

# **British romanticism**

First generation of british romantics: Wordsworth, Coleridge

Second generation: Lord Byron, P. B. Shelley, Keats, M. Shelley

British romanticism was shaped by 3 historical events, known as revolutions:

- Industrial Revolution → romantics were pioneers of ecology → they were against the ind. rev. (it was changing the british landscape, and society)
- American Revolution (or American War of Independence)
- French Revolution

## **Industrial revolution**

First industrial revolution was only in England → and it was impacting massively on british society and landscape

New social class: factory workers, who were highly exploited (long hours, poor wages)

Romantics criticized it because (they were detractors):

- the social injustice it was bringing
- the pollution

## **American war of independence and French revolution**

Romantics were champions (supporters) of political freedom → tended to be in favor of democracy

The 13 colonies became an independent republic → not monarchy

Governors were chosen by people through elections

The French rev. was an act of freedom

Wordsworth and Coleridge started as progressive → they were in favor of the revolutions

But then became more conservative

Wordsworth was in favor of a threshold for people to vote → he thought that only people with a certain education could vote

He changed his opinion because he understood that revolutions are ineffective and lead to violence only

Second generation romantics kept their radicalism → never became conservative  
They also died young → Byron and Shelley died in their twenties  
They were also atheists → it was uncommon and even a crime at the time