**Transcendentalism Analysis Activities II: Whitman and Emerson**

**Objectives:** Annotate for the progression of an argument. Analyze how an author uses rhetoric to achieve his overall purpose. Synthesize sources in order to inform and develop a well-reasoned argument.

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**I. Synthesis**: Read the following famous Walt Whitman poems. Decide the underlying arguments/arguments for each poem. **What is a shared argument? Defend, negate, or qualify this argument. Create a mini-synthesis argument essay. Introduction, 2 warrant sections, and Conclusion. Use a minimum of 5 quotable quotes taken from these 3 sources.**

**Walt Whitman Poems from *Leaves of Grass***

**Source A: O Me! O Life!**

O me! O life! Of the questions of these recurring,

Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill’d with the foolish,

Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I,

and who more faithless?)

Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the

struggle ever renew’d,

Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see

around me,

Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,

The question, O me! So sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,

That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse

**Source B When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer**

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,

When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much

applause in the lecture-room,

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

**Source C Song of the Universal (abridged)**

1

Come said the Muse,

Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,

Sing me the universal.

In this broad earth of ours,

Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,

Enclosed and safe within its central heart,

Nestles the seed perfection.

By every life a share or more or less,

None born but it is born, conceal'd or unconceal'd the seed is waiting.

2

Yet again, lo! the soul, above all science,

For it has history gather'd like husks around the globe,

For it the entire star-myriads roll through the sky.

In spiral routes by long detours,

(As a much-tacking ship upon the sea,)

For it the partial to the permanent flowing,

For it the real to the ideal tends.

For it the mystic evolution,

Not the right only justified, what we call evil also justified.

3

Over the mountain-growths disease and sorrow,

An uncaught bird is ever hovering, hovering,

High in the purer, happier air.

From imperfection's murkiest cloud,

Darts always forth one ray of perfect light,

One flash of heaven's glory.

To fashion's, custom's discord,

To the mad Babel-din, the deafening orgies,

Soothing each lull a strain is heard, just heard,

From some far shore the final chorus sounding.

All, all for immortality,

Love like the light silently wrapping all,

Nature's amelioration blessing all,

The blossoms, fruits of ages, orchards divine and certain,

Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual images ripening.

Give me O God to sing that thought,

Give me, give him or her I love this quenchless faith,

In Thy ensemble, whatever else withheld withhold not from us,

Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space,

Health, peace, salvation universal.

Is it a dream?

Nay but the lack of it the dream,

And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,

And all the world a dream.

**II*. Nature* by Emerson: Annotations for a Rhetoric Analysis Essay**

**Group Analysis:** Discuss the meaning of the passage, and annotate for the progression of the argument (claim, warrants, strategies/affects)

**Student Independent Written Assignment**: Timed Write Rhetoric Analysis on Friday

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood. When we speak of nature in this manner, we have a distinct but most poetical sense in the mind. We mean the integrity of impression made by manifold natural objects. It is this which distinguishes the stick of timber of the wood-cutter, from the tree of the poet. The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title. To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, — he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me. Not the sun or the summer alone, but every hour and season yields its tribute of delight; for every hour and change corresponds to and authorizes a different state of the mind, from breathless noon to grimmest midnight.. Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear. In the woods too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods, is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, — no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, — master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right.

Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.