

To: Global Renaissance Colloquium Members
From: Cleo Kearns
Re: Presentation for conference

Dear Colloquium Members:

Below are the passages from Thoreau and Eliot to which I will be referring at the conference.

T. S. Eliot

From Burnt Norton

So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.

from Little Gidding

There are three conditions which often look alike
Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow;
Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
From self and from things and from persons; and, growing between them, indifference
Which resembles the others as death resembles life

This is the use of memory:
For liberation — not less of love by expanding
Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country
Begins as attachment to our own field of action
And comes to find that action of little importance
Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,
History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time .

Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now always —
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

From Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* and various other writings

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 Bramin, priest of Braham and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in hi 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. With favoring winds it is wafted past the site of the fabulous islands of Atlantis and the Hesperides, makes the periplus of Hanno, and, floating by Ternate and Tidore and the mouth of the Person Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names.

Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes .Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. You some can be patriotic who have no *self*-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay . There are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one s being alone England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea; but no bark from them has ventured out of sight of land, though it is without doubt the direct way to India.

The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning-star.

I stood by the river today considering the forms of the elms reflected in the water. For every oak and birch, too there is a graceful, ethereal tree making down from the roots as it were the original idea of the tree. Anxious nature sometimes reflects from pools and puddles the object which our groveling senses may fail to see relieved against the sky, with the pure ether for background. (PJ.1.123-298.)

We noticed that it required a separate intention of the eye, a more free and abstracted vision, to see the reflected trees and the sky, than to see the river bottom merely; and so are there manifold visions in the direction of every object, and even the most opaque reflect the heavens from their surface. (Week, 48)

There needs some actual doubleness like this in nature, for if the voices which we commonly hear were all that we ever heard, what then? (J.4.493)

As I approached the pond down Hubbard's path (after coming out of the woods into a warmer air) I saw the shimmering of the moon on its surface and in the near now flooded cove the water-bugs darting circling above me made streaks or curves of light. The moon's inverted pyramid of shimmering light commenced about twenty rods off — like so much micaceous sand — But I was startled to see midway in the dark water a bright flame like more than phosphorescent light crowning the crests of the wavelets which at first I mistook for fireflies and thought even of cucullos — It had the appearance of a pure smokeless flame one half dozen inches long issuing from the water & bending flickeringly along its surface. I saw the reflections of the moon sliding down the watery concave like so many lustrous burnished coins poured from a bag — with inexhaustible lavishness - & the lambent flames on the surface were much multiplied seeming to slide along a few inches with each wave before they were extinguished - & I saw how farther & farther off they gradually merged in the general sheen which in fact was made up of a myriad little mirrors reflecting the disk of the moon — with equal brightness to an eye rightly placed. The pyramid or sheath of light which we see springing from near where we stand only — in fact is the outline of that portion of the shimmering surface which an eye takes in — to myriad eyes suitably placed, the whole surface of the pond would be seen to shimmer, or rather it would be seen as the waves turn up their mirrors to be covered with those bright flame like reflections of the moon's disk like a myriad candles everywhere issuing from the waves — i. e. if there were as many eyes as angles presented by the waves — and these reflections are dispersed in all directions into the atmosphere flooding it with light - -(P.J. 3. 262-63).