

Examining Transcendentalism through Popular Culture

Overview

Consider all of the resources in pop culture that you have access to. You can consider genres such as sitcoms, television dramas, comics, movies, music, public figures (political, athletic, entertainment, religious), and so forth. Your job is to find examples of five Transcendental Tenets.

The Tenets – your task is to find 5 representatives out of the following 6 tenets:

- Nonconformity
- Self-Reliance
- Confidence (trusting your intuition)
- Civil Disobedience (not supporting law/policy that is contrary to your nature)
- Importance of Nature (looking for something spiritual here)
- Simplify, Simplify, Simplify – you can also consider this in light of questioning progress that is at the detriment of the human condition/spirit.

The Project

You will create a poster-board, Photo Story, Movie Maker or Power Point presentation/display that presents your five findings.

For each pop-culture finding, you must:

- Identify which Tenet heading your finding falls under from the list above
- Visually display your representative example
- Create a well-written paragraph for each that:
 - o Links a quote from one of the Transcendentalists to your finding (you need to identify which author (Thoreau, Emerson, Fuller or Alcott) it came from).
 - o Explains the relationship between the selected quote and the selected example (why it is transcendental) – this needs to be specific - you need to draw on key quotes, images, or actions – for example, if using Tyler Durden from Fight Club, I would need some specific quotes that align with my transcendental quote – same thing goes for song lyrics.

Requirements:

- Visual Display – visually appealing, demonstrates thought and effort
- 5 Representative Examples
- 5 Quotes
- 5 Explanatory Paragraphs
- Brief sharing of your artifacts with the class

Timeline:

- **All projects must be prepared for presentation on Tuesday, December 15. We'll do a Gallery Walk and Presentations on Wednesday, December 16th and Thursday, December 17th.**

Rubric:

I. Visual _____ / 25 Points

- colorful, appealing, demonstrates time and effort
- very readable

II. Meets Requirements _____ / 125 Points (25 Points Each)

- covers 5 tenets (labeled above each example)
- visual representation for each example

III. Analysis Paragraphs _____ / 50 (10 points each)

- utilizes a transcendental quote and identifies source – author, essay
- specifically analyzes the transcendental nature of your artifact in light of the selected quote

-#1 _____ / 10
-#2 _____ / 10
-#3 _____ / 10
-#4 _____ / 10
-#5 _____ / 10

TOTAL _____ / 200 Points

Sample Paragraph:

Transcendentalist Tenet: Non-conformity

Artist: Green Day
Song: Minority

Stepped out of the line
Like a sheep runs from the herd
Marching out of time
To my own beat now
The only way I know

Green Day’s song “Minority” represents the Transcendental tenet of non-conformity. A non-conformist is someone who does not “fit in” with the crowd. This song suggests that stepping out of the line “like a sheep runs from the herd” is a positive action. “Marching out of time / to my own beat now / the only way I know” is a clear reference to Thoreau’s idea that a man sometimes walks to the “beat of a different drummer.” This song is a declaration of independence from conforming to the idea that you should be anything other than the individual that you are in your life.

Ideas: Find several songs that have a Transcendental theme and make a CD cover for it – put it on your poster. Go to bighugelabs.com and make a motivational poster to go on your presentation. Go to toondoo.com and write your own transcendental comic. Find an advertisement that represents Transcendental thought and include it in your presentation.