

Sahana Sarangi

History

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## Lecture 8: Early 19<sup>th</sup> century Cultural Trends

Second Great Awakening, 1820s-30s:

- Isn't a big deal until now, technically begins in 1790s
- Massive spread of Protestant denominations
  - Particularly Baptists and Methodists, using tactics of the first GA
- Tactics of 1<sup>st</sup> GA:
  - Emotional appeal → rhetoric skills, celebrity preachers, big emotional crowds
- One of the most important things: rejected predestination
  - The idea that who goes to heaven and who goes to hell has already been preordained, there is nothing you can do about it
  - Bleak way of viewing things:
    - How do you know?
    - Why do you even try?
- What they emphasized instead: free will & individual empowerment
  - God wants you to act independently and make your own decisions
  - Your choices will impact whether you go to hell/heaven
  - Can save your soul by changing your behavior
  - Breaks away from Congregationalist ideas → no more good things = good and bad things = God is unhappy
- Key leader: Charles Grandison Finney
  - His idea was perfectionism
  - All Christians should be aiming to be holy and should not rest until they are as perfect as god
  - As close to god-like as possible
  - True Christians will be working to make yourself + society as holy as possible
  - Goes hand in hand with individual empowerment
- So much more optimistic than ideas that came out of 1<sup>st</sup> GA
- Protestantism was not as plagued by fear and despair → now have a reason to hope because you can do something to change your circumstances
- Hopeful, actively participating
- More leadership roles for women
  - Want women to speak and participate more
  - Moving away from traditional feminine roles they had previously
  - Critics: you should convert to Christianity because it is rational instead of emotional → similar to Enlightenment

Transcendentalism, 1830-40s:

- Intellectual movement

- Europe and North America
- Not strictly religious, but building on ideas of 2<sup>nd</sup> GA
- Very strong faith and optimism in humanity
  - People have capacity for good
- Power of individual to improve themselves to reach full potential
  - Kind of like perfectionism, but not exactly religious
- Importance of seeking universal truth
  - Underlying truth that needs to be discovered
  - Do this through engagement with nature & physical world
- Different from 2<sup>nd</sup> GA: trying to harmonize science and religion
  - Want religious beliefs to match what they see in science
- Key people: Ralph Waldo Emerson
  - Important: personal divinity
  - God is within every human being → can change what people think about themselves
- Key people: Henry David Thoreau
  - Taking Emerson's theoretical ideas and making them practical
  - Civil disobedience
    - If the law is immoral, they you have the obligation to oppose unjust laws (even if it means breaking the law)
    - Don't have to pay taxes if they are being used for immoral purposes
    - Don't have to return enslaved people to their masters if it is abhorrent

Amos Bronson Alcott:

- One of most influential and least-well known transcendentalists
- Influential in areas of educational reform
  - Leading Boston school at the time said success of the student meant breaking the will & spirit of the student
  - Alcott says he doesn't think this is true → doesn't agree with transcendentalism
  - Does away with corporal punishment
  - Focused on things that engage the student
    - No rote memorization
    - Experiential education: discussion, journaling, field trips
    - Demands physical education and play for students
  - Early advocate for sex ed., when it was taboo for talking about it → scandalous for this
- His school is closed when he admits an African-American girl → his funding gets cut off
- A lot of his ideas are spread by Margaret Fuller
  - Controversial: undermines gender roles

Coming out of 2<sup>nd</sup> GA and transcendentalists: Utopian Experiments:

- People want to try and live in different ways to reach full potential
- First group: Shakers
  - Led by Mother Ann
  - Their focus was celibacy and simplicity
  - No sex, simple life

- All people are equal regardless of race or sex
  - Included non-Christians, African Americans, and indigenous people
  - 20+ different communities in NY and New England by 1850
- Second group: New Harmony
  - Established by Robert Owen
  - Focused on perfectionism
  - Wants to get rid of social class
  - Provide free public education
  - And abolish personal wealth
  - We get things like kindergartens and vocational educations in the US
- Oneida (founded in NY)
  - By John Humphrey Noyes
  - Emphasizes shared property
  - Also believe in shared relationships
    - Polyamory on a massive scale
    - “free love” and “complex marriage”
    - Had a 200 person group marriage
  - People are scandalized by this
  - Turn to industry: created Oneida Flatware
    - How they earn money, and still available today! Only \$60!
- A lot of these addressing boundaries on women

#### Women's Issues: Coverture:

- Legal doctrine up until late 19<sup>th</sup> century that relegates women as property of their husband
- Lose legal status, lose control of money, make contracts etc.
- Only people allowed these rights are femme sole, or single woman → married women cannot do this
- People are arguing about this → Abigail Adams: “remember the ladies” (1776)
  - Pushing for political equality back when US was fighting for independence
  - Only state that allowed women's rights at beginning of US: NJ allowed widowed or single property owning women could vote

#### Republican motherhood:

- Reigning concept of how women should behave
- Women should only be involved in politics through influencing their male relatives
- If this is their role, women should be well-educated in certain subjects
  - Need to raise their sons to be good US citizens
- This isn't working out because women are working in factories at this time
- This only works for elite, white women
  - Reality: most women need practical skills to help their working-class families financially
  - If you are enslaved, you are not getting an education
  - If you are a free Black women → mostly restricted to domestic labor roles
  - Indigenous women: losing influence slowly, lost control of land
- An ideal, not being lived out by everyone

Women's sphere (true womanhood):

- Separation in public and private spheres of life
- As society becomes more and more industrialized
- Public sphere:
  - Men are working, going out to create wealth
- Private sphere:
  - Home, women are in charge, creating order and refuge for your family
- Republican motherhood is giving way for the idea of the woman's sphere (house is your domain, outside world is men's domain)
- This is not reality, but an ideal, as women are working in factories
- Some people pushing against this, saying women need more political involvement, etc

Women's Rights Advocates:

- Ideas that come out of these things: people striving for perfection, divine within people
- People advocating for slavery & women's rights
  - If everybody has some level of divine, everybody needs to be equal
- A lot of these people advocating are women
- Sisters Angelina and Sarah Grimke
  - Left the south because of their opposition to slavery
  - Traveled around the north advocating for women's equality and abolishment of slavery
  - Used both transcendental and religious principles
  - Scandalous because they spoke to mixed-gender crowds
- Sojourner Truth
  - Fled from slavery herself in NY before NY had gotten rid of slavery
  - Combined abolition and women's rights
  - She was enslaved & a woman → "ain't I a woman" phrase
  - Say all these nice things about what women should be, but says isn't she a woman too?
- Amelia Bloomer
  - More worried about society & fashion → less directly related to abolition movement
  - People should start working to change women's clothing styles to be more useful for the things they do in their day-to-day life, rather than dressing for style
  - Clothing reform
  - early pants for women → called pantaloons/Bloomers, after Amelia Bloomer
  - receives ridicule from conservatives in this era → women who wore these portrayed badly

Seneca Falls Convention, 1848:

- women's rights activists converge at this convention
- First ever women's convention to discuss social, civil, religious rights as well as the right to vote
- Organizers most well known:

- Lucretia Mott
  - Elizabeth Cady Stanton
  - Susan B. Anthony
- Both men and women are attending this
  - People of a sex/gender need the other sex/gender for their movement to be accepted
- Produce the Declaration of Sentiments
  - Women's declaration of independence
  - Formatted the exact same as the Declaration
  - Creative reuse to prove a point
- Organize to lobby state legislatures
  - Voting is mostly handled at the state level
  - Only two ways you can get women's right to vote → either have to get the federal government to pass an amendment (which happens later) or they can lobby individual states to allow women to vote
  - Some states allow women to vote before they get the right to vote in the federal level → further west you are, the more likely it is to happen