



Speaker: During the 1700s, religion lost its place as being the inspiration and patron for innovative art and music. However, religious inquiry resurfaces again during the Romantic era. Romantic era artists, composers, and writers are freed from being mere servants to the aristocrats and the church. Now, let me just recall what a servant of the church had to do. Do you remember Michelangelo? Now, what he had to do in order to create the Sistine Chapel ceiling?

They're freed from this now. With their growing popular appeal, artists focus on the notion that their talents were God-given. They celebrated the ordinary and to paraphrase the English writer, William Blake, "Found infinity in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour." In the 1800s, we start getting the notion that the more we know, the less we really understand. This is particularly true of romantic writers and they examine this theme.

A good example is Robert Louis Stevenson in his short novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in which you have a battle where a logic and rationality is pitted against irrationality and the violent. Mystery, the unfathomable, religious customs from other areas around the globes were explored by artists during this era with curiosity and wonder. Additionally, writers, musicians, and artists turned to the beauty of nature and depicted it in all its splendor as a gift from God. Even though religion was no longer the forefront of the art world, religious themes certainly were present and persisted. Certainly so much more than they did in the previous era.

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