What does **Romanticism** Mean?

**Romanticism**: A movement in the arts and literature which originated in the late 18th century, emphasizing inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual; The art of expressing emotion through poetry, music, and painting.

**Time Period**: 1800-1850 (originated in Europe)

**When it spreaded to America**: 1820-1860
What does *Antebellum* Mean?

**Literal meaning:** “Pre-War”

**In our context:** The Era before the Civil War; “Pre-Civil War”

**Time Period:** After the War of 1812 to the start of the Civil War in 1861
A Desire for Cultural Identity:

American intellectuals were thought of low regard in European society, so they continued to work for elevating and liberating American culture to make an American artistic world focused on American virtues independent from European influence.

The Spirit of Romanticism and the Liberation of the Human Spirit:

At the same time, the cultural leaders in America wanted to bring the spirit of romanticism from Europe to commit the public to the liberation of the human spirit.
Nationalism and Romanticism in American Painting

Nationalism:
- While Europe was blind-siding American painting, Americans believed that they were creating new artistic traditions.
- One divisive difference is that as opposed to Europe, who painted peaceful countrysides, Americans painted the primal and undiluted power of nature by painting spectacles of the world.

Romanticism:
- The artists would paint beautiful scenes of the American wilderness and landscape to show the promise our land still offers.
-Examples of Paintings from the Antebellum Time Period-

Nationalism

*Our Banner in the Sky*

By: Frederic Church, (1861)

Image: http://www.fredericedwinchurch.org/
Romanticism

Daniel Boone Sitting at the Door of His Cabin on the Great Osage Lake

By: Thomas Cole, (1826)

https://www.wikiart.org/en/thomas-cole
Romanticism

Late Summer

By: Thomas Doughty, (1834)

https://www.meisterdrucke.us/fine-art-prints/Thomas-Doughty/390132/Late-Summer,-1834-.html
Romanticism

*Summer Afternoon*

By: Asher Durand,

(Antebellum Period)

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/images/hb/hb_15.30.60.jpg
- Hudson River School -

*This is not an actual school*

- A group of people whose paintings revolved around the “wild nature” of America, as seen in their paintings depicting the unsettled Hudson valley

- Created some of the most influential painters of the time

- The artists wanted to inspire a sense of awe in their works to show the true natural beauty of America, something that the “Old World” (Europe) lacked.

- Some of their best works were created when the United States really began to push Westward. Scenes of Yellowstone and the Rockies were very popular.
-Paintings of the West-

*An Arizona Sunset Near the Grand Canyon*

By: Thomas Moran, (1898)


*Valley of the Yosemite*

By: Albert Bierstadt, (1864)

1820s: British Writer, Sir Walter Scott, was the most popular novelist in America. (His books were about historical events).

The first main effort to create a distinctive American Literature came about through the author James Fenimore Cooper.

Author Walt Whitman helped express the spirit of individualism through his poems collected in the Leaves of Grass. His poems also celebrated Democracy and promoted the Liberation of the Individual (being free both in the flesh and spiritually).
James Fenimore Cooper: The first great American novelist, writing 30 novels over three decades, and focused on Westward expansion and the American Spirit throughout his career.

Created novels of adventure and suspense: including American experiences with Indians, violence, and the law.

Through focusing on the American Wilderness, Cooper managed to produce a truly American literature not just by celebrating American spirit but also by having evocations and themes of Man vs Nature.

Important novels written by Cooper (From his “Leatherstocking Tales”)

- Last of the Mohicans (1826), and The Deerslayer (1841)
Melville had been a sailor since he was young, and his novel *Moby Dick* had captured themes of pride, revenge, courage, and the strength of individual will.

○ Going back to the point of authors focusing American literature with American virtues

He is also seen as the Greatest American Novelist of his Era
Edgar Allen Poe

Edgar Allen Poe spent his short life writing sad and macabre stories. He became a controversial author and he wrote about a deeper world of emotions and spirit, but it only had pain and horror.

He died at the age of 40 in 1849

His works include; Tamerlane and Other Poems (1827) and “The Raven” (1845) that launched his career as a major and controversial author.
Poe was an outlier, because the South, where he was from, was developing an identity for literature independent from the north.

Southern authors wrote about eulogies of plantations. Among them, William Gilmore Simms wrote about a broader nationalism than just the south, but also passionately defended southern institutions like slavery.

One group of southern authors wrote about the backwoods, and used more realistic than romanticized characters with vulgar humor. Mark Twain, one of the most powerful voices in American literature, would come from this group.

Other Famous Southern Authors from the time: Beverley Tucker, John Kennedy, and William Caruthers, Augustus Longstreet, Joseph Baldwin, and Johnson Hooper.
Margaret Mitchell’s novel
*Gone with the Wind* (1937)

A romantic portrayal of the Antebellum South
William Gilmore Simms- Defended Southern institutions, such as slavery, and believed it was his duty to preserve the Southern way of life.

Other Southern authors of the time period also romanticized plantation life which glorified Southern ways including slavery.

Southern Literature and Romanticism, as well as their Northern counterparts, helped to further the divide between the North and South by alienating their cultures from each other.
“Though Southern society was dominated by a planter elite, “Plain Folk” supported secession to defend their families, homes, notions of liberty, and beliefs in racial hierarchies. Historians argue that a distinctive Southern political ideology blended localism, white supremacy, and Jeffersonian ideas of agrarian republicanism.”
The Transcendentalists

A group of philosophers who embraced the theory of individuals that rested on the distinction between ‘reason’ and ‘understanding’. They define reason as the individual's innate capacity to grasp beauty and truth through expression. ‘Understanding’ is the use of intellect as society dictates you to. Therefore, one must break free from understanding and cultivate reason in order to achieve an original relation to the universe.

First emerged in Concord Massachusetts and was led by Ralph Waldo Emerson.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Emerson, former Unitarian* Minister, Leader of the Transcendentalists, was conversationalist who drew intellectuals to him.

Emerson wrote essays on how individuals should work for a communion with the natural world and should strive for self-reliance, (individualism/ “the private man”), which is in other words the search for unity with the universe.

He was also a strong nationalist that said that the American people could find beauty in both learning and instinct. To achieve artistic greatness would not just come from tradition, but also from the sole creative genius of individuals.
In 1832 Emerson left the Christian ministry, but he continued to believe in God. He eventually came to believe that nature was the source of revelation rather than through scripture.

The drawing to the left is of what is called, “The Transparent Eyeball” (created by Emerson)

The “Transparent Eyeball” is an eye that absorbs all that nature has to offer us. He believed spiritual growth, revelation, and God’s glory was only found in nature. He wanted his followers to have this “Transparent Eyeball” mindset to transcend intellect to allow the soul to create a relation with the universe.
Thoreau and Civil Disobedience

Henry David Thoreau, another leader of the Transcendentalist movement, was more radical and argued that almost every social standard in modern society was repressive, and that individuals should rebel to find self-realization.

He even lived in an isolated cabin for his beliefs and later wrote *Walden* (1854) to explain his efforts to free himself.

Thoreau’s rebellious nature also put himself into conflict with the government. He refused to pay any taxes that supported a government with slavery, and claimed that the government’s interests contrasted with his own moral beliefs. It was labelled “civil disobedience” a public refusal to obey unjust laws.
The Transcendentalists feared that Capitalism would have a negative impact on the integrity of the world. (There is a lot of greed in Capitalism)

Nature was the source of human inspiration. Transcendentalists argued that genuine spirituality came from communion with the natural world and that humans should not be separated from nature; Humans would lose their humanity if they were separated with nature.

“In wilderness is the preservation of the world” - Thoreau

The Transcendentalists were the first to anticipate an environmental movement in the 20th century. They did not know what we do today about the essence of having a clean and protected environment, yet they still believed in an essential unity between humans and nature.
What does UTOPIA mean?

**Literal meaning:** an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect.

**In our context:** A religious haven where all participants would like equally and freely with each other while focusing on their time on their spiritual beliefs.
Visions of Utopia

Despite the fact that their philosophies revolved around Individualism, The Transcendentalists, in order to preserve their beliefs, created a series of communal societies that would allow for the “cultivation of the self”.

These “Utopian” experiments were done to create a society where everyone could equally grow in spirit in their search for revelation.

The founders hoped to create a community that was removed from the very demanding secular societies that prevented them from growing to their full potential spiritually.
Sir Thomas More and *Utopia*

Utopia, although somewhat of a satirical piece, describes a land in which all is perfect. It was a land *contrary* to the times he was living in. It was a place where everything was shared, everybody did their jobs, everyone was obedient, and everyone followed the rules. It was a place of *perfection* (thus the origin of the definition).

He wrote the book because he was fed up with the greed and corruption taking place in *Europe* at the time.
“The one art that is known to all, men and women alike, is agriculture, of which none is ignorant. All are trained in it from childhood, partly in school according to traditional precepts, and partly in fields neighboring the city; they learn it as though it were a game, not just by observation, but with their own physical labor. Aside from agriculture (which, as I have said, is common to all), each person according to choice takes up a particular art, the manufacture of wool or flax, masonry, blacksmithing, or carpentry. And there are no other trades that are in great repute among them.”
In Utopian communities, labor was divided equally so that everyone had equal leisure time. This is because the sole purpose of these communities was to allow its residents a place to find self-realization away from society without having to live in isolation. The leisure time they had was intended to be devoted to this belief.

Over the years, many leaders would try to build communities, but due almost entirely to economic reasons, they all failed.

Some of the most noteworthy communities are the Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and New Harmony.
The Brook Farm is the most famous Utopian community.

At first, Brook Farm was a success; experiencing great economic prosperity during the early 1840s.

Then, Ripley, the founder, joined a movement in the community that stated that only the young men should work. This caused many from the later generations to leave which overall weakened the community. Finally, it died in 1847 after it was hit by a smallpox epidemic and the center building burned down.

Despite the fact that it lasted only a few years, the Brooks Farm stands as one of the most successful Utopian communities. Despite this, every attempted Utopian community performed poorly overall.

Even Emerson, their leader, refused to live at the Brook Farm.
New Harmony was not as successful as the Brook farm. In fact, it performed worse (in terms of how a Utopian society should work) than most of the attempted communities.

Robert Owen, a Scottish industrialist, created the community in 1825. Despite its fairly quick death (1827), it managed to become a noteworthy town.

New Harmony became known for being a center for advances in education and scientific research. The town was known for its advances in geology in particular.

Even though it had some importance, the community still failed for being economically impractical.
Redefining Gender Roles

Transcendentalism also played an essential role in starting the feminist movement.

One of the principal concerns of the Utopian communities was the relationship between men and women.

Because everyone shared labor equally in Utopian communities, women were seen as more of an equal to men than outside of these communities.

While gender roles were beginning to change in communities, it wouldn’t be until the next century for the movement to take hold across America.
Redefined Gender Roles at the Oneida Community

One prime example of redefining gender roles is at the Oneida Community, established in 1848 in New York State. This Utopian community was based on primitive Christian beliefs that embraced radical social ideas. The Oneida community broke traditional marriage norms by declaring that everyone was married to all other residents. (hmmm)

Despite what many outsiders thought, Oneida wasn’t just an experiment of “free love.” Instead, women were protected from unwanted childbearing, and the children were raised by the entire community, rarely seeing their own parents.

Oneida took great pride in what they thought of as the liberation from lust and in breaking the traditional bonds of marriage.
One of the original residents of Brook Farm was Nathaniel Hawthorne. Hawthorne was a prominent romantic-fiction writer in American history. Despite having high hopes for his future at Brook Farm with his wife, Hawthorne stressed his disillusionment with the community. He also had some issues with the transcendentalist beliefs. In 1852, he wrote *The Blithedale Romance*, a novel that wrote about his bad experiences at Brook Farm and how the experiment had a negative impact on its residents.
“No summer ever came back, and no two summers ever were alike. Times change, and people change; and if our hearts do not change as readily, so much the worse for us.”
Margaret Fuller was one of the first transcendentalists to bring about a discussion on the new purpose of gender roles.

Fuller stated that redefining gender roles was central to the discovery of the “self” and that every woman needed to consider that if they were to truly create a new connection to the universe.

She asked women both inside and outside of communities to stop being led by men and to instead seek leadership from themselves. Fuller was not only the first to ask to redefine gender roles, but also the first clear leader of the feminist movement.
The Shakers

Haha Just Kidding!
The Shakers

The shakers went further than the Oneidans to challenge gender roles.

The shakers get their name from how they “shake” themselves free of sin.

The shakers could not be born into the faith because they all practiced celibacy. Every shaker had to be converted.

Within their 20 communities, they embraced a genderless God and endorsed sexual equality. In fact, throughout history of the Shaker faith, women exercised more power than men.

The Shakers weren’t just motivated by gender roles, though. They also had a desire to escape from the disorder and the chaos that seemed to define American life.
https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Shakers
The Mormons

The Mormons quickly became one of the most important modern religions due to their attempt to reorganize American society.

Joseph Smith founded the faith in 1830.

Mormons embrace four different texts: The Christian Bible, The Book of Mormon (written by Smith), the Doctrine and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price.

Their main beliefs are founded in Christianity (although not being officially recognized as a Christian denomination).
Mormon beliefs

“We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.”

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”

“We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

Found on: http://basicmormonbeliefs.com/beliefs/
Joseph Smith founded the faith in 1830, and is the author of *The Book of Mormon*. He believed that Native Americans were descendants of a lost israelite tribe that fell from the grace of God.

Joseph Smith lived in New York until he grew in fame from being the leader of the Mormon faith. He remained the leader of the Mormons until he was killed in 1844.
Leader of the Mormons, Joseph Smith, organized his followers to travel west where they could build their own communities. However, along the way, Smith was imprisoned for treason and was killed. His followers continued west and finally found their new home. They established **Salt Lake City** in 1847.
The End!
Thank you for listening!

Or reading (I don't know if you're looking at this again after our presentation but good luck!)