a distinct sense of self as our own standing is being shifted to a position along the surface of a mirror plate” (Galligan, 1998:162). This rationale supports the second argument by showing how the use of the reflexive mirror epitomized the realist movement.
iv. Strengths/Weaknesses of Rationale

The first strength regarding the rationale of the author is his vast knowledge of Manet’s art work. He states, “it has become a commonplace to say that Van Eyck occasionally represents himself or other onlookers in some of his pictures, for example, by means of a specular image, as in the convex mirror of The Arnolfini Marriage (where, it is presumed, we glimpse the painter at work), or as in the Virgin with the Canon van der Paele of 1436, where a diminutive specular portrait of an unknown figure (presumably the painter) can be detected in the armor plate of Saint George” (Galligan, 1998:143). The author shows a strong understanding of Manet’s work and thus indicates how important the Realist painter was in revolutionizing the concept of the artist’s positioning in the composition. This supports the rationale by showing how Realist artists used symbolism and composition to revolutionize their movement.

The second strength regarding the rationale of the author is his discussion of revolutionary thought. Galligan discusses Realism and Impressionism when he states, “this marks a historical shift in visual theory away from a long-dominant Cartesian paradigm, which posited that the eye alone could provide an accurate picture of the world, toward a new science of optics that stressed how a host of highly subjective qualities inform all human visual cognition” (Galligan, 1998:145). By discussing how the movements of Realism and Impressionism differed from preceding movements, Galligan is emphasizing its originality. This supports the rationale by describing how the Realist movement was unique and therefore a shift from the old school of thought.

The first area of weakness in the rationale of the author’s argument is the unnecessary references to the seventeenth century. The author discusses Manet’s work with unnecessary emphasis on visual cognition. Galligan states, “to explore how that principle is established requires reconsidering several historical models of vision described by various commentators who, in turn, have employed such models to explain given schools of realist painting since the early seventeenth century” (Galligan, 1998:145). The author fails to give a strong background of art in the seventeenth century. He needs to elaborate on why that time period was significant. This reference did not benefit the rationale because it was too brief and lacked relevance.

The second weakness in the author’s rationale was his brief discussion of Diderot and Fried’s analysis. This reference did not benefit the rationale because it was brief and did explain its relevance to Realism. Galligan states, “Diderot’s ideas, taken as a conceptual keystone for the interpretation of eighteenth century French painting, have proved even more problematic as they have come to inform Fried’s recent analysis of Gustave Courbet” (Galligan,
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1998:151). By briefly discussing Fried’s analysis the reader is left uninformed on his importance in history. The lack of historical background on Fried does not benefit the rationale. Galligan further discusses Fried’s analysis when he states, “Fried argues, the advent of a distinctly “corporeal vision” may be attributed to Courbet’s realist enterprise” (Galligan, 1998:151). The author should have discussed Fried’s profession and importance to Realism. The rationale is weakened by a lack of historical information.
The third study in this section is “Romanticism in France”, which was written by George R. Havens, published in 1940. For this study I will again address and analyze, the thesis, arguments, rationale, and strengths and weaknesses of the rationale theorized by the author.

i. Thesis

In this article Havens explores the social and political influences which contributed to the Romantic Movement in France. The term Romanticism stemmed from the 17th century word “Romanesque”, which at the time was considered derogatory. However, as centuries passed Romanticism was able to cultivate its own identity, and by the 19th century it was an embellished artistic taste. Classicism on the other hand was the preferred style of the past. The thesis of this article is that Romanticism in France evolved and shifted from Classicism, but managed to form its own identity which differed from other European states, and progressed through autocracy. Author Havens states, “it is evident that a new prose style, written for the eye and the ear, and not primarily for the intellect, has been born. This is one of the first, and greatest, contributions of romanticism” (Havens, 1940:13). France was only willing to embrace the literary works of other states on its own terms. Havens states, “if romanticism is in some respects to be regarded as a return to admiration of the middle ages, it is also a natural continuation of the freedom and exuberance of the renaissance” (Havens, 1940:18). Romanticism in France was an evolution of expression and merely borrowed from other European states to embellish its own unique originality.

ii. Arguments

The first argument that supports the thesis is that the French Revolution and Napoleon’s reign were responsible for temporarily suppressing Romanticism, but could not prevent the rise of its popularity amongst the greater majority of France. Havens explains, “temporarily, indeed, the Revolution seems to have checked the development of romanticism. With the decline of Revolutionary ardor, Napoleon had fought his way to power and laid his iron hand upon thought and literature under the Empire” (Havens, 1940:12). This suppression only led to the enlightened rise of Romantic thought. As author Havens explains, “but the revolution had also a positive influence in sweeping away the dead wood of the past. The salons which had scorned Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s Paul et
Virginie (1787) could not prevent its popularity with the general public” (Havens, 1940:13). This argument supports the thesis by showing how Romanticism could not be suppressed despite Napoleon’s imposing strict rules.

The second argument that supports the thesis is that Romanticism was always pitted against Classicism, but many critics viewed that one could not function entirely without the other, and Romanticism learned lessons from Classicism. Havens discusses, “in Chateaubriand’s Génie du Christianisme (1802) is found also the cult of medievalism, the admiration for the Gothic cathedral, which further characterize the romantic reaction against classic ideals of regularity and balance. Gothic becomes a term of admiration, no longer one of barbarism and reproach” (Havens, 1940:14). When the author explains how Gothic style is now revered by Romantics he is implying that both Romanticism and Classicism have merged in a sense, despite possessing different viewpoints on what is visually appealing. Medieval art was seen by Classicists as barbaric, but it evolved in Romanticism. Romantics accepted the beauty in the natural structure which lacked total uniformity. This argument supports the thesis by indicating how Romanticism was a shift from Classicism and challenged its predecessors of art.

iii. Rationale for Arguments

There are two forms of evidence or rationale to support the first argument. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author describes Napoleon’s design on France, “although in earlier years he had paced up and down in his tent enthusiastically declaiming Ossian, later he threw his support to classic taste, which was already evident in much of the oratory of the revolution” (Havens, 1940:12). Napoleon wanted to return to Classicist thought because it was rigid and predictable. From this statement one can logically deduce that Napoleon has favored Classicism due to the old viewpoints of ruling through autocracy. This supports the first argument because it shows how a head of state can control the social and political content of the nation he is ruling.

The second rationale to support the first argument is logical deduction. Havens states, “the heroic characters of Corneille appealed to Bonaparte as the apotheosis of the dangerous love of glory which he wished to inspire in, or impose upon, his French subjects” (Havens, 1940:12). Havens is indicating how Bonaparte managed to suppress society’s opinions but then proceeds to describe society’s rising fervor. He states, “a new public had been created by the Revolution, a public tired of the old forms of classic action, the sharp contrasts, and the new subjects of the melodrama of the boulevards, a public gradually preparing itself unconsciously for the romantic theater of a Hugo or a Dumas” (Havens, 1940:13). From this statement one can logically deduce that the Revolution had evoked
a society that sought change. Havens clearly explains that people were tired of Classic thought, and wanted a contrast from the past. This rationale supports the first argument by showing that despite Napoleon’s efforts he could not prevent the French people from believing in Romanticism.

There are also two forms of rationale to support the second argument. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author states, “Chateaubriand gives the portrait of the tortured romantic soul, a finite spirit fraught with longings for the infinite, cast adrift upon a world torn loose from its moorings by eighteenth century skepticism and the terrible years of social and political revolution” (Havens, 1940:13). One can logically deduce that Romanticism evolved out of the revolution because it was resisting Classicist ideologies. However, Romanticism could not evolve without Classicism in the background. The author denotes how the revolution in France was the turning point. This supports the second argument because it implies that Romanticism evolved from Classicism.

The second piece of rationale in regards to the author’s second argument is logical deduction. Havens discusses the goals of the romantics during France’s revolution when he states, “unity of tragic tone will not be the goal of the romantic dramatist as it had been of his classic predecessors, although in France he will abandon the old practice timidly and not with the unhesitating naturalness of a Shakespeare. Here too the influence of the classic past still continues strong” (Havens, 1940:14). One can logically deduce that Classicism still added to Romantic thought, and that writings of Shakespeare were a clear indication of this. Havens discusses how the tragic tones in written work were characteristics of both movements. This rationale supports the second argument by showing how the effects of Classicism lingered even after the revolution.

iv. **Strengths/Weaknesses of Rationale**

The first strength regarding the rationale of Havens lies in his explanation of the importance of Romanticism. He states, “an effort if made, not merely to narrate, to analyze, the past, but to evoke it, to make it spring to life before the reader’s eyes. This is another important accomplishment of romanticism” (Havens, 1940:15). By discussing the details of the movement it allows the reader to understand the different components of each movement, and this strengthens the rationale. He continues to ask, “what is classicism? What is romanticism?” And he answers his own questions with humorous irony: “romanticism is the literature which pleases people today. classicism is the literature which pleased their great-grand-fathers.” So Stendhal joins Mme de Staël in demanding a
new literature for a new age” (Havens, 1940:15). The rationale is strengthened by the author’s ability to describe each artistic movement and give attributes that contribute to the reader’s understanding.

The second strength regarding the rationale is the author’s strong conclusion. Havens states, “what of the results of romanticism? Above all, romanticism established the right of a new literature to come into being. This in itself was a great achievement” (Havens, 1940:19). The author goes to great lengths to prove that Romanticism in France was distinct from its European counterparts. He states, “at the end of the nineteenth century, symbolist poetry in France goes at length beyond romantic eloquence to express more fully the mysticism and the sometimes obscure music which French romanticism, still inherently logical, as we have seen, under the long dominance of the classic tradition, hinted at but did not completely accept, as it was more instinctively accepted in England and Germany. In this respect the symbolists are a continuation and a natural culmination of the romantic movement” (Havens, 1940:19). This sums up the logical reasoning as to why French Romanticism differed from Germany and Britain.

The rationale is strengthened by the author’s vast knowledge of the movements within Europe.

The first weakness in the author’s rationale is the comparison of the north of France to the south. Havens states, “thus the classicist’s idea of the fixity of literary forms gives way before the concept of constant evolution. There are two main groups of literatures, the literature of the north and the literature of the south” (Havens, 1940:14). This comparison was not useful since it did not really pertain to the Romantic Movement as a whole. The author continues by stating, “the literatures of the south are clear in outlines…the literatures of the north are melancholy and impregnated with the mystery of life” (Havens, 1940:14). The author momentarily describes the different sentiment of the north and south, but it did not benefit his argument due to its briefness.

The second weakness in the author’s rationale was his constant discussion of various literary writers during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. He states, “Hugo at this time admires Shakespeare and Calderon, but also Racine and Boileau” (Havens, 1940:15). These different authors did not benefit the author’s argument because it did not describe their style and how it pertained to the Romantic school of thought. He continues by stating, “here depth of personal feeling, power of expression, the revivification of the language, all united to produce the great poetry of Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo and Musset” (Havens, 1940:17). Havens should have focused predominantly on a select few, instead of incorporating several writers and theorists. Discussing various literary thinkers did not assist with the understanding of Romanticism.
The fourth study in this section is “Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism”, which was written by Friedrich Antal. For this study, I will again address and analyze the thesis, arguments, rationale, and strengths and weaknesses of the rationale theorized by the author.

i. Thesis

In this article Antal describes the changing political sentiments in France during the French Revolution. The author focuses on the various artistic styles of Neo-Classicist painter Jacques-Louis David, and how his affiliations to different activists and nobility affected his art work as well as social status. In the thesis, Antal claims that the French revolution changed the social infrastructure, and that artists such as Jacques-Louis David were a catalyst for the political agenda by creating work which suited their own passionate convictions. In essence, the author seeks to reason how David’s political sentiments dramatically shifted, based upon his political influences. Antal states, “a great gulf divides the period of his old age from the revolutionary period, when David was topical in every sense of the word, when his life and his art, his politics and his historical paintings formed an inseparable whole” (Antal, 1935:168). David was influenced by various people, some being political revolutionaries, and the others being aristocratic monarchs, and therefore the content of his art was bound to dramatically change throughout his life.

ii. Arguments

The author’s first argument is that art during the eighteenth and nineteenth century had to adapt elements of both classicism and naturalism to appeal to the middle class as well as the monarchy. Author Antal explains that these forms of art fused into Romanticism. He states, “it must be remembered that naturalism had to assume a classicistic form in a historical composition of this kind in order to be accepted at all by the public of that time” (Antal, 1935:160). The author points out that art needed to conform to certain styles in order to be considered successful. Antal states, “classicism, based on naturalism, was thus the historically inevitable style of David’s picture, a style which accurately reflected its social background” (Antal, 1935:160). This argument supports the thesis because it shows how an artist’s style would propel a political movement. Therefore each artist had to make a concentrated effort to cater to each social strata of French society.
The author’s second argument is that although David’s art was often commissioned by aristocratic patrons, his content was geared toward his political affiliations of the revolutionaries. Antal argues that David would create art for his aristocratic patrons, but ultimately had the political influence of the Jacobins as the main substance of his work. Antal states, “the whole tendency of David’s painting, however, it exaltation of patriotism and civic virtue in all its austerity, the puritanical economy of its composition, was radically directed against his own patrons” (Antal, 1935:160). Naturalism in David’s compositions was synonymous with the rising middle class. The author points out the influence of French revolutionary Robespierre, who was a close friend of David, greatly influenced his work. Artwork was influenced by the politics of the era, yet David’s commissions were directly from the aristocracy. He had to be careful, so that his compositions would cater to both the monarchy and the middle class. This argument supports the thesis because it shows how David was influenced by his political convictions rather than just the commission from his patrons.

iii. Rationale for Arguments

There are two forms of evidence or rationale to support the first argument. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author refers to David’s style when he states, “in David’s early period, however, the sculptural character of figures was merely the result of his study of the model, a study which distinguished his figures from the picturesque” (Antal, 1935:160). From this statement one can logically deduce that David’s style had shifted towards Naturalism from his Classical ideologies. This shift further indicates a shift in political ideals, from the rigid Greek figures of Classicism, to the Naturalistic forms representative of the middle class. However, the author emphasizes that both Naturalism and Classicism had to merge in order to be accepted by the public, and this supports the first argument.

The second rationale to support the first argument is logical deduction. The author explains societal hierarchy when he states, “on the other hand, only a historical picture could exercise any far-reaching influence on the public of that period. For there still existed a rigidly hierarchic scale in the social estimation of the different spheres of painting, a scale dating from the time when the artists had to fight for their social position, for their emergence above the artisan level” (Antal, 1935:160). One can logically deduce that there was a strong moral obligation for artists to be true to themselves but also to be grateful to their aristocratic patrons. Therefore, David
had to conform to both styles. This rationale supports the argument because it shows that Naturalism and Classicism reflected the social backdrop of the puritanical monarchy feeling resistance from the Naturalistic middle class.

There are also two forms of rationale to support the second argument. The first form of rationale is logical deduction. The author states, “David’s political views induced him actively to participate in the revolution: he was made its art-dictator and belonged to the intimate circle of Robespierre’s political friends. The great experiences of the bourgeois revolution, David’s intimate contact with daily events, exercised a remarkable influence on his art” (Antal, 1935:162). One can logically deduce that David’s political affiliations greatly affected his work. Considering that Robespierre was the head of the Jacobins, David’s political attachment would be symbolically depicted in his art. Antal continues to explain that David’s paintings, such as The Oath of Horatii (see appendix), have romantic undertones, “illustrating an episode from the history of the seventeenth century, painted in a baroque style transfused and partly suppressed by naturalistic details, strikingly resembles romantic painting” (Antal, 1935:162). This rationale supports the argument because it shows how France’s past had influenced the principles of the Revolution.

The second form of rationale that supports the second argument is deductive logic and the component of political unrest. Antal describes how the shift in political parties created dilemmas for artists such as David. He states, “after the fall of the revolutionary Jacobins, representing the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, a wealthier stratum of the middle class came into power under the Directoire. The new fashionable society which opened its doors even to former Royalists soon turned its back on the severe republican ideal with its far too puritan standards of morality. This social and political change put an end to David’s political career” (Antal, 1935:167). One can logically deduce that David’s success depended not only on his political friends such as Robespierre, but also upon the rich patrons who funded his work. This rationale supports the argument because it shows how David’s career suffered after the death of the Jacobin party.

iv.  **Strengths/Weaknesses of Rationale**

The first strength regarding the rationale of the author is his ability to tie David to the political movement occurring during the 18th and 19th century. He states, “David’s most important period, when his position was unique among the painters of Europe, had by that time come to an end, nevertheless his work during the Napoleonic period is of great historical interest. He was commissioned by the Emperor to paint several large pictures of ceremonial
occasions” (Antal, 1935:167). The author clearly depicts the connection between artists and the autocracy. By showing the reliance of the monarchy on artists the reader is able to see the interdependency of politics and art.

The second strength regarding the rationale is Antal’s reference to art history. By discussing artistic movements and styles which were popular in the past he builds a stronger understanding of Romanticism and Classicism. Antal states, “thus, in all periods since the Middle Ages in which an advanced outlook arose from advanced economic, social and political conditions of the middle class, a classicistic art expressed the rationalism of that class. But in each period, in each country, we are concerned with a different stage in development of the bourgeoisie, and the different classicistic styles themselves reflect these different phases” (Antal, 1935:161). This supports the rationale by showing how Classicism influenced David’s work.

The first area of weakness in the rationale of the author’s argument is the constant reference to other artists. The author merely describes other artists without discussing them throughout the article. He states, “we could revert to the classicism of Raphael, the inspirer of Poussin, or to that of Masaccio, the inspirer of Raphael. All these classicistic, rationalistic and to a high degree naturalistic, styles arose at socially and politically progressive moments in the historical development of the bourgeoisie” (Antal, 1935:161). The author should have elaborated on these artists’ political significance, in order to create a better understanding of their artistic contributions. By briefly discussing these artists and their “inspirers,” the reader is unaware in how they correlate to Classicism and Romanticism and this weakens the rationale.

The second weakness in the author’s rationale was his brief discussion of the Rococo movement and the Renaissance. Antal introduces these movements but does not deeply describe characteristics. He states, “the Renaissance subject introduces a new color scheme differing from that of Rococo paintings, both on account of its greater naturalism, and through the use of certain theatrical effects, e.g., the surprising figure of the doctor in pitch-black in front of the dark green background” (Antal, 1935:162). These comparisons did not benefit the rationale because it convoluted the article by creating too many comparisons of different movements. The introduction of the Rococo movement made it difficult for the reader to understand the style and characteristics of the movement without a stronger understanding of art history.
III Assessment

i. *Strongest Argument for the First Case:*

The first case study that is analyzed in this report is Realism, and two main arguments emerged as the most persuasive.

The first of these arguments is from Bernard Goldman’s article entitled “Realist Iconography: Intent and Criticism”. In the assessment, Goldman argues that it was not the content of what Courbet chose which was controversial, but how the composition portrayed informality in the middle class. Goldman indicates that Courbet’s work was shocking because his motifs were vastly different from what the aristocracy viewed as legitimate art. He states that Courbet, “did not want to imitate those who copied the others, nor would he have anything to do with art for art’s sake” (Goldman, 1959:186). The author clearly outlines that Courbet was not concerned with the aesthetic appeal of subject matter, but sought to depict the truth. Goldman states, “Courbet’s paintings contained a latent social significance” (Goldman, 1959:187). Gustave Courbet’s involvement with social changes can be seen in his work *The Stonebreakers* (see appendix). Although many critics criticized Courbet for only considering peasants versus the very poor, the author indicates that he wanted to focus on a new kind of middle class. Goldman states, “Courbet chose for the bulk of his paintings people drawn from the social stratum of the newly emerging middle-class” (Goldman, 1959:188). By discussing Courbet’s focus on the emerging middle class, Goldman is indicating the social changes occurring in France. Courbet was not creating art to arrive at philosophic interpretation, but he was creating art to describe the emergence of a new class. Changes in Europe’s social hierarchy indicate the political fervor of the revolution of 1848. The author also gives an opposite viewpoint, which shows how artists such as Francois Millet were stronger advocates of social equality. The author quotes Millet, “I have only tried to make people think of the man whose life is spent in toil, and who eats bread in the sweat of his brow” (Goldman, 1959:188). The author does this to strengthen his argument and to show that in reality there is no distinction between peasantry and the poor. After universal suffrage was passed, every man in France had the chance to vote and change the social dynamic. This argument is sound in that it outlines how a new middle class was emerging despite criticism from the aristocracy.

The second strong argument explored in the current scholarship regarding Realism is in Gregory Galligan’s article entitled “The Self Pictured: Manet, the Mirror, and the Occupation of Realist Painting”. In the assessment, Galligan argues that Realists used the concept of the reflexive mirror in ways that marked a historical shift in visual...
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theory, but was still reminiscent of Classical and Romantic art pieces. Galligan discusses the new methods employed by Realists which signified the individuality of the movement. Manet had adopted composition from the Romantics but put a Realist spin on the composition. He states, “Manet studied the mode of looking he found in Titian’s Venus (see appendix) to consider what implications it might have for his own painting, and he was not averse to disclosing his debt to it” (Galligan, 1998:159). Rather than completely opposing Titian’s composition, Manet adopted a similar composition but preferred to insert a Realist factor, which is the maid in the forefront. This argument explains how art could shift in terms of elementary design and methodologies but remain reminiscent of previous movements. Galligan states, “the mirror in Olympia (see appendix), signals that the beholder’s scopic prospect on the model is not necessarily a frontal one, as the painting first suggests. In other words, the logic of the gaze in this painting is not, by default, a possessive one—to the contrary, it is so profoundly panoramic” (Galligan, 1998:160). This argument indicates how the model of reflection was adopted by the Realist movement to revolutionize Manet’s artistic thoughts. Although both Titian and Manet create a similar composition, Manet’s piece differs in terms of style. This argument is sound as it outlines the ways in which various movements merge in terms of composition, yet differ in stylistic approach. Without referring to previous artistic compositions, Realism would not have significantly evolved in methodology. The author indicates how the past artistic movements played a considerable role influencing Realism.

\[ii. \textit{Strongest Arguments for the Second Case}\]

The second case that is analyzed in this report is Romanticism, and two main contentions emerged as the most persuasive.

The first most persuasive argument is noted in the 1940 article entitled “Romanticism in France” written by George R. Havens. The author argues that the French Revolution and Napoleon’s reign were responsible for temporarily suppressing Romanticism, but could not prevent the rise of its popularity amongst the greater majority of France. The author states, “the French revolution had come and gone. The work of Rousseau, the discussion of the Hamlet monologue with its theme of suicide, the vogue of Goethe’s Werther from 1776 on, the popularity of Young’s melancholy Night Thoughts, all show that it was not the great political upheaval of 1789 alone which produced that mal du siècle, which is so important a characteristic of Chateaubriand and of his romantic successors. Literary as well as political change was already in the air” (Havens, 1940:12). Based upon this evidence, the author
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is showing how Romanticism was temporarily suppressed by Napoleon, who placed restrictions on Romantic thought and literature under his Empire. Although he had previously favored Romanticism for his own propaganda, he was turning a new leaf. Havens indicates, “he threw his support to classic taste, which was already evident in much of the oratory of the revolution” (Havens, 1940:12). The heroic characters of Classicism appealed to Bonaparte as glorious inspirations of perfection. But despite Napoleon’s love of Classicism, the public was tired of old literary domination, and preferred the melodramatics of Romantic thought. Havens states, “a new public had been created by the revolution—a public gradually preparing itself unconsciously for the romantic theater of a Hugo or a Dumas” (Havens, 1940:13). This is a strong argument because it shows how public opinion shaped Napoleon’s approval of Romanticism, and the subtle integration of Classical art.

The second most persuasive argument is found in the article entitled “Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism” written by Friedrich Antal. The author argues that although Jacques-Louis David’s art was often commissioned by aristocratic patrons, his content was geared toward his political affiliations of the revolutionaries. The author indicates that David’s focus on Naturalism was characteristic of the rising middle class. Although David took a Neo-Classical approach, his art was heavily Romantic. Antal explains, “the rising middle class proclaimed new political ideas of democracy and patriotism—furthermore there was a new conception of morality, civil virtue, and heroism” (Antal, 1935:160). This argument implies that Romanticism and Neo-Classicalism coincided, and therefore shared significant artistic attributes. The author indicates that David’s Oath of Horatii (see appendix) was indicative of France’s new political agenda, favoring civic virtue and heroism. This is a strong argument because it shows the outlook of the bourgeoisie on the eve of the revolution. Antal states, “throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, the time during which the new and revolutionary ideas of the bourgeoisie were ever more consistently developed and widely circulated, the artists were turning increasingly to classicism and naturalism” (Antal, 1935:161). This is a strong argument because it shows how David’s work covered movements such as Naturalism and Classicism, but propelled Romanticism into the political forefront. Antal distinguishes the important political contributions of art movements.

iii. Comparison of Cases

Realism and Romanticism were chosen as movements for this research because both indicated political change and employed techniques borrowed from preceding movements such as Classicalism, Orientalism, and
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Naturalism. Chu explains how Romanticism encompassed other movements by stating, “the July Monarchy was a crucial period for French culture and art. It started with the dialectic between Classicism and Romanticism and witnessed the eventual synthesis between the two” (Chu, 2006:226). On the other hand, Realism was the art of social consciousness. Chu states, “eager to advance progress and prosperity in France, Napoleon III promoted public works and encouraged the establishment of lending institutions to finance both public and private projects—Unlike Louis-Philippe, who had encouraged the middle class to get rich with little regard for the workers, Napoleon III did not ignore the underclass” (Chu, 2006:269). Despite the distinct attributes of each movement, both helped to publicize social dilemmas through the avenue of art. Furthermore, Realism and Romanticism dealt with the subject matter of social hierarchy.

The Romantic Movement commenced towards the end of the July Monarchy, indicating the changes of governmental principles. Louis-Philippe became the “King of the French” in the summer of 1830. Chu indicates that, “his reign, the July Monarchy, was an important phase in French history since it witnessed the rise and expansion of the middle class and the beginning of socialism, a political ideology that, in its initial stages, centered on the poverty brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the capitalist system it entailed” (Chu, 2006:225). Although his rule entailed an expansion of the elite middle-class, he was unsuccessful due to his neglect of lower classes. Chu explains, “Louis-Philippe’s policy of improving the economy by encouraging the industrialist middle class to “get rich” had led to a wide gap between rich and poor” (Chu, 2006:263). Therefore, Romantics catered to the lifestyle of the expanding middle-class, whereas Realists depicted the social injustice suffered by the lower classes. After the revolution of 1848 artists sought to portray Europe’s internal economic problems, mainly the plight of the poor.

The proclamation of the Second Empire in 1852 birthed a new concept of Realism, and under the leadership of Louis Napoleon III progressive concepts such as science, technology, and industry were introduced. Realism was distinct from Romanticism in that it did not focus on Orientalism or the intrigue of the East. Instead Realism focused internally, on Europe’s impoverished working class. The salon under the Second Republic challenged the allegorical symbolism used in whimsical Romantic pieces. The goal of Realists was to confront the present economic issues rather than focusing on past heroism. There was no false nostalgia or ideology in Realism, but only the harsh and brutal truth. Although each movement differed, they both shared general commonalities.
The main difference between the movements of Romanticism and Realism lie within the issue of political alliances. Romantics favored the beliefs of the expanding middle class, but were caught between pleasing their patrons and propelling their political convictions. Unlike the Realists who openly defied the opinion of the monarchy, Romantics were commissioned under them, and therefore balanced between free thought and political allegiance. Antal explains that David’s paintings were ironically directed against his own patrons. Antal states, “David’s overwhelming success, indeed its very existence, was determined by the strong feeling of opposition then prevailing against the demoralized court and its corrupt government” (Antal, 1935:160). However, Realists were not convinced that the monarchy could facilitate their success, but rather they relied on the artistic appraisal of peers and literary critics. Goldman explains, “the socialist Proudhon, friend of Courbet, conceived art as a vehicle for social messages. Hence, in his volume Du Principe de l’art et de sa destination sociale he held Courbet to be a powerful social critic” (Goldman, 1959:188). Realism and Romanticism catered to their respective audiences. Realists unapologetically propelled matters of social inequality into the forefront, while romantics balanced between appeasing their patrons and symbolically portraying their personal convictions in their artwork.

A strong similarity between Realism and Romanticism lies in the facilitation of their works through their ardent political supporters. Romantics acquired considerable support under Louis XVIII, and were commissioned through the governmental patronage of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Chu indicates, “the Academy controlled the fine arts in France in several ways. In 1819 art teaching became centered on the newly founded Ecole des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts), a merger of the schools of architecture, painting, and sculpture” (Chu, 2006:205). Similarly to the Romantics, the Realists relied on the Salon and upon writers such as Charles Baudelaire to emphasize the importance of their agenda. Both movements relied upon the support of institutions which propelled the movements’ political agendas.

Regardless of commonalities, each author presents arguments which differ. Friedrich Antal focuses on the merging of Classicism and Romanticism, whereas author George R. Havens describes the individuality that French Romanticism possessed in comparison to the same movement in England and Germany. In terms of Realism, Bernard Goldman emphasized the importance of Gustave Courbet’s contribution to socialist principles, while Gregory Galligan discussed the artistic techniques that distinguished Realism from its predecessors. This broad array of viewpoints helps support the thesis because it denotes just how many factors play a role in the development and progress of each movement. Although the arguments focus on different factors, they all contribute to the overall
theory that art movements gained momentum from the politics of the time. Romanticism and Realism alike required the assistance of art institutions, along with the fragmented support of society to advocate necessary political changes.
IV. References


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V. Appendix

Antoine-Jean Gros, *Bonaparte Visiting the Plague House at Jaffa*, 1804. (Romanticism)

Anne-Louise Girodet-Trioson, *The Burial of Atala*, 1808. (Classicism and Romanticism)

Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans*, 1849. (Realism)
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Gustave Courbet, *The Stonebreakers*, 1849. (Realism)

Manet, *Olympia*, 1863. (Realism)
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Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538. (Classical/Romantic)