

Romanticism and Terrorism: Literary and Historical Perspectives

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Most works done on terrorism have never identified the influence of romanticism on the ideologies that underpin terrorist movements. This paper identifies the problem of sentiment as a common factor between romanticism and terrorism. Is it possible to have a peaceful society when most people, irrespective of religious, tribal and political affiliations are unreasonable and only follow their sentiment? This is examined through the analysis of Hugo's *Hernani* and Goethe's *Faust*- two romantic plays. The history of the activities of preromantic writers from 1750 till the end of romanticism in 1850 revealed the explosion of antisocial and socially unfriendly behaviours. These unconventional attitudes are what analysts call romantic behaviours as they were the exaggerated expression of freedom acquired after the French Revolution. These romantic expressions were found in the artistic and literary creations. This has led to the conclusion by some that many absolutely romantic religious individuals become terrorists as they ignore the principles of religion to commit suicide and harm the innocent in the process. Suicide as a means of protest is common to most romantic plays like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Hugo's *Hernani* and Goethe's *Faust*. Romantics always want to change the system. When they succeed in disseminating their romantic ideas peacefully, it leads to revolution, but when they meet an obstacle, they resort to violence and force. This has been the case of terrorists linked to Islam- they are absolutely romantic as they disobey the Islamic principle of peace. This work states that romanticism leads to material progress and causes social problems including terrorism. Biographical and Historical data have helped to understand the psychology of the major characters who committed suicide as a means of message and revolt.