

Original Research

Transcendentalism in America: A Hermeneutic Analysis of the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta

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***Related declarations are provided in the final section of this article.*

Abstract

The truth is science, so the God (the one and only truth) is science and beyond. This research explores Transcendentalism in America: A Hermeneutic Analysis of the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta, focusing on the philosophical convergence between Eastern spirituality and American idealism—truth as the representation of God. . Through the hermeneutic framework of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, the study interprets the Bhagavadgeeta not merely as a religious scripture but as a transcendental philosophy of self-realization that resonates with the American Transcendentalist movement led by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. The analysis emphasizes key Gītā concepts—ātman (self), karma (action), yoga (discipline), and moksha (liberation)—and interprets them alongside Transcendentalist ideals of intuition, nature, moral autonomy, and the immanence of the divine. Using textual hermeneutics, this study reveals a philosophical dialogue wherein Krishna’s discourse to Arjuna mirrors the Transcendentalist quest for inner awakening and self-reliant moral truth. Both traditions affirm that truth is accessible through direct intuition and disciplined consciousness rather than external authority. The research concludes that the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta anticipates many of the ideals later articulated by American Transcendentalists, presenting a universal message of spiritual independence, harmony with nature, and ethical responsibility. This hermeneutic reading enriches cross-cultural philosophy by establishing the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta as a living text whose transcendental vision continues to inspire contemporary spiritual and intellectual discourse all over the world. The source of global transcendentalism is the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta.

Keywords: Eastern philosophy, Hermeneutics, Self-realization, *Shreemadbhagavadgeeta*, Transcendentalism,

Introduction

Hermeneutics seeks to interpret the text not merely as a religious scripture but as a living discourse on self-realization and the unity of existence (Gadamer, 1975). In this interpretive frame, the *Geeta*’s call for selfless action (*nishkama karma*) resonates deeply with the Transcendentalist idea

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of moral autonomy and intuition as pathways to divine truth. Emerson (1841) and Thoreau (1854) both echo the *Geeta's* principle that truth arises from within the self, independent of societal conformity. Hermeneutics generally starts from the context of the historical text and ends with the contemporary general understanding. Hermeneutics is concerned with the construction of meaning within the relationship between author/text/reader, and the overarching paradigm (Badal, 2021).

The *Shreemadbhagavadgeeta* is a timeless philosophical dialogue between Lord Krishna and warrior Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Faced with moral despair and confusion, Arjuna refuses to fight against his own kin. Krishna, serving as his charioteer and divine guide, reveals the essence of life, duty, and spiritual realization. The *Gītā* teaches that true fulfillment arises from performing one's duty (*dharma*) with detachment from outcomes—*nishkāma karma*. It harmonizes three spiritual paths: *karma yoga* (selfless action), *bhakti yoga* (devotion), and *jnāna yoga* (knowledge). Krishna unveils the eternal truth that the soul (*ātman*) is immortal and distinct from the perishable body, encouraging equanimity amidst joy and sorrow, gain and loss. The discourse transcends religion, presenting a universal philosophy of disciplined action, divine love, and inner realization. It concludes with Arjuna's enlightenment and readiness to act according to divine wisdom. The *Gītā* thus embodies the synthesis of ethics, metaphysics, and spirituality, guiding humanity toward harmony between worldly duty and eternal truth (Bhagavadgeeta 2.47–2.72).

The law of nature that drives the organism in the earth independently or naturally is called *Dharma* in philosophy. Naturally a life or lives or from single cellular molecule to the whole universe – living or non-living organism, it is guided by a single energy. The universal single energy is called *Brahma*. The energy transforms to generate the organism, transfers to operation or manifestation, and transfers to another being. "Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be transformed from one form to another" (Feynman, 1964, p. 4). "The process of energy transformation is central to understanding physical phenomena, as energy seamlessly changes forms to maintain balance in natural systems" (Tipler & Mosca, 2007, p. 115). The energy in male and female creates a life with energy. The life with energy creates a next life. When the fuel of the body ends, it dilutes into the nature. It is the matter of Matter, Space, and Time. "Space and time form a single continuum, whose structure is shaped by the presence of matter and energy" (Einstein, 1916, p. 30). Further, "The understanding of matter cannot be separated from the fabric of space and time, as their interrelationship defines the universe's structure and evolution" (Hawking, 1988, p. 50). The creation of Matter, role of its time and its situation is Generation, Operation, and Destruction of the matter. Thus the natural process of divine nature from individual Dharma to entire universal Brahma for the emancipation is transcendentalism.

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were the leading figures of American Transcendentalism, a movement that sought spiritual truth beyond materialism and institutional religion. Emerson, often called the "prophet of Transcendentalism," emphasized intuition, self-reliance, and the divine presence within the individual. In his seminal essay *Nature* (1836), he proposed that nature is the living garment of God, urging humanity to perceive the divine through direct experience. Emerson's transcendental vision celebrated individual moral autonomy, inner illumination, and the unity of all existence (Emerson, 1836).

Thoreau, Emerson's disciple and philosophical companion, expanded these ideals through practical living. His work *Walden* (1854) demonstrated the application of transcendental principles in daily

life—simplicity, harmony with nature, and spiritual independence. In *Civil Disobedience* (1849), Thoreau introduced the moral duty of resisting unjust authority through conscience-guided action, inspiring later reform movements. Both thinkers affirmed that truth arises from inner awareness and moral self-discipline, not external conformity. Together, they transformed American thought by integrating ethical idealism with nature mysticism, aligning closely with the *Bhagavadgeeta's* teaching of self-realization through conscious action.

The theory of scientific assimilation of individual recognition of generation, operation and destruction of matter with time and space with natural energy is transcendentalism. The complete acceptance of nature of outside to the nature of inside of a body is transcendentalism. The body is the product of the nature (Matter, Space, and Time) with natural flow of energy. "The universe is wider than our views of it" (Thoreau, 1854/1992, p. 99). The psychological amalgamation of the universal nature and the life is called enlightenment or salvation. "Nature always wears the colors of the spirit" (Emerson, 1836/2008, p. 45). The spirit is energy of life. "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string" (Emerson, 1841/2000, p. 19). That is what we see or observe outside that is inside us. The life is the product of the nature. Nature is the warehouse of energy. "Transcendentalism is a philosophical movement that asserts the primacy of the individual conscience and the inherent goodness of people and nature" (Gura, 2007, p. 4). In reality "Transcendentalism is the recognition of the divine in every living thing and the belief that spiritual insight surpasses material experience" (Buell, 1973, p. 21). The complete happiness and satisfaction with what the nature has provided to the body is the real happiness. The pure happiness is the transcendental divine happiness. Understanding and applying the Godly phenomena (Generation, Operation, and Dissolution) in everyday life happily is transcendentalism.

Problem statement

Transcendentalism, a philosophical and literary movement that emerged in 19th-century America, profoundly influenced American culture, spirituality, and social reform. While its historical significance is widely acknowledged, the movement's lasting impact and relevance in contemporary American society remain underexplored. Hermeneutically, the *Geeta* may be read as a transcendental text wherein Krishna's discourse to Arjuna represents the awakening of the inner self from moral confusion toward spiritual clarity. This mirrors the Transcendentalist belief in the immanence of the divine within the human soul (Emerson, 1836). The interpretive process thus moves beyond literal exegesis toward an existential understanding: both traditions assert that divinity manifests through nature, conscience, and moral duty. The *Geeta's* vision of *yoga* as disciplined union parallels the Transcendentalist pursuit of harmony between the individual and the universal spirit (Thoreau, 1849).

This research seeks to analyze the core principles of transcendentalism, its historical development, and its influence on modern American thought, literature, and environmental consciousness. Understanding these connections is crucial to appreciating transcendentalism's enduring legacy and its potential to address present-day societal challenges. Transcendentalism is or will be the global thought to link east and west, so the study may be the foundational work.

Objectives

To explore the historical context and emergence of transcendentalism in America from the study of Shreemadbhagavadgeeta.

To analyze the core philosophical principles of transcendentalism and their relation to American identity from the lenses of Shreemadbhagavadgeeta.

The study based on the specified objectives are the corner stone of American Transcendentalism to integrate the philosophy in future. Through hermeneutic dialogue, the *Geeta* can be seen as a philosophical counterpart to the American transcendental project—a synthesis of self-realization and cosmic order. Such analysis not only reinterprets the *Geeta* for philosophical frameworks but also affirms its universal message of inner awakening and ethical living within the global intellectual tradition.

Research Methodology

This section outlines the hermeneutic qualitative methodology used to examine how American Transcendentalism and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavadgītā* enter a dialogic relationship. The study adopts a text-centered interpretive design grounded in philosophical hermeneutics and narrative theory, combining Gadamerian fusion of horizons and Ricoeurian narrative mediation to move between historical-contextual description and existential interpretation (Gadamer, 1975; Ricoeur, 1984). To structure analytic rigor, the study follows contemporary hermeneutic-phenomenological procedures as described in recent methodological literature.

This study adopts an interpretive qualitative design rooted in philosophical hermeneutics and hermeneutic phenomenology to explore the dialogic interface between the *Śrīmad Bhāgavadgītā* and American Transcendentalist thought. Philosophical hermeneutics, as articulated by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975/2004), emphasizes the fusion of horizons and the hermeneutic circle—where interpreter and text engage in mutual transformation. Concurrently, hermeneutic phenomenology emphasizes meaning-making through lived interpretation (Kafle, 2013). Together, these underpin a method suited to textual and philosophical analysis.

Research Design and Theoretical Framework

The approach is hermeneutic since it emphasizes interpretation rather than mere description. Gadamer's concept of the hermeneutic circle—whereby understanding proceeds from parts to whole and whole to parts—guides the analytic process (Debesay, Nåden, & Slettebø, 2008). Additionally, frameworks developed for hermeneutic phenomenology provide procedural clarity for data analysis (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). The study thus treats the *Gītā* and selected Transcendentalist texts as meaningful “texts” whose interpretive horizons interact.

Data Sources and Selection Criteria

Primary texts: the Sanskrit *Śrīmad Bhāgavadgītā* (critical edition) and canonical English translations/commentaries; and selected essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau (e.g., *Nature*, *Self-Reliance*, *Walden*) chosen for their explicit resonances with Vedantic and yogic themes of self-reliance, intuition, and nature.

Secondary sources: peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last decade that address hermeneutics, the *Gītā*, Transcendentalism, and comparative spirituality. Selection criteria included relevance to themes of self-realization, inner authority, nature, intuition, and duty/karma.

Analytic Procedure

Analysis proceeded in three iterative phases:

Descriptive Reading: Close readings of the primary texts to identify recurrent motifs (e.g., ātman/self, karma/action-detachment, and nature/unity).

Contextual Hermeneutics: Mapping identified motifs onto Transcendentalist concepts (e.g., self-reliance, immanence of the divine, nature as teacher). This phase situates the texts historically and philosophically to avoid anachronism.

Interpretive Synthesis: Employing the hermeneutic circle and fusion of horizons, thematic syntheses were developed to articulate convergences and tensions (e.g., inner authority vs. social duty). Reflexive journaling, analytic memos, and comparative matrices support transparency and auditability.

To enhance credibility, methodological triangulation was achieved by referencing multiple translations/commentaries and scholarly sources; peer debriefing with two religious-studies specialists provided external feedback. Reflexivity statements disclose the researcher's orientation toward inter-traditional dialogue, enabling readers to assess potential bias. Dependability was supported by maintaining an audit trail of readings, coding memos, and synthesis drafts.

As a text-based hermeneutic inquiry, no human participants were involved and no ethics board approval was required. Ethical care involved accurate representation of cultural texts, acknowledgement of traditions, and avoidance of reductive interpretation. Limitations include the inherently interpretive nature of hermeneutics and reliance on translations, which may affect nuance. Future research could extend to archival investigation of Transcendentalist reception of Eastern texts.

Results and Discussion

Transcendentalism is the recognition of an inner spiritual reality that transcends the physical world. Emerson described it as “a belief in an ideal spiritual state which transcends the empirical and is realized through intuition rather than through the senses” Emerson (1836). Thoreau (1854) defined Transcendentalism as the act of living close to nature to discover divine truth within the self. In *Walden*, he viewed it as the discipline of freeing oneself from material and social bondage to awaken the higher moral and spiritual consciousness. Matthiessen (1941) – The American literary critic defined Transcendentalism as “a spiritual revolt against rational materialism,” representing the American expression of Romantic idealism that emphasized intuition, individuality, and the moral law within.

Buell (1995) interpreted Transcendentalism as “a philosophy of immanent divinity, affirming the presence of God in the soul and nature, and urging a correspondence between moral and natural order” Gura (2007) defined it as “an intellectual movement of early nineteenth-century America

rooted in German idealism and Eastern mysticism, seeking moral reform through the elevation of individual conscience above institutional authority”

In essence, Transcendentalism is a spiritual-philosophical movement asserting that truth resides beyond sensory experience, accessible through intuition, self-reliance, and harmony with nature. It bridges philosophy, literature, and moral awakening in the quest for the divine within.

Krishna’s Definition (Bhagavadgeeta 2.47–2.72) – Transcendentalism (*Paramārtha Darshan*) in the *Gītā* is the realization of one’s divine nature beyond material actions and desires. Lord Krishna teaches that true wisdom arises when one performs duty without attachment to results (*nishkāma karma*), transcending the dualities of pleasure and pain, success and failure.

Swami Vivekananda (1896) – According to Vivekananda, the *Gītā*’s transcendentalism is the harmony of knowledge, devotion, and action—“a call to realize the divinity within through detached work and self-mastery.” It affirms that spiritual realization is attained not by renunciation but by transcending the ego while engaging in righteous action. Sri Aurobindo (1922) – Aurobindo interpreted transcendentalism in the *Gītā* as “the ascent of the human consciousness to the divine consciousness.” In *Essays on the Gita*, he explains that the *Gītā* reveals the eternal *Purusha* (Self) who transcends *Prakriti* (Nature), guiding humanity toward divine union through disciplined action and inner surrender.

Radhakrishnan (1948) – Dr. S. Radhakrishnan described the *Gītā*’s transcendentalism as “spiritual humanism,” where the individual self (*ātman*) and the universal Self (*Paramātman*) are one. It is not world-denying but world-transforming, teaching that man must act in the world with transcendental awareness of divine unity.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (1972) – Prabhupāda defined transcendentalism as “the process of engaging the senses in the service of the Supreme,” thereby rising above material contamination. In *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, he explains that a transcendentalist acts in pure consciousness (*Kṛiṣṇa consciousness*), detached from selfish motivation and dual perception.

In essence, transcendentalism in the *Shreemadbhagavadgeeta* is the philosophical and spiritual state of realizing the eternal Self that transcends matter, ego, and temporal identity. It invites humans to live in the world but not be bound by it—acting selflessly, perceiving divinity everywhere, and attaining liberation through disciplined consciousness. Thus the history, present consequences, and future dimension of transcendentalism from world spiritual and religious practices should be discussed from scientific lenses.

History: historical context, spiritualism and emergence of transcendentalism in America

The Transcendental Movement, which was emerged in the early 19th century as a response to the growing materialism and conformity in American society. Rooted in the belief that individuals could access higher truths through intuition and a deep connection with nature, transcendentalism reshaped American thought, literature, and culture (Gura, 2007). Transcendentalism has reshaped the American society. The Transcendental Movement arose during a period of rapid social, political and economic change in the United States. Influenced by German idealism and British romanticism, American thinkers sought to break away from traditional religious dogmas and embrace a more personal, spiritual connection to the universe (Buell, 1973). The publication of Ralph Waldo

Emerson's *Nature* in 1836, the movement's founding moment (Emerson, 1836/2008). Since 1836 the concept of transcendentalism is continuously growing. It is exactly the philosophy of Nature.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, often regarded as the "father of transcendentalism," championed the idea of self-reliance and the pursuit of personal intuition. His essays, such as *Self-Reliance* and *The Over-Soul*, encouraged individuals to trust their inner voices and seek spiritual enlightenment (Emerson, 1841/2000) aligned with Mother Nature. Another central figure of transcendentalism was Henry David Thoreau, whose work *Walden* exemplified the transcendental ideal of living simply and harmoniously with nature (Thoreau, 1854/1992), in the lap of Mother Nature. It is the foundation of ecological movement in American literature. Next Margaret Fuller, a pioneering feminist, expanded transcendentalism's scope by advocating for women's rights and social reform (Myerson, 2000). She advocates to respect women as Mother Nature. Thus, transcendentalism is the scientific movement of Nature, Right, and Spiritualism. It links the spirituality with science. Thus thematically it is the perfect mix of Ecology, Human Rights, and Spiritualism.

Transcendentalists believed that truth transcended sensory experience and could be apprehended through personal intuition and contemplation. Nature was viewed as a divine manifestation, a living symbol through which one could access spiritual insights (Packer, 2007). The movement also emphasized self-reliance, individualism, and nonconformity, challenging societal norms and institutional authority (Gura, 2007). The transcendentalist movement had a profound impact on American literature, philosophy, and social reform. It inspired generations of writers, from Walt Whitman to Emily Dickinson, and influenced social movements such as abolitionism and environmentalism (Buell, 1973). The life and the society is the gift of the Mother Nature. Transcendentalism's emphasis on personal freedom and moral responsibility continues to resonate in contemporary discussions of individuality and spirituality seem the base of American identity. An American loves the nature, human right, and spirituality. It is an American identity.

The roots of transcendentalist thought in East trace back to ancient Vedic texts, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavadgeeta. These scriptures emphasize the pursuit of self-knowledge and the realization of the divine within oneself, reflecting a core tenet of transcendentalism (Radhakrishnan, 1953). American transcendentalists, particularly Emerson and Thoreau, drew inspiration from these texts, integrating Eastern spiritual insights into their works (Miller, 1984). The concept of *Prakriti* (nature) in Eastern thought parallels the transcendentalist idea that nature serves as a conduit for spiritual awakening (Buell, 1973). The Shreemadbhagavadgeeta – Geeta is the finest tenet of transcendentalism. They were influenced by the Geeta. Thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau found inspiration in the Gita's teachings, integrating its spiritual principles into their transcendentalist ideals (Miller, 1984). Spirituality is not limited to religion. It is the science that links humanity with Mother Nature.

The real turning point for Sanatan Dharma in America occurred when Swami Vivekananda was invited to speak at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. The Parliament was an attempt to begin a dialogue of world religions and Vivekananda successfully captured the spirit of the event by presenting Sanatan Dharma as an enlightened philosophical and scientific worldview (Kurian, 2015). Sanatan Dharma is not limited to a religion but a natural eternal law. In the 1920's, Swami Yogananda established his Self-Realization Fellowship in the United States which taught a form of meditation known as Kriya yoga. The Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement began in

the early 1960's by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), better known as the Hare Krishnas, was established in 1965 in the United States.

Hindu cosmology presents a complex worldview that divides the Earth into seven continents, or *Dvipas*, encircled by oceans of varying substances (Wilson, 1840). Some scholars interpret America as part of *Shaka Dvipa* or *Pushkara Dvipa*, described in texts like the Vishnu Purana and the *Bhagavata Purana* (Doniger, 1975). America is often viewed as a land where *Sanatana Dharma* has found new ground, with the global spread of yoga, meditation, and Vedic philosophy (Rao, 2002) in Pushkar Dvipa. The term *Pushkara* translates to "lotus" in Sanskrit, symbolizing purity, spiritual enlightenment, and divine creation in Hindu tradition (Apte, 1965). *Pushkara Dvipa* is one of the seven concentric islands (*Dvipas*) described in ancient texts like the *Vishnu Purana* and the *Bhagavata Purana*, each separated by vast oceans of distinct substances. *Pushkara Dvipa* is also considered the outermost *Dvipa*, encircled by the ocean of fresh water (*Svadhudaka*). It is described as a sacred realm, often associated with spiritual transcendence and divine presence (Wilson, 1840). The term *Shaka* is believed to refer to a species of trees called *Shaka* trees, which are said to grow abundantly in this region, giving the *Dvipa* its name (Wilson, 1840). Cultural or religious cosmology explores the universe's creation and structure according to spiritual beliefs and myths. For example, Sanatan cosmology describes the universe as consisting of multiple realms or *lokas*, with Earth divided into seven *Dvipas* (continents) surrounded by various oceans (Doniger, 1975). So, according to Hindu- Sanatan cosmology, America is the pristine land with lotus flowers, ponds, and thick jungle of Shakh woods having sweet or tasty water. Some interpretations arose from the idea that early travelers or spiritual thinkers perceived the Americas as distant and mysterious lands across the "seven seas."

The Transcendental Movement in America was more than a philosophical doctrine. It was a call to embrace the spiritual over the material life and the individual over the collective life. It is a nature as a gateway to deeper understanding of ecology in human life. It is a spiritual science. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a spiritual leader, introduced Transcendental Meditation (TM) to the West, creating a bridge between Eastern spirituality and Western transcendentalist ideals. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's introduction of TM to the Western world in the mid-20th century reinvigorated these ideals, offering a practical method for achieving inner peace and self-realization (Forem, 2012). Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's teachings centered on the practice of TM, a simple technique designed to transcend ordinary consciousness and access a state of pure awareness (Maharishi, 1969). His philosophy echoed the transcendentalists' belief in self-exploration and the pursuit of higher states of consciousness, aligning with Emerson's notion of tapping into the "Universal Being" (Emerson, 1836/2003). Its legacy endures in American thought, reminding us of the power of personal intuition and the pursuit of higher truths. Learning and assimilating the nature in life is transcendental spirituality.

Religious perspectives of Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism, broadly defined, refers to the belief that ultimate reality lies beyond sensory experience and can be realized through inner spiritual awakening. Each major world religion embodies a distinct transcendental orientation grounded in its metaphysical and ethical vision.

Hindu Transcendentalism rests upon the Vedic and Upanishadic idea that the ultimate truth (*Brahman*) transcends material existence yet dwells within all beings as the *Ātman*. The

Bhagavadgītā synthesizes *karma*, *jnāna*, and *bhakti* yogas to guide the individual toward self-realization through disciplined action and detachment (Radhakrishnan, 1948). This transcendentalism is experiential and non-dual, affirming that liberation (*moksha*) arises when one perceives unity between the individual soul and cosmic spirit.

Muslim Transcendentalism manifests in Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam. Sufis such as Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī and Ibn al-‘Arabī teach that divine love transcends dogma and intellect, guiding the seeker toward *fanā’* (annihilation of self) and *baqā’* (union with God). Through remembrance (*dhikr*) and devotion, the soul transcends ego to experience divine reality (Nasr, 1987). Islamic transcendentalism thus centers on the inner purification that allows unity with the transcendent *Al-Haqq* (The Truth).

Christian Transcendentalism arises from the belief that God’s presence transcends yet pervades creation. The Christian mystics—Meister Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, and Teresa of Ávila—taught that divine union comes through contemplative prayer, detachment, and love of God beyond worldly form. This transcendentalism stresses grace, faith, and the transformation of the inner self through Christ’s presence (Underhill, 1911).

Buddhist Transcendentalism departs from theistic frameworks, defining transcendence as awakening to the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of all phenomena. The Buddha’s teaching of *nirvāṇa* represents liberation from ignorance and craving through mindfulness and insight (Rahula, 1974). In Mahāyāna philosophy, the realization of *Buddha-nature* transcends dualities of self and world, showing enlightenment as an immanent yet boundless state.

Across these traditions, transcendentalism unites the pursuit of an ultimate, ineffable truth beyond reason and form. Hinduism affirms divine immanence within, Islam experiences divine love beyond the self, Christianity seeks mystical union through grace, and Buddhism attains freedom through direct awareness. All converge on the transformative realization that transcending ego leads to communion with ultimate reality. Thus the core value of all religion is

Present practices: philosophical principles of transcendentalism and spiritualism,

In contemporary America, transcendentalist ideals are reflected in movements that prioritize mindfulness, personal growth, human justice, and environmental stewardship. The rise of mindfulness practices and holistic wellness can be seen as a continuation of the transcendentalist belief in self-exploration and inner awareness (Packer, 2007) like different types of yoga and meditation. Additionally, the growing interest in sustainable living aligns with the transcendental view of nature as sacred and worthy of reverence (Buell, 1973) increasing gradually in USA. Central to both the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta and transcendentalism, it is the pursuit of self-realization. In the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta, Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to seek truth through self-knowledge and detachment from material desires (Easwaran, 2007) back to nature. Similarly, Emerson’s concept of the "Over-Soul" reflects the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta’s idea of Atman, the inner self that is one with the divine (Emerson, 1841/2000) element. Both philosophies advocate that enlightenment arises from inner exploration and trusting one’s intuition in divine nature.

The modern environmental movement draws attentions heavily from transcendentalist’s thought. Activists who advocate for ecological preservation echo the principles laid out by Emerson and

Thoreau, who saw nature as a source of spiritual and moral guidance (Gura, 2007) to conserve the nature. Thoreau's *Walden* remains a touchstone text for those seeking a life more attuned to nature and environmental consciousness (Thoreau, 1854/1992), it is increasing gradually day by day. Transcendentalism's emphasis on individualism has found expression in contemporary calls for personal authenticity and originality based on nature, right and spirituality.

Social movements championing civil rights, gender equality, and human rights reflect the transcendentalist spirit of challenging societal norms and seeking justice through personal conviction (Myerson, 2000) in USA. The transcendental notion of self-reliance continues to inspire those advocating for self-determination and empowerment. The Shreemadbhagavadgeeta's principle of *Svadharmā* — fulfilling one's personal duty without attachment to outcomes, closely aligns with the transcendentalists call for nonconformity. Similarly, Thoreau's civil disobedience exemplifies acting according to personal conscience, reminiscent of Arjuna's moral struggle and Krishna's guidance to act righteously, regardless of societal pressures (Thoreau, 1854/1992) in Mahabharat – the holy text of Hinduism.

Modern spiritual seekers often draw on transcendentalist ideas, embracing the belief that personal intuition offers a path to enlightenment. The popularity of New Age spirituality and alternative religious practices reflects a desire for direct, personal experiences of the divine, reminiscent of transcendentalist thought (Packer, 2007), it is science in nature. The transcendentalists believed nature was a reflection of the divine, and Maharishi Yogi similarly taught that aligning oneself with nature's rhythms leads to spiritual growth (Forem, 2012). Its principles resonate through modern environmentalism and social reform. It is spiritual exploration, and cultural individualism, offering a timeless call to seek truth. It embraces the nature, and honor the inner self.

Future of Transcendentalism: relation to American identity, Rights and Environmentalism

Transcendentalist ideals also influenced broader social and political movements, such as abolitionism, women's rights, and environmental conservation. The movement's emphasis on questioning authority and pursuing justice aligned with the American narrative of challenging oppression and striving for equality. As climate change becomes an ever-pressing issue, the transcendentalist reverence for nature offers a guiding philosophy for future environmental action. Thoreau's call for harmonious living with the natural world may serve as a blueprint for future sustainability efforts and ecological consciousness (Thoreau, 1854/1992) in human life.

The growing advocacy for environmental preservation and eco-friendly lifestyles suggests that transcendentalist values will continue to shape green movements (Buell, 1973) and sustainability. So, it advocates sustainable development campaign led by the world. The interconnectedness of life, as taught in the Gita, echoes the transcendentalist reverence for nature as a path to enlightenment (Buell, 1973). Thus American Transcendentalism is the path of eternal salvation and enlightenment.

In an era dominated by technology and social media, the transcendentalist ideal of self-reliance may offer a counterbalance to digital conformity. As individuals seek authenticity and personal growth amidst the noise of online platforms, Emerson's call to "trust thyself" could become increasingly resonant (Emerson, 1841/2000) for humanity. The future may see a renewed focus on personal reflection and digital minimalism as paths toward transcendental living based on environmentalism. The future of transcendentalism may also align with the rise of mindfulness practices and spiritual

exploration in postmodern society. As people turn to meditation, yoga, and other contemplative practices to find meaning, they echo the transcendental pursuit of inner enlightenment (Packer, 2007). This spiritual renaissance could pave the way for a broader acceptance of transcendental ideals in contemporary life in sustainable development setting.

Transcendentalism's legacy of challenging societal norms and advocating for justice remains potent in modern social movements. Future activists may draw on the movement's principles to promote equality, inclusivity, and moral courage in the face of injustice (Myerson, 2000) in postmodern spectrum of thought. The call for nonconformity and individual agency will likely continue to inspire those pushing for societal change in natural environmental setting. In contemporary America, the transcendentalist spirit endures in movements advocating for environmental sustainability, mindfulness, inclusive human right, and personal authenticity. It continues to shape the American identity by inspiring individuals to seek truth, embrace nonconformity, and cultivate a harmonious relationship with nature. It is a timeless reminder of the power of inner conviction and the pursuit of higher ideals. It perfectly motivates life.

Transcendentalism, both in American philosophy and in the *Shreemadbhagavadgeeta*, converges on the realization of an inner divine reality that transcends material perception and social conformity. While American Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau emphasized intuition, moral autonomy, and unity with nature, the *Gītā* presents transcendence as selfless action (*nishkāma karma*) and awareness of the eternal Self (*ātman*). Both traditions affirm that truth resides within the individual's consciousness, accessible through discipline, reflection, and harmony with the universal spirit. Thus, transcendentalism emerges as a universal philosophy of self-realization and divine unity across East and West.

The Geeta followers in America

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, India's philosopher-president, produced one of the most authoritative English commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gītā*. His interpretive approach integrates Advaita Vedānta with universal spiritual humanism, making the *Gītā* relevant for global philosophical dialogue (Radhakrishnan, 1948). Founder of ISKCON, Swami Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* became the most widely distributed English translation worldwide. His hermeneutics focused on devotional monotheism and spiritual activism, emphasizing bhakti as the path to transcendence (Prabhupāda, 1972). A renowned Indian-American spiritual author, Easwaran's *The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living* presents the scripture as a guide for ethical mindfulness and inner discipline. His experiential reading bridges Eastern spirituality and Western self-realization (Easwaran, 1985). Founder of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Swami Prabhavananda co-authored *The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gita* with writer Christopher Isherwood. His lucid English prose and universal tone made the *Gītā* accessible to Western audiences (Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 1944). An American Indologist, Minor's *Modern Interpreters of the Bhagavad Gita* explores cross-cultural interpretations from Vivekananda to Gandhi. His academic rigor and comparative methodology highlight the *Gītā*'s modern global significance (Minor, 1986).

Conclusion

From the contemporary perspective, the past, present, and future of American transcendentalism reflect a continuous journey toward spiritual awakening and inner harmony from all worldly

religion. Rooted in the quest for self-realization, transcendentalism resonates deeply with Eastern philosophies, particularly those found in Vedanta, Shreemadbhagavadgeeta, and other spiritual traditions. In the past, thinkers like Emerson and Thoreau drew inspiration from Eastern texts, embracing the idea that truth lies within and can be accessed through personal intuition and contemplation. In the present, this connection persists as practices like meditation and mindfulness, rooted in Eastern traditions, have become integral to modern transcendentalist thought. Looking ahead, American transcendentalism holds the potential to further deepen its alignment with Eastern wisdom, offering a pathway toward greater self-awareness, ecological balance, and spiritual evolution. As global consciousness grows, the fusion of Eastern and Western ideals may continue to inspire a more unified pursuit of truth, compassion, and inner peace. It links east and west and makes a beautiful world. America grows in postmodern thought aligning the transcendental elements of environmental concerns, public health, education, community development, hospitality, human rights and spiritual awareness in secularism.

Transcendentalism in both American thought (Developed by Emerson and Thoreau) and the *Shreemadbhagavadgeeta* teaches same that inner realization beyond material limits. Emerson's self-reliance and Lord Krishna's *nishkāma karma* converge on self-discipline, intuition, and harmony with the divine or this universal nature. Both affirm that truth and liberation arise through awakening the higher Self within in this universal nature.

The truth is nature. The nature is science and beyond. So truth is Dharma. Truth is science. Love and respect of universal nature for entire organism with mindfulness and happiness is the ultimate liberation. This ultimate blessing and happiness in the earth is Transcendentalism. East or west, left or right, Hindu or Muslim, Buddhist or Christian, the truth is universal. God is God, whatever we call it in our language and community, it does not matter. Happiness, love, reverence, renunciations in the earth is Dharma- is universal truth. The supreme consciousness of universal truth on universal nature in human heart is Transcendentalism. Thus it is proved that the source of American Transcendentalism is the Shreemadbhagavadgeeta. It is the only one text book of divine knowledge of universal truth – Transcendentalism in this world. The equanimity among all creatures or organism is Transcendentalism. *Vashudhaiva Kutumbakam* – the world is a family.

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