

Transcendentalism

“I become a transparent eyeball!”
-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

to transcend



- To go beyond
- To be greater than
- To surpass
- To exist above and independent of the material universe

Transcendental Influences

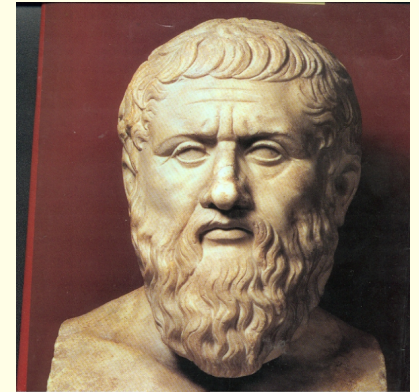


IMMANUEL KANT

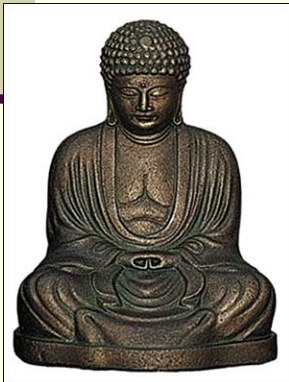
Think autonomously, free from the dictates of authority

PLATO

Overcome struggles to strive for the ideal; perfection can be achieved



Bust of Plato



BUDDHISM

Through careful study and meditation, one can achieve Nirvana, a state of perfection

Putting Theories into Practice

■ Utopias

- Attempts to create the “perfect society”
- Brook Farm

■ Lyceums

- Popular gatherings for lectures, debates, scientific demonstrations



Transcendental Top 5

1. Individualism

2. Self-Reliance

3. Quest for perfection

4. Faith in human potential

And

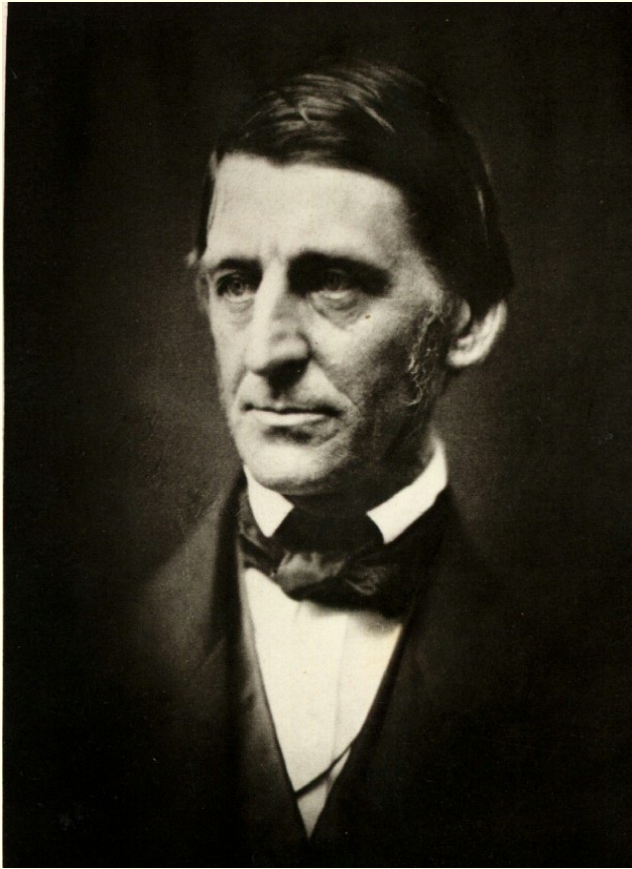
5. OVER-SOUL!!!

Over-Soul



- God, nature, and human are united in a shared, universal soul
- Human spirit is reflected in nature
- Transcendental “Nirvana”
- The ultimate Transcendental experience

Ralph Waldo Emerson



- Teacher
- Regarded as a great thinker
- Developed Transcendental theories
- Mild-mannered and conservative
- Attended Harvard
- Unitarian minister
- Counted on things to take care of themselves
- Even-tempered – never happy, never sad

Henry David Thoreau



- Student
- Regarded as a failure, a loser
- Put Transcendental theories into practice
- Rebellious and radical
- Attended Harvard
- Often engaged in protests
- Given to frequent self-examination
- Influenced both Gandhi and MLK, Jr.