

UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN

CLUJ NAPOCA

Thesis summary

**THE ROMANTIC SCENERY- PROJECTIONS OF THE EGO
ON THE NATURE**

Scientific coordinator:

Univ. prof. dr. Ioan Sbârciu

Ph.D student:

Berciu Lola Gabriela

CLUJ NAPOCA

2011

Contents

Contents.....	3
Introduction.....	5
I.Romanticism, the illustration of an age of change	10
I.1 The symptoms of romanticism	10
I.2 Thematic tolerance and the national specific	19
I.3 The sublime, new acceptances of the feeling of nature	29
II.The exterior and interior nature in the romantic landscape	30
II.1 The return to the nature. Short problematising of the notion of landscape	30
II.2 Nature sublime in the Swiss and German painting	41
II.3 Caspar David Friedrich and the religious sublime	51
II.4 The supremacy of landscape in the English romantic painting.....	60
II.4.1 Constable and the exterior nature	63
II.4.2 Turner and the interior vision on nature	70
II.5 « The New World » and the romantic accents	76
III. Neo-romanticism and the landscape.....	80
III.1 The romantic lode of the art of the XX. century and of the contemporary art	80
III.2 The English neoromanticism	85
III.2.1 The premises of the return to the romantic in the England of the XX century	91
III.2.2 Representatives and artists associated with the neo-romantic phenomenon.....	94
III.2.3. Metamorphoses of the landscape in the work of Paul Nash	95
III.2.4 John Piper, a monograph in images of the English space	97

III.2.5 Interpretation of the correspondences between landscape and human in Graham Sutherland's creation	112
III.2.6 Directions and orienting in the second wave of English neo-romantism.....	115
III.3 The persistence of romantic elements in the German contemporary art	120
III.3.1 Anselm Kiefer, projections of the shadows of history on the myth and landscape	122
III.3.2 Interferences between the German landscape and the abstract art in Gerhard Richter's painting.....	130
III.4 Romantic landscape: in which direction?	135
III.5 Romantic dimensions in the personal creation	137
Conclusions.....	140
Bibliography	144
Thesis summary (Romanian)	194
Thesis summary (English)	207

Keywords: romanticism, neo-romanticism, Sublime, painting, landscape, infinity, nature, emotion, contemporary art, identification with nature, drama of existence

One of the many characteristics the postmodern man inherited from his romantic ancestors is the wish to evade from the daily, from his own life or the world which is known to him. The ground for this evading is the liberty, another romantic ideal. The contemporaneity has claimed the right to explore any possibility of evading from the negative anxiety (anguish) of the present.

The evading can be a collective or individual one, a planned or accidental one, a conscious or unconscious one, but it is always there, just like a *background* we got used to, so much that we don't even perceive its presence anymore. Although we are separated from the romantics by more than two centuries, we didn't have any innovations regarding the areas of evading: dream, art, music, literature, travelling or nature. The evasion environment, I have chosen being an artist, is the nature, an introspective landscape, in the embodiments of which the dream and human nature are woven together with the exterior nature.

The thesis *Romantic scenery - projections of the ego on the nature* is constituted as a genealogical exploration, a search of a way to feel and at the same time an attempt of self knowledge.

Pissaro advises the landscape painters to choose the nature which suits their nature, a nature in which the artists should re-find themselves, with which it would be probably good to identify themselves, as this feeling is described by the concept of *Einfühlung* developed by Theodor Lipps.

The first time I saw the painting *Monk at the seaside* by Caspar David Friedrich, I was amazed by the modernity of this work completed between 1808-1810. The monochromy of this work, the almost waste composition dominated by the coast, sea and sky leads to the conclusion

that we have to do with a first *abstract* work in a modern sense.¹ The uninterrupted line of the horizon crosses all the length of the canvas causing a vibrant juxtaposition of the plans. In this context it seems completely well-founded, that Robert Rosenblum saw in this painting an anticipation of the abstract expressionism and especially of the work of Marc Rothko. Another important aspect of this work is the philosophical substratum, the transposition in experience of the ideas of Carus, according to which the most important mission of landscape painting, which he calls *Erdlebenkunst*, is to represent a state from the interior life of the man, by representing a correspondent state from the nature.² Being visionary through morphology and the philosophical concept which accompanies it, the landscape painting of Caspar David Friedrich remains always actual as Gerhard Richter also remarks: "A painting of Caspar David Friedrich is not something of the past. The thing which belongs to the past is the set of circumstances, that allowed it to be painted... It is possible today to paint like Caspar David Friedrich today."³ Similarly to Richter, I believe, it is possible to paint landscapes, just as the ones of Caspar David Friedrich, today as well, with the necessary changes dictated by the new circumstances, because the concordance has to be identified at a deeper level. The force of Romantic landscape is still big enough to be a source of inspiration for the contemporary art. The thesis *Romantic scenery- projections of the ego on the nature* focuses on the characteristics of romantic landscape, its premisses, and the way it developed for more than two centuries. I started from the genesis of the romantic stream and landscape, following its renaissances in the XX. century to understand to which extent the romantic nature can be extended in the contemporary art. Can the opinions as the one of Kandinsky be considered to be valid in the present: „The meaning, the content of the art is romanticism and it is our fault if we mistake a temporal phenomenon for the whole notion...“⁴

The thesis *Romantic scenery- projections of the ego on the nature* aims to be a scientific incursion in the romantic typology of scenery and focuses on its mutations. The study seeks answers to questions which could be associated with this subject: „*Does the romantic landscape*

¹ Miller, Philip B., „Anxiety and Abstraction: Kleist and Bretano on Caspar David Friedrich“ from *Art Journal*, vol. 33, No. 3, 1974, p. 206-207.

² Beenken, Hermann, „Caspar David Friedrich“ from *The Burlington Magazines for Connoisseurs*, Vol 72, No 421, 1938, p. 175.

³ Gerhard Richter cited in Robert Storr, *Gerhard Richter, Forty Years of Painting*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2002, p. 74.

⁴ Wassily Kandinsky cited in Carlson, Cynthia; Snider Jenny; Dennis Donna; Morton Ree, „Three Artists“, from *Art Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1993, p. 6

persist beyond the first half of the XIX. century?” or Is it founded to identify a neo-romantic movement in the framework of XX. century art? And, as a consequence Which is the contemporary destiny of romantic scenery? To elucidate the answers to these questions we have crossed the traditional or controversial phases of art and romantic landscape painting and we have constantly appealed to the opinions of well known people in the field of aesthetics and art criticism. The structure of this study follows the chronological way of history without claiming to localize and analyse all the possible hypostases of the romantic scenery, but insisting and dissecting the most important moments of this direction.

The thesis is made up of three big chapters: *Romanticism, the illustration of an age of change, Exterior and interior nature in the romantic scenery, and Neo-romanticism and the scenery.* If the first chapter has in view to be an attempt of defining romanticism, and to elucidate the changes this stream brought about at the level of the topic and conception of art, the following chapters stop at the notion of romantic scenery and its characteristics in different ages of art history.

The presence of the chapter *Romanticism, the illustration of an age of change* at the beginning of this paper is motivated by the necessity of making aware of the impact this stream had on the age it has developed in. Although it does not require a complete tear from the tradition, at ideological level romanticism can be considered the first stage of the European artistic avantgarde. As the subchapter *Symptoms of romantism* shows it, this period was about to change the value system of the West completely and irremediably. The word most associated with this artistic movement is revolt which implies opposition towards the institutions of the age, and the obsolete, elitist ideas of the academist art. Another notion close to the romantic spirit is the utopy. The attempts of the romantics to acces a good world, which is uncontaminated by the civilisation and the malign presence of industry, fails. As it makes aware the vainness of the great ideals, the romantic generation proclaims the refusal of this world, *the centre* of which got lost in in the century of lights. The most frequently shown hypostases of this refusal are the evading towards exotic coasts, revery, isolation, and finally as a last, most dramatic consequence, death. Romantism proclaims a new typology of the artist. If until now embracing an artistic career was justified by the decision of the family, together with the romantic revolt, art becomes

a vocation, an inner advice which is meant to remove all the obstacles and allow imagination to erupt to the surface.

The artists don't take into account the conventions of the age, their only guide will be to infer their own creating genius. The attempt to define romanticism seems to be doomed to failure, but probably the one who mostly approached the essence of this stream is Baudelaire: „Romanticism is placed not so much in choosing the subject or an exact truth, but rather a way of feeling.”⁵

The changes brought about by romanticism also determined a major reevaluation of the topics of art. In the chapter *Thematic tolerance and national specific* I tried to review the new subjects developed in the field of art, especially that of painting. The most frappant aspect of this topic is the permissivity. Some subjects which were until now completely ignored, will be represented in art, so the ugly will gain an important place in the field of aesthetics. The neoclassic reason is replaced by irrational visions which swing between nostalgic revery and nightmare, - the tragism of existence, and the landscapes assert the existing affinities between nature and human soul. Anything considered worthy by the divinity being created will also be worthy to be a subject of art. The inspiration sources of the romantics are varied and a new ones: Goya, Gericault and Hugo explore the gloomy faces of human existence, the darkest abyses of madness and pathology. Delacroix, Gautier and Hayez dedicate themselves to the exotic element, Wordsworth and Colerige take over the simple language of everyday life. Other aspects which play an important role in the romantic creation are the growing appreciaton of the art of children and of the naive art by Schiller and Baudelaire, or the passion for the folk poems and artefacts (wood cut) as it is case of Armin, Brentano, Fauriel and Runge. ⁶

Almost all Europe (Germany, England, France, Italy, Russia, Scandinavia) will subscribe to this new way of feeling, what is more, romanticism spreads in the New World. The new artistic concepts will be the ground for affirming the national identity of these peoples. In Germany and England, the romanticism will be affirmed especially through the landscape painting and its expressive aspects, and the most important element of the evolution aof this new type landscape is the Sublime.

⁵ Baudelaire *cited in* Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, „Romanticism: Breaking the Canon”, din *Art Journal*, Vol.52, No.2, 1993, p.18

⁶ Nina Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *op.cit.*, p.19

The classical beauty is replaced in the romantic landscape painting by the Sublime. The sublime appears as a possible replacement for *the lost centre*, by promoting a new spirituality in the frame of which the traditional Christian customs are not a *sine qua non* of the spiritual evolution anymore. Among those who theoretised the notion of Sublime we can find the Alexandrine age author Pseudo Longinus, the translators of his work, John Hall and Boileau, the English Edmund Burke, who has an important role for the acceptance of this term, or the Germans Kant, Hegel, and Schiller.

From the end of the XVII-th century in the work of Thomas Burnett the „experience of mountain” is present, „as something, that lifts the soul towards God, invoking the shadow of infinite and provokes magnificent thoughts and passions.”⁷ Similar ideas can be identified also in the *Moral essays* of Shaftesbury: „And the rocky abysses, the ravines overgrown by moss and the tortous caves, the waterfall in steps seem mostly fascinating for me, because they can represent the nature in its most deprived image and because they are enveloped in a greatness which exceeds by far the ridiculous counterfeits of the nobiliar gardens”⁸

The story of romanticism becomes in this way an evolution of the sublime in painting if we take into account the landscape. As the last part of the first chapter entitled *The sublime, new acceptances of nature* shows us, in the landscape painting the sublime takes two forms: the terrible one taking the model of Burke’s writings or the religious one in the German branch, as it is described by Kant and Hegel.

The second chapter, *Exterior and interior nature in the romantic landscape* analyses the climactic moments and typologies of landscape in the period between the end of century XVIII. and the first half of century XIX. The chapter begins with a short problematising of the notion of landscape. The background landscape is present in art history already with antiquity but can we put these manifestations besides the real landscapes that appear in the Netherlands of the XVII. century or besides the romantic sceneries? The other aspects we have in focus are the appearance and premises of the romantic landscape, development of new ideas of taste regarding the aspects of nature and the enrichment of the realist aspects of landscape having metaphorical valences. The romantic man identifies himself with the nature and at the same time recognises in it the

⁷ Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, p.282

⁸ Shaftesbury cited in Umberto Eco, *op.cit.*, p.282

divine creation. The spiritualising of nature will be manifested in Germany influenced by the ideas of Nature philosophers, who assert that the universe is a unitary, giant organism which is subordinated to a superior will. The artist, just as the philosopher, cannot know the essence of this universe through an exterior look, only through an interior look in order to identify anything that is exterior with an interior archetype preexisting in our interior. So, in order to give the real image of landscape, the painter should search in its interior the sensible connection between the things contemplated by him in the nature and his own feelings.

Starting from Amiel's assertion who considers, that landscape in any of its forms is „a state of soul”, Rosario Assunto comes to the same conclusion- it is not the human state of soul that decides in the perception of nature. The understanding and representing of a landscape according to its true reality and not of an appearance as a consequence is only possible through the existing correspondence between the soul of the man and that of the nature. This is an assertion which could be fundamental through the romantic painting and its evolution in the different stages of creation of the most representative painters of this age. Three different styles, three ways of receiving nature: Constable, Turner and Friedrich, but in spite of the discrepancies their art follows the same track, it starts from naturalism it evolves towards expression, then step by step it becomes more melancholic, restless or profound, loaded with symbols, while the human being feels or forebods the pressing weight of the passing of time. This evolution corresponds to the real and long experience in contemplating nature and to the awareness of the fact, that it is not possible to cut out a corner of nature in order to put it in the frame of a canvas because it would be a simple exercise of craftsmanship. The nature has to have its tale which is revealed in the landscape because it is at the same time a tale of man.

He cannot contemplate the nature (physical reality) as a spectator, but because he lives in it, he becomes „an actor” in the frame of a natural scenery. Assunto insists on this idea as he interprets the connection between the human inside and that of the nature: „When we contemplate a landscape, we are in that landscape; and just as our existence is the life we live (even if it does not run out in the determined life of each of us, as we say, in the finity of life) our existence in a landscape is living in a landscape”.⁹

⁹ *Ibid*, p.219

The subchapter *The sublime of the nature in the Swiss and German painting* sums up the experiences before the work of Caspar David Friedrich and it emphasizes the presence of the concept of Sublime. Among the mentioned painters are Joseph Anton Koch, Caspar Wolf, Adalbert Stifter, Karl Blechen, Ernst Ferdinand Oehme and Calame. The work of Joseph Anton Koch, who is called “the father of romantic landscape”, generates the appearance of two different types of landscape in the German environment: the pathetic and idyllic one. The central elements of the landscape painting in this period are mountains with steep rocks and glaciers being the explicit symbols of the magnificence of nature. This is the context in which Caspar David Friedrich’s work appears, a work which invests the nature with new attributes- the landscape will be a confident of man, who is confronted with his tragic destiny.

The next subchapter *Caspar David Friedrich and the religious sublime*, is dedicated to this painter who is considered the central person of the German romanticism, also called the “prophet of modern ages.” His painting is distinguished through originality and the unique capacity of filling the limited space of the canvas with the sensation of infinite. In his landscapes an unearthly, exciting silence is dominating, and the human characters appearing in these canvases generally look towards the infinite, seeming to wait for a sign from the divinity, and the strain of this waiting makes time to stop. His landscapes are symbolic images; every element has its precise role, as the confessions of the painter himself show it. Among the symbols most frequently used there is the cross, ark, snow or ice, each of them being associated with the mystical uncertainty of the age. *Monk at the seaside* is one of the most impressive sceneries of this painter whose vocation was the *expansion towards the infinite*. In this work Friedrich seems to infer the anguish of the postmodern man and the abstract character of the natural world, for the one who cannot live anymore in communion with the surrounding landscape. The art of the landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich is rooted in his personal standpoint regarding Christian faith. He seeks the appearance of soul in nature. In his vision the divinity is frequently revealing himself through the appearances of nature which is the superior force moving the world. His works are interior landscapes mirrors of the artist’s state of soul. The way opened by Friedrich does not stop at the romantic experience, but will be the connection between the renaissance work of Dürer and expressionism (if we think of the dramatic landscapes of Edvard Munch).

The subchapter dedicated to the English romanticism investigates the conditions which led to the development of landscape as we know it from the work of Constable and that of Turner. The meditations of the British space on notions like *non finito* or picturesque had a decisive contribution to the formation of a typical English feeling of nature. This landscape painting which preferred the watercolour painting was also characterized by getting out into the nature to take a snapshot of it with more exactity. Although we cannot speak of an autonomous landscape, in the works of William Blake and Henry Füsseli we can already identify the features of a dreamy nature, having surrealist aspects which will be fundamentally expressed in the creation of Samuel Palmer. Palmer's landscapes seem to represent a fantastic nature, living, full of misteries and secret meanings. The charm of his works is due to the existence of these visionary substrata as much as to a personal technique through which the visual sensations seem to be potentiated by the almost tactile surface of his canvases. We can neither ignore the work of John Martin even if his work is less known. His paintings inspired by the literary writings of his time, reproduce the dramatic experience of the human beings in a magnificent nature. His works are characterized by a strange colour, and his innovation connected to the theatre-like scenery and painting material confer a particular originality to his work. The machineries with the help of which he potentiated the effect of his paintings were not kept, but it might be possible, that their existence provoked the associating of the painter with the fabricant of bizarre illusions which were in at that time, in such a way diminishing the importance of his work.

The fidelity of Constable to the morfologic aspect of the scenery is probably unique in that time. His real talent can be identified not so much in the finite canvases as it can in the so called preparing drafts which have the same proportions as the final work, where he can let his creativity free not being limited by the expectations of the public. The things which puts him in the pantheon of the great romantic landscape painters is not the formal aspect of his work but the feeling that influences this creation.

The almost pious love that Constable feels towards nature, the feeling of communion with the natural elements , his fascination regarding the always changing appearance of clouds makes us to believe that he succeeds in reestablishing the state before the driving out of the Garden of Eden and in this way he refinds the lost Paradise. It is only a meaning, an illusion, because coming closer to the end of his life, the painter seems to recognize what he and the other romantics had

already long understood- the dark face of nature which yawns threatening and dumb similarly to the dark hollow from the work *Dell at Helmingham Park*.

According to the opinion of some critics, the dramatic vision of landscapes in the last part of Constable's life is a consequence of the influence of J.M.W. Turner's painting. Turner's painting is unequalled in the romantic period. We can affirm without any reservation that his style in the age he belongs to is as inovating as the impressionism was at its time. It is not a mistake to compare him with the impressionists because his painting through the essential role it gives to the light seems to be an anticipation of the change which is going to come at the end of the XIX. century. It is also mistaken to equal him with impressionists. The latter ones used light to take a snapshot of the physical appearance of landscape, while for Turner light contains exterior appearance as much as interior essence, the spirit of nature. Turner's creations leave the impression of a spontaneous, free practice, but the numerous (supposedly) unended works, and his chromatic studies make us believe that his painting is more than just passionately transposing on the canvas the feelings evoked in the artist by the performance of nature.

In the closing part of the second chapter we made a short incursion in the American hypostases of the romantic scenery. The New World associates scenery with the feeling of national idenity, a thing which also had as a consequence a great succes of this genre. If at the beginning the American scenery evoluated under the auspices of the theory of sublime developed by Burke, step by step it went to a new type of sublime- the religious sublime. The exciting aspects of the German sublime miss from this religious sublime, it is an expression of devotion, of unmovable belief in a possible communion between man and divinity through contemplating nature. If the most important elements of the German romantic repertory are the mountains and glacier, which build an unsurmountable obstacle between man and divinity, in the centre of American scenery there is water but not in the form of hurrying rivers that hit against rocks but in the silent form of lake and the sun as primordial source of light.

The last chapter of the thesis entitled „*Neo-romantism and landscape*” is a general view on the manifestations associated with romantism in the flow of the XX century insisting on the acceptance periods in the current critics. The identification of the neo-romantic factor is based greatly on the work of Robert Rosenblum. He sustains the romantic continuity in the art of the XX century, considering that the neo-romantic artists are in fact survivors of the authentic

romanticism. Similarly to all the survivors these romantics have also adapted to the new European artistic conditions. Even in the two decades when neo-romanticism is flourishing in England, due to the isolation from World War II, the influences of cubism and surrealism can be perceived. If we take into account the two retrospectives dedicated to the English neo-romanticism in the years 1980, *British neoromanticism 1935-1950* and *A Paradise lost: Neo-romantic imagination in Britain 1935-1955* the number of the exponents of this movement is considerable. From all these there were only a few who pragmatically followed for a certain period of time the model of the English romantic tradition from the XIX century. In one of the few studies dedicated to this topic *The Spirit of the Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and Their Times* Malcolm York delimits nine personalities associated with this stream: Paul Nash, John Piper, Graham Sutherland, and from the younger artists Keith Vaughan, Robert Colquhoun, John Minton, Prunella Clough, Michael Ayrton and John Craxton. This is only a small number of artists if we take into account that in the exhibition *English Neo-romanticism 1935- 1950* the works of 29 artists appeared. The ones in the work of whom the Romantic element is mostly striking are the first three ones mentioned - Nash, Piper and Sutherland being distinguished through the big attention dedicated to landscape.

The common sources of inspiration of the three neo-romantic painters are the works of William Blake, Turner and Samuel Palmer. Their landscapes as well as those of the romantic forerunners are characterized by a supernatural atmosphere, illustrating a nature, the essential feature of which is the continual metamorphosis. This metamorphosis frequently passes the borders of the vegetal world extending towards the animal kingdom or human zone. In Nash's work his evidently cubist accents and the war has a particular role.

Being named the official artist of both world wars, Nash completes two of the most important symbol-paintings of these calamities: *We make a new world* (1918) and *Totes Meer* (1940-1941). Both are images of the devastated landscape by the terrible experience of war, the atrocities extended over the nature as well. If in *We make a new world* the sun rising on the other side of the red mountains which border on the forest of hurt trees, leaves a place for hope, in *Totes Meer* (*Sea of Dead*) we are confronted with the tragic image of a common cemetery for the dreams of humanity.

Unlike Nash the work of Piper is less dramatic and lacks metaphysical meanings. If we would compare Piper with the artists of the XIXth century, he is probably the closest to Constable.

Piper is a passionate of the English rustic landscape, but unlike Constable, what he is interested in is not only the nature, but the traditional architecture, he aims to immortalize before it would die out. His works are distinguished by the fantastic atmosphere induced to his painting by the vibrant palette where the role of color is a connotative one. Seen from this point of view his creation is situated as the continuation of the work of Turner through the attention given to light and color to obtain a certain atmosphere, but it rises the dramatism of Romantic representation to a new level through the usage of chromatic effects which are accentuated by an artificial eclairage as if it had been torn off from the world of stage.

Graham Sutherland is one of the most celebrated English painters of the XX century. His work was often associated with that of Francis Bacon, but unlike Bacon, Sutherland firstly dedicates himself to representing nature. Beginning with the years 1930 under the influence of the work of Palmer, the landscapes of Sutherland catch a glimpse of a strange nature, sometimes hostile, which is an allegory of the decadence of modern world. From his works dedicated to exploring the nature, the most suggestive are the ones from the series (*Thorn Trees*) in which the evoking of the crucified Saviour and the barbed wire fence of the Nazi concentration camps is woven together with the landscape. The nature becomes in this way, just as in the war paintings of Nash, a participant of the tragic destiny of mankind. But in spite of the profoundness and distinguished character of the painting of Nash, this is far from the sudden striking effect of Sutherland's creations. "Nash was rather bound to the XVIIIth century, while Sutherland was a pure blood romantic".¹⁰

The human destiny and nature are indissolubly bound in the vision of the three English neo-romantics. The suffering, fears and sins of man extend in the scenery which is its life environment, and sometimes as Nash finds it, trees can become our fellows, "particularly beautiful men".

The last subchapter that focuses on the English neoromantism, *Directions and orientations in the second wave of English neo-romantism* is constituted as an overview of the activity of the artists John Minton, Keith Vaughan, John Craxton, Prunella Clough and Michael Ayrton insisting on the romantic influences present in their work.

¹⁰ Andrew Causey, „Formalism and the Figurative Tradition in English Painting” din *British Art in the 20th Century. The Modern Movement*, p.23

Another country in which Romanticism seems to persist beyond the XIX century is Germany. In this sense it is impossible not to perceive the specific aspect of German art that is continuity. It is as if in this space more than in any other the concept of *genius loci* can be exemplified, a happy space of “elective affinities” where death, art and love remain inevitably linked in all the fields of cultural manifestations. The tragedy and dramatism pierce all the German art from one end to the other, as if they were sustained from the shadows of national history. *The altar of Isenheim* by Grünwald seems to be side by side with Dürer’s *Melancholy* and Cranach’s paintings to be the starting point of this wave that pierces all the German art that follows. In Grünwald’s vision Jesus’ contorted face becomes through the exacerbated suffering it emanates a foretelling of the destiny of German people. German art is inextricably linked to the past. Romanticism and expressionism interwoven and Neo-romanticism are nothing else but a renaissance of the specific Teutonic feelings.

The last of the artists associated directly with Romanticism, and as a consequence identified as neo-romantic is Anselm Kiefer. Just as the English neo-romantics who were often mentioned as representatives of surrealism, Kiefer’s work is associated by the criticism with the German neoexpressionism. And really in his work both influences are present, but if expressionism can be identified by technical aspects, the concept on which all the work of Kiefer is founded is of romantic source. I will only name some of the romantic aspects present in his creation: revolt, concern for nature, spiritual searches and working on myths. The revolt is present in his works that proclaim opposing towards forgetting the German past- the most radical example in this sense is the series *Occupations* from 1969. The preoccupation for nature goes through all the work of the artist, often evoking the high horizon of romantic landscapes, in some images in which the life and destiny of humankind are imprinted on nature. Working on myths, when they are not part of the German tradition, is closely linked with the spiritual search which focuses on knowing the beginnings and meaning of existence of mankind and the nature itself is often important part of this process

Kiefer is not only a painter, but also a sculptor, creates artistic books, performances, installations and sometimes even buildings. But this diversity of his artistic manifestations does not fragment his creation; on the contrary, it brings him closer to the romantics, evoking the utopist concept of “total art work.”

The last artist whose work we analysed is the neoexpressionist Gerhard Richter. In his work romanticism is not manifested anymore, and he refuses being associated with neo-romanticism. These aspects probably raise some question marks regarding his presence in this research, yet there are reasons for it. Richter is one of the most versatile artists of the second half of the XX century. Unlike Kiefer, in whose case versatility implies approaching the different genres of art, Richter designates the variety of styles in which he chooses to paint and landscape is one of the major topics of his creation. Richter is aware of his romantic heritage, he doesn't deny it, but his photorealist landscapes, despite being morphologically very much like the ones of the XIXth century, oppose the romantic feeling of nature. They are deprived of higher meanings. They just simply are there. His abstract landscapes are much closer to the romantic experience of nature, as the putting of side by side of the works of Friedrich and Richter proves it in the exhibition *From Caspar David Friedrich to Gerhard Richter: German Paintings from Dresden (2006-2007)*. As they can be interpreted like "landscapes of the mind" or interior landscapes, the abstract landscapes of Richter seem to give off an emotion of the sublime similar to the one present in Friedrich's work. Exactly due to this painting and due to some landscapes having an expressionist tint I chose to put him at the end of Romantic descent.

Gerhard Richter is not neoromantic, but he keeps romantic elements in his work, and if it is less probable that we will have to do with a new neoromantic stream, this type of latent romanticism is widespread in the contemporary art. In this way, Richter's painting seems to be a possible response to the question: *Romantic landscape in which direction?* His landscapes are not the end of a way, but a new beginning. There are also other answers as Robert Rosenblum ascertains us, there are painters with less famous names exploring the area of realist landscape with romantic tendencies, or some creations of *land-art*, in the centre of which there are ecological preoccupations and the attempt to reestablish the feeling of communion with the nature.

In the last subchapter of the thesis a short glance on the personal creation and its building elements is inserted. After the analysis of the works I consider to be representative for my artistic activity, I allow myself to be part of the category of inner landscape painters associated with the answers to the question: *Romantic landscape in which direction?*

Seeking the answers to the questions required by the topic of this research, I appealed to theoretical and critical references by famous personalities of this field as well as to articles published in special magazines

The goal of this thesis is to prove the persistence of romantic feeling of nature beginning with the end of the XVIII century until beyond the second half of the XX century, but also to observe the way in which romantic landscape influenced and continues to influence the development of contemporary art.

As the experience of the last years shows us, the romantic conception continues to be actual and if it's present in this field is a discrete one, it can be found the more in other areas of postmodern life. The contemporary society is more and more preoccupied by the irreversible consequences of technological development, being aware of what it lost, and what we are on the way to lose.

Where else can the ecological attempts be put to preserve the flora and fauna of the planet, if not the category of romantic ideals? Or are we not as excited seeing the unleashing forces of nature, as the men of romantic age used to be? More than two centuries have passed from the debut of romanticism, the circumstances are different, the world surrounding us, has also radically changed, but the human soul remains almost unchanged. We still perceive nature according to romantic concepts; we are still painting romantic landscapes, and continue to be nostalgic just as the romantics seeking in vain to find an adequate substitute of *the lost centre*. Even if civilisation brings us farther from our natural environment, it is an important part of a common memory, a collective nostalgia, because the myth of lost Paradise continues to haunt us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Acton, Mary, *Learning to Look at Modern Art*, Routledge, 2004
2. Adorno, Theodor W., *Teoria estetică*, Editura Paralela 45, Pitești, 2005
3. Aldrich, Robert; Wotherspoon, Garry, *Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian History: from World War II to the Present Day*, Routledge, 2002

4. Anglani, Marcella; Martini, Maria Vittoria; Princi, Eliana; Vettese, Angela, *Il Novecento. Seconda parte. La grande storia dell'arte*, E-ducation. it. S.p.A., Firenze, 2005
5. *** *Anselm Kifer: Merkaba*, Editura Charta, Milano, 2006
6. *** *Anselm Kiefer, Sculpture and Paintings from the Hall Collection at MASS MoCA*, Derneburg Publications, 2008
7. Arasse, Daniel, *Anselm Kiefer*, Thames & Hudson, Londra, 2001
8. Argan, Giulio Carlo, *Arta Modernă*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1982
9. Assunto, Rosario, *Peisajul și estetica*, volumele I, Editura Meridiane, București, 1986
10. Auping, Michael, *Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in association with Prestel, 2005
11. Bailey, Suzanne, *Essential History of American Art*, Parragon, 2001
12. Barker, Francis; Hulme, Peter; Iversen, Margaret, *Postmodernism and the re-reading of modernity*, Manchester University Press ND, 1992
13. Bassie, Ashley, *Expresionismul*, Editura Aquila, Oradea, 2008
14. Belting, Hans, *The End of the History of Art?*, The University of Chicago Press, 1987
15. Benjamin, Walter, (2002 [1955]), *Iluminări*, Cluj Napoca, Editura Idea Design & Print
16. Besançon, Alain, *Imaginea interzisă*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1996
17. Blackburn, Simon, *Dicționar de filosofie Oxford*, București, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 1999
18. Blockemühl, Michael, *J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851). The Word of Light and Colour*, Benedickt Taschen, Köln, 1993
19. Brion, Marcel, *Pictura romantică*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1972
20. Bruckhardt, Jacob, *Artă și istorie*, vol. I, Editura Meridiane, București, 1987
21. Buchloh, H. D. Benjamin, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975*, MIT Press, 2003
22. Burke, Edmund, *Despre sublim și frumos*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1981
23. Büttner, Nils, *L'art Des Paysages*, Éditions Citadelles & Mazenod, Paris, 2007
24. Clark, Kenneth, *Arta peisajului*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1969
25. Clark, Kenneth, *Revolta romantică*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1981

26. Compton, Susan (ed.), *British Art in the 20th Century. The Modern Movement*, Prestel Verlag, Munich, 1987
27. Cooper, Emmanuel, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West*, Routledge, 1986
28. ****Dispariția și reapariția imaginii: pictura americană după 1945*, Institutul Smithsonian, Washington D.C.
29. Dufrenne, Mikel, *Fenomenologia experienței estetice*, vol. I, II, Editura Meridiane, București, 1976
30. Durand, Gilbert, *Arte și arhetipuri*, Editura Meridiane, București, 2003
31. Eco, Umberto (ed.), *Istoria frumuseții*, Enciclopedia Rao, București, 2005
32. Eco, Umberto (ed.), *Istoria urâtului*, Enciclopedia Rao, București, 2007
33. Fischer, Ernst, *Necesitatea artei*, Editura Meridiane, 1968
34. Folkierski, Wladislaw, *Între clasicism și romantism*, vol.I, Editura Meridiane, București, 1988
35. Ford, Boris, *The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain: Modern Britain*, vol.9, Cambridge University Press, 1992
36. Foss, Brian, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939-1945*, Yale University Press, 2007
37. Francastel, Pierre, *Pictură și societate*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1970
38. Friedel, Helmut (ed.), *Gerhard Richter Atlas*, Thames&Hudson L.T.D., London, 2006
39. Gaze, Delia, *Dictionary of Women Artists*, Taylor & Francis, 1997
40. Gibbons, Joan, *Contemporary Art and Memory*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2007
41. Gombrich, E.H., *The Story of Art*, Phaidon Press Limited, 1995
42. Grigorescu, Dan, *Dicționarul avangardelor*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2005
43. Grigorescu, Dan, *Expresionismul*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1969
44. Halkes, Petra, *Aspiring to the Landscape: On Painting and the Subject of Nature*, University Toronto Press, 2006
45. Honour, Hugh, *Romantismul*, vol. I,II, Editura Meridiane, București, 1983
46. Hopkins, David, *After Modern Art: 1945-2000*, Oxford University Press, 2000

47. Huysen, Andreas, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, Routledge, 1995
48. Kocur, Zoya; Leung, Simon, *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005
49. Lipps, Theodor, *Estetica. Bazele esteticii*, vol. II, Editura Meridiane, București, 1987
50. Lörzing, Han, *The Nature of Landscape: A Personal Quest*, 010Publishers, 2001
51. Marcel, Gabriel, *Omul problematic*, Editura Biblioteca Apostrof, Cluj Napoca, 1998
52. Mayoux, Jean-Jacques, *Pictura engleză*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1973
53. Milchman, Alan; Rosenberg, Alan, *Postmodernism and the Holocaust*, Editura Rodopi, 1998
54. Novak, Barbara, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, 2007
55. Nyenhuis, E., Jacob, *Myth and the Creative Process: Michael Ayrton and the Myth of Daedalus, the maze maker*, Wayne State University Press, 2003
56. ****Painting Today*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York, 2010
57. Pavel, Amelia, *Peisaj natural peisaj uman*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1987
58. Patapievici, Horia Roman, *Omul recent*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2006
59. Pleșu, Andrei, *Pitoresc și melancolie*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1992
60. *** *The Prestel Dictionary of the Art and Artists of the 20th Century*, Prestel Verlag, 2000
61. Read, Herbert, *Semnificația artei*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1969
62. Rosenthal Mark, *Anselm Kiefer*, Neues Publishing Company, New York, 1987
63. Rothenstein, John, *An Introduction to English Painting*, I. B. Tauris, 2001
64. Santini, Pier Carlo, *Modern Landscape Painting*, Phaindon Press Limited, 1972
65. Seago, Alex, *Burning the Box of Beautiful Things: The Development of Postmodern Sensibility*, Oxford University Press, 1995
66. Sim, Stuart, *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, Routledge, 2001
67. Soby, James T., *Contemporary Painters*, Ayer Publishing, 1948
68. Tătaru, Marius, *Romantismul german*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1991
69. Toman, Rolf (ed), *Neoclassicism and Romanticism. Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Drawings 1750 – 1848*, Ullmann&Könemann, 2007

70. *** *Tout l'ouvre peint de Caspar David Friedrich*, Editions Flammarion, Paris 1982
71. Simon Wilson, *Holbein to Hockney: A History of British Art*, The Tate Gallery & The Bodley Head, London, 1982
72. Storr, Robert, *Gerhard Richter, Forty Years of Painting*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2002
73. Wojciechowski, Aleksander, *Arta peisajului*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1974
74. York, Malcolm, *The Spirit of the Place: Nine Neo-Romantic Artists and Their Times*, Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001

Articles:

1. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, Nina, "Romanticism: Breaking the Canon", din *Art Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1993, pp.18-21
2. Beenken, Hermann, „Caspar David Friedrich” din *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol.72, No.421, 1938, pp.170-173+175
3. Brailovsky, Anna, „The Epic Tableau: Verfremdungseffekte in Anselm Kiefer's Varus”, din *New German Critique*, No. 71, 1997, pp.115-138
4. Carlson, Cynthia; Snider, Jenny; Dennis, Donna; Morton, Ree, "Three Artists", din *Art Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1993, pp.6-15
5. Connelly, Frances S., „Poetic Monsters and Nature Hieroglyphics: The Precocious Primitivism of Philipp Otto Runge” din *Art Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1993, pp.31-35
6. D'Alessandro, Stephanie, „History by Degrees: The Place of the Past in Contemporary German Art”, din *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2002, pp.66-81+110-111
7. Dyer Geoff, „Photographs from «On the Beach» Richard Misrach” din *Modern Painters*, Vol.17, No. 1, 2004, pp.50-57
8. Forster-Hahn, Françoise, „Recent Scholarship on Caspar David Friedrich”, din *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 58, No. 1, 1976, pp.113-116
9. Gandy, Matthew, „Contradictory Modernities: Conceptions of Nature in the Art of Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter” din *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol.87, No.4, 1997, pp.636-659

10. Gilmour, John C., „Original Representation and Anselm Kiefer's Postmodernism”, din *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 46, No. 3, 1988, pp.341-350
11. Gooding, Mel, „La cathedrale engloutie III” pe <http://www.swanseaheritage.net/article/gat.asp>
12. Griffin, Randall C., „The Untrammelled Vision: Thomas Cole and the Dream of the Artist” din *Art Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1993, pp.66-73
13. Guentner, Wendelin A., „British Aesthetic Discourse, 1780-1830: The Sketch, the Non Finito, and the Imagination” din *Art Journal*, Vol.52, No.2, College Art Association, 1993, pp.40-47
14. *** „From Caspar David Friedrich to Gerhard Richter: German Paintings from Dresden” pe http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/friedrich_richter/
15. Fuller, Peter „Review: The Neo-Romantics. London, Barbican Art Gallery” din *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.129, No. 1012, 1987, pp.472-474
16. Huysen, Andreas, „Anselm Kiefer: The Terror of History, the Temptation of Myth”, din *October*, Vol. 48, 1989, pp.25-45
17. Kuspit, Donald, „The Spirit of Gray”, 2004, pe <http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/kuspit/kuspit12-19-02.asp>
18. Miller, Philip B., „Anxiety and Abstraction: Kleist and Bretano on Caspar David Friedrich” din *Art Journal*, Vol.33, No.3, 1974, pp.205-210
19. *Monumenta 2007*, articolul „Anselm Kiefer: a «Total Art»?”, site-ul oficial: www.monumenta.com
20. Novak, Barbara, „Changing Concepts of the Sublime” din *American Art Journal*, Vol.4, No.1, 1972, pp.36-42
21. Rosenblum, Robert, „A Postscript: Some Recent Neo-Romantic Mutations” din *Art Journal*, Vol.52, No.2, 1993, pp.74-84
22. Sidlauskas, Susan, „Creating Immortality: Turner, Soane, and the Great Chain of Being” din *Art Journal*, Vol.52, No.2, 1993, pp.59-65
23. Spalding, Frances, „Review: John Piper: The Forthies. London” din *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 143, No. 1174, 2001, pp.44-45

24. Wilson, Christopher Kent, „The Landscape of Democracy: Frederic Church’s «West Rock, New Haven»” din *American Art Journal*, Vol.18, No.3, 1986, pp.20-39