

The Romantic Period of American Literature 1820-1865



Definition of the Romantic Period

- Romanticism- **An artistic movement that valued imagination and feelings over intellect and reason.**
- Romanticism is a **complex artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in the second half of the 18th century in Western Europe.**
- Romanticism **was partly a revolt against aristocratic, social and political norm of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature and was embodied most strongly in the visual art, music, and literature.**

American Authors and novels during the Romantic era



1820: Washington Irving's
Sketch Book

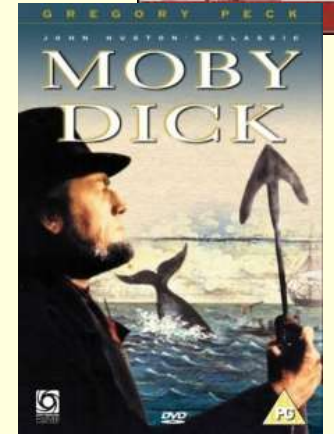
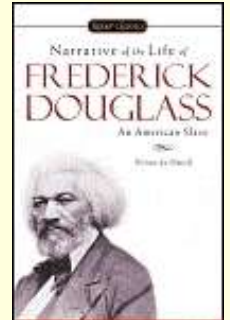
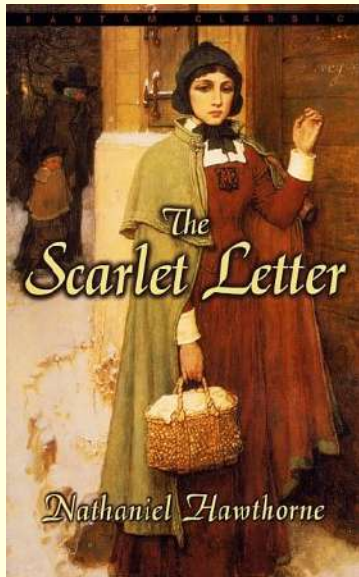
1823: James F. Cooper's
The Last of the Mohicans

1836: Ralph Waldo Emerson's Nature

1850: Nathaniel Hawthorne's
The Scarlet Letter

1851: Herman Melville's
Moby Dick

1852: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's
Cabin



Romantic Emphasis

- **Emotion vs Reason**
- **Intuition vs Logic**
- **Nature vs Civilization**
- **Individual vs Society**
- **Spirituality vs Commerce**

Transcendentalism

A philosophical and literary movement centered in Concord and Boston. Prominent in the intellectual and cultural life of New England from 1836 until just before the Civil War.

Membership included Ralph Waldo Emerson, David Henry Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, their writings were published in *The Dial*. Brook Farm a short-lived commune on the principal of equal sharing of the work, pay and cultural benefits was a high-point of the Transcendentalist.

The Main Tenets of Transcendentalism

- Human soul partakes of that divinity
- Nature and the mind mirror each other
- Insight or intuition is superior to logic
- **Core beliefs centered on the ethics of individualism stressing self-trust, self-reliance and self-sufficiency.**