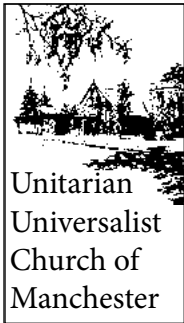


COURSE BOOK FOR



PROGRAMS IN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MANCHESTER
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE | WINTER 2011

F. JAY DEACON, D.MIN.



Unitarian
Universalist
Church of
Manchester



T H E S C H E D U L E

**PART ONE:
THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS**

**SESSION I THURSDAY, JAN. 20, 2011,
7-9 PM**

UNITARIANISM BEFORE EMERSON

You might be surprised! What was “Supernatural Rationalism”? The appearance of a spiritual revolutionary.

SESSION II THURSDAY, JAN. 27, 7-9 PM

“THE NEWNESS”: HARBINGERS OF THE REVOLUTION

An amazing story, and even UUs know little of it.

SESSION III THURSDAY, FEB. 3, 7-9 PM

THE CUTTING EDGE: SYSTEMS SHAKE

The Transcendentalists as leaders of the anti-slavery movement; Emerson, Theodore Parker, and Senator Sumner.

SESSION IV THURSDAY, FEB. 10, 7-9 PM

STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINES/LEGACY

Brook Farm, Walt Whitman, later Transcendentalists and the enduring legacy.

**PART TWO:
INTEGRAL SPIRITUALITY**

SESSION V THURSDAY, FEB. 17, 7-9 PM

A CONTEMPORARY ENLIGHTENMENT

Think the story ended somewhere in the 19th century? Wrong! How the Transcendentalists’ work is extended in the work Ken Wilber, Andrew Cohen, and other pioneers who pursue the Transcendentalist vision — the evolutionary dimension of spirituality.

WEATHER MAKEUP DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

**PART THREE:
EVOLUTIONARY ENLIGHTENMENT WEEKEND**

SESSION VI SAT., FEB. 26, 9AM-12N

WHAT IS EVOLUTIONARY ENLIGHTENMENT?

Presentation, conversation, and Andrew Cohen’s evolutionary/revolutionary approach to spiritual life — presented by Andrew Cohen, via video

SESSION VII SAT, FEB. 26, 1-5 PM

THE UNIVERSE AWAKENING TO ITSELF

THE PRACTICE AND PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

SESSION VIII SAT, FEB. 26, 7-9 PM

BECOMING THE AUTHENTIC SELF

SUNDAY, FEB. 27, 10 A.M.

WORSHIP

Jay Deacon preaches on

Context: The Farthest Reaches of Possibility for Congregational Life — a Higher “We”!

SESSION IX SUNDAY, FEB 27, 12-1:30

Everyone is welcome to this session!

LIVING EVOLUTIONARY ENLIGHTENMENT

WHAT KIND OF CONGREGATION?

THE FARTHEST REACHES OF POSSIBILITY

PART ONE:
THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

SESSION I THUR, JAN. 21, 7-9 PM

UNITARIANISM BEFORE EMERSON

You might be surprised! What was “Supernatural Rationalism”? The appearance of a spiritual revolutionary.

SESSION II
FRIDAY, JAN. 22, 9-12 A.M.

“THE NEWNESS”: HARBINGERS OF THE REVOLUTION

It’s an amazing story, and even UUs know little of it.

SESSION III FRIDAY AFTERNOON 1-5

THE CUTTING EDGE: SYSTEMS SHAKE

The Transcendentalists as leaders of the anti-slavery movement; Emerson, Theodore Parker, and Senator Sumner.

STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINES/LEGACY

Brook Farm, Walt Whitman, later Transcendentalists and the enduring legacy.

PART TWO:
INTEGRAL SPIRITUALITY

SESSION IV FRIDAY EVENING 7-9

A CONTEMPORARY ENLIGHTENMENT

Think the story ending somewhere in the 19th century? Wrong! How the Transcendentalists’ work is extended in the work Ken Wilber, Andrew Cohen, and other pioneers who pursue the Transcendentalist vision — the evolutionary dimension of spirituality.

PART THREE:
EVOLUTIONARY
ENLIGHTENMENT

Readings in Integral Spirituality

ALDOUS HUXLEY. THE PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY. NEW YORK: HARPER & ROW, 1944, VIII-XI.

PHILOSOPHIA PERENNIS — the phrase was coined by Leibniz; but the thing — the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being — the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the Perennial Philosophy may be found among the traditionary lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions. A version of this Highest Common Factor in all preceding and subsequent theologies was first committed to writing more than twenty-five centuries ago, and since that time the inexhaustible theme has been treated again and again, from the standpoint of every religious tradition and in all the principal languages of Asia and Europe. . . .

Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing. For example, the being of a child is transformed by growth and education into that of a man; among the results of this transformation is a revolutionary change in the way of knowing and the amount and character of the things known. As the individual grows up, his knowledge becomes more conceptual and systematic in form, and its factual, utilitarian content is enormously increased. But these gains are offset by a certain deterioration in the quality of immediate apprehension, a blunting and a loss of intuitive power. Or consider the change in his being which the scientist is able to induce mechanically by means of his instruments. . . .

Nor are changes in the knower's psychological or intellectual being the only ones to affect

his knowledge. What we know depends also on what, as moral beings, we choose to make ourselves. "Practice," in the words of William James, "may change our theoretical horizon, and this in a twofold way: it may lead into new worlds and secure new powers. Knowledge we could never attain, remaining what we are, may be attainable in consequences of higher powers and a higher life, which we may morally achieve." To put the matter more succinctly, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And the same idea has been expressed by the Sufi poet, Jalal-uddin Rumi, in terms of a scientific metaphor: "The astrolabe of the mysteries of God is love." . . . The Perennial Philosophy is primarily concerned with the one, divine Reality substantial to the manifold world of things and lives and minds. But the nature of this one Reality is such that it cannot be directly and immediately apprehended except by those who have chosen to fulfill certain conditions, making themselves pure in heart, and poor in spirit. Why should this be so? We do not know. . . . This kind of empirical theology is on precisely the same footing as an empirical astronomy, based upon the experience of naked-eye observers.

KEN WILBER. THE EYE OF SPIRIT 283-86; IN ESSENTIAL KEN WILBER 12-15.

Many people have stern objections to "mysticism" or "transcendentalism" of any sort, because they think it somehow denies this world, or hates this earth, or despises the body and the senses and its vital life, and so on. While that may be true of certain dissociated approaches, it is certainly not the core understanding of the great Nondual mystics

Rather, these sages universally maintain that absolute reality and the relative world are "not-two (which is the meaning of "nondual"), much as a mirror and its reflections are not separate, or an ocean is one with its many waves. So the "other world" of Spirit and "this world" of sepa-

rate phenomena are deeply and profoundly “not-two,” and this nonduality is a direct and immediate realization which occurs in certain meditative states — in other words, seen with the eye of contemplation — although it then becomes a very simple, very ordinary perception, whether you are meditating or not. Every single thing you perceive is the radiance of Spirit itself, so much so, that Spirit is not seen apart from that thing: the robin sings, and just that is it, nothing else. This becomes your constant realization, through all changes of state, very naturally, just so. . . .

This is why Zen calls it the Gateless Gate: on this side of the realization, it looks like you have to do something to enter that state — it looks like you need to pass through a gate. But when you do so, and you turn around and look back, there is no gate whatsoever, and never has been. You have never left this state in the first place, so obviously you can’t enter it. The gateless gate! “Every form is Emptiness just as it is,” means that all things, including you and me, are always already on the other side of the gateless gate.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

“TRANSCENDENTALISM.” A LECTURE BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, DELIVERED AT HORTICULTURE HALL, BOSTON, JAN. 25, 1874. PUBLISHED IN *LECTURES, ESSAYS, AND SERMONS BY SAMUEL JOHNSON WITH A MEMOIR BY SAMUEL LONGFELLOW*. BOSTON: HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY, 1883

By intuition of God we do not mean a theological dogma or a devout sentiment; we do not mean belief in “a God,” Christian or other; but that presumption of the infinite as involved in our perception of the finite, of the whole as implied by the part, of substance behind all phenomena, and of thought as of one nature with its object, which the laws of mind require, and which can be detected, in conscious or unconscious forms, through all epochs and stages of religious belief.

JOHNSON IN A SERMON, PER *LECTURES, ESSAYS, AND SERMONS BY SAMUEL JOHNSON WITH A MEMOIR BY SAMUEL LONGFELLOW*. BOSTON: HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY, 1883, p. 376.

If, then, we cannot see the eternal substance and life of the universe, it is not because Deity is too

far, but because it is too near. . . . [T]he Life, Light, . . . Love, . . . whereby we live . . . , which . . . animates us, is itself the very mystery of our being, and known only as felt and lived.²

WILLIAM JAMES POTTER (1829-1893), “RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE,” PP. 19-20.

William James Potter, who was minister in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Some of the leaders of 19th-century Unitarianism thought Rev. Potter was an unbeliever, and they took his name out of the directory of ministers, along with Theodore Parker; in fact, they declared him a “Parkerite,” which meant something like atheist. But listen to what Potter said:

No definition of religion, I think, will satisfy the philosophy of the subject which does not in some way denote the contact which the finite mind has with the vitalizing and sustaining Energy of the universe. It is not necessary that the definition should embrace the idea of a personal Deity, not necessary that it should attempt the impossible problem, which most theological systems do attempt, of defining the Infinite; but it must, in order to cover all the facts, in some way recognize the Infinite, — in other words, recognize that the human soul is conscious of a life that is not bounded by its material organism nor by any limits which itself can measure, but opens outward into the whole infinity and eternity of things, and is a natural, inherent part of the universal order.

RUMI

We are yearning for something that brings us here: that yearning is like a knocking on a door, and Rumi the Sufi poet wants us to understand something about our yearning, our knocking on the door. He says he was

knocking on a door. It opens.

I’ve been knocking from the inside!

WHAT IS TRANSCENDENTALISM?

AN APPROACH TO TRUTH

From Ken Wilbur, *The Eye of Spirit*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997, 84ff: Three kinds of truth, each of which requires its own *injunctions*, *illuminations*, and *confirmations*.

That is, they require:

Instrumental injunction: if you want to **know this, do this**.

Intuitive apprehension: immediate experience of the domain disclosed by the injunction, a direct experience or data-apprehension, even if the data is mediated, because at the moment of experience it is immediately apprehended. This direct apprehension of the data is brought forth by the particular injunction, whether it be sensory experience, mental experience, or spiritual experience.

Communal confirmation, or rejection. This checking is done with others who have adequately completed the injunctive and apprehensive strands. You don't ask somebody who hasn't gone through the woods if there's a river on the other side of the woods and you don't ask somebody who hasn't meditated about meditating.

Now, the domains:

SENSE | SENSIBILIA

The true (it): science. The sensory domain.

INTELLECT | INTELLIGIBILIA

The good (we): morals. The mental domain.

CONTEMPLATIVE | TRANSCENDELIA

The beautiful (I): contemplation/meditation. The spiritual/transcendental domain.

Wilbur proposes an Integral Philosophy that values and integrates all three domains.

The Transcendentalists demonstrate an integral philosophy *plus* the realization of all three domains, and that is rare. The third domain is what much of UUism sometimes loses; but then, so can orthodoxy, just as severely.

DEFINING TRANSCENDENTALISM

OCTAVIUS BROOKS FROTHINGHAM:

“Transcendentalism was an episode in the intellectual life of New England; an enthusiasm, a wave of sentiment, a breath of mind that caught up such as were prepared to receive it, elated them, transported them, and passed on, — no man knowing whither it went. Its influence on thought and life was immediate and powerful. Religion felt it, literature, laws, institutions. To the social agitations of forty years ago it was invaluable as an inspiration. The various reforms owed everything to it. New England character received from it impetus that never will be spent. It made young men see visions and old men dream dreams. There were mounts of Transfiguration in those days, upon which apostles thought they communed visibly with lawgivers and prophets. They could not stay there always, but the memory will never cease to be glorious. Transcendentalism as a special phase of thought and feeling was of necessity transient — having done its work it terminated its existence. But it did its work, and its work was glorious. Even its failures were necessary as showing what could not be accomplished, and its extravagances as defining the boundaries of wise experiment. Its successes amply

redeemed them all, and would have redeemed them had they been more glaring and grotesque.”¹

¹ Octavius Brooks Frothingham. *Transcendentalism in New England; A History*. New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1886, 356

² Octavius Brooks Frothingham. *Reflections and Impressions, 1822-1890*. New York & London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1891.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

*His article “Transcendentalism,” first printed in the Radical Review for November 1877, was afterwards included in his volume of “Lectures, Sermons, and Essays,” and is credited by O. B. Frothingham with restoring his Transcendentalist convictions.*²

That the name “Transcendentalism” was given, a century ago, to a method in philosophy opposed to the theory of Locke — that all knowledge comes from the senses, — is more widely known than the fact that what this method affirmed or involved is of profound import for all generations. It emphasized Mind as a formative force behind all definable contents or acts of consciousness — as that which makes it possible to speak of anything as *known*. It recognized, as primal condition of knowing, the transmutation of sense-impressions by original laws of mind, whose constructive power is not to be explained or measured by the data of sensation; just as they use the eye or ear to transform unknown spatial notions into the obviously human conceptions which we call color and sound. All this the Lockian system overlooked — a very serious omission, as regards both science and common-sense. . . .

What we conceive these schools to have misprized is the living substance and function of mind itself, conscious of its own energy, productive of its own processes, active even in receiving, giving its own construction to its incomes from the unknown through sense, thus involved in those very contents of time and space which, as historical antecedents, *appear* to create it; mind is obviously the exponent of forces more spontaneous and original than any special product of its own experience. Behind all these products must be that substance in and through which they are produced. . . .

It is certain that knowledge involves not only a sense of union with the nature of that which we know, but a real participation of the knowing faculty therein. When, therefore, I have learned to conceive truths, principles, ideas, or aims which transcend life-times and own no physical limits to their endurance, the aforesaid law of mind associates me with their immortal nature. And this is the indubitable perception or intuition of permanent mind which no experience of impermanence can nullify and no Nirvana excludes.

FROM EMERSON’S “THE TRANSCENDENTALIST”

If there is anything grand and daring in human thought or virtue, any reliance on the vast, the unknown; any presentiment; any extravagance of faith, the spiritualist adopts it as most in nature. The oriental mind has always tended to this largeness. Buddhism is an expression of it. The Buddhist who thanks no man, who says, “do not flatter your benefactors,” but who, in his conviction that every good deed can by no possibility escape its reward, will not deceive the benefactor by pretending that he has done more than he should, is a Transcendentalist.

. . . Transcendentalism is the Saturnalia or excess of Faith; the presentiment of a faith proper to man in his integrity, excessive only when his imperfect obedience hinders the satisfaction of his wish. Nature is transcendental, exists primarily, necessarily, ever works and advances, yet takes no thought for the morrow. Man owns the dignity of the life which throbs around him in chemistry, and tree, and animal, and in the involuntary functions of his own body; yet he is balked when he tries to fling himself into this enchanted circle, where all is done without degradation. Yet genius and virtue predict in man the same absence of private ends, and of condescension to circumstances, united with every trait and talent of beauty and power. . . .

It is well known to most of my audience, that the Idealism of the present day acquired the name Transcendental, from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant, of Konigsberg, who replied to the

skeptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas, or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself; and he denominated them *Transcendental* forms. . . .

Although, as we have said, there is no pure Transcendentalist, yet the tendency to respect the intuitions, and to give them, at least in our creed, all authority over our experience, has deeply colored the conversation and poetry of the present day. . . .

PRE-TRANSCENDENTALIST UNITARIANISM

The Unitarian movement in America began with discontent felt by New England congregationalists toward their traditional Calvinism — according to which, humans are totally depraved, incapable of any good whatever, and fore-ordained by God for either salvation or damnation for reasons unknowable by humans. And Calvinism taught that Jesus was of the same “substance” as God the Father, one of the three persons of the Trinity.

The first Unitarians in Britain and America held a higher view of human beings, and saw Jesus as one of us (or, in some cases, somewhere between humanity and deity). In New England, some had read or met Dr. Joseph Priestley. They began preaching their new views, and eventually such men filled many New England pulpits, especially near Boston. They were, in their way, radical. But in other respects they were like their orthodox brethren, believing in the infallible authority of the Christian Bible, with its miracles, in heaven and usually hell too.

One of the principal founders of the American Unitarian Association was EZRA STILES GANNETT, minister of Federal-Street Church (now Arlington Street Church) in Boston. Dr. Gannett was a few steps from the former Calvinism of New England, but not many. He was prone to the feeling that he had a sinful nature and could feel waves of guilt when he rode on Sunday, and regarding this, Rev. John Parkman told him “that he had his ancestors’ Calvinism in his bones.”⁸

ANDREWS NORTON was early Unitarianism’s chief theologian. He taught at the Divinity School at Harvard and published a theological tome trying to show that the New Testament miracles are the proof of the truth of the Gospel and must be accepted literally.

SAMUEL K. LOTHROP, of the Church in Brattle-Square, was another of the founders. With Norton, he was chiefest among the “Unitarian orthodox,” speaking¹¹ of the “heathen nations” with “their false religions, their idolatry and superstition” which “will pass away before the light of truth and holiness which will . . . radiate from Christian lands.”

Of these stalwarts, THEODORE PARKER ran afoul early with his 1841 sermon, “On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity.”

For the Unitarian Association, it was a perplexing time. Recently come from being viewed with alarm as profoundly heretical and dangerous, they were now quite comfortable in Zion. When the revivalist Lyman Beecher arrived in Boston in 1823 to counter the Unitarian heresy, he complained, “All the literary men of Massachusetts were Unitarian; all the trustees and professors of Harvard College were Unitarian; all the elite of wealth and fashion crowded Unitarian churches; and the judges on the bench were Unitarian.”⁵

They were respectable, educated, and powerful. Their religious view resonated with the philosophy of John Locke and Jeremy Bentham — insisting that we cannot know anything other than via the senses. We cannot know anything directly, intuitively, or inwardly: hence the need for the Bible, as an external authority whose truth we can learn by reading it — *via the senses*. The principal elements of such a religious life were:

logic and reason

strict biblical authority

moral life

This view had a name:

supernatural rationalism

Charles Chauncy, minister of First Church in Boston in the mid-1700s, taught that the biblical writings are authoritative, given to the prophets and apostles under the “Immediate, extraordinary influence and guidance” of God.

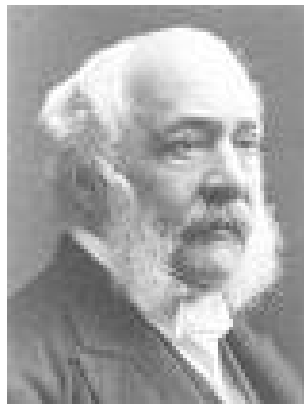
Samuel Clarke, the famous English philosopher taught that human reason is corrupted; therefore “there was a Necessity of some *particular Divine Revelation*, to make the whole Doctrine of Religion *clear* and obvious to all Capacities.”

With these sentiments, the first Unitarians agreed.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING began questioning these assumptions, particularly the view of humans as depraved. His most sublime sermon, “Likeness to God,” is Channing at his most nearly Transcendental. But he continued to hold to biblical infallibility, though he welcomed and encouraged the Transcendentalist view. He was graduated from Harvard in 1803 and took the pulpit at Federal-Street Church, and became the most revered, and influential, figure in the Unitarianism of the period. He was an early inspiration to Emerson, Parker, and others.

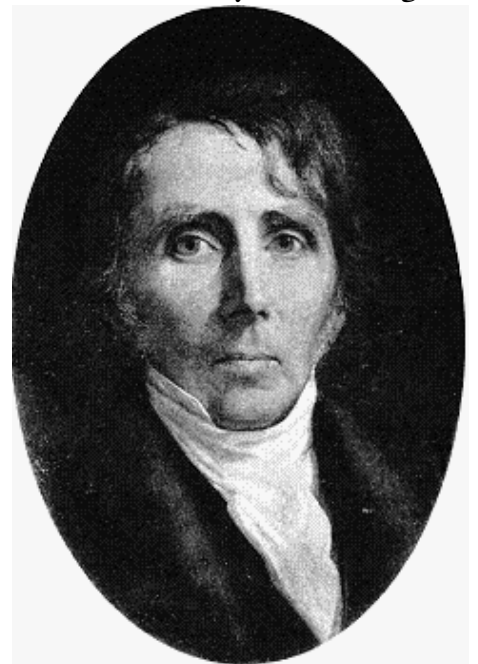


Ezra Stiles Gannett



Samuel Kirkland Lothrop

William Ellery Channing



BACKGROUND

A FEW TERMS . . .

reason	=	insight; the soul itself, which perceives
understanding	=	intellectual argument, comparison, contrivance
self-culture	=	spiritual growth

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

A PARTIAL CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Bronson Alcott

Margaret Fuller

Henry D. Thoreau

Theodore Parker

George Ripley

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody

Frederic Henry Hedge

William Henry Channing

Jones Very

Thomas Wentworth Higginson

Octavius Brooks Frothingham

Samuel Johnson

Christopher Cranch

Walt Whitman



R. Waldo Emerson



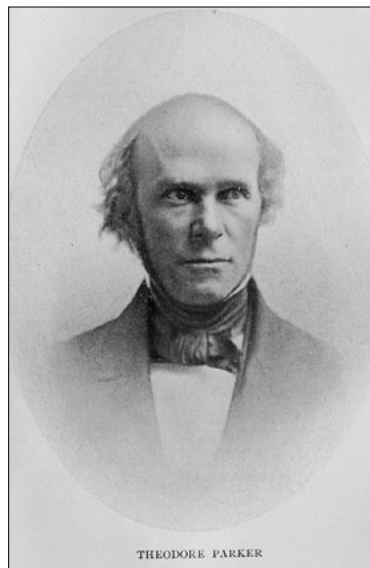
Emerson's Library at Concord
From a photograph in possession of the Emerson family



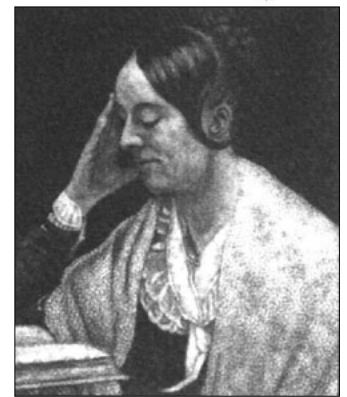
Thomas Wentworth Higginson



Theodore Parker and his
28th Congregational Society at the Music Hall, Boston



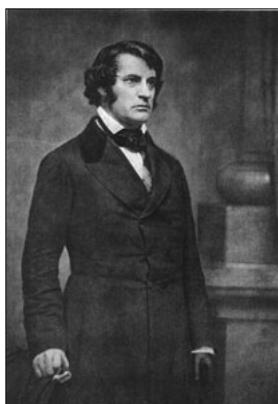
THEODORE PARKER



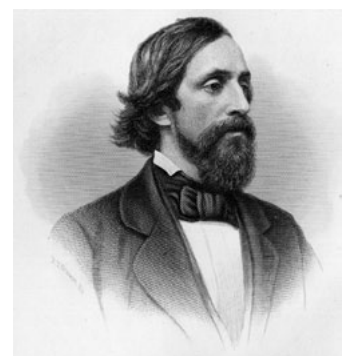
Margaret Fuller



Henry Thoreau



L_R: Senator Charles Sumner;
Moncure Daniel Conway;
Bronson Alcott



Rev. Samuel Johnson

A TIMELINE

	1803		1840
May 25	Emerson born	May 20	John Sullivan Dwight ordained at Northampton
	1805	July	First issue of <i>The Dial</i>
	Harvard comes under Unitarian control	Aug 1	Elizabeth Palmer Peabody opens bookstore-library featuring foreign-language scholarly works, 13 West Street, Boston: Transcendentalist hangout
	1811	Sept 8	Final meeting of Transcendental Club
Jan. 6	Father, Rev. William Emerson, dies; Charles Sumner born		Horace Greeley invites Margaret Fuller to be literary critic for his New-York <i>Tribune</i>
1817	Emerson enters Harvard at 14		
1825	Enters Harvard Divinity School	1841	
1826	Sick; travels south	April	Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education founded
	1828	November	John Sullivan Dwight resigns Northampton pulpit and removes to Brook Farm where he stays to bitter end, 1847
Jan. 11	Second Church votes Emerson junior minister		1842
	1831	Jan. 27	Emerson's son Waldo dies, age 5
Feb 8	Ellen Emerson dies	May	Parker publishes <i>Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion</i>
Mar-May	Emerson presents series of lectures based on critical scholarship regarding the Gospels	Oct. 2	Channing's death after anti-slavery address at Bennington
	1832		1843
March 29	Emerson opens Ellen's grave; ends daily walks there	June	Bronson Alcott founds "Fruitlands"
Sept	Emerson resigns Second Church		1844
Dec 25	Emerson, sick and depressed, sails for Europe	January	Original Brook Farm constitution
	1833		1845
	Emerson marries Lydia(n), buys house in Concord	Feb 16	First service of Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston, in heavy snow
	Emerson, in Europe, meets Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth		Greeley publishes Fuller's <i>Woman in the Nineteenth Century</i>
	1834	May	Brook Farm adopts new Fourierist constitution and becomes Brook Farm Phalanx
	Bronson Alcott opens Temple School in Boston, with Elizabeth Palmer Peabody	June 14	First edition of <i>The Harbinger</i> published at Brook Farm
	1835		1846
Summer	Elizabeth Palmer Peabody publishes <i>Record of a School</i>	March 3	Phalanstery burns down at Brook Farm
December	Channing's book <i>Slavery</i> published		1848
	1836		Margaret Fuller in Italy to cover the Revolution for the <i>Tribune</i>
	Emerson publishes <i>Nature</i>		1849
Sept. 1	Transcendentalist Club's first gathering at Emerson's	Feb. 10	Final edition of <i>The Harbinger</i>
	1838		
July 15	Emerson's Address to the Divinity School, Harvard. He won't be invited back until 1867.		

April 13 Brook Farm sold at auction; it becomes City of Roxbury's almshouse

1850

March 7 Formerly abolitionist Sen. Daniel Webster betrays cause and supports Fugitive Slave Act in hopes of Presidency

July 19 Margaret Fuller's death off Fire Island, while returning from Italy

Sept 18 Fugitive Slave Act becomes Law
Thomas Wentworth Higginson called to "Jerusalem Wildcat" FRA congregation in Worcester

1851

Feb 15 Fugitive slave Shadrack, on trial in Boston, spirited away from trial by antislavery "mob" to Canada

April 24 Charles Sumner goes to Senate representing Massachusetts after President Fillmore appoints Webster Secretary of State

Nov. 4 Moncure Daniel Conway, who has had "conversion" experience in Virginia, writes to Emerson

1852

Western Unitarian Conference founded by Jenkin Lloyd Jones, a radical enclave

Oct 24 Daniel Webster dies at Marshfield, disgraced and bitter

1853

Feb 4 Conway leaves Virginia, forsaking fortune, to join Transcendentalists and attend Harvard Divinity School
Samuel Johnson founds Free Church of Lynn

1854

May Fugitive slave Anthony Burns arrested in Boston

May 30 Over the signature of Franklin Pierce, the Kansas-Nebraska Act became law, repealing the Missouri Compromise, which would have barred slavery from both territories.

July 4 At antislavery rally in Framingham, Garrison burns Constitution, Thoreau makes speech, and Sojourner Truth confronts a Southern man

Autumn Having felt out of place in American Unitarian churches, the radical William Henry Channing becomes minister at large Unitarian church in Liverpool

1855

July 4 Lidian Emerson drapes the gate and fence posts in front of the house with black as a protest against the state of the Union.

Walt Whitman writes, "My ideas were simmering and simmering, and Emerson brought them to a boil," and publishes *Leaves of Grass*, which Emerson praises as the finest piece of literature ever produced in America

1856

May 19-20 Sen. Sumner delivers "Crime Against Kansas" speech
May 22 Senator Charles Sumner savagely beaten in Senate chamber by Southern pro-slavery congressman Preston Brooks. It will take three years to recover from injuries and return to Senate full-time

Sept. 10 Emerson stands with free-soil Yankee settlers. He speaks to Kansas Relief meeting in Cambridge: "The people of Kansas ask for bread, clothes, arms, and men, to save them alive, and enable them to stand against these enemies of the human race," the slaveholders. A systematic war: the national government had for past few years been arming and leading border ruffians against the poor farmers in name of "the Union," "freedom," "Manifest Destiny." Cover-ups for the ugliest of political machinations. Emerson: "They call it attar of rose and lavender. I call it bilge-water."

1857

January Sumner reelected
Franklin Sanborn, Harvard grad, 26, who'd recently established a small school in Concord under Emerson's aegis, is John Brown's local organizer, and he gathers Parker, Clarke, Higginson. Higginson decides to leave Worcester parish to work fulltime against slavery. Brown needed \$30,000
Dred Scott decision from Taney court. Colored people in the United States are not citizens and may not become citizens and had no rights before the law. "The colored man has no rights which the white man is bound to respect."

1858

May Brown lectures in Concord Town Hall, with everybody there. He's going to launch attempt to incite thousands of slaves to rebel. Harper's Ferry is chosen for start of rebellion, and he arrived July 3 at this Virginia town, now in W.Va.
Oct. 16 8 p.m. Raid.
Nov. 2 Brown sentenced to hang. Ailing Parker now is writing from Rome about this. Julia Ward Howe wrote Battle Hymn of the Republic on the second anniversary of Brown's death. *As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free while God is marching on.*
Nov. 18 Emerson speaks at Tremont Temple at time of execution to raise money for Brown's family. There was a death-watch meeting Dec. 2 in Boston, but Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott held their own in Concord. Alcott read the Martyr Service, Thoreau read from poets, and Emerson read from Brown's own words. All over the north church bells tolled; similar services. John Brown's body in black walnut coffin, borne away to Harper's Ferry and taken by train to Philadelphia, New York, and finally home for funeral Dec. 8.
November Jefferson Davis becomes chair of Senate Committee

on Military Affairs. He sends 105,000 muskets from Springfield, Mass. Armory to arm the South in SC, AL, GA, LA, and NC. He is telling Southerners that if new radical Republican Party elects next President, South must secede.

1859

January Parker has violent lung hemorrhage
Octavius Brooks Frothingham organizes Third Unitarian Church in New York. It will become huge FRA affiliate

1860

May 10 George Ripley got a letter from Parker, in Italy: "O George, it is idle to run from Death. I shrank down behind the sugar canes of Santa Cruz, Death was there, too; then I sneaked into a Swiss valley, there he was; and here he is at Rome. I shall come home and meet him on my own dunghill." Instead he died at Florence, 50 years old, and buried in an English cemetery. Emerson is on lecture tour and Darwin's *Origin of Species* appears; he is impatient to see it.
November Senator Sumner comes to Concord to speak and joined Emerson to celebrate the election victory of Abraham Lincoln.

1861

January South Carolina succeeded from the Union and Emerson tried to make an anti-slavery speech in Boston but was drowned out by pro-slavery people.
April 12 bombardment of Fort Sumter; war comes North with the coffins
June 22 William Henry Channing delivers great discourse, "The Civil War in America: or, the Slaveholders' Conspiracy," at Liverpool before returning to the U.S. to serve as Chaplain to the Senate
December Thoreau took a severe cold followed by a kind of bronchitis. Robert Collyer is pained by Thoreau's difficulty speaking. In December Emerson said "I am ever threatened by the decays of Henry T," who had now hung on a whole year.

1862

March 9 Monitor and Merrimack fight to draw; age of wooden sailing warship over
April 6-7 23,000 men die at Shiloh
May 6 Thoreau dies at 44
July Moncure Conway ventures south for daring rescue of his former slaves to freedom in Ohio
Sept 27 Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, effective Jan 1, 1863. Emerson praises proclamation in Oct 12 speech; published in November *Atlantic*.
Now Emersons give permission for son to fight in war, because its purpose is to end slavery
Whitman's nursing sojourn in Washington, 1862-3, coincided with that of Louisa May Alcott! Louisa worked

noon to midnight in hellhole hospital, Union Hotel Hospital and got Typhoid and pneumonia. She awoke from a troubled sleep on Jan. 16 to find Bronson at her bedside, summoned by her supervisor, Dorothea Dix! Mercury treatments ruin her health.

1863

Jan. 1 Huge meeting at Boston's Music Hall to celebrate the first day of Emancipation: Emerson opened program bringing crowd shouting and singing to its feet with his own "Boston Hymn"
May 3 Free Congregational Society of Florence founded on radical and antislavery principals.
Charles Burleigh named first "resident speaker."
September Conway, who has left U.S because of Civil War, becomes minister of South Place Chapel, London

1865

Jan. 13 Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery
Feb. 24-27 Sumner Senate speech "No Reconstruction Without the Votes of the Blacks"
Feb. 5-9 Sumner meets Lincoln at Richmond
April 3 Burleigh and Bronson Alcott (!) elected to represent the Society at the National Convention of Unitarian Churches in New York.
April 7 National Convention of Unitarian Churches opens in New York. Gov. Andrew of Massachusetts occupies chair; program moves with the smoothness of a well-oiled machine. On the second day a proposal for a real Unitarian denomination but the proposed constitution states that its members were disciples of "the Lord Jesus Christ," aimed at driving away the radicals and Transcendentalists and as sop to wealthy conservatives. 335 delegates from 202 congregations hear Transcendentalist position stated by Parker's successor, David Wasson: they object to phrase "Lord Jesus Christ" in the preamble. Declared out of order because Unitarians would not recognize FCSF. Radicals and Transcendentalists leave Unitarian movement.
April 9 Grant accepted Lee's surrender at Appomatox Court House.
April 10 Back in Florence, FCSF votes to reaffirm itself as independent, not associated with Unitarians.
April 14 Lincoln shot; dies next day
April 15 Sumner at deathbed of Lincoln
May 19 Hawthorne dies at 59
May 29 President Johnson issues his plan of Reconstruction giving everything to the former slaveholders and nothing to the former slaves — including the right to vote.
April 6 Senate overrides Pres. Johnson's veto of Sen. Sumner's civil rights bill

June 13 Fourteenth Amendment passes; will be ratified 28 July 1868

1867

May 30 Free Religious Association (FRA) founded in Boston. Emerson and most radicals and Transcendentalists join. Emersons' son Edward a student at Harvard. Emerson is tired, can't do the same kind of creative work, but still traveling reading essays. In 1867 he delivered 80 lectures and made two western trips through 14 states. 29 years after Divinity School Address, Emerson is invited back and put on the Board of Overseers of Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa; asked to deliver annual address at Commencement. Topic: The Progress of Culture. He couldn't see his papers clearly; hadn't realized he needed glasses; got flustered; papers slipped away under his hands on lousy lectern.

1871

Feb-Apr Emerson delivers 17 lectures at Harvard, "Natural History of the Intellect"
Whitman delivers message from Sen. Sumner inviting Emerson to Washington. He goes; speaks to students at Howard University (then called General Howard's Freedman's Institute). He avoids full lecture 'cause his memory is failing.

10 March Republican Party, already gone reactionary, removes Sumner from Foreign Relations Committee

1872

July 23 Emerson house burns
Samuel Johnson publishes *Oriental Religions and their Relation to Universal Religion: India*

1874

Jan 25 Samuel Johnson delivers the finest-ever articulation of "Transcendentalism" in Boston

Jan 27 Sumner Senate address "The Supplementar Civil-Rights Bill: The Last Appeal"

March 11 Charles Sumner dies

1877

Samuel Johnson publishes *Oriental Religions and their Relation to Universal Religion: China*

1881

Journalist Franklin Sanborn takes Whitman to his spacious home in Concord where the delicious autumn weather feeds his nostalgia, and on the evening of the 17th Sanborn's back parlor is filled with locals, including Bronson Alcott and his daughter, Louisa May. They discuss Thoreau, passing around letters that shed new light on him. The aged Emerson was there, looking benign and saying little. Whitman found himself seated next to Louisa May Alcott. Whitman said little too, preferring to sit for two hours and gaze at Emerson's placid face. The next day he attended a dinner at Emerson's house, basking again in his silent presence.

1882

Feb 19 Samuel Johnson dies at North Andover

April 27 Emerson dies at Concord

1885

Samuel Johnson's *Oriental Religions and their Relation to Universal Religion: India* completed and published by Octavius Brooks Frothingham

1897

Free Religious Association (FRA) ceases operation after reconciliation with American Unitarian Association

1906-08

Unity Temple built as a concrete-and-glass embodiment of Emerson's Transcendentalist spiritual vision.

Henry David Thoreau

Walden; or, Life in the Woods

2. Where I Lived, and What I Lived for

At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it — took everything but a deed of it — took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk — cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat? — better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow, perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms — the refusal was all I wanted — but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife — every man has such a wife — changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,

“I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute.”(1)

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being, about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, nawned by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas,(2) to take the world on my shoulders — I never heard what compensation he received for that — and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted, if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale — I have always cultivated a garden — was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato,(3) whose “De Re Rusticâ” is my “Cultivator,” says — and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage — “When you think of getting a farm turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the

more it will please you, if it is good.” I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.



The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length, for convenience putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus (4) is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It

was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa (5) says, "An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those smaller and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager — the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip-poor-will, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain-storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being, shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From

a hill-top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of interverting water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon" — said Damodara,(6) when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system,

behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran (7) or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted, —

“There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by.”(8)

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora (9) as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraved on the bathing tub of King Tching Thang (10) to this effect: “Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.” I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey (11) in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired

force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air — to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas (12) say, “All intelligences awake with the morning.” Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon,(13) are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day,

that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.”(14)

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five;

and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy,(15) made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan (16) simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers,(17) and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow. As for *work*,

we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance,(18) and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire — or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe" — and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River;(19) never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life — I wrote this some years ago — that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter — we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad

instances and applications? To a philosopher all news, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure — news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelve-month, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada,(20) from time to time in the right proportions — they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers — and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! "Kieou-he-yu (21) (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot accomplish it.. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!" The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week — for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one — with this one other draggel-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice, "Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly

slow?”

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that “there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a fosterer, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul,” continues the Hindoo philosopher, “from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*.”(22) I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the “Mill-dam” go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system,

behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry — determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses.(23) If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*,(24) below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer,(25) but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you

stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the

first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

Notes — more information

1. William Cowper (1731-1800) English poet, hymnist, *The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk* (italics added by Thoreau - a surveyor)
2. in Greek mythology Atlas supported the heavens on his shoulders
3. Marcus Porcius Cato (234-149 B.C.) Roman agricultural author
4. in Greek mythology, home of the gods
5. 5th century Hindu epic poem
6. another name for the Hindu god Krishna
7. Cassiopeia's Chair, Pleiades, and Hyades are constellations
8. anonymous, published 1610
9. in Roman mythology, the goddess of dawn
10. another name for Confucius
11. Iliad and Odyssey, attributed to Homer, 8th cent. B.C. Greek epic poet
12. Brahmin religious books
13. statue in ancient Egypt said to produce music at dawn
14. Westminster Catechism
15. group of European states, 1815-1866
16. like the Spartans of ancient Greece, disciplined, austere
17. wooden railroad ties that support the rails
18. chorea, a nervous disorder characterized by involuntary movements
19. river in Arkansas and Louisiana
20. relating to Spanish & Portuguese politics, 1830's & 1840's
21. character in a book by Confucius
22. Brahma, Hindu god of creation
23. Roman name for Odysseus, character in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey
24. a point of support
25. gauge used to measure the rise of the Nile

QUESTIONS PROMPTED BY:
Henry Thoreau, Walden
Conversation questions for chapter two
WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR

- § Where do you feel most at home? How would you describe the experience of being grounded and centered? Might any spot be a place for a home?
- § Thoreau aims to wake his neighbors up. He thinks we spend the greater part of our lives asleep. Can you relate to that? Do you think you've been sleeping?
- § Do you feel any inward aspiration to live a higher life? What would that mean for you? And how would you go about it?
- § Do you think people's attitude affect "the quality of the day?" Does yours? How so? How might you change your attitude?
- § What does it mean to live deliberately? Do you think that you have ever done so? When, and under what circumstances?
- § How might you go about simplifying your life? Have you ever tried to do so? Was it hard?
- § Thoreau is convinced that we are to a great extent deluded by appearances. How would you describe these appearances as they might characterize some aspect of your life? What is reality for you, and what is illusory?
- § How do we wake ourselves up? What might we do? Would you say that you have ever been fully awake? When, and under what circumstances? How would you describe the experience? What difference, if any, has it made in your life?

THOREAU ON MEDITATION: FROM THE BEGINNING OF CHAPTER 4

There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hand. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, on a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sit in my sunny door way from sunrise till noon . . . amidst the pines and hickories and sumacs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in my west window, or the noise of some traveler's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in these seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowed. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

An Address delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College, 1838

In this refulgent summer, it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm-of-Gilead, and the new hay. Night brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays. Man under them seems a young child, and his huge globe a toy. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes again for the crimson dawn. The mystery of nature was never displayed more happily. The corn and the wine have been freely dealt to all creatures, and the never-broken silence with which the old bounty goes forward, has not yielded yet one word of explanation. One is constrained to respect the perfection of this world, in which our senses converse. How wide; how rich; what invitation from every property it gives to every faculty of man! In its fruitful soils, in its navigable sea; in its mountains of metal and stone; in its forests of all woods; in its animals; in its chemical ingredients; in the powers and path of light, heat, attraction, and life . . .

But when the mind opens, and reveals the laws which traverse the universe, and make things what they are, then shrinks the great world at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind. What am I? and What is? asks the human spirit with a curiosity new-kindled, but never to be quenched. Behold these outrunning laws, which our imperfect apprehension can see tend this way and that, but not come full circle. Behold these infinite relations, so like, so unlike; many, yet one. I would study, I would know, I would admire forever.

These works of thought have been the entertainments of the human spirit in all ages.

A more secret, sweet, and overpowering beauty

appears to man when his heart and mind open to the sentiment of virtue. Then he is instructed in what is above him. He learns that his being is without bound; that, to the good, to the perfect, he is born, low as he now lies in evil and weakness. That which he venerates is still his own, though he has not realized it yet. *He ought*. He knows the sense of that grand word, though his analysis fails entirely to render account of it. When in innocency, or when by intellectual perception, he attains to say,—‘I love the Right; Truth is beautiful within me: thee will I serve, day and night in great, in small, that I may not be virtuous, but virtue;’—then is the end of the creation answered, and God is well pleased.

The sentiment of virtue is a reverence and delight in the presence of certain divine laws. It perceives that this homely game of life we play, covers, under what seem foolish details, principles that astonish. The child amidst his baubles, is learning the action of light, motion, gravity, muscular force; and in the game of human life, love, fear, justice, appetite, man, and God, interact. These laws refuse to be adequately stated. They will not be written out on paper, or spoken by the tongue. They elude our persevering thought; yet we read them hourly in each other’s faces, in each other’s actions, in our own remorse. The moral traits which are all globed into every virtuous act and thought,—in speech, we must sever, and describe or suggest by painful enumeration of many particulars. Yet, as this sentiment is the essence of all religion, let me guide your eye to the precise objects of the sentiment, by an enumeration of some of those classes of facts in which this element is conspicuous.

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time,

out of space, and not subject to circumstance. Thus; in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed, is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed, is by the action itself contracted. He who puts off impurity, thereby puts on purity. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice. If a man dissemble, deceive, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own being. A man in the view of absolute goodness, adores, with total humility. Every step so downward, is a step upward. The man who renounces himself, comes to himself.

See how this rapid intrinsic energy worketh everywhere righting wrongs, correcting appearances, and bringing up facts to a harmony with thoughts. Its operation in life, though slow in the senses, is, at last, as sure as in the soul. By it, a man is made the Providence to himself, dispensing good to his goodness, and evil to his sin. Character is always known. Thefts never enrich; alms never impoverish; murder will speak out of stone walls. The least admixture of a lie,—for example, the taint of vanity, the least attempt to make a good impression, a favorable appearance,—will instantly vitiate the effect. But speak the truth, and all nature and all spirits help you with unexpected furtherance. Speak the truth, and all things alive or brute are vouchers, and the very roots of the grass underground there, do seem to stir and move to bear you witness. . . .

These facts have always suggested to man the sublime creed, that the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will, of one mind; and that one mind is everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool; and whatever opposes that will, is everywhere balked and baffled, because things are made so, and not otherwise. Good is positive. Evil is merely privative, not absolute: it is like cold, which is the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or nonentity. Benevolence is absolute and real. So much benevolence as a man hath, so much life hath he. For all things proceed out of this same spirit, which is differently named love, justice, temperance, in its different applications, just as the ocean receives different names on the several shores which it

washes. All things proceed out of the same spirit, and all things conspire with it. Whilst a man seeks good ends, he is strong by the whole strength of nature. In so far as he roves from these ends, he bereaves himself of power, of auxiliaries; his being shrinks out of all remote channels, he becomes less and less, a mote, a point, until absolute badness is absolute death.

The perception of this law of laws awakens in the mind a sentiment which we call the religious sentiment, and which makes our highest happiness. Wonderful is its power to charm or to command. It is a mountain air. It is the embalmer of the world. It is myrrh and storax, and chlorine and rosemary. It makes the sky and the hills sublime, and the silent song of the stars is it. By it, is the universe made safe and habitable, not by science or power. Thought may work cold and intransitive in things, and find no end or unity; but the dawn of that Law is sovereign over all natures; and the worlds, time, space, eternity do seem to break out into joy.

This sentiment is divine and deifying. It is the beatitude of man. It makes him illimitable. Through it, the soul first knows itself. It corrects the capital mistake of the infant man, who seeks to be great by following the great, and hopes to derive advantages *from another*;—by showing the fountain of all good to be in himself, and that he, equally with every man, is an inlet into the deeps of Reason. When he says, “I ought;” when love warms him; when he chooses, warned from on high, the good and great deed; then, deep melodies wander through his soul from Supreme Wisdom. Then he can worship, and be enlarged by his worship; for he can never go behind this sentiment. In the sublimest flights of the soul, rectitude is never surmounted, love is never outgrown.

This sentiment lies at the foundation of society, and successively creates all forms of worship. The principle of veneration never dies out. Man fallen into superstition, into sensuality, is never quite without the visions of the moral sentiment. In like manner, all the expressions of this sentiment are sacred and permanent in proportion to their purity. The expression of this sentiment affect us more than all other compositions. The sentences of the oldest time, which ejaculate this piety, are

still fresh and fragrant. This thought dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East; not alone in Palestine, where it reached its purest expression, but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China. Europe has always owed to oriental genius, its divine impulses. What these holy bards said, all sane men found agreeable and true. And the unique impression of Jesus upon mankind, whose name is not so much written as ploughed into the history of this world, is proof of the subtle virtue of this infusion.

Meantime, whilst the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition; this, namely; it is an intuition. It cannot be received at second hand. Truly speaking, it is not instruction, but provocation, that I can receive from another soul. What he announces, I must find true in me, or wholly reject; and on his word, or as his second, be he who he may, I can accept nothing. On the contrary, the absence of this primary faith is the presence of degradation. As is the flood so is the ebb. Let this faith depart, and the very words it spake, and the things it made, become false and hurtful. Then falls the church, the state, art, letters, life. The doctrine of the divine nature being forgotten, a sickness infects and dwarfs the constitution. Once man was all; now he is an appendage, a nuisance. And because the indwelling Supreme Spirit cannot wholly be got rid of, the doctrine of it suffers this perversion, that the divine nature is attributed to one or two persons, and denied to all the rest, and denied with fury. The doctrine of inspiration is lost; the base doctrine of the majority of voices, usurps the place of the doctrine of the soul. Miracles, prophecy, poetry; the ideal life, the holy life, exist as ancient history merely; they are not in the belief, nor in the aspiration of society; but, when suggested, seem ridiculous. Life is comic or pitiful, as soon as the high ends of being fade out of sight, and man becomes near-sighted, and can only attend to what addresses the senses.

These general views, which, whilst they are general, none will contest, find abundant illustration in the history of religion, and especially in the history of the Christian church. In that, all of us have had our birth and nurture. The truth contained in that, you, my young friends, are now

setting forth to teach. As the Cultus, or established worship of the civilized world, it has great historical interest for us. Of its blessed words, which have been the consolation of humanity, you need not that I should speak. I shall endeavor to discharge my duty to you, on this occasion, by pointing out two errors of its administration, which daily appear more gross from the point of view we have just now taken.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history, he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his World. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, "I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or, see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." But what a distortion did his doctrine and memory suffer in the same, in the next, and the following ages! There is no doctrine of the Reason* which will bear to be taught by the Understanding**. The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said, in the next age, "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you, if you say he was a man." The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric, have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity became a mythus, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt, before. He spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was a miracle, and all that man doth, and he knew that this his daily miracle shines, as the character ascends. But the word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is a Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain.

He felt respect for Moses and the prophets; but no unfit tenderness at postponing their initial revelations, to the hour and the man that now is; to the eternal revelation in the heart. Thus was he a true man. Having seen that the law in us is commanding, he would not suffer it to be commanded. Boldly, with hand, and heart, and life, he declared it was God. Thus is he, as I think, the only soul in

history who has appreciated the worth of a man.

1. In this point of view we become very sensible of the first defect of historical Christianity. Historical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion. As it appears to us, and as it has appeared for ages, it is not the doctrine of the soul, but an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus. The soul knows no persons. It invites every man to expand to the full circle of the universe, and will have no preferences but those of spontaneous love. But by this eastern monarchy of a Christianity, which indolence and fear have built, the friend of man is made the injurer of man. The manner in which his name is surrounded with expressions, which were once salutes of admiration and love, but are now petrified into official titles, kills all generous sympathy and liking. All who hear me, feel, that the language that describes Christ to Europe and America, is not the style of friendship and enthusiasm to a good and noble heart, but is appropriated and formal,—paints a demigod, as the Orientals or the Greeks would describe Osiris or Apollo. . . . You shall not own the world; you shall not dare, and live after the infinite Law that is in you, and in company with the infinite Beauty which heaven and earth reflect to you in all lovely forms; but you must subordinate your nature to Christ's nature; you must accept our interpretations; and take his portrait as the vulgar draw it.

That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine, Obey thyself. That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen. . . .

The divine bards are the friends of my virtue, of my intellect, of my strength. They admonish me, that the gleams which flash across my mind, are not mine, but God's; that they had the like, and were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. So I love them. Noble provocations go out from them, inviting me to resist evil; to subdue the world; and to Be. And thus by his holy thoughts, Jesus serves us, and thus only. To aim to convert a man by miracles, is a profanation of the soul. A true conversion, a true Christ, is now, as always, to be

made, by the reception of beautiful sentiments. It is true that a great and rich soul, like his, falling among the simple, does so preponderate, that, as his did, it names the world. The world seems to them to exist for him, and they have not yet drunk so deeply of his sense, as to see that only by coming again to themselves, or to God in themselves, can they grow forevermore. . . . The time is coming, when all men will see, that the gift of God to the soul is not a vaunting, overpowering, excluding sanctity, but a sweet, natural goodness, a goodness like thine and mine, and that so invites thine and mine to be and to grow.

The injustice of the vulgar tone of preaching is not less flagrant to Jesus, than to the souls which it profanes. . . .

2. The second defect of the traditionary and limited way of using the mind of Christ is a consequence of the first; this, namely; that the Moral Nature, that Law of laws, whose revelations introduce greatness,—yes, God himself, into the open soul, is not explored as the fountain of the established teaching in society. Men have come to speak of the revelation as something long ago given and done, as if God were dead. The injury to faith throttles the preacher; and the goodliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice.

It is very certain that it is the effect of conversation with the beauty of the soul, to beget a desire and need to impart to others the same knowledge and love. If utterance is denied, the thought lies like a burden on the man. Always the seer is a sayer. Somehow his dream is told: somehow he publishes it with solemn joy: sometimes with pencil on canvas; or sometimes with chisel on stone; sometimes in towers and aisles of granite, his soul's worship is builded; sometimes in anthems of indefinite music; but clearest and most permanent, in words.

The man enamored of this excellency, becomes its priest or its poet. . . . But observe the condition, the spiritual limitation of the office. The spirit only can teach. Not any profane man, not any sensual, not any liar, not any slave can teach, but only he can give, who has; he only can create, who is. The man on whom the soul descends, through whom the soul speaks, alone can teach. Courage,

piety, love, wisdom, can teach; and every man can open his door to these angels, and they shall bring him the gift of tongues. But the man who aims to speak as books enable, as synods use, as the fashion guides, and as interest commands, babbles.

Let him hush.

To this holy office, you propose to devote yourselves. I wish you may feel your call in throbs of desire and hope. . . . And it is my duty to say to you, that the need was never greater of new revelation than now. From the views I have already expressed, you will infer the sad conviction, which I share, I believe, with numbers of the universal decay and now almost death of faith in society. The soul is not preached. The Church seem to totter to its fall, almost all life extinct. On this occasion, any complaisance would be criminal, which told you, whose hope and commission it is to preach the faith of Christ, that the faith of Christ is preached.

It is time that this ill-suppressed murmur of all thoughtful men against the famine of our churches; this moaning of the heart because it is bereaved of the consolation, the hope, the grandeur, that come alone out of the culture of the moral nature; should be heard through the sleep of indolence, and over the din of routine. This great and perpetual office of the preacher is not discharged. Preaching is the expression of the moral sentiment in application to the duties of life. In how many churches, by how many prophets, tell me, is man made sensible that he is an infinite Soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; that he is drinking forever the soul of God? Where now sounds the persuasion, that by its very melody imparadises my heart, and so affirms its own origin in heaven? Where shall I hear words such as in elder ages drew men to leave all and follow,—father and mother, house and land, wife and child? Where shall I hear these august laws and moral being so pronounced, as to fill my ear, and I feel ennobled by the offer of my uttermost action and passion? The test of the true faith, certainly, should be its power to charm and command the soul, as the laws of nature control the activity of the hands,—so commanding that we find pleasure and honor in obeying. The faith should blend with the light of rising and of setting suns, with the flying cloud, the singing bird, and the breath

of flowers. But now the priest's Sabbath has lost the splendor of nature; it is unlovely; we are glad when it is done; we can make, we do make, even sitting in our pews, a far better, holier, sweeter, for ourselves.

. . . I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say, I would go to church no more. Men go, thought I, where they are wont to go, else had no soul entered the temple . . . A snow storm was falling around us. The snow storm was real; the preacher merely spectral; and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him, into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned. Not one fact in all his experience, had he yet imported into his doctrine. . . . The true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life,—life passed through the fire of thought. . . . It seemed strange that the people should come to church. It seemed as if their houses were very unentertaining, that they should prefer this thoughtless clamor. It shows that there is a commanding attraction in the moral sentiment, that can lend a faint tint of light to dulness and ignorance, coming in its name and place. The good hearer is sure he has been touched sometimes; is sure there is somewhat to be reached, and some word that can reach it. . . .

I am not ignorant that when we preach unworthily, it is not always quite in vain. There is a good ear, in some men, that draws supplies to virtue out of very indifferent nutriment. . . . The prayers and even the dogmas of our church, are like the zodiac of Denderah . . . wholly insulated from anything now extant in the life and business of the people. They mark the height to which the waters once rose. . . . Alas for the unhappy man that is called to stand in the pulpit, and *not* give the bread of life. . . . Would he ask contributions for the missions, foreign or domestic? Instantly his face is suffused with shame, to propose to his parish, that they should send money a hundred or a thousand miles, to furnish such poor fare as they have at home, and would do well to go the hundred or the

thousand miles to escape. . . .

[The Puritan and Catholic faiths are] passing away, and none arises in its room. . . .

And now, my brothers, you will ask, What in these desponding days can be done by us? The remedy is already declared in the ground of our complaint of the Church. We have contrasted the Church with the Soul. In the soul, then, let the redemption be sought. When a man comes, there comes revolution. The old is for slaves. When a man comes, all books are legible, all things transparent, all religions are forms. He is religious. Man is the wonderworker. . . . The stationariness of religion; the assumption that the age of inspiration is past, that the Bible is closed; the fear of degrading the character of Jesus by representing him as a man; indicate with sufficient clearness the falsehood of our theology. It is the office of the true teacher to show us that God is, not was; that He speaketh, not spake. . . .

Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil. Friends enough you shall find who will hold up to your emulation Wesleys and Oberlins, Saints and Prophets. Thank God for these good men, but say, 'I am also a man.' Imitation cannot go above its model. The imitator dooms himself to hopeless mediocrity. The inventor did it, because it was natural to him, and so in him it has a charm. In the imitator, something else is natural, and he bereaves himself of his own beauty, to come short of another man's. Yourself a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost,—cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity. Look to it first and only, that fashion, custom, authority, pleasure, and money are nothing to you,—are not bandages over your eyes, that you cannot see,—but live with the privilege of the immeasurable mind. Not too anxious to visit periodically all families and each family in your parish connection,—when you meet one of these men or women, be to them a divine man; be to them thought and virtue; let their timid aspirations find in you a friend; let their trampled instincts be genially tempted out in your atmosphere; let their doubts know that you have doubted, and their wonder feel that you have won-

dered. By trusting your own heart, you shall gain more confidence in other men. . . . It is not to be doubted, that all men have sublime thoughts; that all men value a few real hours of life; they love to be heard; they love to be caught up into the vision of principles. We mark with light in the memory the few interviews we have had, in the dreary years of routine and of sin, with souls that made our souls wiser; that spoke what we thought; that told us what we knew; that gave us leave to be what we inly were. Discharge to men the priestly office, and, present or absent, you shall be followed with their love as by an angel.

And, to this end, let us not aim at common degrees of merit. Can we not leave, to such as love it, the virtue that glitters for the commendation of society, and ourselves pierce the deep solitudes of absolute ability and worth? We easily come up to the standard of goodness in society. Society's praise can be cheaply secured, and almost all men are content with those easy merits; but the instant effect of conversing with God, will be, to put them away. There are persons who are not actors, not speakers, but influences; persons too great for fame . . .

And now let us do what we can to rekindle the smouldering, nigh quenched fire on the altar. The evils of the church that now is are manifest. The question returns, What shall we do? . . . The remedy to their deformity is, first, soul, and second, soul, and evermore, soul. . . . What hinders that now, everywhere, in pulpits, in lecture-rooms, in houses, in fields, wherever the invitation of men or your own occasions lead you, you speak the very truth, as your life and conscience teach it, and cheer the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and new revelation?

PRIMARY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Margaret Fuller

When Margaret Fuller was 21, she had a powerful primary religious experience. One sees “conversion” and “mystical experience” in this, and the parallels to Emerson’s reports in Nature strike one. It is Thanksgiving Day 1831. Richardson’s description follows:

The experience occurred on Thanksgiving Day, 1831, after a church service, which she disliked, she said, “from a feeling of disunion with the hearers and dissent from the preacher.” In a mood of childlike sadness, she says, “I felt within myself a great power, and generosity and tenderness; but it seemed to me as if they were all unrecognized. . . . I was only one and twenty; the past was worthless, the future hopeless.” She went walking out over the fields.

“It was a sad and sallow day of the late autumn. Slow processions of sad clouds were passing over a cold blue sky; the hues of earth were dull, and gray, and brown, with sickly struggles of late green here and there: sometimes a moaning gust of wind drove late, reluctant leaves across the path—there was no life else.”

She stopped beside a stream. “It was shrunken, voiceless, choked with withered leaves.” She sat down, thinking of nothing; “all was dark, and cold, and still. Suddenly the sun shone out with that transparent sweetness, like the last smile of a dying lover.” At that moment, she says, there “passed into my thought a beam from its true sun . . . which has never since departed from me.” This was a moment of self-elevation, a moment that showed her not only who she was but in what relation she stood to the world. “How is it that I seem to be this Margaret Fuller? What does it mean? What shall I do about it? . . . I saw how long it must be before the soul can learn to act under the limitations of time and space, and human nature; but I saw also that it *must* do it.” Like Emerson’s moment standing on the bare hillside, Fuller’s moment of self-affirmation was accompanied at once by a sense that one is not an isolate self but a part of a central, all-pervading consciousness. “I saw,” she goes on, in her Ecclesiastes’ like way, “that there was no self: that selfishness was all folly, and the result of circumstance;

that it was only because I thought self real that I suffered; that I had only to live in the idea of the all, and all was mine. This truth came to me, and I received it unhesitatingly; so that I was for that hour taken up into God. In that true ray most of the relations of earth seemed mere films, phenomena.”

Source: *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, ed. R. W. Emerson, W. H. Channing, and J. F. Clarke, 2 vols. (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1852), 131-41.

Margaret Fuller’s own commentary on the experience:

I have passed down from the rosy mountain, now, but I do not forget its pure air, nor how the storms looked as they passed beneath my feet. I have received my assurance, and if the shadows should lie upon me for a century, they should never make me forgetful of the true hour.

Emerson

From Robert D. Richardson Jr. *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (University of California Press, 1995, 237f.

R.W.E. went to New Bedford in November 1833, a month after his return from Europe,

and met the New Light Quakers who had been voted out of the Quaker meeting and were uniting with the Unitarian Church. Among these was Mary Rotch. He returned home in April 1834 and, sitting in a sunny hollow at Mt. Auburn in Cambridge:

“I opened my eyes and let what would pass through them into the soul. I saw no more my relation how near and petty to Cambridge or Boston, I heeded no more what minute or hour our Massachusetts clocks might indicate—I saw only the noble earth on which I was born, with the great star which warms and enlightens it. I saw the clouds . . . It was Day, that was all Heaven said. The pines glittered with their innumerable green needles in the light and seemed to challenge me to read their riddle. The drab oak leaves of the last year turned their little somersaults and lay still again. And the wind bustled high overhead in the forest top.”

JMN (Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. William H. Oilman et al. 16 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-82. 14:273.

And he describes it again in his first book, *Nature*, which is a kind of manifesto of Transcendentalism:

“Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blythe air and uplifted

into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God.”

Emerson’s own commentary on the experience:

“The worst feature of this double consciousness is that the two lives, of the understanding and of the soul, which we lead, really show very little relation to each other: one prevails then, all infinitude and paradise; and with the progress of life, the two discover no greater disposition to reconcile themselves. . . . Presently the clouds shut down again; yet we retain the belief that this petty web we weave will at last be overshot and reticulated with veins of blue, and that the moments will characterize the days.”

Henry David Thoreau

I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway

from sunrise till noon, rapt in a reverie, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller’s wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of singing like the birds, I silently smiled at my incessant good fortune. As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so had I my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest. My days were not days of the week, bearing the stamp of any heathen deity, nor were they minced into hours and fretted by the ticking of a clock . . .

—*Walden*, chapter 4

I can remember how I was astonished. I said to myself, I said to others, "There comes into my mind such an indescribable, infinite, all-absorbing, divine heavenly pleasure, a sense of elevation and expansion, and I have naught to do with it. I perceive that I am dealt with by superior powers. This is a pleasure, a joy, an existence which I have not procured myself. I speak as a witness on a stand, and tell what I have perceived.

—*from his Journals*

Thoreau's own commentary on his experience:

Our ecstatic states, which appear to yield so little fruit, have this value at least: though in seasons when our genius reigns we may be powerless for expression, yet, in calmer season, when our talent is active, the memory of those rarer moods come to color our picture and is

the permanent paint-pot, as it were, into which we dip our brush . . . Our moments of inspiration are not lost though we have no particular poem to show for them; for those experiences have left an indelible impression, and we are ever and anon reminded of them. Their truth subsides, and in cooler moments we can use them as paint to gild and adorn our prose.

—*from his Journals*

Carlyle

From Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 2.vi. *The Carlyle Reader*, ed. G. B. Tennyson (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 230f.

The "conversion" or "spiritual rebirth" he speaks of in Sartor is described in this third-person "autobiography" and must refer to an experience in Leith Walk in Edinburgh in 1822. A second transformative experience turns up in chapters vii and ix, but it flows out of this first.

A hundred and a hundred savage peaks, in the last light of Day; all glowing, of gold and amethyst, like giant spirits of the wilderness; there in their silence, in their solitude, even as on the night when Noah's Deluge first dried! Beautiful, nay solemn, was the sudden aspect to our Wanderer. He gazed over those stupendous masses with wonder, almost with longing desire; never till this hour had he known Nature, that she was One, that she was his Mother and divine. And as the ruddy glow was fading into clearness in the sky, and the Sun had now departed, a murmur of Eternity and Immensity, of Death and of Life, stole through his soul; and he felt as if Death and Life were one, as if the Earth were not dead, as if the Spirit of the Earth had its throne in that splendour, and his own spirit were therewith holding communion.

KEN WILBER'S SPECTRUM OF CONSCIOUSNESS



REALM I: PRE-RATIONAL OR UNCONSCIOUS

ARCHAIC. Material body, sensations, perceptions, emotions. Piaget's sensorimotor intelligence; or Maslow's physiological needs.

MAGIC. Simple images, symbols, first rudimentary concepts. These first and lowest mental productions are "magical" because they display condensation, displacement, "omnipotence of thought," etc. Freud's primary process; Piaget's preoperational thinking. Correlates with Lawrence Kohlberg's preconventional morality.

BOUNDARY: BETWEEN REALMS I AND II

MYTHIC. More advanced than magic but you're not yet capable of clear rationality, or of hypothetical-deductive reasoning. Piaget's concrete operational thinking; correlates with Loevinger's conformist and conscientious-conformist stages; Maslow's belongingness needs; Kohlberg's conventional stages.

REALM II: RATIONAL OR SELF-CONSCIOUS

RATIONAL. Piaget's formal operational thinking, propositional or hypothetico-deductive reasoning. Loevinger's conscientious and individualistic stages; Kohlberg's post-conventional Morality; Maslow's self-esteem needs.

BOUNDARY: BETWEEN REALMS II AND III

PSYCHIC. Realm of the Psyche. Its cognitive structure is called "vision logic" or integrative logic; Loevinger's integrated and autonomous stages; Maslow's self-actualization needs.

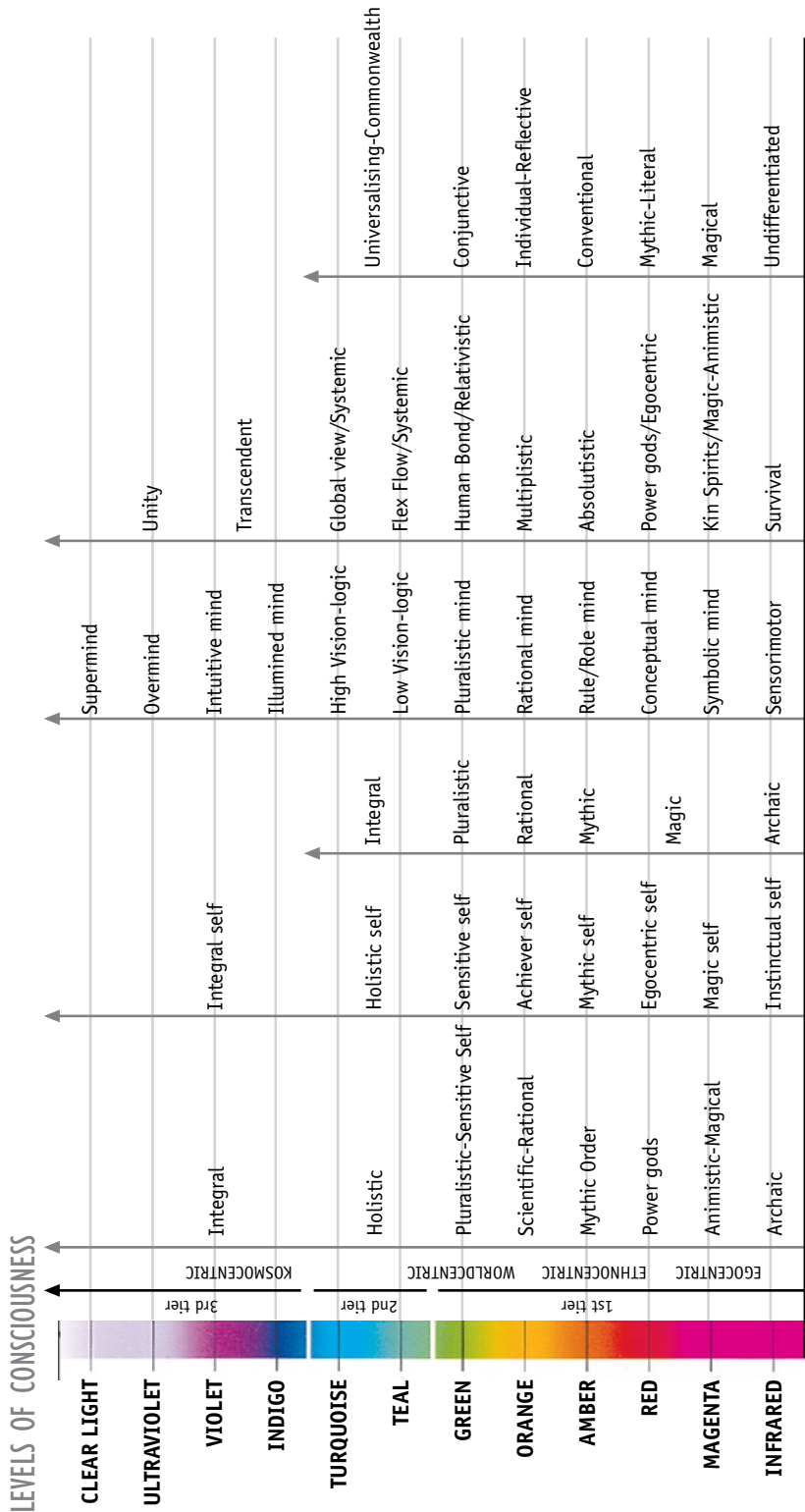
REALM III: TRANS-RATIONAL OR SUPERCONSCIOUS

SUBTLE. The archetypal level, Aurobindo's "illuminated mind." Truly transrational, not pre-rational or anti-rational structure. Intuition in its highest and most sober sense. Home of Platonic forms. Start of Maslow's self-transcendence needs.

CAUSAL. "Spirit" in the highest sense; Tillich's "Ground of Being."

EVOLVING WORLDVIEWS, EXPANDING SELF

Although the spectrum of consciousness includes twelve colors to denote twelve specific levels, stages, structures, or waves of development, for ease of explanation Wilber often uses a simpler, three- or four- level scheme pioneered by developmental psychologists like Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan. Tracing the most general contours of psychological growth, this scheme highlights the fact that increasing consciousness corresponds to a broadening of and an expansion of one's sense of self.



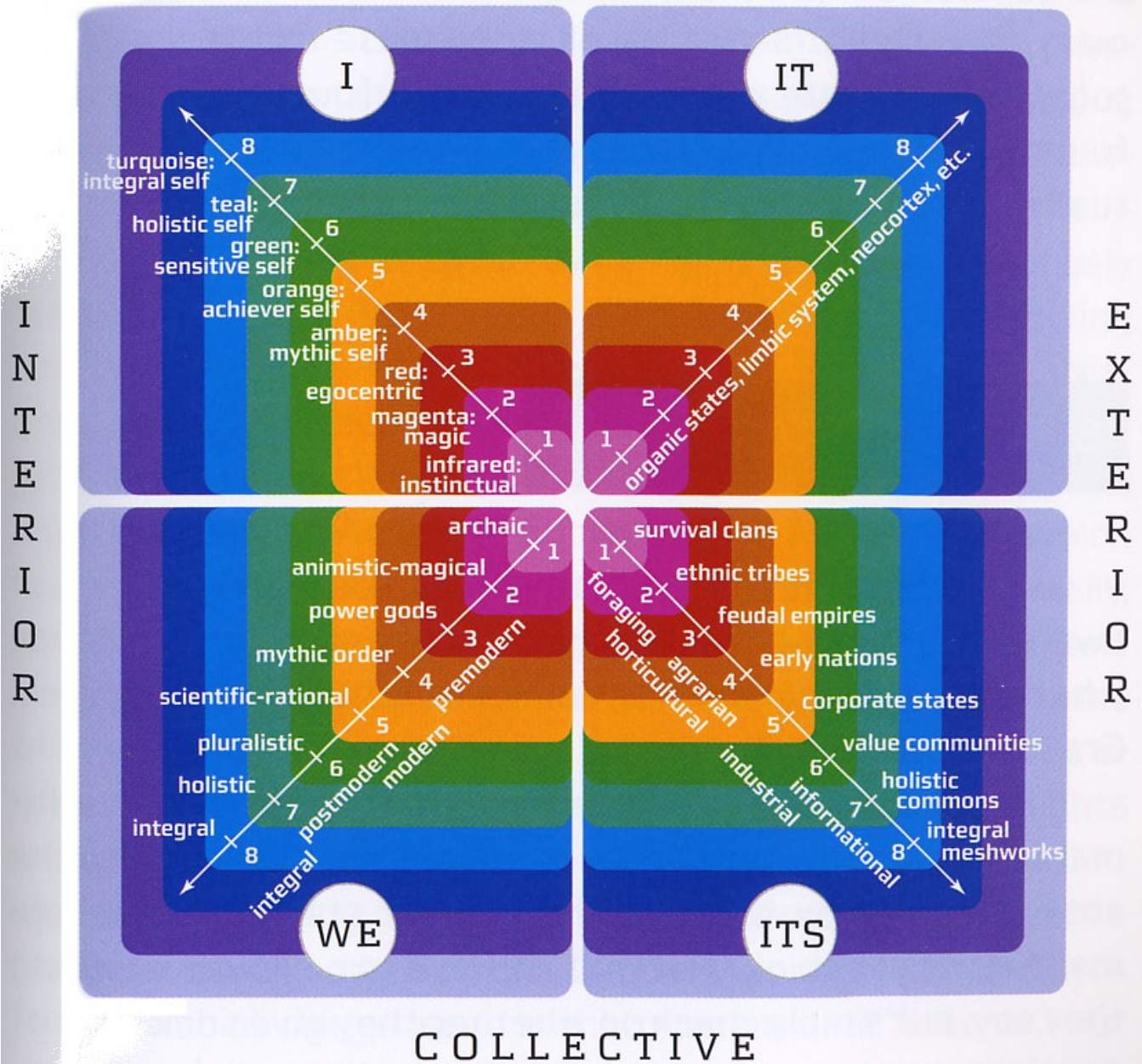
Egocentric (“me”): A stage characterized by narcissistic self-absorption, bodily needs and desires, emotional outbursts, unsocialized impulses, and an incapacity to take the role of the “other”; seen today predominantly in infants and young children, rebellious teens, wild rock stars, and criminals. (Infrared to red)

Ethnocentric (“us”): An expansion of self-identity to include one’s family, peers, tribe, race, faith group, or nation; the adoption of socially conformist rules and roles; commonly seen in children aged seven to adolescence, religious myths and fundamentalism, the “moral majority,” Nazis, the KKK, right-wing politics, patriotism, sports teams, school rivalries. (Amber)

Worldcentric (“all of us”): An even greater expansion of the self to embrace all people, regardless of race, gender, class, or creed; a stage of rationality that questions rigid belief systems and transcends conventional rules and roles; commonly seen in late adolescence, social activism, multiculturalism, science, moral relativism, liberal politics, the “global village,” New Age spirituality; the emergence of integral cognition. (Orange to teal)

Kosmocentric (“all that is”): An identification with all life and consciousness, human or otherwise, and a deeply felt responsibility for the evolutionary process as a whole; “super-integral” cognition and values; innate universal morality; spirituality beyond merely personal motivations; an emergent capacity, rarely seen anywhere. (Turquoise to clear light)

INDIVIDUAL



For every *within*, there is a *without*, and vice versa. You can look at the individual from within (Quadrant 1, *I*) and you're talking about inner states of mind; but if you look at that *I* from without (Q 2, *UR*), you're now contemplating an *It* — bodies or brains or limbic systems.

You can look at an aggregate of *I*s, a *We* (*LL*) — a culture, and talk about inner stages such as animalistic-magical ages or ages of the power-gods or the current pluralistic era. You can look at the same aggregate from *without* and see tribes, empires, and nations.

As individuals evolve, “outer” evolution is no longer so much physiological. We haven't changed much that way in 10,000 years. Now it's the human *artefacts* such as language that evolve and become more complex along with our consciousness. And the collective quadrants similarly show interior and exterior development. For instance, persons whose consciousness conceives power-gods develop feudal empires; at the scientific-rational stage, corporate states emerge.

What is our stage of development, and what kind of collectives do we create?

STAGES OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: AND THE FAMOUS PRE/POST FALLACY

Wilber first summarizes developmental stages as laid out by several different thinkers:

Maslow with his *Needs* line: Physiological, Safety, Belongingness, Self-Esteem, Self-Actualization, and Self-Transcendence;

Jean Gebser with his *Worldviews* line: Archaic, Magic, Mythic, Rational, Pluralistic, and Integral;

A synthesis of the *Cognitive* lines of Common & Richards, Piaget & Aurobindo: Sensorimotor, Preoperational (symbolic), Preoperational (conceptual), Formal Operational (rational mind), Pluralistic Mind (meta-systemic, planetary), Low Vision-Logic (paradigmatic), High Vision-Logic (cross-paradigmatic; global mind), Illumined Mind/Para-mind, Intuitive Mind/Meta-Mind, Overmind, and Supermind;

Clare Graves and Spiral Dynamics' *Values* lines: Survival, Magic-Animistic/Kin Spirits, Egocentric/Power Gods, Absolutistic/Truth Force, Multiplistic/Strive Drive, Relativistic/Human Bond, Flex Flow, Global View, Transcendent, and Unity;

Robert Kegan's *Orders of Consciousness* lines zero through Fifth Order; and

Loevinger and Cook-Greuter's *Self-Identity* lines: Symbiotic, Impulsive, Self-protective, Conformist, Conscientious, Individualist, Autonomous, Construct-aware (integrated), Ego-aware, and Transpersonal.

To understand these, read Wilber, 114-122.

Then he writes:

For now, you might simply notice . . . that, in general, the first tier of growth involves moving from *prepersonal* to *personal* development; the second tier involves *integrated* personal development (and the beginning of the "integral" stages); and the third tier involves *transpersonal* development (or the beginning of "super-integral" stages).

Thus, overall evolution and development

moves from pre-personal to personal to transpersonal, from subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious, from pre-rational to rational to trans-rational, from pre-conventional to conventional to post-conventional . . . With third-tier or transpersonal development, one's self begins to expand beyond the personal realm and into a realm of vast spaciousness, luminous clarity, and unitive experiences, all of which have a decidedly spiritual flavor. But unlike the magic and mythic levels, which are mere concepts and dogmatic beliefs, these are levels of direct experience and immediate awareness.

THE PRE/POST FALLACY

So let's stop and note that fact: researchers have found that the very *highest* stages of cognitive, moral, and self growth all take on a transpersonal or spiritual tone. Let's call this "**highest-level spirituality**," and put that down as one of the important meanings of "spiritual." (We will also refer to this aspect of spirituality as **trans-rational** and **transpersonal spirituality**.)

But let's also note a strange, fascinating item: some of the trans-rational and transpersonal stages superficially resemble some of the pre-rational and prepersonal stages. Because *pre-conventional* stages and *post-conventional* stages are *both non-conventional*, they are confused and even equated by the untutored eye. Pre-rational stages are confused with trans-rational stages simply because both are non-rational; pre-egoic stages are confused with trans-egoic simply because both are non-egoic; transverbal is confused with preverbal because both are nonverbal, and so on.

This confusion is known as *the pre/trans fallacy* (or *the pre/post fallacy*). Once it occurs, people make one of two big mistakes. They either reduce all trans-rational realities to pre-rational childish twaddle (think Freud), or they elevate pre-rational childish images and myths to trans-rational glory (think Jung). Both reductionism and elevationism have plagued the discussion of

spirituality from the beginning, and so one of the first things that a truly integral approach contributes is a way out of that particular nightmare.

A PRE-RATIONAL MYTHIC GOD AND A TRANS-RATIONAL UNITIVE SPIRIT

At the very least, it behooves us to recognize that there are, based upon significant scientific and empirical research, stages of development that involve prerational, childish, pre-conventional, narcissistic fantasy, and those that involve post-conventional, trans-rational, ego-aware, post-autonomous, transpersonal awareness. In the former (e.g., magical-animistic, mythic-membership), ultimate reality is indeed pictured as a white-haired, grey-bearded gentleman in the sky, or somebody who walks on water and is born from a biological virgin, or an elderly sage who was 900 years old at birth, and so on. All of these pre-rational myths are taken to be literally and concretely true. But in the latter of post-conventional stages, ultimate reality is pictured as a nondual ground of being, a state of timeless presence, or a post-rational (not pre-rational and non anti-rational) state of unity consciousness. The difference between the two is indeed night and day, wit the dawn of reason separating them.

If we put all of the scientific research on human development together, it appears that there are indeed at least these three broad arcs of human psychological growth: prepersonal to personal to transpersonal, or pre-rational to rational to trans-rational, or subconscious to self-conscious to super-conscious. Each of the stages in these arcs continues to **transcend and include** its predecessor(s). As each new level **unfolds**, it **enfolds** its predecessor — a development that is envelopment — so that the cumulative effect is integral indeed, just as with atoms to molecules to cells to organisms. Nothing is lost, all is retained, in the extraordinary unfolding and enfolding, developing and enveloping, transcending and including, negating and preserving, that is consciousness evolution.

We are not, at this point, talking about whether there is or is not a “real” Spirit or an actual Ground of Being. We are talking about

whether there are these three great arcs (or, sliced a slightly different way, three great tiers) of human development, and the answer is that any empirical study that has looked carefully at the entire sweep of human development has concluded **yes**. Those who deny the stages of superconscious and transpersonal awareness are simply and absolutely denying the scientific evidence. And frankly, we are no more obligated to take their views into account than we are to take seriously the churchmen who refused to look through Galileo’s telescope because they already “knew” what they would see.

So, if we now move to that most fascinating of all questions and do indeed ask if there is, or is not, an actual Ground of Being, a genuine Spirit, a real Godhead underlying all phenomena, who better to ask than those individuals who are at the higher or highest levels — the transpersonal levels — of development? And if we do ask them, what do they say?

Well, let’s start by repeating that each of these three great arcs has its idea of what ultimate reality is. We saw that in the first arc, leading up to rationality, ultimate reality is viewed as **magic** and **mythic** in nature. Here, to be honest, perhaps 80% of the tenets of the world’s major religions can be found, Shinto to Christian to Islamic to Hebraic to Hindu to Buddhist to Taoist. This includes much New Age magic.

Then human development enters a period that appears to be non-religious or even anti-religious, namely, all of the stages of the second major arc, the arc of Person and Reason. Rational science here comes to the fore, bringing with it an extraordinary boon for humankind in terms of reduction of suffering and increase in longevity. Counting disease, hunger, illness, and infant mortality, rational science has alleviated more actual human suffering than all of the prerational mythic religions combined. That science can be misused is not the issue; its positive gains are staggering and undeniable.

Then, right when it looked like all things religious and spiritual were in our past, relics of archaic history, comes the third major arc. Building on the gains of rational awareness, development begins to transcend and include rationality

in even larger circles of care and consciousness. Here, ultimate reality is seen not in anthropomorphic terms, which color the first arc, and not in rational terms, which color the second, but rather in terms of Being, Emptiness, Consciousness, and Suchness — terms such as a Ground of All Being; a universal Consciousness; a nondual Suchness of Is-ness; a vast, open, empty Luminous Clarity; a mirror-like Witnessing Awareness; a Godhead prior to any Trinity; a pure, infinite, transcendental, selfless Self; an unbounded, spacious, radiant, unobstructed and unqualifiable Consciousness as Such; a timeless, endless, eternal Presence or Now; a Thusness or Suchness or Is-ness of each and every moment, beyond any conceptualizations at all, but as simple and obvious as the person who is reading this page, or the sound of a robin singing, or the cool quench of the first swallow from a glass of iced tea on a hot summer's day.

This is not your father's religion, and not your mother's, and certainly not your grandparent's. And yet the vast majority of individuals who reach the stages of the third arc/tier report that reality is some versions of an infinite/eternal Ground of All Being. But this transpersonal reality is *at the opposite end* of the spectrum of human development from the magic and mythic conceptions of the prepersonal and pre-rational arc. They are, indeed, as different as night and day, and we absolutely must, at the least, stop confusing them.

(To make matters worse at that end, the press seems to recognize only two types of religion: fundamentalist nutcases and New Age nutcases. Both of those, of course, are *pre-rational*, with the fundamentalist believing in amber dogma and myth, the New Ager believing in magenta magic. Any transrational orientation, such as transpersonal psychology, is lumped in with the New-Age nutcases. . . . The only two people that the press knows who are "spiritual" are George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden. And the press can't figure out which is the more dangerous.)

The fact is, conservatives tend to support the first arc and liberals tend to support the second arc, with neither one of them even vaguely aware of the third arc. So the third arc is either dismissed

entirely, or, as we said, subjected to a pre/trans fallacy and completely confused with the first arc.

Night and day indeed. So it's worth repeating that, at the very least, these two diametrically different kinds of "non-rational spirituality" (pre and trans) simply must be acknowledged, by the press, or at least by anybody who can read without moving their lips.

It looks very much as if the phrase "spiritual but not religious" often applies to this third arc. And even if people who describe themselves that way are not permanently at these higher, transpersonal waves, many of them seem to be intuiting these higher realities. They do not want egocentric magic or ethnocentric mythic religion, drenched in dogma and creed and conceptual beliefs. They want direct experience beyond words and concepts, a supramental, transrational, postconventional spirituality, with its immediate awareness and radiant consciousness. They are indeed **spiritual but not religious**. And they do claim to be directly aware of a nondual empty, open, spacious, infinite, unqualifiable Thusness, by whatever name you care to call that particular rose.

AGAIN WITH THE PRE/POST FALLACY

Excuse my French, but the ultimate bitch when it comes to "God or "Spirit" or "Absolute Reality" is that the whole thing is caught in a staggeringly huge pre/post fallacy. The pre-rational and the trans-rational versions of spirituality sound similar or even identical to the untutored eye, simply because they are "nonrational," and hence they are treated as basically the same by anyone caught in this pre/trans fallacy, even though they are actually poles apart. And when night and day are confused, the trans-rational stages of Nondual Consciousness — which are, wherever they appear, said to disclose an ultimate Freedom and Fullness, a Great Liberation from alienation, fragmentation, and suffering — are thoroughly confused with the pre-rational stages of a mythic God — stages that have arguably caused more human-made suffering than any other factor in history. The means of our Liberation are confused with the cause of most of our misery. Then,

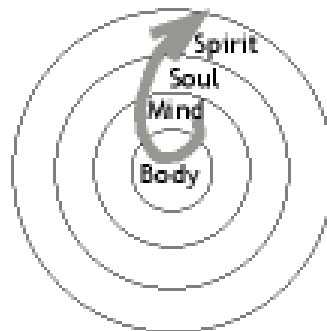
in running from what appears to be the cause of suffering, we are running from our salvation.

This is, um, very bad. This confusion is everywhere, not only in the press, but in the religions themselves and the culture at large. . . . Simply by looking at the “levels” aspect of AQAL, these incredibly important differences can be first, spotted, and second, utilized.

At the same time, let’s be honest about the numbers involved here. Studies consistently show that around **70% of the world’s population is at ethnocentric (or lower) levels of development.** That is, at or below mythic, amber, conformist. Put yet another way, about 70% of the

world’s population are fundamentalists (or lower) in their spiritual orientation. About 30% are at the second arc (orange to turquoise). And less than 1% are stably at the transpersonal stages. But those transpersonal stages do exist,, they are there, and they are open to any who want to take up a transformative practice . . . in order to engage them.

REGRESSION AND TRANSCENDENCE



The pre/trans fallacy exacerbates confusion about “spirituality”: much of what gets called *spiritual* is not transrational awareness but prerational feeling. Ken Wilber¹:

Human growth and development generally unfolds from body to mind to soul to spirit — not as a linear ladder, but as nested waves, with each wave enveloping its predecessor(s) — *if* all goes well. But at almost any stage, the higher *can repress* the lower. Instead of enfold and embrace, there is deny and reject. Instead of transcend and include, there is alienate and repress.

This is especially true of the relation between the mind and body. The first few years of life are basically sensorimotor, preverbal, and largely premental — the self is all body, feelings, and organic impulse. But starting around age 2, the symbolic and conceptual mind begins to emerge, and by age 6 or 7, the concrete operational mind emerges. Ideally the mind transcends and includes the previous bodily sensations, feelings, impulses, and drives. But more often than not — and this is Freud’s great province — the mind (the ego-mind) represses or denies some previ-

ous bodily feeling, often sex or aggression. This repressed feeling does not simply go away, but rather reappears, in disguised forms, as painful neurotic symptoms.

Thus, by the time most people reach young adulthood, they suffer various forms of mind/body dissociation: *they are out of touch with their bodies*, their feelings, their organic richness, their *élan vital*. This has two specific consequences: one, it dulls life itself; two, it makes *higher* development harder and therefore much less likely to occur.

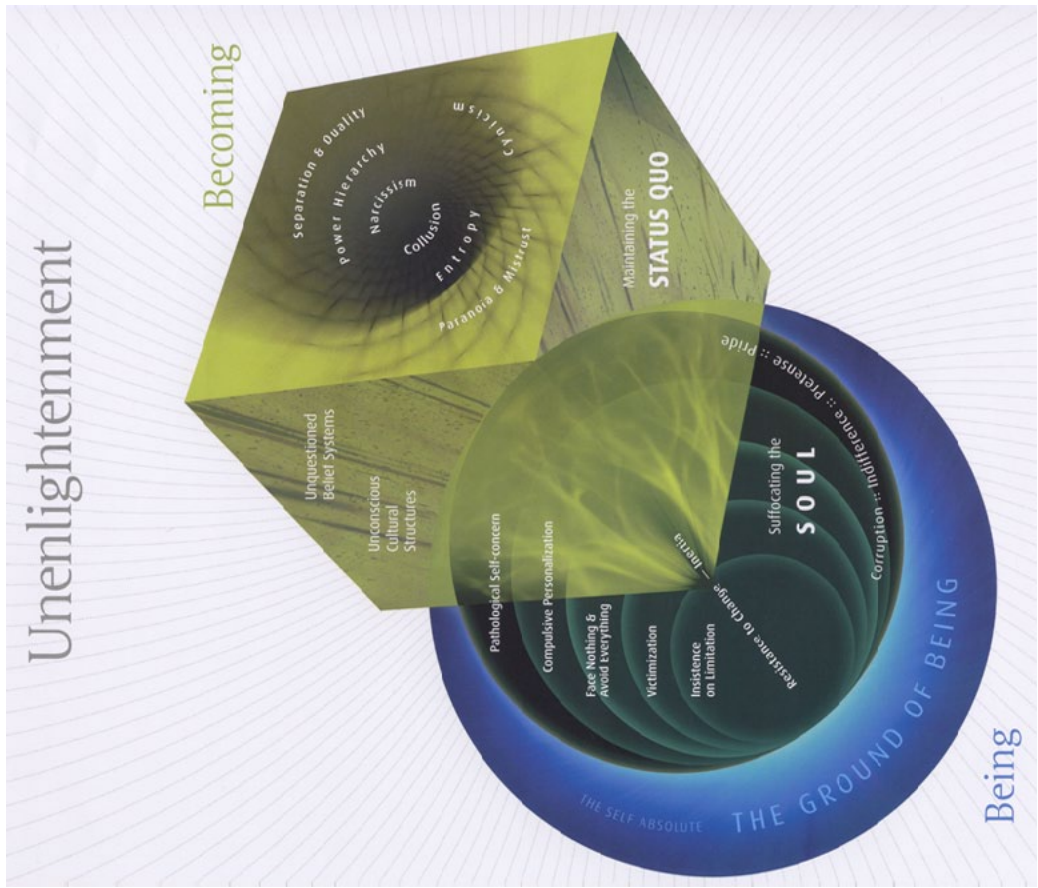
Thus, in order to both revitalize the present and allow higher growth to occur, it is often necessary to *recontact the body*. Many therapies are designed to do just this. Some of the body therapies approach the body directly (through sensory awareness, Rolfing, bioenergetics, etc.), while other therapies will actually engage in a type of regression to the awareness of early childhood. We temporarily regress back to the preverbal body, recontact and befriend it, and then reintegrate it with the mind (that is classically called “regression in service of the ego”). But in all these cases, the ultimate goal is to become fully in touch with *both* the body and the mind.

Once we have integrated the body and the mind, it is much easier — and more likely — that growth can then continue

beyond the body and mind, into the realms of soul and spirit. In the diagram, these two general movements — regression in service of the ego, and then progression in transcendence of the ego — are indicated by the large spiral, which, for the typical adult, first moves down (regression) and then up (transcendence).

In the regressive part of the spiral, we are *not* . . . recapturing a transrational awareness that we had as an infant but then lost, but rather a prerational impulse that we unfortunately repressed. That repression is nonetheless painful and deleterious, and it can only be cured by recontacting and befriending the alienated impulses and bodily feelings (regression in service of ego, as a prelude to progression in transcendence of ego).

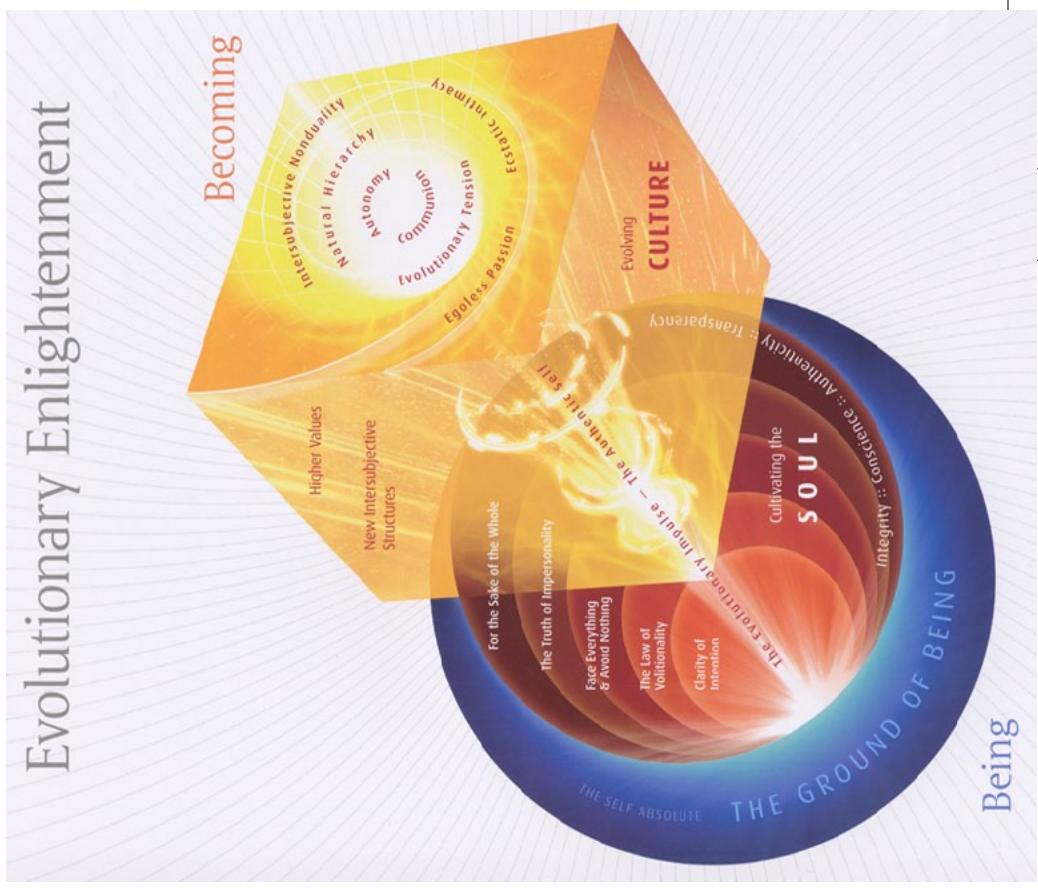
Now the problem with many forms of therapy, and most forms of alternative spirituality, is that we start along this healing spiral and then we get stuck at the prerational, sensory, bodily stage. We regress back to feelings, emotions, sensations, bodily awareness — which itself is fine, and is the first leg of the journey — but then we simply *stop* there and call that transrational spirit, whereas it is nothing of the sort. Trying to go transrational, we end up prerational, and this is called liberation. This is a bit of nightmare.



WHAT IS EGO?

A Report from The Trenches
— Andrew Cohen

In the end it really is black-and-white. But of course it all depends upon the sincerity of our interest in genuine and truly radical transformation. That's why there is so much confusion about the question: What is ego? Because our ability to recognize the true face of the ego, to see it for what it actually is, depends



- 2 The Law of Volitionality
- 3 Face Everything and Avoid Nothing
- 4 The Law of Impersonality
- 5 For the Sake of the Whole

entirely upon how far we want to go on the spiritual path.

A simple psychological definition of the ego is something like the “self-organizing principle,” that all-important command center in the psyche that coordinates the different aspects of the self. And that command center must be in good working order for a human being to be able to function in the world with any reasonable degree of competency. Its function is mechanistic, and in that, it has no self nature. But there is another definition of ego, and the ego in

that definition has self nature. The human face of that ego is pride; is arrogant self-importance; is narcissistic self-infatuation; is the need to see oneself as being separate at all times, in all places, through all circumstances—and that ego is the unrelenting enemy of all that is truly wholesome in the human experience. When *this* ego is unmasked, seen directly for what it is, finally unobscured by the other expressions of the personality, one finds oneself literally face-to-face with a demon—a demon that thrives on power, domination, control and separation, that cares only about itself and is willing to destroy anything and everything that is good and true in order to survive intact and always in control. This demon lacks any capacity for empathy, compassion, generosity or love; delights in its perfect invulnerability; and, worst of all, will never ever acknowledge that which is sacred.

But I knew none of this when I began teaching the path to liberation fourteen years ago. At that time, I had no idea of the magnitude of the battle I had taken on by daring to lead others to the yonder shore. In those days I thought spiritual experience, tasting the miraculous and unlimited depth of the Self beyond time and mind, would instill enough reverence and awe in the seeker to empower them to face whatever needed to be faced and bear whatever needed to be borne in order to be free. But oh how wrong I was! I didn't realize then that for most seekers, enlightenment experiences were not the end of the path but only the beginning. It's true that without that depth of spiritual experience, it is very difficult for a seeker to take the possibility of their own liberation seriously—but even when one has experienced that depth of Self, when push comes to shove, when our back is against the wall, when like Jesus or the Buddha we must face directly into the darkest regions of the human soul, how many among us will have such love for the truth alone that we will courageously remain unmoved and immovable?

I can't tell you how many times I have witnessed the shocking and often frightening transformation of a human personality when faced squarely with the truth of its own division, hypocrisy and deceit: in an instant, a warm,

intelligent, sensitive, apparently caring personality can change, becoming the face of pure ego, glaring with narcissistic rage because it has been exposed. It is because of many experiences like this that I have spent countless hours thinking about the questions: What is the personality? Who is the individual? It seems that in the end it really is black-and-white, simply because who we are depends upon where our allegiance lies. Is it with the narcissistic ego? Or is it with the spiritual heart? Of course, we can only really find out the answer to that question when we are tested because otherwise it's inevitable that the truth of our own condition will remain obscured, masked by self-concepts that are based on the ego's need to always see itself in a positive light—even if it sees itself as a victim.

Who we are and how we perceive our own experience and the world around us depend upon where our allegiance lies. The perspective of the individual who has surrendered the will of their own ego to their spiritual heart is drastically different from the perspective of one who has not. But it is important to understand that because the ego can usurp any calling of the human soul in order to remain in control—even the longing for liberation—it's usually impossible to tell exactly who it is who is claiming they want to be free until that moment when their faith and love for truth alone are put to the test. It is only then that we can actually find out who we really are and what part of our self is pulling the strings of our own destiny.

To walk the spiritual path in earnest is to find out what we're made of and how much we are truly willing to give up in order to come to the end of division within ourselves. The price for that kind of profound and deeply liberating simplicity is too high for most, because that price is ego death. What does that mean? That means endeavoring with all our being to purify ourselves from any and every attachment, gross and subtle, to the narcissistic ego, that demon of false individuality that masquerades as our own self and whose task it is to keep us, at all costs, separate from our own heart.

MEDITATION

THE EVOLUTIONARY ENLIGHTENMENT TEACHINGS OF ANDREW COHEN

HENRY THOREAU, FROM CHAPTER FOUR, "SOUNDS," ON MEDITATION OR CONTEMPLATION

Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went.

A PORTAL TO THE FOURTH DIMENSION

One of the many miraculous functions of meditation is that it is a portal to a different dimension. When you go deeply into the meditative state, your awareness detaches itself from the thought-stream. Your identification with emotion, memory, time, and body begins to fall away. You become aware of something very mysterious. Imagine that you have been fast asleep in a small dark chamber, and then you suddenly awaken to find yourself floating in the infinite depth of a vast peaceful ocean. You have literally become aware of a fourth dimension, whereas before you experienced yourself as being trapped, a prisoner of your body, mind, and emotions. When you awaken to this fourth dimension, all sense of confinement disappears. You feel that you have access to the whole universe and also to that which the universe exists within. You're aware of body, mind, time, and space, but there's another dimension that extends in all directions, unlimited by any of it. Meditation is the portal to this fourth dimension, a door to the realization of limitlessness.

Why is this experience significant? Because the infinite context you awaken to is not just a quiet place inside your own head. It is a deeper dimension of reality itself. Life, death, and everything in between, reality as a whole—the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknown, all that ever was and ever could be—is made up of both the manifest and the unmanifest. But most of the time

all we are aware of is the manifest dimension, the domain of time and space and becoming. Meditation will give you the direct, conscious experience of the unmanifest dimension, which is the ground of being itself.

The ground of being is empty. It is an objectless, timeless, spaceless, thoughtless void. But everything that exists has come from this no-place, including you and me. Paradoxically, while empty, this no-place is pregnant with infinite, unborn potential. It is the ground we all emerge from, the womb of the entire universe. When something came from nothing, 14 billion years ago, the nothing did not disappear. That unmanifest unborn dimension is the ever-present ground out of which everything is arising in every moment. And meditation allows you to know this ground within your own experience. Even in the awareness of the body and the movement of thought, beneath it all, in the state of meditation, you become conscious of a current of stillness that is the echo and the reflection of the ground of being. There is a great mystery there. In the infinite depth of that emptiness there arises a knowing, a pure knowing itself that seems to answer all our questions and relieve us of all our existential doubts.

Whenever we journey far enough beyond the conditioned mind—beyond thought, beyond form, beyond time—we will always discover this same mystery. That is why we meditate, so we can

awaken to the instantaneously liberating nature of the ground of being. The more profound our experience of the ground of being, the more we

begin to emanate that mysterious knowing which is enlightened consciousness

MEDITATION IS A METAPHOR FOR ENLIGHTENMENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEDITATION

Meditation is the experience of a particular state of consciousness that has certain qualities, which are also the qualities of enlightenment itself. This is why meditation can be understood as a metaphor for enlightenment. So when we sit down to meditate, we are consciously choosing to assume the enlightened relationship to our own experience, which means we take a position in relationship to our experience that is free—free from compulsive identification with the thought-stream. In order to do this, we can follow three very simple instructions: Be still. Be at ease. Pay attention.

BEING STILL IS A METAPHOR FOR WANTING TO BE FREE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

The decision to be physically still represents a fundamental posture in relationship to life itself. It means you're making a commitment that no matter what happens, even if the whole world seems to be falling apart, you will not move. In the unenlightened state, constantly driven by conditioned impulses of fear and desire, we are always moving. Not moving is a metaphor for the goal, because one who is enlightened is one who inwardly never moves from that which is most important.

EASE OF BEING IS A METAPHOR FOR LETTING EVERYTHING BE AS IT IS.

Letting everything be means you are no longer grasping at or trying to control your experience. When you experience ease of being, there is a temporary cessation of a fundamental existential tension, which is the deep conviction that something is terribly wrong. The state of enlightenment is based upon this freedom from existential tension. Letting everything be, you discover a state of innocence, as if you have been reborn and

are suddenly seeing everything through different eyes, grounded in the deep knowing that nothing is fundamentally wrong. In the enlightened state, the knot of compulsive self-concern has been untied forever.

PAYING ATTENTION IS A METAPHOR FOR HAVING NO RELATIONSHIP TO THE ARISING OF THOUGHT OR THE PRESENCE OF FEELING.

When you choose not to identify with the movement of thoughts and emotions, sooner or later you will have the profound experience of your own Self standing free from the mind—free from the compulsive habit of conceptualization and personalization. Your awareness will become so vast that it embraces all things, while simultaneously being the experience of freedom from all things. You will discover that you are resting as awareness itself, beyond all thoughts, concepts, or emotions. It is this miraculous depth of attention that makes one who is enlightened appear to be unusually awake.

THE PURPOSE OF MEDITATION

Q: Why is it important to meditate?

A: You meditate to remind yourself that you're not a prisoner. If there is power in your meditation, if your experience of the ground of being is deep and profound, you will discover and rediscover, over and over and over again, that you are not a prisoner. You are not held captive by your own mind; nor are you imprisoned by your own emotions. It sounds simple, but it's so easy to forget. If all you are aware of is the endless rollercoaster ride of thoughts and feelings, of course you will

believe you are trapped.

The ground of being is a deeper, infinitely more subtle dimension of your own consciousness that simply cannot be perceived by the gross faculties of the conditioned mind and ego. You can't see it; you can't taste it; you can't touch it. So even if you have directly experienced the unconditioned freedom of that empty ground, when you return to the world of conditioned mind and ego, you're likely to doubt it. The mind simply cannot cognize this ground, and the ego cannot know it. That is why it's very important to meditate as much as you can. If you meditate regularly with

a strong intention, you will keep rediscovering that you're not a prisoner. You cannot recognize that enough. Until your conviction in your own freedom is unwavering and you're able to prove it through unbroken consistency in the way that you live, you need to keep having that experience. Each and every time you realize that you're not a prisoner, it gives you a deeper confidence in the limitless inherent freedom of that empty ground that is your own deepest Self. It builds a conscious conviction in no-limitation, and, as I teach it, this is the most significant purpose of meditation.

—ANDREW COHEN

“Evolutionary Enlightenment”

Guided Meditation

Let yourself relax. You don't need to make any effort. Just allow yourself to be deeply at ease. Then take the risk to release your attention to expand and flow free, detaching from any form of conceptual engagement with the mind. Allow your attention to become vast, wide, open, and clear. In that wide-open space, all kinds of things may come and go—thoughts, emotions, physical sensations—but don't focus your attention on any of them. Let it expand in all directions, until it becomes so vast that you're paying attention to everything at the same time while not focusing on anything in particular. Keep letting your attention expand until the awareness itself becomes the object of your attention, until all the structures of the created universe begin to crumble and you start seeing through everything. Ultimately the whole universe will seem to disappear. And you will begin to taste the unborn, unmanifested Ground of Being, the empty void out of which the whole manifest world sprang into existence, in your own experience. In this place, nothing has ever happened. The universe has not yet come into existence; you have not been born; even time itself has not yet begun. When you discover this limitless place, then your deepest sense of yourself and of life itself will change from one of imprisonment and limitation to one of unqualified freedom.

—ANDREW COHEN

IF HUMANITY IS TO SURVIVE,
A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION
OF HUMAN NATURE IS
INDISPENSABLE.

— Sri Aurobindo, *The Future
Evolution of Man*

But it has not been found in experience, whatever might have once been hoped, that education and intellectual training by itself can change man; it only provides the human individual and collective ego with better information and a more efficient machinery for its self-affirmation, but leaves it the same unchanged human ego. Nor can human mind and life be cut into perfection — even into what is thought to be perfection, a constructed substitute, — by any kind of social machinery; matter can be so cut, thought can be so cut, but in our human existence matter and thought are only instruments for the soul and the life-force. Machinery cannot form the soul and life-force into standardized shapes; it can at best coerce them, make soul and mind inert and stationary and regulate the life's outward action; but if this is to be effectively done, coercion and compression of the mind and life are indispensable and that again spells either unprogressive stability or decadence.

At first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; for the transcendence of our normal human nature, a transcendence of our mental, vital and physical being, has the appearance of an endeavour too high and difficult and at present, for man as he is, impossible. Even if it were so, it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life; for to hope for a true change of human life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle. But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its

self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation. It is, besides a step for which the whole of evolution of the being touches a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining.

What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance. To that call in the being there must always be some answer in the Divine Reality and in Nature.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF
ENLIGHTENMENT

— Andrew Cohen

I. Then, after a few years, something new started to emerge in my teaching. And the first time I became aware of it was when I started to teach retreats in India. One morning, as I was giving a talk, something just exploded out of me. I didn't know where it came from. An unbridled passion poured out of me spontaneously, calling for this miracle, this mystery beyond time, to become manifest in this very world as **ourselves**. It shocked and inspired many people, and it shocked and inspired me as well. That was over ten years ago.

And more and more, over time, it has started to dawn on me that this passion is really a passion for more than just enlightenment in the traditional sense or the Eastern sense, which would mean a vertical lift-off, getting off the wheel of

becoming, transcending this world absolutely, and leaving no trace. My emphasis has shifted radically. The goal now, as audacious as it sounds, is not merely to transcend the world but to transform the world, to become an agent of the evolutionary impulse itself. Indeed, in surrendering one's ego to **that**, one literally feels oneself being filled up with a divine and luminous energy and a passion to transform the world and the whole universe for a cause that has nothing to do with oneself.

This shift of emphasis, many years ago, was also one of the reasons that I parted ways with my teacher. Whenever he would hear me speaking about there being anything to do except get off the wheel of becoming and BE, he felt that I was corrupting and distorting his teaching. So at a certain point I started to conclude that there must be different **kinds** of enlightenment, different kinds of awakening that actually have different results.

Eventually, I started to call this teaching “evolutionary enlightenment” or “impersonal evolutionary enlightenment.” In this teaching, there is an emphasis not only on the realization of emptiness and pure Being but also on the need to **become** a radically and profoundly transformed human being who is going to be able to manifest our higher evolutionary potential in the world. I'd never really come across anything like this before. It was only recently, when I came upon the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin in our research for the magazine, that I started to hear echoes of my own passion—a passion for evolutionary enlightenment, for awakening to the truth of who we are, and then daring to allow ourselves to experience the urgency to make it manifest in this world with all of our being.

FROM GURU AND PANDIT (FUTURE OF GOD)

*Dialogue, Ken Wilber
and Andrew Cohen*

AC: There is one other aspect to all of this that I wanted to go into. Several months ago, an extraordinary event occurred a number of times among a group of my students. They witnessed and directly experienced the spontaneous descent of a cosmic power—a powerful conscious presence within and without that was instantly enlightening. In other words, each individual experienced, in their own consciousness, inherent liberation and the unlimited potential that the liberated heart and mind feels as the living universe calls for our unconditional participation in the process of its own unfolding. These are excerpts from some of the letters they wrote to me describing the event.

“Last night we literally reached a critical mass and exploded. Revelation after revelation as a living understanding of the sweetest perfection is being unraveled in front of our eyes. The emerging presence is a mystery that can never be known—all it recognizes is One, and it's on a seek-and-destroy mission against all separation. We were on our knees before this miraculous phenomenon: impersonal enlightenment. None of us has any idea where we are going, but we are being consumed in the white heat of perfect communion.”

“I finally understood that this is actually enlightenment manifesting between us. It is unheard of that a group of unenlightened people, who are willing to leave self-concern behind, start to experience the enlightened vision and BE it. It is amazing how easy it felt, really like a natural state ... I see now why you call it Evolution!”

“This tremendous explosion has unalterably shifted our attention to a vast and unfathomable presence—it is as if this new cosmic Being speaks as us, through us, manifesting the bigger view that It alone perceives.”

It seems that it was both the collective nature of the event and the willingness of the participating individuals to bear witness to what was unfolding that made the emergence of this consciousness possible. This thing has hap-

pened a few times, among different groups of my students, and I realized that this expression of enlightenment beyond the personal was really the target that my teaching has been heading toward for the past sixteen years. I had never heard of anything else that sounded similar until I read about Sri Aurobindo's descent of the "supermind,"* which sounded very much like what my students were experiencing. I was wondering if it sounded similar to you?

KW: Well, yes. I wasn't present for the phenomenon you were describing, but I think I get a pretty good sense of it. And it does really tie in to what we were saying earlier. In a sense, the nondual realization, which at least became a historical realization for a fair number of people right around the turn of the century, including Sri Aurobindo, is still unfolding. I mean, the world of form keeps unfolding, keeps evolving—spirit's own self-expression keeps unfolding—and it happens, as far as we can tell, to build on what it did yesterday, which is why evolution is indeed an unfolding event in the world of form. So as this incarnational nonduality, this ultimately ecstatic tantric nonduality itself, began to unfold, and its forms of manifestation began to unfold, you find that by the time you get to people like Sri Aurobindo, there's such a full-bodied understanding of this process. Even though some of the earlier sages were ultimately enlightened for their time, there's a richness, an unfolding, a resonance of spirit's own incarnational understanding in some of these recent sages that just gives you goose bumps.

AC: Wow. So you're talking about the evolution of enlightenment itself.

KW: Yes. If we talk about enlightenment as the union of emptiness and form, the pure emptiness doesn't change because it doesn't enter the stream of time, but the form does change, and the two of those are inextricably united. And therefore, there is, in that sense, an evolution of enlightenment. And what we find in some of these sages, particularly in the modern era when evolution itself was understood—which is to say when evo-

lution became part of the consciousness of spirit's manifestation—is an increasing transparency of enlightenment manifesting in the world of form. Under those circumstances, the type of descent that Sri Aurobindo was talking about, the descent of the supermind, is something that he certainly thought would be increasing in frequency as evolution continued. And I do think that's the case. The phenomenon you described certainly sounds like it would be kind of a miniature example of just that.

The notion of, in a sense, higher states coming down and grabbing people where they are and lifting them up is itself an old notion. And I think there are many examples of lesser states, in a sense, descending upon people. You can be in the egoic state and have a descent of a subtle reality, for example. But I think that because the world has already been opened to nondual incarnational realization, we are going to see these things increasing in depth and profundity as time unfolds.

AC: For Aurobindo, though, wasn't the supermind still a theoretical ideal? I mean, as far as I know, he didn't succeed in bringing it down in the way that he wanted to—making it manifest in the world.

KW: Yes. That's correct. And that's why I say it's hard to know exactly what was going on with your group without everybody kind of having a look-see.

AC: Sure. Of course. But I think the important thing was that there was a very powerful meeting beyond the personal. There was the awareness that "I am going beyond the personal together with many others." In other words, there was a simultaneous realization of the nondifference between the One and the many, supported by the ecstatic realization that this is everything. And at the same time, there was the awareness of an overwhelming compulsion in the individual and the collective to give all of oneself to the greatest possibility that there is.

You can read all the Wilber-Cohen dialogues at: <http://www.wie.org/cohen-wilber/>

The Spiral of Development

A structure of evolution in consciousness and culture



From *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*. For excerpts and audio interviews go to: www.stevemcintosh.com

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THE SPIRAL OF EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

Evolutionary development has been described as a dialectical spiral by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan in their *Spiral Dynamics*. The stages of evolutionary development have been discussed in somewhat similar ways by many thinkers: Maslow, Gebser, Piaget, Aurobindo, Kegan, Lovinger, and others. Ken Wilber has synthesized these, and it's common now to refer to them by the way they've been color-coded ("Oh, contemporary society is stuck at Green," or "I'd say he's at Blue").

A glance at the chart above gives you the general idea. These stages can be said to be *dialectical* because you can't get to a higher stage without reaching and developing successfully at the previous stage. And individuals and cultures don't advance to a higher stage until the previous one reveals its limitations and problems — a situation which calls forth further development.

"So first I have to ask you" writes Steve McIntosh in his *Integral Consciousness*, "has evolution

made any progress in the last 13.7 billion years? Have things gotten any better since the Big Bang? Has there been progress in matter from the isolated atoms of hydrogen gas to the blue jewel of planet earth? Has there been progress in life from single-celled prokaryotes to self-conscious human beings? Has there been progress in culture from archaic human survival bands to the 21st century's global civilization?"

There's an evolutionary impulse at the heart of everything, and at the heart of us. As for *religion*: Religion will serve either as a lock on an outworn past, or as an engine of evolution.

The Transcendentalist movement was an example of the latter. To fulfill its necessary role in human affairs, Unitarian Universalism must be, too. Not just a hodge-podge pluralism of world religions, but an evolutionary advance, an unfolding of consciousness.

Which brings us to the bands above the green one in these charts.

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✓ Lawrence Buell. *The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings*. New York: Modern Library, 2006. The latest of the Transcendentalist anthologies. Buell, like Myerson, is a fine Emerson scholar. I particularly like this collection, which includes items you seldom find. **Recommended for course.**

✓ Perry Miller. *The Transcendentalists*. (Anthology) Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950. Includes short bios and sample writings of all the principal Transcendentalists.

✓ Barbara L. Packer. *The Transcendentalists*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2007. A fairly new entry, this is one of the most incisive and comprehensive. Her capacious knowledge enables her to draw revelatory connections between players and events.

✓ Albert J. Von Frank. *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. Emerson's thought as central to the religious revolution that ended slavery — ideas that reached all the way to Abraham Lincoln. The pivotal role of Theodore Parker, the clear articulation of Transcendentalism's view of freedom by Thoreau, and the many others, clergy and lay.

✓ Sterling F. Delano. *Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia*. Cambridge MA & London: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 2004.

EMERSON

✓ Robert D. Richardson Jr. *Emerson: the mind on fire*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995. \$35 hardbound; \$15-22 paperbound. **Absolutely the best.**

✓ Lawrence Buell. *Emerson*. A brilliant critical study of his thought in a biographical context by a Harvard professor active in the Emerson Society. 2003.

✓ Carlos Baker: *Emerson Among the Eccentrics*. Viking; 640 pages. *The Economist* says: When Carlos Baker died in 1987, he had completed all but the finishing touches on what will be considered his masterpiece. An esteemed literary critic and mentor to several generations of younger scholars, Carlos Baker had a lifelong interest in Emerson, but also in Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Amos Bronson Alcott, and Margaret Fuller, all of whom made Concord a mecca for American intellectuals . . . Lucky for us that in his last years Carlos Baker poured his resources, wisdom, and affections into this remarkable book.

✓ Richard G. Geldard. *God in Concord: Ralph Waldo Emerson's Awakening to the Infinite*. Burdett, N.Y.: Larson Publications, 1999. Drawing particularly from Emerson's private journals, the author opens the heights and depths of the mind of America's great Seer. Deeply insightful and deeply inspiring.

✓ Maurice York and Rick Spaulding. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Infinitude of the Private Man*. Chicago: Wrightwood Press, 2008. Yet another Emerson bio, offering a surprisingly fresh approach and, for this reader, yet more surprise.

✓ Neal Dolan. *Emerson's Liberalism*. Madison & London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009. I've spoken of the revolutionary impulse driving his thought. This is a brilliant study of his liberalism and hopeful vision of future possibility. Dolan shows Emerson rejecting old answers, including many aspects of Christian doctrine.

✓ Len Gougeon. *Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform*. University of Georgia Press, 2010. One of my favorite Emerson scholars draws on a huge array of primary documents to show Emerson immersing himself in antislavery and reform.

John T. Lysaker and William Rossi, editors. *Emerson & Thoreau: Figures of Friendship*. Letters and journals showing how their friendships took root and bolstered their political, social, and ethical projects, even in contexts of differences, tragedy, and loss.

WORKS OF EMERSON

✓✓ Ralph Waldo Emerson. *Essays & Lectures*. Library of America Edition; edited by Joel Porte. Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1983.

✓✓ Ralph Waldo Emerson. *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. New York: The Modern Library, 1992. Edited by Brooks Atkinson. Includes some items, particularly on abolitionism, not commonly found. 842 pp; \$20' now in paper for about \$12.

○ *Emerson in His Journals*. Selected and edited by Joel Porte. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1987.

✓✓ *Emerson's Antislavery Writings*. Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995. And you get a 45-page historical background by the editors. The writings themselves are of great importance, yet seldom appear in collections of his works.

✓ Ralph Waldo Emerson. *Natural History of the Intellect*. Reconstructed and edited by Maurice York & Rick Spaulding. Chicago: Wrightwood Press, 2008. This is as close as we're going to get to Emerson's last lecture series, and it's important because these lectures were a synthesis of Emerson's life work that he'd intended for decades to produce. Finally, in the waning days of his ability to do it, Harvard invited him (after shunning him ever since the 1838 "Divinity School Address") to offer a course. His first attempt in 1870 didn't go as he'd hoped, so he tried again in 1871. Had he been younger, he would have turned the lectures into a magnus opus of a book, but he couldn't. Instead, what remained were his lecture notes, held in Harvard's library, long defying the attempts of scholars to decipher. It took York and Spaulding to do it, the fruit of seven years' work. These 17 lectures don't soar like the "Divinity School Address" or "The Over-Soul" or "Self-Reliance," but they're still brilliant and nicely summarize his thought.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER EDITIONS OF EMERSON'S WORKS.

CHANNING

Jack Mendelsohn. *Channing: The Reluctant Radical*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1971.

WORKS OF CHANNING

○ *William Ellery Channing: Selected Writings*. Ed. David Robinson. New York: Paulist Press American Spirituality Series, 1985.

○ *The Works of William E. Channing*. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1898.

PARKER

✓✓ Dean Grodzins. *American Heretic: Theodore Parker and Transcendentalism*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. This is a spectacular work of scholarship by a young professor at the UUA's Meadville/

Lombard Theological School. This first of two volumes gets Parker into 1846; the remaining 14 years of his life await Volume II.

○ Henry Steele Commager. *Theodore Parker: Yankee Crusader*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1982 (first published 1936 by Little Brown).

○ John Weiss. *The Life and Correspondence of Theodore Parker; Minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society, Boston*. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1864. In two volumes. Reprinted by Bergman Publishers, New York, 1969. This is the work that persuaded many skeptical Unitarians of the greatness of the previously-despised Parker — four years too late for Parker to benefit from in his lifetime.

WORKS OF PARKER

○ *Theodore Parker: An Anthology*. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by Henry Steele Commager. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.

THOREAU

○ David M. Robinson. *Natural Life: Thoreau's Worldly Transcendentalism*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.

○ Robert D. Richardson. *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*. University of California Press, 1988.

WORKS OF THOREAU

are readily available everywhere.

FULLER

○ Paula Blanchard. *Margaret Fuller: From Transcendentalism to Revolution*. Reading, Mass. and New York: Addison-Wesley, 1987.

WORKS OF FULLER

○ *The Portable Margaret Fuller*. Ed. Mark Kelley. New York: Penguin, 1994.

BRONSON ALCOTT AND LOUISA MAY

✓✓ John Matteson. *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and Her Father*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007. A wonderful telling of an astonishing story. A bit too much psychologizing, but engaging and informative.

WORKS OF ALCOTT

○ *Conversations with Children on the Gospels*. Published as *How Like an Angel Came Down* by Lindisfarne Press, 1991. Ed. Alice O. Howell, who provides some biography, with foreword by Stephen Mitchell. Available from Anthroposophic Press, Hudson, NY (518/851-2054).

MISCELLANEOUS

○ *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing, Emerson, Parker*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1961. A sermon by each, and an introduction.

THE PEABODY SISTERS

Megan Marshall. *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism*. Boston: Houghton Mif-

- ✓ flin, 2005. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody was an intimate of Channing and Emerson, and brought the kindergarten to
- America. Sophia and Mary were significant players, too, and their stories tell the story of the times.

2. EVOLUTIONARY/INTEGRAL SPIRITUALITY

✓ *EnlightenNext* (previously *What Is Enlightenment?*). Quarterly journal. Published by EnlightenNext, Lenox, Mass. Available in some bookstores (like Trident on Newbury St.).
○ www.wie.org gives you access to some features and lets you subscribe online.

✓ andrewcohen.org The website that connects you to all aspects of EnlightenNext's thought and work. A very rich site I rely on.

✓ Ken Wilber. *The Integral Vision*. Boston & London: Shambhala, 2007. Extremely accessible, visually very cool, and cheap. Even if he peppers it with promotion for his "IOS/ILP" program. **Recommended for course.**

✓ Ken Wilber. *Integral Spirituality: A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World*. Boston & London: Integral Books, 2006. For those who want a lot more, but it's more work and not awfully accessible.

✓ Ken Wilber. *The Eye of Spirit: An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997. Probably my favorite Wilber production, not yet trying to sell his perfectly alright Integral Life Practices program.

✓ Ken Wilber. *Boomeritis*. Boston: Shambhala, 2002. Ken Wilber has published a multitude of books, but this one sets his thought in the form of a novel, making it very understandable — even if it isn't much of a novel!

✓ Steve McIntosh. *Integral Consciousness and the Future of Evolution*. St. Paul: Paragon House, 2007.

SCIENCE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SPIRIT

✓ Amit Goswami. *The Self-Aware Universe. How Consciousness Creates the Material World*. New York: Jeremy Tarcher/Penguin, 1993, 1995. The Hindu physicist relates quantum mechanics and the "perennial wisdom." What does Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, or the principle of Nonlocality, or wave-particle duality, have to do with Being Itself?

✓ Amit Goswami. *The Visionary Window: A Quantum Physicist's Guide to Enlightenment*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2000.

UPCOMING AND IMPORTANT

Andrew Cohen. *Evolutionary Enlightenment*. Expected during 2011.

Carter Phipps. *Evolutionaries*. Harper & Row, 2011. The Executive Editor of *EnlightenNext* magazine explores the development of an evolutionary spiritual vision through the work of many — the Transcendentalists, of course; and Henri Bergson, Jean Gebser, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo, and many more.

And, of course, might mention I this one:

F. Jay Deacon. *Magnificent Journey: Religion as Lock on the Past or Engine of Evolution*. Groundwave Publishing, 2011, one hopes.

ONLINE:

The works of Ralph Waldo Emerson online: the digital Centenary Edition of his Complete Works. Lots of other resources. <http://www.rwe.org/>

More Emerson texts: <http://www.emersoncentral.com/>

Thoreau Institute, at Walden Pond: includes a digital library of his works. <http://www.walden.org/institute/>

The Transcendentalists. Jone Johnson's tremendously useful site. <http://www.transcendentalists.com/>

The Margaret Fuller Society. <http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~jasteel/>

Andrew Cohen official site: <http://www.andrewcohen.org/>

EnlightenNext organization: <http://www.enlightennext.org/>

EnlightenNext magazine. A must-read twice-yearly journal. <http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/>

Cohen-Wilber dialogues: <http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/cohen-wilber/>

Guru-Talk.com: Former students of Andrew Cohen speak. <http://www.guru-talk.com/>

Ken Wilber official site: <http://www.kenwilber.com/>

Ken Wilber's Integral Institute: <http://integralinstitute.org/>

Ken Wilber's Integral Life site: <http://integrallife.com/>

Alliance for a New Humanity: <http://anhglobal.org/who>

Institute of Noetic Sciences: <http://www.noetic.org/>

Craig Hamilton website: <http://craighamilton.us/>

Craig Hamilton's Integral Enlightenment site: <http://www.integralenlightenment.com/>