The pattern and the significance of the travel metaphor in "Walden".

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THE PATTERN AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRAVEL METAPHOR

IN WALDEN

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at Assumption University of Windsor

by
Geraldine Payne
B.A., University of Western Ontario, 1948

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1962

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ABSTRACT

Numerous references to travel are evident throughout Walden. These references make up an intricate and pervasive travel metaphor which is a significant unifying factor of the work. The purpose of the metaphor is the expression of the journey of self-exploration which Thoreau undertakes in his Walden experiment. Through knowledge of himself, Thoreau hopes to attain knowledge of life's meaning to all men. From this, Thoreau emerges as a typical Romantic hero-author who replaces the unavoidable physical journeys of primitive man with voluntary spiritual ones. The travel metaphor may be found to have five divisions: the voyage, walking, the railroad, extra-terrestrial references, and references to foreign lands and cultures. Thoreau has hereby included all then-known methods and areas of travel, thus showing the all-encompassing nature of his search. Each of these five images is clearly established in Chapter I; each, while having its own purpose, following its own course, and reaching its own climax, is a vital part of the over-all travel metaphor. The voyage metaphor is the most significant and obvious, reaching its climax in Chapter XVIII, the final one of the book. The walking image also reaches its fullest expression in this final chapter. The railroad image is the only travel metaphor which does not survive the length of the book. Referring as it does to an object which Thoreau considers of ephemeral nature, it disappears after Chapter IX, having reached its most striking expression in Chapter IV. The extra-terrestrial references are intended to show that man's search for knowledge must extend beyond all limits of time and space. This metaphor reaches its most significant
expression in Chapter II, where it conveys Thoreau's belief in the unity of all creation. The references to foreign lands and cultures convey the multiplicity of regions and customs on this planet, and the immensity of the problem of finding a universal answer to life's meaning. This metaphor reaches its climax in Chapter XVI where Thoreau uses the figure of the mingling of Walden with Ganges water to express his Transcendental belief in unity.

Thoreau uses the various aspects of the travel metaphor to express his search for life's meaning. Just as this search followed the circular path from Walden Pond to the unknown and back to Walden, so do the various aspects of the travel metaphor, with the exception of the railroad, follow a similar pattern. The main ideas established in Chapter I are reiterated in Chapter XVIII, but now the emphasis switches from the author to the reader, as Thoreau exhorts him to undertake a similar journey of discovery. The content and form of the comprehensive travel metaphor around which Thoreau has built Walden make this book a record of the universal traveller searching creation for eternal truth.
Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, on July 12, 1817. The financial straits in which the family found itself during Henry's early years were considerably alleviated later when the father, John, turned from storekeeping to pencil manufacturing. Henry graduated from Harvard in 1837 as an undistinguished but well-read student. Then followed a brief entry into the teaching profession, chiefly in a private school operated by Henry and his brother, John. In 1841, after John's ill health necessitated the closing of the school, Henry went to live in the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the famous Concord Transcendentalist writer and lecturer. Here Thoreau participated in the vigorous intellectual life of the Emersonian circle which included such men as Hawthorne, Bronson, Alcott, and later, Ellery Channing. The ideas of Emerson, implanted during this period, were perhaps the most significant influence in Thoreau's life.

The philosophy of Emerson and his followers was a diluted form of the German Kant's ideas, as interpreted by Coleridge, Carlyle and other amateur philosophers. It was known as Transcendentalism because it passed beyond, or transcended, what is finite and experimental, and recognized a priori conditions of experience. It was primarily a religion rather than a philosophy, and was a reassertion of the mystical basis of all religion, in reaction against the rationalism of the Unitarians and the pessimism of the Calvinists. Leaving behind all the forms and traditions
of the Unitarians and Calvinists, it placed its reliance on conscience and intuition or "inner light". As a result of his belief that mystic vision could be attained in this life, the Transcendentalist concluded that man may achieve perfection here. This led to a sort of Pantheism in which the Creator and all creation became one in the great Over-soul. This unity of all being is the central theme of Thoreau's thinking, and is the channel through which he arrives at his answer to life's meaning in Walden.

Thoreau left Emerson's house in 1843, and spent several months on Staten Island as tutor to Emerson's nephew. Unhappy in the city atmosphere, Thoreau returned to Concord where, with the exception of several brief excursions, he spent the rest of his life.

On July 4, 1845, Thoreau moved into a cabin which he had built with his own hands on the shore of Walden Pond, a short distance from Concord. For the next two years and two months, Thoreau conscientiously pursued his purpose in going to Walden. This purpose was, as he put it, "to live deliberately", "to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms". Walden, published in August, 1854, is the account of his experiment. Thoreau found his answer to life's meaning in the spring of the year when, observing on Walden's shores the decay from which life would soon arise, he came upon the idea of "universal innocence" whereby evil gives way to good, and hence destroys itself. For the sake of unity, Thoreau condensed his two years and two months at Walden into the framework of a single year in his written work.

Thoreau's remaining years were spent peacefully, lecturing, writing, and aiding in the family pencil manufacturing business. On May 6, 1862, after several years of steadily declining health, Thoreau died. His friends
and townsmen grieved at the death of a gentle, upright man; few, if any, realized the impact which his ideas would have on the coming generations.

In the year of his graduation from Harvard, Thoreau began his Journal. He continued it throughout his life, and from its ever-increasing bulk he drew the material for most of his writings and lectures. Chief among his works are A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Walden, several accounts of his excursions, and numerous essays, of which "Civil Disobedience" has had the most widespread influence. Thoreau also wrote poetry, but it is for his prose that he will be remembered.

Today, one hundred years after Thoreau's death, there is an ever-increasing interest in his works. Walden has captured the imagination of the modern, who, like Thoreau, is in danger of losing his identity in the midst of the mass materialism with which he is surrounded. Lacking the opportunity or the courage to face life as did Thoreau, he searches eagerly to see if Thoreau's findings could apply to him. Recent critics have discovered symbolism in Walden, and see in his sun and rebirth images a renewal of ancient mythological concepts. I became aware, during a study of recent Thoreauvian criticism, that no one seemed particularly concerned with the numerous and striking travel references in Walden. The travel image is an integral part of primitive mythology, and would appear as worthy of consideration as the sun and the rebirth symbols. These travel references are especially intriguing because of their existence in an account which involves no physical movement beyond the occasional walk to town. The following thesis is my attempt to seek out and interpret the travel metaphors in Walden.

I have used as my text the Modern Library edition of Walden and Other Writings of Henry David Thoreau, edited by Brooks Atkinson (New York,
1937). The compactness and availability of this edition made it more practicable for my purpose than would have been the Manuscript, the Walden or the Riverside Editions of *The Writings of Thoreau*, which are considered the standard editions.

I should like to thank Professor Eugene McNamara for his generous and wise direction, not only of this thesis, but of all my work toward my Master's degree in English. Thanks are due also to Dr. John Sullivan and Dr. Ralph Nelson, also of Assumption University, who along with Professor McNamara, gave their constructive criticism as members of my examining committee; to Rev. C. P. Crowley, C.S.B., Ph.D., Head of the English Department, Assumption University; to Miss Julia Bellard, Reference Assistant, Assumption University; and to Mrs. Helen Haberer, for her patience and endurance in the typing of this manuscript.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Travel is a strikingly evident theme in the works of Henry David Thoreau. In his Journal, on January 11, 1855, Thoreau wrote: "If I travel in a simple, primitive, original manner, standing in a truer relation to men and nature, travel away from the old and commonplace, to get some honest experience of life, if only out of my feet and homesickness, then it becomes less important whither I go or how far". In this statement we may see a summary of Thoreau’s life, and especially the two years and two months of it which he spent at Walden Pond.

Thoreau’s first interest in travel appears to have been concentrated in walking. The enthusiasm for this activity evinced in his early essays "A Walk to Wachusett" and "A Winter Walk", both published in 1843, culminated in his better known "Walking", published almost twenty years later, a month after his death in 1862. The fact that the latter essay was used as a lecture frequently in the interim shows a continued preoccupation with the theme. Thoreau’s literary ventures, however, took on broader horizons than could be achieved on foot, as the following titles suggest: A Week on the Concord and Merrimack, The Maine Woods, Cape Cod, A Yankee in Canada.

I am concerned, however, with the travel metaphor in Walden, a book in which Thoreau goes nowhere in a physical sense. No boat carried him past rich farmlands or busy cities as in his Week. No locomotive whirled him into the wilds of Canada. No lengthy walking excursions lured

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1 The Writings of Thoreau, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), III p. 183.
him from his pond. In spite of this, Walden is a travel book. It is filled with travel references, and the restless spirit of adventure permeates it. The numerous travel metaphors are an apt vehicle for the theme of spiritual discovery which is the essence of Walden.

Walter Harding quotes a statement from John Christie's dissertation Thoreau Traveler, which is particularly applicable to Walden. Thoreau is "a man who reiterates his disdain for travel while he peppers his writings with its products ... a writer who urges his readers to concentrate upon a knowledge of their own local plot of ground while he makes sure in his writings that their acquaintance with the world be nothing less than global ... the seemingly contented provincial who is all the while devouring the accounts of other men's farthest travels". This should not strike Christie as too surprising, if he considers Thoreau as a product of his times. As a Romantic author-hero, Thoreau is able to sail on endlessly, without going beyond Walden Pond's limiting shores. As W. H. Auden points out, the ancient idea of a voyage as a fearful and unnatural event, a necessary evil, has been replaced in Romantic literature by the concept of the joyous voyage. No longer is the voyage undesirable and unnatural, but is sought after as "the true condition of every man". The sea is a place where decisive events occur on the way to an unknown destination. In classical literature the author described the deeds of others; in Romantic literature he himself becomes the hero, and he describes his own deeds - deeds of valour no longer on a physical plane, but

2 I am speaking of the text of the book, not of the actual events of Thoreau's life at this period, e.g. his trip to Maine, which occurred while he was living at Walden Pond, but which is not mentioned in the book. This omission may be an indication of his concern for cohesion and form.


on a spiritual one. The voyage symbol, in its Romantic rather than its classical connotation, is frequently adopted as the vehicle for this self-exploration. Sherman Paul declares, "The Whole of Walden is an experience of the microcosmic and cosmic travels of the air." Like Melville, Whitman and many others of his time, Thoreau is a traveler on a journey which never ends. In his statement of the purpose of his Walden experiment he tells of his intention "to drive life into a corner..." if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it on my next excursion." A true Romantic author-hero, Thoreau knows that he will return essentially the same person as when he left, but with a deeper understanding.

Thoreau's enthusiasm for "excursions" was not solely an offspring of the Romantic ideal, but was occasioned in part by the contact with Transcendentalism which resulted from his association with Emerson. Whether Thoreau would have had Transcendental leanings had it not been for the impact of Emerson upon him is a debatable question. At any rate, his independence of spirit necessitated a testing of Emerson's theories and Walden was the ideal testing ground. Joseph Wood Krutch sees a possible split motive in Thoreau's enthusiasm for Transcendentalism:

"But the fact that he went not to study but to the river for communion with the oversoul is itself significant. It suggests the possibility that the philosophy is chiefly an attempt to justify an expedition which would earlier have been made without any such justification and that the boatman was


antecedent to the philosopher – perhaps even that the first appeal of Transcendentalism was the fact that it seemed to invest with high moral purpose activities which to family and fellow townsman seemed irresponsible when indulged in by a grown man without profession. 7

Be this as it may, Thoreau's findings at Walden did confirm his Transcendental inclinations. By his practical experiment he "has brought Transcendentalism down to earth, has taken Emerson's castles in the air, to use his own figure, and built foundations under them". 8

In order to express adequately this journey of self-exploration which he undertakes, Thoreau builds up an intricate travel metaphor which extends like a web throughout his book, and is, I believe, a significant unifying factor of the work. In the building up of this over-all metaphorical picture, he does not limit himself to any one travel image. The romantic voyage predominates, but present also are the walking metaphor, the railroad, references to imaginary journeys to the stars, the multi-tudinous mention of foreign lands and cultures. I shall attempt in this thesis to trace the occurrence of each of the five above-mentioned metaphors, and to show the significance of their appearance in certain chapters, and of their absence in others. I am convinced that each of these metaphors has its own purpose, follows its own course, and reaches its own climax. The combined effect is a pervasive, yet varied, travel metaphor which conveys the sense of urgency, discovery and fulfillment which Thoreau experienced as his Walden experiment began, developed and reached its fruition. In Chapter II of this thesis I shall consider what


the critics have to say concerning the travel aspect in Walden; in Chapter III, I shall trace the order of appearance of the five aspects of the travel metaphor in the book; in Chapter IV, I shall attempt an interpretation of this pattern.
CHAPTER TWO
CRITICAL MATERIAL

In the one hundred years since Thoreau's death, critical analysis seems to have shifted from interest in him as a man, to interest in him as an artist. Since I am concerned with one aspect of the metaphor pattern in *Walden*, my survey will be concentrated on the latter approach. It is, however, of interest to examine very briefly the shift in this critical attitude, and to mention a few of the most significant critics in the various fields. One may detect four stages in Thoreauvian criticism: consideration of Thoreau as a personality, as a naturalist, as a thinker, and finally as an artist. This is a chronological list. Naturally enough, his contemporaries who knew him as a companion were interested in baring his soul, so that others might know him as they did. We, far removed in time, may view him more impersonally as an artist.

In the first group, the soul-searchers, one must include Emerson, Lowell, Alcott, and Stevenson, all of whom wrote their significant criticisms of Thoreau within twenty years of his death. In his famous funeral eulogy, which the modern critic Joseph Wood Krutch maintains is, "the best thing ever written about Thoreau", ¹ Emerson saw Thoreau as a gentle, but quite aloof Stoic, devoid of human warmth and compassion, a man of negative quantity. "It cost him nothing to say no; indeed he found it much easier than to say yes". ² James Russell Lowell, in a virulent essay which almost

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succeeded in interring Thoreau much more deeply and permanently than Emerson's well-meaning funeral sermon, damns Thoreau as a narrow egotist, with no interest in humanity or progress. "Perhaps the narrowest provincialism is that of Self". \(^3\) Robert Louis Stevenson, in his essay, "Henry Thoreau: His Character and Opinions", \(^4\) intensified the sterile image of Thoreau which Emerson and Lowell had presented. It required the rather vague ethereal voice of Thoreau's Transcendentalist friend, A. Bronson Alcott, coming to Thoreau's aid by presenting him as a warm human being, to break the Stoic mold which had been formed around Thoreau. "I should say he inspired the sentiment of love, if, indeed, the sentiment did not seem to partake of something purer, were that possible, but nameless from its excellency."\(^5\)

Interest in Thoreau as a naturalist was inevitable, and arose almost contemporaneously with interest in him as a person. Foremost in this field were Ellery Channing, Thoreau's friend who wrote Thoreau: The Post-Naturalist, and John Burroughs, who wrote frequently on Thoreau in the late nineteenth century, pointing out at first that Thoreau was more a philosopher of nature than a scientist. Later, he forgot this broader concept, and spent much time pointing out Thoreau's numerous errors in scientific identification. In recent years there has been a revitalization of interest in Thoreau the scientist, as evinced by Philip and Kathryn Whitford's study "Thoreau: Pioneer Ecologist and Conservationist". \(^6\)

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\(^3\) "Thoreau", in Thoreau: A Century of Criticism, p. 49.


As was frequently the case with major American writers, it required the English to appreciate fully the stature of Thoreau. Many consider that the best biography of Thoreau is that written by Henry Salt, an Englishman, in 1890. The English psychologist, Havelock Ellis, probably influenced by his friend Salt's interest in Thoreau, was one of the first to consider Thoreau as a thinker rather than a naturalist: "He was not a naturalist; he was an artist and a moralist." Since that time, interest in Thoreau as a thinker has become increasingly widespread, extending even to India, where Mahatma Gandhi became the most famous proponent of Thoreau's theory of "passive resistance", as it was suggested in *Walden* and outlined more fully in "Civil Disobedience".

It required almost thirty years before any significant American criticism of Thoreau as an artist appeared. Norman Foerster, in an article published in 1921, "Thoreau as Artist" comments on Thoreau's figure of speech in which "his concreteness is largely a figurativeness." In 1939, Henry Seidel Canby had published his *Thoreau*, which has become the most popular biography of recent years. In this work may be found the Freudian slant to Thoreauvian criticism which was to gain such impetus in the next decade. Characteristic of the present-day approach is the psychological consideration of Thoreau as a symbolist. Until the 1940's, little attention was paid to the imagery of *Walden*, although it is one of the most highly figurative works in American literature: Walter Harding says that he once "checked a list of more than fifty different types of speech against *Walden* and found virtually every one represented, most of them many times over."9

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7 "Thoreau", in *Thoreau: A Century of Criticism*, p. 93.
8 "Thoreau as Artist", in *Thoreau: A Century of Criticism*, p. 129.
He then goes on to state, "Although John Broderick and Sherman Paul have made a good start at examining more closely the images of Thoreau's writing, much more work needs to be done." An examination of the available bibliography on this aspect of Thoreau's work, would lead one to agree with Professor Harding's opinion.

To the two critics, Broderick and Paul, mentioned by Professor Harding, I should like to add the names of F. O. Matthiessen, Stanley Edgar Hyman and Ethel Seybold, all of whom have made significant contributions toward the discovery and interpretation of Thoreau's images. I shall consider the work of Matthiessen first, as his ideas form the springboard from which succeeding critics dive into the depths of Thoreau's imagery. In his consideration of "art and expression in the age of Emerson and Whitman" entitled American Renaissance, Mr. Matthiessen expresses his conviction that Thoreau's power lies in his re-creation of basic myth, in his role as the protagonist in a great cyclic ritual drama. The need for such a re-creation was realized by Emerson, when he stated in his Journal in 1835, "We need a theory of interpretation or Mythology". Matthiessen believes that, by his return to nature, by the identification of himself with the advance of the days into months, the seasons into a year, Thoreau has discovered the essence of man's role in the drama of creation, of life and of death. "The meandering course of Thoreau's reflections here should not obscure his full discovery that the uneradicated wildness of man is the anarchical basis both of all that is most dangerous and most valuable to him". In the course of this discovery, Thoreau has identified him-

self with the Homeric wandering hero. It is this identification of himself with the voyager, Ulysses, and hence with all who travel, and the imagery whereby he expresses this identification, which I shall attempt to trace in Walden.

Matthiessen's great work was published in 1941, and was followed within the decade by various considerations of Thoreau as a symbolic writer. Among the most searching and convincing work done in this field was, I believe, that of Stanley Edgar Hyman. In an article appearing originally in November, 1946, Mr. Hyman declares that "His obsessive image, running through everything he ever wrote, is the myth of Apollo, glorious god of the sun, forced to labor on earth tending the flocks of King Admetus .... The sun is Thoreau's key symbol, and all of Walden is a development in the ambiguities of sun imagery". The sun, as it breaks through the mists, symbolizes Thoreau's rebirth at Walden. "Walden is, in fact", continues Hyman, "a vast rebirth ritual, the purest and most complete in our literature" (pp. 176-177). This would appear an interesting, but rather extraneous view to the searcher for the voyage image in Walden. One's attention is, however, alerted when Mr. Hyman continues, "I have maintained that Walden is a dynamic process, a job of symbolic action, a moving from something to something. From what to what? On an abstract level, from individual isolation to collection identification -- from, in Macaulay's terms, a Platonic philosophy of pure truth to a Baconian philosophy of use" (p. 188). Hyman continues: "Early in the book, Thoreau gives us his famous Platonic myth of having long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle dove. Before he is through, his symbolic quest is for

a human being, and near the end of the book he reports of a hunter: "He had lost a dog but found a man". (p. 173).

The above passages are, I believe, definitely suggestive of the voyage idea: "a dynamic process ... a moving from something to something". The mention of the "symbolic quest" for the hound, bay horse, and turtle dove intensifies the metaphor, for a quest necessitates a journey, be it physical or spiritual. Thus it appears that Hyman, while admirably developing the significance of the sun image and the primitive rebirth from decay symbol, has merely suggested the voyage image in his emphasis on the dynamic action of Walden. This image, may, upon examination, prove to be equally significant with the sun and rebirth symbols.

Sherman Paul, whom Professor Harding mentioned in connection with his work on imagery in Walden has, in my opinion, provided Thoreau enthusiasts with by far the most thorough consideration of the symbolism in Walden. Like Hyman, he develops the significance of the seasons as symbols of death and regeneration. I shall concern myself here only with his consideration of the voyage aspect, as he sees it in Walden. The core of his argument is found in his essay "Resolution at Walden", written originally for Accent in 1953. "The whole of Walden", he declares, "is an experience of the microcosmic and cosmic travels of the self". Paul then draws an interesting parallel between Thoreau and Melville — both have written of voyages of the self, both were searching for the meaning of life, "But if Melville needed the watery two-thirds of the world and the great whale for his quest, Thoreau who had the gift of enlarging the small, needed only

the pond and its pickerel" (p. 166).

Professor Paul expands his theory in his more recent book, The Shores of America; Thoreau's Inward Exploration. This is the most thoughtful and intensive consideration of Thoreau which I have encountered. Concerning it, Professor Harding says, "I wish here ... to call it to the attention of Thoreau scholars as the first really significant study of the development of Thoreau's mind". In his penetrating Chapter VII, "Walden: or the Metamorphoses", Professor Paul, as the chapter title suggests, presents the work as a record of the spiritual change which Thoreau underwent as a result of his Walden experience. He sees this experiment not as a rejection, but as a transformation; "its natural images suggested gradual transformation through growth". One of the symbols of this movement is, I believe, the voyage, and Thoreau, with the gift of making small things large which Professor Paul has mentioned, has transformed Walden Pond into the vast ocean on which the voyage occurred.

The pond is, in fact, of the many symbols treated by Professor Paul, the one to which the most space is devoted. Mr. Paul believes that "the pond was the real self, and the shore the empirical self" (p. 333). Thoreau, according to Paul, gives a mythical account of the pond's origin; he makes the pond a symbol of his own spiritual history, and its seasonal changes, its "tides", as Thoreau called the rise and fall of the pond, "represented the over-all movement of his life" (p. 337). Not only does the pond represent Thoreau's spiritual development, but it actually be-

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comes the symbol of his soul. Paul continues, "Once the pond was the
soul, coves, inlets and shores, the sea and navigation, provided the
imagery for a conceit that seemed irresistible" (p. 344) and he quotes
a lengthy passage from Halden laden with sea imagery. Professor Paul
has given us the strongest suggestion of a voyage image, but, as in Hyman,
the image is still only a suggestion and would require considerably more
development before it could approach in clarity and significance the other
symbols treated by this eminent critic.

Ethel Seybold, who is concerned primarily with Thoreau's debt to
the classics, compares Thoreau to Moses, Orpheus, and Homer—all men
vitaly concerned with travel. She mentions Thoreau's fascination with
the works of early adventurers and explorers, particularly those of the
Jesuit missionaries in Canada. She sees great significance in Thoreau's
e ssay, "Walking", written near the end of his life, and hence, perhaps,
the epitome of what its author had become, as a result of his journey
through life. "His walking", she says, "was the material manifestation
of his journey through life, his quest for the other world". She quotes
Thoreau's statement, "My path ... like a road through a diversified county,
now climbing high mountains, then descending into the lowest vales" (p. 43).
Not only was Thoreau's travel metaphor limited to this earth, but he goes
cut into orbit when he declares: "Reading the classics ... is like walking
amid the stars and constellations, a high and by way serene to travel"
(p. 47). I mention Miss Seybold's work because, although her purpose is
to show the influence of the classics on Thoreau, in so doing she has
emphasized the voyage aspect, not as a metaphor, but as such an integral
part of Thoreau's ideas that it cannot be ignored.

15 Ethel Seybold, Thoreau: The Quest and the Classics, (New Haven:
John Broderick's debt to Hyman and Paul is evident in his emphasis on the sun and rebirth symbolism in *Walden*. Mr. Broderick emphasizes the significance of the group of images showing contrast between night and morning, sleep and awakening, and he skillfully traces the chantecler theme to its culmination in the final words of *Walden*. "There is more day to dawn". Broderick's essay contains no consideration of the travel aspect inherent in *Walden*. He has left this consideration for a recent article in *American Literature*, wherein he makes a study of the movement in Thoreau's prose. It is the only consideration of this aspect of Thoreau which I discovered, and while it is primarily concerned with stylistic devices, it also contains an interesting application to the direction of Thoreau's ideas. Basing his article on the statements, "Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing" from *Walden*, and "Our expeditions are but tours, and come around again at evening to the old hearthside from which we set out. Half the walk is but retracing our steps" from "Walking" Broderick maintains that these describe "the pattern of his Thoreau's own walks, the history of his life, and even ... the pattern of his most characteristic prose and the structure of some of his controlling ideas". Mr. Broderick finds Thoreau's writings, like *Leaves of Grass*, to be full of movement. *Walden* itself might be regarded as a year-long walk, for as in his daily walk, Thoreau moved away from the mundane world of the village toward one of heightened awareness and potentiality, only to return spiritually invigorated, so *Walden* records an adventuring on life which structurally starts from and returns to the world of quiet desperation.


Mr. Broderick then goes on to show that Thoreau's best paragraphs "move as Thoreau did and as his books do—from the mundane known to the transcendent knowable and back again. By various stylistic means he involves the reader in an intense spiritual experience, only to sit him down again in the world from which he has been removed, presumably with more abundant resources for living" (p. 36). Using several paragraphs as examples, Broderick illustrates how Thoreau begins with the known, moves to greater and greater remoteness from the world of the ordinary reader, and then returns to reality. Often there is a suggestion that the return is only temporary, as in the closing sentence of the first paragraph of Walden, "at present I am a sojourner in civilized life again." Mr. Broderick considers this first paragraph "a miniature of Walden as a whole" (p. 137). He finds Thoreau's greatest significance in this outward and inward movement: "The dynamism of Thoreau's best writing takes us momentarily out of ourselves to that heaven-approaching plane from which the world of normality is seen and judged. We are reluctant to depart, and once there, perhaps more reluctant to return. The movement of Thoreau's prose enables us to do both, and thus extract the maximum benefit from both the going and the coming back" (p. 142).

Broderick has convincingly pointed out that Walden is a moving, dynamic book with the movement following a circular and continual course, from the known to the unknown and back to the known. Like Miss Seybold, he sees walking as the symbol whereby this movement is expressed. In this thesis, I shall attempt to build on Broderick's ideas, but expand them so as to include the entire travel picture in Walden, of which the walking symbol is, I feel, but a small part.

A cursory look at the course of Thoreauvian criticism, then,
reveals a change in emphasis from Thoreau, the man, to Thoreau, the artist. The most recent aspect of Thoreau's artistry to receive attention is his use of symbolism, perhaps an inevitable development in the face of the ever-growing interest in symbolic interpretation. It is with this aspect that I am primarily concerned; hence, the majority of my critical references are to works in this category. The names of many competent Thoreauvian critics have been omitted, as their approach did not appear to add anything to the question of Thoreau's use of imagery, Matthiessen, Hyman, Seybold, Paul and Broderick stand out particularly among the modern critics evincing interest in this field. While these critics have written exhaustively of the mythical element in *Walden*, of the significance of the sun symbol, and of the rebirth ritual, none has dealt at any length with the travel image. Perhaps Broderick has had the most to say on this subject, but even he limits his consideration to the walking metaphor. I was able to uncover no discussion of the voyage image, which is, I am convinced, the central and most pervasive of all the images in *Walden*. The suggestion of the travel aspect in *Walden* is in the works of all the above-mentioned critics, but any definite pin-pointing of the course of significance of the metaphor is lacking. Here is, I believe, one field of Thoreauvian criticism to which Professor Harding's remark that "much more work needs to be done" applies.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE PATTERN OF THE METAPHOR

Thoreau closes the first paragraph of *Walden* with the following statement: "At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again". With this use of the term "sojourner", Thoreau introduces the spirit of movement which is such an integral part of *Walden*, and to which Mr. Broderick, whose opinions on the subject I discussed near the conclusion of the previous chapter, has devoted considerable attention. I shall consider the movement in *Walden* in a more general, and perhaps less subtle sense than has Mr. Broderick; I shall consider it as it is expressed through the very frequent introduction of metaphors concerning travel. In his use of travel metaphors, Thoreau is comprehensive and utilizes references to all the then-known methods of travel.

I find, as I mentioned in Chapter I, that the travel metaphors in *Walden* may be categorized under five headings: the voyage, walking, the railroad (including lesser references to other "modern" means of communication, such as the telegraph and the Transatlantic cable) extraterrestrial references, and finally references to foreign lands and cultures. I make this differentiation for the simple reason that each of these aspects of the travel metaphor is evident as a separate entity, but contributes to the over-all travel picture, in the book. I believe that Thoreau viewed his Walden venture as a great journey, and that in order to convey this idea, he utilized metaphorical references to every then-known mode of travel, from the time-proven methods of sailing and walking, to the newly-invented railroad. The regions to be covered
were infinite, for Thoreau's journey was a mental and spiritual one, and no one has yet set limits to man's thoughts or aspirations. Thoreau represents the comprehensive quality of his journey by means of metaphors depicting the three regions in creation which man may search—air, land, and water. The inter-terrestrial references enter the atmosphere, the foreign references penetrate distant lands, and the voyage references encompass the oceans. Thus the voyage metaphor serves a dual purpose, conveying both the method and field of travel, and it is not surprising to find it the most emphatic and pervasive of the travel metaphors. Thoreau has metaphorically covered every explorable region by every then-possible means of travel, and has, in the process, created an inclusive and convincing travel metaphor which gives his work the sense of movement, and yet of unity, which is, I believe, its most compelling quality.

My purpose in this chapter is to trace the occurrence of these five aspects of the travel metaphor in Walden. By showing their individual or collective appearance in some chapters, and absence in others, I hope to make evident that each metaphor follows its own pattern, but that each contributes to the over-all travel metaphor of the book. I shall venture, in this chapter, no interpretation of the significance of the order of appearance of these symbols, but shall reserve such an attempt for the succeeding one. Nor shall I limit myself to a discussion of the metaphor in its strict technical sense, although the majority of my references will fall into this category, but I shall also include certain other significant travel references, even though they may not fit into the grammarian's definition of "metaphor".¹

¹ Joseph Wood Krutch, says, "Frequently his metaphors are not, in the strictest sense of the term, metaphors at all, but merely figurative terms of speech in which the metaphor is at most implied". Thoreau, The American Men of Letters Series, (Wm. Sloane Associates, Inc., 1948), pp. 268-269.
1. The Voyage Metaphor

I have decided to consider the voyage metaphor first, because it is, I am convinced, by far the most significant of the travel references. It is clearly established in, and maintained throughout, Chapter I. It first appears in this chapter devoted to "Economy" when Thoreau declares: "One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels" (p. 10). This casual simile points the way to one of Thoreau's most carefully developed and involved metaphors in which he outlines the method whereby he intends to pursue the "private business" for which he went to Walden Pond. It is to be carried on in the manner of a voyage to the "Celestial Empire". In such an undertaking, he must be both business man and sailor:

- to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter...
- to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise ... taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation; charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier...studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, the Hanno and the Phoenicians down to our day (p. 18).

Walden Pond is a good place for such a venture, for it is "a good port and a good foundation. No Neva marshes to be filled; though you must everywhere build on piles of your own driving" (p. 19). A passing voyage metaphor is encountered when Thoreau warns lest "we shall be found sailing under false colours" (p. 21). In his discussion of dress, he complains: "Like shipwrecked sailors, they put on what they can find on the beach, and at a little distance, whether of space or time, laugh at each other's masquerade" (p. 23). Sailing is used to illustrate Thoreau's complaints
against the excessive emphasis on theory and disregard for practice in
the current American college curriculum: "To my astonishment I was in-
formed on leaving college that I had studied navigation! — why, if I had
taken one turn down the harbour I should have known more about it" (p. 46).
There is a lapse in the voyage metaphor until near the end of the lengthy
first chapter when it is re-introduced as Thoreau encourages each man to
follow his own way of life: "It is by a mathematical point only that we
are wise, as the sailor or the fugitive slave keeps the polestar in his
eye ... We may not arrive at our port within a calculable period, but we
would preserve the true course" (p. 64).

In Chapter II, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For", the voyage
metaphor occurs clearly only twice. In his plea for simplicity, Thoreau
declares: "In the midst of this choppine sea of civilized life, such are
the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be
allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to
the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be
a great calculator indeed who succeeds" (p. 82). At the end of the chapter,
as he exhorts his reader to "spend one day as deliberately as Nature", he
skillfully re-introduces his travel theme: "Why should we knock under and
go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible
rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows.
Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill.
With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigour, sail by it, looking another way,
tied to the mast like Ulysses" (p. 87).

The voyage image drops below the horizon for the next three chap-
ters, and it is not discernible until it makes a brief reappearance in
Chapter VI, "Visitors". Here Thoreau admits that one of the inconven-
iences of so small a house as his is the difficulty in getting a sufficient distance from your guest when you wish to "utter the big thoughts in big words. You want room for your thoughts to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port" (p. 127). Several pages later, he utilizes sea imagery to express his voluntary isolation: "I had withdrawn so far within the great ocean of solitude, into which the rivers of society empty, that for the most part, as far as my needs were concerned, only the finest sediment was deposited around me. Besides, there were wafted to me evidence of unexplored and uncultivated continents on the other side" (p. 130).

Midway through the book, Thoreau devotes his eighth and shortest chapter to "The Village". This chapter is dominated by the voyage image. Thoreau describes his occasional ventures into Concord as sorties into enemy country. Here "the houses are so arranged as to make the most of mankind, in lanes and fronting to run the gauntlet, and every man, woman and child might get a lick at him" (p. 152). Signs attempt to lure him into shops to purchase unnecessary articles, so that he is compelled, like Orpheus, to keep his thoughts on high things; and go drown "the voices of the Sirens" (p. 153). Sometimes, after an irruption into a house where he obtained food and news, he was "let out through the rear avenues, and so escaped to the woods again" (p. 153). In contrast to this nervous stealth is the joyous confidence which Thoreau experiences as soon as he begins the familiar walk back to Walden Pond. Here Thoreau presents the most jovial of his voyage metaphors, drawing the reader into his snug cabin with him, as he makes for the safe harbour of Walden:
It was very pleasant, when I stayed late in town, to launch myself into the night, especially if it was dark and tempestuous and set sail from some bright village parlor or lecture room, with a bag of rye or Indian meal upon my shoulder, for my snug harbour in the woods, having made all tight without and withdrawn under hatches with a merry crew of thoughts, leaving only my outer man at the helm, or even tying up the helm when it was plain sailing. I had many a genial thought by the cabin fire 'as I sailed.' I was never cast away nor distressed in any weather, though I encountered some severe storms (p. 153).

Thoreau's sureness of the way is not shared by all, as is illustrated in his story of two young men who, attempting to return home after fishing in the pond, wander about all night, within a short distance of their own home. This leads to the expression of one of Thoreau's fundamental beliefs, cloaked in the imagery of a voyage metaphor:

In our most trivial walks, we are constantly, though unconsciously, steering like pilots by certain well-known beacons and headlands, and if we go beyond our usual course we still carry in our minds the bearing of some neighboring cape; and not till we are completely lost, or turned around, do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. Every man has to learn the points of compass again as often as he awakes, whether from sleep or any abstraction (pp. 154–155).

Chapter IX, "The Ponds", shows slight evidence of the voyage metaphor which pervaded the previous chapter. Thoreau has resisted the temptation here to expand his ponds into vast oceans on which to launch a fleet of metaphors. He contents himself with two brief comments. As he sits in his boat, he watches the moon "travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewn with the wrecks of the forest" (p. 158). He finds the remains of a small boat along the shore of Flint's Pond "as impressive a wreck as one could imagine on the seashore" (p. 176).

The travel metaphor makes a vigorous come-back in Chapter X, "Baker Farm". In the first sentence, Thoreau tells us of rambles "to pine groves, standing like temples, or like fleets at sea, full-rigged, with navy boughs" (p. 187). A chance visit to the dank rain-soaked shack of an Irish neighbour causes Thoreau to return to his own snug cabin at a run, like a John
the Baptist proclaiming the message which his "Good Genius" prompted
him to utter: "Go fish and hunt far and wide day by day, — farther and
wider, — and rest thee by many brooks and hearth-sides without misgiving...
... Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures. Let the
noon find thee by other lakes, and the night overtake thee everywhere at
home" (p. 187). Instead of coming "tamely home at night from the next
field or street ... We should come home from far, from adventures, and
perils, and discoveries every day, with new experience and character"
(p. 188). These last two travel metaphors are too broad to classify
arbitrarily under any one of my specific headings, and are Thoreau's most
exuberant expression of the freedom which man finds when he sufficiently
frees himself to be "everywhere at home" (p. 187).

The next five chapters are almost devoid of the voyage metaphor,
aside from a brief appearance at the end of Chapter XII on "Brute Neighbours".
Among his "brute neighbours", Thoreau numbers the wild ducks, whose irreg-
ular flight reminds him of the passage of a sailing ship: "For hours, in
fall days, I watched the ducks cunninglytask and veer and hold the middle
of the pond ... but what beside safety they get by sailing in the middle
of Walden I do not know" (p. 213).

As was the case when the voyage metaphor disappeared earlier in
the book and reappeared with increased vigour in Chapter VIII, so it comes
to thefore emphatically in Chapter XVI, "The Pond in Winter". Here is
found a passage which must be quoted almost in its entirety, in spite of
its length, for it is in this that Thoreau gives us, I believe, our deepest
insight into his use of the voyage metaphor. This metaphor was not
intended merely for the purpose of drawing on obvious and hackneyed com-
parison between life and a voyage in which Thoreau was the sailor. Here
the symbolism goes deeper; the pond becomes Thoreau's real self, and its
physical properties and surroundings becomes the recesses and depths and
shallows of Thoreau's own being. Using the voyage as his symbol, he
explores and plumbs these unknown regions and depths of his being.

He has been speaking of his method of measuring the depth of the
pond by means of calculating the point where the lines of the least and
the greatest breadth intersect. Approximately at this intersection is to
be found the deepest part of the pond. Now follows Thoreau's application
of this phenomenon:

but draw lines through the length and breadth of the
aggregate of a man's particular daily behaviors and
waves of life into his coves and inlets, and where
they intersect will be the height or depth of his
character. Perhaps we need only to know how his
shores trend and his adjacent country or circumstances,
to infer his depth and concealed bottom ... Also there
is a bar across the entrance of every cove, or partic-
ular inclination; each is our harbor for a season, in
which we are detained and partially land-locked. These
inclinations are not whimsical usually, but their form,
size, and direction are determined by the promontories
of the shore, the ancient axes of elevation. When this
bar is gradually increased by storms, tides, or currents,
or there is a subsidence of the waters, so that it reaches
to the surface, that which was at first but an inclination
in the shore in which a thought was harbored becomes an
individual lake, cut off from the ocean, wherein the
thought secures its own conditions, — changes, perhaps,
from salt to fresh, becomes a sweet sea, dead sea, or a
marsh. At the advent of each individual into this life,
may we not suppose that such a bar has risen to the surface
somewhere? It is true, we are such poor navigators that
our thoughts, for the most part, stand off and on upon a
barberless coast, are conversant only with the heights of
the bays of posssy, or steer for the public ports of entry,
and go into the dry docks of science, where they merely
refit for this world, and no natural currents concour to
individualise them (pp. 260-261).

Chapter XVII, "Spring", is probably the most significant of the
book. In it, among the grotesque patterns suggesting "brains or lungs
or bowels, and excrements of all kinds" (p. 272) which the rivulets
trace on Walden's banks when the spring thaw begins, banks which will
soon be covered with pure verdure, Thoreau discovers a "universal inno-
cence" which consoles and convinces him that good comes from evil, and that life springs from death. The voyage metaphor plays no discernible role in this vital chapter, a fact which, after due consideration, I have decided detracts neither from the importance of the chapter nor of the metaphor. I shall reserve a possible explanation of this situation for the next chapter.

In the final chapter, "Conclusion", we find an overwhelming plenitude of the voyage symbol. The chapter is a vivid summary of Thoreau's discoveries at Walden, and a moving entreaty, clothed in bold and convincing voyage metaphors, for his readers to undertake the same journey of exploration as did Thoreau. The force with which the voyage metaphor strikes the reader at this crucial point of the closing of the book brings a realization of the significance which its author intended it to have.

The first sentence of the second paragraph introduces the voyage metaphor which is evident in almost every sentence of the next three paragraphs. "Yet we should oftener look over the taffarel of our craft, like curious passengers, and not make the voyage like stupid sailors picking oakum" (p. 285). The next two sentences express the circular path of Thoreau's philosophy: "The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing" (p. 285). An egocentric philosophy, no doubt, as it begins and ends with himself, but in the "great circle of sailing" of his voyage, he has encompassed the universe, and made Thoreau and Concord all men and all places.

In a series of rapid fire questions, Thoreau attempts to point out man's basic ignorance, and of this the spiritual is more deplorable than the geographical. It is not a hopeless ignorance, however, at this most optimistic of writers admonishes: "Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own
higher latitudes ... May be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought" (p. 286).

In the above Thoreau also tells us to explore "with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans skyhigh for a sign" (p. 286).

Here is, I believe, the answer to some of Thoreau's early critics, such as James Russell Lowell, who stated that he advocated a romantic, unrealistic return to the primitive way of life, and would ignore all the advances of civilization. On the contrary, Thoreau is quite willing to avail himself of the advantages of scientific discoveries, if these are used to aid in further explorations not only of the physical, but especially of the spiritual world, and are not considered as ends to themselves: "Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat only?" (p. 286) 2

Thoreau considers a contemporary south-sea exploring expedition "with all its parade and expense" as "but an indirect recognition of the fact that 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 of one's being alone" (p. 286) 3. There is a universality in Thoreau's exhortation to "Explore thyself" which melds all explorers of all ages and spheres into one great incarnation of man's eternal desire for truth. The statement with which

2 This same idea is evident in Thoreau's description of the manner in which he intends to conduct his business at Walden, as quoted on page 20 of this thesis: "...taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation".

3 Reminiscent of this "parade and expense" are ticker-tape parades accorded to John Glenn, as a result of his recent flight, which dwarfs the nineteenth century south sea expedition.
he closes the last of the three paragraphs on exploration of self has a prophetic touch, as though Thoreau were foreseeing the efforts of all future ages: "Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct towards a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct, a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down, too" (p. 287).

As though unwilling to relinquish his hold on the voyage metaphor which he has built to such a gripping climax, Thoreau weaves several further references to it in his denouement. "I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now" (p. 288). Later, he states that, if each man steps to the music which he hears, "We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality" (p. 290). As he approaches his final page, Thoreau warns against the smugness of world powers: "We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a ship, if he should ever harbor it in his mind" (p. 296).

The eternal flux of life is symbolized as Thoreau continues: "The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets" (p. 296). This observation leads immediately to the much-discussed story of the bug which gnawed its way out of the wood of a sixty year old apple-wood table, after being hatched, by some increase in temperature, from an egg deposited in the living tree years earlier. It is with this story and the
resultant conviction that "There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star" (p. 297), that Thoreau ends his book.

At this point, a brief retracing of the appearance of this most frequent and significant of the travel metaphors might be in order. The voyage metaphor is very evident in Chapter I, making seven separate appearances, one of which, the comparison between the Walden experiment and a trip to the "Celestial Empire" is a full page in length. It is developed hand in hand with, and is, I believe, of equal significance to the business metaphor from which the chapter title "Economy" is derived. The voyage metaphor wanes sharply, with only two appearances in Chapter II, and entirely disappears in Chapters III, IV and V. It reappears briefly in two fleeting references in Chapter VI, and is entirely absent in Chapter VII. In Chapter VIII it makes a triumphant renewal with two lengthy and pointed comparisons. Chapter IX also has two voyage references, but of considerably less length and significance than those of the previous chapters. In Chapter IX, we find one brief, but very obvious reference to the voyage metaphor specifically, and two vigorous and penetrating travel metaphors which cannot be classed as voyage solely, but in which the voyage aspect is definitely present. In the next five chapters there is only one voyage reference, and is rather a superficial one in Chapter XII. In Chapter XVI we have an intricate voyage metaphor which is prolonged for a full page, and which provides perhaps the deepest insight into Thoreau's interpretation of the voyage symbol. After an absence in Chapter XVII, the metaphor reaches a triumphant climax in the final chapter. Here are found three paragraphs, occupying approximately two pages, each overflowing with voyage symbols, as well as three lesser, but quite definite references, and a final strong river image which is strongly suggestive of the voyage symbol. Thus, if one were to trace a graph of the course of the voyage
metaphor, it would show high points in Chapters I, VIII, X, XVI and XVIII, with only an occasional slight rise in the intervening ones.

2. Walking

References to walking are fairly numerous in Chapter I of Walden. Early in the chapter, Thoreau sympathises with the "poor immortal soul ... creeping down the road of life" (p. 5). This same scorn for man burdened by concern for material trivia appears when Thoreau condemns those who take pride in their dress. For such people: "It would be easier to hobble to town with a broken leg than with a broken pantaloon" (p. 20). The picture of man following a beast of burden appears twice in close succession. Thoreau exhorts us to "look at the teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night" (p. 7). He uses this picture to show how man has corrupted his destiny: "Talk of a divinity in man! ... does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty to fodder and water his horses!"

A similar scene appears on page eight as Thoreau points out the irony of the farmer who insists that one cannot live on vegetable food only, "for it furnishes nothing to make bones with ... walking all the while he talks behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerk him and his lumbering plow along in spite of every obstacle" (pp. 8-9). Walking is the apparent mode of locomotion in the controversial hound, bay horse, and turtledove symbol: "Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks ... I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse" (p. 15). Only the dove spurns this earthy means of propulsion to "disappear behind a cloud" (p. 15). Thoreau's concern with the preservation of the paths, material and spiritual, whereon people walk is shown in his whimsical confession: "For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snowstorms and rainstorms, and did my duty faithfully; sur-
veyor, if not of highways, then of forest paths and all across-lot routes, keeping them open, and ravines bridged and passable at all seasons, where the public heel had testified to their utility" (p. 16).

The walking image which is used with somewhat derogatory connotations as Chapter 12 begins ("the immortal soul ... creeping," "hobble to town on a broken leg") becomes the sign of vigorous independence as the chapter progresses. Primitive man's simplicity of life left him always "but a sojourner in nature. When he was refreshed with food and sleep, he contemplated his journey again. He dwelt as it were, in a tent in the world, and was either threading the valleys, or crossing the plains, or climbing mountain tops" (p. 33). This impression is intensified in the enthusiastic affirmation that "the swiftest traveller is he that goes afoot" (p. 47). Thoreau proves this theory, evidently to himself, at any rate, describing an imaginary wager between a friend and himself as to which would reach a point thirty miles distant sooner — he travelling by foot, or his friend by the new-fangled railway. Since the fare by rail is ninety cents, the friend must spend a day working in order to earn this exorbitant sum, while Thoreau jaunts briskly to the destination on foot, and arrives before his friend has been able to invest his earnings in a railway ticket, let alone make the journey. A similar lesson is illustrated near the end of the chapter in the commentary on a recent proposition of which Thoreau says he heard — that "two young men should travel together over the world, the one without money, earning his means as he went ... the other carrying a bill of exchange in his pocket". Such a partnership could not last. "They would part at the first interesting crisis in their adventures ... the man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready, and it may be a long time before they get off" (pp. 64-65). By combining the
lessons of these two stories one may find a motto on which Thoreau patterned his life: "the swiftest traveller is he that goes afoot – alone".

As Chapter III draws to a close, the walking symbol loses its vigor, and Thoreau returns to the attitude of disparagement evident at the beginning of the chapter. England is "an old gentleman who is travelling with a great deal of baggage, trumpery which he has accumulated from long housekeeping" (p. 60). In a cleverly-turned biblical reference Thoreau quips, "It would surpass the powers of a well man nowadays to take up his bed and walk, and I should certainly advise a sick one to lay down his bed and run (p. 60). He then turns to the plight of the immigrant "tottering under a bundle which contained his all ... I have pitied him, not because that was his all, but because he had all that to carry" (p. 60). Thoreau's intent in this change in attitude toward walking is obvious. At the beginning and the end of the chapter, the walker "creeps" and "hobbles" and "totters" because he is burdened by pride or possessions or both. In the middle of the chapter, he is "threading the valleys", "climbing mountain tops", and, because of the very fact of his walking, he is "the swiftest traveller". This freedom is possible because he is not carrying anything with him, but is walking in the true sense, upright, unburdened and alone, as did primitive man.

The walking symbol is evident only very occasionally as the reader advances beyond chapter one and makes his way toward the final "Conclusion", where it reappears with a certain significance. In Chapter III, Thoreau amuses himself at the expense of romantic love stories where the course of true love did not run smooth, "at any rate, how it did run and stumble, and get up again and go on" (p. 95). In the same chapter on "Reading" he paints a rather deflating picture of Concord culture, decrying the lack of opportunities for adult education: "We needed to be provoked, – goaded like oxen,
as we are, into a trot" (p. 98). One wonders how Emerson and his circle accepted their new biological classification. In Chapter IV, the walking symbol appears briefly as the expression of man's advance, "walk on into futurity" (p. 101). In Chapter V, we are acquainted with the fact that "no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another" (p. 121). The metaphor now disappears until the final chapter, where it makes quite a strong come-back. Thoreau uses the path which his feet wore from his door to the pond as an illustration of the impressionability of men's minds. "How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity" (p. 288). He utilizes the walking symbol to point out his belief in the importance of preserving one's individuality in the midst of the mass emphasis on material success, which was even then threatening to drown the individual personality. This is one of his most striking walking metaphors: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away" (p. 290). Thoreau's drummer beats the call of obscurity and contemplation. "I delight to come to my bearings, — not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may" (p. 293). The knowledge that he is being true to his calling is a source of strength to Thoreau, "to travel the only path I can, and that on which no power can resist me" (p. 294).

In retrospect, the walking metaphor is finally established in Chapter I, making thirteen quite distinct appearances. It appears only four times from Chapter II to Chapter XVII and is re-established in the final Chapter XVIII in four metaphors, all of which are, I feel, especially significant, as they are used by Thoreau as a sort of apologia pro vita sua.
3. The Railroad

In startling contrast to the God-made method of travelling on foot is the man-made "iron horse"—representative to Thoreau of much of the evil in modern society. Thoreau's use of the railroad metaphor is almost entirely in the nature of an attack. This attack begins good-naturedly enough early in chapter one: "Old people did not know enough once, perchance, to fetch fresh fuel to keep the fire a-going; new people put a little dry wood under a pot, and are whirled round the globe with the speed of birds, in a way to kill old people" (p. 8). Mid-way through the chapter, he is appalled by the amount spent by the traveller on luxury, so that the railroad car becomes little more than "a modern drawing-room, with its divans, and ottomans, and sunshades and a hundred other oriental things" (p. 33). His rather self-righteous independence of such fripperies is expressed in his exuberant statement: "I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart, with a free circulation, than to go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a malaria all the way" (p. 33). Thoreau's mistrust of all modern methods of communication is expressed in his concern that modern man, after being "in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas" may discover that "Maine and Texas ... have nothing important to communicate ... We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the Old World some weeks nearer to the New; but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough" (p. 47). This humorous expression of concern takes a sombre turn on the following page: "but though a crowd shouts All aboard! when the smoke is blown away and the vapor condensed, it will be perceived that a few are riding, the rest are run over" (p. 48).
This concept is intensified mid-way through Chapter II as Thoreau makes this scathing social commentary: "We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them ... if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon" (p. 83).

Thoreau does see in the railroad, however, an opportunity for a metaphorical statement of his belief that each man must follow his own manner of life: "whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid before us" (p. 87). But almost immediately, the temptation to use the railroad as a positive symbol is dispersed. In a rather mixed metaphorical attempt to warn his readers against becoming lost in the superficial details of life, Thoreau admonishes, "sail by it ... tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains" (pp. 87 - 88).

The railroad dominates Chapter IV on "Sounds". The track motif mentioned in Chapter II returns: "I too would fain be a track-repairer somewhere in the orbit of the earth" (p. 105). The next seven pages are an elaborate description of the railroad, and its effect on society. This is the most prolonged and intricate metaphor of Walden, and in it Thoreau uses all his technical skill as a writer. It is a treasure chest of similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, with the "iron horse" metaphor holding the place of honour. I shall quote one sentence from these pages, a remarkable one if only from the number of devices which Thoreau has packed into it. It serves to illustrate the care which Thoreau lavished on his railroad metaphor, and is written, I feel sure, with typical tongue-in-cheek Thoreauvian humour:
When I meet the engine with its train of cars moving off with planetary motion — or, rather, like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve, — with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreaths, like many a downy cloud which I have seen, high in the heavens, unfolding its masses to the light, — as if this travelling demi-god, this cloud-compeller, would ere long take the sunset sky for the livery of his train; when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don't know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it" (pp. 105 - 106).

Not only does the section from page 104 to 111 exemplify Thoreau's technical skill, but it is evidence of the spiritual struggle which the railroad aroused within him. The railroad first looms on the horizon as an unwelcome, noisy threat to Thoreau's search for solitude, and he treats it with a mixture of amused contempt and annoyance. Then he sees in this invention an irresistible opportunity to illustrate his "march to your own drummer" theme. "Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then" (p. 107). In addition to this pedantic use of the railroad, however, Thoreau's spirit of adventure is inevitably stirred by the romance of the railroad: "I am refreshed and expanded when the freight train rattles past me, and I smell the stores which go dispensing their odors all the way from Long Wharf to Lake Champlain, reminding me of foreign parts, of coral reefs, and Indian oceans, and tropical climes, and the extent of the globe" (p. 108). For the next three pages we are treated to a kaleidoscope of scenes as the cars flash along with their loads of Maine lumber, Thomaston lime, Grand Banks fish, and Spanish hides "with the sails still preserving their twist and the angle of elevation they had when the ocean that wore them were careering over the pampas of the Spanish Main" (p. 109). But the delightful day
dream is shattered by the jangling of the bells which remind Thoreau of the annoying reality that he "must get off the track and let the cars go by ... I will not have my eyes put out and my ears spoiled by its smoke and steam and hissing" (111). The railroad is, to Thoreau, a symbol of all the so-called advances in civilization, bringing with it much that is good and irresistibly exciting, but destroying also much of one's peace and independence.  

The Iron Horse steams into view for the last time in Chapter IX, after an absence of four chapters. Thoreau's attitude toward him has not mellowed: "That devilish Iron Horse, whose ear-rending neigh is heard throughout the town, has muddied the Boiling Spring with his foot, and he it is that has browsed off all the woods on Walden shore, that Trojan horse, with a thousand men in his belly, introduced by mercenary Greeks! Where is the country's champion ... to meet him ... and thrust an avenging lance between the ribs of the bloated pest?" (p. 174). And that is precisely what Thoreau himself does, for no further appearance of the horse blots the landscape for the remainder of the book. Thus ends the railroad metaphor which, along with comments on other modern communication media, occupy approximately eleven full pages. Although it vies with the other travel metaphors in actual length, it differs from them in that it is not so pervasive, but is concentrated in large units in Chapters I and IV, with shorter references in II and IX.  

4. Extra-Terrrestrial References  

References to other planets are frequent enough in Walden to necessitate their inclusion in a discussion on the travel metaphor, and

to omit them merely because they are of necessity of a highly imaginative nature would be to omit all of Thoreau's travel metaphors. If the metaphorical reference to outer space as "the sea on which the United States must sail" is permitted to a practical man of affairs like President Kennedy, surely it is not surprising that a man of contemplation like Thoreau, with no material concern beyond the state of his bean field, would include this mysterious region as a field for his explorations.

Thoreau's interest in the universe is suggested in chapter one when, as he marvels that "the same sun that ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours", he exclaims, "What distant and different beings in the various mansions of the universe are contemplating the same star at the moment". This unity of place expands into a unity of time, which is to become one of Thoreau's main tenets as Walden develops: "We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages" (p. 9). Thoreau exhorts man not to direct his energies toward obtaining the superfluities of life, but rather "to adventure on life" (p. 14). Comparing man to a plant whose roots anchor him for an upward growth, he asks, "Why has man rooted himself thus firmly in the earth, but that he may rise in the same proportion into the heavens above?" (p. 14).

The most prolonged description of Thoreau's astronomical meanderings is found early in Chapter II, where he describes the trance-like state into which his imagination sometimes led him as he contemplated the view from his door. Again, it appears impossible to cut any parts from the description, as each phrase is an integral and essential part of the metaphor:
Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him (p. 79).

As the chapter advances, one finds similar references sprinkled here and there. In his praise of morning, he says: "To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning" (p. 81). Near the close of the chapter, Thoreau complains that "Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man" (p. 87). This is a mistake: "God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages" (p. 87). A final reference occurs in the last paragraph when, in another expression of his now clearly established unity theme, Thoreau merges sea and sky into one: "fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars" (p. 88).

In his third chapter, "Reading", Thoreau praises the superiority of the written word over "fleeting spoken language" (p. 92) and uses this metaphor to vivify his idea: "There are the stars, and they who can may read them. The astronomers forever comment on and observe them" (p. 92). This conceit is continued two pages later as Thoreau puts forward the opinion that only great poets can read the works of great poets: "They have only been read as the multitude reads the stars, at most astrologically,
not astronomically" (p. 94).

Even the iron horse is elevated from his earthy track in Chapter IV to become a "celestial train" as it moves off "with planetary motion, - or, rather, like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve" (p. 105).

Chapter V, "Solitude", provides excellent opportunity for an introduction of the heavenly bodies. Thoreau depicts his aloneness at Walden: "it is as solitary where I live as on the prairies ... I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, a little world all to myself" (p. 118). But this aloneness does not mean loneliness. "How far apart, think you, dwell the two most distant inhabitants of yonder star ... Why should I feel lonely? is not our planet in the Milky Way?" (p. 120).

In Chapter IX, "The Ponds", Thoreau's strange identification of sky and water noticed at the conclusion of Chapter II is reiterated, this time more emphatically. Describing a night fishing expedition, he says, "It was very queer ... when your thoughts had wandered to vast and cosmogoncal themes in other spheres, to feel this faint jerk, which came to interrupt your dreams and link you to Nature again. It seemed as if I might next cast my line upward into the air, as well as downward into this element, which was scarcely more dense" (p. 159). This concept reappears in Chapter XVI, another Pond chapter. As Thoreau peers down through the ice into "the quiet parlor of the fishes", he is convinced that "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads" (p. 254). The fish, however, are not aware of this amalgamation of water and air, and, when caught "give up their watery ghosts, like a mortal translated before his time to the thin air of heaven" (p. 255).
Thoreau makes his final reference to the heavens near the end of Walden when, warning against the danger of self-deception, he asks, "Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not." (p. 290).

Thoreau's extra-terrestrial references are introduced in Chapter I, where they lay the foundation for the expression of his Emersonian belief in the unity of all time, place and experience. They are most pronounced in Chapter II, where they occur four times, and are sprinkled sparsely through the remainder of the book, appearing in Chapters III, IV, V, IX, XVI, and XVIII.

5. References to Foreign Lands and Cultures

The final metaphor concerned with references to foreign lands or cultures is rather a difficult one to handle, but I feel that it belongs in this discussion, as the element of travel is so obvious in it. On the first page of Walden, Thoreau says that he requires of every writer "some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land, for if he had lived sincerely, it must have been to a distant land to me" (p. 3-4).

The numerous references to distant lands and societies are, I believe, indications of Thoreau's attempt to find this "distant land" and are evidence of the vast regions of earth, sky and water which he covers in the course of his search - which, of course, begins and ends at Walden Pond.

The actual pin-pointing and discussion of these references, however, poses a problem, because of their frequency, especially in the first and last

chapters, but more so because of their variety, ranging as they do from
descriptions of the habits of the North American Indians to the philosophy
of the Bhagvat-Geeta. Since an adequate discussion of these various aspects
of the metaphor would necessitate in itself a thesis, I have decided to omit
those references to Eastern and classical philosophy and mythology, both of
which are significant and frequent, and to limit myself to those references
which obviously suggest travel rather than philosophy or mythology — refer­
ences, in other words, to facts and ideas which Thoreau must have acquired
in the course of his almost constant reading of travel and adventure ac­
counts.6

In Chapter I, the reader is deluged with references to foreign
lands and cultures. They begin on the second page of Walden when Thoreau
states his desire to "say something, not so much concerning the Chinese,
and Sandwich Islanders, as you who read these pages, who are said to live
in New England" (p. 4). In his travels about Concord, Thoreau has been
self-imposed penances which dwarf those of the Bramins, and labours which
reduce those undertaken by Hercules to insignificance. Such penances and
labours however do not appear to harden man physically, for, in comparison
with the hardiness of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego and New Holland,
civilised man is a pitiful creature indeed. Thoreau is not, however, led
to the extreme of considering the noble savage as superior in all respects:
"Is it impossible to combine the hardiness of these savages with the intellec­
tualness of the civilized man? (p. 12).

6 John Christie says: "In his published writings (including the
Journal) Thoreau directly refers to his reading in at least eighty-three
different travel works, and, "We are able to identify...a minimum of one
hundred and seventy-one separate travel accounts read by Thoreau". "Thoreau
Traveller" (Duke University, Ph.D., 1955), as quoted in A Thoreau Handbook,
p. 110.
In the comparison of Thoreau’s "business" at Walden to a trading expedition, mentioned under the voyage metaphor, references to the "Celestial Empire" to Hanno and the Phoenicians, to the Neva marshes and St. Petersburg give a flavour of universality and timelessness. As the chapter unfolds exotic names and places are woven into a tapestry of scenes quite bewildering to the Concord eye. On page 20, we find a reference to Madame Pfeiffer, a German world traveller of Thoreau’s time, and to her adventure in Asiatic Russia. On page 22 we are in the fashion world where "The head monkey at Paris puts on a traveller’s cap, and all the monkeys in America do the same". Suddenly we are whisked backward and eastward, and reminded that "some Egyptian wheat was handed down to us by a mummy" (p.23). Back to the world of fashion, but now "we are amused at beholding the costume of Henry VIII, or Queen Elizabeth, as much as if it was that of the King and Queen of the Cannibal Islands" (p. 23). As we turn the page, we are transported from the palms of the Cannibal Islands to the bleak expanses of Lapland where the geographer Samuel Laing is describing the sleeping attire of the natives. Before the end of the page, we are scanning the Indian gazettes to find the significance of the wigwam symbol in their art, and as the same paragraph ends, we have been catapulted into the Garden of Eden where "Adam and Eve, according to the fable, wore the bower before other clothes" (p. 25).

Thoreau returns to his North American Indian studies on page 26 with a quotation from Gookin, superintendent of the Indians of the Massachusetts colony. This leads, naturally enough, to a comparison of the primitive and civilized societies' ideas on shelter. The civilized man comes out second best, for "it is evident that the savage owns his shelter because it costs so little, while the civilized man hires his commonly because he cannot afford to own it" (p. 27). Thoreau goes on to point out that the usual evidences of civilization in a country do not indicate
that the condition of "a very large body of the inhabitants may not be as degraded as that of the savages" (p. 31). To support this view he quotes the plight of the slaves who built the pyramids of the Pharaohs, and of the Irish (frequently the objects of Thoreau's rather ferocious pity), whom he contrasts, to their detriment, of course, with the North American Indian or the South Sea Islander. The Arabs are introduced on pages 32 and 34. The pyramids again arose Thoreau's ire as he declares that "there is nothing to wonder at in them so much as the fact that so many men could be found degraded enough to spend their lives constructing a tomb for some ambitious booby whom it would have been wiser and manlier to throw in the Nile, and then given his body to the dogs" (p. 52).

The Indians stalk back into view as Thoreau quotes from the anthropologist Bartram's Travels concerning the Micmac Indians who, at their "busk" or "feast of the first fruits", after having provided themselves with new clothes and furniture, cheerfully destroy all their old possessions. The stamina of the Indians under torture, as described in the Jesuit Relations is lauded on page 67. In his condemnation of philanthropists, Thoreau waxes universal: "and straightway his drastic philanthropy seeks out the Eskimau and the Patagonian, and embraces the populous Indian and Chinese villages" (p. 69). The chapter closes with a story of Sheik Sadi of Siraz, a Persian poet of the thirteenth century. This chapter, devoted, as the title states, to "Economy", has taken us from "a house which I built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts" (p. 3) to the banks of "the Dijlah, or Tigris, which will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct" (p. 71).

The profuse foreign references poured out in Chapter I dwindle to a mere trickle in Chapter II. The view from Thoreau's door shows a low shrub oak plateau stretching "away toward the prairies of the West and
the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men" (p. 79). References to Spain and England are found in Thoreau's criticism of the newspaper which has no news. As the chapter closes, Thoreau urges a piercing of all the superficial trappings which characterize different cities and nations: "Let us ... work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion; and appearance, that alluvion that covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord ... till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call reality" (p. 88).

The occasional foreign reference sprinkles the intervening chapters between II and XVI. In Chapter V we find brief mention of Asia, Africa, and Acheron and the Dead Sea. In Chapter VI, an account of North American Indian customs is presented, a reminder of Thoreau's persistent interest in this subject. Thoreau sticks close to Concord until Chapter XIII, where he makes reference to the scholar "who dwells away in the North West Territory or the Isle of Man" (p. 220), as well as to the works of Gilpin, an English historian.

Chapter XVI provides the culmination of the foreign lands and cultures metaphor, as well as the key to its significance. "Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my 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 Persian Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names" (p. 266).

The final chapter brings something of the same confusion of references to foreign lands as does Chapter I. Beginning with the statement:
"To the sick the doctors wisely recommend a change of air and scenery" (p. 285), Thoreau follows the flight of a wild goose from Canada to a southern bayou, the migrations of a bison in the southwestern United States, and the voyage which the town clerk is unable to take to Tierra del Fuego this summer—all in one brief paragraph. Most of his references to distant lands are tied up with the voyage metaphor, and several have already been quoted in this connection. I shall add a few more.

"What does Africa, what does the West stand for?... "Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger or the Mississippi, or a Northwest Passage around this continent, that we would find?" (p. 286). "It is not worth the while to go around the world to count the cats in Zanzibar" (p. 287).

"England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea" (p. 287).

References to foreign lands and cultures, in summary, are most frequent in the first and last chapters of Walden. Their most significant appearance is in Chapter XVI, where Thoreau clarifies their function in this tale of his experience at Walden Pond.

As one attempts to survey the entire travel metaphor pattern in Walden, one sees that all five of the metaphors are clearly established in Chapter I. Of these, references to foreign lands and cultures is the most frequent, although not necessarily the most significant. The railroad and inter-terrestrial metaphors are predominant in Chapter II. There is a general lull in all metaphorical references in Chapter III. Chapter IV brings a striking renewal of the railroad metaphor, where it reaches its climax. The travel metaphor is not significantly evident in Chapters V, VI and VII, but comes to the fore in Chapter VIII with a striking renewal of the voyage metaphor. Chapter IX has passing references to all the travel metaphors except those concerning walking, but nothing of great import.
Travel and adventure in a general sense, with no specific limitations, is the theme of Chapter X. Another lull occurs in Chapters XI and XV. Chapter XVI blossoms forth with vigorous renewals of all the metaphors under discussion, except, again, for the walking image. There is no significant travel reference in Chapter XVII, but they all return with enthusiasm in the final Chapter XVIII. Chapters I, II, IV, VIII, IX, X, XVI and XVIII contain all the significant travel metaphors. All five aspects of the travel metaphor are quite obvious at the beginning of the book, each making a clear appearance in Chapter I. There is a lull in the middle chapters, except for the voyage metaphor, which makes strong appearances in Chapters VIII and X. The final chapter brings a vigorous re-establishment of the metaphors, with the exception of the railroad image, which made its final appearance mid-way through the book in Chapter IX. Each of the five metaphors which I have considered has a climax, I believe. The voyage and walking metaphors reach their peaks in Chapter XVIII; the railroad in Chapter IV; the extra-terrestrial in Chapter II, although the ideas of this chapter are reiterated, but not so strikingly, in Chapter IX; the foreign lands and cultures in Chapter XVI. The supplying of reasons for the predominance of certain metaphors in certain chapters will be my task in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE METAPHOR PATTERN

The voyage metaphor is the most extensive and carefully wrought of all of Thoreau's travel symbols. It is launched early in Chapter I and persists throughout the book. Although its influence is pervasive, there are, as I have pointed out, certain chapters where it is more strikingly evident than it is in others. The first chapter is such a one. Here, under the title "Economy", Thoreau is preparing carefully, as would any Yankee business man, for a new venture. The purpose of this venture is not outlined until Chapter II, but the manner in which he intends to undertake it is. It is to be done in the manner of a voyage to the "Celestial Empire", and this voyage conceit is maintained with care throughout Walden. It remains till the final chapter, where it reaches the peak of its vigour, long after the business metaphor, in whose partnership it began, has become ship-wrecked on the rocks of Thoreau's disinterest in the commercial.

That the numerous voyage metaphors in Chapter I should be reduced to an ignominious two in the second chapter, "Where I Lived and What I Lived for", is understandable from a consideration of the title. Chapter I is concerned with the beginnings of a venture, the preparation for the voyage, and as one gets ready for a trip, one waxes loquacious about it. Chapter II settles down to the living of the venture, and hence some of the preparatory enthusiasm is lost.
The voyage metaphor occurs briefly, again in Chapter VI, but only enough to keep it alive for re-introduction in Chapter VIII, as Thoreau describes his return from "The Village" in terms of a merry voyage to home port. This re-appearance of the voyage metaphor in the chapter on the village is significant both as far as form and content are concerned. It is half way through the book and the reader needs to have the voyage conception re-presented to him. But more significant is the fact that it is only when Thoreau goes into the village that he is in danger of losing his bearings. When he is reading, hoeing in his bean field, meditating in solitude, or entertaining visitors in his own cabin, his course is clear. But when he ventures into the village, he often encounters "severe storms" on his return voyage. But this is good, and a necessary part of his experience, for "not till we are completely lost, or turned around ... do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature ... Not till we are lost ... do we begin to find ourselves" (p. 154).

The two travel references found in Chapter IX, are concerned with wrecks — imaginary ones at the bottom of or on the shores of the pond. Sandwiched as this chapter is between two accounts of excursions to his neighbors, these references might suggest a warning of the wreckage that results from too frequent communication with one's fellow creatures.

In Chapter X another contact with society, this time in the person of John Field, an impoverished Irishman, arouses in the author a grateful enthusiasm for his own enquiring spirit, and a desire to impart some of his love of adventure to his reader: "Go fish and hunt far and wide day by day" (p. 186).

The next significant voyage reference occurs in Chapter XVI, "The Pond in Winter", and differs from the other voyage metaphors in the book.
First, it is not devoted entirely to the voyage per se, but rather empha-
sizes the pond, which Thoreau has come to identify with himself. This
identification was first expressed poetically in the earlier chapter on
"The Ponds": "I am its stony shore,
And the breeze that passes o'er" (p. 175).
Now, after Thoreau has spent the winter in contemplation of the secrets of
Walden, he is able to expand upon this identification, and to clothe it in
voyage terms, so that, by depicting man as a sailor on Walden Pond, he is
really depicting himself as a sailor on the sea of his own being, discov-
ering coves, reefs and depths which time and circumstances have produced.

In Chapter XVIII the voyage metaphor is brought to a powerful con-
clusion with the exhortation to all to "be a Columbus to whole new contin-
ents and worlds in you" (p. 286). Here the voyage references are di-
rected towards Thoreau's reader, not towards Thoreau himself, as they were
in Chapter XVI, where Thoreau was still wrapped in contemplation. Now
the spring sun has melted the icy covering which partially obscured Walden's
secret of "universal innocence". Thoreau has found his answer to life's
meaning and he is eager for all to make a similar discovery. But it is
something which they must find for themselves; hence his marked emphasis on
the exploration theme.

A retracing of the voyage metaphor, reveals that it is launched
early in Chapter I. It is expanded as the chapter develops, and prep-
arations for the journey must be made and discussed. It is mentioned
briefly in Chapter II then almost completely disappears as Thoreau
steers through the comparatively calm waters of "Reading", "Sounds",
"Solitude", "Visitors", and "The Bean Field". It hoves into view mid-way
to port when the shoals of "The Village" and "Baker Farm" threaten the
journey's successful completion. It serves as the medium for Thoreau's expression of his discovery of himself in Chapter XVI. The voyage symbol is climax in the final chapter, where the reader is urged along to the harbour of "faith in resurrection and immortality" (p. 296) which Thoreau himself has reached.

The walking symbol makes a strong appearance in Chapter I, where it is used, as I mentioned previously, to illustrate Thoreau's contention that one travels fastest on foot, free from all impeding possessions. It would appear that, since Thoreau has stated this to be the fastest method of travel, the walking symbol would achieve at least equal significance with the voyage metaphor as Thoreau pursues his search for life's meaning. Such is not the case, however, as one finds only occasional references to it as the chapters unfold. It is, in fact, the only travel metaphor which has no significant utterance somewhere in the mid-regions of the book. It is resurrected for a vital role in the final chapter where it is utilized as a vehicle for Thoreau's expression of this basic theme that by stepping to the music which his drummer plays for him, he is travelling the only right and possible path for him. It is rather puzzling that walking, which was one of Thoreau's chief joys in life, and certainly his only means of transportation during his Walden months, should not be the most pronounced of the travel metaphors. I have already discussed, in Chapter I of this thesis, the influence which walking had on certain of his other works, and have mentioned, in Chapter Two, Miss Seybold's theory that walking was the manifestation of his quest for the other world.

I believe that Thoreau chose to utilize the voyage metaphor rather than the walking symbol as his main travel image in Walden because it tied in much more logically with the business metaphor of Chapter XVI. One does not walk on a trip to the Celestial Empire. Thoreau's use of the business
metaphor was essential, for it was through it that he expressed the quandry of modern man, engulfed by concern for material success, and in grave danger of losing himself in the process. It is Thoreau's method of making unto himself a friend of the mammon of iniquity, in order to achieve his own end — "to live deliberately." Thus it was essential that the voyage and business metaphors be launched together in Chapter I, and the walking symbol was relegated to a position of less importance. It is, however, an interesting side-note that both sailing and walking take Thoreau to the same place. The final paragraph of *Walden* concludes: "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" (p. 297). The final paragraph of "Walking" reads: "We saunter toward the Holy Land, till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall per­chance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a banksde in autumn" (p. 632). All of which might suggest that Thoreau had no real ad­vance in his ideas after *Walden*, but that the answers he sailed upon there sufficed for the more tedious walk which made up the rest of his life.

The railroad metaphor, as I mentioned in Chapter Two of this paper, differs from the other travel images in that it is concentrated in sizeable units in the early chapters, and disappears after Chapter IX, thus being the only travel image not to survive the length of the book. This is not due to a lapse of memory; it is, I believe, an illustration of Thoreau's skill in combining form and content. The railroad, like anything new, makes a great deal of noise and occupies most of one's attention for a time until the novelty wears off, and one returns to the living of the essentials of life. This is precisely how Thoreau has treated the railroad metaphor. It occupies considerable space in Chapters I and II, because, by
its very physical presence it cannot be ignored. Its noisy, smoky appearance is a paradox in the life of a man who has gone to a cabin in the woods in order to escape all that the railroad represents, but the fact remains that it is there, and must be considered. Hence its long appearance in Chapter II, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For". It plays no part in Chapter III, as this chapter is in the nature of a withdrawal from Thoreau's physical surroundings. But in a chapter on "Sounds" how could one ignore the presence of an 1845 steam engine within a mile of one's house? Here, in Chapter IV, the railroad achieves its glory as well as its condemnation, symbolizing as it does both the good and the evil of modern civilization. Its presence is not, however, significant enough to interfere with Thoreau's "Solitude" in Chapter V, and makes no reappearance until it is finally polished off with a thrust of Thoreau's pen in Chapter IX. In this chapter on "The Ponds", Thoreau is beginning to find the answers he is looking for. The death of the railroad at this point is symbolical, I believe, of the ephemeral nature of man-made objects, no matter how large or noisy, as compared with the eternal nature of the truth one finds in contemplation of a God-made pond.

Thoreau's entrance into the inter-stellar regions is inevitable for a man who desires to live "in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages" (p. 9). The establishment of this metaphor in Chapter I, along with his other travel metaphors, indicates his intention of using all media - earth, water and sky - in order to facilitate his search for the meaning of life. That these media may all be one is strongly suggested in Chapter II. The long quotation which I gave from page 79 of this chapter is in itself a statement of Thoreau's belief that he is not only in a cabin by Walden Pond, but that he belongs equally in "a region viewed nightly by astronomers... If it were worth the while to
settle in those parts near the Pleiades ... then I was really there". Not only does the land on which Thoreau squats become the planets of outer space, but the water of Walden becomes undistinguishable from the sky in which these bodies whirl, as his desire to "fish in the sky" whose bottom is pebbly with stars" indicates. That this idea should be expressed so clearly in the chapter entitled "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" is significant. "Where I Lived" is not on the shore of Walden Pond in 1845, but in all space in all eternity. Thoreau's attempt to solve the riddle of life's meaning by his humble experiment at Walden was a result of the influence of Emerson's idea that all experiences are versions of one experience, and that it is possible for any one to be a key to the rest. The union of sky and water suggested in Chapter II is expanded and clarified in Chapters IX and XVI, both of which deal with the pond. This is understandable, for it is in his communion with the pond that he has become all being - a part of the great over-soul which he must have heard discussed frequently during his two-year stay in Emerson's home.

Thoreau's references to remote lands and cultures fulfill the same purpose as does his introduction of distant planets and endless stretches of sky. He strives to bring all regions and peoples into his book, for he believes, not that they are a key to him, but that he is a key to them. Thoreau, by striving to know himself, was not being self-centered, but universal, for he was acting on Emerson's belief that to know one man rightly was to know all men, for one soul animated all. The profusion of foreign names in Chapters I and II is Thoreau's attempt to show the diversity of cultures existing on this planet, and thereby to emphasize the magnitude of the task he has in trying to reduce all men, despite their variety of customs, into one. If Thoreau is able to come to understand himself while at Walden, he will have encompassed this vast diversity of humanity as well.
No wonder that he takes his experiment so seriously. The renewal of the metaphor in Chapter V, "Solitude", is of interest because of the inherent paradox. Thoreau is alone, but in this aloneness whereby he is in the process of discovering himself, he is one with Africa, Asia, Acheron, and the Dead Sea. The metaphor reaches its fullness as Chapter XVI ends. It is as though "The Pond in Winter" has unlocked her secrets during the frozen months and the realization of their significance begins to trickle to Thoreau as the ice breaks. The trickle becomes a joyous flood as the "Spring" of Chapter XVII breaks upon him. By renewing the foreign reference in Chapter XVIII, Thoreau, as he has a habit of doing, brings us back to where he began; "Our voyage is only great-circle sailing" (p. 285). They suggest the myriad regions which we, the readers, may discover, if we follow Thoreau's advice to "explore thyself".

I feel that some special attention needs to be directed toward the two chapters dealing with the ponds, Chapter IX, "The Ponds", and Chapter XVI, "The Pond in Winter". This is the only aspect of his life at Walden that Thoreau requires two chapters to describe. The first of these is found mid-way through the book, and is the second longest chapter, surpassed only by the seventy-two pages of Chapter I. Both by position and length, then, it has a place of distinction, forming the centre of the book, just as the actual ponds were the centre of Thoreau's life at Walden. There is, I am sure, a deliberate juxtaposition of the shortest chapter of the book, "The Village", and the second longest, "The Ponds"; Thoreau thereby puts each in its proper perspective as far as its importance to him is concerned. On comparing "The Ponds" and "The Pond in Winter" one notices that the first includes a discussion of the several ponds in the vicinity of Walden, each of which has its own peculiar beauty and interest. They are described as
they appear in summer or early fall, shortly after Thoreau's arrival at Walden. Although he admires them all, the beginning of his particular infatuation with Walden is evident: "of all the characters I have known, perhaps Walden wears best, and best preserves its purity" (p. 174). By the time Thoreau reaches Chapter XVI, Walden is the only pond worth discussing; she has become "the pond". There is a depth of perception in Chapter XVI not found in Chapter IX. Thoreau has had the winter months, uninterrupted by house-building or bean-hoeing, to concentrate almost entirely on her. The prolonged metaphor on page 260 in which he compares the spiritual characteristics of individuals (and hence himself) to the physical attributes of the pond ("there is a bar across the entrance of our every cove ... "), shows the closeness of identification which Thoreau has achieved. This has been a period of stillness which leads inevitably to a period of action - the frozen stillness of winter to the released vitality of spring. This undulation of rest and action was expounded by Emerson in "The American Scholar", and was a vital part of Whitman's sea imagery, where the stillness of the shore contrasted with the motion of the sea.

In Chapter XVI, Thoreau gives us our deepest insight into the tremendous scope which his experience at Walden has given him. The pond has performed the same function for him as did the ocean for Whitman; it has mingled Walden water with that of the Ganges, and has provided him with his own "Passage to India". Indeed, Gandhi's utilization of Thoreau's passive resistance ideas which were incubating, if not actually hatched, during the Walden period, produced a more effective mingling than Thoreau had ever anticipated.

Chapter XVI, then, holds in its frozen depths the secret of oneness with all peoples, revealed by Thoreau's Ganges reference; it holds
the secret of oneness with all spheres, expressed by the identification of the heavens and the waters of Walden which Thoreau sensed as he gazed through the ice at the fish below; it holds the secret of oneness with himself: "Perhaps we need only to know how his any man's shores trend and his adjacent country or circumstances, to infer his depth and concealed bottom" (p. 260). This knowledge bursts the bonds of the frozen pond to expand into the joyous message of Chapter XVII, wherein the death of winter becomes the life of spring, and a "universal innocence" springs from decay. I mentioned earlier that no travel metaphors are present in Chapter XVII. None is necessary. The port has been gained. The renewal of the travel metaphors in Chapter XVIII is intended to encourage others to undertake the voyage whereby they may reach the same harbour of peaceful assurance as did Thoreau.

One may note a cohesion of the travel metaphor pattern and the theme of Walden. The theme is the search for life's meaning; the travel metaphor is the vehicle whereby this search is presented. Just as the search followed the circular path from Walden to the unknown and back to Walden, so do the various aspects of the travel metaphor, with the exception of the railroad, follow a similar pattern. The voyage metaphor is the most significant and enduring of the group. It is introduced in Chapter I, where it is closely linked with the business metaphor. The references to it in Chapters VIII, X and XVI are significant, not mere passing references. In Chapter XVI, the voyage metaphor conveys Thoreau's discovery of himself; in Chapter XVIII it encourages others to undertake the same voyage of discovery. Thus, the circle is closed, and the reader, if he follows Thoreau's advice, will find himself at precisely the same spot as was Thoreau when he began Chapter I at Walden. The walking metaphor is frequent and significant in Chapter I, where it depicts Thoreau's enthusiasm for simplicity and soli-
tude, negligible in the body of the book, and reaches its full potency in Chapter XVIII, where it is used to convey Thoreau's idea of walking to one's own drummer. It again represents the circular movement in the structure of Thoreau's ideas by its reiteration of the theme of individuality and freedom which it introduced in Chapter I. The railroad metaphor, introduced in Chapter I also, is climaxed in Chapter IV, where it is the most obtrusive, but perhaps the least important of the "Sounds". It does not last beyond Chapter IX, as it is a passing annoyance, and not worthy to survive the book. The extra terrestrial metaphor is evident in Chapter I, and climaxed in Chapter II, where it serves to convey Thoreau's belief in the unity of all the infinite variety of the universe. The references in the remainder of the text are brief, and of no great significance, except in Chapters IX and XVI, where the water of the ponds flows into the ether of the skies, and all become one, thus suggesting a return to the unity theme of Chapter II. The single mention in Chapter XVIII serves only to sustain the metaphor which was worthy, unlike the railroad metaphor, to survive the length of the text. The foreign lands reference is overwhelming in Chapter I where it serves to intensify the multiplicity of the lands and cultures which exist, and hence the immensity of the problem of finding an answer to life's meaning which could apply to all. Brief references keep the metaphor alive until it reaches its peak in Chapter XVI, where the diverse becomes unity. In Chapter XVIII there is a pronounced return to emphasis on foreign lands, for, although Thoreau has resolved life's riddle to his own satisfaction, and has given this answer to the reader, it is still Thoreau's answer, and not necessarily the reader's. Accordingly, as was the case in the voyage metaphor, Chapter XVIII brings the reader to the same spot as was the author in Chapter I, and the journey begins again, but this time with a new traveller. Thus, of the five aspects of the travel metaphor, the four which are
of a universal nature survive the book. They are all evident in Chapter I, and again in Chapter XVIII, for Thoreau's conclusion of Chapter XVIII is the reader's Chapter I.

I have attempted to show the integral part which the travel metaphor plays in *Walden* by pointing out its occurrence under the five aspects of the voyage, walking, the railroad, extra-terrestrial references, and references to foreign lands and cultures, and by proposing reasons for the pattern which these various divisions of the metaphor follow in the course of the book. As a result of this prolonged and intricate travel metaphor, Thoreau emerges as the typical Romantic hero-author. His journey was strictly a voluntary one; the dangers (in which one has the suspicion he took considerable delight) were spiritual ones; by the journey's end, Thoreau's desire to "drive life into a corner" was achieved, and he had found it more "sublime" than "mean". But, in true romantic style, the journey is not finished when the goal is reached, and Thoreau is but a "sojourner in civilized life again" (p. 3) and already contemplating "my next excursion" (p. 32). This journey, of which *Walden* is the account, comprehends all regions of earth, air and water, and employs all modes of travel possible in Thoreau's time.

The five metaphors whereby he accomplishes this are all introduced early in the book, are carefully maintained as the work develops, each reaching a climax in certain chapters, each being absent in other chapters. I have indicated what I believe to be logical reasons for the pattern of each of the five metaphors. Each is important, for each contributes to the universality of the whole travel metaphor. The voyage aspect is the most significant, possibly because it is the most appealing to work with, and Thoreau's predecessors in the Romantic tradition had given him much in this field upon which to build. The voyage image is the mast of the travel
conceit; the other four metaphors are the sails appended to it. By means of this figurative journey, Thoreau has come to the meaning of life - for him. It is revealed to him in the spring when he observes the beauty of new life arising from decay. Thus he reaches a concept of "universal innocence", and hence what amounts to a negation of evil. For if evil gives birth to good, then evil is not evil, but good. As Whitman did in Leaves of Grass, Thoreau has reconciled opposites by abolishing their differences. Thoreau's conclusion was reached only after the winter months of contemplation, when the physical bondage of Walden Pond prepared Thoreau's mind for the spiritual release which the spring brought. How much of Thoreau's answer was known before he went to Walden, I do not know. At any rate, Walden was the testing ground whereby he proved to himself Emerson's Transcendentalist belief in the unity of all time, place and experience. Apparently the Walden findings sufficed for the remainder of Thoreau's days, for no very different ideas on life's meaning are apparent in his later writings. As I mentioned earlier, the conclusion of "Walking" is almost identical with that of Walden and we know that the "true account" which he hopes to be able to give after "my next excursion" (p. 82) would be substantially the same as was this one. Thoreau's voyaging was, as he said, "only great-circle sailing", and the close of Walden is a return to the beginning, but now the reader, not Thoreau is at the helm.

Thoreau will sail again, to be sure, but as Walden closes, his chief concern, as a conscientious artist, is to share his findings with his fellowmen. Hence, in Chapter I, the emphasis is on the first person as Thoreau makes ready for his voyage: "I have always endeavoured to acquire strict business habits" (p. 18), and "I thought that Walden Pond would be a good place for business" (p. 19). In Chapter XVIII the emphasis switches
to the second person as Thoreau exhorts his reader to "Be rather the Mungo Park ... of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes" (p. 286), and to "Explore thyself" (p. 287).

In so doing, the reader will launch upon a similar journey to Thoreau's. It will not be an easy one, for, as Thoreau says of travelling in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack*, "ere long it will wear a man clear up, after making his heart sore into the bargain". But travelling is a necessity if one wishes to enter into the fulness of life: "The traveller must be born again on the road" (p. 412). Thoreau saw his life as a continuous journey. In his essay, "Life Without Principle", published posthumously in 1863, we find: "No, no, I am not without employment at this stage of the voyage. To tell the truth, I saw an advertisement for able-bodied seamen, when I was a boy, sauntering in my native port, and as soon as I came of age I embarked". The content and form of the comprehensive travel metaphor around which Thoreau has built *Walden* make this book a record of the universal traveller searching all creation for eternal truth.

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2 Ibid., p. 715.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles and Parts of Books


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