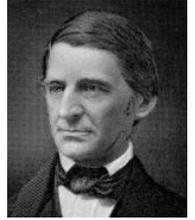


RALPH WALDO EMERSON

- He was trained as a Unitarian minister, but resigned due to disagreements about church rituals and sacraments
- He lived most of his adult life in **Concord, MA** near the site of the Battle of Lexington & Concord
- He gave lectures that articulated the tenets of Transcendentalism
- He let Henry D. Thoreau use a piece of his property he had purchased along Walden Pond which led to Thoreau's famous book



Some of Emerson's Works

Nature	The American Scholar	The Divinity School Address
Self-Reliance	Concord Hymn	Brahma & Hamatreya



LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

- Her father - Bronson Alcott - noted Transcendental philosopher
- Made her home primarily in Concord most of her life
- Spent some time in Boston trying to find ways to support her family and pay off the family debt
- Her definition of philosophy: "*My definition is of a man up in a balloon, with his family and friends pulling the ropes which confine him to earth and trying to haul him down.*"
- Alcott died of a stroke at age 55 in Boston, on March 6, 1888, two days after her father's death.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSCENDENTALISM

1. Transcendentalism is a form of philosophical idealism and is essentially a counterfeit religion.
2. The material world – man and nature – emanates from a spiritual force called the Over Soul
3. Because the Over Soul also permeates the world, man and nature contain a spark of the divine.
4. Man receives knowledge through nature.
5. Man is guided to truth by his intuition – not reason or history or biblical revelation!
6. Man is inherently good and progressing toward perfection.

Some of Alcott's Works

Hospital Sketches (1863)

Little Women Series:

- Little Women (1868)
- Good Wives (1869)
- Little Men (1871)
- Jo's Boys (1886)

Eight Cousins (1875)

Rose in Bloom (1876)

Under the Lilacs (1878)

Transcendentalism - Some Key Concepts

TRUTH

- According to Transcendentalism, the only determinant for truth is our own inner selves. Each person chooses his or her own truth through sense of intuition.
- Culture and society tend to corrupt our intuition, establishing other determiners for morality and truth - such as the church, the government, and peer groups – and these societal institutions deny us our own truth.
- To live transcendently, we must not deny our own truth. Instead we must listen to our inner selves to hear our own truths, and then we must live according to what we believe is true even when it violates the standards of society & others.
- The wisest sages of the past were all misunderstood souls, and so we too, when living closely to our own sense of truth, may live very differently than the church, government, or peer group would have us live. (Thus, if our view of truth radically diverges from basic standards of truth, that's because we are simply a misunderstood soul ahead of our time.)

NATURE

- We should live close to nature, for it is our greatest teacher. Nature holds the truths of life.
- Nature is symbolic of the divine, and understanding its "language" can bring us closer to God.
- Poets know this, and they write in the language of nature, helping us to connect our lives to the spiritual realm. They replace the priests and ministers of the church.

INDIVIDUALISM

- Individualism lies at the heart of Transcendentalism. Everyone chooses their own truth.
- Self-empowerment is attained by defying the authority of "empty" conventions and senseless rules in society.

THE BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY

- The Bible was written for people in the past and may offer some transcending lessons. But it is not the word of God or the ultimate authority on how to live your life.
- Jesus had God in him too, like all of us, but he was not God. In many ways, though, he taught valuable lessons and lived a transcendent life, which should be studied.
- The miracles of the Bible are doubted in terms of specialness; the universe around us every day is full of the miracles of **nature**.