**Reform: Social & Intellectual**

*European Romanticism branched into American mainstream society. The basic goals emphasized were to transcend the bounds of intellect and to strive for emotional understanding. It agreed on the sacredness, uniqueness, and the authority of the individual apprehension experience.*

**Transcendentalists-**Transcendalists included many brilliant philosophers, writers, poets’ lecturers and essayists. These included such intellectuals as Ralph Waldo Emerson Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. They believed in emphasis of the spontaneous and vivid expression of personal feeling over learned analysis.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson:** Serving briefly as a Unitarian minister, he was a popular essayist and lecturer. The topics of his essays were broad and general. He wrote on subjects such as "Beauty," "Nature," and "Power." He was a Transcendalist who believed that knowledge reflected the voice of God, and that truth was inborn and universal.

**Henry David Thoreau, *On* *Civil Disobedience*:** He was considered to be a "doer." He wrote OCD to defend the right to disobey unjust laws. He was also a Transcendalist who believed that one could satisfy their material purposes with only a few weeks work each year and have more time to ponder life’s purpose.

**Margaret Fuller, *The Dial:*** A feminist, critic, philosopher, and journalist, she edited The Dial, which was a Transcendalist journal with Ralph Waldo Emerson and George Ripley. After writing *Summer on the Lakes*, she was offered a job and wrote significant literature as a critic of the Tribune from 1844 to 1846.

**James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans, The Spy, The Pioneers:*** He wrote historical novels under Sir Walter Scott’s influence. To fiction, he introduced characters like frontiersmen, and developed a distinctly American theme with conflict of between the customs of primitive life on the frontier and the advance of civilization.

**Herman Melville, *Moby Dick:*** Drawing ideas and theme from his own experiences in life, Melville wrote with much pessimism. His book, which contains much pessimism, focuses on the human mind instead of the social relationships. He, along with Poe and Hawthorne, were concerned with analyzing the mental states of their characters.

**Nathanial Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter-*** Hawthorne turned to his Puritan past in order to examine the psychological and moral effects of the adultery. He, along with Poe and Melville, wrote with concern for the human mind because of their pessimism about the human condition.

**Edgar Allen Poe:** Poe, with Melville and Hawthorne saw man as a group of conflicting forces that might not ever be balanced. He changed literature by freeing it from its determination to preach a moral and established the idea that literature should be judged by the positive effect they had on the reader.

**Washington Irving:** Residing in New York and serving in the war of 1812, he left the US and lived in Europe until 1832. He wrote *Sketch Book,* which contained "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and "Rip Van Winkle," which continued to give him the support of Americans who were proud of their best known writer.

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:** Coming from New England, the area from which literature was most prominent, Longfellow, a poet, wrote *Evangeline* which was widely read by schoolchildren in America. His poems of *Evangeline* and *Hiawatha* preached of the value of tradition and the impact of the past on the present.

**Walt Whitman:** By writing *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman broke the conventions of rhyme and meter to bring new vitality to poetry. Not only did he write in free verse. But his poems took on a different style, being energetic and candid at a time when humility was accepted in the literary world.