

Celebration of the Self: Romanticism and Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism is a distinctively American offshoot of the Romantic Movement.

- Characteristic – be a rebel

The splendors of nature inspired the Romantics more than the fear of God

- Individual spirit
- Emotions
- Imagination
- Atmosphere
- Sentiment
- Optimism

Transcendent forms of truth exist beyond reason and experience

- Emerson said you discover this higher truth on your own (over-soul)

**“A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth
Longfellow** RHYME SCHEME: A, B, A, B

Stanza

Rhyme scheme

Meter

Lyric poem – p. 1383, 1255

Define all above

A Psalm of Life, p. 347

RHYME SCHEME: A, B, A, B

(Psalm means song or poem)

1. Don't waste your life, life is too short;
don't be overly rational –YOLO
2. The body turns to dust but not your
soul – it's eternal
3. Live life to the fullest, and accomplish
something each day. Don't worry about
being happy or sad.
4. We are all going to die.
5. Life is like a battle and you are meant
to be a hero.
6. Live for now – not the future or the
past

7. Make your mark, make it a good one

8. Be a good example for others –
inspiration

9. Be ready for anything, achieve, and
have patience.

#3, p. 347

In lines 25-32 in “A Psalm of Life,” the speaker says the following about the lives of great people: make your life sublime and leave “footprints on the sands of time.”

First, to make your life sublime means .

..

Next, leaving footprints on the sands of time means . . .

#7, p. 347

Americans today still have some of the values expressed in “A Psalm of Life,” but also in some ways they don’t. First, we are still taught to

On the other hand, . . .

Transcendentalists	Anti-transcendentalists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Humanity is god-like. ❖ People are basically good. ❖ Evil is non-existent in human beings. ❖ Self-reliance and individualism are important. ❖ They are idealists. <p>They believe that true reality is spiritual.</p> <p>Transcendentalists valued:</p> <p>NON-CONFORMITY ANTI-MATERIALISM REVERANCE FOR NATURE PASSIVE RESISTANCE TO INJUSTICE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Humanity is not god-like. ❖ People are basically not good. ❖ Evil exists in human beings. ❖ Sin, pain and evil are real. <p>They used symbolism to illustrate their points.</p>



Big Ideas



in Transcendentalism



Things to look for in Emerson's writing:

from "Self-Reliance":

". . . a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds . . . "

"Whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist."

Other "gems" from Emerson not included in your text:

from *The American Scholar* :

"All things have two handles: beware of the wrong one."

Regarding the state of man:

"In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking."



Things to look for in Thoreau's writing:

from *Walden* :

"Still we live meanly like ants Our life is frittered away by detail."

"Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand"

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

from *Civil Disobedience* :

". . . government is best which governs not at all"

"The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished: and would have done somewhat more if government had not sometimes got in its way."