

UNIT 2 Expressing a National Spirit
American Renaissance 1800 to 1850

A STEMM SCHOOL
FROEBEL
BILINGUAL SCHOOL
Home of the Space Generation



AMERICAN GOTHIC

WITH
JIM SOTO

SPEAK YOUR MIND

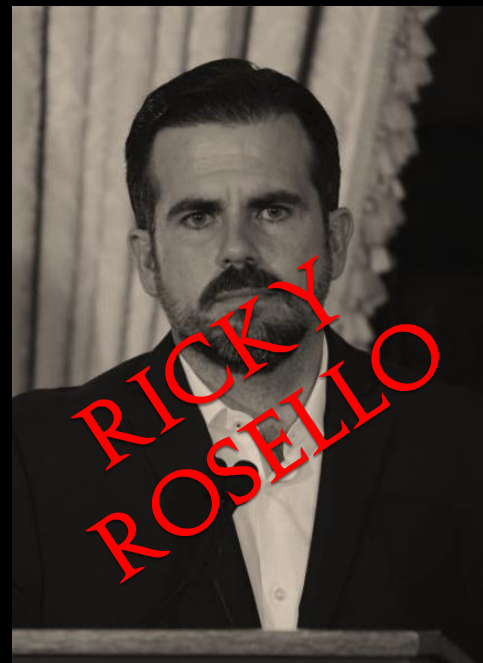
Think about a famous character or public figure who caused his or her own undoing.

What behavior played a part in their own undoing?



One of the tropes of Dark Romanticism and Gothic literature is Human corruption and self-destruction.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY
OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE?



EMBRACING THE DARKNESS

Not all of the literature of the New England Renaissance was sentimental and idealistic. Other writers portrayed a decidedly darker view of the world.

Dark Romanticism is distinguished from Romanticism in its emphasis on human fallibility and sin (they are pessimists), whereas Romantics believe in human goodness (they are optimists). According to Dark Romantics, even good men and women drift towards sin and self-destruction, and there can be unintended consequences that arise from well-intended actions.

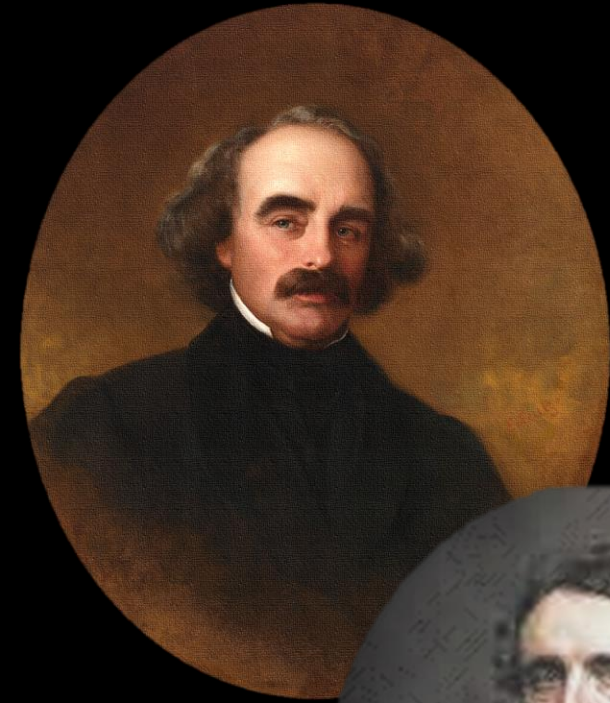


The genre of "Dark Romanticism" is thought to have emerged from the Transcendental Movement in 19th century America. Whereas Transcendentalists felt goodness as innate an quality of mankind, Dark Romantics believed humans gravitate more towards their evil tendencies. Stories in this genre share many characteristics of **Realism**.



Dark Romantics focus on human fallibility, self-destruction, judgement, punishment, as well as the psychological effects of guilt and sin.

Authors who embraced this genre in the 19th century include: Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Emily Dickinson. There's an even darker side of the Dark Romantics: **Gothic Literature**, which involves sheer terror, personal torment, graphic morbidity, and the supernatural.





EXEMPLARY WORKS

Moby-Dick by Herman Melville is one of the most recognized works of Dark Romanticism. Melville's Captain Ahab is the prototype of human fallibility, and he draws upon ample Biblical allusions centering on themes of judgement, guilt, sin, souls, and the end of the world.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne exemplifies Dark Romanticism in its themes of imposed judgement and punishment for those committing sin, resulting in alienation and destruction. His magnum opus examined the human soul and our morality—a cautionary tale about the dangers of well-intended social reform and blind religious fervor.



Most of Edgar Allan Poe's canon falls in the Dark Romantic genre, in which he explored the psychology of the conscious and subconscious mind. **A Descent Into the Maelstrom** is a fine example. However, many of Poe's works fall in the dark end of the Dark Romantic spectrum, into the realm of **Gothic Fiction** with macabre tales of horror, morbidity, mental conditions, and madness. Fine example: **The Fall of the House of Usher**.

ELEMENTS OF GOTHIC LITERATURE

Some important elements found in dark romanticism/gothic literature you will explore during the next days include:

- Focuses on tragedy (grisly deaths, omens, curses, murder)
- Pays attention to the mysteries of life (family legends, gruesome dreams)
- Shows a belief in the Supernatural (struggle between good vs evil forces, punishment of sin)
- Honors human nature and its struggles (Extreme emotions e.g.: grief, passion, love and insanity)
- Is dark, creepy and suspenseful (dark houses/drafty, old castles)

GOTHIC SHORTS

Now, lets sample some gothic shorts from YouTube.



The Cat With Hands



Sucka Blood



Pictured

ASSESSMENT

1. Identify the characteristics of Dark Romanticism as expressed in works by American authors.
2. Explain the difference between "Romanticism" and "Dark Romanticism."
3. Which short exemplified the elements of "gothic" better? Which elements were they?



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