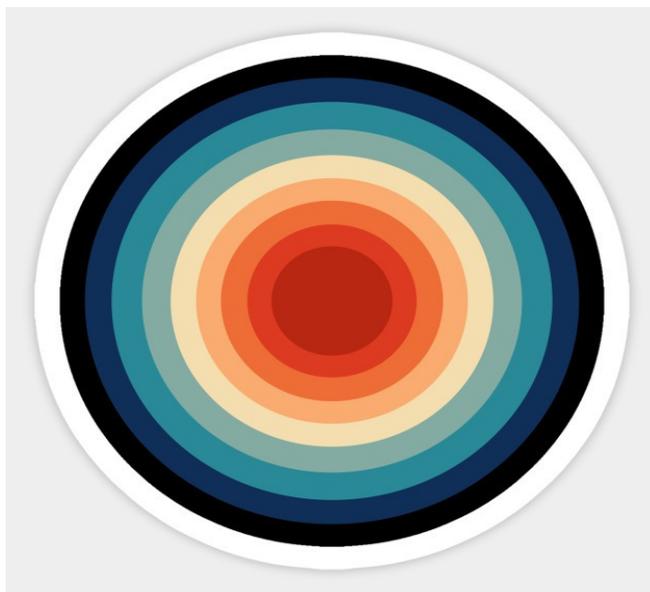


Transcendence



Chris Phillips

I can clearly remember my dad holding onto the back of the brown banana seat on my new (1977) sunburst orange Huffy Buckaroo. Stripped of training wheels, riding was a completely new proposition. However, one thing allayed my fears: I knew the driveway like the back of my hand. Endless loops on my old training wheel equipped bike had let me fully feel the limits of my immediate, albeit limited environment. This allowed me to focus on the task at hand more fully. As I slowly but surely mastered the art of two wheel travel, I quickly realized that what had been my whole riding universe was now merely one galaxy amongst many.

What I had experienced, as we all do, is transcendence. Transcendence is a form of growth. Typical growth can be broken into two categories: linear and parabolic. A typical linear growth example would be a standard life skill like writing. In general, if you write consistently and competently, you can continue to progress at a rather solid pace. Parabolic change tends to more obvious in endeavors such as sports. Remember learning to play tennis? How all those disparate skills had to be mastered (serving, returning, backhand, etc.) first? But suddenly, you began to integrate those skills into a seamless and fluid flow, and your ability began to grow exponentially in a parabolic curve. Transcendence is completely different from those changes, however. Transcendence occurs when you suddenly realize that the whole has become the part in a greater whole. Bear with me...

Back to my bike. Suddenly I realized that my driveway, which was once my whole, was now merely a part of another whole. That whole was my street. I tentatively began to ride my bike up and down my street (remember this was 1977—only a couple of cars an hour generally ventured down our street). Within weeks,

this whole again became the part in my neighborhood. You see my point...

The same principle applies to motorcycling. When we first begin riding, we tend to not stray from our riding hatchery—that area generally near our homes, where we use our previous home-field advantages to minimize other risks (terrain, wildlife, traffic patterns, etc.). Soon, as expected, we begin to venture out. Remember your first ride to the hills? Perhaps the next valley over? Transcendence dictated that your local area now become a piece of the bigger riding arena. One day, as I did twenty plus years ago, you feel the inexorable itch to travel on two wheels. My first 'real' trip involved taking my 1995 Suzuki GS500 that I'd bought to take me to grad school and back, strapping a soft case on the pillion seat, and riding up the California coast to San Francisco to visit my aunt. In the matter of a day, my new whole was the entire state of California, Los Angeles now becoming a part.

There are, however, limits. At this point in my life, given my riding skills and experiences, there is conceivably nowhere in this world I couldn't visit to ride a motorcycle. With a passport and enough money (OK—credit cards...) there are few places I couldn't ride. Until Mars is colonized I'll have to make due with this blue ball we call home. Europe, Japan and of course too many states to remember, there remains many adventures ahead in theory for myself. The universe may be infinite, but there are still many more galaxies than anyone could conceivably visit in a lifetime. I'm not holding my breath, but I'm looking into red camouflage schemes to paint my GS in...