

Transcendentalism
Literary Characteristics and Traits
English 10 Block

Transcendentalism is a religious and philosophical movement. Among the transcendentalists' core beliefs was the inherent goodness of both people and nature. They believe that society and its institutions—particularly organized religion and political parties—ultimately corrupt the purity of the individual. They have faith that people are at their best when truly "self-reliant" and independent. It is only from such real individuals that true community could be formed.

Transcendentalism is...

1. A literary movement
2. A philosophic conception
3. Epistemology (a way of knowing)

Characteristics of the literature of the Transcendental Era:

1. Believed in living closer to nature
2. Believed in the dignity of manual labor
3. Saw the need for intellectual companions and interests
4. Emphasized the need for spiritual living
5. Considered man's relationship to God a personal matter established directly by the individual himself
6. Posited the essential divinity of man
7. Urged one great brotherhood
8. Proposed self-trust and self-reliance
9. Believed in democracy and individualism
10. Encouraged reform (to awaken and regenerate the spirit)
11. Insisted on a complete break with tradition and custom
12. Know through intuition

