

AMERICAN LITERATURE ~ 2ND SEMESTER

TRANSCENDENTAL PESSIMISTS

LECTURE NOTES

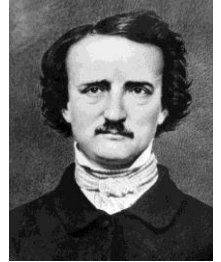
EDGAR ALLAN POE

Orphaned at an early age - Raised by the wealthy Allan family of Richmond, Virginia
Believed every work of literature should be dominated by **one mood**

- His poetry - Melancholy
- His short stories - Horror/Terror

Believed that literature should **appeal only to the artistic side** of man by entertaining the reader

- He did not believe that literature should appeal:
 - to the intellect by teaching about truth OR
 - to the conscience by inspiring people to do what's right
- Therefore he was very critical of Transcendentalism who taught their version of truth and duty in their writings
- He rejected Transcendentalism for ARTISTIC reasons



POE'S WORKS TO KNOW

Poems

To Helen The Raven
To My Mother Annabel Lee

Short Stories

The Tell Tale Heart
The Purloined Letter

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Strongly attracted to American history
Two infamous ancestors

- Major William Hathorne - persecuted Quakers
- Judge John Hathorne - Judge during Salem Witch Trials who never repented (as Samuel Sewall from Chapter 1 did)

Changed spelling of his last name by adding "w" to separate himself from family infamy

Attended Bowdoin College in Maine

Worked in Boston Custom's House and later Salem Custom House

Lived for several months at Brook Farm - the Transcendental farming commune

Worked on the Franklin Pierce presidential campaign - wrote official campaign biography

After Pierce was elected President, Hawthorne was appointed US consul to Liverpool, England and served four years

He rejected Transcendentalism for MORAL Reasons

- Wrote with Puritan values
- Believed in man having a sin nature
- Did not share the Transcendental notion that man is born good and society is the corrupting influence

Known for:

- Settings in the past
- Universal Themes that we can all relate to in any time period
- Puritan View of man's nature
- Allegory - a story with a literal AND an implied level of meaning
- Ambiguity - double meaning / inconclusive meaning
- Ambivalence - conflicting feelings and attitudes co-existing in the story

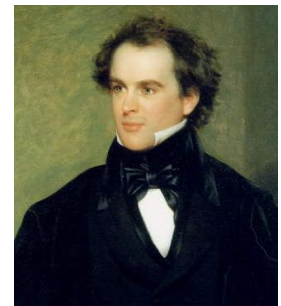
HAWTHORNE'S WORKS TO KNOW

Short Stories

The Maypole of Merry Mount
The Celestial Railroad
The Minister's Black Veil
The Birthmark

Novels

The Scarlet Letter
The House of Seven Gables



HERMAN MELVILLE

Rejected Transcendentalism for PHILOSOPHICAL reasons
Born into socially prosperous New York family
Unable to settle on an occupation, so he went to sea
His sea experiences gave him subject matter for his fiction
He was not well known at the time of his death
He was a friend of Nathaniel Hawthorne
Noted for:



- Realistic Style - presenting the world as he saw it
 - He depicted evil as a powerful force that most often dominates men
 - He did not believe in the inherent goodness of man like the Transcendentalists

He believed that God gave man no hope for ultimate victory over the evil forces that oppose men.

MELVILLE'S WORKS TO KNOW

Typee- first novel

Moby Dick - most famous novel

- Dedicated it to Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Full of
 - Symbolism
 - Ambiguity

Bartleby the Scrivener - short story in textbook