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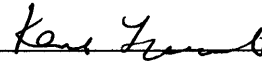
**Transcendentalism and Spiritualism:  
From Cultural Exploration to Modern Healing Practices**

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report  
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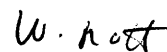
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## **ABSTRACT**

The nineteenth century cultural movement of Transcendentalism is often marked by the philosophical ideas of spiritual insight, beauty and the Divinity in man and in nature. The writings of three major Transcendentalists--Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller--are interspersed with the scientific and anthropological exploration of Orientalism. Spiritualism and the spirituality--two major concepts of the Transcendentalists--anticipate perspectives associated with contemplative, complementary healing of mind, body and soul.

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## PROLOGUE

Transcendentalism is defined most appropriately for this study as "a form of pure idealism, the insistence on the power of thought and will, and upon the exaltation of the life of the spirit above all material or physical demands."

The movement included the ideological categorization of cultural identities. Many of these facets of Transcendentalism are passed by as they are read, unexplored by both the educated and common reader. This report focuses in on two of the major aspects of the Transcendentalist movement: Spiritualism and Orientalism. Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller-- the major Transcendentalists most influenced by these movements--are the focus of this project.

The first part of this report addresses the writings of major Transcendentalists in the field of Orientalism, as it was known in the nineteenth century. Their interest in Orientalism grew out of the sources available to them, and that interest may have been influenced by developments in anthropology, a nascent science in the nineteenth century.

The second part of this report defines spiritualism, its major proponents, and physical manifestations such as rappings, table tippings, auto-writing, levitations, music playing without instrumentation, and other unexplained phenomena. The movement of spiritualism and the break from the "spirit" world to the "spirituality" of the Transcendentalists are explained. The Transcendentalists defined Spirituality as the divinity in man and divinity immanent in Nature.

Is this nineteenth century spirituality partially at the root of the 21st century attempts at healing of mind, body, and soul as exemplified by modern day complementary practitioners? This question is explored, and the relationship between the early Transcendentalists and the modern healers is also explored.

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**Appendix II – Glossary**

**Appendix III – Interviews with Dr. Graham Campbell and  
Reverend Barry Andrews**

**The Authorship Page**

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**PART I**

**Historical and Anthropological Perspective of  
Nineteenth Century Transcendentalism and Orientalism**

# Chapter 1

## Orientalism and the Transcendentalists

Orientalism was all the rage in North America during the nineteenth century. The Romantics, the Transcendentalists, and anyone who would dare call themselves a scholar read up on what was known as "The Orient." Perhaps what sparked America's interest was the newness of it, the excitement of it, or the ideas that came with it. The East was often considered more advanced than the West. Europeans were studying the Orient for at least a decade before the trend migrated over to the United States. Travelers would wander across the Orient in search of the hidden truths and adventure not yet discovered. The languages and cultures were studied with vigor. Missionaries were sent from Christian churches to spread the word of God. The rest of the world relied upon the writings of those more fortunate to tell the tale of the great beyond and reveal its mystery to them.

The issue with this craze of the Orient is best described by its name. Even the name was misunderstood. The Orient, as it was called, referred to all of Asia, and Orientalism referred to the languages, doctrines, customs, and expressions of all of Asia. Asia, unfortunately, defies easy generalization. Today, the use of the word Orientalism to describe Asia in a scholarly sense is almost considered an insult because it is so downright wrong; the term Orientalism is best described as a misnomer. In fact the East was often known best as mysterious and it is not unusual that something so mysterious in concept would be so fascinating. A good understanding of how the East was viewed is found in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English. "ORIENT: The East;



lustrous, sparkling, precious; radiant, rising, nascent; place or exactly determine position, settle or find bearings; bring into clearly understood relations; direct towards; determine how one stands in relation to one's surroundings. Turn eastward.” The Persian rugs or the Indian silk, the stories of men in turbans performing rituals, the idea of pirates at sea in uncontrolled waters, all build to the legends and evoke an interest to study this foreign place. The Orient was interesting.

It would hardly have been possible for the Transcendentalists to not know about the Orient, just as it would hardly have been possible for them to ignore it. The Orient was given attention by many scholars of the time, some of which the Transcendentalists knew, and some of which were Transcendentalists. Proof of the Transcendentalists interest can be found by simply opening a book such as *Walden*, reading Emerson’s essays, or taking a peek at the regular article in the Dial entitled “Ethnical Scriptures.” “Ethnical Scriptures” captured in article form the various important writings of other cultures, such as the Laws of Menu or the Analects of Confucius, the philosophies of which remain guiding cultural principles even today.

Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein, summarizes the thinking of the Transcendentalists and their interest in Orientalism:

The Orientalism of the Transcendentalists—Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott—was a significant component of their philosophy. What Emerson vaguely called “Asia” was the home of the oldest philosophic truths. In Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Persian Sufism, and Hinduism, he and the Concordians found what they were seeking—historical evidence to establish an organic link between Christianity and the mystic creeds of the Orient and to confirm the Transcendentalist concept of the unity of the world, man, and God (Finklestein 13).

In some way, it seems that the Transcendentalists first became Transcendental and then found that certain something across the seas which they could connect to and take

from. Perhaps they located part of themselves recurring on the other side of the world, or perhaps they located something else that they only thought was consistent with their beliefs. Perhaps they only interpreted the East in the way they wanted to.

Thoreau read a wide range of books by travelers to the Orient, taking from each what he appreciated. His journals are filled with quotations and personal opinions on the books that he read. He seemed to know the Orient as well as if he had been there, alongside the writers of each book, experiencing what they did and more. In Thoreau as World Traveler by John Aldrich Christie, Thoreau is depicted as a sort of traveler who journeys not by sea or land, but through the books he reads. The beginning of the chapter called “Eastward over the World” quotes Thoreau, best telling the tale of his fascination with the East. “Was not Asia mapped in my brain before it was in any geography?” (Journal, March 23, 1842). Christie goes on to list books Thoreau read, noting where Thoreau quoted these in his journals and what possible interest Thoreau might have had in these books. To list just a few, Thoreau read Voyage to Cochinchina by Sir John Barrow and History of India by High Murray while he attended Harvard. On his own, Thoreau read Narrative of a Mission to Bokharra and The State of Eastern Churches by Joseph Wolff, a Christian. These two books were probably not so fascinating to him for their Christian aspect, but for the fact that “[Wolff] adventured and observed as directly and honestly as he wrote”(Christie 132) Perhaps for the sake of Geography and History, Thoreau read Nineveh and Its Remains as well as Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, with Travels in Armenia, Kurdistan, and the Desert, both written by Austen Layard. A more important book to note is Lady’s Voyage round the World by Ida Pfeiffer. Thoreau references this book in passing in his own Walden, noting Asiatic Russia’s custom of judging people by their clothes. More interesting yet is a work by the

Lazarist Fathers Huc and Gabet who wrote Journey through Tartary, Thibet, and China, during the Years 1844, 1845, and 1846. This book offers an introduction to the Dali Llama, where the Lazarist Fathers befriend the Dali Llama. There are details on the rituals and prayers of the Tibetans, as well as a chronicle of each and every religious ceremony the fathers witnessed. Thoreau takes note in his journal of the chants and the meanings behind certain of the chants and prayers, seemingly interested in the philosophy behind them.

Perhaps more prolific in his reading on the Orient was Ralph Waldo Emerson. Indeed, it was Emerson who sparked Thoreau's interest in the Orient, providing him with books; the first of which was the Laws of Menu, which Thoreau ate up, going so far as to publish a Dial Essay on them. In addition to providing his friends with reading, Emerson kept a notebook called "Orientalist." Mostly an assortment of quotations and translations of Persian poetry, "Orientalist" had very few comments from Emerson himself. What comments existed were notes on the quotations in his notebook, "In 1844, Burnouf published 'Introduction a l'histoire du Buddhisme.'" Emerson's own opinions on the quotations are not written in "Orientalist," though it is apparent by what the quotations are that one of his main interests was placing dates on the major writings and religions of the Orient, "Institutes of Menu are variously dated from 800 to 1280 B.C."(2 Bosco 133). and "Bouddhism banished from India, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century after Christ"(2 Bosco 132). There is also a note on what percentage of the world prescribes to what religion, which by Emerson's notes, labels Buddhists as 31.2 percent, Christians as 30.7 percent, and Brahmanists as 13.4 percent. The quotation begins, "At present of the whole population of the world"(Bosco 132). Given the whole population of the world, with only percent 75.3% of the world noted in this figure, the other 24.7% of the world must be made up of

unknown religions, agnostics, or perhaps atheists! As a pie chart, there is a piece missing. This figure is notably wrong. What is even more interesting is the use of the word Brahmanists. One can only assume that by Brahmanists, it is meant Hinduism, as Brahman combines with Atman makes up the Vedic God. It is interesting that Emerson wrote the figure down, because it points to the idea that some of his quotations are concerned with the comparison of the origin of Christian, or Western beliefs with those of Buddhism, Hinduism, or other Orientalist religions. One quotation at the very beginning of his notebook best illustrates this interest, "There was a time when the ancestors of the Celts, the Germans, the Slavonians, the Greeks & Italians, the Persians & Hindus were living together within the same fences separate from the ancestors of the Semitic & Turanian races." (2 Bosco 41) Emerson seems to go from there in his cataloging and dating of Asian religions, documenting quotes in "Orientalist" as fact.

It is true that scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had difficulties interpreting Asian philosophies and spirituality. Even today there is the problem of the East and the West misunderstanding each other. For the transcendentalists, who relied upon secondary sources to guide their understanding of Asian culture, there is always the question of whether they knew their sources to be sound. One such example of a bad source that most likely led the Transcendentalists awry was Emerson's readings on the ancient Persian religion Zoroastrianism, "The great bulk of his references are to two pseudo-Zoroastrian books, both of which have been pronounced utterly false by modern scholarship" (Carpenter 218). This is not to say that all of the sources and translations were false, but some have been shown to be misleading as to the real philosophies of the Orient.

## Chapter 2

### The Influence of The Dial

The Dial was the main source for Transcendentalist publications and ideas from 1840 to 1844. It published poetry, stories, reviews of books, and essays on social reform in the form of a magazine. Transcendentalists used it as a sounding board for ideas and interesting tidbits of information, as well as a periodical to read and to contemplate.

The Dial was originally published by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, who owned her own bookshop. It was edited first by Margaret Fuller and then by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and for a brief period of time Henry David Thoreau took the editorial job. Several editions of The Dial included a section entitled “Ethnical Scriptures.” These articles were meant to give examples of universal religion and universal laws guiding man. Most interesting is that most of the “Ethnical Scriptures” were about Orientalism. There was an attempt to spread the news and explain the concepts of the religions and philosophies of the East.

The complete list of “Ethnical Scriptures” published in The Dial is as follows: “Extracts from the Desatir,” “Chinese Four Books,” “Hermes Trismegistus,” “Chaldaean Oracles” and “Sayings of Confucius.” In fact, only one Ethnical Scriptures varies from the Oriental trend. This was “Hermes Trismegistus” which was written on the subject of Neoplatonism, a subject that is believed to have been a gateway to the Transcendentalist’s interest in Orientalism. “Extracts from the Desatir” and “Chaldaean Oracles” were articles about Zoroastrianism, which was the main religion of Persia, now Iran. “Chinese Four Books” and “Sayings of Confucius” were on Confucianism, one of the main philosophies of the Chinese culture. Additionally, The Dial published several informational articles dealing with Orientalism that were not part of Ethical Scriptures.

These were “Veeshnoo Sarma,” “The Laws of Menu” and “The Preaching of Buddha.” “Veeshnoo Sarma,” or Vishnu Sarma, as it is spelled in modern translations, was a teacher of the word of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism. The Laws of Menu is also a Hindu text that is part of the ancient tradition of the Vedas. “Laws of menu” literally means the laws on man and is considered the word on how to do things for Indian men. “The Preaching of Buddha” is a just as its title describes it, the translation of an ancient Buddhist text.

While the publishers of Ethnical Scriptures meant well, they were sadly misinformed about many topics. There are many cases where translation issues interrupted the main philosophy behind the original work that the transcendentalists were publishing. No doubt this is due more to the fact that the transcendentalists relied upon secondary sources to explain the East, some of which were performing a translation of a great work as an exercise in learning another language. “Chinese Four Books,” the Dial article based on The Sayings of Mencius, was one of these. The article is prefaced with this sentence “This translation, which seems to have been undertaken and performed as an exercise in learning the language, is the most valuable contribution we have yet seen from the Chinese literature.” This sentence is very telling about the availability of resources on Orientalism at the time. Many were translated not by experts, but travelers wishing to be scholars of such a mysterious and distant land. These translators would have come across the same problem that continues to plague many modern translations by of an eastern document: cultural barriers. It is the issue of understanding the philosophy of a culture fundamentally different from one’s own, and in a different language. This made good resources on Orientalism particularly hard to come by.

In the Dial article, “Sayings of Confucius,” Confucius is badly misquoted. The quotations included in “Sayings of Confucius” are apparently taken from Analects, one of

the Chinese Four Books. These four books, Analects, Mencius, The Doctrine of the Mean and The Great Learning, were part of a civil service movement in China. Any person, from peasant to nobleman's son, was allowed to take the Confucianism test, validating them to do civil service within China. The Chinese Four Books teach the principles of Confucianism, relating an ethical way to live. Analects is a collection of Confucius' sayings, which is thought to capture and explain the philosophies of Confucianism. The Analects are written as a series of dialogues between Confucius and his disciples.

Modern translations of the Analects vary so widely that one cannot even compare them quotation-by-quotation and find the same meaning. This is most likely due to the shortcomings of the various translators. It has always been true that something is lost in translation, and The Analects is no exception.

To give an example of two modern translations of a quotation in "Sayings of Confucius," one might compare the following. The Dial quotes "Choy-ee slept in the afternoon. Chee says, rotten wood is unfit for carving: a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful color. To Ee what advice can I give?" The translation in the Dial is rather confusing, but from one of the modern translations we can see more in it. "Zai Yu was sleeping during the day. The Master said: 'Rotten wood cannot be carved; dung walls cannot be toweled. What is the use of scolding him?' The master said: 'There was a time when I used to listen to what people said and trusted that they would act accordingly, but now I listen to what they say and watch what they do. It is Zai Yu who made me change'"(Leys 20). Another translation offers further clarification, "Zaiwo was still sleeping during the daytime. The Master said, 'You cannot carve rotten wood, and cannot trowel over a wall of manure. As for Zaiwo, what is the point in upbraiding him.' The

Master said further, ‘There was a time when, in my dealings with others, on hearing what they had to say, I believed they would live up to it. Nowadays in my dealings with others, on hearing what they have to say, I then watch what they do. It is Zaiwo that has taught me as much.’(pp 97-98, Ames) As one can see from the Transcendentalist quotation, there is a crucial piece of the story missing. The second half of the quotation is left out, leaving the reader to infer the lesson in the quotation from the story. Besides leaving out a piece, the quotation the Transcendentalists use is also confusing in its wording. In the beginning, they call the subject “Choy-ee” and in the end he is simply “Ee.” It is hard to tell whom Chee, or the teacher in the quotation, is speaking to or of. At the same time, the center piece of the quotation remains intact, “rotten wood is unfit for carving: a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful color.” This message is very clear. It is similar to saying “a leopard cannot change his spots,” but it is not the same at all as the lesson in the modern translation, “judge a man by his actions, not his words.”

“Sayings of Confucius” is not the only article from the Dial to make the mistake of murdering Chinese philosophy in a diced up version of a text. “Chinese Four Books” was written as an extension of “Sayings of Confucius.” As mentioned before, “Sayings of Confucius” was written by taking quotations from The Analects, part of The Four Books. The Ethnical Scriptures article “Chinese Four Books” was written mainly by piecing together quotations from Meng tzu, or The Sayings of Mencius with quotations from Analects. The same issues with the translation of The Sayings of Mencius occur as with Analects. In The Dial’s “Chinese Four Books,” one can find the quotation,

Mencius said, Pih E's eye would not look on a bad color, nor would his ear listen to a bad sound. Unless a prince were of his own stamp, he would not serve him, and unless people were of his own stamp, he would not employ them. In times of good government, he went into office, and in times of confusion and bad government, he retired. Where disorderly government prevailed, or where disorderly people lived, he could not bear to dwell. He thought that to live with



low men was as bad as to sit in the mud with his court robes and cap. In the time of Chou, he dwelt on the banks of the North Ka, watching till the Empire should be brought to peace and order. Hence, when the fame of Pih E is heard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the weak determined.

A modern translation reveals slight differences in the meaning,

Mencius said, 'Po Yi would serve only the right prince and befriend only the right man. He would not take his place at the court of an evil man, nor would he converse with him. For him to do so would be like sitting in mud and pitch wearing a court cap and gown. He pushed his dislike for evil to the extent that, if a fellow-villager in his company had his cap awry, he would walk away without even a backward look, as if afraid of being defiled. Hence even when a feudal lord made advances in the politest language, he would repel them. He repelled them simply because it was beneath him to go to the feudal lord.

'Liu Hsia Hui, on the other hand, was not ashamed of a prince with a tarnished reputation, neither did he disdain a modest post. When in office, he did not conceal his own talent, and always acted in accordance with the Way. When he was passed over he harbored no grudge, nor was he distressed even in straitened circumstances. This is why he said, "You are you and I am I. Even if you were to be stark naked by my side, how could you defile me?" Consequently, he was in no hurry to take himself away, and looked perfectly at ease in the other man's company, and would stay when pressed, simply because it was beneath him to insist on leaving'

Mencius added, 'Po Yi was too straight-laced; Liu Hsia Hui was not dignified enough. A gentleman would follow neither extreme (Lau 84).

As one can see, these two translations are considerably different. The former cuts out mention of Liu Hsia Hui and rewords the story so that the moral is missed. In fact, it is difficult to even find a moral in this translation. The most interesting tidbit to note about the article "Chinese Four Books" is that it is not filled with quotations from all four books. Notably, The Doctrine of the Mean and The Great Learning are missing from the list. It is questionable if the transcendentalists knew about these two works of Confucius or not; neither of these two books is quoted in the article.

Given the notion that the materials the transcendentalists had to work with in relation to Orientalism were only really accurate translations for their time period, one begins to wonder if they ever truly understood Orientalism. However, determining whether the transcendentalists had understood Orientalism or not would be futile. There

are too many texts and too much to infer. In truth, there are many examples in which the moral of the story is translated correctly, leading to a counter-point of such a paper. However, in reading the essays, notes, and journals on Orientalism, one gains a sense of knowing that this is what the transcendentalists appreciated. This is what they found interesting, correct or not. There may be instances where the point of a paper is lost in its translation, but to the transcendentalists, it was still an interesting quotation. No doubt, many an hour was spent in contemplation of what ancient Chinese philosophers have written.

There is a sense from reading on what the transcendentalists fondly referred to as Orientalism, that in fact what they were publishing contained more of their beliefs than the actual works themselves. Perhaps this was due to the translators' attempting to figure out the meaning behind an ancient text in a strange language. Perhaps they simply wrote what they thought the philosophy was because they couldn't figure it out. Indeed, it would be easy to fall in love with a culture that reiterates all of the colloquialisms you already know and believe in.

## Chapter 3

### Anthropology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

Regardless of the availability of the sources on Orientalism in New England during the time of the Transcendentalists, there is also a question of where these sources originated from and what bias the bringers of culture may have had. The Anthropologists of the time who wrote on the Orient were not just interested in the philosophies of the cultures they studied.

The nineteenth century began with a formidable number of debates on the different cultures of man. The various races that constitute man were studied, quantitatively and qualitatively, with at least some attention to what makes science valid: objectivity.

The main question of the time was: “are humans one species?” Various well-established scientists took on the question in unique ways. For example, Dr. Benjamin Rush, in his studies, came across a black individual by the name of Henry Moss. Moss had been born black, but as he grew, his body had progressively turned white in sections. Dr. Rush speculated from this example that Henry Moss, and other black people, had contracted a form of leprosy that turned their skin black. Henry Moss was just one of the many examples where the body was overcoming the disease. Dr. Rush argued that for this reason, black people and white people should not intermarry, else it would “infect posterity with the disorder”(Stanton 13).

Another example is Dr. Samuel Morton, who studied the relative size of the human cranium based on race. While Rush's attempt defied quantitative analysis,

Races	No of Skulls	Mean Internal Capacity (cu inches)	Largest in Series	Smallest in Series
Caucasian	52	87	109	75
Mongolian	10	83	93	69
Malay	18	81	89	64
American	147	80	100	60
Ethiopian	29	78	94	65

(Stanton 32). The conclusion drawn was that “the physical distinction from the races did not result from climate”(Stanton 32). This was one of the leading counter-arguments that man was one species, changed into races by climate.

Other examples of quantitative study of the races were catalogues of racial traits, such as skin color, facial structure, coarseness of hair, and the human penis. Some went so far as to dissect and study the layout of internal organs. One study showed that Africans were closer to the anatomy of the monkey than Caucasians. At the time, however, all the hypotheses had to conform to the stories in the Bible. Egypt could not have existed before the time of the great flood, there could only be one “human species,” as God created Adam and all man spread out from there. It was for this reason that the conservative religious men were the main supporters of the idea that man was all one species, while the less religious hinted at the idea that man could be multiple races. Some anthropologists purported that Native Americans were a separate creation.

of whether certain races were inferior, and if so, should the inferior races have rights. Even Jefferson, who argued for the freeing of slaves, doubted their actual equality. Some scientists argued that perhaps the different races were actually separate species. George

Gliddon, professed Egyptologist, argued “racial distinctions—either at the Creation or at some time subsequent—were impressed upon man by the hand of God”(Stanton 50).

Reputable scientists struggled with these questions in the nineteenth century, attempting to use science to prove or disprove racism. In their battles, however, real and worthwhile discoveries were made. Linnaeus, with his binomial nomenclature, began what is known today as taxonomy. Morton did a lot of groundbreaking research on the cranium and how human anatomy was physically arranged.

One particular definition of science, from Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913), shows that science can be viewed as a way of systematically finding evidences of fact,

accumulated and established knowledge, which has been systematized and formulated with reference to the discovery of general truths or the operation of general laws; knowledge classified and made available in work, life, or the search for truth; comprehensive, profound, or philosophical knowledge.

In today’s world, any attempt to explain away race as anything other than circumstances of parentage might as well be written by the Ku Klux Klan. In the nineteenth century, this was all a part of science. The study of man was a noble and just cause. We find another useful definition in Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913),

#### Anthropology

1. The science of the structure and functions of the human body.
2. The science of man; -- sometimes used in a limited sense to mean the study of man as an object of natural history, or as an animal.
3. That manner of expression by which the inspired writers attribute human parts and passions to God.

There is little distinction made here between the biology of the human body and the comparative biology of the various races of mankind. As far as studying race was concerned, it was all a part of anthropology.

Anthropologists of the nineteenth century, however, did not begin their researches uniformly. Anthropology is something that came out of the debate of mankind and the attempt to understand it. Morton, for example, was a Geologist prior to his study of anthropology, and as a result of his study, he became a Biologist. Gliddon was the vice consul at Cairo, a political position! These varied backgrounds made for a diversified study of man, rather than a close-minded one.

Particularly interesting is that from all this study of race and culture, came an actual anthropological study of Egypt by George Gliddon. Gliddon became a self-professed "Egyptologist." Gliddon's influence on America coincided with a romantic interest in Egypt during the nineteenth century and after studying under the major Egyptologists in England, Gliddon lectured widely in the United States on the subject. Of note is that he lectured in Boston, Massachusetts, a place that the transcendentalists would have considered within walking distance. More importantly, the lecture occurred in 1839, two years after Thoreau graduated from Harvard. Thoreau and Emerson were also both on the lecturer circuit, and would have kept up with what was going on.

While Thoreau's personal readings on Orientalism did not commence until 1840, there was a considerable amount of influence of the Orient on Thoreau from the lectures of the time period, as well as the two books he read on the subject during his

study at Harvard. Even Louis Agassiz, one of the main anthropologists of the time on the subject of race, was a direct influence on Thoreau, who read his five of his books on scientific nomenclature and zoology. Agassiz also became a professor at Harvard, after the time when Thoreau attended the school. Certainly, if Thoreau did not directly study the anthropological viewpoint of the time, he certainly must have known of its existence because it was one of the main arguments of the time and was studied by some of the same men Thoreau read because of his interest in natural history and zoology.

While anthropology in the nineteenth century was in its infancy, those who studied it did so with scientific vigor and an interest in understanding race and species, rather than proving necessarily racist viewpoints. Though diverse, many of the viewpoints of the time were humanistic and proposed that the slaves be set free, if nothing else than out of pity. Various professors on the topic even went so far as to study the culture of the races they examined, leaving a trail of foreign cultural influences in the United States. Other studies resulted in some of the most important scientific research and discoveries of all time, ones with lasting influence on such fields as taxonomy. Yet it was true that prior to these anthropological studies, there was no teaching of it in schools, “It should be remembered that scientific education was in its embryonic stage everywhere, and that most of the great nineteenth-century naturalists—Darwin included—were essentially self-taught” (Sattelmeyer 11). By today’s standards, the anthropology of the nineteenth century was less advanced; it was a truly significant effort nonetheless. Being the first of their kind ever, the efforts should be looked upon as noble in their intention regardless of their subject matter.

## Chapter 4

### Thoreau's Orientalism

Indeed, each of the transcendentalists had his own version of Orientalism. Thoreau's interest was dominated by his own desires in Concord. It was he who published many of the initial "Ethnical Scriptures" articles in The Dial, an action stemming from an interest in the Orient developed a good many years before the magazine existed. His interests at the time were scholarly and there is much evidence that they originated from the beliefs he was raised with in Concord and that these interests guided his very research into the subject. The interest was strong and enveloped a good deal of his time. There are references even in Walden to Thoreau's influences, significant evidence that Thoreau learned a great deal from the philosophies of his Eastern influences.

Thoreau's Journals show that he had notes on the "Sayings of Confucius" in 1838, a good five years before the article was published in The Dial. They were, as with The Dial essay, primarily concerning the values of friendship and virtue, and denying the overwhelmingly Confucian thought of conformity. Thoreau was more impressed by Confucius' ideas on good conduct than his beliefs on how society should function. The very idea of conformity was not in Thoreau's interest, as is evidenced by his writings on civil disobedience and self-reliance. Confucianism is a model for Thoreau's approach to all of the Oriental religions and philosophies he encountered: Thoreau's interest and practice was selective to his own desires. It was more about finding his own truth in other cultures than understanding every aspect of these cultures.



Interest in Confucianism for its ideas on virtue is also evidenced in Walden. “Can we not do without the society of our gossips a little while under these circumstances, -- have our own thoughts to cheer us on? Confucius says truly, ‘Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors’” (Thoreau, 266). Thoreau pokes fun at the idea of gossips being virtuous, for if they possessed virtue they would also possess the many neighbors of virtue and perhaps would not gossip so much. Still, this evidence of Thoreau’s acknowledgment of Confucian theory on virtue is not quite the result of his belief in Confucianism. It is doubtful that Confucius had gossip in mind when he said what he did.

It is interesting just how many times Thoreau references Oriental thought, religion, or culture in even the most noted of his texts, Walden. Walden is full of references to the “Bhagvat-Gita,” Vedic belief, and Confucianism. Walden contains more references to Orientalism than any other transcendentalist writing and the majority of these references are on Hinduism and the Vedas.

In reference to material wealth and its lack of value, he says, “How much more admirable the “Bhagvat-Gita” than all the ruins of the East! Towers and temples are the luxury of the princes. A simple and independent mind does not toil at the bidding of any prince” (Thoreau 193). What is interesting is the very philosophy behind such a statement. Finding virtue in thought and not material wealth is the very basis of Hindu and Yogic belief. One could say Thoreau’s very life at Walden was a testament to the Yogi, whose noble cause it is to free himself from the worries of the world and learn to be in touch with the nature of things and his own being.

Despite evidences of Thoreau’s life being Yogic, there is no question that this was not his main desire. He says, “I carry less religion to the table ... I am far from regarding

myself as one of the privileged ones to whom the Ved refers when it says ‘he who has faith in the Omnipresent Supreme Being may eat all that exists’ (Thoreau 345)” Of course, Thoreau is speaking of food in this quotation, but it is still an evidence of his denial that the Vedic laws were his way of life. Surely he was interested in them and perhaps he lived a life in their light, but this life was not directed to follow them.

Another aspect of Thoreau’s selective interest in the Orient is evidenced by his love of nature. Even before he encountered Oriental writings, he loved nature in a mystical sense. Perhaps it was his readings of Oriental literature that helped him to fully develop his love of nature’s magic. Thoreau’s writings speak of nature as a sort of guide. He lives in nature to fully expand his being, because Thoreau’s understanding of nature relates to spiritual laws. Nature is a sort of guide to him, an example of life living the spiritual laws of the universe without society to hinder it. Robert D. Richardson theorizes that Thoreau’s thoughts on the subject of nature in fact originated from Goethe. “Just as Goethe recounts in that book his own discovery that the leaf is the law of plant morphology, so Thoreau began to perceive nature as infinite variations on certain underlying laws” (Richardson 8). This idea of the sovereign principle was not uncommon in New England during Thoreau’s time however. It was a much-debated religious principle and one that Hinduism and Confucianism just happen to conform to.

Yet if Thoreau did not research Oriental philosophy for the purpose of following it, he did research it with his own spirituality in mind. In the Walden chapter entitled “Reading,” he quotes a poet: “Says the poet Mir Camar Uddin Mast, ‘Being seated to run through the region of the spiritual world; I have had this advantage in books. To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine; I have experienced this pleasure when I have drunk the liquor of the esoteric doctrines’” (Thoreau 231). Certainly, Thoreau did not live with

the intention of being Hindu, but he did live with the intention to fully realize these universal, spiritual laws, these sovereign principles. He explores the ideas he is fascinated with and drinks the liquor of their truths.

In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the “Bhagvat Geeta,” since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! There I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges (Thoreau 418).

If Thoreau could not have ventured to the Ganges to bathe there himself, he certainly does a well enough job of imagining Walden as his own version. He goes to the length of experiencing the spirituality of the Hindus without even leaving his dear little pond. This drive to understand and to experience the spirituality of Hinduism could not have been much else but a recognition that he believes in their philosophies. Perhaps he did not call himself a Hindu, but he understood their plight.

Indeed, Thoreau’s interest in Hinduism was much more advanced than his interest in most other Oriental philosophies. His interest in Orientalism began with an understanding of the Laws of Menu, The Vedas and Confucianism. It ended, however, in an exploration of his self. It was a drive to free himself through the understanding and the living of the Hindu ways. Thoreau immersed himself in Hinduism. He read the basic texts with vigor, going so far as to argue their points. “The central problem with the Bhagavidgita—and which he had dealt with in the final version of A Week—was that it seemed to him that Krishna did not really give Arjuna a sufficient reason to fight“

(Richardson 206). Thoreau also read and translated “The Transmigration of the Seven Brahmins,” from which he focused on “how to obtain final emancipation” (Richardson 206). In his later days what had been suspected was even more pronounced—that Thoreau’s studious interest in Oriental spiritualism had become personal.

A personal attachment to Hinduism did not happen by accident. Many of the underlying ideals of the religion fit quite nicely into what Thoreau already believed. There was an attachment to nature and the sovereign principle, as well as the inclination towards self-realization and the desire to free himself of the worries of a material and socially reliant world. At first, his experiments were aimed at common ideas, understanding the world from an objective perspective, getting in touch with nature. These were more a result of Emerson’s influences than his Asiatic research. Yet, it is easy to see how the practice of these things became commonplace for Thoreau while at Walden. The man who separates himself with the noble cause of exploration and understanding. A desire to strive for freedom from the mean and understand the truth within him and nature. These are the goals of the Yogi. Truly, Thoreau must have known this as he conducted his little experiment at Walden Pond. This is perhaps the reason why we find just so many references to Hinduism, the “Bhagvat-Gita,” and Confucianism in Walden. Thoreau had a lot of time to think on it and perhaps he decided that he should come to understand the philosophies of the East as he lived such a simple life.

## Chapter 5

### Emerson's Orientalism

Emerson's interest in the Orient could be looked upon as being less personal than Thoreau's. The majority of Emerson's notes on the Orient were essays in which various cultures are mentioned in passing, quotation in his notebook "Orientalist", and poems. Thoreau's interest revolved around improving his life by recognizing his inner self, unabated by a material world. Emerson's interest involved the study of the intellectual thought behind the philosophies, an intense passion for that study, and most notably, poetry. He believed these philosophies of the East should be noted and studied, for they were a truth of the universe and perhaps some contained in them Transcendental thought.

Emerson often speaks of the credibility of Oriental cultures, using them in examples in his many essays. In "Over-Soul", he notes the ways of the Arabian sheiks as a comparison to the western capitalist man.

In their habitual and mean service to the world, for which  
They forsake their native nobleness, they resemble Arabian  
sheiks who dwell in mean houses, and escape the rapacity  
of the Pasha, and reserve all their display of wealth for their  
inferior and guarded retirements (Emerson 51).

In "History," Emerson further clarifies his opinion on Oriental cultures, taking note of the credibility of the truth taught by the many figureheads of major movements.

How easily these old worships of Moses, of Zoroaster,  
of Menu, of Socrates, domesticate themselves in the mind!  
I cannot find any antiquity in them. They are mine as much  
as theirs"(Emerson 78).

There are many quotations containing tidbits of information of what Emerson thinks about these cultures, but it is only in really looking at a few of them that we come to understand his intent in doing so. For him, the simple idea is that these truths remain

truths despite the ages that have passed, despite the varying cultures; this idea is what truly defines Emerson's own quest to study Oriental philosophy. His interests were in the philosophical truths that guided the cultures and struck him as being a part of his own quest to find truth. It was to him a vast quest, by which there was a lot to learn.

Fortune, Minerva, Muse, Holy Ghost,--these are quaint names, too narrow to cover this unbounded substance. The baffled intellect still kneel before this cause, which refuses to be named,--ineffable cause, which every fine genius has essayed to represent by some emphatic by (Novs) thought, Zoroaster by fire, Jesus and the moderns by love: and the metaphor of each has become a national religion (Emerson 102).

There is evidence in the style by which he speaks of these religions that they were important, interesting, and intense to him. The description of the “ineffable cause” leaves the impression that these things were so important that even Emerson himself could not speak upon them to the extent they required. Yet, there is still the lack of clear explanation that these things were not just studies to him, that they were personal.

Emerson's writings may not have been as explanatory of the personal nature of his studies as Thoreau's, but still there are hints that they were personal. An interesting clue into Emerson's attempts to understand the various cultural philosophies of the Orient lies in his very own opinions on poetry. A viewing of Emerson's “Orientalist” journal shows a version of the Zoroastrian poem "Hafiz." It is interesting that he placed it there, occupying about half of his “Orientalist” notebook. The poem is noted simply because Emerson's interest in Persian Poetry is believed to be the main thing that drew him to Orientalism. Persian Poetry was not the supreme end to Emerson's poetic journeys in the Orient however. Emerson also published "Brahma," following the base ideas of the Hindu religion. Emerson himself composed the poem “Brahma”, with the intent of unveiling the nature of the Hindu God Brahma. One would gander that these attempts

were less tangible and more mystical given the nature of poetry, but Emerson himself offers a better explanation in his essay "The Poet," giving us reason to believe that the quest to write a poem for Emerson was a quest to get in touch with the pre-existing truths of the universe.

For poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, or a verse, and substitute something of his own, and thus miswrite the poem (Emerson 405).

In general, it has been noted that Emerson did not miswrite the intent of the Hindu religion in his poem "Brahma." Truth is One, a book of comparative analysis of the oldest religions of time even references Emerson's verses on the Hindu God Brahma, comparing them to the words of the "Bhagvat-Gita."

Thou hast greived for those who need no greif, and thou speakest words of wisdom! The wise greive neither for the dead nor for the living. For never was I not, nor thou, nor these prices of men; nor shall we ever cease to be in the time to come...

We may recall Emerson's lines based upon this colloquy:

If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think his is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.  
(Forman 16-20)

Emerson's very words reach out into the depths of Brahma's nature. The quotation, "They know not well the subtle ways I keep, and pass, and turn again" refers to Brahma as being a fiery wheel that recycles life as per reincarnation. Those who die are sucked into the fire, are absorbed, and are spat back out into a new life. Certainly this quest to understand must have led Emerson down a personal avenue in order to prompt a poem such as "Brahma." By Emerson's own definition of what poetry truly is, he had

come to grasp an understanding of Hinduism that transcended other people's poetry.

Emerson had written his own version to suffice his mind.

It is not enough to say that Emerson's understanding of Oriental philosophies was personal. It must also be clarified why these can be considered personal, and how Emerson came to make an idea personal to him. There is always the notability of Emerson's comprehension. He is noted as being a great mind, full of ideas pieced together to make a system of it all. Emerson was this way for one simple reason: the experience of the thought. Those things that are provoking and moving were the things he built his mental universe on. An idea was more of a wondrous creation, a truth was gold; and there were many to be found. He sifted through ideas, seeking truths and all were tucked away into his mind. The preaching of Buddha or Socrates was just as sound as those of Jesus in his eyes. Everything needed to be explored and was. Observations were placed in long essays where Emerson jumped from idea to idea, attempting to fully explain the peculiarities of a subject. There is an explanation by him that this mental universe does not exist in his actual life, left untouched by the material world.

I know that the world I converse with in the city and in the farms, is not the world I think. I observe that difference, and shall observe it. One day, I shall know the value and the law of this discrepancy. But I not found that much was gained by manipular attempts to realize the world of thought. Many eager persons successively make an experiment this way, and make themselves ridiculous (Emerson 109).

Yet, over and over again we come to understand this great mind through his world of thought on paper. There are books chronicling his life but to the scholar, Emerson is known through his writings and ideas. Perhaps the thought of the physical realization of his mind's world was not something Emerson was willing to attempt, but then again perhaps Emerson's world was more in his mind than on the Earth. What were personal to



him were his thoughts. The very fact that a piece of this mental universe was Oriental and admirable, shows only that it was as personal as Thoreau's Orient.

Yet, could Emerson have believed any of these Oriental cultures to fit into his transcendental universe? Yes, he could have and yes, he did!

But for Emerson, Buddha was a special kind of philosopher. He wrote: "The Buddhist... is a Transcendentalist", and illustrated his assertion by citing: "his conviction that ever good deed can by no possibility escape its reward" (Carpenter 148).

It is notably unclear whether these cultures had helped to shape Emerson's Transcendental universe, but it is clear that they fit nicely into them. Emerson's "Orientalist" notebook is believed to have been started in the 1850s. However, most scholars agree that it was Emerson's influence that piqued Thoreau's interest in the Orient, setting the date of Emerson's readings prior to the early 1840s. Proof that Emerson's readings began around the early 1840s exists when we note that the Dial began its publication in 1840 and "Ethnical Scriptures" was published in it not long after that. Emerson's most famous essays were composed in the 1840s, so there is the possibility that Orientalism had its influence on his ideas. For the most part, scholars have noted that Emerson's understanding of Oriental thought was too cursory to have influenced writings such as "Self-Reliance" which contains ideas comparable to Hindu thought. "But Emerson had fully developed his doctrine of Self-Reliance before beginning to read the Bhagvat-Gita" (Carpenter 153)

Regardless of evidence of Emerson being influenced or not influenced by Oriental thought in the forming of his Transcendentalist ideals, the connection between his beliefs and Orientalist philosophy remains evidence of his fascination with it. There exists the ever-present interest in Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Confucianism in

dedicated study, evidenced by so many references to these philosophies in his many essays. It is likely that even had Emerson not read the many books on Orientalism he did, his beliefs would be contrasted to the “Bhagvat-Gita” regardless.

## **PART 2**

### **Bridging the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Spiritualism, Transcendentalism and**

## Introduction

Does the *spirituality*\* that was so characteristic in the movement of *Transcendentalism* in the nineteenth century pervade some of the twenty-first century healing arts? Are the complementary healing techniques of some modern practitioners rooted in the lives and works of the major Transcendentalists? Is the “Soul Care” of a psychologist, *mindfulness* meditation in a stress reduction clinic, and the ministry of a Unitarian Universalist using *contemplation* and *self-culture* patterned after the spiritual exercises of the Transcendentalists? To answer these questions, we go back to a study of the 19<sup>th</sup> century movement of spiritualism and some of the early scientific investigations of this movement’s “spirit world” physical manifestations, as well as its major proponents.

*Spiritualism* was the alleged communication of the living with the spirits of the world of the dead. The birth of this movement was started on March 31, 1848 by the Fox sisters' "knock heard 'round the world," in Hydesville, New York. People reacted with great excitement, curiosity, belief and disbelief, and near hysterical interest in all phases of it. This eventually brought about scientific investigation and psychical research and claims about the reality or fraud of this phenomenon known as Spiritualism. Spiritualism was developed during a time of empirical science and great advancements in science and technology. The claims of Spiritualism, defined as the communication of the living with spirits of the other world through mediums, seances, automatic writings, and rappings, caused a real conflict between the scientific and religious groups.

This conflict will be explored and scientific methods and investigations into the occurrences of spiritualistic events will be discussed. Several of the movement's main figures, beginning with the Fox sisters' rappings extending to William James and the establishment of the Society for *Psychical Research* will be related. This will show that the contrasting scientific and religious communities are still at odds on explaining the phenomena of "Spiritualism" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, this will lead to the breaking from these concepts and happenings to the Transcendentalist movement of the "Oversoul" in the Universe, "*Self-culture*" and "*Spirituality*". (Moore), (Brown), (R Fuller)

Other major spiritualists and their phenomenon were the backdrop for the movement of *Transcendentalism* (beginning around 1836) and the "*spirituality*" found in their lives and works. Transcendentalism being a form of pure idealism, the insistence on the power of thought and will, and upon the exaltation of the life of the spirit above all material or physical demands. The persistent search for the things of the spirit... brought about an awakened interest in spiritualism. However, this term, to the Transcendentalists meant "spirituality", relating to the Divine in man and nature, spirit as "soul". Three major Transcendentalists, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller, lived and wrote about this essence of man, the "soul", and the Divine in nature. Their spirituality and their interest in "self culture" deepened their lives.

\*Definitions of all italicized words can be found in the Glossary (Appendix I).

*...a charge by raps conveyed  
Should be most scrupulously weighed  
And searched into, before it is  
Made public, since it may give pain  
That cannot be cured again.*

Lowell *Poetic Works*, II, 308-9)  
(Quoted in Kerr 26)

## Chapter 6

### **Spiritualism: Its Beginning, Major Proponents, and Specific Phenomena and Manifestations**

#### **The Fox Sisters and the Hydesville Rappings**

The birth of Spiritualism, as it is now called, occurred in what is called the "Burned-Over" district in New York. It was termed "burned-over" because there were so many religious revivals in that area that some claimed there were no more souls that were "combustible" (Brown 98). It was into this area that a major happening was to take place that would have people searching for wisdom beyond empirical science and trying to resolve the problem between scientific and religious interests beyond the occult for the next 175 years (Moore xiii).

This event occurred on March 31, 1848 in a tiny, run-down house in Hydesville, New York, where John D. Fox, his wife Margaret and his two daughters, Maggie and Katie lived. A week before this date, after sundown, noises like furniture moving or knockings on the walls and floors were heard. On this evening, when they heard the rappings again, Maggie playfully clicked her fingers in imitation. Surprisingly, the rappings responded. They counted out the ages of the girls and of the family. Neighbors of the family then gathered over the next few days and began questioning the spirit or whatever was causing the noises and devised a system of raps for each letter of the

alphabet. In this way, many questions were answered, ages of people were identified, and even years since the death of a neighbor's or friend's loved one were numbered, all correctly. Nobody could explain this phenomenon. It was eventually attributed to the spirit of a murdered spirit buried in the cellar of the Foxes' little house. These started such an interest and near hysteria that the Fox family finally ended up moving. After many investigations and reports of neighbors, influential people in the neighborhood, it was concluded that the rappings could not be attributed to normal circumstances. It was also, at this time believed unlikely that fraud was involved. This was deduced because the sisters, particularly Katie, were uneducated, naive and very innocent and could not, in the estimation of the observers, think of a scheme or accomplish the noises by abnormal means.

Maggie and Katie moved to New York to live with their Aunt Leah. Leah saw a chance to make money by having the girls demonstrate these unusual rappings, which continued even outside their home in Hydesville. She found them an agent and rented a large auditorium in New York where the demonstrations were held. These seances were well attended by large numbers of curious people, many of great influence and of a "high station" in life (Brown 90-110).

Again, many investigations, inquiries and private examinations of the girls and their unusual talent of producing these rappings came up with no scientific or reality-based explanation. One of the most thorough scrutinies of these noises was done in Buffalo, New York.

A scientific group of professors at the School of Medicine at the university in Buffalo did a lengthy investigation into the reality of the rappings produced by Katie and Maggie. It was a long and grueling investigation and at the end, the three professors released a lengthy report to the press with a technical description of the mechanism involved:

The displacement occasioning the knockings is sufficient to remove the ridge of bone, which divides the two articular surfaces of the upper extremity of the tibia from its situation in the sulcus between the condyls of the femur and to carry it, more or less, upon the surface of the outer condyl. This movement gives rise to the first sound, and the return of the bone to its place causes the second sound, which, in the Rochester knocking generally follows quickly on the first (Brown 120).

The doctors admitted that they were "unable to explain fully the precise mechanism by which the displacement is effected" and declared that it was their conviction that both knees of the rappers were "endowed with sonorous powers."

This scientific investigation and resulting report was given great play by the press. They said that the first investigation by men of science was a mortal blow to the humbug. Some journals, however, made light of the professors' diagnosis and one, *The Cincinnati Commercial* printed a parody of the report's technical description of the "sonorous knees":

The only true and legitimate manner for accounting for the taps is the physiological defect of the membranous system. The obtuseness of the abdominal indicator causes the cartilaginous compressor to coagulate into diaphragm, and depresses the duodenum into the flandango. Now, if the taps were caused by the vocation of the electricity from the extremities, the tympanum would also dissolve into the spiritual sanctum, and the olfactory ossificator would ferment, and become identical with the pigmentum. Now, this is not the case; in order to produce the taps the spiritual rotundum must be elevated down to the spiritual sphere. But, as I said before, the inferior ligaments must not subtend over the digitorum sufficiently to disorganize the stercicletum, etc., etc. (Quoted in Brown 121).



So the doctors' "sonorous knees" explanation did not rouse much belief and people, who were genuinely interested in finding a natural explanation for the sounds, complained that it took as much stretch of the imagination to believe that the sounds could be made by the cracking of the joints, as if they were produced by a supernatural agent. The parody above attested to the humor and disbelief in this scientific investigation. Thus, here science did not make their case to explain this type of spiritualism.

Exploration of other theories or explanations of the sounds, such as "toe crackings," a concealed rapping device, a hidden servant under the floor boards, intensive scrutiny of the sisters' clothes and seating arrangements, etc., all did not hold up to the scrutiny of the scientific or other influential groups of investigators as well as the general public (Brown 121-24).

It was finally Maggie herself, some forty years later, who confessed that the rappings were due to the cracking of the toes and if louder noises were needed then all ten toes were used to produce these sounds. Somewhat later, she denied this explanation and said she was under great strain to establish some explanation and get away from the onslaught of the press, investigations and lack of privacy in her life. She and Katie became alcoholics under the stress the notoriety of the whole situation produced.

Again, whether fraud was absolutely established either by Maggie's own account or by the scientific investigations, has not been totally proven. It has been maintained in some accounts of the Fox sisters' stories, that the phenomenon could not be explained by natural means. Other accounts absolutely state that fraud was involved (Moore, Braude).

Whatever the absolute truth, these events started the whole movement called Spiritualism and triggered what would then be a main cause of debate between proponents of science and religion. One thing that the Fox sisters definitely established by these impressive rappings in their presence was the emphasis of this movement of Spiritualism on scientific empirical tests and objective observations (Moore 15).

Spiritualism cannot be understood without looking at a most influential man who earlier emerged as a kind of symbol of the unity between religion and science. This was Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). It was 19<sup>th</sup> century spiritualism that supplied vivid physical demonstrations in the form of such manifestations as the rappings which made Swedenborg's teachings accepted in America. They showed the existence of the hierarchy of the spiritual realms with which we may make psychic contact and thus spiritualism left the door opened for claims of religion to be put to an empirical test (R Fuller 188-9).

Who was Emanuel Swedenborg and what were his major concepts that made such a significant impact on American religion and psychical thought?

### **Emanuel Swedenborg**

Emanuel Swedenborg, born in 1688, was both a well-respected scientist and after many symbolic dreams and a mystical experience, became a visionary and greatly influenced Spiritualism in the 1840's and '50's. In his *Journal of Dreams*, he describes his mystical experiences:

I had in my mind and body the feeling of an indescribable delight so that had it been in my higher degree the whole body would have been, as it were, dissolved in pure joy. In a work, I was in heaven and heard speech which no human tongue can utter, with the life that is there, with the glory and inmost delight that flow from it (Brown 45-6).

After this illuminating event, Swedenborg took this as a sign that he had been intromitted into the spiritual world and that it was his duty to explain to mortals the future

existence that awaits them and the spiritual laws that prevail in both this world and the next. He immediately resigned his position as assessor of minds and began his exploration of the spiritual world. He was 54 at the time (Brown 46-47). His subsequent and prolific spiritual writings, as well as his previous scientific writings, attracted men like Henry James, Sr. and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In Emerson's essay "Swedenborg, or, the Mystic from *Representative Men* (1850), he says of Swedenborg:

... the thoughts he lived were, the universality of each law in nature; the Platonic doctrine of the scale or degrees; the version or conversion of each into other and so the correspondence of all the parts; the fine secret that little explains large, and large, little, the centrality of man in nature, and the connection that subsists throughout all things: he saw that the human body was strictly universal, or an instrument through which the soul feeds and is fed by the whole of matter; so that he held, in exact antagonism to the skeptics that 'the wiser a man is, the more will he be a worshipper of the Deity.' In short, he was a believer in the Identity-philosophy (Emerson 6).

Emerson also credits Swedenborg with the genius of 'giving science an idea'.

In the same essay, he writes:

Each law of nature has the like universality, eating, and sleep or hibernation, rotation, generation, metamorphosis, vortical motion, which is seen in eggs as in planets. These grand rhymes or returns in nature, - the dear, best-known face startling us at every turn, under a mask so unexpected that we think it the face of a stranger, and carrying up the semblance into divine forms, - delighted the prophetic eye of Swedenborg; and he must be reckoned a leader in that revolution, which, by giving to science an idea, has given to an aimless accumulation of experiment, guidance and form and a beating heart (Emerson 7-8).

Emerson continues in his essay to show that the scientific genius of Swedenborg, systematic and logical, was also used in his spiritual writings to show the harmony of nature:

... nature exists entirely in leasts," - is a favorite thought of Swedenborg. "It is a constant law of the organic body that large, compound, or visible forms exist and subsist from smaller, simpler and ultimately from invisible forms, which act similarly to the larger ones, but more perfectly and more

universally, and the least forms so perfectly and universally as to involve an idea representative of their entire universe...

Man is a kind of very minute heaven, corresponding to the world of spirits and to heaven. Every particular idea of man, and every affection, yea, every smallest part of his affection, is an image and effigy of him. A spirit may be known from only a single thought. God is the grand man (Emerson 9).

Emerson, throughout this essay, draws on the genius and great intellectual and prophetic powers of Swedenborg, giving example after example of his explanations of the laws of nature in the most beautiful spiritual words, yet with the precision and logical order of science. (Emerson uses some of these great thoughts in his own writing of *Nature*). He summarizes Swedenborg's connection of the scientific to the spiritual at the end of his essay:

Swedenborg has rendered a double service to mankind, which is now (1850's) only beginning to be known. By the science of experiment and use, he made his first steps; he observed and published the laws of nature; and ascending by just degrees from events to their summits and causes, he was fired with piety at the harmonies he felt, and abandoned himself to his joy and worship. This was his first service. If the glory was too bright for his eyes to bear, if he staggered under the trance of delight, the more excellent is the spectacle he saw, the realities of being which beam and blaze through him, and which to infirmities of the prophet are suffered to obscure and he renders a second passive service to men, not less than the first, perhaps, in the great circle of being – and, in the retributions of spiritual nature, not less glorious or less beautiful to himself (Emerson 22).

Emerson and the Transcendentalists assimilated some of this beauty Swedenborg expressed in his idea of the laws harmony of nature. They also “delighted” in nature as did Swedenborg but the “spirituality” was, to the Transcendentalist, the Divine in man and his “Oneness” in Nature.

Other accounts of Swedenborg, of his trances and visitations by Jesus Christ, Plato, and other minor spirits, made him seem as if he had gone mad. But it was this very

ability to communicate with the other world that opened the way to other religious mystics and this Spiritualism was the single most important factor that made Swedenborgianism popular in America (Moore 10). The person responsible for the awareness in America of the state “trance” in which Swedenborg purported to see these other great figures of history was Andrew Jackson Davis.

### **Andrew Jackson Davis**

Andrew Jackson Davis was born on August 11, 1826 and provided the most direct link between the teachings of Swedenborg and those of Spiritualism (Brown 73); (Moore 20). Davis was a very sickly youth from a very poor, uneducated family. He himself had only about five months of formal education. His clairvoyant powers manifested themselves at a very early age. He became fascinated by a lecture on *mesmerism* and was a highly suggestible candidate and therefore a good subject to be mesmerized. He began to fall at regular intervals into a trance state and have visions. In 1844, the spirits of Swedenborg and the Greek philosopher Galen paid a visit to the mesmerized Davis. Swedenborg was said to have declared that the young Davis would become “an appropriate vessel for the influx He began to fall at regular intervals into a trance state and have visions. In 1844, the spirits of Swedenborg and the Greek philosopher Galen paid a visit to the mesmerized Davis. Swedenborg was said to have declared that the young Davis would become “an appropriate vessel for the influx and perception of truth and wisdom” and that he would soon elevate the human soul to a high degree of harmony (Quoted in Brown 79).

Soon after these mystical experiences, Davis began to be able have success in visualizing inner organs of sick persons and prescribing cures which brought him much attention. He gave medical advice only during periods he was mesmerized and his public appearances took on a formal air of clairvoyant diagnosis exclusively. The sideshow element of his demonstrations of the more sensational aspects of hypnotism--catalepsy communion of sensation, analgesia--the stock program of all stage mesmerists was eliminated.

These demonstrations gave him much notoriety and attracted the attention of Dr. Silas Lyon, and two Universalist ministers, Samuel Brittan and William Fishbough. With Dr. Lyon as his mesmerizer and Fishbough, Davis began the dictation of his book *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind, By and Through Andrew Jackson Davis, the 'Poughkeepsie Seer' and Clairvoyant* and it appeared in 1847 to a skeptical press (Moore 11). However, there were very influential exceptions such as George Ripley, Albert Brisbane and George Bush, a New York University Professor of Hebrew languages, who examined Davis at length. He attested that Davis dictated in Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Arabic, languages he could not possibly know. He wrote regarding Davis that he was "...the most astonishing prodigy the world has every seen next to Swedenborg's oracles." Swedenborg remained in Bush's opinion "seven heavens above Davis," but that "Davis ... was most fascinating from the simplicity of his manner and a certain guileless grace," was destined to be a "world's wonder (Quoted in Moore 11).

Brittan, with Lyon and Fishbough began to edit a journal called *The Univercoelum and Spiritual Philosopher*, first appeared in 1847 soon after Davis's book. This journal, though undogmatic, showed that the contributors did share some assumptions they had derived in roughly equal parts from Swedenborg, Davis, The Universalist Church, and American Transcendentalists.

They believed in Brittan's quest for an 'interior or spiritual philosophy, comprehensively explaining the character and operations of natural laws, accounting for their exterior phenomena and results, and showing the tendencies of all things to higher spheres of existence.' The writers accepted Swedenborg's "science of correspondence," and attempt to reveal the universal relationship between the material and spiritual world. In pursuit of that science, according to Brittan, man must attempt 'to interpret the mystic manuscript wherein Deity has written his great thoughts—the revelations in the earth, and seas, and skies, and above all in the human soul.' The reverence for nature reflected the influence of Transcendentalism, as did the emphasis on the inward divinity of human beings. According to Harris, the goal of life was to discover 'the Divinity within. To believe in God is but to believe that the spiritual which we feel flowing into ourselves, flows from the Infinite Existing Source.' Davis labeled the body of his teachings Harmonial Philosophy. To the staff of the *Univercoelum*, harmony meant above all the underlying unity of science and theology. They argued that only those who penetrated the full set of relationships that existed that existed between the spiritual and material world would understand that both realms operated according to the same principles of natural law. A divine immanence that sustained universal order made all things knowable to those individuals who developed their internal (spiritual) and external (bodily) senses together (Moore 11-12).

The major ideas emphasized by the Trancendentalists seemed to come from the melding of the ideas of these early spiritualists and their followers. The contributors and editors of this journal, the *Univercoelum*, discouraged by the low number of subscribers, were led in the direction of the sensational spiritualism at the time... the seances and displays of mediums in communications with spirits, which had just been popularized by the Fox sisters. Therefore, other publications, such as *The Spiritual Telegraph*, *The Spiritual Messenger* and *The Spirit World* were in demand. The spiritualists of this time

became solely interested in the spirits of the departed and lost interest in the “spirit of Christ, which descends to be immanent in the heart”(Moore 17-18).

At this point, one difference emerged between spiritualism and perhaps transcendental spirituality. Swedenborg’s Church in the United States, rejected an alliance with spiritualism. For roughly the same reason. In spirit seances, one spoke only to dead human beings, never with non-human spirits. No medium claimed a direct infusion of divine intelligence. Swedenborg had warned against casual spirit intercourse because of the deception practiced by evil demons.

Gile Stebbins, a man who was active in many reforms movements and who did successfully combine Transcendentalism and Swedenborgianism with an enthusiastic espousal of spiritualism, summed up his dual faith in a sentence of his autobiography: “the transcendentalist would say immortality is a truth of the soul; the spiritualist would grant that, but would verify that truth by the testimony of the senses”(Quoted in Moore 18).

The importance that the early writers of the *Univercoelum* had placed on the “awakening of the senses” did not follow into popular writings. Spiritualism and science clashed and the spiritualists, in the interest of science, proposed a religious faith that depended upon seeing and touching. They tried to make the man’s inward spiritual nature into an empirical inquiry. From that time on, Spiritualists never wavered from four main principles that would make spirit communication credible: “a rejection of supernaturalism, a from belief in the inviolability of natural law, a reliance on external



facts rather than on an inward state of mind and a faith in the progressive development of knowledge” (Moore 19).

John Edmonds, a lawyer who converted to spiritualism, also took up the cause of making spiritualism plausible. He had visions and wrote of them. His testimony was always sober and subdued—free from extravagant adjectives, and couched in the chaste poetical style, which led the reader with an attraction, which could not be resisted. But his style made him easy to parody. A “chaste” style could not turn fantasy into science, as Edmonds himself discovered to his embarrassment when he touted a piece of fiction about a talking corpse as a genuine report of spirit activity. Nevertheless, Edmond’s “sober” and subdued” tone led many Americans to believe the seriousness of his scientific intentions” (Moore 21).

One of his main arguments was to

‘emphasize that the spirit visions granted to him were quite humdrum affairs.’ No trace of saintly rapture dulled his mind, nor did he, like Davis and other mediums, profess to enter a different level of consciousness and utter things they could not later recall. He wrote that his visions neither severed his contact with reality nor led him to abandon reason and self-control. . . . Let us ever bear in mind, that spiritual intercourse is not supernatural, but in compliance with fixed laws affecting the whole human family (Quoted in Moore 21).

In this way, one can see why Edmonds’ tracts became associated with scientific investigations. The very format of his spirit messages was printed to create that impression.

Spiritualists also claimed their adherence to Baconian procedures that guided American science in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They professed to let their conclusions emerge naturally from the observed. To them it appeared that scientists who

did not agree with their efforts and criticized their efforts violated empirical principles by ruling out the facts “not for the want of testimony in their favor, but because they presume, beforehand, that nature has no power to produce them.” In fact, during the 1850’s, the spirit of Francis Bacon sent many messages of consolation to spiritualist circles because of the hostility of groups among professional scientists it was claimed (Moore 23).

Another problem the spiritualists encountered was difficulty in clarifying their view of the nature of spirit. Most agreed that “immaterial substance could not exist.” The two words contradict each other.

A Mr. Levi found spiritualism required only minor adjustments in the former materialist outlook: ‘the whole universal creation, unimaginable even to our highest conceptions, is entirely, and without exception, composed of matter in thousands and tens of thousands of different shapes, figures, and forms, more or less refined, rarefied, and elevated.’ Spiritualism’s war on materialism consisted totally in getting science to recognize the existence of matter ‘too refined, subtle, and sublimated to our vision, although its proponent involved themselves in a contradiction by also insisting that ‘seeing is believing’ (Moore 24).

In trying to convince science to measure things that lay beyond earthly horizons spiritualists wound up reinvesting spirits with all the qualities of matter which was the term they employed and which did not differ in concept from Thomas Hobbes’s definition of spirit as ‘a physical body refined enough to escape the senses’ –somehow had to demonstrate its existence in the senses or go begging. There were those who interpreted this position as a capitulation to materialism (Moore 24).

Finally, one of the claims spiritualists were proudest of was their rejection of the distinction between natural and supernatural.

Andrew Jackson Davis attacked Horace Bushnell, a theologian, who wrote *Nature and the Supernatural, as Together Constituting the One System of God*. By saying that Bushnell’s desire to distinguish a supernatural realm whose laws were superior to human “reason,

argument and judgment” reflected “the uneducated mind that yearns for the romantic. and the incomprehensible,” Davis had completely missed the point: the theologian was worried about an age “which had become fastened to, and glued down upon nature; conceiving that nature, as a frame of physical order, is itself the system of God; unable to imagine anything higher and more general to which it is subordinate.” Given his own concerns about the movement, Davis might well have wondered whether the loss of the supernatural in the imagination did not account for spiritualism’s overemphasis on the strictly physical.

The attitude of the spiritualist towards the supernatural was derived from Transcendentalists who also did not believe in the concept of miracles. The movements were considered by some to be complementary. Spiritualism’s assertion that spirit was a tangible presence in everyday lent support to the point of contact between the infinite and the finite—or, as Emerson would have it,

the point where spirit became manifest in visible creation. However, despite the influence of Transcendentalism on spiritualism, the terminology used by spiritualists altered the Romantic point of view in crucial ways. In joining Emerson’s attack on miracles, most spiritualists forgot to balance such a potentially mundane doctrine with the Transcendentalist’s concern for inward illumination for “internal evidences”). “Natural” for the spiritualists meant observable, and the realm of nature they observed (the séance room) had little in common with Walden Pond. The regularity in perceived by the five senses became the standard against which to measure all divine activity. Not surprisingly, regarded the whole spiritualist affair as trite. “no inspired mind,” he said, “ever condescends to these evidences. They comprised “The rat hole of revelation” (Moore 25).

## **Conclusion**

With the birth of spiritualism up to the coinciding period of the Transcendentalist movement, the struggle for the spiritualist’s approval of science that it (spiritualism) be a rational science has been very pronounced. This debate of Science and Theology will probably be permanently unresolved. The main point of this debate is that without

spiritualism, the triggering of the start of psychical research and the study of the concepts of the unconscious might not have happened. Spiritualism had paved the way for psychology and the exploring of the levels of consciousness of man's mind. The additional though different study of the care and cure of man's soul and the Divinity ("spirituality") was also very much a consequence of this movement. In this regard, it is one of the most important movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

However, the proponents of spiritualism became less concerned with the inner spirituality sought in early stages of the movement, and gravitated toward the showy seances and paying clientele. The hopes generated by the early spiritualists for the reconciliation of science and religion consequently shifted elsewhere. This was to parapsychology and psychical research.

Therefore, another important outcome was the establishment of the Society of Psychical Research in 1882. This society was a group of scholars and wealthy "seekers" alike in their study of such phenomena as trance mediumship, telepathy, clairvoyance, ghostly apparitions and life after death. This psychological science of the study of the unconscious and life after death, was termed by F.W. Myers, a great psychical researcher, as "the preamble to all religions"—the existence of an invisible spiritual reality. William James put his finger on it when he said the underlying reason that he and others found themselves turning to psychical research was: "Science has come to be identified with a certain fixed general belief, the belief that the deeper order of Nature is mechanical exclusively, and that non-mechanical categories are irrational way of conceiving and explaining such a thing as human life." He and Myers said that "the search for new facts, so as to make faith possible again in a scientific age, is precisely what our Society undertakes" (Quoted in R Fuller 190-1).

***There is only one illness and one healing.***  
***—Franz Anton Mesmer, 1779***  
**(Quoted in R.Fuller 1)**

## **Chapter 7**

### **Spiritualistic Healers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century healers, who eventually influenced the development of psychical research through mind-cures, studies of the unconscious, trances, and *hypnotism*, anticipated developments in the science of psychology. The discovery of the unconscious will later pervade some of the 21<sup>st</sup> century healing practices. One of these early healers was Franz Anton Mesmer whose discovery was to greatly change the “healing thoughts” of that period.

#### **Franz Anton Mesmer**

Franz Anton Mesmer, whose discovery of animal magnetism was part of the healing science of his time, was a precursor of the later study of the science of psychology and the unconscious. He was a Viennese physician who treated a hysterical woman with about 15 symptoms by reasoning that if he could artificially induce the wave-like fluctuations of her physical system, he could bring them under control. He had her swallow a solution containing traces of iron and attached magnets to her legs and stomach. She almost immediately reported waves of energy going through her body. In a few minutes, he recreated the hysterical conditions she had had previously. After a few such sessions, the symptoms became less frequent and then disappeared completely until she was pronounced “cured” (R..Fuller 2).

This finding of Mesmer, that human ailments could be explained and treated by dynamic forces previously undetected by medical science, “stimulated successive theoretical breakthroughs which eventually gave rise to modern psychiatry” (R. Fuller 2). To Mesmer, however, his cures had nothing to do with what we, today, would call psychological factors.

He believed that the curative agent was said to be an invisible energy or fluid, which he called animal magnetism. He believed that he had at last come upon the etheric medium through which sensations of every kind—light, heat, magnetism, electricity—were able to pass from one physical object to another. He thus proclaimed that animal magnetism to be a universal substance linking together every orderly process throughout nature (Quoted in R. Fuller 2-3).

Supposedly, this cosmic essence was distributed evenly in the healthy human body. If the equilibrium of an individual’s supply of animal magnetism were changed, one or more bodily organs would consequently be deprived of sufficient amount of this vital force and would begin to falter. Since there was only one cause of illness, it followed that there was only one truly effective mode of healing—the restoration of equilibrium to the body’s supply of animal magnetism. In simple terms, Mesmer believed he had “reduced medical science to the passing of magnets over the patients’ head in an effort to supercharge their nervous systems with this mysterious, net life-giving energy (R.Fuller 3).

The importance of this discovery was that it defied the magicoreligious practice of exorcism at the time used by the clergy. Mesmer claimed to have discovered the scientific principle of disease of which all healers before had only been dimly aware. He

stated that there was nothing whatsoever supernatural about his cures. He proclaimed this was a victory of the aristocracy over the clergy, and science over theology (R. Fuller 4).

Mesmer wrote his *Reflections on the Discovery of Animal Magnetism (1779)* that listed 27 principles of his theory of Animal Magnetism. The following selected principles are the most important and define the rationale of his theory:

1. There exists a mutual influence between celestial bodies, the earth, and animated bodies.
2. The means of this influence is a fluid, which is universally widespread, and pervasive in manner which allows for no void, subtly permits no comparison, and is of a nature which is susceptible to receive, propagate, and communicate all impressions of movement.
3. This reciprocal action is subject to mechanical laws, unknown until now.
4. This action results in alternative effects, which can be considered as ebb and flow  
.....
- 6 It is by this operation (the most universal of those laws which nature offers us) that active relations are exerted between the heavenly bodies, the earth, and its constituent parts.  
.....
9. This mutual influence exhibits, particularly in the human body, properties analogous to those of a magnet. One can distinguish diverse and opposing poles, which can be communicated, changed, diminished, and reinforced; even the phenomenon of declination is observed.
10. The property of an animal body, which renders it susceptible to this influence of celestial bodies, and of the reciprocal action of its environment evinces an analogy with a magnet so I have decided to call it "Animal Magnetism."  
.....
22. It should be understood that magnetism and artificial electricity, with respect to illness, have qualities that are shared in common with many other agents that nature offers us; and if the administration of one of these other agents results in useful effects it is really due to animal magnetism.

23. One will notice by the facts, according to practical rules which I establish, that this principle can immediately cure illness of the nerves and immediately all others (Quoted in R Fuller 4-5)

Mesmer's theory, in one giant stroke, brushed aside both medical science and religious supernaturalism. The healing he proposed deflated all other rival healing systems, putting them all under one grand doctrine. "There is," he pontificated, "only one illness and one healing" (Quoted in R.Fuller 4). This implied that conventional medicine was largely useless and any therapeutic value attributed to any religious or medical healing practices was their indirect effect upon the supply of the patient's animal magnetism. Mesmer's methods were more direct. With sufficient concentration and will power, a healer could capacitate, store and transmit potent energies from his own person to the patient. The science of animal magnetism was alone sufficient to "immediately cure illness of nerves and mediately all others" (R.Fuller 6).

This "cure" would be more effective than what would be termed as "hypnotism" because it not only involved power over the will of the client, but also it allegedly was a physiological cure of the "nerves." Mesmer claimed almost "God-like" powers in this concept of animal magnetism.

One of Mesmer's self-proclaimed Professors of Animal Magnetism, the Frenchman named Charles Poyen, brought mesmerism to New England in 1836. His lecture tour initially took on a skeptical audience. However, he turned throngs of people around to believers who came to see great entertainment as he staged his exhibitions of mesmerizing subjects into a *somnambulic* state. He explained to his volunteers that his



manual gestures would heighten the activity of their systems' animal magnetism to the point where what he called "external sensibilities" would temporarily go into a sleep-like condition. Nothing could evoke the slightest response while in this state. To every appearance, the subjects' minds left the physical world. When they came to, they did not remember anything they did in this state. The frivolity of these demonstrations separated mesmerism from the established scientific community. However, Poyen's lecture-demonstrations effectively stimulated the public's imagination with novel "facts" about human nature—facts which if not as "important to science" as Poyen had hoped, would prove far more "glorious to human nature" than even he had ever dreamed (R Fuller 32).

Some of Poyen's mesmerized subjects attained the "highest degree" of the magnetic condition. They went beyond the peculiar to the extraordinary. The client and the mesmerizer established a strong rapport or *telepathy*, which was characteristic of some nonverbal communication. This was due to "suggestibility" or "power over the will" of the subject.

Some mesmerized subjects saw "dazzling lights", became clairvoyant, Or capable of seeing objects at any distance without even the assistance of sympathy (with their operator); they are prevoiant, or capable of foreseeing future events; and they have also intuitive knowledge as to the though and characters of persons to whom they direct their attention. In truth there is no definite limit to the range of their intuitive knowledge (whether) in medicine, metaphysical philosophy, theology, chemistry, geology... (R. Fuller 35).

These deeper realms of the state of mesmerization had mystical elements to them. The subjects temporarily felt omnipresent and having omniscient mental powers. One investigator said the subjects "speak as if, to their own consciousness, they had undergone an inward translation by which they had passed out of a material into a

spiritual body...the state into which a subject is brought by the mesmerizing process is a state in which the spirit predominates for the time being over the body” (Quoted in R. Fuller 36).

This opened up the beginning of the psychology of “deeper” levels of consciousness and allowed the individual to reach qualitatively “higher” planes of mental existence. Some reached ecstasy or enjoyed an ethereal experience. The mesmerists claimed that the key to achieving personal harmony with these deeper levels was literally within themselves. The chief value, then, of the mesmerists in America was that they transformed the science of animal magnetism into a theory that it sanctioned, and could even help engineer, mystical union with a transcendent spiritual order.

Poyen was oblivious to the close connection there was between mesmerist psychology and the popular religious climate at the time. The *Providence Journal* stated that “God and eternity are the only answer to these mysterious phenomena...these apparitions of the Infinity and the Unknown.” One author points out that it cast “light on how we are constituted, how nearly we are related to and how far we resemble our original...God who is a pure spiritual essence.” A typical account of this encounter with the animal magnetic forces momentarily transforming and elevating a person’s very being relates that:

The whole moral and intellectual character becomes changed from the degraded condition of earth to the exalted intelligence of a spiritual state. The external senses are all suspended and the internal sense of spirit acts with its natural power as it will when entirely freed from the body after death. No person, we think, can listen to the revelations of a subject in a magnetic state, respecting the mysteries of our nature and continue to doubt the existence of a never dying soul and the existence of a future or heavenly life (R. Fuller 41-2).

It was evident that Americans saw mesmerism as treating the whole person and not just isolated complaints. Mesmerism, like so many of the “isms” to appear in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was, however, liberating, progressive and had a combined scientific and religious outlook. Since mesmerism “not only disposes the mind to adopt religious principles, but also tends to free us from superstition by reducing to natural causes many phenomena,” it also enabled people who had become intellectually separated from the church to find a new focus for their religious convictions. (R. Fuller 43)

This led many years later to the “turning of the mind inward upon itself toward its ‘divine’ [essence] and thus man coming into such relation with his own immortal self”. This was similar to the vision of the introspective *ascetic* paths of the West and the meditative paths of Hinduism and Buddhism. Evans, a proponent of New Thought Psychology, stated “the true self is covered over by several sheaths or layers of earthly identifications. These layers must be stripped away before we can know our own divine nature:

First is the outer court of sense, next, the inner sanctuary of the intellectual soul and lastly, in the East, the most holy place, the spirit where like the high priest we may commune with God. This is the inmost religious core of our being and our real self. It is included in the Christ or the Universal Spirit... The Summit of our being which is the real and divine man, is never contaminated by evil nor invaded by disease (Quoted in R. Fuller 180).

This New Thought psychology (Thine) provided the clearest explanation of the movement’s harmonial piety:

In just the degree that we come into a conscious realization of our oneness with the Infinite Life, and open ourselves to the Divine inflow, do we actualize in ourselves the qualities and powers of the Infinite Life, do we make ourselves channels through which the Infinite Intelligence and Power can work. In just the degree in which you realize your oneness with the Infinite Spirit, you will exchange dis-ease for disease, in-harmony for harmony, suffering and pain for abounding health and strength (R. Fuller 182).

Thus, they proposed this mind healing was based on the fact that “thoughts are forces” and in the degree that thought is spiritualized does it become more subtle and powerful; it is within each of us that this spiritualizing can be a mind-cure and this was the principle of the mind-cure psychologists and positive thinkers.

Psychology, science, and spirituality were all connected in Swedenborg’s and Davis’s “Laws of Harmony” and philosophies of the Universe; Mesmer’s “Animal Magnetism” as the ‘fluid force’ within all of us that if balanced, promotes health; and finally, the discovery by Poyen's form of mesmerism of the unconscious by *somnambulism* or *hypnotism*. These were all interwoven in this final "mind-cure movement" or the beginning of psychology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [Quimby, Evans, Trine - Mind-Cure proponents](R. Fuller, Moore). These are part and parcel to many of the beliefs of the Transcendentalists and the spirituality that was evidenced in the lives and written works of the major Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller.

These Transcendentalists, however, thought Mesmer’s ideas were a form of demonology. This was the transition point from spiritualism’s healing philosophy to the Transcendentalists “spirituality.” They believed, for example, in the “Divinity in man” which was similar to Divine inflow into self of the New Thought Psychology. The key point is that Mesmer and his proteges precluded this New Thought science of psychology by the discovery of the “unconscious” (R. Fuller).

*Incredulity of truth is apt to be accompanied by credulity  
of much nonsense, as in our skeptics in religion who  
go blind into – astrology and – mesmerism.  
--(Emerson in his Journal, 1866)*

## Chapter 8

### From Spiritualism to “Transcendental Spirituality”

What is “spiritualism” as defined by the major Transcendentalists? What are the thoughts and opinions of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller, three major Transcendentalists, on spiritualism and its manifestations? Is there a splitting or a bridging of the two 19<sup>th</sup> century movements \_\_spiritualism, the belief in spirits and contact with the “other world,” and Transcendentalism, characterized by *spirituality*\_\_the Divinity in man and in nature?

The term spiritualism was used to describe the practices of individuals or institutions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that believed in communion with the deceased—communication with the world of spirits. Some people, such as Emerson, used the word “spiritism” to define this movement. In summary, the spiritualists showed the reality of this communication with the “other world” by many physical manifestations that included table rappings and table tipping; spirit writing and drawing made involuntarily by the medium; spontaneous movements of large material objects such as tables and pianos without any physical explanation; apparitions of the dead; spirit music—

sometimes provided with instruments, sometime without; human levitation; and possessions. (Bosco, Mott ed. Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism, 204-6)

The Transcendentalists, Emerson and Thoreau, criticized this movement of “spiritualism” beginning with the Fox sisters’ “knock heard round the world” on March 31, 1848. They also balked at Mesmer’s discovery of Animal Magnetism (propounded in a summary of his concepts [1779]) and brought to the United States in 1836 by his protégé, Charles Poyen, whose lecture tours sold his ideas on animal magnetism to an amazed public as *somnambulism*. These manifestations of spiritualism were the target of some brutally caustic opinions by Emerson and Thoreau.

Thoreau, living in the progressive town of Concord, Massachusetts in writing a letter to his sister Sophia on July 13, 1852, expresses his exasperations—bordering on contempt—with his neighbors who, like many Americans, were caught up in the latest news of mediums, spirit encounters, and seances. He states:

Concord is just as idiotic as ever in relation to the spirits and their knockings. Most people here believe in a spiritual world which no respectable junk-bottle which had not met with a slip would condescend to for a moment—whose atmosphere would extinguish a candle let down into it like a well that wants airing; in spirits which the very bull-frogs in our meadows would blackball. Their evil genius is seeing how low it can degrade them. The hooting of owls, the croaking of frogs, is celestial wisdom in comparison. If I could be brought to believe in the things which they believe, I should make haste to cell out my stock in this and the next world’s enterprises, and buy a share in the first Immediate Annihilation Company that offered. I would exchange my immortality for a glass of small beer this hot weather. Where *are* the heathens? Was there ever superstition before? And yet I suppose there may be a vessel this very moment setting sail from the coast of North America to that of Africa with a missionary on board. Consider the dawn and the sunrise—the rainbow and the evening—the words of Christ and the aspirations of the saints! Hear music! See, smell, taste, feel, hear—anything—and then hear these idiots, inspired by the cracking of a restless board, humbly asking, ‘Please, Spirit, if you cannot answer by knocks, answer by tips of the table’ !!!!!!-- (Thoreau’s Letters).

Thoreau's ridicule both of the spiritualists and their practices is very clear in this letter. He used metaphors from the sounds of lowly animals to objects of uselessness to show his contempt. The sarcasm in the last few sentences of the quotation sums up his stance on the people ("idiots") that believed in and thronged to the entertainment and sensationalism of this movement.

Emerson's most derisive and strongest opinion on the spiritualists, especially the mesmerists and their Animal Magnetism and the "rappers," is stated in his essay "Demonology" published in the *North American Review* in 1877, but first given as a lecture in 1839 on Human Life. He speaks of the simple men drawn in and attracted to this movement as those

men who had never wondered at anything, who had thought it the most natural thing in the world that they should exist in this orderly and replenished world, have been unable to suppress their amazement at the disclosures of the somnambulist. The peculiarity of the history of Animal Magnetism is that it drew in as inquirers and students a class of person never on any other occasion known as students and inquirers. Of course the inquiry is pursued on low principles. Animal Magnetism peeps. It becomes in such hands a black art. The uses of the thing, the commodity, the power, at once come to mind and direct the course of inquiry. It seemed to open again that door which was open to the imagination of childhood... but as Nature can never be outwitted, as in the Universe no man was every known to get a cent's worth without paying in some form or other the cent, so this prodigious promiser ends always and always will, as sorcery and alchemy have done before, in very small and smoky performance.

Mesmerism is high life below stairs; Momus playing Jove in the kitchens of Olympus. 'T is a low curiosity or lust of structure, and is separated by celestial diameters from the love of spiritual truths. It is wholly a false view to couple these things in any manner with the religious nature and sentiment, and a most dangerous superstition to raise them to the lofty place of motives and sanctions. This is to prefer halos and rainbows to the sun and moon. These adepts have mistaken flatulency for inspiration. Were this drivel which they report as the voice of spirits really such we must find out a more decisive suicide.

On the subject of the Fox sister rappings, Emerson writes, also in

“Demonology:”

“I say to the tablerappers:-- ‘I well believe  
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,  
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.’

They are ignorant of all that is healthy and useful to know, and by law of kind, --dunces seeking dunces in the dark of what they call the spiritual world, --preferring snores and gastric noises to the voice of any muse. I think the rappings a new test like blue litmus or other chemical absorbent, to try catechisms with. It detects organic skepticism in the very heads of the Church. ‘T is a lawless world. We have left the geometry, the compensation, and the conscience of the daily world, and come into the realm or chaos of chance and pretty or ugly confusion; no guilt and no virtue, but a droll bedlam, where everybody believes only after his humor, and the actors and spectators have no conscience or reflection, no police, no foot-rule, no sanity, --nothing but whim and whim creative...

“Demonology is the shadow of Theology.”

The whole world is an omen and a sign. Why look so wistfully in is the Image of God. Why run after a ghost of a dream? The voice of divination resounds everywhere and runs to waste unheard, unregarded as the mountains echo with the bleatings of cattle (Emerson, “Demonology” 25-8).

Emerson’s aversion to spiritualists, particularly those who profited from these demonstrations (the Fox sisters, Poyen), was so great, that he called them “charlatans.” His belief that spiritualism was undermining the moral fabric of society is collectively represented also in “The Conduct of Life (1860); “Success,” a title of a lecture and then later published as an essay in Society and Solitude (1870), and as seen in the above “Demonology”. In the “Conduct of Life”, he said of the phenomenon, “that it was not only a confusing, faddish nuisance but also one among several factors contributing to the decline of the intellectual component of spirit, of moral conduct in personal affairs, and of progress in political economy as well as in the arts and sciences...all evidenced in ‘the squalor of Mesmerism’”( Ryan , Mott, ed Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism, 207).



One can see that both Emerson and Thoreau were totally and passionately opposed to the movement of spiritualism. Their rhetoric and writings could not be more crystal clear on their position. The only leeway that Emerson gives at all to the rappers is in his quotation stated above in which he mentions Kate (the youngest of the Fox sisters) that “thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know and in that so far will trust I trust thee, gentle Kate.” Her innocence and lack of education—suggesting that she could not possibly have fabricated these noises (rappings) that she claimed to hear gives--her the benefit of the doubt. But he has only sarcasm and ridicule as Thoreau for all the sensationalism of the collective spiritualists of “rappers,” mesmerists, mediums, and the like in particular, those making money from these “demonstrations of fakery.”

Margaret Fuller, on the hand, although she did not define spiritualism as was witnessed at the time, believed in what she termed “daemonology” after the example of the German writer Goethe. She epitomized him as the greatest influence on her. Admitting that she was mostly an “intellectual” and wanting dearly to develop her other whole being, she fulfilled this yearning after studying him. She greatly developed her spiritual and emotional being through the beautiful, ethereal, wise and sublime ideas in his writings. The woman that emerged after her reading of this great German writer was a completely different person, previously the political proponent of many causes-- abolitionist, women’s right activist, and women’s intellectual equality. She also was an intellectual conversationalist mostly at gatherings of prominent and influential women of the time, and editor of the *Dial*, the Transcendentalist journal of essays. Her spirituality, emotional depth, and “womanly” essence was enhanced and she felt whole after study of Goethe. Her “Credo,” later paraphrased, will show this growth.

Her idea of daemonology is connected to a sense of fate or destiny that she experienced in much of her own life. She expresses in several letters to friends her thoughts on this topic. In a letter dated December 12, 1848 to Ralph Waldo Emerson, she quotes Goethe that “every man has a daemon, who is busy to confuse and limit his life.” She writes, “with me, for weeks and months, the daemon works his will. Nothing succeeds with me. I fall ill, or am otherwise interrupted” (Quoted in Emerson, Channing, Clarke *Memoirs*, Vol. I: 123).

In another letter to an earlier friend, she explains in little more detail:

As to the Daemoniacal, I know not that I can say to you anything more precise than you find from Goethe. There are no precise terms for such thoughts. The work ‘instinctive’ indicates their existence.... It may be best understood, perhaps, by a symbol. As the sun shines from the serene heavens, dispelling noxious exhalations, and calling forth exquisite thoughts on the surface of earth in the shape of shrub or flower, so gnome-like works the fire within the hidden caverns and secret veins of earth, fashioning existences which have a longer share in time, perhaps, because they are not immortal in thought. Love, beauty, wisdom, goodness are intelligent, but his power moves only to seize its prey. It is not necessarily either malignant or the reverse, but it has no scope beyond demonstrating its existence. When conscious, self-asserting, it becomes (as power working for its own sake, unwilling to acknowledge love for its superior, must) the devil. That is the legend of Lucifer, the star that would not own its centre. Yet, while it is unconscious, it is not devilish, only daemonic. In nature, we trace it in all volcanic workings, in a boding position of lights, in whispers of the wind, which has not pedigree; in deceitful invitations of the water, in the sullen rock, which never shall find a voice, and in the shapes of all those beings who go about seeking what they may devour. We speak of a mystery, a dread; we shudder, but we approach still nearer, and a part of our nature listens, sometimes answers to this influence which, if not indestructible, is at least indissolubly linked with the existence of matter.

Fuller continues to talk of these daemons (spirits) as powers within oneself that have gone awry and not the spirits of the dead (NOT spiritism as of the sensational kind). She continues in this same letter:

In genius, and in character it works, as you say instinctively; it refuses to be analyzed by the understanding, and is most of all inaccessible to the person who possesses it. We can only say, I have it, he has it. You have seen it often in the eyes of those Italian faces you like. It is most obvious in the eye. As we look on such eyes, we think on the tiger, the serpent, beings who lurk, glide, fascinate, mysteriously control. For it is occult by its nature, and if it could meet you on the highway and the familiarly know as an acquaintance, could not exist. The angels of light do not love, yet they do not insist on exterminating it.

It has given rise to the fables of wizard, enchantress, necessarily bad. Power tempts them. They draw their skills from the dead, because their being is coeval with that of matter, and matter is the mother of death (Quoted in Emerson, Channing, Freeman *Memoirs*, Vol I: 223-5).

In his “Demonology” (16), Emerson also speaks of this same kind of ‘doting power’ “so easily sliding into the current belief everywhere, and, in particular of lucky days and fortunate persons”. After speaking of fairies, angels and saints (which he also includes in demonology) Emerson like Fuller, uses Goethe’s words from his Autobiography to explain the nature of this power and its purpose: --

I believed that I discovered in nature animate and inanimate, intelligent and brute, somewhat which manifested itself only in contradiction, and therefore could not be grasped by a conception, much less by a word. It was not god-like, since it seemed unreasonable; not human, since it had no understanding; devilish, since it was beneficent; not angelic, since it is often a marplot. It resembled chance, since it showed no sequel. It resembled Providence, since it pointed at connection. All, which limits us, seemed permeable to that. It seemed to deal at pleasure with the necessary elements of our constitution; it shortened time and extended space. Only in the impossible it seemed to delight, and the possible to repel with contempt. This, which seemed to insert itself between all other things, to sever them to bind them, I named the Demoniactal, after the example of the ancients, and of those who had observed the like.

Although every demoniactal property can manifest itself in the corporeal and incorporeal, yes, in beast too in a remarkable manner, yet it stands specially in wonderful relations with man, and forms in the moral world, though not an antagonist, yet a transverse element, so that the former may be called the warp, the latter, the woof...

But this demonic element appears most fruitful when it shows itself as the determining characteristic in an individual. In the course of my life I have been able to observe several such, some near, some farther off. They are not always superior persons, either in mind or in talent. They seldom recommend themselves through goodness of heart. But a monstrous force goes out from them, and they exert an incredible power over all creatures, and even over the elements; who shall say how far such an influence may extend? All united oral powers avail

nothing against them. In vain do the clear-headed part of mankind discredit them as deceivers or deceived, --the mass is attracted. Seldom or never do they meet their match among their contemporaries; they are not to be conquered save by the universe itself, against which they have taken up arms. Out of such experiences doubtless across the strange, monstrous proverb, 'Nobody against God but God' (Emerson, "Demonology" 18).

Emerson analyzes this power, which "appears in only a few men and which draws other men and events to favor them. The crimes they commit... and which would ruin any other man are strangely overlooked. I talk of these things because if wise men as Goethe speak mysteriously of the demonological, the "insinuation is that the known eternal laws of moral and matter are sometime corrupted by this 'gypsy principle' which chooses favorites and works in the dark for their own favor. This extends the popular idea of success to the very gods; that they foster a success to you which is not a success to all; that fortunate men, fortunate youths exist whose good is not virtue or the public good, but a private good, robbed from the rest"(Emerson, "Demonology"19). It is a 'midsummer madness,' corrupting all who believe it.

The demonologic is only a fine name for egotism; an exaggeration namely of the individual, whom it is Nature's settled purpose to postpone. 'There is one world common to all who are awake, but each sleeper betakes himself to one of his own.' Dreams retain the infirmities of our character. The good genius may be there or not, our evil genius is sure to stay. The Ego partial makes the dream; the Ego total the interpretation. Life is also a dream on the same terms. (Emerson "Demonology" 20).

He concludes that

before we acquire great power we must acquire wisdom to use it well. Animal magnetism inspires the prudent and moral with a certain terror; so the divination of contingent events and the alleged second-sight of the pseudo spiritualists. There are many things of which a wise man might wish to be ignorant, and these are such. Shun them as you would the secrets of the undertaker and the butcher. The best are never demoniacal or magnetic; leave this limbo to the Prince of the power of the air. The lowest angel is better. It is the height of the animal; below the region of the divine. Power as such is not known to the angels (Emerson, "Demonology" 21).

Just as with the “rappers” and the “mesmerists”, Emerson is quite wary and negatively opposed to this selective “doting power” and is adamant in his opinion that ordinary man is better not to know of it.

On the one hand, Emerson refers to demonology as “midsummer madness.” On the other hand, he seems attracted, like Fuller to Goethe’s sense of the daemonic\_\_ associated with force, will, energy, destiny, and self-actualization. The poet John Crowe Ranson suggested that the daemonic stood for the “transcendent individuality of some individual and private person.”

These thoughts and writings on the movement and phenomena of spiritualism by the major Transcendentalists summarize their opinions of the happenings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The movement of Transcendentalism and its major concepts will further show the gap between the two concepts—spiritualism and spirituality.

*May the fire of intellect, the soul's light to mind  
Show us the torchbearer's path to the height he climbed,  
And by the material of thought fuel the flame of insight  
On the journey of our souls in the quest for right.  
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Chapter 9

### Transcendentalism, Spirituality, and Self-Culture

Transcendentalism was a movement that was a revolt against *Unitarianism* and its purpose was essentially spiritual in nature in every area, including literature, politics, philosophy, and education. The Transcendentalists' inspiration came from William Ellery Channing, and they adopted his notion of "*self-culture*" or the cultivation of one's inner spiritual life or "soul" which Channing had preached in his sermon "Self-Culture":

To cultivate any thing, be it a plant, an animal, a mind, is to make grow. Growth, expansion, is the end. Nothing admits culture but that which has a principle of life, capable of being expanded. He, therefore, who what he can to unfold all his powers and capacities, especially his nobler ones, so as to become a well-proportioned, vigorous, happy being, practices self-culture (Quoted in Andrews 1).

The major Transcendentalists had their own means of self-culture. Self was essentially the "soul" and therefore self-culture meant "care of the soul." Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller each had their gospel of spirituality and expressed it in their manner of living and in some of their writings.

Emerson, in his lectures on "Human Culture," said that one's "own culture, the unfolding of his own nature is the chief end of man. A divine impulse at the core of his being impels him to this." To Emerson the self or soul did not need to be cultivated in keeping with external criteria but was simply encouraged to develop spontaneously from the promptings of its own nature. Self-culture for Emerson, as for the other

Transcendentalists was a natural development of the spirit in response to the soul's prompting, "to remove all obstructions and let this natural force have free play."

The Memoirs of Margaret Fuller, Emerson, Channing and Clarke, explains Margaret Fuller's aim in life. "This aim was distinctly apprehended and steadily pursued by her from first to last. It was a high, noble one wholly religious, almost Christian. It gave dignity to her whole career, and made it heroic."

This aim, from first to last was Self-Culture. In her own description of her youth, as found in her Memoirs, she says, "Very early I knew that the only object in life was to grow. I was often false to this knowledge, in idolatries of particular objects, or impatient longings for happiness, but I have never lost sight of it, have always been controlled by it, and this first gift of love has never been superceded by a later [one]." (Quoted in Andrews 2).

Broadly speaking, it was the goal of self-culture to make it possible to develop a sense of spirituality in every day life. The Transcendentalists sought this in a variety of ways. First and foremost, they looked to nature as a source of revelations concerning the spiritual life. As Thoreau noted in his Journal: "My profession is always to be on the alert to find God in Nature, to know his lurking places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas in nature... To watch for, describe, all the divine features which I detect in Nature."

Emerson, too, looked to nature for spiritual insight and moral instruction. As he Observed in one of his lectures on "Human Culture":

We divorce ourselves from nature; we hide ourselves in cities and lose  
The affecting spectacle of the Day and Night which she cheers and  
instructs her children withal. We pave the earth for miles with stones and  
forbid the grass. We build street on street all round the horizon and shut  
out the sky and the wind; false and costly tastes are generated for wise and  
cheap ones; thousands are poor and cannot see the face of the world; the  
senses are impaired, ant the susceptibility to beauty; and life made vulgar.

Our feeling in the presence of nature is an admonishing hint. Go and hear in a woodland valley the harmless roarings of the South wind and see the shining boughs of the trees in the sun, the swift sailing clouds, and you shall think man is a fool to be mean and unhappy when every day is made illustrious by those splendid shows. Then falls the enchanting night: all the trees are wind-harps; out shine the stars, and we say, blessed by light and darkness, ebb and flow, cold and heat, these restless pulsations of nature which throb for us. In the presence of nature a man of feeling is not suVered to lose sight of the instant creation. The world was not made a long while ago. Nature is an Eternal Now (Quoted in Andrews 5).

This passage is a long quote to show that it is indicative of the “theology” of Natural Religion. Nature is appreciated not only for its beauty but also for what it has to teach us in the natural order of things and the way this harmony is in our lives. Emerson and the other Transcendentalist, even though recognizing that nature can have its darker side, it is wisdom to conform one’s life as far as possible to the forces and rhythms of the natural world. We are a product of nature and the cause of many problems is an alienation from it. Emerson in his Journal confided: “God resides not in formal religion, but in nature; not in rites, but persons. I grow in God. I am only a form of him. His is the soul of me. I can even with a mountainous aspiring say, I am god” (Emerson *Journal*).

If Emerson was a theist, he was a *pan-theist*. The divine subsists in all of creation, and the soul of nature is coincident with the human soul. *Pantheism* is a highly charged theological term. By its etymology, the word means, simply, that God is in everything, immanent in the world and not transcendent or separate from it. The Transcendentalist questioned whether God had an existence apart from the universe. They agreed that God, the Divinity, was revealed in man and in all creatures and manifestations of the natural world.

Because of this view, transcendentalists believed that there is a “correspondence” between nature and human nature, between the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the individual human being. The concept had at least two implications.



First of all, it meant that there was no fundamental break between the sacred and secular; therefore, all of human existence was religious. Secondly, it suggested that the goal of the life was to achieve a sense of harmony with the working of the cosmos itself. They learned the importance of spiritual growth and self-discovery and the wisdom of trying to achieve a sense of balance and proportion in life (Andrews 6-7).

These concepts of harmony, correspondence in nature, are similar to Swedenborg's and Davis's harmonial philosophies of nature. Emerson speaks to these philosophies in great length in his Nature (1836) and would not admit that some of these original ideas were from Swedenborg. However, Emerson's spirituality is expressed in Nature and a few of these concepts are drawn from the ideas of Swedenborg, but in a very different manner of writing.

In Nature, Emerson spirituality is expressed when he writes of Nature and the soul. The soul is the creative essence, while all creation, including art, which is human collaboration with natural phenomena, is referred to as nature. In Nature the soul sees the reflection of its own pure essence manifest, perceiving beauty, truth, and goodness in its laws. To describe the natural facts, humans use words as signs for language communication. From Emerson's transcendental viewpoint, the natural facts are also symbols of spiritual facts. "Nature is the symbol of spirit". The intellect then is able to put these principles into laws, for "all science has one aim, namely to find a theory of nature" (Quoted in Beck 4).

Emerson also reveals the essence of his spiritual philosophy in this work: "Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul." By

interacting with Nature, people learn not only what is practical but also what is good. For Emerson, the soul and nature are perfectly complementary.

Thus to him, to this schoolboy under the bending dome of day, is suggested that he and it proceed from one root; one is leaf and one is flower; relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. And What is that root? Is not that the soul of his soul? A thought too bold; a dream too wild. Yet when this spiritual light shall have revealed the law of more earthly natures, --when he has learned to worship the soul, and to see that the natural philosophy that now is, is only the first grouping of its gigantic hand, he shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to becoming creator. He shall see that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind. Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess. And, in fine, The ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, 'Study nature,' become at last one maxim. (Quoted in Beck 5)

Even from early childhood, Emerson saw the relationship from one part of creation to another. He saw the divinity in nature, nature in our soul and our soul in nature. In it he says, we can see our own accomplishments.. the more we know and understand nature, the more we can understand ourselves and the workings of our mind t and the reflection of our soul.

The other work of Emerson that fully expresses his spirituality is his "Over-Soul," a beautiful treatise on the soul within man and the Divinity in man as soul. Emerson attempts "to indicate the heaven of this deity in us and to report what hints I (Emerson) have collected of the transcendent simplicity and energy of the Highest Law."

All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates And exercises all the organs, is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet, is not a faculty, but a light, is not the intellect or the will, but master of the intellect and the will, in the background of our being, in which they lie, - an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us

upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all... When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius, when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through he affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims one particular to let the soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey (Emerson Nature quoted in Beck 2).

Here is the key Emerson expresses through which the individual of self-reliance draws from the soul...this inner power, compassion, the source of beauty, goodness and divine energy. The person who separates his ego from the transcendent ideals of love, truth, beauty, and justice, which emanate from the soul, separates himself from the source of goodness. This is the essence of spirituality and Emerson expresses it beautifully and sublimely in this essay.

He continues in the “Over-Soul” to encourage us to continue to access this divine energy.

As there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side to the deep of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know, Love, Freedom, Power... The heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works and will travel a royal road to particular knowledge and powers. In ascending to this primary and aboriginal sentiment we have come from our remote station on the circumference instantaneously to the center of the world, where as in the closet of God, we see cases and anticipate the universe, which is but a slow effect (Emerson “Over-Soul” quoted in Beck 2-3).

Revelation is this process of communion with the soul, “an influx of the Divine mind into our mind.” This enables us to know the truth and perceive new truth by this intuition. It is by communion with others by conversations, sharing of this soul that the connection of the Divine and man, nature, and the relationship with others is deepened and likewise, the depth of individual spirituality.

This overwhelmingly sublime connection of man's essence, the soul, and the influx of Divine energy is the spirituality that is also at the core of modern healers. The similarity to this essence ("soul") and its definition and manifestations, will show the bridging of Emerson's 19<sup>th</sup> century writings and the concepts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century healers' own spirituality.

The spirituality of another major Transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau was seen even when he was a young boy. One night when Henry stayed up longer than usual, his mother asked why he wasn't yet asleep and young Henry replied, "Mother, I have been looking through the stars to see if I couldn't see God behind them" (Quoted in Thoreau On Land, Valentine, ed. xvi).

From the age of five, the family took "nature walks" in the woods and along the shores of rivers and streams. Looking back at his first visit to Walden Pond at this very early age, Henry writes in his Journal of the Pond twenty-three years later,

"That woodland vision for a long time made the drapery of my dreams. That sweet solitude my spirit seemed so early to require that I might have room to entertain my thronging guests, and that speaking silence that my ears might distinguish the significant. Somehow or other it at once gave the preference to this recess among the pines, where almost sunshine and shadow were the only inhabitants that varied the scene, over that tumultuous and varied city, as if it had found its proper nursery" (Thoreau August 1845, Journal quoted in Thoreau on Land, valentine, ed xvii).

Thoreau's spirituality seemed to be mostly expressed in his union with nature. Solitude in communion with nature would be the deepening of Henry's "soul." His going to Walden Pond and living as an *ascetic* in the woods overlooking the beauty of this body

of water, seems to be the reality of the dream of the Journal passage cited. His Walden is the classic that has been the "Bible" of so many people on "how to live" that it is truly a statement of his love of Nature and the Divinity manifesting itself within it. Therefore, Walden is his "spirituality" written to be a guide for posterity.

Part of this nature experience was Henry's love of mountains and the spiritual "elation" he received by his 20 ascents attesting to this. Thoreau transformed the conventions of travel, making the search for a beautiful landscape a spiritual journey. "My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature," he said. He wished to be "elevated for an instant upon Pisgah," for then the world became "living and divine." Mountains thus seen are worthy of worship." They "elevated and etherialized" him. This was the real purpose of transcendental travel, to quest for "your own higher latitudes" (Quoted in Hoagland, Mott and Huber, eds. "Elevating Ourselves" from Henry David Thoreau on Mountains, xiv).

His love of water is also expressed so many times in the notations in his Journals that all examples could not be written here. One which mirrors his spirituality in water:

#### Nature Idolized

*That mirror, as it were a permanent picture to be seen there, a permanent piece of idealism...*

The season which we seem to *live* in anticipation of is arrived--the water indeed reflects heaven because my mind does--such is its own serenity--its transparency--and stillness.

31 August 1851, Journal 4:24

(Quoted in "Reflecting Heaven", Henry David Thoreau on Water, Mott and Franc, eds, 8).

Thoreau's kind of "transcendental spirituality" is, therefore, exemplified mostly in the cultivation of the beauty of nature which again will be one of the resources that the 21<sup>st</sup> century practitioners will recommend in their healing exercises.

Lastly, Margaret Fuller had a struggle to develop her spirituality which was a slow process. She was not happy with herself as "the intellect" only, and the daughter of a strict, Puritan father whose religious dogmas turned her away..."I look not fairly to myself, at the present moment. If noble growths are always slow, others may ripen far worthier fruit than is permitted to my tropical heats and tornadoes. Let me clasp the cross on my breast, as I have done a thousand times before" (Quoted in Emerson, Channing, and Clarke, Memoirs, 98).

This poem Margaret writes expresses a time when she did finally awaken to an illuminated state:

Let me but gather from the earth one full-grown fragrant flower;  
Within my bosom let it bloom through its one blooming hour;  
Within my bosom let it die, and to its latest breath  
My own shall answer, "Having lived, I shrink now from death."  
It is this niggard halfness that turn my hear to stone;  
For once let me press firm my lips upon the moment's brow,  
For once let me distinctly feel I am all happy now,  
And bliss shall seal a blessing upon that moment's brow.  
(Quoted in Emerson, Channing, and Clarke, Memoirs, 98)

The passage she writes in her Journal after this shows her state:

I was in a state of celestial happiness, which lasted a great while. For months I was all radiant with faith, and love, and life. I began to be myself. Night and day were equally beautiful, and the lowest and highest equally holy. Before, it had seemed as if the Divine only gleamed upon me; but then it poured into and through me a tide of light. I have passed

down from the rosy mountain, now; but I do not forget its pure air, nor how the storms looked as they rolled beneath my feet. I have received my assurance, and if the shadows should lie upon me for a century, they could never make me forgetful of the true hour. Patiently I bide my time. (Quoted in Emerson, Channing, and Clarke, Memoirs, 100)

In her Memoirs, Emerson, Channing, and Clarke state that "Margaret refers to this time when her earthly being culminated and when, in the non-tide of loving enthusiasm, she felt wholly at one with God, with Man, and the Universe. It was ever after, to her, an earnest that she was of the Elect."

After this experience she wrote to her friends who had shared and intimacy with her to know that her past life was one of illness, periods of sadness, and an emotional and spiritual dryness. She says in a letter to one of these intimates, "Whatever the past has been, I feel that I have always been reading on and on, and that the Soul of all souls has been patient in love to mine. New assurances were given me, that if I would be faithful and humble there was no experience that would not tell its heavenly errand. If shadows have fallen, already they give way to a fairer if more tempered light; and for the present, I am so happy that the spirit kneels" (quoted in Emerson, Channing, and Clarke, Memoirs, 99)

Margaret then progressed in her deepening of her spiritual life by studying the great German writer Goethe. This past time of ecstasy was followed by a more practical life. She considered the other Transcendentalists, "lost in the clouds", "out of touch with real life," "dream," which did not fit her well (Braun 144). She, after her study of Goethe, seemed to forget this experience of illumination and she became a "free spirit" in the sense that she rejected idea of an objective religion, a church that had its existence

anywhere else than in the human heart, was to her the religion of an outspoken individual, inconceivable.

Her *Credo* shows that it was evident that she felt no hostility toward religious systems or creeds but, like Goethe, she believed that out of our own inner being, out of the inner hear and self, are determined the higher laws for individual growth and action, and not from any principle or law that may be imposed upon us by anything that has its existence outside of our being, whether religion or philosophy. "only give the soul freedom and room enough to grow, " she says, "and it will grow from its own center." It was her conviction that we must ultimately turn to the highest instincts of our inner should for the divine source of our spiritual life, and that the possibility of a perfectly developed and rounded out life lay with our own human nature, which she considered divine (Quoted in Braun 145-6).

Those who recorded her life can best attest to her spirituality and philosophy. "Her nature, " said Mrs. Ednah Dow Cheney, 40 years after Margaret's death, "was intuitive and enthusiastic. Her method of thought was to seize the heart of the subject and develop from within. Nature readily yielded to her its spiritual meaning. I do not know the record of any spiritual life more absolutely free from theological narrowness, and yet more truly religious. The depth of her life, her joy and faith in living, was the secret of her marvelous power over others." James Freeman Clarke, said of her doctrine." It was religious, because it recognized something divine, infinite, imperishable in the human soul, --something divine in outward nature and providence, by which the soul is led along its appointed way"(Quoted in Memoirs, I, 133). And Emerson says of one of the reporters of her "Conversations": "What is so noble is that her realism is transparent with idea,-- her human nature is the term of a divine life" (Quoted Braun 146 in Memoirs, I, 139).



Margaret Fuller, therefore, was very different than the other Transcendentalists but it is to be seen that some of the aspects of her spirituality, her realism, love of nature, living in the moment and from the heart, her bringing the most out of her relationships with her friends, her wanting always to "grow" will also pervade some of the 21<sup>st</sup> century healing practices.

In summary, the spirituality of the three major Transcendentalists could be shown in many more of their writings and many more examples of parts of their lives. Some of the major spiritual exercises that they used in their lives are discussed and are used as guides today to deepen spirituality in modern times.

*Peace comes within the souls of men  
When they realize their oneness with the universe.*  
Black Elk

## Chapter 10

### **Spiritual Exercises Practiced by Transcendentalists in 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The Transcendentalists engaged in the cultivation of the soul in order to deepen their spirituality. Barry Andrews, in his Thoreau as Spiritual Guide, lists six particular spiritual exercises which were common to the major Transcendentalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller. A discussion of these will show that spirituality for these writers was a way of life and they incorporated these exercises in their lives and their works.

#### **Contemplation**

Contemplation was a time of great reflection and long intervals of quiet and stillness in the lives of all of the Transcendentalists. These were periods of rest and reverie, which were time for personal growth and spiritual nurturing. These calm, meditative times were especially fruitful for pondering material for their writings, fostering inspiration and food for thought for their intellectual nurturing also. Spiritual awareness was enhanced and these quiet stretches of meditation were necessary for looking inward.

The two years that Thoreau lived at in the woods at Walden Pond were especially contemplative for him. At the Pond, Henry would often sit in his doorway for hours and

simply watch and listen as the sun moved across the sky and the light and shadows

changed almost imperceptibly. He described it in Walden:

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. Sometime, on a summer morning having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway 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 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 words.

Emerson also speaks of sitting alone for the culture of the intellect and to open the door of the spiritual life to the student:

The simple habit of sitting alone occasionally to explore what factors of moment lie in the memory may have the effect in some more favored hour to open to the student the kingdom of spiritual nature. He may become aware that there around him roll new at this moment and inexhaustible the waters of Life; that the world he has lived in so heedless so gross, is illumined with meaning, that every fact is magical; every atom alive, and he is the heir of it all. (Emerson "Human Culture" 261)

Margaret Fuller's favorite place of contemplation was the little garden in the back of her home and as a child and young adult it was a place of beauty and solitude and provided her with the time away from the rigorous instruction of her father. She also took nature walks and during many of her despondent moods, would sit out among the trees in quiet contemplation. It was during these times when she usually was inspired or reached a higher level of consciousness in which an especially enlightening thought would solve her problem and lift her spirits. Being of fragile health, physically and emotionally, she enjoyed these quiet times in her garden or in nature when she was able to "grow" and gain energy to continue her demanding schedule (Emerson, Channing, and Clarke Memoirs). This exercise, therefore, was almost a healing for her.

Contemplation was of great value to each of these major Transcendentalists and their spirituality thrived in this time of reverie.

### **Writing or Keeping a Journal**

All of the Transcendentalists also wrote and kept detailed journals of their daily thoughts and activities. Emerson started his journal and the age of seventeen when he was a student at Harvard College. He later encouraged Thoreau to keep a journal and it is from the journals of these two Transcendentalists that we can find the wealth of the wisdom, genius, thoughts, and detailed accounts of their lives and the wealth of knowledge they amassed over the years.

Emerson, again in his "Human Culture," writes of the spiritual exercise of journal keeping:

The other [rule for the culture of the intellect] is, keep a journal. Pay so much honor to your mind as to record those thoughts that have shone therein. I suppose every lover of truth would find his account in it if he never had two related thoughts without putting them down. It is not for what is recorded, though that may be the agreeable entertainment of later years, and the pleasant remembrances of what we were, but for the habit of rendering account to yourself of yourself in some more rigorous manner and of more certain intervals than mere conversation or casual reverie of solitude require (Emerson, "Human Culture" 261).

Thoreau in his Journal, January 22, 1852 writes:

To set down such choice experiences that may own writing may inspire me and at last I may inspire me and at last I may make wholes of parts. Certainly it is a distinct profession to rescue from oblivion and to fix the sentiments and thoughts which visit all men more or less generally, that the contemplation of the unfinished picture may suggest its harmonious completion. Associate reverently and as much as you can with your loftiest thoughts. Each thought that is welcomed and recorded is a nest egg, by the side of which more will be laid. Thoughts accidentally thrown together become a frame in which more may be developed and exhibited. Perhaps this is the main value of a habit of writing, of keeping a journal –that so we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves. My thoughts are my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality. Having by chance recorded a few disconnected

thoughts and then brought them into juxtaposition, they suggest a whole new field in which it was possible to labor and to think. Thought begat thought (Shepard ed. The Heart of Thoreau's Journals 73).

### **Sauntering or Walking**

The Transcendentalists enjoyed the outdoors and made an effort to spend part of every day with nature. This was for them, a spiritual discipline and an experience almost like worship. Emerson walked daily and Thoreau went even a far as to say: "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits unless I spend four hours a day at least..sauntering through the woods and over the hills, absolutely free from all worldly engagements" ..

Sauntering was the term Thoreau gave to walking as a spiritual discipline. "The walking of which I speak," has nothing in it akin to the taking of exercise...but is itself the enterprise is an adventure of the day...If you would get exercise, go in search of the springs of life. Thoreau wrote a whole book, Walking, on the subject of sauntering. For him sauntering was a noble pastime. No wealth, he said, "can buy the requisite leisure, freedom and independence, which are the capital in this profession. It comes only by the grace of God. It requires a dire dispensation from Heaven to become a walker" (Quoted in Andrews 12).

### **Reading**

Reading was another form of spiritual discipline for the Transcendentalist and all of them were avid readers. They read voraciously and with, as Andrews put it, a certain "athleticism. Mostly they read as Emerson called them, for spiritual insights, or "lustres." They devoured the classics, including poetry, philosophy, mythology, history, science, and biography. They read the classics and were also attracted to the sacred texts

and religious philosophies and traditions of the East, India and China. Their publication, the Dial, was the journal of the Transcendentalists and included “Ethnical Scriptures from religions around the world.

Emerson and Fuller had extensive libraries and Thoreau kept long lists of the books he had read. They borrowed and read books from each other’s collections.

Henry wrote a whole chapter in Walden of which the following passage shows his love of reading and how it should be done:

To read well is to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, And one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the Customs of the day esteems. It requires a training such as the athletes Underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written.  
(Quoted in Andrews 13)

### **Excursions**

Excursions were longer, more purposeful trips or outings which were described in many of the Transcendentalists books. Thoreau was especially fond of excursions and traveled to Cape Cod, the Maine Woods, and up the Concord and Merrimack and wrote detailed descriptions of these. He also traveled to and climbed many of the New England mountains and it was during these excursions, in particular, he was spiritually revitalized.

Margaret Fuller also made excursions and Summer on the Lakes was her book describing this experience.

This form of spiritual exercise, therefore, provided a prolific time of writing and material for the detailed descriptions of nature in their books.

## **Conversations**

*Conversation as the natural organ of communicating, mind with mind... is the method of human culture. By it I come nearer the hearts of those whom I shall address than by any other means.*

---The Journal of Brownson Alcott

Leading groups of adults on educational subjects of various political, literary, cultural, or other substantive topics was a form of spiritual exercise called conversations. Some of the Transcendentalists led conversations as a source of income and as educational tools.

Beginning in 1839 and for five years after, Margaret Fuller, led a much celebrated and well-attended series of Conversations, primarily with groups of women, on such topics as mythology, education, women's rights and issues, and universal religious philosophies. Fuller sought, first of all, to integrate the head and the heart, the intellect and the affections. Secondly, she wished to connect learning with living by applying thought to the problems of life. In short, the aim of these Conversations was to promote self-culture as she understood it. She was guided in her efforts by two fundamental questions: "What were we meant to do? How shall we do it?" (Andrews 21)

The Conversations encouraged introspection, originality, and self-reliance. They were run like the Socratic forums... a "poly"-logue as opposed to a dialogue led by a facilitator and they were many times controversial in nature. It was Thoreau's idea and intention to be provocative as he stated in Walden: "to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning...if only to wake neighbors up" (As quoted in Andrews 22). These Conversations, then, woke the attendees to many activist's ideas such as abolition and women's rights but these remained educated and enlightening group discussions.

All of these spiritual exercises that were very much a part of the lives of the Transcendentalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century helped to develop and cultivate their souls. These exercises, which deepened their spirituality, are the spiritual exercises that some of the 21<sup>st</sup> century healers of mind, body, and soul also used or instructed their clients to practice. How these spiritual exercises effected healing in modern times will be discussed in the context of practical applications in three very prominent contemporary practices.



*Don't go outside your house to see the flowers.  
My friend, don't bother with that excursion.  
Inside your body there are flowers.  
One flower has a thousand petals.  
That will do for a place to sit  
Sitting there you will have a glimpse of beauty  
Inside the body and out of it, before and after gardens.*

Kabir

(Quoted in Kabat-Zinn 97)

## **Chapter 11**

### **The Spirituality of the Transcendentalists in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Healing**

The spirituality of the Transcendentalist is expressed very persuasively in the healing of mind, body, and soul in examples of contemplative, complementary medicine, “spiritual” psychotherapy (Soul Care), and in certain modern ministries. These modern healers take many concepts-- the Divinity in man and immanent in Nature, “self-culture,” living fully in the present moment, contemplation, elevating ourselves beyond the material world, and many of the spiritual exercises found in the Transcendentalists’ works and lives--and incorporate them in their healing.

Specific examples, which illustrate the use of this special spirituality at work in healing, are found in the three present-day practitioners from different disciplines: Dr. Graham Campbell, Reverend Barry Andrews, and Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn (See Appendix III - Synopses of the interviews of Dr. Graham Campbell and Reverend Barry Andrews). The different fields of healing are psychology or psychotherapy (Campbell), complementary healing (stress reduction by Kabat-Zinn) and the ministry of a Unitarian Universalist (Andrews). The diversity in their backgrounds and yet similar uses of various spiritual concepts and exercises in their choice of healing, whether of mind, body, and/or soul shows the versatility, connectedness, and the power of spirituality in man.

The similarities and differences in their methods will be clear in the following discussions of these prominent men.

### **Graham Campbell, Ph.D.**

Dr. Campbell, a spiritual psychologist and theologian, leads a group called “Soul Care.” This group is based on deepening individual spirituality and further personal growth and development. The group consists of deeply spiritual people who need to share their spirituality, their soul, and their person with others. The gathering place of the group is a “safe” place where confidentiality is honored and where the vulnerability of the mind, heart and soul is exposed and healing or deepening of spirit can happen. The word “spirituality” is a common word that can be spoken of freely unlike in the “outside” world where people do not know how to react to the word, are afraid of it, or simply ignore it. Deep “conversations” with each other on whatever is present in our lives, soul, psyche or heart are shared.

Dr. Campbell uses meditation as part of his “spiritual healing.” He defines spirituality as consisting of two things: the presence of “soul” and healing. He uses meditation, the focusing of the mind on the breath, as he leads a group. He directs the participants to “let go” figuratively, of everything external, as well as their emotions, physical self, thoughts, to calm the static of their energies, and to find that place, the center of being, the soul\_\_that which is their “source.” This time of contemplation is the beginning of each session. There is candlelight, meditative music, often flowers, beautiful art, and a completely peaceful atmosphere. Each person in the

group get in touch with their soul and upon opening their eyes, conversation begins which comes talk the depth of each one and from a heightened state of awareness. The sharing of what is within each person at the time, any good feelings, a painful situation, an inspirational reading, a discussion of a particularly powerful happening that may have affected one, or any other “gut” responses are spoken.

Dr. Cambell may decide to do a visualization himself for the group or have each of the participants picture a place of beauty or a space where we one feels comfortable, peaceful, and safe. If the energy is low, he has the group “drop out” so to speak, into that place each envisions. The group may stay there (in the place they imagine) for a few minutes, contemplating and getting in touch even more deeply with their “soul”. They can then, again, come to focus on the presence of the group, share their “special place” or feelings after that experience or just remain quiet. The power of the sharing, the heightened energy, and sense perception is felt. and a complete calmness and deep, strong connection between each group member cannot be put into words. As a participant in this “Soul Care”, the transformation or glowing feeling at the end of the evening is a definite transcendence of the present reality. My spirit and soul have been “touched” and “shared” with the others and healing has taken place. I leave the group in a better place each time.

This technique of visualization does distinguish a difference from that of the Transcendentalists although each major Transcendentalists would have had to have a vivid imagination to create the material for their abstract writings and beautiful poetry. Thoreau’s detailed description of nature in whatever place he was or visited seems to be an exercise in putting his visualizations on paper. So even though there is a difference, there also is an analogy to the imaginative concept used.

Overall, the spiritual energy generated, the “transcending” of the material and physical, does happen and Dr. Campbell does effect “healing”. He also advocates living in the present moment, keeping a journal of our thoughts and feelings as a tribute to ourselves and to keep a record of our growth. He also says of nature that "it is a place where we can get in touch with that part of us that is “closest to God” and to our true “self” or “soul”. He encourages nature walks or walking meditations.

Dr. Campbell does believe his practice can be drawn on the spirituality of the Transcendentalists. “Soul Care” is a concept similar to the “self-culture” of the Transcendentalists. Meditation and contemplation, journal keeping, walking in nature are similar to the spiritual exercises of Emerson and Thoreau mentioned in the last chapter. He believes these practices are effective in healing and his “Soul Care” group member agree that his spiritual methods work. His thriving practice as a personal psychotherapist also attests to his success.

### **Jon Kabat-Zinn**

Jon Kabat-Zinn has a Doctorate in Biochemistry from MIT, and is presently an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Founder of the Center for Mindfulness (some term it the Stress Reduction Center) at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The author of Wherever You Go There You Are, Full Catastrophe Living, and Everyday Blessings, he has also collaborated with Andrew Weil, well-known author and complementary healer, on several audiobooks on Mindfulness Meditation and Optimum Health.

Dr. Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness Center and its instructors use many of the spiritual practices of the Transcendentalists and Henry David Thoreau is especially quoted in his book Wherever You Go, There You Are and used as an example in his teaching of mindfulness meditation, yoga and "living in the present moment" philosophy. These spiritually based practices mirror the 19<sup>th</sup> century authors and are most effectively used in his eight-week basic course.

The method of mindfulness meditation with focus on the breath and non-judging of the thoughts that pass through the mind at the time, just noting them and letting them go, is the kind of contemplative practice used. This deepens awareness, heightens the senses, focuses one and centers the person to the "spirit" or "soul," the essence of the individual. He also quotes Thoreau's Walden several times in his own book, Wherever You Go, There You Are. Henry's states the "purpose for going out into the woods to live deliberately," emphasizes increased awareness, the use of nature as a soul-searching place, and the living of each moment in the presence. He also uses the quote mentioned in the last chapter on Thoreau's reverie in front of his cabin describing his form of contemplation and likening it to his mindfulness meditation, sitting practice, used in his complementary healing approach.

Walking meditations -slow thoughtful, meditative walking in nature or anywhere and being aware of your surroundings are also encouraged and a "homework" exercise in Kabat-Zinn's course of instruction. This also correlates to the "sauntering" of Henry, defined as a spiritual exercise by Barry Andrews also previously cited.

Jon Kabat-Zinn wisdom of simple living expressed in his book by Henry's quote:

Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say let your affairs be  
Be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand instead of a  
Million count half a dozen... In the midst of this chopping seas of  
Civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and  
The 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 prt at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great  
Calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, Simplify, Simplify.  
(Quoted in Kabat-Zinn 71)

This is another quotation from Walden and is the Center for Mindfulness teaches as a lessening of stress and a step toward personal order in one's life. Kabat-Zinn says for him, trying to live a simple life is an arduous task but one worth the effort. It is tricky and the needs and opportunities that arise in a day, most people respond to, adding stress to an already busy life. A commitment to simplicity is a delicate balancing act. But if one finds simplicity keeps, "it will keep him mindful of what is important, of an ecology of mind and body and world in which everything is interconnected and every choice has far-reaching consequences. You don't get to control it all but choosing simplicity whenever possible adds to life an element of deepest freedom which so easily eludes us, and many opportunities to discover that less may actually be more" (Kabat-Zinn 70).

One very interesting form of meditation that has been used, recorded, and distributed is his "Mountain Meditation" and "Lake Meditation", each one a separate mindfulness meditation full of beauty, seasonal changes, calmness, stability and strength, depth of soul, and spirituality, all brought out in the meditations. They also contain, besides the aesthetic beauty of the words and images, long periods of silence for reflection and stilling of the mind. This very much parallels Thoreau's love of mountains

and lakes in his spiritual exercise of excursions and described in some of his writings.

Kabat-Zinn quotes the passage from Walden on the beauty of the lake:

*In such a day, in September or October, Walden is a perfect forest mirror, set round with stones as precious to my eye as if fewer or rarer. Nothing so fair, so pure, and at the same time so large, as a lake, perchance, lies on the surface of the earth. Sky water. It needs no fence. Nations come and go without defiling it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding Nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface every fresh;\_\_ a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks, swept and dusted by the sun's hazy brush, \_\_this the light dust-cloth,\_\_ which retains no breath that is breathed on it, but sends its own to float as clouds high above its surface, and be reflected in its bosom still.*

(Quoted in Kabat-Zinn 144)

Kabat-Zinn then uses this image of a lake to “support sitting or lying in stillness during a meditation, not going anywhere, held and cradled in awareness.” He asks you to “ Note when the mind reflects; when it is embroiled. Note the calm below the surface. Does this image suggest new ways of carrying yourself in times of turmoil?” (Kabat-Zinn 144) This is part of his practical use of Thoreau’s awareness of the image of the water to the image of our soul “beneath the surface” \_\_an awareness of our inner selves\_\_ calm, reflecting, still, embroiled?

He also reiterates Thoreau's love of mountain climbing as "elevating ourselves. In the Mountain Meditation, he uses strength, stability, beauty, power, loftiness as attributes to center ourselves or meditate upon. Not only is one "elevated" after a class of meditation, yoga, and inspirational sharing and/or readings, but is in a calm, trance-like state not easily described in words.

I can personally attest to the effectiveness of the healing program at The Center for Mindfulness since I graduated from the basic stress reduction course, have taken eight

advanced courses, and have meditated for five years. Thousands of clients and patients have also gone through his basic program and universities and medical institutions across the country can vouch for the positive spiritual and physiological healing of, in particular, the practices of meditation and yoga.

A connectedness to other people and to nature, a balancing of strong emotions, calming of spirit, clarity of mind, centering and focusing of the whole person, and increased awareness of senses to the surroundings and to one's own inner thoughts and feelings are all results of a long-term practice of mindfulness meditation.

Using Henry David Thoreau's life at Walden and examples pulled from his works persuasively attests to the effectiveness and use of the Transcendentalist's spirituality in the complementary healing Kabat-Zinn and his instructors use. The Center and his methods are recognized by experts in the field of Medicine and the Holistic Healing gurus and health experts across the country with satellite branches in many of the major cities.

### **Reverend Barry Andrews**

Barry Andrews is a Unitarian Universalist minister, author of the book Thoreau as Spiritual Guide, and a prominent and active member of the Thoreau Society. He guides his congregation and groups outside his church in discussions similar to the "conversations" held by the Transcendentalists, particularly Margaret Fuller, of topics that are for the purpose of healing the soul and for spiritual deepening. He directs them



to use Walden and the six spiritual exercises brought out in the last chapter as a major part in his ministry. This is his "self-culture" offered to his congregation and listeners.

As seen in his interview (Appendix III), living in the moment is his form of contemplation rather than a focusing on the breath or a sitting meditation used by Dr. Campbell and Kabat-Zinn and expresses his viewpoint that everyone's form of contemplation differs.

The other five spiritual exercises used result in "living in the present moment", a calming of mind, body, and spirit and a focusing of self, the "soul." These exercises are mirroring not only the spirituality of the Transcendentalists but are being specifically used in instructing people in the practices of both Campbell and Kabat-Zinn. Andrews also states that it is effective in his ministry of healing of mind and soul since it also helps people deal with the reality of everyday problems with calmness and awareness.

Barry Andrew's book, Thoreau as Spiritual Guide, discussed in detail in the last chapter of this paper, is used as a study guide to personally heal and develop the spiritual depth of a person. Reading and conversing in groups on chapters of Walden and using the book as a source on how to live is obviously at the heart of Reverend Andrews "healing" ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Andrews says his form of healing of the soul based on the spiritual exercises defined and practiced by the Transcendentalists (particularly Henry David Thoreau as the book is titled) is effective to his Unitarian Universalist congregation and to the people that come to his "conversations."

In summary, the spirituality of the Transcendentalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century pervades the 21<sup>st</sup> century healing arts and suggests a linkage and affinity to their concepts. Henry

David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller continue to inspire, deepen our spiritual lives, and instruct us in the very essence of life. Our individual "self-culture" is being and experiencing life with all its beauty, spirit, and wisdom, totally aware of and present in each moment. Self-culture, to the Trancendentalists, meant a deepening of the soul. "Soul" is in the Oneness of the Divinity in Man and immanent in Nature. This Transcendental concept of spirituality is "alive and well" in the present world.

## **Appendix I**

### **HISTORICAL TIMELINE**

**Major People/Events in the  
Spiritualism/Spirituality Era  
In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

**TIMELINE**  
**Spiritualism/Spirituality**  
**In 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

- 1688-1772      Emmanuel Swedenborg's Life-scientist turned spiritualist
- 1734-1815      Franz Anton Mesmer's Life
- 1772            Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell translated into English
- 1779            Mesmer publishes Reflections on the Discovery of Animal Magnetism enumerating 27 principles
- 1784            Marquis de Puysegur used Mesmer's "manipulation" passes on a peasant boy to cure him of a mild case of pleurisy and effected the first case of a hypnotic trance
- 1826            Andrew Jackson Davis born
- 1836            Emerson wrote Nature
- 1836            Charles Poyen, self-proclaimed Professor of Animal Magnetism, went on lecture tour across New England demonstrating mesmerism
- 1839            "Demonology," Emerson's last lecture on Human Life
- 1839-1844      Margaret Fuller's Conversations
- 1840            Fuller becomes the editor of the *Dial*, at its founding, published by the Transcendentalists
- 1841            Emerson's "Oversoul" published
- 1841            Emerson's Self Reliance published
- 1845            Henry David Thoreau went to Walden Pond (July 4)
- 1845            Thomas Wentworth Higginson the Rational of Spiritualism," two lectures consisting of "The Theory of Spiritualism," given in the morning, and the "Facts of Spiritualism," given in the evening, New York (December 5)
- 1845            Fuller publishes Women in the Nineteenth Century
- 1847            Henry David Thoreau leave Walden Pond

- 1847 Davis wrote The Principles of Nature, Her Divisne Revelation and A Voice to Mankind
- 1848 Birth of Spiritualism in Hydesville, New York-the Fox sisters' rappings...the knock heard round the world
- 1849 Emerson's Representative Men published
- 1850 Death of Margaret Fuller; Thoreau goes to Fire Island to search for remains
- 1854 Henry David Thoreau's Walden, Or, Life in the Woods published
- 1858 Mr. Higginson on Spiritualism, New York Tribune, (printed December 6, p.5)
- 1861 William James Varieties of Religious Experience published
- 1869 The *New York Tribune* publishes Fuller's Life Without and Life Within, a collection of essays, poems an reviews
- 1877 "Demonology" published in North American Review
- 1882 The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) founded
- 1890 William James Principles of Psychology published

## **Appendix II**

### **GLOSSARY**

## GLOSSARY

- Ascetic* One who devotes himself to a life of solitude and contemplation and produces such methods of self-discipline as celibacy, fasting and self-mortification. (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary).
- Asceticism* A disciplined course of conduct in which certain actions (as contemplation and fasting) are performed for their intellectual, moral, or religious effect. (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary)/
- Baconian Method* 1826 English philosopher, Francis Bacon's doctrine especially his belief in the inductive origin of valid ideas, the testing of human progress and improvements by the control of nature through scientific knowledge. His logical method consisted of the process of attaining general statements of the basis of observations, comparisons, and experiments through intermediate generalizations & with regard for negative as well as positive instances. (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary).
- Demonology* A name which covers dreams, omens, coincidences, luck, sortilege, magic and other experiences which shun rather than court inquiry, and deserve notice chiefly because every man has usually in a lifetime two or three hints in this kind which are specially impressive. (Emerson from *Demonology* 3)
- Hypnosis* A technique which predisposes a subject to telepathic influences. The state of hypnotic trance increases the powers of memory sometime to a phenomenal degree and can bring up recollections not evocable in normal consciousness. (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary)
- Mesmerism* Franz Anton Mesmer's science of animal magnetism. He detected the existence of a superfine substance or fluid (which eluded science previously). This invisible fluid referred to as Animal Magnetism he postulated to permeate the physical universe. Animal magnetism constituted the etheric medium through which sensations of every kind—light, heat, magnetism, electricity passed as they traveled from one physical object to another. (Fuller R. 29-30)
- Mindfulness* Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the moment, and non-judgementally. (Kabat-Zinn 4)
- Pantheism* This became a term associated with American Transcendentalism and particularly with Ralph Waldo Emerson. For Emerson, it meant a "divine emanation that permeated the finite universe, a power suffusing the phenomenal world that was consanguineous with one's own nature. One type of pantheism suggests that God is identified with the totality of all things: Creation is represented as a manifestation of the Deity. Another type of pantheism denies reality to anything except God. Emerson was alternately attracted to both kinds. What most attracted Emerson and

Thoreau to pantheism was its central assumption of a simple unity that denied the dualist split between spirit and matter. In emphasis, Emerson's pantheism tended to focus on consciousness—a mode of pure seeing—which he identified with the divine. This revelation in both the famous “transparent eyeball” passage in *Nature* and a 1935 journal comment: ‘Our compound nature differences us from God, but our Reason is not to be distinguished from the Divine Essence.’” (Mott Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism 155-6)

*Phrenology* A pseudoscience which proposed that a person's character and moral traits and even his vocation in life could be identified by the shape and bumps on a person's head.

*Puritanism* A religious sect which propounded the doctrines of original sin and election of grace.

*Psychical Research* means the systematic inquiry into whether human minds receive information in ways that bypass the normal channels of sensory communication, or interact with matter in ways not yet comprehensible to physical science. (Moore 34)

*Self-Culture* The cultivation of one's inner nature or soul. (Andrews 1)

*Somnambulism*  
The action of walking or other motor actions while asleep, specifically those, which are not remembered when awake.

*Spiritualism* The communication of the living with the spirit world through seances, medium, and other phenomenon. (Brown 98-100)

*Spirituality* *Several definitions - basic and one related specifically to the Transcendentalists*

The state of or relating to the moral feelings or presence of the soul rather than the material; or a condition which is influenced or controlled by the divine spirit and where the Spirit of God predominates. (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary)

*Spirituality of the Transcendentalist*

A balance of life between work and leisure, nature and civilization, society and solitude, spiritual aspiration and moral behavior. Their worldly form of spirituality was characterized by a reverence for nature, an organic world-view, a sense of the miraculous, an optimism about human potential, a search for what is universal in religion and personal experience, a strong ethical sensibility, and an encouragement of the individual in his or her own religious quest (Andrews xv).



*Transcendentalism – several definitions by different people in the field*

“A form of pure idealism, the insistence on the power of thought and will, and upon the exaltation of the life of the spirit above all material or physical demands. The persistent search for the things of the spirit... brought about an awakened interest in spiritualism” – quoted from Caroline Ticknor (Myerson 4)

“A movement of theological innovation and literary experiment arising within New England Unitarianism and had a significant impact on the later developments in American religious, educational, literary, and political culture. Theologically, *transcendent* refers to a divinity that is above or apart from the world; but for Emerson, Thoreau, and most leading American transcendentalist, God is imminent in the creation.” (Mott Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism 224)

*Unitarianism* A liberal religion which saw the Puritan and Calvinist orthodoxy as deterministic concepts that denied human agency and human moral responsibility. They argued for a renewed sense of the importance of human will and preached a theology that established reason over biblical authority as the primary criterion for religious judgement, and emphasized the human capacity for benevolence, self-determination, and spiritual and moral development. Emerson and his Transcendentalist followers are in many senses the product of this theological shift. They found the established 19<sup>th</sup> century Unitarian churches to be stiffly rational and closed to the intuitive and visionary basis of religious experience, and tied too strongly to materialism and empiricism. (Reubin 2)

## **Appendix III**

### **INTERVIEWS**

**Dr. Graham Campbell**

**Reverend Barry Andrews**

**Synopsis of Interview with Dr. Graham Campbell**  
**May 22, 2001**

This meeting with Dr. Graham Campbell resulted in my finding his flyer "Soul Care" and an appointment to see him. My purpose was two-fold \_to talk about spiritual exercises in his focus group and to possibly interview him for my project on spiritualism, transcendentalism and its relationship to holistic, psychological, and/or inner soul healing.

He wanted to first talk and get to know me and my personal history to see if I would want to be part of one of his groups. He spent more than half of the time asking me questions and analyzing my reactions, feelings and past history. I very much wanted to be part of his Group on 'Soul Care' and we arranged for me to be in one of his future groups.

He also shared what he did in his group for my benefit and some of his own history.

I then told him about my project. I gave a brief synopsis of the 3 main transcendentalist writers, Thoreau, Emerson and Fuller and some of their beliefs, life-style and spiritualistic thoughts, exercises, and life style as gathered in some of my readings. This was brief, concise and just enough substance to give him a general idea of the topic and purpose of the project. One interesting comment he made at that time was "How does a project on spiritualism find its way into an engineering school like WPI and what is their reaction to it?"

I told him that I did prepare some questions and he said he had some time to answer them until his next appointment. Here is a brief synopsis of the interview and the questions asked:

Questions:

1. What is your definition of spiritualism? Is it Deity-based? Higher Power-based? Including Inner Beauty?

*My definition of spiritualism is certainly not all-encompassing. To me, spiritualism consists of two things:*

- a. There is healing*
- b. It engages the soul*

*In my work as a psychotherapist using spiritual psychology and spiritual exercises, you cannot have "healing" without engaging the "soul". This is my idea of spiritualism.*

2. What do you mean by "The Witness" (in your flyer)? Are you referring to a "higher power" since it is capitalized?

*We are all wrapped up in our inner thoughts and emotions, justifiably so. In my practice, I try to have the clients in my group "step out of themselves" and try to view the*

*situation difficulties in a relationship, a stressful situation at work, or a good experience and the feelings that go with that, etc., from an objective stance. This is what I call "The Witness". Each of us can witness our person objectively only if we look at ourselves from a distance.*

3. One of the things you say in your flyer "Soul Care" is that the group will focus on "Listening for The Soul"? How do you get your patients, clients "Listening for the Soul"?

*The biopsychology of each of us consists in the realm of personal needs and personality traits which makes us all different. At the beginning of each session, we stop and meditate for about 10 minutes or longer depending on the energy in the room. The static in each of us is dampened and once our mind and being are calmed we can reach the deeper part hiding in each of us. The deepest and truest part of "me" is the part that is "beyond 'me'", what is 'divine' in 'me' is out of my person and in a higher level of consciousness.*

4. Studying with Jon Kabat-Zinn in the Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical Center and as a former religious, meditation can be one of two kinds.
  - a. Mindfulness meditation in which you concentrate on "the breath" and still the mind by letting go of any thoughts that might enter the mind and getting back to focusing on the breath.
  - b. The second kind is reading of a passage, inspirational, on a particular virtue or goal, a person of exemplary qualities, etc. and contemplating on this subject. First of all one might think about the passage and then reflect inward to examine where we are in the context of the particular passage and what we could do to incorporate the message of the reading to enhance our being.

What kind of meditation do you employ in your work.

*Good question. With my focus group, I concentrate on meditating from the heart by focusing on the breath. This again calms our whole being and we can speak from our "soul" or "center". Then when we talk after first meditating, ideally, it is from that the soul or heart of us.*

5. "The Shadow"? Again, what do you mean by this in your pamphlet? That from within that enhances our "dark side", so to speak or forces outside of oneself?

*Both. We can be brought down by internalizing negative or stressful or 'bad' things that may happen to us. In this case, both internal emotions, nervous feelings and negative thoughts are a reaction to the outside circumstances of forces. Or external happenings can try to influence us negatively in themselves. We can be strong or unreactive to these forces. So, both internal, negative reactions and stressful, negative or anything that could upset our inner self can be seen or called "The Shadow".*

6. Some of the exercises you use in your sessions besides meditation are visualization, psychosynthesis and journal writing. Could you explain a little about each of them and do you employ all of them in your focus group?

*I use VISUALIZATION a lot in the group. If someone has a problem and say, they feel "stuck", I ask them to visualize how they feel by using objects or inner images to work with their feelings. It is a very structural method. For example, the person who feels "stuck" might say he/she feels like they are "in a box" with the sides of the box closing in on them. I ask them how that makes them feel...fearful, smothered, etc. and step back and look at this image. Trying to put a structure to the feelings from a distance and employ the mental image usually can give the person a different perspective on their feelings. We then try to analyze a way "out of the box" or just ponder it if we cannot think of a solution. It is then food for thought and might be "homework" that the person can look at. This relieves the feelings and places them apart from you, and, in most cases, make the negative impact more manageable.*

*PSYCHOSYNTHESIS is the merging of the mind, body and spirit. It is the completeness of the whole being. (He gave me several references: Robert Assagioli. Psychosynthesis, Ken Wilbur, and a pamphlet on a workshop on Social Psychology to make this subject more understandable to me). In his work, he asks the person, with whatever subject or circumstance they are talking about to talk about their feelings, if there are any bodily symptoms, changes, etc. or what thoughts are connected with this circumstance. He said we could talk further on the subject when I had done some readings on psychosynthesis. I said I would definitely like to do that.*

*JOURNAL WRITING, obviously, is keeping your thoughts, actions, feelings down on paper so that you can have an outlet for them and reflect on them later. You can also probably learn, change future actions, or just have an account of your person at the time and how you have changed or can change over time. He does not require the group to keep a journal but encourages it as a way of personal growth and development.*

7. Do you think the "transcendental spiritualism" of the main 19<sup>th</sup> century transcendental writers, Thoreau, Emerson, and Margaret Fuller that I talked about earlier, can relate to your spirituality and that of the "healing" you employ and, in general, the holistic healing of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries?

*Yes, definitely. I don't know too much about Trancendentalism, but I know enough to know that this movement was the first to say that man consists of a "divinity within" and that it is also in nature. Nature is definitely where we can be closest to the divinity, whatever we define it to be and, therefore, closest to the soul. The transcendentalists also were some of the first to talk about the "higher level of consciousness" which is a major part of spiritual psychology, in general, and in my work personally.*

The interview part of the hour ended because of his time and a waiting appointment, but I think that this initial meeting was very educational, enlightening, stimulating and pertinent to my topic. I am very lucky to have found him and will continue to be in contact with him. We exchanged phone numbers and that concluded the session.

I will be entering his focus group on 'Soul Care' both for personal growth and development and also to observe and experience first hand these methods at work in me.

I will also be talking to him again after reading some of his resources and perhaps going to the workshop he recommended that he is now taking for his own training.

## Synopsis of the Interview with Barry Andrews

Barry Andrews is a Unitarian Universalist minister, currently serving as Minister of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock on Long Island, New York. He is the author of Thoreau as Spiritual Guide which explains some of Thoreau's spiritual practices and how he uses them in conferences or guided groups in his work. He is a very active member of the Thoreau Society.

I requested an interview with him by letter explaining the purpose and giving a short summary of my IQP. In his initial contact with me by phone, Barry Andrews made the distinction between the terms "spiritualism" and "spirituality" and that he could talk to me about "spirituality. Up until that point I was using the term interchangeably to denote the movement in the 1850's beginning with the rapping phenomenon of the Fox sisters and to also mean "spirituality," the "soul" or Divine essence within us. Andrews said that this movement known as spiritualism was not looked upon favorably by the some of the Transcendentalists, particularly by Ralph Waldo Emerson. He quite emphatically denounced the movement in his essay "Demonology" and I agreed that I had read the essay. I told him that it was about spirituality that I wanted to talk.

We met at the Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society this past July in Concord, Massachusetts. Even though formal questions were prepared, the interview took on the quality of an informal discussion. He talked about many subjects interwoven into the conversation pertaining to the major Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau and the principles found in some of their works. He also explained the difference between the

Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist Churches. He gave several applications or practices he used in his work as a Unitarian Universalist minister which were Transcendentally “spiritual”.

He named some of the characteristics Thoreau and Emerson portrayed as Transcendentalists: a sense of depth in life, being connected with others and with nature, spiritually, being “part and parcel” of everything\_\_”Oneness”, a “waking up” or greater awareness in their relationship to the world, being fully alive and being aware that each moment is precious, and living it to the utmost

He quoted Henry’s famous saying from Walden:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, no 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, to discover that I had not lived.

We talked of contemplation as he states in his book, Thoreau as Spiritual Guide as one of Henry’s spiritual exercises. He also spoke of the form of contemplation he considered best suited to his own spiritual temperament. He led me again to a Henry David Thoreau quote from Walden which identifies Thoreau’s use of contemplation and cultivation of awareness:

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. Sometime on a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon... amidst the pines and hickories and sumacs in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around or flitted noiseless 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 those sessions 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.

Only the day dawns to which we are awake.



Both quotations summarize the spiritual exercises of Thoreau, Andrews says, of contemplation and “waking up”, fully alert and alive in the present moment.

Likewise, Barry Andrew’s own form of contemplation, as stated in his book, is simply “becoming aware or living in the moment not trying to improve ourselves or to get anywhere else. We can do this in any place at any time, taking each moment as it comes.” This is what I call contemplation, Andrews states. When questioned if he does any form of sitting meditation or mindfulness meditation since he quotes Jon Kabat-Zinn several times in his book, he said he did not and that contemplation means something different to each person.

I asked if the spiritual exercises of Thoreau that he listed in his book:

Contemplation, walking or sauntering, excursions, reading, writing-journal keeping, and Conversations were termed “spiritual exercises” by him or did Henry think they were “spiritual” when he was doing them? He said “Yes and no”? He said there was no doubt that Thoreau was spiritual even though it was not a religious spirituality. He had no dogmas or practical set of laws but he had the characteristics of spirituality as listed above for the Transcendentalists.

He again referred to the quotations and said that everywhere in Walden, one could see the spirituality of Thoreau. Also he distinguished the Transcendentalist movement as including Reason versus Understanding.

Reason

Intuitive  
More emotional  
Connotative

Understanding

logical  
rational  
denotative

Lastly, he answered the question regarding the difference between the Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists and some of the Universalist practices in relationship to Transcendental spirituality.

The Unitarians believed in a theology which established reason over biblical authority as the basis for moral decisions and spiritual growth. They consisted of the well-educated, intelligent elite. The difference in the Universalists was their belief in the Universal Soul. God is love. He would not want his creatures to suffer. He would want them to help themselves to become better...self reliant. This appealed to the working class; however, they were very disorganized for about 40 years. Then there was a merging of the two sects to become Unitarian Universalists. They continued a religious experience that was a human universal "God is love" practice. There were no prescribed ceremonies at the beginning.

In his work now, the U. U. are trying to have some practical moral code and dogma defined.

One of the venues he uses in his ministry which incorporates some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Transcendentalist ideas is his conferences in which he engages people in coming to grips with their problems by "conversations". He chooses a topic and each of the participants has a chance to take part in the discussion. He referred to the "conversation" he had the first morning of the Thoreau Gathering on "Solitude" and "Visitors" held in the little cabin of Thoreau as an example of his conferences.

He did describe, in detail, one of their beautiful meditative practices particularly used with younger adults. A “flaming chalice” as symbolic of the “love and light” of the world, wisdom and understanding that comes from the heart is placed in the center of a circle. The children light the chalice which contains a candle and meditate. Their thoughts are tuned into the symbolic significance of the flame and by deliberating the meaning of it, fill their own hearts with love and wisdom. They sit still and with erect posture on the floor. This is one of their very devotional practices.

In his ministry he also uses the spiritual exercises described in his book Thoreau as Spiritual Guide. He will have his congregation or those that attend the “conversations” to practice a level of intentionality, contemplation and living in the moment in their everyday undertakings. These characteristics and exercises are described in some of the Transcendental works, Andrews states, such as Emerson’s “Nature”, “Self Reliance”, “The Divinity School Address,” “The Over-Soul” and Thoreau’s “Walden” and specifically “Higher Laws.” He believes these works are effective now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and reflect the best of the Transcendental spirituality.

He believes he does use the “spirituality” of the Transcendentalists in the healing of souls in his ministry and that is it is effective in healing.

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We thank Reverend Barry Andrews for his interview time and the sharing of the techniques and practices he uses to guide his congregation and other groups as a Unitarian Universalist minister. His book Thoreau As Spiritual Guide was a great resource in the spiritual exercises that were used to show 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century similarities.

The stress reduction techniques, courses, and seminars given by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn and the Instructors at the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School have been invaluable in the comparison to 19<sup>th</sup> century Transcendentalist's practices. Jon Kabat-Zinn's book, Wherever You Go, There You Are, is a tribute to Henry David Thoreau's contemplative life and spiritual exercises at Walden Pond, and a source of many of the analogies used in our project's goal.

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