

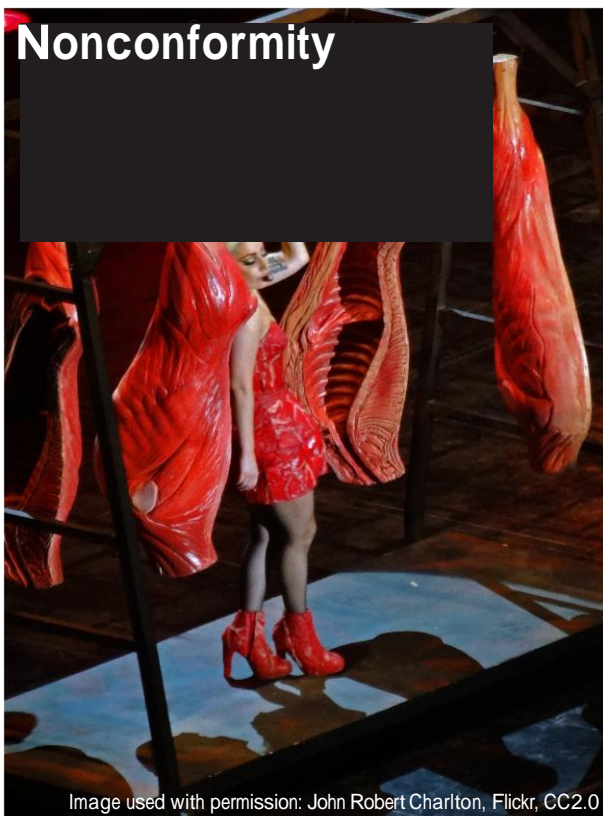
Modern Transcendentalism

Emerson and Thoreau were promoting their Transcendental ideas way back in the mid-1800s and, yet, those same ideas still surround us today in our media and popular culture. When you pause and closely examine the music in your earbuds, the movies and shows on your DVR, and the bestsellers loaded in your Kindle, you'll see that some of today's artists promote the very same ideas as the fathers of Transcendentalism.

For this assignment, you are going to become an expert on Emerson and Thoreau by finding echoes of their words in the works of people you enjoy today. T.V. shows, movies, cartoons/comic strips, music, products/packaging, internet news stories, and public figures are fair game as you find examples to illustrate the words of Emerson and Thoreau. All works submitted as examples must come from the last 20 years (1999-2019).

Steps:

1. Understand the Five Tenets of Transcendentalism:
Be Yourself (beauty of all people)
Self-Reliance (Nonconformity)
Importance of Nature (finding enlightenment or true self or "God" in nature)
Trust Your Intuition
Simplified Life
2. Create a visually appealing poster or infographic that features five different pop culture elements and an explanation of their connection to Transcendentalism. Each of the five element sections must include:
 1. Specific Tenet (see above) identified
 2. A quote from any of the Emerson or Thoreau works discussed in class, with author and title identified
 3. A visual display of the modern example
 4. A thoughtful explanation of how the modern work (include the year) echoes the idea in the quote from #2 above. Be sure you clarify the Transcendental element/s and draw on specific quotes, images, or actions from your example. Assume your audience doesn't know the artist or work you're discussing and fill in the knowledge gaps so your example will make sense to anyone. Don't be generic or vague in your assessment of the example. Get deep; I'm looking for real depth of thought and evidence of research/intelligence about the world in this section.
3. Example:



"Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood."
— Ralph Waldo Emerson,
"Self-Reliance"

For the 2010 MTV Video Music Awards, Lady Gaga donned a headline-grabbing dress made of raw meat. The gag-worthy garment gained a lot of negative attention, but Gaga explained that the dress was a statement about one's need to fight for one's beliefs. Media outlets from *Time Magazine* to *Vogue* commented upon the stunt, criticizing singer's lack of taste and poor judgment. Vegetarian groups and PETA also lambasted the singer. Later, Gaga said the dress was designed to highlight the way women are treated "as pieces of meat." She also said the dress was a statement about her distaste for the U.S. military's "don't-ask-don't-tell" policy, which was ruled unconstitutional by a federal court in 2011.

While I don't want to elevate Gaga to a parallel platform with Socrates, Galileo, or Jesus, it is fair to say that her nonconformist message is clear through her fashion and her music. All of the great men mentioned by Emerson were rebels and were, at times, harshly criticized by their peers. The same can be said of Gaga.

Student's Name:

**Modern
Transcendentalism
Rubric**

Visual: of 10 possible pts.
Attractively packaged/Shows some creativity
Evident that work took time, energy, attention
Reader-friendly formatting

Meets Requirements: of 15 possible pts.
Covers all five tenets of Transcendentalism
Each example is labelled with its tenet
Each example has a high-quality visual representation
An accurate Emerson or Thoreau quote is included for each of the five entries
Author and title of each quote included
Examples come from a variety of sources

Writing: of 25 possible pts.
Analysis clearly/accurately connects example to the chosen quote
Transcendental nature of the example is thoroughly explored/explained
All reader's questions are answered
Writer's voice is alive in the analysis
Proper mechanics, usage, and grammar rules are followed

Total:

of 50 possible pts.

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