



American Literature and Culture: the 19th century

Ενότητα 2 : Literary Movements

Ζωή Δέτση

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ



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Literary Movements



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο



ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ
ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



ΕΣΠΑ
2007-2013
πρόγραμμα για την ανάπτυξη
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ

Περιεχόμενα ενότητας

1. American Transcendentalism.
2. Henry David Thoreau.
3. Edgar Allan Poe.



Σκοποί ενότητας

- Επικεντρώνεται στο κίνημα του Ρομαντισμού, στις επιρροές του από την Ευρώπη, και στις ιδιαιτερότητές του πιο φιλοσοφικού/ μεταφυσικού κινήματος Transcendentalism.
- Μελετούνται κείμενα του Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau καθώς και των εκπροσώπων του «Αρνητικού Ρομαντισμού» (Negative Romanticism) όπως Poe, Hawthorne, Melville.





ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΙΟ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

American Transcendentalism

American Transcendentalism

- Emerged in the 1830s mainly in Boston.
- Idealistic philosophy, spiritual position, and literary movement that advocated reliance on romantic intuition and moral human conscience.
- Promoted the belief that individuals could intuitively transcend the limits of the senses and of logic to a plane of “higher truths.”
- Valued spirituality (direct access to benevolent God, not organized religion or ritual), divinity of humanity, nature, intellectual pursuits, social justice.



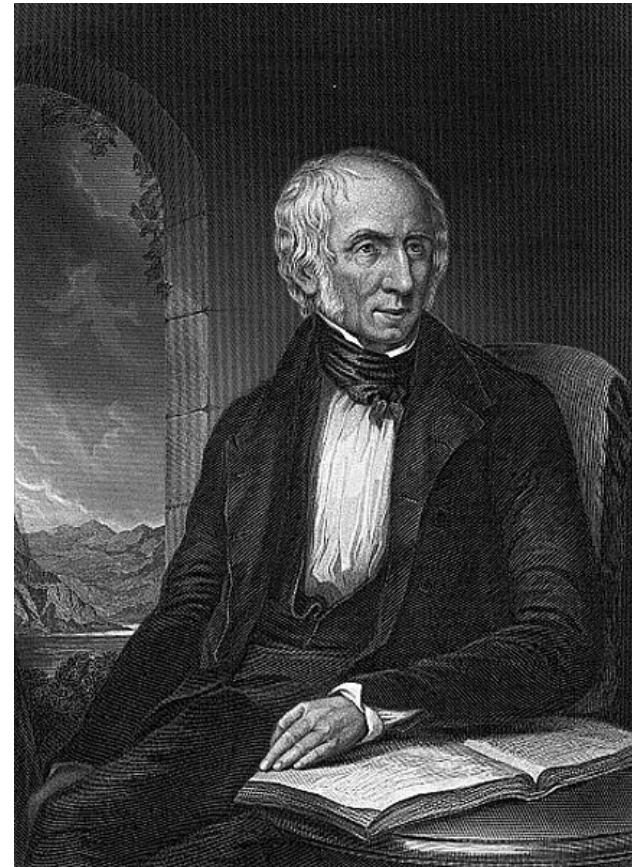
Rises out of two key intellectual and spiritual traditions

- European Romanticism
- American Unitarianism



Roots in European Romanticism

- **England: 1798 – 1830s**
Wordsworth,
Coleridge, Keats,
Shelley, Byron, etc.
- **America: 1820s – 1860s**
Irving, Cooper,
Emerson, Thoreau,
Hawthorne,
Melville, Poe,
Whitman, etc.



Εικόνα 1



The Movement of Romanticism

- Reaction against “overly-rational” Enlightenment philosophy, art, religion, literature.
- Poetry / art not a thing of logic, strict rhyming, strict meter.
- Art – inspiration, spontaneity, “naturalness.”
- Nature: the path to the discovery of universal, spiritual truths.



Nature and Romanticism

- Nature is the key to self-awareness.
- Open self to nature & you may receive its gifts: a deeper, more mystical experience of life.
- Nature offers a kind of “grace” — “salvation” from mundane evil of everyday life.



Romanticism in America

- Arrives in America 1820s.
- Centers around Concord, Massachusetts—kind of artists' colony.
- Transcendentalist Club” 1836—writing, reading, social reform projects.
- Utopian communities—escape American materialism and the alienating effect of American market economy.



Roots in American Unitarianism

- Unitarianism (Christian denomination) rises in late 1700s; formalized by William Ellery Channing, early 1800s.
- Liberal church—broken from strict New England Congregationalism.
- Reject total depravity of humanity.
- Believe in perfectibility of humanity.
- Reject idea of “angry God” —focus on benevolent God.
- UNITY of God rather than TRINITY of Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson was a Unitarian minister.



American Transcendentalism – Spiritual Revival

- Transcendentalists: lonely explorers (pilgrims) outside society and convention.
- Trying to form new society based on metaphysical awareness.
- Trying to purify society by purifying hearts and minds.
- Emerson's Nature: a spiritual manifesto.



Εικόνα 2





ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΙΟ
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

Henry David Thoreau

Civil Disobedience/ Resistance to Civil Government

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) (1/2)

- Philosopher and writer best known for his attacks on American social institutions and his respect for nature and simple living.
- Influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson.
- Walden (1854) documents his experiences living alone on Walden Pond in Massachusetts from 1845-1847.



Εικόνα 3



Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) (2/2)

- Emphasized the importance of individuality and self-reliance.
- Practiced civil disobedience in his own life and spent a night in jail for his refusal to pay taxes in protest of the Mexican War.



Social context

- 1840s-1850s, U.S. became polarized (abolitionism).
- The Fugitive Slave Law (1850), prompted many abolitionists to protest the government's actions via various forms of civil disobedience.
- The Mexican-American War (1846-1848): boundary disputes between the U.S. and Mexico
- Expansion of American territory: California, Nevada and Utah.



Social commentary/ political statements

- Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* espouses the need to prioritize one's conscience over the dictates of laws.
- The text criticizes American social institutions and imperialistic policies (Mexican-American war and the institution of slavery that was sanctioned by law).



Thoreau's social theory and political philosophy (1/2)

- Government derives its power from the majority because they are the strongest group, not because they hold the most legitimate viewpoint.
- People's first obligation is to do what they believe is right and not to follow the law dictated by the majority.



Thoreau's social theory and political philosophy (2/2)

- Concept of individualism – first moral agents, then political citizens.
- Emphasis on individual conscience and integrity.
- People's lack of intellect and self-reliance.
- Fear for the masses of people.
- Voting and petitioning for change achieves little.



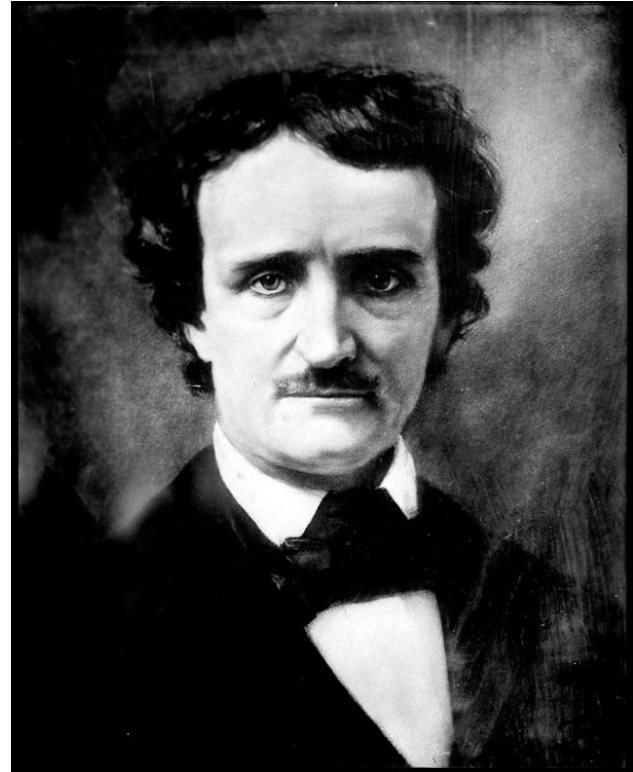
Edgar Allan Poe

The Fall of the House of Usher



Edgar Allan Poe (1809 – 1849)

- Author, poet, editor, and literary critic.
- Inventor of the detective fiction genre.
- Short stories of mystery and the macabre.



Εικόνα 4



Dark Romanticism

- A literary subgenre opposed to the beliefs of Transcendentalism regarding human inner goodness and moral worth.
 - Gothic and the Uncanny(ghosts, vampires: representation of personal torment and uncertainty as to whether human nature can be a source of salvation or destruction).
 - Supernatural realm – inexplicable/ metaphysical phenomena.



Dark Romantics

- Representative writers: Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville.
- The Dark Romantics emphasized the evil in human nature and the individual's proneness to sin and self-destruction.
- They believed that the soul of the individual became contaminated by materialism. As a result, all attempts at the spiritual reform of the individual as well as at social reform were futile.



Gothic fiction

- Gothic fiction: a literary genre that combines melodrama, horror, and Romanticism.
- Examples of Gothic fiction:
 - Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).
 - Edgar A. Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839).
 - Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).
 - Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847).
 - Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).
 - Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891).
 - Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).



Poe's writing: themes

- Questions of death (mourning, physical decomposition, premature burial, reanimation of the dead).
- Emptiness / void beneath human existence
- Despair.
- Symbolism/ allegory.



Poe's literary theory

- Undercurrents of meaning/ obscurity of meaning/ dark suggestiveness.
- Diseased soul of the individual.
- Fragmentation and alienation.
- God as a Poet.
- Earth: a fallen planet (Poe was among the first ecologists).
- Scientific reason vs. poetic intuition.
- Material facts vs. visionary knowledge.
- The poet's torment: imprisoned in his own physical body.



The Fall of the House of Usher (1/3)

- Gothic atmosphere:
 - haunted house, dreary landscape, inexplicable plot.
 - vagueness of time, place, character motives/personality.
 - blurring of the real with the fantastic.



The Fall of the House of Usher (2/3)

- Sense of claustrophobia.
- Monstrosity of the House.
- “Usher” refers not only to the mansion and the family, but also to the act of crossing a - threshold that brings the narrator into the perverse world of Roderick and Madeline, a world he does not know.



The Fall of the House of Usher (3/3)

- Doubling spreads throughout the story. The tale highlights the Gothic feature of the doppelganger (a ghostly double of a living person):
 - the mirror image in the tarn doubles the house,
 - Roderick and Madeline,
 - other works of literature, “The Haunted Palace” and “Mad Trist” by Sir Launcelot Canning.



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Θεσσαλονίκη, Εαρινό εξάμηνο 2014-2015





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ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ
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- το Σημείωμα Αναφοράς
- το Σημείωμα Αδειοδότησης
- τη δήλωση Διατήρησης Σημειωμάτων
- το Σημείωμα Χρήσης Έργων Τρίτων (εφόσον υπάρχει)

μαζί με τους συνοδευόμενους υπερσυνδέσμους.

