



Transcendentalism

The movement and its
characteristics

Definition

- The belief that truths about life and death can be reached by going outside the world of the senses.



Major Beliefs

- Relationship between man and nature. Heightened awareness of this relationship would cause a “reformation” of society away from materialism and corruption.
- Feelings were a priority over reason

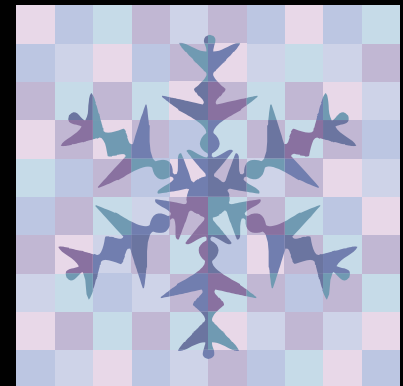
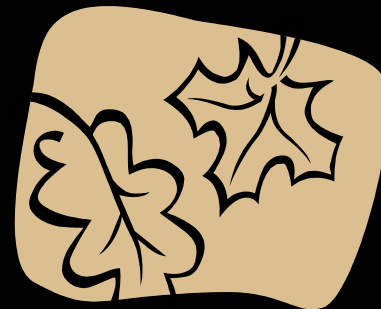
What promoted the movement?

- Rise of cities
- Class Systems
- War
- Freedom from the past
- Freedom from organized religion
- Greed/Manifest Destiny

TRANSCENDENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Nature

- Nature was divine
- Nature held the truths of life
- To communicate and be one with nature was true goodness
- Nature was innocence and an escape from the evils of society



Individualism

- Rejection of standard societal beliefs
- Inner truth is the only thing that matters
- The soul is something equally available to all people
- Fulfillment comes from knowing one's self, not wealth, gender or education

Moral Enthusiasm

- Anti- Aristocracy
- Anti-Slavery
- Pro-Women's Rights
- Quest for Utopia (Brook Farm)

Literary Focus

- Because of the stress of “feelings” and “self” during this time period, literature was a very large medium that artists used to express themselves. Such artists include:

Emily Dickinson, Ralph
Waldo Emerson,

Henry David Thoreau and
Edgar Allen Poe

