Will the Real Johnny Appleseed step forward?

Hoping to learn more about how humans and the apple seed have benefited one another, Michael Pollan sets out to discover the true character of the historical John Chapman behind the Disneyfied folk hero Johnny Appleseed. In a three- to four-page, double-spaced essay examine Pollan’s characterization of John Chapman in an effort to determine Pollan’s attitude toward this mythical figure. What is Pollan’s appraisal of John Chapman and his contribution to our culture?

You will want to write an introductory paragraph in which you introduce the subject of your paper and declare your thesis. Your thesis must be a formal declaration of what you believe Pollan’s final assessment of John Chapman’s character is. Be prepared to substantiate your claim in the following body sections:

- Your first section will discuss Pollan’s comment that Chapman was an “American Dionysus.” Dionysus and Apollo were Greek gods: On the one hand, Apollo was the god of reason and logic, and was considered the god of music since the Greeks thought of good music as a great expression of order and patterns. Dionysus, on the other hand, was the god of wine and revelry, and was worshiped with loud, raucous music accompanied by pipes and drums. In his essay, The Birth of Tragedy, the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche represents them as a dichotomy, as polar opposites on a continuum of emotion. Through numerous readings and misreading of Nietzsche’s text, Apollo has come to represent reason, order, logic, rationality, beauty, clarity, self-control, and perfection, while Dionysus represents chaos, intoxication, instinct, pleasure, passion, excess, and that which is irrational and non-logical. What does Pollan seem to be arguing with regard to this dichotomy of order-chaos, restraint-passion, sobriety-intoxication?

- Your second section will discuss the myth of Johnny Appleseed. How has American folk mythology characterized him? Be sure to cite passages from Pollan’s book to substantiate your argument.

- Your third section should explore who the real man John Chapman was. According to Pollan, what was John Chapman really like and what was his contribution to American agriculture? In this section, you will want to present what you believe Pollan’s final assessment of John Chapman the man.

Your paper will need a conclusion which matches (but does not copy word-for-word) your introduction and thesis.
A few parameters for your paper:

- Your essay must include an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement; supporting body paragraphs; and a conclusion.

- **Do not use first person in writing this essay.** Since this is an expository or analytical paper, you may not use the first-person pronoun “I.” You must write the paper in the third person. For example, avoid any first-person stories or narratives. Don’t use phrases such as “I think,” “I feel,” “It seems to me,” “In my opinion,” or “In this paper, I will show,” none of which are acceptable in formal academic writing.

- Your essay should be typed and double-spaced in Times-New Roman 12 point font with 1-inch margins. Please put your name and the assignment number in the upper left-hand corner of your paper. Please also staple the pages of your paper.

- You may not use any outside sources to write this essay with the exception of our primary source, Michael Pollan’s book, *The Botany of Desire.* (Please don’t even try: I’ve read most of the websites/blogs devoted to both Pollan’s book and the Apollo/Dionysus dichotomy.)

- You must use a minimum of two direct quotations from Pollan’s text.

- Your paper must include a Works Cited Page. You must cite your quotations or paraphrases in MLA (Modern Language Association) format. We will review MLA citation methods in class, but in the meantime, here is a quick overview:

  **MLA (Modern Language Association) Citation Format**

  When writing a paper for English or other humanities class, you must use **MLA Citation Format.** Here is an example of a sentence which uses a quotation from Sarah Vowell.

  After the break-up with her boyfriend, Sarah Vowell realizes that music has become a religion for her. For example, she describes the music of Elvis in an almost mystical way. Vowell writes, “An Elvis song coming out of the radio wasn’t a sign of God to him, it was just another one of those corny pop tunes he could live without” (Vowell 169). Vowell is upset to learn that her boyfriend does not hear Elvis in the same way she does. While for her the song is a sign that fate has brought them together, he hears nothing but a “corny pop tune.”

- When using a **direct quotation**, always do the following:

  1. **Introduce the quotation and explain its context.** Here, for example, the writer introduces the quotations with the phrase “Vowell writes…”
  2. **Briefly explain and analyze the quotation.** Every quotation that you use should be followed by at least two sentences of explanation and analysis. This analysis should explain how the quotation supports the thesis of the paper.
3. **Cite your source.** When using a book with one author, you must include the last name of the author and the page number of the quotation. In this example, the citation is (Vowell 169).

- You must also include a **Works Cited page** with your paper. This page comes after the last page of your paper; it is a separate page all to itself. In this case of this essay, which uses only our primary text and that handout as your source, your Works Cited Page will look like this:

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Works Cited

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