TRANSCENDENTAL

"I call all knowledge *transcendental* which is concerned, not with objects, but with our mode of knowing objects so far as this is possible *a priori*." (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1788)

"The terms *transcendent* and *transcendental* had been employed during the Middle Ages to designate concepts which 'overpass' the finite. The Schoolmen had used them to describe universal truths which transcended the categories of Aristotle. Kant, who influenced the New England group, reserved the term *transcendent* for those ideas that can in no way be experienced, using *transcendental* for *a priori* elements of thought (such as the concepts of space and time) which do not arise from sense experience but are manifested in and give meaning to sense experience." (Max J. Herzberg, *The Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature*, 1962)

"Its classical description, formulated in the *Cambridge History of American Literature* (1917)…begins with the central conceptions of the oversoul and of the validity of intuition arising from man's participation in divinity—'that great nature…that Unity, that Over-Soul [Emerson], within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other. From these conceptions certain ethical conclusions may be drawn, principally the doctrine of self-reliance, a spirit of optimism, and defiance of tradition and authority; for to the extent that all men are godlike in their being and knowing, they must trust themselves, can overcome evil, and should regard their fellow men as equal." (William M. Gibson & George Arms, *Twelve American Writers*, 1962)

TRANSCENDENTALISM

"What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers, mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists; the first class founding on experience, the second on consciousness; the first class beginning to think from the data of the senses, the second class perceive that the senses are not final, and say. "The senses give us representations of things," but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell. The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances and the animal wants of man; the idealist on the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture. These two modes of thinking are both natural, but the idealist contends that his way of thinking is in higher nature. He concedes all that the other affirms, admits the impressions of sense, admits their coherency, their use and grounds of assurance that things are as his senses represent them. But I, he says, affirm facts not affected by the illusions of sense, facts which are of the same nature as the faculty which reports them, and not liable to doubt, facts which in their first appearance to us assume a native superiority to material facts…" (Emerson, "The Transcendentalist," 1842)

"That belief we term Transcendentalism maintains that man has ideas that come not through the five senses, or the powers of reasoning; but are either the result of direct revelation from God, his immediate inspiration, or his immanent presence in the spiritual world…. This, then, is the doctrine of Transcendentalism—the substantive, independent existence of the soul of man, the reality of conscience, the religious sense, the inner light of man's affections, his knowledge of right and truth, his sense of duty…his love for beauty and holiness, his religious aspirations…not dependent on education, custom, command, or anything beyond man himself." (Charles Mayo Ellis, "Essay on Transcendentalism," 1842)

"Ultimately…*transcendentalism* was an epistemology—a way of knowing—and what tied together the frequently contradictory attitudes of the loosely defined group [New England Transcendentalists] was the belief that human beings can intuitively transcend the limits of the senses and of logic and directly receive higher truths denied to more mundane methods of knowing." (C. Hugh Holman & William Harmon, *A Handbook of Literature*, 1936-92)

TRANSCENDENTALISMS

The four primary spaces (City, Garden, Wilderness, Sky) and modes of consciousness are related to four basic value systems: primitivisms, puritanisms, pastoralisms, and transcendentalisms. A primitivism is an expression of instinctive or animalistic values that is virtually unconscious and in the vertical mode of consciousness is identified with Wilderness. A puritanism is a focused, definite, structured belief system,

ideology, or mental set in the vertical mode, and is identified with the City; it is defined by its source of authority, which may be sited in any of the four primary spaces, but usually City or Sky. A pastoralism is a diffused, indefinite complex of feelings and values in the horizontal mode of consciousness, and is defined by the location of a "good place" in the Garden. A transcendentalism is the synergy of a puritanism and a pastoralism attained through transformation in the Wilderness, and is defined by a unique individual expression of holistic consciousness identified with Sky.

INDIVIDUATING TO HOLISTIC CONSCIOUSESS

As T. S. Eliot avers in "The Waste Land," the spiritual paralysis induced by the "Unreal City" of dissociated vertical consciousness may be overcome, the wasteland of the soul restored to life and holistic consciousness attained through a quest in the Wilderness. Such inner revolution is exemplified in a simplistic manner in the movement from Garden to City to Wilderness in *The Wizard of Oz*. The heart and the head are personified as the scarecrow and the tin man, one a pastoral fellow of the heartland/Garden who wants a brain or head, the other a mechanical man of the City who cuts down trees and needs to have a heart. The taming of the Wilderness is represented by a cowardly lion. Accompanied by these three personifications of her psyche, Dorothy skips along the yellow brick road to the Emerald City.

In *Oz* the images of Garden/City/Wilderness reflect the cultural mythology of Western tradition: the yellow brick road of progress and success leads to the City, idealized as a secular equivalent of Christianity's Celestial City, with its towers echoing cathedrals and castles of the Middle Ages. Wilderness is perceived from the traditional perspective of Puritans and pioneers, as the dark and dangerous abode of evil to be overcome. Yet Dorothy's dream vision is also revolutionary in exposing the limited authority of the head, the fraudulent wizard whose big head is inflated out of all proportion, and in depicting her City as green, suggesting a synthesis of civilization with nature, centered in a pastoral meadow in the Wilderness of the world. She learns to rely on herself more completely and moves beyond the vertical City. To get where she wants to go, she must become whole, as must the scarecrow after he is fragmented and scattered all around by the forces of the evil witch. As it turns out, Dorothy has all the head, the heart and the animal courage she needs to overcome evil in the dark depths of the Wilderness, liberating the forces there and turning them to good.

Thus the holistic mode transcends binary polarization. It redefines the network of concepts represented by the popular metaphors of left brain and right brain and reattaches them to space in an egalitarian manner that is not prescriptive. The holistic mode of consciousness may be envisioned as a mandala composed of the primary spatial metaphors:

Sky

City Garden

Wilderness

The head and the heart, or left brain and right brain, are imaged as City and Garden, side-by-side and overlapping. Often in conflict in the vertical mode, in the holistic mode they are equal, balanced, harmonious and synergistic. They derive from and are based upon the space of the deeper self, corresponding to the structures referred to in neurophysiology as the primitive brain, imaged as Wilderness, usually in the form of forest, sea or other depths. Above the three overlapping spaces, completing the mandala is Sky, which expresses a mental experience generated by the functioning of the physical brain, but which cannot be located in nor identified with a part of the brain. Hence, it is transcendent by nature--boundless and paradoxical, like sky and space.

Consciousness is present throughout the holistic mode of the paradigm, including the Wilderness locus, which in the vertical mode is often identified with the unconscious. Sky images appear in the vertical and horizontal modes, sometimes evoking transcendent implications and feelings, but in the holistic mode Sky connotes a "higher" consciousness than is associated with the other three primary spaces. Thus a degree of verticality is preserved in the holistic mode, based upon ordinary human perception, but metaphors of

mystical experience temporarily void this verticality in the paradox of unifying opposites, transcending physical space and time, as when Henry David Thoreau says in *Walden*, "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads" (187). In the holistic mode, the horizontal axis is unstable in that left and right are preserved but relative to position; the vertical axis is stable but allows for inversion, rotation and synthesis.

The major figures in Greek mythology may be identified with the components of the spatial model, in the same way that literary characters often personify them, making their stories psychological allegories. In the plots of literary works, movements expressing the holistic mode may be set in any of the four primary spaces:

(1) The movement upward from Wilderness to City is the plot line of education and getting ahead into the vertical mode--often into conflict, polarization and alienation.

(2) The movement upward from Wilderness to Garden is the plot line of growth, nurturing, synthesis and harmony. In traditional romance, Wilderness is often personified as a male, Garden as a female. In typical sequence, the vertical mode is overturned by passion, courtship and seduction; the lovers enter the horizontal mode in a Garden setting, seek holistic union along the axis of Wilderness-Garden, then formalize the union in a marriage ritual evoking the Sky.

(3) The movement downward to Wilderness is the plot line of the spiritual quest or of tragedy. In tragedy it may begin in the Garden, as in *Romeo and Juliet*; the City, as in *Death of a Salesman*; or the Sky, as in *Paradise Lost*, depending upon who falls.

(4) The movement upward from Wilderness to Sky is the plot line of spiritual rebirth, ascent and ecstasy, as in mystical experience and recurrent culminations of the cycling individuation process.

In the holistic mode, the individuating protagonist often moves through the spaces of the model, or mandala, in a circular or a spiraling pattern, in either direction. The complexities and variations in this process are reduced by Joseph Campbell to a monomyth in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The quest or spiritual journey into the Wilderness is a chief characteristic of literature in the holistic mode, usually leading to the attainment of transcendental values. In the vertical mode Wilderness is darkness, whereas in the holistic mode it may yield the most significant illumination. For in this mode, Nature is numinous; it is experienced as one with the Self, the outer unified with the inner. The result is an atonement and healing of puritan dissociation, often marked, at a climax, by the metaphorical union of Wilderness and Sky--then all spaces are one.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOLISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

In American literature, characteristics of the holistic mode of consciousness are most fully evident in such diverse works as the "Personal Narrative" of the 18th-century Calvinist theologian Jonathan Edwards, Melville's *Moby-Dick*, the poems of Emily Dickinson, John Neihardt's translation *Black Elk Speaks*, Faulkner's *The Bear*, Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, and Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*. The recurrent characteristics of such works may be summarized as follows: (1) quest into the Wilderness (psychological individuation toward wholeness or search for salvation); (2) sense of need to save one's soul, psyche or Self; (3) Christ-evoking figure as exemplar; (4) an Indian, Black, wise old man or woman as spiritual guide; (5) ultimate solitude and soul-reliance; (6) confrontation with ultimate Truth in the form of a wild animal or a supernatural manifestation; (7) spiritual death and rebirth in submission to higher power; (8) atonement with Nature and/or God; (9) reconciliation of opposites that integrates head and heart, puritan and pastoral values in synthesis; (10) circular, cyclical and spiral imagery; (11) inner light; (12) numinous evocation of spirit; (13) mystery, intensity, ecstasy; (14) transcendence of time and space; (15) sense of paradox; (16) ineffability; (17) holistic perception; (18) harmonious vision of life, unique in its totality, universal in its archetypal components.