

The Influence of Primitivism and Related Ideas in the Writings of Wordsworth, Novalis, Hölderlin, and Chateaubriand.

In the various stages of the development of Western Civilization from the time of the ancient Greeks to the present, man has continually expressed through his literature a dissatisfaction with his own state of existence and a desire or yearning for a return to a way of life that is better than his immediate situation. That improved way of life is almost always conceived of as a simpler existence close to Nature and is yearned for because of a reaction against too much civilization.

Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas in *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* trace the origins of this innate yearning in man through a detailed discussion of literary examples from the Greek and Roman traditions. Primitivism is the broad term for this not uncommon emotion that has affected Western man since he began to develop a social, political, artistic, and literary civilization. Lovejoy and Boas see this phenomenon as the result of the fusion of two distinct tendencies in the concept of primitivism.

The one, chronological primitivism, views history as a natural law whereby the human race will continue to progress toward a better future.

But chronological primitivism can obviously find the process of history in general small encouragement, and only such instruction as may be obtained from examples of evils and aberrations to be avoided, if possible; yet, even if not without hope for the future, it is essentially a backward-looking habit of mind. At most, nothing better is to be anticipated than a recovery of what has been lost; and it is on a single, brief and remote bygone episode in history that it fixes its imagination. (7)

The other, cultural primitivism, is most clearly the dissatisfaction of man with the very civilization he and his fellow men have created through their intellect and ingenuity.

The cultural primitivist has almost invariably believed that the simpler life of which he has dreamed has been somewhere, at some time, actually lived by human beings. He has not merely enunciated an ideal but has pointed to its exemplars. When these have been conceived as having

existed at the beginning of history, or of a cycle of it, cultural primitivism fuses with one or another form of chronological primitivism. (8)

As the title of Lovejoy and Boas' important work suggests there are many ideas that have a direct relationship to the concept of primitivism. Hoxie Neal Fairchild in his study of romantic naturalism entitled *The Nobel Savage* explores various ideas related to primitivism. For Fairchild there are three concepts that are particularly obvious in the literature of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: that of the Nobel Savage, that of the Golden Age, and that of the Pastoral (not as an art form but as a way of life close to nature).

The period of history alluded to above corresponds loosely to the dates of the Romantic Movement whose most polemical precursor was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century he first suggested the concept of the Nobel Savage that might provide to the over-civilized Age of Enlightenment what its culture was lacking, namely nature, mysticism, passion, emotion, and natural instinct.

European thinkers in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, such as Bacon (1561-1626) in England inspired Hobbes (1588-1670) and Locke (1632-1704) who were to concern themselves with the rights of man. In Germany the ideas of Leibnitz (1646-1716) influenced the two most important figures of the "Aufklärung," Lessing (1729-1781) and Kant (1724-1804). What Descartes (1596-1650) had initiated in seventeenth century France was more fully developed by the men around the "Encyclopédie," namely Diderot (1713-1784), Montesquieu (1689-1755), Rousseau (1712-1778), and Voltaire (1694-1778). One can say that, in general, the Enlightenment was a period in which such European thinkers as these endeavored to establish a firm philosophical basis free from any particular culture, religion, or tradition and acceptable to any rational person. Rousseau proved himself to be a contrary thinker who was willing to criticize the effects of the Enlightenment in his essay submitted for a prestigious contest.

In 1750 the Académie des Sciences et Belles Lettres in France at Dijon offered a prize for the best essay discussing the scientific and artistic effect of the Renaissance on European Civilization. It was expected that the essays would emphasize the positive contributions to European culture and life that

were the result of a renewal or re-birth of classical learning and an interest in exploration and scientific enquiry known as the spirit of the Renaissance or Modern Age.

Rousseau responded with an essay condemning the harmful effects of civilization and civilized man on the virtue and morality of the human race entitled "Discours sur les Arts et les Sciences." A few years later in "L'Origine de l' Inégalité parmi les Hommes" he argued that the historical events leading to the profane civil society of his day had corrupted human beings who are basically good by nature. In the second part of this 1753 essay Rousseau reveals what he believed to be the origin of civilization and man's break with his natural state.

Le premier qui ayant enclos un terrain s'avisa de dire: ceci est à moi, et trouva des gens assez simples pour le croire, fut le vrai fondateur de la société civile.<sup>i</sup>

In May 1762, *Emile*, a book on education that is both a novel and a philosophical treatise, was published. This work in the first person narrative form traces the education of Emile from birth to adulthood. Rousseau's philosophy of education is one through which he hopes his pupil will grow to be virtuous even in this imperfect and unnatural world he must inhabit.

About fifty years later, writers who were born in the 1770's began to express their regret at the deplorable state of civilized mankind and promulgated through their literary works a return to nature and a simpler life. Rousseau's ideas had helped give birth to the Romantic Movement. To understand the mental attitude or Weltanschauung that was prevalent among the writers, such as William Wordsworth (1770-1850) in England, Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg 1772-1801) and Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) in Germany, and François-René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) in France, active at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a reference to Freud's essay, "Das Unbehagen in der Kultur" (1930) is helpful. In this essay whose English title is "Civilization and Its Discontents," the author discusses the psychological reactions to too much civilization and culture that bring about secret yearnings and desires for a Golden Age, the life of a Noble Savage, or a Pastoral existence in Nature. For Freud there exists a contradiction between "der Kultur und der Natur des Menschen."<sup>iii</sup>

Before endeavoring to relate how primitivism and related ideas form a basis for some of the writings of the four Romantic writers mentioned above, some of the general characteristics of the Noble Savage, the Golden Age, and the Pastoral, should be discussed. Fairchild is quite emphatic in his assertion that there is an assumed relationship between the idea of the Noble Savage and romantic naturalism. The Noble Savage lives in nature, and it is from nature alone that he draws the virtues and qualities that make him a man to be admired and envied by the civilized European.

Fairchild sees the concept of the Noble Savage resulting from three distinct elements: "the observation of explorers, various classical and medieval conventions, and the deductions of philosophers and men of letters" (2). He stresses the importance of classical and medieval conventions in fusing the concept of the Golden Age with that of the Noble Savage.

The conception of a Golden Age is to the ancient world as the Noble Savage idea is to the Modern World. Each represents a protest against the evil incidental to human progress; each looks yearningly back from the corruptions of civilization to an imaginary primeval innocence. Just as it takes an excessively rich diet to make one appreciate bran, so it is in over-ripe stages of culture, such as the Augustan Age of Rome or the eighteenth century Enlightenment, that one yearns for simplicity. There is a similarity between Rousseau's view of the state of nature and Ovid's picture of the Golden Age. To Ovid, the Iron Age represents what Rousseau calls the "moral effect of the arts and sciences." (2)

Peter V. Marinelli, in his critical work, *Pastoral*, is quick to make a distinction between the golden Arcadias of classic pastoral and the new concept of 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic pastoral.

It is Wordsworth in his poetry who sets forth this new concept of pastoral which serves as a hymn to romantic naturalism. After his graduation from Cambridge in 1791, Wordsworth made a trip to France where he became inspired by the fervor and passion of the French Revolution. Back in England, he intended to return to France in 1793, but the Reign of Terror prevented him from doing so. With his sister Dorothy he settled in Dorsetshire, and in 1796 he and his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote *Lyrical Ballads*. Perhaps the most famous of his poems from this work is "Tintern Abbey," a poem which helped

introduce Romanticism to England. In 1800 a second edition with the "Preface" appeared after he and Dorothy had moved to Grasmere in the Lake District. Marinelli writes that "towards the beginning of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, (1805) a book entitled 'Retrospect—Love of Nature Leading to Love of Man,' there occurs a passage of almost two hundred lines which is of distinct importance to the pastoral tradition" (1). The beginning paragraph shows the poet's growing love of humanity and ends with a reference to the idyllic life of shepherds.

For me, when my affections first were led  
 From Kindred, friends, and playmates to partake  
 Love for the human creature's absolute self,  
 That noticeable kindness of heart  
 Sprang out fountains, there abounding most,  
 Where sovereign Nature dictated the tasks  
 And occupations which her beauty adorned,  
 And Shepherds were the men that pleased me first.  
 (*The Prelude*, Book VIII, 121-8)

In this work Wordsworth makes it clear that his shepherd is not to be found among the Latin wilds ruled by Saturn and leading a life of carefree abandon, nor is he to be seen on a lush, verdant hillside in Arcady playing a tune on a Pan's flute while his flock roams in aimless tranquility amid groves of sacred olive trees. He contrasts this traditional pastoral with its idyllic quality with the reality of the modern shepherd whose rural ways and manners were the "unluxuriant product of a life/Intent on little but substantial needs. . . ."

In "Michael" which Wordsworth called a pastoral poem, the poet explores the simple beauty and charm of rustic life, but it is a life of hard work, deep parental affection, and intense appreciation of property. When Wordsworth wrote this poem in 1800, he was living at Grasmere amid the scenic splendors of the northern Lake Country which undoubtedly inspired him to sing of the Shepherd, Michael, and his son and wife. It is their story that Wordsworth tells:

It was the first  
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me  
 Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men  
 whom I already loved;--not verily  
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills  
 Where was their occupation and abode. (21-26)

Father and son have a heart-to-heart talk, and Michael attempts to give Luke advice that will keep his character pure, much as Rousseau had done for Emile.

When thou art gone away, should evil men  
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son  
 And of this moment, hither turn thy thoughts,  
 And God will strengthen thee, amid all fear  
 And all temptations, Luke, I pray that thou  
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived  
 Who being innocent, did for that cause  
 Bestir them in good deeds. (407-414)

Michael and Luke are important not because they are merely men but because they are men who are close to Nature and whose existence is an integral part of that Nature which the poet himself admires and envies. Wordsworth describes in detail the arduous but fulfilling life of Michael and his family. The deep affection for the land which he has labored to retain and improve throughout his long life of more than eighty years is closely tied to his love for his wife and son.

When this property is threatened due to the financial ruin of a nephew for whom Michael had been bound in surety, the father reluctantly decides to send his son, Luke, to the city to earn enough money to enable him to pay the debt and retain his beloved land. Amid this civilization in the city, Luke becomes corrupt and unresponsive to his duties. Meantime Luke began

To slacken in his duty; and, at length  
 He in the dissolute city gave himself  
 To evil courses: ignomy and shame  
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last  
 To seek a hiding place beyond the seas. (445-449)

This is Wordsworth's way of illustrating the detrimental influence of too much civilization on man's morality. So long as Luke was in the country leading a pastoral life that was one of self-discipline and hard but satisfying work, he was the model son. It is clear that the poet sees the rugged pastoral existence with its hardships and joys as the only truly moral and spiritual experience.

Michael's consolation for the loss of his beloved son is his work among the things he holds dear: his land, his flock, and his sheep-fold that he had begun when Luke departed for the city to make his fortune. To be sure, Michael is far removed from the idle shepherds of classical pastoral, but it is also

very clear that Wordsworth has taken the basic idea of the pastoral and has molded and shaped it to fit his own romantic view of existence.

In Germany, Romanticism emerged as a result of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars (1789-1815) that brought an end to the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, reducing the Hapsburgs to simply Emperors of Austria and Kings of Bohemia and Hungary. The entire map of Europe was remade as a result of Napoleon's conquests. The spirit of "liberté, égalité, et fraternité" of the French Revolution lingered among the people in German lands in spite of a restoration of absolutism that resulted from the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). Perhaps the most lasting and dramatic presentation of this desire for freedom among German-speaking peoples has been expressed by Beethoven in his only opera entitled *Fidelio* (1805) and in his Third Symphony known also as the "Eroica."

German Romanticism arises out of the emotions that came from the irrationalism and spirit of freedom prevalent in Europe at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a reaction against the dictates of German Classicism's restraint and objectivity. Romanticism exuded subjective passion, violent emotions of grief (Weltschmerz) and joy—all presented in a sonorous lyricism akin to melodic music. Goethe and Kant had promulgated the classical idea that human existence must be limited by rules and self-discipline, but the Romantics desired to be free from restraint in both their works and in their private lives. Hence a literature filled with colors, melodies, fantasy, hallucinations, and exaggerated individualism emerged from these writers whose personal actions often were tinged with immoral or unorthodox behavior. Often these poets suffered extreme tragedy in their lives, making them living examples of the gloom and despair of "Weltschmerz." Two poets of "Weltschmerz" are Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) and Friedrich Hölderlin, both of whom expressed a yearning for a Golden Age in their poetry. The former was to find it in the Christian Middle Ages and the latter in Classical Greece, dominated not by Apollo but by Dionysos.

Novalis read and adapted the philosophies of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) into his own "Liebesreligion" (religion of love) between 1795 and 1796. The brothers Schlegel, important figures in early German Romanticism, published Novalis' first fragment in their magazine, *Das Athenäum*, in 1798.

In 1799 he wrote his famous essay, "Die Christenheit oder Europa," which was to serve as a kind of statement for the German Romantics who had lost all faith in the ideals and aspirations of the Enlightenment. Novalis and other writers active in the Romantic Movement were disenchanted with their present situation and looked back to the Middle Ages as a period of order, unity, true comradeship, and meaningful religion—in short, for these exceptional thinkers who reacted against the idealism of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the Middle Ages were a lost paradise, a Golden Age in which mankind lived without doubt and fear. It was a time when all men could live in harmony and peace, sure in their deepest thoughts that there was indeed an order and plan to existence guided by a just and benevolent God.

Those were beautiful, magnificent times, when Europe was a Christian land, when one Christianity dwelled on this civilized continent, and when one common interest joined the most distant provinces of this vast spiritual empire. Without great worldly possessions one sovereign governed and unified the great political forces. Immediately under him stood one enormous guild, open to all, executing his every wish and zealously striving to consolidate his beneficent power. Every member of this society was honored everywhere. If the common people sought from their clergyman comfort or help, protection or advice, gladly caring for his various needs in return, he also gained protection, respect, and audience from his superiors. Everyone saw these elect, armed with miraculous powers, as the children of heaven, whose mere presence and affection dispensed all kinds of blessings. Childlike faith bound the people to their teachings. How happily everyone could complete their earthly labors, since these holy men had safeguarded them a future life, forgave every sin, explained and erased every black spot in this life. They were the experienced pilots on the great uncharted seas, in whose shelter one could scorn all storms, and whom one could trust to reach and land safely on the shores of the real paternal world.<sup>iii</sup>

This essay is a purely objective historical observation in which Novalis declares that a Golden Age could be rediscovered by his contemporaries by their returning to the social conditions of the Middle Ages when the Roman Catholic Church gave a cultural unity and spiritual stability to European society.

Two fragmentary novels, *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* and *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, published in 1802 after the death of Novalis, focus on the theme of a new Golden Age that will be found in one's own self and will be achieved through the power of art and poetry. In the latter novel, Novalis' central character, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, was known in history as one of the semi-mythic medieval Minnesingers who took part in the Sängerkrieg or Minstrels' contest on the Wartburg in Eisenach, a small city in Thuringen where Martin Luther was to translate the Holy Bible into German.

In this apprenticeship novel emerges the Romantic symbol of the "Blaue Blume" or "Blue Flower" which stands for longing and love and for the metaphysical quest for the infinite. Novalis opens his romance with a description of the youthful Heinrich in restless sleep in his parents' house nestled in Eisenach at the foot of the Wartburg. Heinrich thinks to himself while tossing uneasily in his bed:

It is not the treasures that have stirred in me such unspeakable longings; I care not for wealth and riches; but that blue flower I do long to see; it haunts me and I can think and dream of nothing else. I never felt so before; it seems as if my past life had been a dream, or as though I had passed in sleep into another world, for in the world that I used to know who would have troubled himself about a flower? Indeed, I never heard tell of such a strange passion for a flower.<sup>iv</sup>

In this novel of education, Novalis attempts to respond to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* which he considered to lack an emphasis on the poetical in deference to the economical. Heinrich's tale of his endless pilgrimage is presented against a vivid depiction of a medieval world of poets, knights, and crusades where imagination and fantasy represent the key elements of life, poetry, and art.

Not only Novalis felt himself adrift in a rudderless boat which was the world of the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, but also Friedrich Hölderlin lamented the fact that his lifetime was a "Nachtzeit," a period in history that lacked an order and plan. But this present era, from which the gods had disappeared, was not compared with the Middle Ages as Novalis had done. Hölderlin has as his highest ideal the world of ancient Greece, populated with gods who gave stability and meaning to life. Throughout his writings, Hölderlin expresses a longing and admiration for this lost world of ancient Greece which he considered a Golden Age for mankind. For this poet it was not medieval Christianity that was lacking in man's life, but rather a unity, a harmony with the whole of Nature.

Many other German literary figures had come to know and admire ancient Greek civilization through Johann Joachim Winkelmann's (1717-1768) *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke* (1754) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764). Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813) in his important apprenticeship novel, *Agathon* (1766) feature Agathon and Danae, charming representatives of epicureanism of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In his one-act tragedy, *Philotas* (1759), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) describes Spartan patriotism and manliness. The young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in his "Prometheus" reveals his fascination with super-human Greek titans. The ancient Greeks later appear as

disciplined and calm humanists in the old Goethe's fragmentary dramatic poem entitled *Pandora* (1808) in which he affirms his belief that beauty and culture always remain with humanity in spite of historical upheavals.

But Hölderlin's classical Greece was not the Apollonian paradise of beauty and art lauded by Goethe. The spirit of Dionysos reigned in Hölderlin's vision of this past Golden Age where the gods' music, ecstasy, and frenzied sexual exploits appeared as irrational and emotional behavior that led to unbalanced and tragic individuals.

In his apprenticeship novel in epistolary form entitled *Hyperion; Oder Der Eremit in Griechenland* (1797), he expresses his personal enthusiasm with Nature through the letters Hyperion writes to his friend, Bellarmin. Hyperion, a noble and idealistic Modern Greek, has left his studies in Germany to return to his native Greece where he hopes to aid the cause of his fellow countrymen in their struggle against the cruel and oppressive domination of the Turks. The very soil of Greece is alive with the spirit of the ancient gods, and it is amid the beauties of Nature that Hyperion experiences the exhilaration of the spirit that is evocative of the Golden Age. In spite of the dangers of roaming Turks, Hyperion can still experience the glories of Nature.

But you still shine, heavenly sun! You still grow green, holy earth! The streams still rush into the sea, and shady trees rustle at midday. The blissful hymn of spring sings my fading thoughts to sleep. The abundance of all living things in this world nourishes and satisfies my hungry soul with its power of intoxication.

O blessed Nature. I do not know what happens to me when I raise my eyes toward your beauty, but all heavenly yearning is in the tears which I the lover shed for you the beloved. My whole being falls silent and listens when the gentle breezes toy with my heart. Lost in the blue horizon, I look up to the firmament and down into the holy sea, and I feel as if a kindred spirit takes me in its arms, as if the pain of loneliness fades away into the living deity.<sup>v</sup>

Through the power of the imagination Hölderlin/Hyperion creates a Golden Age for himself by communing with the "Gottheit der Nature."

In the novel is the well-known poem, "Schicksalslied," which inspired Brahms in 1871 to compose a choral work that he entitled "Hyperions Schicksalslied." Hölderlin begins by evoking the gentle, peaceful stasis of immortality as personified by the gods in the first two verses and then in the third and final verse contrasts the beginning with the uproar and chaos of mortal life.

After the death of his friends Diotima and Alabanda, Hyperion loses his ideals and faith in the prospect of a better world and becomes a hermit. The ending of his work reflects to some extent the tragic and pathetic life of Hölderlin himself who suffered his last decades from severe mental problems and lived alone in a carpenter's house in Tübingen where he had done his university studies.

In spite of the dismal final plight of Hyperion that serves to depress the reader, the power and strength of the descriptions of the beauties and splendors of Nature in this novel provoke in him a feeling of the limitless reach of the divine.

Lush images of Nature also appear in the writings of François-René de Chateaubriand. Born into an ancient and aristocratic Breton family, he was the quintessential Romantic by his idealization of the mysterious ego, by his poetic, emotional description of exotic nature, by his aesthetic Christianity, and by his reverence for the Middle Ages. Inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution in 1791, he journeyed to America where he hoped to encounter the free natural savages of the forests of the young American Republic. Chateaubriand's accounts of the extent of his travels in this new nation are, according to historians, somewhat embellished, but he did take away from this experience the inspiration that would permit him to write the works that made his reputation.

On his return to France after the imprisonment of Louis XVI, he joined Royal forces that confronted the Revolutionary army at Thionville. With the defeat of the Royalists, Chateaubriand took refuge in England for seven years and supported himself by translating English literary works into French. He came to know the classical literature of paradise and lost golden ages through his prose translation of John Milton's (1608-1674) *Paradise Lost* (1667) and his familiarity with Britain's more recent recovery of its own primitives, such as the *Ossian* epics (1756) by James MacPherson (1736-1793). During his years in England he began *Le Génie du christianisme* (1802) wherein one sees an aesthetic defense of Roman Catholicism and an ardent polemic on the splendors of Medieval art and architecture as meaningful symbols of French culture and civilization.

Introduced into the text of *Le Génie du christianisme* is the story of René which was published as a separate work in 1805. René, the image of Chateaubriand himself, is a young Frenchman who has

withdrawn to America and lives among a tribe of Indians. René shares with the chief of the Natchez, Chactas, why he has left his native France. He has been close to his sister, Amélie, to the extent that the growing tenderness between them threatens to lead to an incestuous relationship. To avoid a moral catastrophe, she enters a convent and he exiles himself in America.

But it is in *Atala* (1801) that Chateaubriand presents the theme of the Noble Savage whose life was rooted in Nature and guided by natural law and reason. For this primitive man, free from the burden of modern thought and ideals, God was contemplated primarily as creator of the natural world. Chateaubriand has taken a cue from Milton's Adam in *Paradise Lost* who, recognizing his sin, yearned to withdraw to a place without social interaction. "O might I here/In solitude live savage, in some glade/Obscure" (ix, 1085).

Not only does Chateaubriand create a Golden Age in his vivid descriptions of the banks of the Mississippi River populated with blue herons, green flamingos, bears drunk from eating grapes and mix together the flora and fauna of the most disparate regions, but he also provides a very detailed picture of the Noble Savage in the figures of Chactas and his beloved Atala. In this prose poem of love and Christian faith, Atala has sworn to remain a virgin at her mother's deathbed and remains convinced of the immutability of her Christian vow. Her love for the pagan Chactas, who stayed faithful to the ancient Indian lore, is so great that she takes poison to avoid making love with him and thereby breaking her sacred vow. Chactas in his old age recounts this sorrowful tale to René, the young French adventurer in the New World. Chateaubriand's portrayal of Chactas in the Prologue stresses the nobility of this gentle savage.

Among these Indians there was an old man named Chactas, whose age, wisdom, and vast knowledge of life had made him the patriarch of the wilderness, beloved of all. Like all men, he had acquired his great virtue at the price of suffering. Not only were the forests of the New World filled with his sorrows, but he had borne them even to the shores of France.<sup>vi</sup>

In spite of the many injustices which Chactas had suffered at the hands of the French, He loved them. (20)

Chateaubriand in his Epilogue to this novella has René tell of these Noble Savages who are the sources of his story and infused in it his Christian faith.

In this tale I saw a portrayal of the people of the hunt and the people of the plow; of religion, the supreme lawgiver to men; of the perils of religious ignorance and all-consuming fervor set against the light, the charity, and the true spirit of the Gospel; of the struggles of passion and virtue in an innocent soul; and finally I saw the triumph of Christianity over the most ardent feeling and the most terrible fear—love and death. (76)<sup>vii</sup>

In the selections from these four Romantic writers it is clear to see that the important related ideas of primitivism—the Pastoral, the Golden Age, and the Noble Savage—are both stated and implied. Every period in history has writers and thinkers who expound on the better times of ages past, but no other period in modern literature has so poignantly expressed these yearnings as that of the Age of Romanticism.

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<sup>i</sup> The first person who staked out a piece of ground and was bold to say: "This belongs to me," and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society.

<sup>ii</sup> . . . "between civilization and human nature."

<sup>iii</sup> Es waren schöne, glänzende Zeiten, wo Europa ein christliches Land war, wo *eine* Christenheit diesen menschlich gestalteten Weltteil bewohnte; *ein* großes gemeinschaftliches Interesse verband die entlegensten Provinzen dieses weiten geistlichen Reichs. – Ohne große weltliche Besitztümer lenkte und vereinigte *ein* Oberhaupt die großen politischen Kräfte. – Eine zahlreiche Zunft, zu der jedermann den Zutritt hatte, stand unmittelbar unter demselben und vollführte seine Winke und strebte mit Eifer, seine wohltätige Macht zu befestigen. Jedes Glied dieser Gesellschaft wurde allenthalben geehrt, und wenn die gemeinen Leute Trost oder Hilfe, Schutz oder Rat bei ihm suchten und gerne dafür seine mannigfaltigen Bedürfnisse reichlich versorgten, so fand es auch bei den Mächtigeren Schutz, Ansehn und Gehör, und alle pflegten diese auserwählten, mit wunderbaren Kräften ausgerüsteten Männer wie Kinder des Himmels, deren Gegenwart und Zuneigung mannigfachen Segen verbreitete. Kindliches Zutrauen knüpfte die Menschen an ihre Verkündigungen. – Wie heiter konnte jedermann sein irdisches Tagewerk vollbringen, da ihm durch diese heiligen Menschen eine sichere Zukunft bereitet und jeder Fehltritt durch sie vergeben, jede mißfarbige Stelle des Lebens durch sie ausgelöscht und geklärt wurde. Sie waren die erfahrenen Steuerleute auf dem großen unbekanntem Meere, in deren Obhut man alle Stürme geringschätzen und zuversichtlich auf eine sichere Gelangung und Landung an der Küste der eigentlichen vaterländischen Welt rechnen durfte.

<sup>iv</sup> Nicht die Schätze sind es, die ein so unaussprechliches Verlangen in mir geweckt haben, sagte er zu sich selbst; fern ab liegt mir alle Habsucht: aber die blaue Blume sehn' ich mich zu erblicken. Sie liegt mir unaufhörlich im Sinn, und ich kann nichts anders dichten und denken. So ist mir noch nie zu Muthe gewesen: es ist, als hätt' ich vorhin geträumt, oder ich wäre in eine andere Welt hinübergeschlummert; denn in der Welt, in der ich sonst lebte, wer hätte da sich um Blumen bekümmert, und gar von einer so seltsamen Leidenschaft für eine Blume hab' ich damals nie gehört.

<sup>v</sup> Aber du scheinst noch, Sonne des Himmels! Du grünst noch, heilige Erde! Noch rauschen die Ströme in's Meer, und schattige Bäume säuseln im Mittag. Der Wonnegefang des Frühlings singt meine sterblichen Gedanken in Schlaf. Die Fülle der allelebendigen Welt ernährt und sättiget mit Trunkenheit mein darabend Wesen.

O seelige Natur! Ich weiss nicht, wie mir geschieht, wenn ich mein Auge erhebe vor deiner Schöne, aber alle Lust des Himmels ist in den Thränen, die ich weine vor dir, der Geliebte vor der Geliebten.

Mein ganzes Wesen verstummt und lauscht, wenn die zarte Welle der Luft mir um die Brust spielt. Verloren in's weite Blau, blik' ich oft hinauf an den Aether und hinein in's heilige Meer, und mir ist, als öffnet' ein verwandter Geist mir die Arme, als löste der Schmerz der Einsamkeit sich auf in's Leben der Gottheit.

<sup>vi</sup> Il y avait parmi ces Sauvages un viellard nommé Chactas qui, par son âge, sa sagesse, et sa science dans les choses de la vie, était le patriarche et l'amour des déserts. Comme tous les hommes; il avait acheté la vertu par l' infortune. Non seulement les forêts du Nouveau-Monde furent remplies de ses malheurs, mais il les porta jusque sur les rivages de la France.

<sup>vii</sup> Je vit dans ce récit le tableau du peuple chasseur et du peuple laboureur, la religion, première législatrice des hommes, les dangers de l' ignorance et de l' enthousiasme religieux, opposés aux lumières, à la charité et au véritable esprit de l' Evangile, les combats des passions et des vertus dans un coeur simple, enfin le triomphe du christianisme sur le sentiment le plus fougueux et la crainte la plus terrible, l' amour et la mort.

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