Romanticism

Desarrollo:

* Historical Introduction.
* General Approach.
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**Historical Introduction (1800 - 1860):**

The US between 1800 and 1860:

* Democratization: it took place mainly in the first half of the XIX century. The US was born as a democratic nation, but not everyone (even not all white men); only land owners and men with an economic level.
* Debates on universal white male suffrage in each state: gradual abolition of property qualifications by the states.
* Industrialization (started in Europe, but it was exported to the United Sates): it affected most on the Norther States:
* Factories built in the North: for this reason, the North became mainly urban, industrialized, commercial… The process of industrialization also had important consequences for the South, because many of the factories on the north were textile factories and they needed cotton, so the plantation of cotton in the South became very profitable:
* Perpetuation of the rural South (as a consequence).
* Westward expansion (in the first half of the 19 century it expanded as far as the Pacific coast). When the United States was born, after the War of Independence and after the American Revolution, the western frontier was the Mississippi River:
* The Northwest Ordinance.
* The Lousiana Purchase (1803). Lousiana was a french colony.
* The Florida Purchase: In 1819 the government of United States bought Florida to Spain.
* The Annexation of Texas took place in 1845, Texas originally was a part of Mexico, but because of a revolution in 1830s, it gets independent and almost immediately it gets to be admitted as part of land of the United States. At first it was not admitted, but then it was in 1845.
* The Annexation of Oregon took place in 1846 thanks to a treated that the United States signed with Great Britain. When the Annexation of Texas took place, the Mexican government considered that it was an unfriendly act on the part of the United States. This meant a beginning of a war between the United States and Mexico.
* The Mexican Cession: As a consequence of the war between Mexico and the United Sates started in 1845 (because of the annexation of Texas), and lasted 3 years, until 1848, Mexico was forced to cede (ceder) all the lands between Texas and the Pacific coast to the United States. Since Mexico was defeated Mexico had to give this land by the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, that both signed.

It was necessary to populate this land. So, the west was divided in 8 districts, and it became a territory. And when a territory had a certain number of inhabitants, it became a State with the same rights and the same duties as the original 13 states. But, when each Sate was born, was necessary to write a Constitution for each State. So, it was necessary to decide whether each of the new States was going to be a slave State or a free State; what was very conflictive between North and South. And this is why this expansion is related to the slavery.

* Manifest Destiny: means that the Westward civilization is the only civilization. This expansion was to spread civilization.
* Slavery.
* Related to the Westward expansion we have the slavery.

We are going to see how with the process of industrialization and the question of slavery, the Civil War started. It started because of the tension between North and South for economic reasons because of the industrialization and the question of slavery was also related. The Civil War lasted 4 years between 1861 – 1865. The Civil War started in 1861 when a group of the Southern States became separated from the Union. At first there were 7 states and then, there were other 4 states that joined them. And they considered themselves to be a new nation. So they fought in the Civil war because they believed that they had the right to became separated from the United States because his government was not acting in the way that they wanted. In contrast, the northern states, remind as a union and they did not accept this separation. The South was defeated, this meant the end of slavery.

**General Approach:**

Romantic movement:

* First developing in Europe and then exported to the United States.
* Common features:
* Freedom.
* Individualism and the Self.
* Emotions and feeling (more important than Reason).
* Remoteness in time and place. Remote times (Middle Ages) and places (exotic) because they were more easily to idealize, and they allowed them the opportunity of scaping from the consequences of industrialization. Mystery and darkness.
* Imagination as a source of creation (over reason). Kant’s ideas because of his ideas about the human imagination.
* Nature as a source of beauty, spontaneity. Romantics did not react against science, they reacted against the empirical and scientific approach to nature, because science deprived nature. Nature for them was also a moral feature, because it was a place where men could recover his instinct and spontaneity. “Solitary romantic hero”. This solitary contact with nature was understood as a source of the sublime. This concept of the “sublime” was very important. According to Edmunds book, the sublime was a combination terror, horror, pain, beauty, emotion, feeling… but a terror and fear that were delightful, that could cause a source of pleasure for the human beings.
* Common people and simple life.

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| **ENLIGHTENMENT** | **ROMANTICISM** |
| Stress on reason, intellect, the head. | Stress on feeling, intuition, and the heart. |
| Children are important because they develop into adulthood through the training of their savage instincts thus eventually becoming civilized and sophisticated. | Children are pure and holy because they are a source of natural, spontaneous feelings. Civilization is a corrupting agent: they get corrupted by civilization. |
| Focusing on what can be logically measured and rationally understood. | Attracted to the irrational, the mystical, the supranatural. |
| Looking outwards towards society. | Looking inwards towards the individual soul and imagination. |
| Attracted by a social order where everyone knows his place. | Celebrating the freedom of nature and the individual experience. |
| Society improves under regulation. | Criticism on society and its injustices. |
| Study of a man in social contexts: concern with man and manners in an artificial society. | Concern with manly simplicity. Growing interest and approbation of the primitive and the wild. |
| Mimetic, objective artistic theory: a work of art is a mirror, passively mimetic or reproductive of the existing “reality”. Art is objective and rationally planned. | Expressive, subjective theory: a work of art is a lamp throwing out images originating not in the world but in the poet. Art is subjective and intuitive. MH Abrams, “*The Mirror and the Lamp*” (1953). |
| Imitation of reality means not the accidents but the underlying principles of nature. Expression of the words as a harmonious universe with ordered, hierarchical political systems. | Stress on accidents, the extraordinarity, the sublime, greatness… |
| Formal, ordered way of writing. Balance, symmetry, adherence to convention. Over-ornamentation. | Forms and language closer to everyday speech and more accessible to the general reader. Simple style: imitations of genuinely early popular poetry (ballads). |
| Universalism. | Concern with the private and domestic. |

**US Romanticism:**

Particular circumstances affecting the Romantic Movement in the USA:

* Democracy and freedom: The Revolution as a victory of freedom. Romantics in the USA were not so concerned about political freedom as in Europe.
* The frontiers as a safety valve for excedents of population in the cities caused by industrialization: opportunities and optimism. In the United States it was not so dramatic as in Europe. For poor people there was always the possibility of moving to the West, escaping from the overpopulation.
* Puritanism: avoidance of explicit allusions. Public opinion in the United Sates was under strict moral conventions of Puritanism, so writers had to take this into account. People had strong opinions, especially concerning illicit sex, that’s why in the American Romantic writers we are not going to find any explicit allusions to sexual matters.
* The Colonial Complex: refinement. American writers were influenced by the cultural immaturity of the nation. The conditions in the United States were not the most appropriate one for the developing of the literature. Americans were not so refined as Europeans (even though there were some refined gentleman in America) and did not know which the cultural path was. There were some writers that became specially focus on formal style; everything that was not in accordance with this general purpose was eliminated: illicit sex, drunkenness, profanity…
* American national ideals: They had to define an American feeling different form the European. The demand of the definition of the American literature.
* Vs. European values: They wanted to establish a contrast between the European (corruption, artificiality…) values and the American ones: honesty, simplicity, innocence, spontaneity...
* American landscapes: American Romantic writers understood the interest in remote times and places in a slightly different way from the European writers in spite of the general interest on remote places.
* The American past: the Romantic interest on the past was directed towards native materials, in spite of their short history, American writers tried to find the scenes of adventure in their own past: in the fights against the Indians or French or English… So, they tried to look backwards to their own American Past.
* Particular circumstances affecting the Romantic Movement in the USA:
* A rural society: opportunity of realizing the pastoral ideal of a life in harmony with nature, that Romantics believed.
* Sectional differences (because of economic reasons): the North (industrialization: commercial 🡪 Industrial capitalistic system), the South (developing of the textile industry, change the traditional crops: The plantation of cotton were worked by slaves) and the West (many people moved to the West, but they were mainly rural population and they settle they farms and ranchers).
* Publishing conditions in the USA: most of the literature written in this period of time was published in the North East, mainly in the East. Economic development as well as the development of education, favoured the sail of books, so publishing became a commercial business. On the one hand this was good, as the writers could get some financial supports from their literary activities, but, on the other hand this had some negative effects: writers were expected to write according to the popular tastes. As in American and in England spoke English, American books could be read in England too, but also had to compete against them.

Two main trends:

* The New England Renaissance and Transcendentalism: optimistic, hopeful approach:

Belief in human progress mainly through education; self-reliance; life in harmony with nature; nature as a projection of the human soul; optimistic about the future of mankind and of the United States…

* Dark Romanticism: pessimistic approach:

Nature as a hostile to the human beings; stress on the “dark” side of the human self (the unconscious, evil…), irrationality and human corruption; impossibility of human progress; aware of the past human atrocities (the extermination of native Americans…). Associated with writers like: Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville.