2017

Thoreau's Melancholia, Walden's Friendship, and Queer Agency

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THOREAU'S MELANCHOLIA, WALDEN'S FRIENDSHIP, AND QUEER
AGENCY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by
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B.A., California State University Fullerton, 2007
M.A., Louisiana State University, 2012
August 2017

Acknowledgements

First, I thank Dr. Nathan Crick. You revolutionized my research, writing, and thinking. As a student, I have never studied under an educator as committed as you to joining the duties of rhetorical research and pedagogy. I have you to thank for deprogramming me and returning me to Thoreau.

Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer, you made me understand how performance inquires. Through your teaching, I came to realize that how and what I perform to others affects what I know about myself. Most of my arguments involving performance studies in this dissertation should be credited to your professorship, performance direction, and festival chaperoning. Had I not been there to experience Petit Jean, I would still be struggling to transition and recover from melancholia. Words cannot express my gratitude for what you have done to me.

Dr. Andy King, thank you for bringing me many joyful ideas, a fondness for my graduate years, and a deeper respect for teaching. I particularly appreciate your advice to examine Thoreau's journal for his emotional expression.

Dr. Bryan McCann, we have not known each other very long, but during our short acquaintance, you have changed my research trajectory considerably by recommending that I read Michael Warner and José Esteban Muñoz. Without your input, Chapter One and the Conclusion chapter would not be what it is. Thank you.

Dr. Griffin Campbell, your skill teaching music must be as keen as your way of being included in my committee meetings. Your questions during my comprehensive exam helped me to remember that I do not know what I cannot teach. Thank you.

Dr. Ruth Bowman, thank you for introducing me to performance studies. Before I saw Dr. Dappertutto, I thought that performance was merely nonverbal communication. Before I took your historiography seminar, I thought that genealogy was just for families. Thank you for letting me tend your garden and your menagerie.

To Dr. John Protevi, thank you for teaching me Deleuze. Without your instruction, I doubt that I would have enjoyed producing this project.

To my friends who I met in Louisiana, we are scattered far and wide now, but our continued friendship is still being felt. To Dr. Ben Haas, thank you for encouraging me to study Deleuze, and for standing up to water balloons and loud men. To Dr. Joe Rhodes, thank you for your counsel. To Dr. Nicole Costantini, thank you for remembering me; I owe you a road trip. To Anna Byars and Emily Graves, thank you for being amazing. To Dr. Stephanie Kilgore Heath, thank you for telling me about Ken Butigan's article about Mark Jiminez and Beau Chandler's gay marriage sit-in. As the dissertation's opening and closing shows, that story is perfect for this project. Let me know when you run out of purple pens.

To my endocrinologist, my psychiatrist and my therapist, thank you. Dr. Kristen Vierregger, thank you being there for the trans community and for doing your homework on bioidentical progesterone. Dr. Vitaliy Shaulov, you have changed my life by testing my DNA and uncovering my COMT and MTHFR single nucleotide polymorphisms. More people should test themselves for SNPs. Kim Quickel, you

have kept me out of some dark spots. Without your care, I probably would have dropped out of grad school.

This dissertation is for my mother; the life that produced it is owed to you, Mom. I love you.

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Abstract

Walden queers its readers. While many have investigated Thoreau's queerness, there has been little notice of *Walden*'s queerness. This project begins with a situational analysis that identifies the melancholic antecedents of *Walden* in Thoreau's life and his choices that led to the illumination of his melancholia. Thoreau had already been experimenting with what Branka Arsić identified as "literalization." Nevertheless, a period of crisis, detailed by Robert Milder, made him aware of what Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok have referred to as the melancholic's blind skill of "demetaphorization." I suggest that Thoreau exploited this skill to produce *Walden*'s unique ability to feed on and, as Henry Abelove and Henry Golemba have suggested, awaken its reader's desires. I combine a close reading of *Walden* with selective study of the text's reception. *Walden* delivers on Thoreau's theory of friendship from his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. *Walden*'s friendship with its reader is the agency that accomplishes what Henry Golemba and Lawrence Buell have noted as a blurring of the boundary between reader and text. To investigate this friendship and *Walden*'s accommodations of faux friendship, I construct a Burkean perspective by incongruity using research in the nature-writing and rhetoric disciplines that intersect with Thoreauvian studies. This incongruity is analyzed using not only Burke's theories of literary form and literature as equipment for living, but also Deleuze's process philosophy and Deleuze and Guattari's analyses of the war machine and their spatial analysis. This project complexifies Erin Rand's research on polemics, using Deleuze's multiplicity not only to explain why polemics are unpredictable, but also to address what Sarah Hallenbeck has referred to as "the crisis of agency." I suggest an expansion of José Esteban Muñoz's research. The question of how one actually transitions from melancholia to disidentification cannot be adequately answered with terms like Stuart Hall's 'oppositional reading' or Deleuze and Guattari's 'de/reterritorialization.' I also suggest that queer utopian thinking and poststructuralism are more compatible than previously argued. This dissertation is itself a polemic, straining the possibilities of friendship in the service of queerness.

Introduction: Reawakening Desire with Wild Readings

On July 10, 2012, the 195th anniversary of Henry David Thoreau's birth, Ken Butigan analyzed a recent act of protest (2012). Before I discuss the details, consider the analysis:

> The power of Thoreau's archetypal civil disobedience action over a century and a half ago rings through this one: withdrawing consent from the state's policies that offend core values and one's own conscience; doing so by delivering the message "in person," using the most powerful language at our disposal, the vulnerable but resisting body; the potential effect which conscientious, centered and nonviolent action can have on those carrying out the policies in question and on those who chafe under them, as well as the larger population of self-described bystanders. (para. 8)

Butigan's quote "in person" as the touchstone of Thoreauvian protest comes from Thoreau's essay "Resistance to Civil Government" (1849, p. 198). This display of conscience usually finds its way into the examples of Mohandas Gandhi and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to describe protests involving thousands. However, the act of protest that inspired Butigan to write involved only two protesters during an act that, by itself, could not hope to produce an official acknowledgement. Instead, the motive of the protest was a simple expression of their desire; a desire that state law held to be illegitimate.

Seven days prior to Butigan's article, Mark Jiminez and Beau Chandler, residents of Dallas, Texas, went to the county clerk's office to get married. They knew, contrary to their mutual love, that they would be turned away. They brought no weapons and raised no voices in anger. They simply informed the media and their allies, which were present with cameras recording. As Butigan reports, "The men are composed and clear" (para. 7). The clerk's comments are inaudible to the camera. However, the response is not: "That's very unfortunate for us because we love each other and want to get married" (michturn, 2012). The two men then handcuffed themselves to each other, calmly sat on the floor in the middle of the room, and waited, married together by steel. When the office staff announced that the office was closing and that everyone had to leave, Jiminez calmly said that they would remain until they received a marriage license. The next video record shows the two men being escorted out of the lobby in police custody. The two men posted bond later that night, and were received with applause by Dallas LGBTQ activists.

"Unfortunate" is an apt adjective. These men risked a $2,000 fine and had to wait nearly three more years for the Supreme Court to legitimate their desire to marry (Butigan, 2012). Even after *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), opponents continue to deny the legitimacy of same sex marriage (Yuhas & Dart, 2015). It would seem foolish for Jiminez and Chandler to risk arrest and penalty knowing that the office would not grant their request. However, that was not their motive. They showed us through "the perception and the performance of right" (Thoreau, 1849, p. 197) that the status quo was, to use Jiminez's word, unfortunate.

Activists have a long relationship with Thoreau's logic. Mohandas Gandhi, who was integral in India's struggle for independence, found his writings to be

useful in explaining the merits of his nonviolent resistance method. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther Link Jr. famously credits Thoreau for inspiring his lifelong pursuit of social justice that led to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Thoreau has been philosophically recruited for the benefit of famous civil rights giants, and he continues to serve in that capacity.

In addition to illuminating the well-known episodes of civil rights activism in our history books, he has also served as a champion of the average person struggling for the right to speak honestly. Maggie Sullivan Murphy, in a response to a pro-rape meetup group in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had this to write concerning Thoreau's contribution:

> I think that it's important to do more than speak politely to evil. Many people, much more noble than I, used various tactics to disrupt groups like these. Disruption is part of the non-violent protest action described and utilized by Thoreau, Gandhi, King and most recently, Black Lives Matter. If they have the right to assemble and use hate speech, then I have the right to assemble and be as obnoxious as humanly possible. (quoted by Dinan, 2016, para. 2)

This rhetoric of "counter friction," to borrow a phrase from Thoreau (1849, p. 198), continues today. In the gay marriage protest article discussed above, Butigan finds that the wisdom behind Thoreau's political philosophy is that it focuses on individual choices: the quest for social justice does not hinge on one's ability to mobilize voters, silence opposition, and conform to a standard model for historical movements. Instead, the quest for social justice hinges on the existence of a multitude of singular examples of conscience in the midst of injustice.

Thoreau has been used countless times as a symbol of protest, and vast scholarship reveals this legacy, but his works train us to do more than that. Besides "Resistance to Civil Government," Thoreau's famous masterpiece, *Walden*, provides other resources—queer resources—that take *us* beyond the norms of protest. *Walden* subsumes the point of civil disobedience, albeit in a different style of writing, and it goes farther. "Resistance to Civil Government" is a treatise, one written straightforward in the vein of Thoreau's lecture on that topic. *Walden* contains, among many things, an allegory of an individual placed under arrest by a tax collector, of a naturalist with a queer interest in two colonies of ants engaged in heroic struggle. These two anecdotes capture Thoreau's thesis on civil disobedience, which uses disengagement and nonviolent confrontation to boycott unethical social practices and by that absence induce others to take notice. However, *Walden* offers more than simply a mythos for reinforcing the stock theory of civil protest that is often articulated in schools. More than announcing a duty, *Walden* works.

In *Walden*, Thoreau's infectious queerness makes his contribution special. Thoreau was writing during the middle of the 19th Century, the era of our westward expansion. This colonization of the hinterland required new families to produce children, new farms to grow food, new roads and railroads to market resources, new communication technologies to integrate it, and everything that stood in the way of this burgeoning expansion of the American empire was treated with disdain (Howe, 2007; Sellers, 1991). *Walden* praises none of the familial values that American society came to expect from her writers (Abelove, 2003). Henry Abelove has found

ample evidence of Thoreau's queer reception (p. 29). For instance, the *Boston Globe*, in reviewing Thoreau's *Walden*, wrote, "The author had not, even in his imagination, peopled his hut at the pond 'with a loving and beloved wife and blooming children'" (p. 29). The *National Era* openly wondered how long society would last if they "squatted on solitary duck-ponds, eschewing matrimony" and "casting off all ties of family" (p. 29). It is no surprise that Thoreau's contemporaries criticized him for being "eccentric" (p. 29). But you will not find that criticism within *Walden*.

After Thoreau's death, Ralph Waldo Emerson tried to erase this public perception of Thoreau's eccentricity, replacing that appearance with one that was unfriendly, political, and cerebral (Harding, 1995). This move loses touch with the enormously wide breadth of Thoreau's desires, such as his fascination with the absurd antics of squirrels, his awe at the repeated patterns found in both sand and leaves, his empathy for the deep melancholies of owls, the ways in which a pond can resemble a giant eye gazing into the cosmos, his faith-like confidence that we could measure all of it. Thoreau was not afraid of society, nor was he unfriendly. He desired to see the men and boys in town, and recounted his asexual attempt to seduce a woodchopper in the safety of his cabin (Abelove, 2003, pp. 34-36). Thoreau passionately felt that each person had an important part to play in the cosmic drama, and he pursued his own with the awareness that he had a duty to respect the ability of others to do the same, even if that means giving the reader special interpretive license (Buell, 1995; Golemba, 1990).

The lasting power of *Walden* is not the specific issues that Thoreau spoke to in his time or how it equips individuals to oppose public culture; rather, *Walden* remains durable because of the manner in which his queer method cultivated a reawakening of individual desire (Abelove, 2003, p. 37; Golemba, 1990). Civil disobedience is a common ingredient that reminds individuals that they should not sponsor state efforts to obstruct individual desire, but civil disobedience is only the beginning of one man's contribution to a project of awakening that can be traced to the Stoics and continues today among process philosophers. Consider a few effects of *Walden* that exceed the rubric of civil disobedience. Amy Wang, a teacher in Oregon, interpreted *Walden* as a self-help tutorial for people living with the special needs of autism (2015). She found wisdom in his careful placement of an abode far enough from the town to avoid crowds, but close enough to foster frequent interpersonal encounters. Alexandra Nicewicz Carroll, rejecting the practice of New Years Resolutions, suggested that we replace the Resolution with an Intention, citing Thoreau. She quoted Thoreau's *Walden*: "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."[1] Reading Thoreau's story as merely an exercise in resistance seems far removed from a person who, in truth, was squatting on his friend's land (with his permission) in order to study, write, and find his own way (Harding, 1982).

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[1] Although Carroll (2015, para. 12) misquotes Thoreau, her attribution is a paraphrase of the following passage from *Walden*: "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours" (1985, p. 580).

The Supreme Court's affirmation of gay marriage rights in the United States, like Thoreau's civil disobedience, is just one step in the collaborative quest for desire. Queer folk still face reproach and violent denial, and moving from civil disobedience to *Walden* coincides with another step in United States queer advocacy. LGBTQ employees have limited state-level legal protections in the United States. This does not account for legal attempts that are underway in various states and cities to roll back protections that already exist. In 2015, anti-trans advocates in Houston, Texas, repealed an ordinance that allowed transpeople to use bathrooms that match their gender identities (Lett, 2015). This repeal has encouraged North Carolina to pass sweeping anti-LGBTQ legislation, which has only recently been repealed, only to give private businesses the freedom to discriminate against nonconforming individuals. Numerous studies have shown that transgender and gender nonconforming people face high percentages of the population who see their expressions as illegitimate, and this scorn has been linked to high rates of depression and suicide (Haas, Rodgers, & Herman, 2014). The freedom of gays and lesbians to pursue their dreams leaves much to be desired.

Exigence

Most activists and Thoreauvian scholars have remained within the confines of civil disobedience and have not graduated to the ways that *Walden* reawakens desire (Abelove, 2003, p. 37; Golemba, 1990). This has happened for a few reasons. The first reason is practical. The ways in which civil disobedience can be exploited in political contexts are vast, and activists on both sides of queer politics will be able to draw upon its heuristic for the foreseeable future. Queer people can be disobedient in many ways, but it should be pointed out that opponents of queer advocacy are also aware of Thoreau's political philosophy (Lopez, 2015), and the recent rollbacks of queer rights demonstrate that civil disobedience is insufficient. The second reason is theoretical. The vast majority of research on *Walden* positions it in terms of its ecological possibilities and as an extension of civil disobedience, rather than the queer way it provides a robust and erotic model for living. Few academics have tested *Walden* in terms of queer advocacy. There is a nascent field that bridges ecology and queer studies, but its connection to Thoreau remains tenuous.[2]

Thoreauvian studies has mostly failed to exploit *Walden*'s queer mission to reawaken desire because it does not take queer desire seriously as a force worthy of consideration. There are two reasons for this, but they both have to do with the old American avoidance of queerness. The first reason is a general lack of attention. Queer studies has, until recently, remained at the periphery of academic study, and queerness is perhaps forever out of alignment with heteronormative culture (Warner, 2002). In addition to this general lack of service, specific failures to notice the queerness of Thoreau and others have affected research trajectories. For

[2] Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson's (2010) introduction to their anthology on queer ecology mentions Thoreau only once in passing in a single-paragraph review of 19th century literature.

example, Robert Richardson's biography of Thoreau, perhaps the most recent (1986) source on the man's life, made no mention of Thoreau's queerness, and this lack has filtered to every other secondary source that relied on Richardson. In addition, even though Michael Warner has focused on Thoreau's alleged homosexuality (1992), he has continued to analyze *Walden* as a force that opposes common sense rather than as a champion for the enabling of desire (2002). Another more disturbing example is the reception of Francis Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941 as cited by Abelove, 2003). This book, arguably one of the most important seminal texts of American studies, helped establish America as part of the university curriculum and made America's literature worthy of examination in political and historical disciplines (Abelove, 2003). However, the reception of the text was qualified with an "edginess, reserve, and wariness" of "an erotic focus in the book, a focus that is somehow obtrusive though never quite explicit" (pp. 61-62). Henry Abelove continued:

> What is inexplicit, what is merely suggested, is the question the book frames without asking: what was the erotic meaning of that democracy, the erotic dynamic, the ties, affections, affiliations, that bound together those white men, supposititiously equal, supposititiously brothers, who were the privileged subjects of the old republic? And if we could know that erotic dynamic, would we know something pertinent to the tasks of improving and deepening and expanding and advancing and even reconstructing democracy in the present. (pp. 62-63)

The fact that *American Renaissance* was published in 1941 made it impossible for Matthiessen to discuss his desires openly. Matthiessen's homosexuality has been well documented in retrospect (Steinberg, 2009). The reception of Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* is a representative anecdote of a refusal to take queer desires seriously as anything more than as a gadfly of popular culture. Finally, with respect to Thoreauvian studies, its inattention to Thoreau's erotics has given the majority of its literature a prominent blind spot.

Literature Review

       This review addresses relevant intersections of Thoreau with and between queer studies, rhetoric, and ecology. In this review, I first discuss the attention Thoreau has received in queer studies. Second, I confront an issue over the definition of 'queer' in queer rhetoric. Third, I review the rhetorical research on Thoreau. Fourth, I discuss ecology's attention to *Walden* as environmental literature. Fifth, I address queer ecology's emphasis on melancholic writing. I conclude the review by identifying research questions that focus on the relationship between melancholic writing and *Walden*'s queer rhetorical form.

Queer Studies

       Henry Abelove represents queer studies' interest in Thoreau. He conducted a reception study of *Walden* and identified Thoreau's queer turn away from sexual reproduction. In this section, I present Abelove's position to reveal an odd polysemy

around the salience of Thoreau's sexuality that has problematized the meaning of queer.

Modern readers are quick to dismiss Thoreau as an antisocial bore, but this prejudice is premature. According to Abelove (2003), after *Walden*'s publication in 1854, reviewers complained that Thoreau's literary persona was eccentric and selfish (pp. 29-30). These derogations stemmed from *Walden*'s conspicuous silence about marriage, domesticity, and sex (p. 30). This offended the values of Thoreau's contemporaries, and Emerson stepped in to erase the rumor that Thoreau was affectionate with the young men in Concord (pp. 31-32). Emerson's interference with Thoreau's oeuvre has been well established,[3] but it is still an open question as to how much of Thoreau's hermit persona was really a person who saved his affections for other men. Fortunately, Thoreau was able to preserve a few cleverly hidden clues in *Walden*, found by Abelove, that reveal a different kind of person than a sour misanthrope.

Walden reveals that Thoreau had a mature network of friends. He could be intellectually seductive, not only with his friends, but also with his written audience. Thoreau visited the village "to see the men and boys" (1985, p. 456 as quoted by Abelove, 2003, p. 35). In addition, Thoreau received visitors at his cabin. The most notable record in *Walden* of one of these visits is with a woodchopper. According to Abelove (2003), "No other person who appears in *Walden* is so extensively described" (p. 35). Thoreau identified the color and texture of his sunburned neck, the leather of his boots, and his slapstick behavior (p. 35). When the woodchopper visits, they read literature (p. 35). Thoreau's choice, Homer, is extraordinary because he has the woodchopper read a portion from *The Iliad*, in Greek, where Achilles is consoling his grieving lover (Patroclus), reminding him that many of their friends are still alive (p. 36). The woodchopper, who can pronounce Greek, reads the words, and Thoreau translates (p. 35). This, for Abelove, is the seductive relationship that Thoreau establishes with his reader:

> Throughout *Walden* Thoreau repeatedly asks his readers the same question that he translates from Homer for the woodchopper: Why so unnecessarily sad? Why so unnecessarily discontented? Just as Thoreau tries to arouse the woodchopper, so he tries to arouse his readers to what he again and again calls "life." Just as he hands the woodchopper a book, so he does to his readers, and as readers we are therefore all positioned, regardless of our gender or sexual taste, as the objects of a homosexual seduction. In addition, the more successfully we are enabled to read *Walden*, that is, the farther we get beyond just sounding the letters, the more willing we show ourselves. (p. 36)

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[3] Harding (1995) explains: "Emerson believed that Thoreau's greatest claim to fame was as a Stoic, and he tended to overemphasize the cold and the negative in his portrait; indeed, he so overdid it that he inadvertently turned many people away from Thoreau. Several years later when he came to edit Thoreau's Letters to Various Persons (1965), he did the same thing again, editing out of the letters anything that showed warmth and human kindness" (p. 5).

We do not know the wood-chopper's sexual orientation, and so the reader knows nothing more than his words: "That's good" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 437 as quoted by Abelove, 2003, p. 36). At that moment, Thoreau was not a misanthrope, but was instead seductive of others (p. 36) and a queer inducer of melancholia.

Thoreau was not gay, but he was queer. It is tempting to pigeonhole Thoreau as gay or bisexual by virtue of the suggestiveness of this exchange. It is important to remember that Thoreau was critical of sensuality and found the woodchopper to be particularly sensual, but not vicious or diseased. Nevertheless, Thoreau's choice of literary moment has given Abelove ample cause to interpret Thoreau as he did. Since I have a different reading here, this leads to a queer polysemy. Does queer have a sexual denotation, as many people in the LGBT*Q* community assert, or does it refer to the establishment of difference?

Queer Rhetoric

Queer rhetoric subscribes to both essential and process perspectives. 'Queer' can refer to an audience's interpretation of queerness. It can also refer to the way that an act of communication is done. In this section, I discuss this split, and then I adopt a process perspective for my interpretation of *Walden*.

What does queer mean? Queer rhetoric indicates that the answer depends on how the word is used. Some argue that it involves sex, while others deny that it is necessary to sex queerness.[4] Queer is, in fact, an essentially contested concept (Jackman, 2010). The primal wedge that divides definitions is the part of speech to which queer belongs. Queer is a noun, an adjective, and a verb. Although these parts are permeable and do not exhaust its possibilities, I use them as an entrance into the topic of definition.

On one hand, queer tends to have an anti-normative essence when used as a noun or as an adjective. Each person is a lens that selects examples of queer people and objects judged against his or her conception of queerness (Bessette, 2016; West, 2013). Today, queer people and objects are different than or resistant to heteronormativity (Dunn, 2011). By their very existence, queers "trouble sexual normalcy and its discriminations" (Morris, 2006, p. 147) by being, like the young Abraham Lincoln, "different, awkward, oddly demonstrative" (Morris, 2013, p. 407).

On the other hand, when queer is a verb, it is something that is done. To queer something is to change it to being not normal (Morris, 2007a), and the meaning of normal is by no means a settled issue (Bessette, 2016). The use of queer as a verb does not always have the sexual denotation, although this often does happen today. It can also be defined by its ability to do queer work, particularly to other ideas (Rand, 2013b). In particular, an act of queering "play[s] norms against one another" (West, 2013, p. 540) and may even produce readings of texts that are at variance from the intentions of authors (Dunn, 2011).

Erin Rand (2008) has provided one example of this non-sexual deployment of queering that I use to analyze *Walden*. She has developed criteria for the

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[4] Some scholarship declines to define queer altogether. See Morris (2007b, 2015a, 2015b).

rhetorical form of polemics and argued that the polemic is a queer rhetorical form. Rand's queering of the polemic enables a queer analysis of *Walden*'s form.

Rand's analysis of the polemic as queer falls on the verb side of the definitional wedge because she categorizes the polemic as a rhetorical form. This move is different from traditional analyses of the polemic because a rhetorical form is supposed to have nothing to do with semantic content (Rand, 2008, p. 301) and everything to do with how the speech act is carried out (pp. 298-299). Rand argued that there are "four specific features that are unique to the polemical form" (p. 301).

The possibility that *Walden* is a polemic is provocative, but even more interesting is the fact that Rand found the polemic to be a queer rhetorical form, a form marked with unpredictability. For Rand, the "unpredictable relationship between an intending agent and the effects of an action" (p. 312) makes a rhetorical form queer. Because of their volatility and their risky flouting of the conventions of argumentation, "the characteristics of polemics make them especially prone to being put to unforeseen uses" (p. 310). They serve as a foil for more "complex, rational, and theoretically based language" elsewhere (p. 311). Polemics provoke people to make space for communication. In other words, the "'failure' of a polemic to do exactly as its author intended is thus the very resource for its productivity" (p. 313).

Thoreau's 'intentions' have been violated in unpredictable ways. The stereotyped purpose of *Walden*'s rhetoric is to catalogue Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond. However, this stereotype is at variance with the users of *Walden*, some of whom I have already discussed in the introduction. To provide a more thorough answer to why this has occurred, I turn to rhetorical studies.

Rhetoric

Rhetorical studies shows that *Walden*'s meaning is wildly unpredictable because it contains an unusual narrative structure and was written in an unusual style. This narrative and style evolved during a period of melancholia that Thoreau experienced over many years in his early life. In this section, I review the rhetorical forms that have already been identified and discuss the details of Thoreau's melancholia.

Walden's unusual nature derives from the way in which it features multiple voices that contrast with Thoreau's persona. Henry Golemba (1990) argued that *Walden*'s Thoreau strategically poses as a model individualist, constraining him to downplay his cooperative side. In addition, Thoreau incorporated a variety of voices into his text, and it is difficult to isolate them individually (Buell, 1995; Bickman, 1992). This fusion, which has been regarded as a Bakhtinian carnival (Schueller, 1986), creates a "language of paradox, ambiguity, oxymoron, indirection, and exaggeration" that provides a fertile field for reader interpretation (Golemba, 1990, p. 203).

These multiple voices in *Walden* produce a provocative language. The fertility in this field of interpretation permits the reader to run in unanticipated directions with unsanctioned meaning. Thoreau goads the reader to take flights of interpretation by speaking a "language of desire" (p. 233, p. 234). Taking an analogy from Thoreau's old correspondent, Harrison Blake, Golemba argued that this

language of desire feels like a posted letter that has not quite yet arrived (p. 228). This feeling of not quite having arrived fosters anxiety that induces the reader to recover something that has been lost (p. 228), and that recovery, wherever it comes from, becomes *Walden*'s interpretation.

Robert Milder (1995) reads many of these voices in *Walden* as the various stages of Thoreau's development. After exhaustive research into Thoreau's prolific journal and draft manuscripts of *Walden*, Milder concluded that *Walden* is more than Thoreau's portrait of reality, circa 1854. It combines both a narrated story and an enacted story (p. 54) tracing and retracing his development, his painful lessons and failures, and intimates a humbled student of nature who still had more to learn (p. 55).

The multiple Thoreaus presented in *Walden* are arranged to form a complex set of sequences, each of which expose different developments and tensions. *Walden*'s genius, argued Milder, lies in the complex organization of these lessons and cleverly hidden questions. As Milder argued, these lessons and questions are imbricated in specific agon clusters that showcase specific struggles, Thoreau's failure to reconcile these struggles, and the lessons that he gleaned. Milder's analysis of these tensions coalesce around at least three clusters: one's freedom, one's purity, and one's relationship with the world.

Milder found that many of these complex sequences came about because of a profound crisis that occurred between 1849 and 1854. This is the time period between Thoreau's first and second book publications (pp. 52-53). As Fink (1992) and Milder (1995) have pointed out, the impetus for this crisis had something to do with the fact that his first published book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, was a humiliating failure. That book is about loss: the loss of not only his close brother John in 1842, but also the loss of a pastoral image of America from his youth. Failing such a personal debut project must have been devastating. However, perhaps what truly made this time period a crisis for Thoreau was the fact that this failure snowballed into a rift between him and his mentor and owner of Walden Pond, Ralph Waldo Emerson (Milder, 1995).

Thoreau's crisis, his estrangement from Emerson, occurred because *A Week* established Thoreau's public disagreement with Emerson's philosophy of Transcendentalism. Emerson held that the great moral and eternal truths that guided humanity were located within each individual mind, and that each of us had a duty to reach within ourselves to find and share these truths. *A Week* was a spectacular departure from Emerson, finding the fount of truth not within each person, but within the whole of nature itself, which included the human mind. For whatever reason, Emerson warmly supported Thoreau's final manuscript before publication, urging him to publish it on credit (Fink, 1992). However, after publication, Emerson turned about-face and refused to write a review of it (p. 248). This rebuke intensified Thoreau's downward spiral because Emerson's silence served to wave the writing industry away from Thoreau, condemning him to oblivion. Thoreau published *A Week* at his own expense, and he was barely able to make his debt payments by working in his father's pencil factory and doing hard work outdoors as a surveyor (Milder, 1995, p. 99).

Thoreau's embarrassment led to a painful distancing of himself from his friends, but this isolation would be a blessing in disguise. "Genial misanthropy" is a fair assessment of Thoreau during this crisis (p. 104). To compensate for his solitude, Thoreau tried to befriend nature and its dispassionate laws, continued to dream about being a successful writer, and remained faithful to his journal writing (p. 105). His prose progressively described more and explained less (Golemba, 1990, pp. 223-224), and he feared that the world was losing its wonder (Milder, 1995). He sought to renew this wonder through nighttime walks alone in the woods; it was in these times and places of being profoundly lost that he found nature, there all along in his mind, teaching him something (pp. 110-111).

Ecology

Research on *Walden* as ecological literature shows that Thoreau learned that nature is nonlinear and should be regarded as an equal. In this section, I review the research by Lawrence Buell (1995), who discusses the nature of this nonlinearity and the importance of Thoreau's filial love affair with nature.

Buell argued that *Walden* has a nonlinear seasonal progression. This nonlinearity exists for two reasons. First, as Buell has identified, Thoreau must have realized that his own recovery was nonlinear: he made breakthroughs, and these breakthroughs occurred because of previous setbacks. *Walden* zigzags in its advocacy, reflecting Thoreau's inconsistent progress and coinciding with the irregularity of evolution. Second, and more importantly, as Buell has pointed out, Thoreau discovered that placing the ego at the center of the world was problematic. *Walden* destabilizes the persona of Thoreau, making it difficult to trace his position through it (Buell, 1995; Milder, 1995). Without a stable authority to restrain the reader's interpretations, flights of interpretation become possible. However, Thoreau left behind abundant resources to help recover these personae, and this recovery leads to different ways to interpret *Walden* (Milder, 1995).

The nonlinear nature of *Walden* embodies Thoreau's growth into a genuine peer of nature (Buell, 1995). His journals and drafts of *Walden* testify to his gradual evolution from an egalitarian survivalist to a whole human who was capable of regarding "nonhuman agents as bona fide partners" (p. 179). In the first draft of *Walden*, Thoreau's argument is an unambiguous nod to Emersonian metaphysics with a working-class twist. He told a mostly easy romance between nature and a transparent eyeball in the woods, he covered his blunders, and praised the tools that he already had. However, with each subsequent draft, Thoreau's appreciation for nature's lessons grew to cover *Walden*'s entire surface and disrupted any normal boundary between author and content (Milder, 1995). Perhaps the most important lesson that links these lessons together is the realization that a true love is an equal. There is no better way for a text to do this than by inviting the reader to become a co-author. *Walden* is a text that turns on an unpredictable relationship between itself and its intended meaning. This move is profoundly democratic, and because it involves internal moves that destabilize its own identity, Thoreau's ecology is queer.

Queer Ecology

Queer ecology demonstrates the importance of melancholia. In this section, I show why melancholia is of interest to queer ecology, define it as a distinct phenomenon, and discuss why research in this area should focus on *Walden*'s language of desire.

Despite its personal nature, melancholia is an important topic because it grows out of situations of social denial. For Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands (2010), melancholia "is focused exactly on the condition of grieving the ungrievable: how does one mourn in the midst of a culture that finds it almost impossible to recognize the value of what has been lost?" (p. 333). Melancholia finds purchase not only in queer studies, where popular culture has long held queer attachments to be barely tolerable, but also in ecology, which has had to confront "a society that cannot acknowledge nonhuman beings, natural environments, and ecological processes as appropriate objects for genuine grief" (p. 333).

Melancholia is the condition[5] of denying or being denied one's desires[6] in the midst of loss. Mortimer-Sandilands showed, through analysis of Judith Butler and

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[5] Melancholia has a long history that dates back to antiquity and survives today with a different meaning. In the 19th century, before and during the establishment of psychiatry as a legitimate medical field, melancholia was a term that referred to an explanation for madness that involved mysterious anatomical lesions (Berrios, 1988, pp. 298) and moral degeneration (Misbach & Stam, 2006, p. 49). The symptoms of affect, such as sadness, were not a part of the concept (Berrios, 1988, p. 298). In the insane asylums, patients with melancholia either recovered on their own or went on to develop more intense and terminal forms of insanity, and the early 19th century saw the erosion of traditional social support structures and growing asylum populations (Misbach & Stam, 2006, p. 50). This epidemic encouraged a paradigm shift in the emerging field of psychiatry at the hands of neurologists (p. 50). Moral degeneration became less relevant to medical empiricism, and because the anatomical lesions were nowhere to be found, their apparent size shrank until they became metaphorical (Berrios, 1988, p. 299). In the U.S. context, between the late 1860s and the 1900s, melancholia underwent a complex conceptual reframing and was ultimately replaced by mental depression and bipolar disorder (Misbach & Stam, 2006, p. 50; Berrios, 1988, p. 302). There is little terminological equivalence between melancholia and these terms. There is not enough space here to detail this evolution, which involved several "bridge" diagnoses and typologies that are no longer commonly used, but it should be enough to say that most people with depression and bipolar disorder today would not have been diagnosed with melancholia in the early 19th century (Berrios, 1988, p. 298, p. 300). Depression and bipolar disorder are symptom terms, leaving behind the anatomical and moral mechanisms of causation that melancholia represented as explanations. Today, melancholia survives in the psychoanalytic realm as a term of explanation for why a person's mourning continues interminably.

[6] In this project, I use a process-oriented understanding of desire, defining it as "the production of production" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 6).

Freud's writings, that not everyone grieves the same way. In this theoretical orientation, which has been summarized by these three authors, some people are encouraged or permitted to mourn the loss of the objects of their desires. Normal mourning occurs in cases where the psychic trauma would be too great for the loss to be accepted all at once (Arsić, 2016). Alternatively, the subject may simply not be ready to part with the object (Butler, 1999). To accommodate this gradual process, the psyche constructs a fantastic version of the lost object, an illusion that is made possible by a metaphorical swallowing, consuming, or acquiring (Leader, 2008), with that metaphor being concealed from the subject's awareness (Abraham & Torok, 1994a). This normal mourning involves a feeling of anger, first directed inward during the stage of denial, and then outward toward the desired object that is now absent in reality (or related objects; Leader, 2008), and the fantasy of the object's continued existence is slowly diminished at the pace in which the psyche is able to absorb the truth (Arsić, 2016). Mourning does not, by itself, induce the subject to 'move on' from the loss; rather, mourning slowly lessens the intensity of one's grief so that it can be managed in the context of continued living (Leader, 2008, p. 99). As Darian Leader has observed, not only is grief distinct from mourning (p. 8), but old losses are apt to be resurged when subsequent losses occur; old losses stick to fresh ones, especially when they occur to others in a social group (p. 67). On the other hand, some people lose more than just objects of desire, but their desires as well; as Butler clarified, instead of mourning, a melancholic individual incorporates a lost object into their psyche as usual, but once there it becomes a permanent resident of the subject's identity (as cited by Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010). It has nothing to do with narcissism or overwhelming pain, but instead it is the halting of a process. This happens subconsciously; most people are unaware why they are melancholic (p. 335). Anger still occurs, but since the desired object has been devoured, anger remains turned inward as guilt (p. 335). Melancholia is a mourning frozen in time, but the guilt continues to gnaw. Butler argued that melancholia does indeed apply to sexual desires, and that one's gender identity is susceptible to melancholic incorporation when specific sexual desires are disavowed (1997 as cited by Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010). As Leader (2008) has put it, the melancholic dies along with the loss (p. 8).

Because melancholia can last for months, years, or even a lifetime, melancholic writing is an important means of recovery from the arresting death of melancholia. The most important observation, in my opinion, that Mortimer-Sandilands (2010) made concerning melancholic writing is her notice of Jan Zita Grover's notice that it can accomplish "imaginative feats" (p. 345). These feats "emerge from a conscious, laborious process of reflection grounded in intimate experiences and local histories, in the precise ways in which pain and loss are manifest in lives and events" (p. 345). Melancholic writing involves the reader with the features of melancholic experience, and those features demonstrate to the reader the transition from melancholia to mourning. This experience has the potential to induce a recovery from melancholia. In Thoreau's case, an attentive reader of *Walden* has an experience that follows Thoreau's descent into winter and redemption in spring. The lesson of melancholia can only be obtained through

painstaking attention to the phenomenon of melancholia. That lesson does not occur when the writer discusses melancholia abstractly.

An example of Thoreau's melancholic writing that has this functionality appears in *Walden* in an unlikely place. The central chapter of *Walden*, "The Ponds," is often regarded by readers as the most descriptive and least evaluative chapter in the entire book. It is a summertime chapter that marks an almost imperceptible change in the tone of the book. In his description of Walden Pond, Thoreau laments about the untold civilizations that have used this pond as their Delphic fountain. The version that he had in hand when he published *A Week* leaves this history unexplored.[7] However, in later drafts, he added, among other things, this segment:

> Yet perchance the first who came to this well have left some trace of their footsteps. I have been surprised to detect encircling the pond, even where a thick wood has just been cut down on the shore, a narrow shelf-like path in the steep hillside alternatively rising and falling, approaching and receding from the water's edge, as old probably as the race of man here, worn by the feet of aboriginal hunters, and still from time to time unwittingly trodden by the present occupants of the land. This is particularly distinct to one standing on the middle of the pond in winter, just after a light snow has fallen, appearing as a clear undulating white line, unobscured by weeds and twigs, and very obvious a quarter of a mile off in many places where in summer it is hardly distinguishable close at hand. The snow reprints it, as it were in clear white type alto-relievo. The ornamented grounds of villas which will one day be built here may still preserve some trace of this. (1985, p. 466)

At the outset of *Walden*, Thoreau is adamant that his desire is that people should find their own way, and so I read this passage as a confession that he has not been entirely going his own way. What is remarkable here is that Thoreau could not notice this old path in the summer, but had to stand on the middle of the frozen pond. He predicted that in the future this old path would still be noticeable. Becoming aware of one's habits and the loss of originality can reawaken desire, and Thoreau's language in this passage is charged with a significant fertility.

Summary and Inquiry

We began this review with the discovery that *Walden* permits itself to be interpreted as queer. It can be interpreted as such in homosexual (Abelove, 2003), asexual, and melancholic ways, leading it to have an indeterminate meaning. Queer is an essentially contested concept (Jackman, 2010), making *Walden* queer at a formal level and through a text's unforeseen potential (Rand, 2008).

Walden employs various literary forms, and uses a queer language of desire to describe Thoreau's life in the woods (Golemba, 1990). This strategy involves the reader in the process of authorizing its content, leaving it with indeterminate meaning that goads the reader to recover it (p. 228). This is the source of its queerness.

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[7] This observation, and many others like it in this dissertation, was made possible by a digital encoding of Ronald Clapper's dissertation (Schacht, n.d.).

One of *Walden*'s literary forms is a seasonal progression, developed out of the author's fall into, overwintering in, and spring back from melancholia (Buell, 1995). Extant drafts written by Thoreau, his journal, and his biography reveal that Thoreau gradually introduced his language of desire during a period of melancholia, which followed a pattern similar to *Walden*'s fall, winter, and spring (Milder, 1995). He also, by his own claim in the opening passages of the text, wrote the bulk of these seasons into *Walden* during this time. Thoreau's crisis led him to encounter nature, learn from it as an equal, and redeemed him by making him understand his powers of careful observation and description.

Thoreau's language of desire interacts with his melancholic writing. Melancholic writings have already been subjected to research, which found their strength in the particularity of their descriptions that show the specific features of melancholic experience (Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010). Research has already noted that Thoreau's powers of description were particularly strong. However, the melancholic writings that Mortimer-Sandilands examined focused on queer and ecological content, not queer form. *Walden* is unique for its use of melancholic writing in a queer rhetorical form. In light of this fresh combination, this dissertation addresses two questions:

RQ1: How does Thoreau's language of desire interact with his melancholic writing?
RQ2: How does this interaction implicate queer studies and queer movements?

Method

This section describes the means of analysis in the dissertation. The analytical tasks are a presentation of the situation of *Walden*, how the various rhetorical forms within it interact, and how that interaction implicates queer studies and queer movements.

As Kenneth Burke's early works (1941/1973, 1935/1984a, 1937/1984b) show, one must know the artist's situation before it is possible to understand what the art communicated. This requirement warrants a more thorough discussion of the historical state of affairs in the 19th century coupled with the particular details of Thoreau's own biography and oeuvre.

My analysis of *Walden* is specifically a formal analysis. Kenneth Burke's early writings on the relationship between situations and literary responses are rich resources of formal method for analyzing *Walden*'s status as equipment for living (1941/1973). Thoreau responded to his situation with a unique combination of conventional and impious attitudes, and Burke helps to assemble incongruous perspectives (1935/1984a). To develop answers to the research questions, I propose to exercise the typologies explored in Burke's *Counter-statement* (1931/1968) so that I can chart Thoreau's complex formal sequences.

Thoreau deployed a language of desire, and this addition queers what would be a normal formal analysis. I investigate the relationship between the forms and chart changes to Thoreau's unique language of desire. Rand (2008) argued that all rhetorical forms enable a range of meanings and purposes. Nevertheless, the meaning of the content of that form is especially contingent on the reader of *Walden*

(Buell, 1995; Golemba, 1990). To this end, it is important to chart a selective constellation of readings of *Walden* to construct a perspective by incongruity. Leah Ceccarelli (1998) argued that an appropriate method to understand polysemic texts that have high levels of hermeneutic depth should involve "a close reading of the receptional evidence, with an eye toward the construal of message content by different interpretive communities" and "a close reading of the text itself" (p. 410).

Outline

This dissertation is divided into two main parts and a conclusion. The first part of the dissertation addresses the topic of melancholia through both biography and close textual analysis of Thoreau's early works. The second part focuses on *Walden*'s form, first from a nature-writing perspective, then from a rhetorical perspective, and then from a polemical perspective. Finally, the conclusion reviews the dissertation, answers the research questions, and explores how this implicates future research on melancholia and queer studies in the communication discipline.

Not including this Introduction chapter, this dissertation has six chapters. Chapter One provides an accounting of a narrative of Thoreau's life that focused on his vulnerability to melancholia, the real losses and blunders that he experienced, and the breakthrough in self-loss that assisted him in recognizing his condition and the skill that he invented to hide that condition. Chapter Two traces Thoreau's progression through three stages of melancholia: entrenchment, transfer, and recognition. These waypoints are reflected by his published works: the journal and magazine publications that he published before 1849, his first book, *A Week*, and finally his writings on walking after 1849. Chapter Three identifies how *Walden* defines the parameters of friendship with itself, as well as its offer of spacious hospitality toward readers who are not ready for or willing to take the challenge of befriending the text. Chapter Four discusses the procession of friendship in between literary forms in *Walden* at different levels of scale, revealing an interaction between perceptual striation and smoothening that uncovers a holey space (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) for Thoreau to reveal his philosophy of self-respect. Chapter Five investigates the borders of *Walden*'s friendship with the reader through an investigation of the unpredictable agency of *Walden*'s polemical characteristics (see Rand, 2008). Finally, the Conclusion chapter engages the research of José Esteban Muñoz (2009, 1999).

Coda

Despite the tendency of scholars to ignore the queer legacy of Thoreau, his message has reached a much larger audience. Many people love to read *Walden* without understanding why Thoreau's rhetorical situation has increased in relevancy. Until that understanding becomes commonplace, I am comforted that there are individuals, like Mark Jiminez and Beau Chandler, who married themselves years before the state recognized their partnership. These men, like the melancholic owls that kept Thoreau up at night, exercised their desires in a culture that often only responds to what is "expedient" (Thoreau, 1849, p. 189). Perhaps in

the future more individuals will be able to draw from this relief, reawaken their slumbering passions, and live their own dreams.

Chapter One: A Narrative of Melancholia

There we lay under an oak, on the bank of the stream, near to some farmer's cornfield, getting sleep, and forgetting where we were; a great blessing, that we are obliged to forget our enterprises every twelve hours. Minks, muskrats, meadow-mice, woodchucks, squirrels, skunks, rabbits, foxes, and weasels, all inhabit near, but keep very close where you are there. The river sucking and eddying away all night down toward the marts and the seaboard, a great wash and freshet, and no small enterprise to reflect on. . . .
One sailor was visited in his dreams this night by the Evil Destinies, and all those powers that are hostile to human life, which constrain and oppress the minds of men, and make their path seem difficult and narrow, and beset with dangers, so that the most innocent and worthy enterprises appear insolent and a tempting of fate, and the gods go not with us. But the other happily passed a serene and even ambrosial or immortal night, and his sleep was dreamless, or only the atmosphere of pleasant dreams remained, a happy natural sleep until the morning; and his cheerful spirit soothed and reassured his brother, for whenever they meet, the Good Genius is sure to prevail.
—Thoreau's *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, "Sunday" (1985, pp. 93-94)

The roots of Thoreau's melancholia began to form with his relationship with his family, and especially with his brother. Despite the fact that they had different personalities, the two men shared a love for one another that could only have been possible because of a loving family. Paradoxically, this same family was responsible for cultivating co-dependency that induced psychological heteronomy. Henry was the intellectual genius, but John was the social genius. Henry had difficulty finding work, but John held the steady job. Whereas Henry whispered the language of nature, John was the representative man of culture (Thoreau, 1985, p. 198). Henry loved his brother, and deferred to his desires. They vacationed together, slept together, and taught together, but it was always John who held the keys to society. It is not unfair to say that Henry looked up to his older brother with admiration, even when his parents had decided to send Henry to college and not John.

When John died, abruptly, a void opened in Henry's heart, and he spent years formulating an expression of that grief. Thoreau's first attempt to fill that void was to replace his brother with his mentor, Emerson, and the promise of a writing career that came with him (see Fink, 1992) in what seems to be a case of "involuntary surrogation" (Roach, 1996, pp. 5-6). Emerson was impressed with Thoreau's performance at Harvard College, and Thoreau was similarly impressed with Emerson's lectures and published essays (Richardson, 1986). When John died, Emerson took Thoreau under his wing, and eventually, under his roof; he included Thoreau into the circle of Transcendentalists, and offered him privileged opportunities to get his essays published in his journal (Fink, 1992; Harding, 1982).

However, differences soon fractured the famous friendship; Thoreau had good reason to believe that Emerson was not making good on his notions to find enlightenment in nature (Sattelmeyer, 1989). It was Thoreau, and not Emerson, who became the Transcendentalist in nature.

It was nature, and not Emerson, who would be Thoreau's best friend. Aggrieved over the loss of the illusion that Emerson was a genuine friend for Thoreau, he turned away from publishing and towards surveying for a livelihood (Milder, 1995). He went on a trip to Cape Cod to reacquire what he had lost, and developed a habit of walking through the wilderness of his hometown (Milder, 1995; Harding, 1982). In 1851, when Thoreau was anesthetized with ether (Milder, 1995), he made a breakthrough: nature was his friend, and in its ability to disorient the nighttime walker lay the key to restoring the desires that he thought had been debased by social pressure.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of this chapter addresses Thoreau's susceptibility to melancholia. Thoreau's actions make it clear that he had a heteronomic relationship with his family (Lebeaux, 1984). This involved a willingness to subordinate his own desires in a way that made him susceptible to melancholia. The second part of this chapter discusses several losses and blunders. Because of the difficulty in discerning Thoreau's emotions in his biographical record, any conclusion of exactly when he contracted melancholia has to be left to speculation in light of an overall survey of these losses and ironies. Finally, I discuss his nighttime walks in the woods and his experience with losing himself with the unexpected assistance of ether. Isolation made Thoreau aware of his melancholia and provided him with clues that helped him invent *Walden*.

This chapter begins with two stories of the Thoreau brothers and one man's quest to create meaning in a world that was crumbling around him. There were many sad moments in Thoreau's early life, and many of them were linked to the loss of his brother. One of these stories had to do with their time teaching together. The other one of these stories had to do with a woman whom they both loved and wanted to marry. Both are integral puzzle pieces that reveal a growing melancholia that scholars have already identified in Thoreau. The purpose here is to present that condition so that Thoreau's subordination of his own desires may be laid bare for examination. The first strokes of that picture need to be drawn from Thoreau's family biography.

The Thoreau Family

According to Walter Harding (1982), the Thoreau family was a tight unit, with Henry's mother being the hub. Henry's father, John Sr., was a quiet and hard working businessman, good to his wife and children, and always filled with a sense of responsibility to them (p. 13). His "business flaw," wrote Walter Harding, "was apparently his good nature" (p. 13). Henry's mother, Cynthia, was a social butterfly who loved to talk and form alliances; she was the most crucial person in the house, holding social gatherings there, and served as the vice president of the Concord Female Charitable Society (Sullivan, 2009, p. 31). Cynthia had an enormous influence on Henry's life, imparting in Henry his sense of civic duty, his familiarity

with Latin, and his acquaintance with the local botanical life (p. 33). While it makes sense to assume that both parents had strong moral compasses and were instrumental in instilling a sense of social justice into their children, it was Cynthia as matriarch that advocated for natural familiarity, familial cohesion, and intellectual curiosity (p. 33). Early in their marriage, the young couple was bogged down with failed business ventures, and they were itinerant (p. 27). They eventually settled down in Concord, Massachusetts, with socially active relatives, and were able to produce a stable and nurturing environment for their children; they rented out rooms and made pencils (Sullivan, 2009; Harding, 1982).

Most of Thoreau's frugal life was spent boarding with his family, and the Thoreau family relied on boarders for a significant portion of its income during and after Henry's life (Harding, 1982). When Henry was five, the family returned to Concord (Sullivan, 2009). When he was able, Henry contributed to the setup by paying for his own room and providing entertainment to the occupants in the rhythmic forms of dance and flute playing (p. 31). In addition to having Henry as a paying renter of the Thoreau family, the home was also used to board four students for Thoreau's private school for a few months in 1838 before Henry leased the Concord Academy building (Harding, 1982, p. 75).

In "The Landlord" (1843d), Thoreau praised the enterprise of the boardinghouse, singling out the public virtue of its Landlord for discussion. This archetype, argued Thoreau, had "sacrifice[d] the tender but narrow ties of private friendship" (p. 427) and exchanged it for "a broad, sun-shiny, fair-weather-and-foul friendship for his race; who loves men, not as a philosopher, with philanthropy, nor as an overseer of the poor, with charity, but by a necessity of his nature" (p. 427). The signature character trait of the Landlord is the abandonment of privacy. The guest of the Landlord is welcome in the kitchen, and "all the secrets of housekeeping are exhibited to the eyes of men, above and below, before and behind" (p. 428). Thoreau argued that it is in such a public place of habitation that "the real and sincere life which we meet in the streets was actually fed and sheltered" (p. 428). In contrast, the Landlord's neighbor hides behind a screen of trees and relies on a fence to keep visitors away.

Harding's (1982) biography of Thoreau shows that the similarity between the archetype in the essay "The Landlord" and the Thoreau family is too striking to ignore. After Thoreau began to lease the Concord Academy building (for $20 per year; p. 75), his school business picked up considerably and he was pleased to be in need of his brother's help with teaching (p. 76). There, the brothers taught numerous boarding students and had steady employment until 1841 (p. 76, pp. 87-88). For some reason, instead of continuing his teaching without his brother, as he originally did, Henry shuttered the school and resigned from the profession of teaching entirely (pp. 87-88, p. 122). In 1844, a year after "The Landlord," the Thoreau family was approved for a mortgage to purchase their first plot of land, where the family built their first home, which would also be used for boarders (Sullivan, 2009, p. 143). Later, in *Walden*, Thoreau wrote about not using a lock on his cabin door, expressing openness to being able to entice strangers to examine his habitation and provisions, and being open to the prying eyes of passing travelers as

he hoed his beans. Thoreau, like the Landlord, loved everyone. It is no accident that Thoreau wrote that the Landlord "is a more public character than a statesman" and that he should be exempt from paying taxes (1843d, p. 429).

Before they moved to Concord, they visited a glacial pond at the outskirts of the town (Sullivan, 2009). The most important and salient portrait of this environment is recorded in Thoreau's journal and his masterpiece, *Walden*. This image is, of course, on the shore of Walden Pond. It takes place when Thoreau was either five or seven years old. It was, for Thoreau,

> one of the most ancient scenes stamped on the tablets of my memory, the oriental Asiatic valley of my world, whence so many races and inventions have gone forth in recent times. That woodland vision for a long time made the drapery of my dreams. That sweet solitude my spirit seemed so early to require that I might have room to entertain my thronging guests, and that speaking silence that my ears might distinguish the significant sound. Somehow or other it at once gave the preference to this recess among the pines, where almost sunshine and shadow were the only inhabitants that varied the scene, over the tumultuous and varied city, as if it had found its proper nursery. (Thoreau, 1906a, pp. 380-381)

John and Cynthia were there with their four children, Helen, John Jr., "David Henry," and Sophia. Chowder cooked over an open fire (Sullivan, 2009). It was in this moment that he began his friendship with Walden Pond.

As they grew up, each brother used his strength to compensate for the other's weakness (Harding, 1982). In school, Thoreau was teased because he did not want to play with the other children, preferring "to sit on the sidelines and watch" (p. 18). One of his schoolmates later wrote that he was "an odd stick, not very studious or devoted in his lessons, but a thoughtful youth and very fond of reading . . . not given to play or to fellowship with the boys; but shy and silent" (p. 30).

The Thoreau Brothers

The year 1833 was the educational crossroads for the Thoreau brothers. Despite showing great promise as a carpenter, Henry was selected by his parents to attend Harvard college because of his intellectual abilities (p. 32). The Thoreaus were not wealthy during Henry's childhood, and could only afford to send one of their children to college (p. 32). Harvard during its early years was uninspiring and rote; a constant source of resentment for the student body and for Thoreau for his entire life (Richardson, 1986). However, what he failed in enthusiasm, he gained in his mastery of several languages, mathematics, history, and his acquaintance with Emerson (Harding, 1982).

Pedagogy

Thoreau's employment problems began soon after his graduation (p. 53). When Thoreau graduated from college, he surprisingly found a lucrative teaching position (p. 52). Unfortunately, his family values chafed against the unofficial corporeal punishment policy of the school, and he resigned his position (p. 53). This inconvenienced the faculty enormously, and they must have been able to extract

their revenge on Thoreau, because he could not find a teaching position anywhere at any of the existing schools (pp. 55-59). He looked as far as Maine for teaching work (p. 58). Desperate, he started his own boarding school (p. 75).

Thoreau's boarding school brought him into closer proximity to his brother, but the arrangement lasted for less than three years (p. 87). Thoreau's "academy" debuted in the fall of 1838 (p. 75). Thoreau started with only four students, but that number quickly grew, and he found himself needing his brother to work with him (pp. 75-76). John was eager to work with his brother, for the two of them were excellent teachers, and shared the same attitude toward student discipline (pp. 79-80). Unfortunately, John was also afflicted with tuberculosis, and his teaching duties caused his condition to deteriorate with alarming speed (p. 87). The brothers' Concord Academy had not even been open for three years when John had to quit (p. 87). Then, Henry closed the school (pp. 87-88). Why? He didn't have to; he had started the academy by himself (p. 75). Instead, he applied to one teaching position, and failing that, he resigned himself to shoveling manure for 75 cents a day (p. 122).

The answer to why the academy closed lies in John's failing health and Henry's growing sense of isolation. As early as 1833, John's health was visibly deteriorating; he got frequent nosebleeds that sometimes caused him to faint (p. 87). In this time period, Henry "had been thinking of retiring to some lonely spot where he might rest and devote himself to writing" (p. 122). He had experimented with simple living at the end of his college days by camping at Flint Pond (Eidson, 1951 as cited by Thoreau, 1995).

Harding explained that Thoreau found his living solution, or more accurately, Thoreau's solution found him (p. 127). In April 1841, he decided to purchase a dismal and isolated farm plot called the Hollowell Place (p. 123). As Thoreau detailed in *Walden*, days later, the wife on the farm had second thoughts, and convinced her husband, and Thoreau, to return the property. After the Hollowell farm, Emerson offered to let Thoreau board at his house in exchange for a few hours of handyman work per day (pp. 127-128). The hours were flexible, and Thoreau honored the agreement (p. 127). He also enjoyed Emerson's vast library, and access to a living scholar who was more than willing to share his philosophical ideas (pp. 127-131). All of this nurtured a seductive promise of a career in writing and lecturing to match the older scholar. Almost immediately, Thoreau's isolation dissolved when he became acquainted with Emerson's child, Edith (p. 128). However, the relationship between Thoreau and Emerson was not perfect; Emerson treated Thoreau as less than an equal, and Thoreau deeply resented this subtle treatment (Sattelmeyer, 1989). Eventually, Thoreau tried to live elsewhere to make a living. He moved to Staten Island in New York to try to break into the writing market (and tutor Emerson's cousin), but by the time he moved there, the market was thoroughly saturated (Fink, 1992). He moved back and most likely continued to irritate his landlord. Eventually, Emerson decided to let Thoreau pursue his solitary living on a new woodland property that Emerson had recently purchased (Harding, 1982).

Thoreau was capable of deep affection, warmth, love, and conflict (Abelove, 2003), and his relationship with Edith Emerson is proof that the man was not a hermit. Thoreau was also capable of romance (Harding, 1982).

Love

In 1839, one of the women who boarded with the Thoreaus was a Mrs. Joseph Ward, precipitating love (p. 77). On June 17, her grandson, Edmund Sewall, visited her for a week (p. 77). As the poets say, it was love at first sight (p. 77). Two days later, Thoreau went on to compose a poem in honor of this 11-year-old boy, invoking a number of chords that would suggest a powerful queerness by today's standards (pp. 77-78). Thoreau thought the poem important enough to him that he included it in his first book, *A Week*. In the 19th century cultural atmosphere, such affection was not unusual (pp. 78-79). In fact, the Sewalls thought it was wonderful, and asked Thoreau to write a similar poem for Edmund's younger brother, George (pp. 78-79). It was in reference to Edmund that Thoreau famously wrote, "I might have loved him, had I loved him less" (p. 78).

Perhaps Thoreau found something lovely about the Sewall lineage, because he fell in love with another Sewall less than a month later (pp. 94-96). On July 20, Edmund's sister, Ellen, came with the Wards to visit the Thoreaus (p. 94). Thoreau had met her before on a number of occasions, but he was not nearly as responsive then as on this occasion (p. 94). Thoreau had been slow to develop romantic interests, and when he saw the 17-year-old woman, he fell head over heels in love with her (p. 94). He showered her with poetry, became obsequious, and only refused to do as she asked when she wanted him to attend church (pp. 94-96).

Henry's brother also developed affections for Ellen (p. 97). After her two-week stay in Concord, she had inadvertently left behind some Indian relics (p. 96). John mailed them to her, along with a note that he and his brother were taking a vacation trip on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (pp. 96-97). When they returned, John immediately left to visit Ellen, ignoring her aunt's warning that her parents were away and that it would be imprudent to seek her affections at such a time (p. 97). Nevertheless, John made the trip, and they had a lovely time. John and Ellen went walking, and spent time together with her brothers (p. 97). George also found John to be delightful, but interestingly, he kept slipping up by calling him Henry (p. 97). That December, Ellen wrote to her aunt, then boarding with the Thoreaus; she felt that the house had been deserted since she had left to board with the Thoreaus (pp. 97-98). Ellen wished "a thousand times" to see her aunt, John, and Henry again (p. 97).

Ellen had little choice but to reject both Henry and John (pp. 101-102). Her father strongly disapproved of them (p. 100). Undaunted, John proposed to Ellen in July the next year, and she accepted (p. 100). However, she changed her mind (p. 100). Harding argued that her mother intervened, knowing that Mr. Sewall's conservative Unitarianism would never stand for such a marriage. However, Richardson (1986, p. 60) felt that the evidence for this was uncertain, and suggests that her family did not intervene. Henry, at his end of the correspondence, was aware of what had transpired (Harding, 1982, p. 100). However, like us, he did not

know why she changed her mind (p. 100). Henry was free to make a proposal of his own, in writing (p. 101). However, this time, Ellen did consult with her father (pp. 101-102). His response reveals just how protective of his family he was, and how much he distrusted the Thoreau brothers (pp. 101-102). He demanded that Ellen write a cold letter rebuffing Henry, and she agreed that no other response would suffice (pp. 101-102). Ellen felt awful for being forced to treat Henry with such disregard, but she had little choice but to turn him down (p. 102). Later, she wrote: "I wonder if his thoughts ever wander back to those times when the hours sped so pleasantly and we were so happy. I think they do. I little thought then that he cared so much as subsequent events have proved" (p. 103). Harding concluded that Ellen actually preferred Henry over John (p. 100). At the time, Ellen had already met the man who was destined to be her future husband (p. 103).

Summary

The relationship between Henry and John was complex, filled with joy, hardship, love, and heartache. The biographical records of Henry David Thoreau offer a glimpse of a man who had desires of his own and the willingness to pursue them, but at this stage of his life, he ultimately privileged the desires of other people (Lebeaux, 1984).

Graduating Loss and Blunder

When Thoreau graduated from Harvard College in 1837, the economic environment was already placing pressures on him to make a living. Martin Van Buren had just been inaugurated as President of the United States, who promised to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, Andrew Jackson (Howe, 2007; Sellers, 1991). Jackson's economic policies had started a recession that began three months before Thoreau's graduation and would last until his retreat to Walden Pond in 1845 (Howe, 2007; Sellers, 1991). It was the United States' first double-dip recession, which evolved into the first economic depression of capitalism in the New World.

With the decline of Thoreau's teaching prospects, Thoreau made a herculean effort to make money as a writer (1982). His more successful efforts were with his mentor, Emerson, who gave the young scholar the advantage of a journal that was chronically in need of submissions (Fink, 1992). In 1840, he published his first text in the Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial* (1840), and he would publish several more articles in that journal before it folded (Fink, 1992). By that time, Thoreau had secured a few important connections in other publishing venues (Fink, 1992). While there are several occasions where Thoreau was paid for his writing, in the end writing did not make Thoreau money (Fink, 1992). Most of his income was secured through his father's pencil factory and doing survey work; after *A Week*, all of Thoreau's income would be coming from surveying (Sullivan, 2009). Nevertheless, Thoreau placed an amazing amount of effort into the vocation of writing, and gambled with the financial risk of self-publishing in 1849 (Fink, 1992).

Loss of Privacy

Two factors influenced Thoreau's coping after Ellen Sewall and John. The first was the enigmatic nature of his journal writing. The second was a scientific instrument.

Thoreau's public is astonishing. Besides having lived in a boardinghouse with astonishingly public boundaries, Thoreau did not use his journal for emotional release. Instead, it began as a scrapbook (Harding, 1982, p. 71). Before 1849, it is exceptionally difficult to use it as a barometric genealogy of his emotions. After 1849, when Thoreau's writings became more observational rather than simply analytical, the reader must intuit the writer's mood from the sensory detail, and one risks projecting one's own feelings onto the author (see Golemba, 1990). Despite writing on January 26, 1841, that "good writing as well as good acting will be obedience to conscience" (Thoreau, 2009, p. 14), there are few clues in the journal pages of his state of mind. A passage from three days later illustrates this difficulty:

> Of all strange and unaccountable things this journalizing is the strangest. It will allow nothing to be predicated of it; its good is not good, nor its bad bad. If I make a huge effort to expose my innermost and richest wares to light, my counter seems cluttered with the meanest homemade stuffs . . . (p. 15)

Of course, as anyone who has kept a diary knows, such an outlet is supposed to be therapeutic. Denying himself such a personal and uncensored tapestry must have had an effect of slowing the procession of his emotions. In addition, the fact that he shunted his feelings into the privacy of lyric poetry is further evidence that Thoreau felt that his journal was not a safe place to express himself.[8] Emerson, in the most telling anecdote of their differences, made no secret that he thought that Thoreau's poetry was inferior, further discouraging that outlet (Harding, 1982). That discouragement became so great that at some point he incinerated most of his poetry (p. 117). It was Emerson who, at the beginning of their friendship, advised Thoreau to start his journal (Thoreau, 2009). It is possible that his acquaintance with such a popular intellectual figure made Thoreau believe that his personal writings would become the object of scrutiny after his death.

The safe place that Thoreau found to validate his emotions was the spaciousness of nature, and his scientific ability to focus on nature enabled him to pursue his relationship with nature and, for lack of a better term, lose himself. In the

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[8] Michael Warner argued that lyric poetry is private: "Lyric poems are in fact produced by particular persons and addressed to others, and they circulate in public media (even if only in manuscript). But to read them as lyric, we ignore those facts and reinterpret both the speaking event, the boundaries of the text, and all the figures of apostrophe in the text (even, or especially, in love lyrics, which have a special vocabulary of love that allows us to do this). The rhetoric of lyric, including its affects, scenes, and temporality, exploits this reading convention. In reading something as lyric, rather than regard the speaking voice as wholly alienated to the text, we regard it as transcendent. Though it could only be produced through the displacement of writing, we read it with cultivated disregard of its circumstance of circulation, understanding it as an image of absolute privacy" (2002, pp. 80-81).

fall of 1840, Thoreau introduced surveying into his school's academy curriculum, and made a purchase that probably saved his sanity in later years (Harding, 1982). The purchase was for a hybrid instrument, a combination of a surveyor's level and a circumferentor (p. 83). With this device, he was able to take the students at the academy on field trips and teach them how to survey (p. 83). Thoreau must have also been able to use it as an excuse to take walks into nature without his students, and for that matter, anyone. The fact that Thoreau became familiar with the use of a circumferentor is important, because of the status of surveying technology at the time. As Gerard L'Estrange Turner (1998) has pointed out, in the 19th century, circumferentors had for the most part been replaced with more modern theodolites. Nevertheless, circumferentors were still the favored instrument for use in woodlands and in areas with uncleared ground (p. 43). It was in these secluded, inaccessible, often dark places that Thoreau preferred to explore, and helped him be in an environment that validated his emotions. Only through this means of distancing himself from the public world, which would become even more important to his mental health later in life, would he be able to focus on his scholarly writing.

Loss of a Brother

Thoreau's only refuge against romantic and professional rejection was nature, both on the page and in the world. His brother's health was deteriorating, and soon he would be unable to fulfill his teaching duties (Harding, 1982, p. 87). With "almost physical hunger he went for long walks in the winter woods, and avidly took in the migrating otter tracks, the young pines springing up in the corn fields. Everything was striking, beautiful, sustaining" (Richardson, 1986, p. 86). In addition to seeking a tangible relationship with natural surroundings, Thoreau continued to have a voracious reading appetite. He delved into the *Georgics* of Virgil, using the ancient poet to appreciate the travails in his own life (pp. 87-88). In the *Georgics*, the Jovian god "brought the Golden Age to an end so that man might have to work in order to earn and savor the good things won through work" (pp. 87-88). Virgil also appreciated the seasons, and his prowess with depicting the cycles of labor "showed Thoreau just how much detail was required to sustain a literary work designed to convey the feel of the land" (p. 88).

After the academy, Thoreau fully came under Emerson's "spell" (Richardson, 1986, p. 96). In early 1841, Emerson came to visit Thoreau when he was sick with bronchitis, leaving the younger man "with the unutterable security and exaltation that comes when someone the world loves loves us" (p. 99). Joseph Roach (1996) has found widespread historical evidence that whenever "actual or perceived vacancies occur in the network of relations" that are disrupted by loss, "survivors attempt to fit satisfactory alternatives" in a process called "surrogation" (p. 2). In the case of Thoreau, Emerson would be John's first involuntary (pp. 5-6) surrogate candidate, since I suspect that Emerson never intended to replace John, but simply wished to give Thoreau the ability to realize his potential. A few months later, Emerson invited Thoreau to board at his house in exchange for his handyman

skills, and the arrangement would last for two years (p. 103). Put to work and challenged intellectually, Thoreau appeared to be moving forward (p. 103).

However, both Richardson (1986) and Harding (1982) clearly show that Emerson's friendship and mentorship could not adequately compensate Thoreau for the loss of his brother. The next year, Henry's brother John Jr. cut himself while stropping a shaving razor, and came down with a horrific case of tetanus (Harding, 1982, p. 134). When Thoreau heard of his brother's illness, he came home to be with his brother (Richardson, 1986, p. 113). However, there was nothing that could have been done. John's body seized and he died in his brother's arms after days of excruciating agony (Harding, 1982, p. 134). Henry himself was astonishingly quiet for days afterwards, worrying his family and even himself (pp. 135-136). Then, Henry too came down with the same symptoms—a "psychosomatic illness" that embodied his sympathy for his brother (p. 136). He recovered physically, but the death of John Jr. opened a void in Henry's life that would not easily be filled (p. 136).

Steven Fink (1992) shows that, from an academic perspective, Emerson's assistance was divine. Emerson had just acquired a pile of natural history resources, and felt that his nature-loving protégé would be up to the task of producing a nature-writing piece (p. 41). The gift virtually guaranteed another publication (p. 42). It must have been a religious experience, which perhaps explains why Thoreau's journal in this period is filled with an uncommon number of references to God and speculations about what great tasks he seemed destined to fulfill (p. 39). Fink interpreted these journal comments as evidence that Thoreau began to see himself as a kind of prophet, selected by Providence to survive his late brother and deliver their word to the human race (p. 39).

It took less than a year for cracks to appear in the Emerson-Thoreau friendship (Sattelmeyer, 1989). In September, Thoreau began to fear that he was "living with Mr. Emerson in very dangerous prosperity" (quoted by Richardson, 1986, p. 109). As Roach has pointed out, surrogation often fails (1996).

In the winter of 1842-1843, Nathaniel Hawthorne was enjoying his first winter as a resident of Concord, but his appreciation was no match for Thoreau's nymph-like behavior (Harding, 1982). Hawthorne particularly appreciated Thoreau's unpretentious company, often vanishing from his own home just to avoid visitors (to his wife's embarrassment; p. 139). Emerson too was a frequent presence with Thoreau and Hawthorne during these excursions (p. 139). However, neither Hawthorne nor Emerson could match Thoreau's spritely skill with his ice skates (p. 139). As Harding wrote, Thoreau performed "dithyrambic dances and Bacchic leaps on the ice" while Hawthorne moved stiffly and Emerson had no sense of balance (p. 139).

Thoreau's happy presentation of self to Hawthorne was an act. Thoreau was sick for most of that winter; he wrote in his journal that he viewed himself as "a diseased bundle of nerves standing between time and eternity like a withered leaf" (quoted in Richardson, 1986, p. 120). He also wrote about having a happy streak in him that never seemed to last, and he "tried to keep up his spirits in the face of numerous and prolonged illnesses" (p. 120). His attitude was especially telling in a letter that he wrote to his friend, Mrs. Lucy Brown, on January 25, 1843. It was a

tortured letter, sent with the self-consciousness of not having any good news to share:

> I am mistaken, or rather impatient when I say this, —for we all have a gift to send, not only when the year begins, but as long as interest and memory last. I don't know whether you have got the many I have sent you, or rather whether you were quite sure where they came from. I mean the letters I have sometimes launched off eastward in my thought; but if you have been happier at one time than another, think that then you received them. But this that I now send you is of another sort. It will go slowly, drawn by horses over muddy roads, and lose much of its little value by the way. You may have to pay for it, and it may not make you happy after all. But what shall be my new-year's gift, then? Why, I will send you my still fresh remembrance of the hours I have passed with you here, for I find in the remembrance of them the best gift you have left to me. We are poor and sick creatures at best; but we can have well memories, and sound and healthy thoughts of one another still, and an intercourse may be remembered which was without blur, and above us both. (Sanborn, 1895, pp. 53-54 quoted in part by Richardson, 1986, p. 121)

Thoreau's only defense here against his feeling of sadness was nostalgia for happier times, and this coping strategy crept into his professional writings.

Loss of a Surrogate

Meanwhile, according to Harding's account, Thoreau was feeling restless with his life (1982). He began to seek forms of employment that did not involve manual labor in March 1843, and wrote to Emerson to ask him for advice in that endeavor (p. 145). At the time, Emerson was staying with his brother on Staten Island during the New York leg of his lecture circuit (p. 145). Emerson's brother, William, the County Seat Judge of Richmond Court, had a number of children that he wanted to see well educated (p. 145). They talked about Thoreau's situation, and Emerson agreed with his brother's proposition that Thoreau would be an ideal candidate for tutoring the children (p. 145). What we know about the correspondence between Thoreau and Emerson we know from Emerson's correspondence with his brother, and the following words need to be read through that lens:

> I have to say that Henry Thoreau listens very willingly to your proposition[;] he thinks it exactly fit for him & he very rarely finds offers that do fit him. He says that it is such a relation as he wishes to sustain, to be the friend & educator of a boy, & one not yet subdued by schoolmasters. (p. 145)

There was a lot of truth in Emerson words. Thoreau's previous relationship with Edmund Fuller indicates that Thoreau did like to teach young men. However, the fact that Thoreau deliberately shuttered his academy when he could have kept it open does not cohere with Emerson's correspondence. If Thoreau was so desperate for work, and he must have experienced that desperation after he quit his teaching position in 1837, then there was a more important motive for Thoreau's decision to

move to New York. As Emerson mentioned later in his letter to his brother, Thoreau still wanted to make writing a profession (p. 146).

Thoreau returned to his family from New York at the tail end of 1843 with his tail between his legs (p. 157). He failed to do anything in New York but network with publishers and get further into debt (p. 157; Fink, 1992). He put the experience out of his mind, and immediately went to work in his father's pencil factory (Harding, 1982, p. 157). He made a number of breakthroughs in the pencil manufacturing process, and developed a method of adjusting the hardness and brittleness of the pencil graphite (p. 157). He worked in the factory so much that he began to dream about it (p. 157).

At this point, Thoreau's relationship with Emerson was deteriorating (Sattelmeyer, 1989, pp. 192-193 as cited by Rossi, 2010). "It is clear that Emerson's enthusiasm for his younger friend had been steadily moderating for several years, beginning as early as 1842 and 1843" (Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 192). As Roach (1996) has observed, "surrogation rarely if ever succeeds" (p. 2). Up until this point, Emerson had been a boon to Thoreau is several ways, including being an editorial advocate, moneylender, employer, and job finder (Fink, 1992). Soon he would also be allowing his friend to stay on a newly purchased plot of wilderness land (Harding, 1982). However, in Emerson's judgment, Thoreau was squandering his blessings (Fink, 1992). He complained in writing about the "phlegmatic" "Natural History of Massachusetts" and how "nervous & wretched" he felt to read "A Winter Walk" (Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 193). Sattelmeyer also pointed out that while Emerson was complaining privately about Thoreau's prolixity, he was publishing fawning praise about Ellery Channing's poems (Emerson, 1843 as cited by Sattelmeyer, 1989). It is not surprising that at this time, Emerson wrote in the privacy of his journal, "H[enry] will never be a writer[;] he is active as a shoemaker" (quoted by Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 193).

At the end of April 1844, Thoreau took a break from pencil making and went on an even more disastrous trip than his stay in New York (Harding, 1982, pp. 159-161). This time, it was a vacation with his friend Edward Sherman Hoar to boat on the Sudbury River (p. 159). The river trip never materialized (p. 160). Their mistake occurred when they stopped to cook a mess of fish they caught before they had rowed a mile up the river (p. 160). Their fire produced sparks that lit the dry grass, and soon their cooking fire was a blaze that they could no longer control (p. 160). Desperate, the two men raced in separate directions for help (p. 160). Edward took the boat down the river; Thoreau ran on foot through the woods towards town (p. 160). Thoreau relayed the news to the owner of the woods, and they returned to the scene (p. 160). By this time the fire was half a mile wide, and they realized that they needed more help (p. 160). The owner of the woods ran to town (p. 160). However, Thoreau had run two miles, and his weak lungs were spent (p. 160). Instead of walking to town or waiting for assistance, he shamefully sneaked off to the cliffs of Fair Haven, and watched as the town citizens responded (p. 160). On May 3, the *Concord Freeman* reported that the fire had burned 300 acres and caused two thousand dollars of damage (p. 161). If it were not for the fact that Edward Hoar's father was the leading citizen of the town, the two might have been prosecuted in

court (p. 161). For the rest of his life, Thoreau was infamous among the residents of Concord for causing what James Kendall Hosmer called "the forest fire" (Lebeaux, 1984, p. 118).

The fire fiasco weighed on Thoreau, but even in his journal he gave no indication of having a guilty conscience. He wrote nothing of it for six years. Then, in his journal, he wrote an account of what had occurred. What is particularly telling about Thoreau's version is how little responsibility and blame he seems to have accepted. He excused himself, on account of some convenient facts, such as the matter of the forest not really belonging to anyone, and that he interpreted everyone's excitement as merely an opportunity to throw water on some flames. It seems more likely that Thoreau was in denial, that he was actually ashamed of the episode, and that he could not bring himself to be accountable for what had occurred. Whatever his personal feelings about the fire, Thoreau continued to focus on his writing and worked with his father making pencils (Harding, 1982).

Historians do not have to speculate how Thoreau's behavior affected his relationship with Emerson. In 1844, Emerson published his second series of essays, which included "Experience." In that essay, Emerson complained: "We see young men who owe us a new world, so readily and lavishly they promise, but they never acquit the debt; they die young and dodge the account: or if they live, they lose themselves in the crowd" (1983, p. 474 as quoted by Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 194). In the privacy of his journal, Emerson recorded these words with explicit reference to Thoreau (Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 194).

In the summer of that year, the Thoreau pencil business was doing well enough that Mrs. Thoreau had decided that they should own a house (Harding, 1982, pp. 177-178). On September 10, 1844, Mr. Thoreau made a down deposit of 25 dollars for a three-quarters-acre lot (p. 177). Two days later, he was approved for a $500 mortgage (p. 177). Henry's assistance was integral. He dug and stoned in a cellar, and then helped his father build the house (pp. 177-178). They bought two vacant Irish shanties, and used the lumber to add a lean-to shed to house the pencil business (p. 178). The town assessors valued the two-story complex at $1100 (p. 178). Thoreau not only had learned how to build a house, but he also learned how to do it on a shoestring budget.

At this time, Thoreau had been dreaming for a long time of living by himself in a house built by himself, and now it seemed that he could make his dreams a reality (p. 181). All he needed was a place upon which to build. He had tried to squat at Flint Pond after he graduated from college, but the plan did not work out with Mr. Flint (Eidson, 1951 as cited by Thoreau, 1995). Fortunately, Emerson had just recently bought the area surrounding Walden Pond for 300 dollars, and he reluctantly agreed to let Thoreau build a cabin at the pond (Sattelmeyer, 1989, pp. 195-196). As soon as the 1844-45 winter broke, he dug another cellar a few hundred feet from the shores of Walden Pond (p. 181). Then, he bought a local shack, dismantled it, and moved the lumber to the construction site (pp. 180-181). He also borrowed an axe, and proceeded to chop down pine trees for studs (p. 179). He bought some nails, and went to work framing his cabin (p. 182). He must have been terrible with a hammer, as excavators later found an unusual number of bent

nails buried at the construction site (p. 182). Furthermore, Thoreau had detailed his costs for construction supplies, and his nails entry was unusually expensive (p. 182). He then asked his friends to help him raise the frame.[9] He sheathed his hut with used and sundried boards from Collins' shanty, and began to occupy it on Independence Day, 1845 (pp. 180-181).

Thoreau knew that if he wanted to become a successful writer, he had to "get away from it all" (Harding, 1982, p. 179) and away from the heteronomy of his mentor and his family. His cabin was his answer. Thoreau spent two years, two months, and two days at the cabin. He left his cabin for two trips: the first time was during his night in jail, and the second time was his trip to Mount Katahdin (Lebeaux, 1984, p. 47). He returned to civilized life again after he had completed first drafts of the only books he would publish in his lifetime: *A Week*, and *Walden* (Harding, 1982).

Thoreau's purpose of going to Walden Pond is a riddle, and the difficulty of the riddle has to do with the fact that his purposes for moving to Walden Pond changed dramatically after he moved in. In terms of economics, it was a necessary move if he wanted to get any work done as a writer. Henry was living in the attic of the new Thoreau home (Harding, 1982), and the increased number of renters there must have been a distraction. As Thoreau claimed in *Walden*, his purpose for living in the woods was "to live deliberately" (1985, p. 394), which has been interpreted in a number of ways. To some it means that he lived simply, attempting to reduce his cost of living. To others it means that he wished to interrogate the essence of living, in the spirit of "A Winter Walk," (1843b) by experimenting with asceticism. My interpretation of the situation is that he had two objectives in mind when he went there: to create a place to work that would suit his needs for solitude when it was necessary; to find a place to live that pleased him. These two purposes are interrelated. Furthermore, Thoreau found additional advantages that gave him still another reason why such sojourns are worth undertaking. He was reacquainting himself with nature, and slowly opening himself to the relationship. However, during Thoreau's famous stay at the pond, his understanding of friendship was not fully developed. He was still limiting his friendships to animate relationships, despite his claims to the contrary in *Walden*.

Although Thoreau's residence at Walden Pond was a time of work and solitude, there was plenty of time to be social and have friends (Abelove, 2003). As Thoreau indicated in *Walden*, he made frequent walks to town. He also boasted that his friends found his Spartan dwelling to be more than sufficient for having a good time. Ellery Channing bunked with Thoreau at the cabin for two weeks (Harding, 1982). The anonymous woodchopper described in *Walden* was a real person, Alek Therien, and the man was quite fond of Thoreau (Bradford, 1963). It is clear from

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[9] His assistants, not named in *Walden*, included the following: "Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Ellery Channing, George William Curtis and his brother Burrill, and Thoreau's favorite Concord farmer, Edmund Hosmer, and his sons John, Edmund, and Andrew" (Harding, 1982, p. 181).

the number of social gatherings and Thoreau's unwillingness to be a recluse that Thoreau only wanted to be alone some of the time.

Thoreau's stay at Walden Pond was enormously productive. As he explained in *Walden*, in terms of productivity, not only did he maintain a bean field, but he also wrote. In the two years that he spent at the pond, Thoreau produced more writing than during any other two year stretch of time in his life (Richardson, 1986). He continued to write in his journal, which was just beginning to shape up into a visible work of writing in its own right. It is not surprising that Thoreau began to search for a publisher to arrange for his first book to be printed (Fink, 1992).

Surprisingly, the end of Thoreau's residence at Walden Pond came at the request of Emerson's wife, Lidian (Sattelmeyer, 1989 as cited by Rossi, 2010). Waldo had decided to take a trip to England (Harding, 1982, p. 197). Lidian was unwell, and because Emerson was going to be away for a longer time period than his domestic tours, she felt it to be important to ask someone trustworthy to stay with her and the children; Thoreau agreed and returned to town (Sattelmeyer, 1989).

According to Sattelmeyer (1989), Thoreau's stay at the Emerson house without his mentor reveals a great deal about the growing distance between the two men and a growing intimacy between Thoreau and Lidian. While Waldo was in England, he was in correspondence with Lidian and Thoreau (pp. 196-198). Waldo's relationship with Lidian suffered (p. 196). Not only was Lidian physically unwell, but she was also dependent on Thoreau (Harding, 1982, p. 197). Lidian complained of a cold Waldo through her letters. Emerson brushed off her pleas for warmth and promised to return "shortly and behave the best I can" (Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 197). Sattelmeyer quoted Gay Wilson Allen, who concluded that Emerson took the trip not because he needed money, but because he was "bored and dissatisfied with his life" (p. 196). In one of Thoreau's letters to Waldo, he wrote, "Lidian and I make very good housekeepers. She is a very dear sister to me" (p. 197). Thoreau's use of "sister" was not just a casual jab or an accident. In Thoreau's journal, he wrote about this relationship more explicitly:

> I still think of you as my sister. I presume to know you. Others are of my kindred by blood or of my acquaintance but you are mine. You are of me & I of you   I can not tell where I leave off and you begin.—   there is such a harmony when your sphere meets mine   To you I can afford to be forever what I am, for your presence will not permit me to be what I should not be. (quoted by Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 198)

The entry went on to make it clear that Thoreau was not talking about his actual sisters (p. 199). Then, Thoreau ended his entry with an explanation for why this relationship was so important to him:

> On the remembrance of whom I repose— — So *old* a sister art thou—so newly hast thou recreated me. Who speakest never colored words—who art not possessed by a demon. Who dwellest in the morning light whose eyes are like the morning star   Who comest to me in the morning twilight (quoted by Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 199)

Thoreau was replacing Waldo with Lidian as his friend. In other words, Lidian was the second candidate for John's surrogate in Thoreau's world of fraternal loss.

According to Sattelmeyer, one of the Emerson children also felt the need to compensate for their father's absence. In the same letter that Thoreau confessed to Waldo that he had begun to view Lidian as a sister, he reported the behavior of the Emerson children in a way that would have disturbed any father. In the letter, Thoreau continued:

> Ellen and Edith and Eddy and Aunty Brown keep up the tragedy and comedy and tragic-comedy of life as usual. . . [Eddy] very seriously asked me, the other day, 'Mr. Thoreau, will you be my father?' I am occasionally Mr. Rough-and-Tumble with him that I may not miss *him*, and lest he should miss *you* too much. So you must come back soon, or you will be superseded. (quoted by Sattelmeyer, 1989, p. 197)

Although we must guess as to Waldo's reaction to these comments, the fact remains that Thoreau was taking on Waldo's role as "paterfamilias," not only to Emerson's wife, but to the Emerson children as well (p. 196). Unfortunately, as Roach has observed, "the very uncanniness of the process of surrogation, which tends to disturb the complacency of all thoughtful incumbents, may provoke many unbidden emotions" and might also induce forgetting (pp. 2-3). Thoreau later wrote in his journal that he did not know why he left Walden Pond when he did (Arsić, 2016). Thoreau's forgetting can easily be attributable to an anxiety over securing an appropriate replacement for a sibling.

When Emerson returned, he brought two things back with him that alienated Thoreau (Sattelmeyer, 1989). First, he brought his old status as head of household back to where it belonged. Thoreau moved back into his parents' house, and continued to make pencils (Harding, 1982, p. 234). He also continued to search for a publisher willing to print his first book; Thoreau was having problems finding a publisher that would front the printing costs (Fink, 1992). The second thing that Emerson brought back was a different man than the one that had left the U.S. the previous year. Sattelmeyer (1989) wrote, "He was suddenly full of praise for England and the English—their wonderful manufacturing economy, transportation, and even culture—and was much more stereotypically the Boston Brahmin than he had even been before" (p. 197). To illustrate how much he had changed, Sattelmeyer pointed out that Emerson had even developed a habit of smoking after-dinner cigars, and found himself in need of a club. He "soon joined Alcott in founding the Town and Country Club, a loose-jointed organization much more given to sociability and dinners than the earlier Transcendental Club had been" (p. 197). Thoreau did not join the club, but he did continue to care for Lidian (p. 197).

What followed was one of the most foolish things that Thoreau ever did in his life: he published his first book on credit (Fink, 1992). Thoreau was most likely discouraged after being rejected by publishers, but that does not explain the errant foolishness of his financial gamble, especially with his awareness of the shackles of debt. Perhaps his lack of self-regard was a result of feelings of guilt caused by melancholia, as Butler (1997) and Leader (2008) predicted? Thoreau could not afford to front the printing costs for a thousand copies of *A Week* (p. 214). He consulted with his mentor, Emerson, who seemed to have a positive opinion of the text (p. 212). He urged Thoreau to publish the book with his own funds, as Emerson

had done previously with his own publications (p. 212). As it turned out, Emerson was simply repeating to Thoreau his own advice from 1844.[10] Thoreau entered into an agreement with Munroe publishers: they agreed to publish the book, but on the condition that Thoreau would pay the publishing costs if the book failed to sell (p. 199). He signed the contract in 1849, and it only took a few months for him to discover that he had made an enormous mistake (Harding, 1982). The book received mixed reviews from newspapers and magazines, and Emerson refused to give it any public review (Fink, 1992). Furthermore, Munroe, noticing that it had no real stake in ensuring that the book did well, made no effort to publicize it (p. 213). Most of the books sat in a warehouse until the publisher told Thoreau that they no longer had any space to store the copies; he retrieved the unsold copies, and Thoreau stored them in his parents' house (Harding, 1982, p. 254).

There is an interesting perspectival contrast to be drawn from Thoreau's actions. Those two perspectives are the prospective and the retrospective, which match up with Milder's (1995) contention that *Walden* tells both a narrated story and an enacted story of the Walden experience. Thoreau did something that, in prospect, was an enormously foolish thing, and he suffered with debt for years before he paid it off. However, in retrospect, Thoreau's failure set him up to learn a special lesson from nature about friendship. This is why friendship is important. The importance of irony comes into play when Thoreau's forecast made him blind to specific facts about his plan to publish a book and treat nature as an obedient subject (p. 96).

Loss of Prestige

Unfortunately, the failure of Thoreau's first book, combined with his past embarrassments, would make it impossible for his mourning strategy to succeed. The *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* asked Emerson to review *A Week*, but Emerson refused, citing that "he was of Thoreau's 'same clan & parish'" (quoted by Lebeaux, 1984, p. 106). Not to be denied, the journal commissioned Lowell, who wrote a devastatingly mixed review that "gave with one hand" and "took away with the other" (Harding, 1982, p. 250). Instead of admiring and respecting Thoreau, his contemporaries treated him as laughing stock for the neighborhood: the irresponsible son who burned a forest and got away with it (Lebeaux, 1984). A poignant example of this dynamic between the Concord locals and Thoreau was penned by James Hosmer years later:

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[10] Steven Fink (1992) showed that during negotiations to get Margaret Fuller's book published in 1844, Thoreau was an ardent advocate of self-publishing. Emerson wrote to Fuller that "Henry Thoreau has been showing me triumphantly how much cheaper & every way wiser it would be to publish the book ourselves paying the booksellers only a simple commission for vending it & conducting personally the correspondence with distant booksellers" (p. 212). Fink went on to note that Fuller did not take Thoreau and Emerson's advice. Her choice "turned out to be an especially wise one" (p. 212).

Thoreau in those days was known in the town as an irregular, eccentric spirit, rather hopeless for any practical purpose. He could make a good lead-pencil but having mastered the art he dropped it, preferring to lead a vagabond life, loitering on the river and in the woods, rather to the disquietude of the community, though he had a comfortable home cared for by his good mother and sister. . . . This strange man, rumor said, had written a book no copy of which had ever been sold. . . . The edition fell dead from the press, and all the books, one thousand or more, he had collected in his mother's house, a queer library of unsold books which he used to exhibit to visitors laughing grimly over his unfortunate venture into the field of letters. My aunt sent me one day to carry a message to Mrs. Thoreau and my rap on her door was answered by no other man than this odd son who, on the threshold received my message. He stood in the doorway with hair which looked as if it had been dressed with a pine-cone, inattentive grey eyes, hazy with faraway musings, an emphatic nose and disheveled attire that bore signs of tramps in woods and swamps. Thinking of the forest fire I fancied he smelled of smoke and peered curiously up the staircase behind him hoping I might catch a glimpse of that queer library all of one book duplicated many times. (Hosmer, 1912, pp. 235-236 as quoted in part by Lebeaux, 1984, p. 118)

Despite the withering criticism in these words, they contain several important truths for the present study. Abandoning the pencil-making business, loitering in the wild, and having to pay for hundreds of unsold books were all realities which Thoreau had to live with after his "unfortunate venture" of self-publishing.

Loss of Friendships

According to Milder, despite having access to a larger living space, or rather because of it, Thoreau found his network of friends drifting away (1995). The years beginning in 1849 are the infamous years in which the friendship between Emerson and Thoreau cooled down and approached a dissatisfying low that would last for the rest of their lives (Milder, 1995; Sattelmeyer, 1989). However, Thoreau's friendship problems were by no means limited to Emerson (Milder, 1995). On February 15, 1851, for example, Thoreau wrote the following in his journal:

Fatal is the discovery that our friend is fallible, that he has prejudices. He is, then, only prejudiced in our favor. What is the value of his esteem who does not justly esteem another?
Alas! Alas! when my friend begins to deal in confessions, breaks silence, makes a theme of friendship (which then is always something past), and descends to merely human relations! As long as there is a spark of love remaining, cherish that alone. Only *that* can be kindled into a flame. I thought that friendship, that love was still possible between. I thought that we have not withdrawn very far asunder. But now that my friend rashly, thoughtlessly, profanely speaks, *recognizing* the distance between us, that distance seems infinitely increased.

> Of our friends we do not incline to speak, to complain, to others; we would not disturb the foundations of confidence that may still be. (1906b, pp. 161-162)

There are two imports to glean from this journal entry. The first fact is that the level of specificity found here is typical of Thoreau's whole journal. We do not know who Thoreau was referring to or if there was anyone in particular who precipitated this entry. Most of Thoreau's journal entries are open-ended enough that he probably predicted that someone would be reading his journal, and he carefully maintained the silence of particular friendships within the confines of his journal. The second fact that is revealed by this journal entry is that Thoreau was predicating a pattern from a single example. He went from noticing when his "friend begins to deal in confessions," to making remarks about an unwritten principle, "Of our friends we do not incline to speak, to complain, to others." This indicates that Thoreau was noticing a pattern of behavior that was not particular to a single friendship. It also posits silence and patience as hallmarks of genuine friendship.

Summary

The losses and blunders that Thoreau experienced were profound and unrelenting. Some of Thoreau's losses cannot be appreciated within the bounds of his own life, such as the public nature of the Thoreau family. For him, such conventions were seen as right, even though Thoreau himself followed the family form imperfectly. Other losses were acute, such as Thoreau's loss of his brother. This was the major loss of his life, more significant than the losses of his friends, his mentor, and even his prestige; it fed into the melancholia that had begun before. Finally, some of the losses were chronic, such as his loss of steady employment, his loss of the surrogates that he had cultivated to replace his brother, and the steady drifting-away of his friends when his melancholia reached fever pitch in 1849. In addition to his losses, Thoreau committed several blunders. His decision to move to Staten Island in 1843, his decision to boat on the Sudbury River in 1844, and his decision to publish his first book on credit saddled him with 275 dollars of debt (Harding, 1982, p. 254) and an even more dubious reputation of being a foolish momma's boy.

The shock that came from the spectacular change of fortune from a privileged member of the Transcendental Club to a fallen protégé of a friend-turned-faux was a complex blow to Thoreau's ego, an upheaval to his life plan, and the beginning of a life experience that prepared him to write *Walden* (Milder, 1995). Thoreau had already completed three drafts of *Walden* by the time he sent the final proofs of *A Week* to the printing press, but it was nothing close to the masterpiece that he developed by the time it was published in 1854 (p. 52). The pain was palpable, the worries and pressures in his life were real, and he could do little about it but shrink away from his network of friends and colleagues (p. 104). The only comfort that carried Thoreau the five years between 1849 and 1854 was the unconditional love that cold facts and cold darkness offered to him. The going was tough, but time continued to move inexorably forward. The breakthrough for Thoreau occurred during a dental operation that involved the use of a general

anesthetic, and the experience sharpened his sense of what was so important about his melancholic walks in solitude (p. 110).

Thoreau's Heroic Journey into the Ether

Thoreau's breakthrough, which happened in 1851, cured him of his heteronomy. As Richard Lebeaux argued, Thoreau "was coming to realize, when he could afford to let down his guard and be honest with himself, that he had oriented himself too much to others' expectations and demands—his family's, Emerson's, his townspeople's, the literary establishment's" (1984, p. 114). Years of effort and hard work had produced sad fruit, and he came to realize "that it is not easy to find your own way" (p. 116). He took a trip to Cape Cod later that year "to recapture a sense of wildness and put distance between himself and the pollution of civilization; the ocean was a vaster (though less benign) version of the pond" (p. 122). He was aggrieved at the loss of his friends in the Emerson family (pp. 122-123).

While Thoreau was leaning toward abandoning pencil making, he did not abandon surveying (Harding, 1982). Because he was staying with his parents, his rent must have been relatively low, and his surveying jobs and pencil work at the end of 1849 were sufficient both to make his debt payments and to buy a dedicated notebook (p. 235). As Harding put it, "Deciding to turn professional, he made up a list of fourteen books to study, had his compass repaired, acquired a surveyor, a blank journal, and some drawing paper, and inquired about the prices of a drawing instrument" (p. 235). According to John Gordan (1955), at some point (we are not sure when), Thoreau had a broadside advertisement printed in a local circulating journal, magazine, or newspaper. The evidence for this advertisement was an old scrap of paper that had been reproduced from an original that has long since been lost (Harding, 1982, p. 235). "The piece," Gordan wrote, "is unrecorded in any published Thoreau bibliography or checklist" (1955, p. 253):

> LAND SURVEYING [/] Of all kinds, according to the best [/] methods known; the necessary data supplied, in order that the boundaries of Farmers may be accurately described in Deeds; *Woods* lotted off, distinctly and according to a regular plan; *Roads* laid out, &c., &c. Distinct and accurate Plans of Farms furnished, with the buildings thereon, of any size, and with a scale of feet attached, to accompany the Farm Book, so that the land may be laid out in a winter evening.
>
> Areas warranted accurate within almost any degree of exactness, and the Variation of the Compass given, so that the lines can be run again. Apply to [/] HENRY D. THOREAU. (pp. 254-255 as quoted by Harding, 1982, p. 235)

According to Gordan, it is possible that this broadside's publication preceded the publication of *A Week*, and it is possible that it was not published until well after 1851. I would venture to conclude that the time of publication was around this time period in 1849 when Thoreau found himself completely dependent on surveying for income. Harding also reported that Thoreau did not yet have enough funds in 1849 to repair his own compass, and had to borrow working equipment from Cyrus Hubbard until he could purchase working equipment in the spring of 1850 (1982, p. 235).

After *A Week*, Thoreau published nothing for three years (Fink, 1992). It was a time for working, reading, reflection, and walking. In a May 31 1850 journal entry, he wrote about the forest fire incident (1906b, pp. 21-27). He made copious notes of his first of many trips to Cape Cod; those notes turned into a manuscript that ended up as a posthumous publication (Harding, 1982). His journal began to swell in 1850 (Lebeaux, 1984).

The journey that proved to be most profitable for Thoreau was one in which no amount of money would provide: it was a trip that cost him his teeth (Milder, 1995). For his May 12, 1851 journal entry, Thoreau wrote about his experience, or rather lack of experience, with being anesthetized with ether to remove his teeth and replace them with false teeth. It is interesting that Richardson (1986) did not record this episode in his biography. However, Harding's older (1982) biography does record this incident, but Harding perhaps did not understand the significance of the event. Instead, he attributed the perceptual change in Thoreau's writing to a realization that he was getting older. I find that the breakthrough for Thoreau came from the ether, or rather the return from the ether, not from the necessity of having his teeth replaced. If old age were the catalyst, he wouldn't have posited his false teeth as an example of "how much Art outdoes Nature" (quoted by Harding, 1982, p. 296).

For Thoreau, ether's power was in its ability to unplug an individual's array of senses and cause an irreversible change. As Thoreau wrote in his journal, while you are under, "You are a sane mind without organs" (1906b, p. 194), making a statement that is eerily similar to Deleuze's famous "body without organs," "an organism without parts which operates entirely by insufflation, respiration, evaporation and fluid transmission" (1990, p. 88). For Thoreau, as for many people who have been through similar ordeals, such an experience brought a new youthfulness to his writing that had not previously been there (Harding, 1982). This was the 'boon,' as Joseph Campbell (1949/2008, p. 148) has referred to it, that Thoreau returned from the ether. Harding detailed a number of giggle-worthy things that appeared in his journal after his psychedelic experience (1982). He "was squeezing pokeberries and rejoicing to see their rich purple wine staining his hand" (p. 296). He noted "the aroma of wild grapes on the wind and thought he possessed the sense of smell in greater perfection than usual" (p. 296). He began to swim in the nude, ritualistically, bathing himself at every stream encountered during his walks (p. 296). Sometimes he would walk down rivers dressed in nothing but "a hat and occasionally a shirt to protect himself from the sun" (p. 296). Thoreau's behavior was strange enough that Channing wrote about his refusal to follow Thoreau's breaks from convention (p. 296).

Months later, the breakthrough was continuing to unfold, to change the way he read his senses. That summer, he began to describe his nighttime walks with a newfound intensity; as Lebeaux observed, walking at night gave Thoreau "a privileged perspective not available to 'day men'" (1984, p. 132). This privilege became so important to Thoreau that he sometimes pulled all-nighters to be able to enjoy a walk in the woods "in order to imbibe his own brand of moonshine" (p. 132). On August 19, 1851, Thoreau wrote about the need for a "meteorological journal of

the mind. You shall observe what occurs in your latitude, I in mine" (1906b, p. 403). The line became famous enough that it was quoted in Annie Dillard's text, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (2007).

Thoreau already understood the power of walking, but his experience with taking ether further awakened him to his transformative capabilities as a writer (Milder, 1995). The connection between these two practices, walking and description, became clear in the additions that he made to *Walden* during this time (pp. 52-53). He focused more on the minutia of sensory data that flows during the winter and the lessons that the body learns when the active season shuts down and returns in a way that invites polysemic interpretation. Winter is the resting season, like the taking of ether (or any other psychedelic compound). Like getting lost in the woods on a stormy night, it produces profound changes in individual identity (Buell, 1995).

The change of individual identity that getting lost does can be profoundly restorative, but not regressively so. As Lebeaux concluded about Thoreau's nighttime walks, the practice "was a means to regain access to the youthful inspiration and vitality he had lost" (p. 133). More than simply regaining access, these walks at night functioned as a way to filter and separate his desires from the desires around him. As anyone who has taken large doses of psychedelics or traveled to a foreign country can say, the experience of being completely "turned round" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 459) can be profoundly deprogramming of one's cultural values. The return of a traveler or a psychonaut from a 'trip' can be just as transformative as the trip itself, revealing what practices and rituals are done for the sake of genuine desire, social pressure, and what may be done to relieve heteronomy.

Coda

When I re-read the quote at the beginning of this chapter, I am reminded of what Thoreau wrote on his birthday in 1851. In the quote at the beginning of this chapter, Thoreau was trying to sleep, but the bank of the Merrimack River kept Thoreau's mind interested in the many enterprises that the river makes possible, enterprises that other people and other animals are engaged with. He resisted sleep because he was thinking about others. Eventually, he and his brother fell asleep, and had different experiences that night. One brother had a pleasant sleep, but the other was plagued with a bad dream. When the morning arrived, the assured brother consoled his mortified friend. The horror turned out to be more than just a dream. Thoreau went on to encounter the Evil Destinies, who had the power to make those who come under their influence doubt the sincerity and legitimacy of their desires. What was Thoreau to do now that his brother was dead? Could his friend-as-nature really console him?

On July 12, 1851, when Thoreau turned 34, he wrote what seems to me an affirmative response to that question, and a response to what he had published two years prior:

> 8 P. M. — Now at least the moon is full, and I walk alone, which is best by night, if not by day always. Your companion must sympathize with the

present mood. The conversation must be located where the walkers are, and vary exactly with the scene and events and the contour of the ground. Farewell to those who will talk of nature unnaturally, whose presence is an interruption. I know but one with whom I can walk. I might as well be sitting in a bar-room with them as walk and talk with most. We are never side by side in our thoughts, and we cannot hear each other's silence. Indeed, we cannot be silent. We are forever breaking silence, that is all, and mending nothing. How can they keep together who are going different ways!

I start a sparrow from her three eggs in the grass, where she had settled for the night. The earliest corn is beginning to show its tassels now, and I scent it as I walk, —its peculiar dry scent. (This afternoon I gathered ripe blackberries, and felt as if the autumn had commenced.) Now perchance many sounds and sights only remind me that they once said something to me, and are so by association interesting. I go forth to be reminded of a previous state of existence, if perchance any memento of it is to be met with hereabouts. I have no doubt that Nature preserves her integrity. Nature is in as rude health as when Homer sang. We may at last by our sympathies be well. (1906b, pp. 302-303)

Chapter Two: Roots of Melancholia

> In dark places and dungeons the preacher's words might perhaps strike root and grow, but not in broad daylight in any part of the world that I know. The sounds of the Sabbath bell far away, now breaking on these shores, does not awaken pleasing associations, but melancholy and somber ones rather. One involuntarily rests on his oar, to humor his unusually meditative mood. It is as the sound of many catechisms and religious books twanging a canting peal round the earth, seeming to issue from some Egyptian temple and echo along the shore of the Nile, right opposite to Pharaoh's palace and Moses in the bulrushes, startling a multitude of storks and alligators basking in the sun.
> —Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, "Sunday" (1985, p. 63)

The epigraph to this chapter is perhaps Thoreau's most direct engagement with the effects of melancholia in 1849. Several chapters later in *A Week*, in what appears to be a solution for this "unusually meditative mood," Thoreau prescribed the light of day that promises to banish the shadows that are cast by our bodies and spirits. For this early Thoreau, grief always comes from a dark shadow, and the solution is to accept the fact that "constant abrasion and decay of our lives makes the soil of our future growth" (p. 286). We simply need to expose our darkness or illuminate ourselves, turn the humus and sustain the aerobic oxidation of decay, and "if we preserve ourselves untarnished, we are able to enlighten our shaded side" (p. 287).

In *A Week*, Thoreau did not distinguish between the loss of an object of desire and the loss of desire itself when he prescribed daylight. This solution assumes that "there is no ill which may not be dissipated, like the dark, if you let in a stronger light upon it" (p. 287), but what if the person is tarnished, as Richard Bridgman complained about Thoreau (1982)? What if we decide or are forced *not* to let in or out that stronger light? Too bad? This is a special concern to those of us who have become melancholic, who have allowed others to corrupt what we believe is worthy of grief. In *A Week*, Thoreau does not seem to have crafted his solution for the melancholic individual, but for people who have lost a legitimate object of desire.

In 1849, when *A Week* was published, Thoreau was already experiencing melancholia, but he was not fully aware of this fact. The text of *A Week* reveals this; there, his medicinal poetry assuages the intensity of his grief at the loss of his brother and his image of pastoral America. It does this by attempting to reproduce loss within the mind of the reader in a way that presumes to know the reader's desires. *A Week* is beautiful and its language is dense. It is difficult to read, and to a large extent it was not the easy reading that the natural history and travelogue readers preferred, producing a tension that would leave Thoreau with additional loss. Unfortunately, Thoreau's grief strategy was blind to the realities of the publishing world. In the scenario Thoreau set up, his ritual of mourning needed to be legitimated and accepted by his readers. This did not happen, and when Thoreau

discovered that his grief was solitary among humans, he became aware of his melancholia and the universal possibilities of friendship that helped him mourn and restore his powers of metaphorical thinking while preserving his grief for his lost brother.

After 1849, Thoreau rediscovered a profound and deep relationship with nature in *Walden*, departing subtly but significantly from his arguments about friendship in *A Week*. Moreover, this friendship with nature was not an attempt at surrogation (Roach, 1996), for it was not designed to replace John. Rejected by companions and left to labor under the weight of his financial debt in oblivion, Thoreau discovered how to relate to "nonhuman agents as bona fide partners" (Buell, 1995, p. 179). Thoreau's friendship with nature led him back to his desire to publish with a seasoned awareness, and reawakened the desires that he had suppressed early in his career at the behest of Emerson, John, and the rest of his family. Nature (in its infinite modes of expression) was his best friend: more reliable and more honest about his situation than his mentor, Emerson. One of nature's modes, melancholia, taught Thoreau how to relate to language not just literally, but when he recovered, also revealed to him the interface between literal and metaphorical levels of meaning.

While biographers have been able to ascertain the fact that Thoreau had, in fact, been experiencing melancholia, they have not been able to identify why he was experiencing that condition and how his understanding of it evolved. Arsić (2016) has investigated Thoreau's regenerative process of grieving, tracing his encounter with melancholia to John's death. In truth, Thoreau's melancholia antedated that tragedy.[11] To help make my case, this chapter examines his writings. Before I do so, it is important to revisit melancholia theory. I do this not simply to reconsider the current literature on the Freudian tradition of melancholia, but also to examine Arsić's analysis of Thoreau's own take on the topic, which anticipates and departs from the Freud in important ways. After discussing the theoretical matter of melancholia, I address Thoreau's early works, split into three time periods that correspond to three stages of Thoreau's experience with melancholia: *entrenchment*, *transfer*, and *recognition*. The first segment on entrenchment assesses Thoreau's early works, focusing on material he wrote before his first book. The second segment on transfer focuses on that first major work: *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. This second segment also introduces literature on irony and friendship. The third segment that highlights Thoreau's recognition of his melancholia focuses on "Walking," his masterpiece essay that describes of a technique that assisted him to produce *Walden*.

Thoreau's situation and his melancholic condition, I argue, was *entrenched* in a suppressed desire to do philosophy using an evolving technique of experimental writing that he appropriated from Emerson and modified for his own purposes. This

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[11] One clear explanation for Arsić's (2016) trace of Thoreau's melancholia no further back than John's death is her claim that "The Service" was published when he submitted it to *The Dial* (see p. 47). My contention is that melancholia was a preexisting condition for Thoreau when John died.

desire is most obvious in Thoreau's first essays, one of which was rejected by Margaret Fuller, a senior Transcendentalist to Thoreau. Fuller's 1840 rejection of Thoreau's essay, "The Service," is an important moment in the shaping of Thoreau's trajectory as a writer,[12] and an indication that Thoreau was most likely already suffering from the classic Freudian form of melancholia that Judith Butler has further developed as a compound of loss and disavowal (1997). My motivation for writing Chapter One was to bolster my contention that the stage for this melancholia stretched back into his early life and the lost genealogy of his family's parenting strategies. After Fuller's rejection, Thoreau was handed multiple opportunities to write on other topics in writing genres that were significant departures from Thoreau's preferred style and topics (Fink, 1992). When John died, as Arsić (2016) has observed, Thoreau sought to grieve in perpetuity. My argument about melancholia does not deny this perpetual grief, but rather produces a tension with it because Thoreau was trying to express a grief that he was also trying to disavow. Thoreau bowed significantly to market pressures to produce writing that would sell (Fink, 1992), butting up against his desires that found a prominence in his "Persius" and "The Service" essays and his desire to grieve for his brother. During these years, Arsić (2016) observed that Thoreau had thoroughly developed a skill of "literalization" (p. 8). Since Arsić did not trace Thoreau's melancholia further back than John's death, she does not attribute this literalization to Thoreau's melancholia. My contention is that Thoreau's extended experience with melancholia was the germ that cultivated and magnified this skill. His literalization is plain to see in the first version of *Walden*, but it had not yet become his "language of desire" (Golemba, 1990, p. 233, p. 234).

Thoreau resurrected his queer experimental writing and lyrical exegesis in *A Week*, taking a gamble that the marketplace would validate his grief by allowing that grief to be *transferred* to them. *A Week* was not a failure because it was a bad book. On the contrary, as Fink (1992) pointed out, *A Week* was meticulously engineered and offers an intimate portrait of the values in the Thoreau family, especially a view of Henry and John Jr. as semi-fused personalities. Instead, *A Week* failed because Thoreau was trying to ask an archive to do the work of a repertoire (see Taylor, 2003). This error led him to get a bad publishing deal, and this happened because he wanted to publish his book for an audience that was not prepared for or accepting of it (p. 215). This audience problem was caused by the fact that the text was archival in nature, which made for an inflexible scenario of loss (see Taylor, 2003). The fact that his mentor, Emerson, did not share his true feelings about his book until after its publication intensified Thoreau's feelings of betrayal (Fink, 1992, p. 248). Had *A*

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[12] Fuller wrote her rejection of "The Service" to Thoreau on December 1, 1840 (Thoreau, 1902, p. ix). However, Fink (1992) has pointed out that Emerson probably anticipated the rejection, as evinced by Emerson's written apologia to Fuller in August of that year, and Fuller's not placing the essay in the October issue of *The Dial* (pp. 30-31). This anticipation would have been communicated to Thoreau far earlier than Fuller's letter. The letter was simply confirmation of the two men's suspicions.

Week been printed with a different publishing firm and stripped down to the form and style of "Ktaadn" or *Cape Cod*, or perhaps made into a lecture performance that sought to transfer a repertoire to an audience who could modify Thoreau's scenario and transfer the repertoire to others (see Taylor, 2003), *A Week* would most likely have been more successful in terms of circulation (Fink, 1992, p. 215). However, it would not have been such an intense and durable fusion of an autobiography and a counter-monument to his late brother and pastoral America. When *A Week* failed to sell, it further invalidated Thoreau's grief and forced him to work as a surveyor to pay off his debt (Harding, 1982).

A Week's publication precipitated a personal crisis for Thoreau (Milder, 1995), inducing him to retreat further into the wilderness with the company of nature and sadness where he discovered that nature shared the grief that he had made contingent on human validation. This natural validation revealed to Thoreau how to write that *recovery* for others. This crisis started around late 1849 with the unfolding commercial failure of *A Week* and his falling out with Emerson (Milder, 1995; Fink, 1992). His melancholia and nighttime walks both forced him to engage with the interface between the literal and the metaphorical aspects of language, enabling him not just to literalize his prose, as Arsić observed, but also to leave metaphorical significance fallow in wild furrows for his readers to sow their own seeds and witness how friendship functions. The triad of melancholia, irony, and nomadic sauntering are the experiences and practices that he used to invent *Walden*.

Melancholia

Melancholia is a difficult topic to analyze because its psychic workings are concealed from self-discovery by melancholics, and twice removed from professional analysis. However, I argue that it is this self-sealing nature of melancholia that bestows a special skill of communication that can be carried forward beyond recovery to help others recover. Unfortunately, the traditional mode of recovery, detailed by the Freudian tradition, curtails the importing of this special skill for therapeutic purposes and gives psychoanalysis an undeserved monopoly on melancholia therapy. Thoreau's own experience with melancholia and his recovery from it provides a powerful alternative to the Freudian model that ends this monopoly by turning former melancholics into walking advocates and cures.

The Freudian model posits two different models of mourning, and they both have one important similarity and one important difference. Originally, the Freudian model posited that mourning was done for the purpose of replacing a lost object (Butler, 1999, 1997), but Darian Leader's (2008) more recent version of Freudian mourning indicates that the purpose is for the subject to live with loss. The similarity between 'normal' mourning and melancholia is at the beginning of the process, since both begin with the illusion that the object has not actually been lost (Arsić, 2016). This illusion is made possible by a figure that Abraham and Torok called "*antimetaphor*," which is "not simply a matter of reverting to the literal meaning of words, but of using them in such a way—whether in speech or deed— that their very capacity for figurative representation is destroyed" (1994a, p. 132).

Arsić's analysis seems to agree that this "demetaphorization" (Rand, 1994, p. 105) is a characteristic of melancholia, although her sources vary in their accounts of how it comes about. The difference between the two kinds of mourning comes into play when the two processes progress through time. This difference is produced by the presence or absence of another process known as 'introjection,' which is a process that occurs in everyday life where we appropriate desires from the objects in our world to which we are attached (Rand, 1994, p. 100). These objects are phenomenal, and as such they are being constructed from sensory data as we form attachments to them. When loss occurs, melancholic individuals disavow their desires (for any number of reasons, such as coercion from the agent that caused the loss, seduction by prospective surrogates, or feelings of betrayal caused by the loss itself), and it is the disavowal that stops the process of introjection (Butler, 1997). Unfortunately, according to the model developed by Abraham and Torok, the only way to dissolve the "antimetaphorical activity" (Butler, 1999, p. 87) is slowly through introjection. Normal mourners begin their journey in denial (the first stage of loss), and introjection carries them to the next stage of anger directed outwards at the pace in which demetaphorization is dispelled. Furthermore, as the reality of loss gradually sets in, the process of introjection continues with the memory of the lost object—with the understanding that the memory was produced by someone or something that has been lost. Thus, contrary to some understandings of this process (e.g., Rand, 2007), mourning does not achieve a detachment of desire (i.e., decathexis) from the lost object. Grief never truly ends, but the process of recovery from demetaphorization, which I identify as mourning, does resolve, affirming Darian Leader's (2008) contention that grieving and mourning are two different things, and that the proper goal of mourning is not to eliminate grief, but to reduce its intensity so that it may coexist with life.

Ordinarily, overcoming the barrier of demetaphorization is a natural process accomplished during mourning by allowing introjection to do its work, but in melancholia, an intervention is needed; the Freudian tradition intervenes on one level; Thoreau intervenes on two levels. In the Freudian tradition, overcoming the barrier of demetaphorization that guarantees the secured encryption of melancholia involves a partnership that targets the disavowal of desire, not melancholia itself (Abraham & Torok, 1994c). Responding to the usual and dysfunctional response to melancholia that urges the aggrieved to 'move on,' Abraham and Torok point out that any push that condemns or threatens the crypt itself is counterproductive because what melancholic subjects need to do—what they have disabled themselves from doing—is mourn for the lost object and address the legitimate reasons why it has been retained (p. 156). Telling melancholics to 'move on' tells the subjects that their encryptions of their lost objects are illegitimate, that they need to be disavowed, thereby reinforcing the shackles of melancholia (p. 156). What those around melancholic subjects should do, instead of threatening the crypt, is to embrace the crypt, and to display friendly hospitality for the secret within the crypt; this requires that the contents of the crypt be "laid out in the open and recognized as the unalienable property of the subject" (p. 156). Once this occurs, melancholic subjects can introject the contents of the crypt (Butler, 1999, 1997). Psychoanalysis,

according to Abraham and Torok, facilitates this by inducing the melancholic to project the crypt onto the psychoanalyst and using them as a symbol of the lost object—a stand-in for the crypt itself. For Thoreau, this was not an option. For Thoreau, the problem was that he thought that he had dealt with the melancholia that had occurred with the death of his brother, but in fact he had a prior melancholia that had escaped his awareness, and psychoanalysts did not yet exist. Thus the issues of recognition and the requirement of psychoanalytic assistance affect how well Freudian intervention works. Thoreau's intervention deals with this problem by inducing ego death, which for Thoreau was caused by his experience with ether, and for those of us without access to such a compound, we are to get lost on a sauntering walk. When ego death occurs, the melancholic is forced to come to terms with the fact that the lost object has in fact been lost, because the subject (along with the object) has died. However, since the memory is obviously still present, it is recognized as not the object that was lost.

Branka Arsić (2016) argued that Thoreau departured from the Freudian model, building an alternative that advocates perpetual grief for losses that are constantly occurring and constantly being transformed anew. Thoreau's preferred grief, according to Arsić, was a kind of perpetual mourning that resists mourning through representational means, giving the incorporated object its own life at the expense of oneself. In this kind of mourning, argued Arsić, the bereaved refuses the conventional wisdom that one's memories or perceptions are representations. This is the consequence of Thoreau's literalization, which Arsić argued can be implicitly traced as far back as 1837 and became explicit in 1842 (this explication happened after Fuller's rejection of "The Service" in 1840). By my reading of Arsić, she held that Thoreau lived with demetaphorization for his entire life. My reading of Thoreau is that he recovered from this insistence on literality, and appreciated the spacious capacity of the phenomenal world to accommodate both literal and metaphorical meaning—space for all of one's remembered losses—all sources of desire.[13] In any event, it is a good thing that Thoreau found a way to mourn through non-representational means, since Leader (2008) was adamant that symbolic mourning is necessary to dissolve demetaphorization. As it is my contention that Thoreau's recovery was enabled through a friendship with nature, and not by unilaterally

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[13] Perhaps the most lucid evidence of Thoreau's recovery was a March 7, 1852 journal entry, quoted by Henry Golemba (1990, p. 8): "As I look down the rail-road, standing on the west brink of the Deep Cut—I seem to see in the manner in which the moon is reflected from the west slope covered with snow, in the sort of misty light as if a fine vapor were rising from it—a promise or sign of spring. This stillness is more impressive than any sound,—the moon, the stars, the trees, the snow, the sand when bare,—a monumental stillness, whose void must be supplied by thought. It extracts thought from the beholder, as the void under a cupping-glass raises a swelling. How much a silent mankind might suggest! There is no snow on the trees. The moon appears to have waned a little, yet, with snow on the ground, I can plainly see the words I write. What a contrast there may be between this moon and the next!" (1906c, pp. 340-341).

projecting his own significance onto it, nature's non-representational mode of communication is a unique walk to recovery that gives the necessary space for metaphorical interpretation to be introduced by the observer.

Whatever the ultimate truth is regarding how we mourn and grieve or should mourn and grieve, the cause of melancholia is the disavowal of desire, and it is this disavowal that produces and intensifies the literalization or demetaphorization, the latter which scholarship has noticed as a touchstone of the melancholic experience. The longer an individual bears with the experience of melancholia, the more thoroughly they are familiarized with the practice of stripping symbols of their metaphorical fertility, and the symbols are left bare. It is my contention that Thoreau restored the legitimacy of his desires that he set aside when he bowed to the writing constraints that Fuller articulated when she informed Thoreau that "The Service" was unacceptable. Since he spent years as a melancholic, he carried a profound familiarity with literalization/demetaphorization forward in his writing practices, but also returned with a restored awareness that literal meaning has room for metaphors, and that that space draws on what the reader has suppressed.

Thoreau's Early Career

This section analyzes Thoreau's major writings that he composed before *A Week*. In this time period, Thoreau's oeuvre is varied and spans different genres. This 'literature' review is structured into three main parts. The first part focuses on his seminal essay, which has been neglected in the secondary literature. This essay, "Aulus Persius Flaccus," has been dismissed or ignored by many scholars. I find that although it was written in a style that is not easy to read and that it is exceptionally abstract, it contain arguments that are important clarifications that set Thoreau apart from not only Emerson, but also most thinkers who follow Hegel. The second part of this review focuses on the nature-writing essays. These essays were written with a different style and focus than his early essays and the remaining essays that I will discuss in the third part of this section. These nature-writing essays form a compositional tension when juxtaposed with first book, *A Week*. This tension is evidence of the melancholia that Thoreau was unable to recognize. The final part of this review focuses on other writings that do not fit into the nature-writing genre. These essays demonstrate Thoreau's development of a symbolic statement about desire.

"Persius"

The first essay in Thoreau's career, "Aulus Persius Flaccus," is an important opportunity to view some of Thoreau's philosophical perspectives before they were integrated into his nature writing. "Persius" shows that Thoreau was following Spinoza and ignoring Hegel.

Thoreau's debut publication, "Aulus Persius Flaccus" (1840), is the densest and most underappreciated example of writing that he ever published in his lifetime. In just four pages of text with wide margins, Thoreau brought special attention to Persius' lineage, and described a model for affirmative difference that does not rely exclusively on negation when he shows the learning curve of genius.

The main argumentative project in "Persius" is to announce Thoreau's criticism of uninspired satire. Perhaps the most important sentence in the essay lays this reasoning out: "Truth never turns to rebuke falsehood; her own straightforwardness is the severest correction" (p. 118).

For Thoreau, what made satire inspired was not an abstract Muse, but a process that frees the satirist from the object of complaint. Thoreau wrote that there is "a sort of necessary order in the development of Genius" (1840, p. 118). This order consists of three waypoints: Complaint, Plaint, and then Love. Perhaps what made the essay so difficult to analyze was the fact that Thoreau never explained what difference he meant between "complaint" and "plaint." In the modern colloquial sense, there is no difference between those two words. Etymologically, however, 'complaint' is different from 'plaint' with respect to object relations. On the one hand, a complaint involves a target, situation, or condition. An example of this is a legal complaint. In common law, a legal complaint always occurs against at least one other party (James, 1961). A plaint is a somewhat archaic word, and it is actually the root word of complaint. The difference is 'plaint' is missing the prefix 'com,' which means "together." This means that the first step toward genius was separating satire from the original target that served as the impetus of attack in the first place.

The separation that the transition from 'complaint' to 'plaint' accomplishes is a transition from the tears of sorrow to the tears of joy, a *natural* progression (Thoreau, 1840). Thoreau argued that the highest form of poetry and nature herself, which offers the gentlest "reproof to the hearer" (p. 118), is like the "sighs of her winds in the woods" (p. 118). For Thoreau, "As long as there is satire, the poet is, as it were, *particeps criminis*" (1985, p. 252). The importance of graduating beyond negation cannot be overestimated in Thoreau's philosophy, and in Thoreau's life. As anyone who is familiar with Hegelian philosophy knows, negation is the central component that allows his dialectical engine to function. Negation links together thesis and antithesis, and brings a new antithesis to the new synthesis. Thoreau's philosophy does not propose that any person or any idea should exist merely to oppose another person or another idea, but will eventually stand on their own merits and sing the song that they hear. This is why Thoreau wants each person to graduate beyond complaint. This incompatibility between Thoreauvian and Hegelian thought complicates the relationship between Thoreau and other scholars who have used a Hegelian framework to write about Thoreau (Warner, 2002, 1992) and queer culture (Muñoz, 2009), a point I return to in the Conclusion chapter.

Writing Nature From Massachusetts to Maine

In what became a series of nature-writing essays, Thoreau's effort to reconcile his desires with the opportunities presented to him is visible in two ways. First, Thoreau's idea that his career as a writer made him into a prophet is noticeable in each of his nature-writing essays, but this role that Thoreau carved out for himself evolved toward the empowerment of his audience rather than towards the empowerment of his own prophetic role (Fink, 1992). Second, Thoreau's nature-writing essays are a fascinating inventory of experimental writing. Thoreau began

his career in nature writing with a gift publication from Emerson (p. 42), and the reader has a brief opportunity to find Thoreau being honest about what interested him and what did not. After Thoreau was able to secure publishing outlets outside of the Transcendentalist territory of *The Dial* and realized that Emerson was using him to fill his journal, the reader begins to see this Thoreau returning to a bold experimentation with poetry and prose, reminiscent of his writing in his "Persius" and "The Service" essays. As the essays progress in more competitive outlets, the reader finds Thoreau moving away from poetry and towards a subtle awareness of feeling and desire. Specifically, Thoreau's nature writing essays became subtly more preoccupied with the phenomenon of melancholia.

In this section, I am concerned with the audiences targeted by the nature writing articles produced by Thoreau before *A Week*: "Natural History of Massachusetts," "A Walk to Wachusett," "A Winter Walk," and "Ktaadn and the Maine Woods." These articles, when examined as a progression of writing skill and motivation, reveal a writer who was continuing to grapple with a reading audience that was more interested in the commodity of nature than the philosophical imports that Thoreau cherished from those observations. When these essays are read as a series of publications, Thoreau's role of prophet began as defined and embraced, but transformed into a role that was increasingly deflected away from himself and towards the audience (Fink, 1992). After "Natural History of Massachusetts," the reader is exposed to an array of writing experiments, which lead to a curiously elided concern with melancholia. In the last of these articles, "Ktaadn," Thoreau's narrative is positively dark, leading one to doubt Robert Richardson's (1986, p. 116) and Robert Sullivan's (2009, p. 94) conclusion that his brother's death somehow freed him. Instead, I argue, his brother's death placed a special obligation on Henry; he began to burn like a candle, and the flame was not entirely his own. This mission would continue until after *A Week*'s failure to sell.

The nature-writing essays that Thoreau wrote before *A Week* reveal a writer who appeared to be progressing towards two writing conventions. The first convention acknowledged the prophetic role of Thoreau as author, and this role was slowly democratized to include the audience in the prophetic process of revelation (Fink, 1992). Thoreau began this role by being a prophet in the traditional sense, of making prophecies and sharing those prophecies with his readers (1842). Later, he experimented with sharing the empirical method of revelation, showing the audience how to reach the prophetic role themselves, first by walking up a mountain, and then taking a winter walk (1843a, 1843b). Then, Thoreau resorted to pure description to avoid spoiling the empirical method, and letting the readers reach their own conclusions regarding what qualifies as the prophetic role and the substance of prophecy during a bruising trek up Mt. Katahdin (1848). The second convention involved the reader as an active part of the reading experience. Thoreau began his nature-writing with a straightforward exposition of the philosophical issues that concerned him (1842). Later, he experimented with complex prose and poetry that required great effort and, sometimes, special knowledge, to interpret his writing (1843a). Then, Thoreau resorted to the strategic use of description and the

avoidance of explanation, to force the reader to do more work of interpretation (1848).

Thoreau's published nature-writing reveals a budding writer who was struggling with a dejection that threatened to consume him. "A Winter Walk" and "Ktaadn" are appropriate examples. He saw the sad descent that his brother was taking into infirmity, and he found himself completely helpless to forestall the entropy that was unfolding all around him. When John died, Emerson tried to provide him with distracting opportunities, but those opportunities ended up returning Thoreau to his losses. He did not want to let go, but his career path was pushing him to do just that.

Thoreau produced other works before *A Week*, which, taken together, amount to a coherent statement of his practice of desire. In his first book, which I discuss later in this chapter, Thoreau was reluctant to leave any of his innovations or arguments behind, and portions of most of them were imported into the heart of the manuscript. Thoreau's omnibus book revealed, with the exception of a few fleeting relationships, the brutal historical fact that Thoreau was surrounded by a capitalist society that did not share his values, and did not value his uncommonly queer and loving soul. It only cared about his labor.

Toward a Statement About Desire

Five of Thoreau's early writings, when taken together, capture his theoretical and empirical relationship with desire. Thoreau had a developed understanding of what he did not want to do, but the affirmative project of pursuing his own desires was not sufficiently developed. He had learned a considerable amount from his friend, Emerson, and Thoreau's family was enormously influential on his values, as his essays reveal. However, Thoreau had yet to appreciate a more important relationship that he had already begun to cultivate: friendship with nature. Thoreau's frustrations with and disinterest in the intricate facets of the publishing industry were the most significant reasons why his first book failed. Thoreau did not understand or accept the fact that the human world of publishing is a part of nature, and his ironic confidence in his mastery of it was the most significant factor that made him aware of his melancholic crisis in 1849.

The myriad statements that Thoreau made during this time period about desire can be summarized. This summary is an extract of five quotations from five of his essays joined together into a statement that presents Thoreau's emerging perspective: Accept that "the *past* cannot be *presented*" (1843c, p. 57), ward against "a love of popularity" (2001, p. 64), and be "a more public character than a statesman" (1843d, p. 429); we must "succeed alone, that we may enjoy our success together" (1843e, p. 461), and I will work with "language itself, and the common arts of life" (1844, p. 292). These five lines were taken from the following five essays: "Dark Ages" (1843c), "Sir Walter Raleigh" (2001), "The Landlord" (1843d), "Paradise (to be) Regained" (1843e), and "Homer, Ossian, Chaucer" (1844).

As the concatenated poem above illustrates, the essays that Thoreau produced in 1843 and 1844 form the kernel of his understanding of desire. Thoreau was invested in the ways in which memory is stored within whole cultures and

individuals (1843c). At this time in Thoreau's development, probably because of his close proximity to a number of powerful and intelligent scholars who were grappling with the temptations of fame, the motives for being a productive member of society became a major concern to him. His earliest influences were, of course, his family members, but Thoreau was still having difficulty discovering an affirmative statement about his own beliefs. His essay on poetry was the closest thing to such a statement about (one of) his own passions, but that perspective needed more time, writing, and maturity to find its own voice. The poem begins by constructing an identity in negative terms, mirroring the "complaint" phase in Thoreau's "Persius" essay. As this poem continues, the reader sees Thoreau's family lineage in his praise for an idealized public citizen. After all of this, Thoreau starts to recognize his own attraction to instrumental individualism and his passion for working with language and the arts of prosaic living.

The two major lessons that Thoreau had yet to learn have to do with the ironic nature of his own philosophical contradictions, and the fact that his writings on friendship show that he was failing to recognize what was the most important friendship in his life. Thoreau's inability to learn these lessons until after 1849 indicate that he did not sufficiently understand irony or friendship.

A Week with Irony and Friendship

In this section, I discuss the relationship of irony and friendship at a theoretical level and with respect to Thoreau's situation. Irony and friendship are timeless topics in philosophy, and continue to be relevant in communication studies. In addition, they are my two main concerns with respect to the text of his first book.

Irony

Scholarly interest in irony dates back at least as far as Ancient Greece (Carlson, 1993). Plays were producing characters afflicted with the trope of folly, and other characters bent on exposing these follies, and characters that could tell jokes about it (Muecke, 1969). These plays introduced specific stock characters that interacted with each other, performed folly, and produced important experiences for the audience (Burke, 1941/1973). The insight that is produced when audiences are forced to respond to multiple incompatible perspectives and learn vicarious lessons is the essence of irony that is carried into contemporary theoretical discussions about this topic (Muecke, 1969).

Ancient Irony

Ancient Greek theatre's most important contribution to the current inquiry rests between stock characters (Muecke, 1969). These stock characters showcase attitudes and patterns of interaction with each other that produce ironic states of affairs within a dramatic situation (Burke, 1941/1973). Three of these characters, the *eiron*, the *alazon*, and the *bomocholus*, always appeared in Greek comedy (Muecke, 1969). The *eiron* and the *alazon* also appeared in the finest examples of Greek tragedy, interacting to produce dramatic ironic situations.

Ancient Greek theater helps us understand irony through the interactions of these stock characters. The *eiron*, as its name suggests, is the master of irony (Muecke, 1969; Karstetter, 1964). Audiences find the *eiron* employing what Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1984, p. 1750; 1108a22 as cited by Muecke, 1969) described as understatement and self-depreciation to humiliate others who exhibit innocent and confident unawareness. The *alazon* fulfills the role of the oblivious character that underestimates skeptical cautions, speaks beyond competence, and falls victim to folly (Muecke, 1969; Karstetter, 1964). The important contrast between the *eiron* and the *alazon* occurs at an epistemic level, requiring the *alazon* to display hubris or express confident anticipations. The last stock character, the *bomolochus*, known as the buffoon who supplies comedic wit, crude and direct address to the audience, employs several narrative tools, and a privileged vantage point, that allow the author to share information with the audience relatively transparently (Muecke, 1969).

Muecke noted that the *alazon* need not appear as a stage character in ironic performances. Offstage characters or naïve audience members can fulfill the role of the *alazon*, and Muecke even went so far to say that modern *alazonys* (behavior or speech befitting the *alazon*) can take the form of a salient school of thought or prevailing worldview, regardless of whether the ironic text identifies specific *alazon* examples and objects of ridicule. Likewise, as Muecke pointed out, the *eiron* also need not appear in the ironic performance as a definite character; because the Greek chorus almost no longer appears in modern dramatic productions, the ironist's goal and method may fold into a narrator, the author, the story, or life itself.

The Ancient Greek framework of irony is crucial to understanding how ancient performances invented dramas that audiences were able to use to witness irony. However, this analysis is incomplete without a discussion of how audiences reach this understanding at a psychological level. To make this point, I turn to Kenneth Burke.

Burke's Irony

Burke contained his analysis of irony within three texts: the first in his *Attitudes Toward History* (1937/1984b), another in his *Philosophy of Literary Form* (1941/1973), and finally in his *Grammar of Motives* (1945/1969).

The first instance of Burke's attention to irony was couched within his analysis of 'comic correctives' or a 'comic frame' (1937/1984b). For Burke, "The comic frame, in making a man the student of himself, makes it possible for him to 'transcend' occasions when he has been tricked or cheated, since he can readily put such discouragements in his 'assets' column, under the head of 'experience'" (p. 171). This comic frame "should enable people *to be observers of themselves, while acting*" (p. 171). However, this analysis, while significant, did not address the internal mechanisms of irony or how the audience comes to see itself as a proper object of critique or, to use Burke's terminology, how the audience experiences drama.

In "Mainsprings of Character," Burke (1941/1973) explained why audiences cannot experience drama without witnessing dramatic irony:

Dramatic irony arises from a relationship between the audience and the play. The audience knows that certain tragic events are destined to take place. It also hears some figure on the stage boasting of good times to come. And in the audience, as spectator, arises dramatic irony. The audience is powerless to affect the course of events; at the same time, its sympathy for the characters makes it long to alter the course of events—and this divided attitude, a sense of being *with* the people as regards one's sympathies but *aloof* as regards one's ability to forestall the movements of destiny, this awareness of a breach between one's desires and one's understanding, this is ironic. (p. 419).

Writers exploited this dramatic mechanism in the nineteenth century, according to Burke, to vent their disapproval of popular ambitions. Within irony, dramatists could express their inability to change events that they disdained by depicting "people headed with confidence toward desolate ends" (p. 419). Burke noted Haakon Chevalier's focus on certain character traits, such as irresponsibility, which allowed Anatole France to exploit the ironic spectator. Furthermore, Burke rejected the idea of a pure or separate spectator, emphasizing the need for a naïve audience.

As a kind of summary, in "Four Master Tropes," Burke (1945/1969) borrowed Vico's terminology and built a framework around four overlapping tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. Irony is an interactive process that occurs within the other tropes to "produce a *development*" (p. 512). Each of the "participating 'sub-perspectives'" is an integral contributor to the development of a "perspective of perspectives," and "only through an internal and external experiencing of folly could we possess (in our intelligence or imagination) sufficient 'characters' for some measure of development beyond folly" (p. 512). The requirement that irony consists of a development led Burke to emphasize that none of the individual characters can be equivalent or foreign to the development itself.

Discussion

Thoreau's life up to 1849 was ironic on two counts. At one level, Thoreau's decision to publish *A Week* on credit assumed the role of the *alazon*. He ignored the realities of the publishing industry and exposed himself to 275 dollars of unnecessary debt (Sullivan, 2009). To put this into perspective, he could have purchased Walden Pond with that money (Fink, 1992). Thoreau could not have pinned this error on his mentor's bad advice, since it was his own advice to Emerson in 1844 that led to Emerson's own foolish attitude about self-publishing (p. 212). Second, the content of *A Week* provided a detailed and honest presentation of Thoreau-as-*alazon*. In the book, Thoreau boasted that he "found all things thus far, persons and inanimate matter, elements and seasons, strangely adapted to my resources. No matter what imprudent haste in my career; I am permitted to be rash" (1985, p. 240). He also described nature as predictably obeying the laws of nature, adding, "This world is but canvas to our imaginations" (p. 238). Thoreau woefully underestimated the complexity of the publishing industry, indicating that either he underestimated nature, did not recognize the hostility of the publishing industry (or the public culture which was fed by the publishing industry) as a part of that nature,

or both. It is obvious that his relationship with nature was still immature, making it necessary for nature to teach him an expensive lesson about irony and friendship.

Thoreau's Procession of Friends

For Thoreau, friendship is the giving and receiving between intermixed individuals (Crosswhite, 2010). Its only risk, as Thoreau wrote, is that the process will end, which puts former friends into a position of grief. In this section, I present Thoreau's understanding of friendship in 1849. It is helpful to understand Thoreau's theory of friendship because it not only helps identify the irony of Thoreau's decision to publish *A Week*, it shows the advantage of Thoreau's future extension of friendship to nature, and it exposes some contradictions surrounding the public nature of friendship.

It should be obvious to any reader of *A Week* that Thoreau conceived of friendship as a process, not a structural state of affairs. For Thoreau, as Crosswhite has discussed, friendship is giving and receiving (p. 167). Friendship involves friends with each other, but it is not the friends' relationship that makes it a friendship; instead, it is a form of "indwelling" between people that breaks the illusion of independent self-sufficiency (p. 166).[14] It is inevitable that friendship ends when seen through a structural framework (p. 166). Because giving and receiving is the procession of friendship, and that the giving and receiving is cultivated from previous giving and receiving, friendship survives the supposed denouement of particular relationships (p. 168). According to Thoreau, the grief that is felt at the end of particular friendships can be analyzed in two ways: a contrast between our unworthiness to be an individual's friend and our *perceived* unworthiness to be their friend, which measures "the intensity of our grief" (1985, p. 242), and a shade that envelops the image of a lost friend when the aggrieved subject blocks the source of light (p. 286).

The theory of friendship developed by Thoreau was a reorientation to friendship that involved an abandonment of a structural understanding of friendship and a move toward understanding friendship as a process (Crosswhite, 2010). For Thoreau, friendship is giving and receiving (p. 167), and it is an intermixing of individuality in which "we give the best to, and receive the best from" (1985, p. 218). It is nothing more than the moments when friends are imbricated with each other, changing each other (Crosswhite, 2010, p. 168). "The best" are no external material goods, nor are they instrumental advantages or pleasures. Instead, "the best" are introjections to ourselves that are supplied by friendship: "the virtue which we appreciate we to some extent appropriate, so that thus we are made at last more fit for every relation of life" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 225). For Thoreau, friendship is no more and no less than that mutual appropriation of virtue. It is "evanescent" (p. 213 as quoted by Crosswhite, 2010, p. 167). At the same time, however, friendship for Thoreau is a "perpetual and all-embracing service" that is

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[14] According to Crosswhite, "indwelling" is just one translation of *perichoresis*, "the old theological word for that relation among the members of the Christian Trinity." (2010, p. 166).

found over and over again, changing friends into new beings, turning them into a friend of new friends, and creating new and wider possibilities for friendship (1985, p. 217 as quoted by Crosswhite, 2010, p. 168). For Thoreau, the paradox that afflicts Aristotle's framework of friendship is not a paradox at all (Crosswhite, 2010, p. 168). Instead, Aristotle's paradox happens because of two misconceptions. First, virtuous individuals cannot be assessed apart from their friends(hips) (p. 168, pp. 170-171). Second, friendship should not be framed as a structural achievement (p. 166). Thoreau's framework for friendship, which was his most significant theoretical contribution in *A Week*, was advanced as a combination of empirical observation and philosophical analysis.

Friendship contradicts several of our assumptions about how public culture works. Friendship is traditionally seen as a relationship that, for the most part, occurs outside of public view. However, this is a fiction generated by structural understandings of friendship. According to Thoreau, friendship comes into existence by virtue of our daily engagement with strangers, some who will be imagined and realized as friends by their naming. In other words, friendship is a counterpublic that exposes the contradiction of the standard public sphere literature that characterizes strangerhood and intimacy as opposed (see Warner, 2002).

Thoreau's analysis of friendship consists of his "Wednesday" chapter in *A Week* and must be placed in the context of what Thoreau reported for that day. In that chapter, Thoreau engaged in a mixture of empirical description and digression. It was a day in which Thoreau and his brother were rowing up the Merrimack River. In the context of a travel narrative, the digressions could be interpreted as Thoreau's musings that were occurring to him during the rowing, floating, sailing, and walking that was being narrated in exquisite detail. Thoreau noticed that there were some islands in the river that were not there previously. In addition, near a spectacular waterfall, Thoreau noticed various holes in the bedrock. Finally, he recalled a relationship between two men who lived in the area that he had read about in the local annals. All three of these observations are important opportunities to describe Thoreau's theoretical understanding of friendship.

As William Rossi (2010, p. 121) has observed, river islands became Thoreau's metaphor to describe friendship, highlighting the difference between processual and structural orientations toward friendship. During their river trip, John and Henry noticed that there were a number of islands that periodically formed at river confluences. These islands, when compared to Thoreau's memory of his previous encounter with the area, were ephemeral. The existence of these islands results from a calming of the river water in specific places, and the depositing of river sediment in those calm places. The islands are simply an incidental and evanescent structural effect of friendship between rivers, and the appearance and location of that friendship changes over time.

In addition to a consideration of river islands as a metaphor, "Wednesday" also discussed the formation of a curious geological phenomenon near the river's waterfalls. While the two brothers were at a waterfall, they noticed that there were holes that had been carved out of solid bedrock. Thoreau reported the silly conclusion that the English arrived at to explain the existence of these holes: they

thought that these holes were artificially carved by the natives to hide provisions from invaders. Native Americans did not produce these holes. Instead, they were produced by large river stones that had been caught in specific water currents, and were forced to spin in place for enough millennia to carve holes into the bedrock. These stones, which Thoreau thought were perhaps serving endless penance for past sins, demonstrate Thoreau's open-ended reframing of friendship as a process. I see two ways to interpret this description and tracing of the holes in the river, one of which arrives at Thoreau's understanding of friendship. In one reading, there is something in common in each of the relationships that exist in Thoreau's description: *between* the (1) water currents, (2) the river stones, (3) the bedrock, and (4) the Native Americans. In another reading, the relationships that exist in Thoreau's description depict relationships that involve apparent disparities. Misunderstanding the process of how these holes were formed amounts to an understanding of friendship as a relationship between self-sufficient individuals. Only one of these readings agrees with the perpetual aspect of friendship that Thoreau advanced.

In the first reading of the river holes, Thoreau was able to discuss the ephemeral moment of friendship caught in a stabilized pattern of repetition that showcases its timeless features. Although there is apparently none of the parity of friendship between the stone and the bedrock, the stone grinds away at the bedrock. As Thoreau wrote, "As if by force of example and sympathy after so many lessons, the rocks, the hardest material, had been endeavoring to whirl or flow into the forms of the most fluid" (1985, p. 202). The stones were spinning because they had inherited a pattern of motion from the water currents, and were passing that lesson to the bedrock. The giving that occurs in friendship is displayed here surviving the relationship between the river stones and the river itself, creating a hole in the bedrock that the Native Americans used for themselves for their own purposes. In this sense, the river gave the stones a flowing motion, and the stones gave the bedrock a spinning motion, and the bedrock gave the natives holes in which to hide their provisions. In return, the water was given a path in which to flow to the ocean, the bedrock ground the stones to sediment (which were the material of the river islands), and the Natives gave a special reverence to the river. This giving and receiving never ends, and at the same time, the parties to the relationship are changed in the encounters.

In the second reading of the river holes, Thoreau found a way to respond to a structural understanding of friendship that he was attempting to correct. The stone spins in the water, grinding itself away against the bedrock. That spinning produces a hole, an absence, and that hole becomes deeper and more difficult to escape the longer the stone performs its penance. The only fortuitous effect of this phenomenon is that others will be able to take advantage of the hole, and others will misunderstand how that hole was formed. Many relationships, Thoreau warns, are nothing more than a trap in which someone feels that their daily work is to inscribe their message of penance into the earth. So be it, but the hole enlarges the more the stone invests. Such stones are either worn away by eons of spinning, are freed by a chance flood, or reach low enough in their holes that they fall through the bottom of

the bedrock, disappear into oblivion, and cause the river to leak "through in anticipation of the fall" (p. 202).

In "Wednesday," Thoreau was describing two different understandings of friendship. One of these understandings is advanced by the English explorers. To the English, the Native Americans were using the river for their own purposes, learning nothing from the lessons of nature. In this framework of friendship between the river and the natives, the two parties provide goods to each other, and part ways when their period of friendship ends. The two parties only use each other to appropriate their virtue, producing the requisite giving and receiving that constitutes the process of friendship. In this framework, the form of the hole was invented by the Native Americans. The Native Americans produced a void in the riverbed in exchange for its life-giving water. However, this framework ignores the chain of inheritance that links together the water, the stones, the bedrock, and the Native Americans. The forms that are given at each stage of this inheritance again reveal that friendship is a "perpetual and all-embracing service" that does not end at the boundaries of a singular friendship (Thoreau, 1985, p. 217 as quoted by Crosswhite, 2010, p. 168). The hiding place that the Native Americans found exists because of the friendship between the water and the river stones, and between the river stones and the bedrock. The giving outlasts particular friendships because friendship is giving and receiving, and not the relations between water and stone, or between stone and bedrock, or between hole and human. Friendships, like river islands (Rossi, 2010, p. 121), are the movements of the sediment of other friendships, which will be passed on…

Besides islands and river stones, Thoreau described a real friendship in what has been a thoroughly abstract and metaphorical treatment of friendship. This real friendship existed between a white man and a Native American: Wawatam, a Chief of a tribe of Odawa Native Americans, and Andrew Henry, a fur-trader (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, 2014; National Park Service, n.d.). This "almost bare and leafless" friendship began after one of Wawatam's vision quests, which involved "fast, solitude, and mortification of body" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 223). In Wawatam's vision, he saw a white brother and decided to adopt him. After his vision, Wawatam came to the white man's lodge, told Henry about his vision, and decided that the two men should be brothers. They "buried the hatchet," and they made plans to "hunt and feast and make maple-sugar together" (p. 223). At length, Wawatam repaid his material debt of hospitality to Henry through his tribe, and the two were durable friends. Their friendship appeared to endure beyond their last meeting, even as Henry had to flee other Native Americans who wished to kill him. As Henry departed, Wawatam gave a heartfelt speech to his tribe, and continued to speak even after Henry's boat was out of earshot.

The significance of the Wawatam-Henry friendship consists of the two men's perception of honor even in the face of an exceedingly basic relationship. Theirs was a friendship that consisted of the exchange of material goods, and there was very little, but still significant, mutual ascendancy toward virtue achieved between the two men. However, Thoreau's point in telling this story is not only to show that friends are strangers before they are named (a point that I will return to), but also to

make the distinction between friendships as they exist, and friendships as they are imagined. For Thoreau, "Friendship is not so kind as is imagined" (p. 224). It was not the setting aside of differences and the sharing of provisions that impressed Thoreau. Instead, Thoreau took the story as an opportunity to describe how friendship can behave with "a certain disregard for men and their erections, the Christian duties and humanities, while it purifies the air like electricity." (p. 224). This is why Thoreau concluded that the dissolution of a friendship comes from "unworthiness" rather than a disparity of deeds or even physical departure (p. 216, p. 226). For Thoreau, there are perhaps no individuals who are actually worthy of being "true and lasting" friends (p. 226). Actual worthiness is less important than felt worthiness.

To explain why perception and actuality are two different things in friendship, Thoreau compared friendship to a scientific illusion of intuition that is still well known in physics, which he called the hydrostatic paradox (p. 221). The hydrostatic paradox is an intuitive bias discovered by Blaise Pascal; living in the 17th century, Pascal made a number of scientific and theological insights, including a hydrostatic principle that science has named Pascal's law (Acott, 1999). According to Pascal's law, in a fluid, a change of pressure at one point in the fluid will be transmitted to all points in the fluid. Figure 1 is a scientifically sound illustration of two of "Pascal's vases."
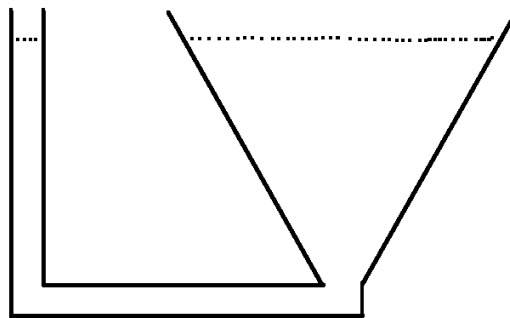
Figure 1: Pascal's Vases

The illustration appears to be wrong because the human mind habitually does not expect the liquid to be where it is represented. If we pretend that the two vases are separate containers, "the fluids in the two containers exert the same downward force on their respective bases, and yet the containers clearly have different weights" (Walker, 1998, p. 378). We expect the liquid to move to the left and overflow the smaller cylinder. However, since the two vases are connected at their bases, the level of the liquid is appropriately equal on both sides of the vessel. The mind is tempted to conflate volume and pressure, trapped by the intuition that weights need to be equal.

The difference between perception and actuality in the context of friendship carries psychological significance for the parties involved that becomes salient when they are aggrieved. Since friendship is the giving and the receiving, and not the status of our relationship with our friends, it is inevitable that our friends are going to change in ways that are outside of our control, both in their identities, relation to ourselves, and their presence/absence (Crosswhite, 2010). After a friendship, there is perhaps always going to be a perception of our unworthiness, which Thoreau defined as "the intensity of our grief, . . . our atonement, [which] measures the degree by which this is separated from an actual unworthiness" (1985, p. 242). This is why it is possible for people to feel immense amounts of grief for seemingly insignificant relationships after the process ends, and why grief never truly ends. For Thoreau, since friendship occurs before it is named, grief only becomes salient after the fact. The grief that people feel is a manifestation of the difference between the perception and actuality of our worthiness to be party to a specific friendship. Finally, because everyone's grief is different, not everyone is equally affected by the hydrostatic paradox. The more one becomes familiar with the principles of hydrostatics, the more one's intuitions are brought in alignment with the behavior of fluid in Pascal's vases.

There is another level of the experience of grief that goes beyond the difference between perception and actuality with respect to friendship worthiness. This implication of grief is linked to Thoreau's understanding of melancholia. Desire can be imagined with reference to the above illustration of Pascal's vases. Add some liquid to one side of the apparatus, and the liquid will flow to the other side and achieve equilibrium. On the other hand, the negative side of desire is melancholia, a plug in the plumbing of the vases, which produces its own depressive effects. For Thoreau, a state of melancholia is one in which "One involuntarily rests on his oar, to humor his unusually meditative mood" (p. 63). In this mood, animals are startled and are in a state of disease. Thoreau's description of this discomfort is of a shaded side of a person, the side that faces away from the light. Thoreau wrote, "This is his grief" (p. 286). It should be *like* our shadow, but since it has been demetaphorized, it *is* our shadow, always there, restricting our view of whatever falls in the shade. At its most intense, it achieves orbit, functioning like the "moon eclipsed" (p. 286). The treatment is to "preserve ourselves untarnished" so that the divine light will return the shaded objects to illumination (p. 287; see also Arsić, 2016).

Discussion

So, who are our friends? Thoreau's argument, that friendship occurs before it is named, has public implications that go beyond relationships between people who are thought of as friends. The relationships that Thoreau had in mind, including the relationships between strangers, were just as important to him as the relationships between friends who have named each other. The following stanza, taken from *A Week*'s "Wednesday" chapter, sings this belief:

No warder at the gate
Can let the friendly in,
But, like the sun, o'er all

He will the castle win,

And shine along the wall. (Thoreau, 1985, p. 235)

We cannot know the difference between a stranger and a friend until friendship has been established by name. This has implications for public sphere theory concerning counterpublics.

Thoreau's address to his possible friends is a counterpublic. Since Thoreau's address to possible friends was an address to strangers, friendship for Thoreau is a relationship that is imagined (p. 224). According to Michael Warner, publics (and some counterpublics) are invoked merely through attention to circulating texts or address and are "embedded in the background and self-understanding of its participants in order to work" (2002, p. 9). This is a controversial claim, according to Warner, because we tend to think of the public as having a non-contingent existence, like an office park, that does not depend at all on the imaginative powers of people who merely pay attention to an act of communication. However, as Warner argued, this is an important fiction that we ignore when we engage in public interaction, and this fiction becomes most salient when we consider counterpublics.

Thoreau's counterpublic address to those who might turn out to be his friends exposed him to hostility. As Warner warned, because counterpublics and publics theoretically speak to the same pool of strangers (p. 120, p. 122) counterpublics risk estrangement and hostility from the public to which their participants must speak (p. 122, p. 130). However, it is not necessarily the counterpublic that instigates this hostility. The hostility that earns counterpublics its 'counter'-ness is sometimes a hostility originating from the imagined community of strangers. As Warner admitted, "Counterpublics are 'counter' to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger sociability and its reflexivity" (pp. 121-122). It is important to remember that being different from 'normal' publics does not necessarily mean 'counter,' unless of course one gives identity priority over difference, as Hegel did (Hardt, 1993). Warner openly relied on Hegel as a framework for interpreting his conclusions about opposition and negation (1992), and so it is easy to see him concluding that aberrant examples of publics that ignore the standard framework for public engagement are branded as counterpublics. However, my disagreement with Warner over the assumed primacy of identity does not discount the reality that Thoreau realized his risk of estrangement from the public sphere because he publicly abandoned the opposition between strangerhood and intimacy. Heteronormative culture is invested in maintaining this opposition between strangerhood and intimacy (Warner, 2002).

Friendship was an important topic for Thoreau for two reasons: Emerson and John. In one way, Thoreau's analysis of friendship was a response to Emerson's "Friendship" and a public grieving of their decaying relationship; their personal relationship was certainly not to be lauded as an example of Thoreau's friendship, and it may have been Thoreau's way of expressing his understanding of its immanent denouement (Hodder, 2010, p. 137). In another way, Thoreau's relationship with his late brother epitomized Thoreau's understanding of friendship. To Thoreau, John was a Representative Man (Thoreau, 1985, p. 198), a mountain (Thoreau, 1843a, p. 31), and a loss that deserved to be written about as

his first full-length book. The loss left him with grief, and *A Week* was an attempt to connect with others to atone for that grief. Thoreau's atonement mirrored the speech that Wawatam gave in honor of his brother, Henry. The expression of honor for Thoreau hinged on his ability to preserve the memory of his brother in his audience, and when it became evident that his audience was unwilling to experience the depths of Thoreau's story so that his brother may be forgotten, Thoreau was forced to confront a poverty of friendship as he understood it in his immediate life.

Thoreau's Counter-Monument to John

Thoreau's first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, was designed to introduce the reader to the two Thoreau brothers. It is both an autobiography and a transmission of the memory of John to the reader. Because Henry and John are treated as a good example of friendship, it is impossible for the reader to tease apart the two individuals and consider them in isolation from each other as self-sufficient individuals (Fink, 1992). This is both an indication of their closeness, as well as the fact that Thoreau had incorporated his brother into his identity (Arsić, 2016). Thoreau needed to express his grief for the loss of his brother, but he also recognized that an artifact would only be a temporary accommodation for the crypt of his brother. Instead of building a monument, Thoreau imported his many theoretical explorations that he had made early in his writing career into a crushing omnibus, and then made his audience responsible for remembering and forgetting his brother on the "sacred space" of a represented pastoral America (McGeough, 2011, p. i). The miscalculation that caused his debut book to fail was the fact that Thoreau could not secure a readership willing to participate in this program of loss (Fink, 1992). Without readers, Thoreau could not bury his brother within them. Without that burial, Thoreau could not mourn for his brother in the nonrepresentational manner that he had insisted was needed to maintain one's grief (Arsić, 2016).

In this section, I read *A Week* as a counter-monument. First, I review the theoretical matter on counter-monuments. The second step in this discussion is to show how *A Week* manifests these characteristics. Finally, I analyze where Thoreau went awry.

The Character of Counter-Monuments

Ryan McGeough (2011) established that there were significant cultural differences between Germany and the United States regarding the establishment of counter-monuments. In McGeough's review, counter-monuments force their audiences to be responsible for remembering. German counter-monuments "attempt to deny or avoid sacred space" (p. 80), usually through the selection of prosaic locations and modes of display that serve as catharsis and camouflage. As a contrast to this trend, "American counter-monuments embrace the idea of sacred space, but contest access to it" (p. 80). This tendency of American counter-monuments to embrace and regulate sacred spaces happens is a result of what McGeough described as a tension between monuments and counter-monuments that appears to be less salient in German memorializing. As McGeough explained,

the American attempt to reconcile multiple perspectives had an effect of its own: as each party contested the narrative associated with a particular monument, additional monuments were added to the sacred space in a process of accretion that accumulated monuments in one sacred space. This accretion of monuments, according to McGeough, caused the monuments to mutate into a counter-monument through the emergence of irony, a monument of monuments, a perspective of perspectives.

The Sacred Space of A Week

Thoreau knew that to communicate his fraternal grief, it would not be enough to create a monument for his brother. His "Dark Ages" and a litany of local examples in *A Week* make it evident that he recognized the limitations of monuments. Only by installing the memory of John within the minds of his readers and inducing the reader to lose that memory would Thoreau feel satisfied that his grief for his late brother was adequately transferred. This installation and loss of memory required that he construct a narrative and then deconstruct that narrative (see Fink, 1992, p. 220).

The fact that Thoreau was grieving for his brother is evident in *A Week*. Recall that a person's grief, in the context of *A Week*, is the sad shade that is felt as a condition of melancholia (Thoreau, 1985, p. 286) measured by the difference between a person's actual worthiness to be a friend and their perceived worthiness (p. 242). Thoreau expressed in verse, his most effective and private emotional outlet, that his perceived worthiness of being his brother's friend was different from his actual worthiness (p. 133; 1843a, p. 31). The efforts of *A Week* were directed at expressing Thoreau's atonement, which still existed seven years after John's death.

The main orienting theory of *A Week* was Thoreau's "Dark Ages" (1843c). "Dark Ages" reminded people that they are responsible for historical memory. Thoreau argued that there are facts that are constantly being forgotten, and that there is a strong and fruitless tradition of creating monuments to forestall the process of forgetting. According to Thoreau, we remember the lessons that were confided to us in song and dance, and we do not know the lesson of the Egyptian pyramids for this reason. Instead of building larger and more durable memorials, Thoreau insisted that living people are the appropriate containers of living facts. Thoreau regarded history, the practice of recording history, and the future that preservationist historians share with their archive, as fated to a gradual descent into oblivion. Only a monument that accepted the darkness of history—a counter-monument—would transmit the memory of his brother to the minds of his readers.

For most of us, it is not easy to absorb lessons from a book; it is more effective to remember lessons confided to us through practice. Thoreau recognized this, and programmed his text accordingly. *A Week* is much more than a kaleidoscopic collection of facts about pastoral America and his fraternal relationship. The book is capable of doing actual work on the reader. Every part, especially the digressions, drives the practice of memory transfer and forgetting. Many lines of quoted poetry were transcribed by Thoreau in Latin without any given translation, making it necessary for a 19th century reader to accomplish that

translation through learning the language or by consultation with an expert, such as Thoreau himself at one of his Lyceum lectures. In addition, the text does not cite many of its sources (although Thoreau does cite an abundant number of them). By my count, there were 39 specific authors that Thoreau quoted without attribution. Perhaps Thoreau meant for the names of these poets to be forgotten, for it illustrates an important lesson for the reader. The reader is responsible for the task of remembering, and there are likely people alive today that would be able to connect the quoted verses and the names of these individuals. Fortunately, I was able to use Google's search technology to identify these authors. In the 19th century, consulting with experts on poetry or Thoreau himself would have been the only ways to discover these names. This demonstrates two things. First, it shows that Thoreau's passion went beyond philosophical or theological texts, as was Emerson's main areas of concern. Thoreau was enormously interested in poetry as well, and the unattributed quotation of verse from these various poets, like the discipline of performance studies, "challenges the disciplinary compartmentalization of the arts" (Taylor, 2003, p. 26). Second, like un-translated Latin, this list shows that Thoreau was actively engaging with his readers to encourage them to do the necessary work of memorializing and forgetting.

Reading and understanding *A Week* requires the cultivation of the capability of an archive to achieve what Diana Taylor has termed a "system of transfer" (p. xvii). As Taylor argued, embodied "acts of transfer" are "an important system of knowing and transmitting knowledge" (p. 26). It functions in a fundamentally different way than "the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones)" (p. 19). Repertoires are competencies built into the memories of the living, and they lack the durability that archivists prefer (pp. 18-19). It is no accident that transferring repertoires to surrogates "work[s] against notions of easy access, decipherability, and translatability" (p. 15).

Thoreau's *A Week*, at a textual level and relatively speaking, is now easily accessed, deciphered, and translated, but its mechanism of transmission of loss is not. According to Steven Fink, "Thoreau loaded his narrative with an almost crushing burden of meditative digressions and essays" (1992, p. 235). In light of this unexpected duty, Thoreau subtly commented on his own writing, setting up the "scenario" of the text (Taylor, 2003, p. 28), giving the reader riddles on how to engage. For example, in reference to the "playful wisdom" of the Heetopades of Veeshnoo (Thoreau, 1985, p. 119), Thoreau wrote:

> The story and fabulous portion of this book winds loosely from sentence to sentence as so many oases in a desert, and is as indistinct as a camel's track between Mourzouk and Darfour. It is a comment on the flow and freshet of modern books. The reader leaps from sentence to sentence, as from one stepping-stone to another, while the stream of the story rushes past unregarded. . . . It is the characteristic of great poems that they will yield of their sense in due proportion to the hasty and deliberate reader. To the practical they will be common sense, and to the wise wisdom. . . (p. 119)

In other words, Thoreau placed an enormous burden on his reader to attend to the "gestures, attitudes, and tones" (Taylor, 2003, p. 28) in the "stream of the story" and

do the investigatory footwork necessary to gain access to the numerous shadow texts. If readers did not, they were supposed to be left merely with "common sense." For the wise readers, engaging with the text, and going beyond the text, would transmit memory to the reader, who would then lose it. Only then would the reader approach an adequate understanding of Thoreau's loss. However, Thoreau's text is subject to the rules of archival preservation and reproduction, not the embodied mode of transmission that Taylor argued makes the scenarios of repertoires supple in the hands of those who embody them. The archival status of *A Week* made it impossible for anyone to modify Thoreau's specific scenario.

To force the reader to choose between common sense and wisdom, Thoreau deconstructed his own narrative (Fink, 1992, p. 220), and it is the forced choice that made his scenario incapable of embodied modification. The deconstruction was accomplished because of an interaction between the two kinds of 'spaces' in the text. One of these spaces was the world surrounding the Thoreau brothers on their river trip. It consisted of an exquisite "sacralization" of the surrounding environment: a careful attention to the names of the fish, meticulous descriptions of the techniques of the other sailors and boatmen on the river, and an accounting of the many human personalities that represented a deceased pastoral America.[15] The other space was Thoreau's mental world that unfolded during *A Week*'s many digressions. Thoreau's mental world was set in many places and times in the past, including previous sojourns by himself and with other companions, and analytical essays that touched upon various topics. The opening chapter of *A Week* gave a preview of what sights the traveler would see during such a trip. For example, Thoreau told the would-be traveler,

> You shall see rude and sturdy, experienced and wise men, keeping their castles, or teaming up their summer's wood, or chopping alone in the woods, men fuller of talk and rare adventure in the sun and wind and rain, than a chestnut is of meat; who were out not only in '75 and 1812, but have been out every day of their lives; greater men than Homer, or Chaucer, or Shakespeare, only they never got the time to say so; they never took to the way of writing. Look at their fields, and imagine what they might write, if ever they should put pen to paper. Or what have they not written on the face of the earth already, clearing, and burning, and scratching, and harrowing, and ploughing, in and in, and out and out, and over and over, again and again, erasing what they had already written for want of parchment. (1985, p. 9)

These men and women worked against the sacredness of their living inscriptions upon the earth. When Thoreau turns the attention of the reader away from the conventional travel narrative in his digressions, he demonstrates nature's

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[15] McGeough has reported that the process of "sight sacralization" consists of five steps: (1) naming, (2) framing and elevation, (3) enshrinement, (4) mechanical reproduction, and (5) social reproduction (2011, pp. 48-49). Reading the portions of *A Week* that involve travel narrative proceeds through these stages. Thoreau's mental space—his digressions—worked against the sacredness of the travel narrative.

indifference to the losses that are sustained in these environments. The travel narrative is no safe space, and everything in it is at risk of disappearing within the mind of the reader. In fact, as Thoreau admitted in the text, it was already gone at the time the book was published. "Books of natural history" are of no help either, as Thoreau pointed out, for they "aim commonly to be hasty schedules, or inventories of God's property, by some clerk" (p. 79).

Constructing and then deconstructing Thoreau's narrative in *A Week* had the effect of burying John and the sacred space of pastoral America under the story's immense edifice, installed within the mind of the reader. The prose is dense, without reprieve. Every detail is a potentially significant facet to be juxtaposed with something in the next or the previous digression, and the reader's memory becomes laden with a growing inventory of archival data. In addition, Thoreau's own poetry is enigmatic, and cannot be set-aside without sacrificing a significant part of the story. As a result, the reading of the text slows to a crawl, the reader's memory begins to leak through like the river, and the reader, perhaps if he or she notices this process of loss, understands that Thoreau had meant for this to happen. This is the same situation that Thoreau described in his metaphor of ancient history as a "picture on the wall" (1985, p. 125; 1843c, p. 528), describing the comments made by observers of history concerning what is behind that picture. Just like Walter Benjamin's "Angelus Novus," it is the result of "one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet" (1968, p. 257). Thoreau was burying his brother in the minds of his readers, trying to induce grief.

The act of transfer that *A Week* attempts to accomplish is necessarily paradoxical. For Thoreau's technique to work on an audience, it must both construct a legitimate historical narrative, and then undermine it (Fink, 1992). In theory, Thoreau accomplished those two tasks. As Steven Fink pointed out, Thoreau "charts his route with geographic precision, identifying each village, each tributary, each lock; he observes local commerce and agriculture" (p. 221). Thoreau also went beyond these observations, taking note of the changes that have occurred to these marks upon the landscape over time. Then, "Thoreau undermines this conventional historical perspective by asserting nature's indifferences to such changes" (p. 220). *A Week* "ultimately turns on itself, achieving its ends by undermining its means— not only an excursion that undermines the value of travel but finally a book in which language itself must give way to a higher silence" (p. 220).

There is no surviving effigy in *A Week* for John. Thoreau went to painstaking steps to describe him in a context that seems to be as sacred as his late brother. However, to force the reader of *A Week* to absorb and lose a memory of him, Thoreau incorporated a complex system of digressions into a narrow thread of a travel narrative. This system worked to overburden the memory of the reader and transferred a lesson to the reader regarding the necessity of forgetting. No durable monument could accomplish that task. Only by developing the reader's repertoire of memory and forgetting would they understand Thoreau's need to assuage the intensity of his grief, which is what mourning is all about: preserving himself untarnished and recruiting an audience to help him along the endless process of equalizing his actual and perceived unworthiness of having been John's friend.

A Week's Ironic Oversight

In practice, the system of transfer that Thoreau attempted to accomplish was a failure. This is most salient in the context of *A Week*'s relationship with his audience. As Lloyd Bitzer argued, the success of any rhetorical action turns on the audience as the mediator of change (1968). The change that Thoreau asked of his audience was nothing less than the willingness to endure the grueling process of attempting to construct a travel narrative and follow him through a maze of digressions that deconstructed that narrative (Fink, 1992). Much of Thoreau's audience was unwilling to follow him for two reasons. First, Thoreau's marketing strategy for his book, ironically, failed to account for the complexities of the publishing industry as a legitimate ecological system of nature. Second, for many of the individuals who did answer his call to read, the reading experience proved to be too uncomfortable and taxing (pp. 241-242). Furthermore, the scenario for experiencing the trip and losing that memory was inflexible due to its archival nature (Taylor, 2003). This left a few of Thoreau's friends who understood his project (Fink, 1992, p. 242) and were willing to follow the scenario that he had arranged for the reading experience. However, this number was far less than the thousand-copy print run for which Thoreau contracted.

Thoreau's inattention to an important relationship with nature, which would develop years later, was an ironic testament to his blindness to the impending failure of *A Week*. This blindness can be seen within the story, outside of the story, and at the interface between the inside and the outside.

Internally, *A Week*'s most ironic oversight was Thoreau's unwillingness to engage with works of human artifice as legitimate natural constructions. Today, one of Thoreau's most important contributions to ecology was his rejection of the nature-human divide. However, in 1849, this divide was very much intact in his thinking. As Burke's theory of irony shows, irony culminates in a "comic frame" that makes audiences self-critical, and it requires an element of humility (1937/1984b). That humility was missing in Thoreau's text. In *A Week*, Thoreau's absence of humility can be seen in two ways. The first manifestation of Thoreau's confident unawareness can be seen through a comparison of his theory of friendship and his practices of friendship with nature, or partial lack thereof. The second way that Thoreau refused to countenance humility was through the rescue of a missing specimen of fruit.

Thoreau's meditation on friendship should have made him receptive to friendship with inanimate objects in nature, but his theoretical stance at this time was qualified. The allegorical reading of the transient river islands and the spinning rocks underneath the waterfalls brings the relationship of friendship into close proximity with things that are not people, nor are these allegorical examples biologically alive. This raises the question: why did Thoreau prejudice the case of friendship against "mere wood and stone" (1985, p. 218)? The theoretical answer to that question is that he was merely following Aristotle, who argued that one does not share friendship with inanimate objects (e.g., wine; Crosswhite, 2010).

The fact that *A Week* did not countenance friendship with inanimate objects is most evident when Thoreau discussed the Billerica Dam. His description of this

artificial feature was fetishized and idolized. As my analysis of Thoreau's theory of friendship shows, it is important that friends perceive themselves to be equal.

There are three different ways to engage with things. These ways have been assessed in detail by W. J. T. Mitchell (2005) and Diana Taylor (2003). Mitchell argued that these three different "relations to things" (p. 188) are identified by the type-name that is often given to them: fetish, idol, and totem. The difference between these types of object-relations can only be assessed by inquiring "into what it says and does, what rituals and myths circulate around it" (p. 189). A fetish is an object that is evaluated as inferior, and the subordination "seems deeply linked with trauma" (p. 192), frustration,[16] privacy, and colonialism. An idol is an object that is evaluated as superior, and the superordination is linked with iconoclasm, the norms of language and theater, authority, and the "'received systems' of philosophy" (p. 189). Finally, a totem is an object that is evaluated as equal, and the kinship is linked with friendship, tribal identity, monuments, and ritual scapegoating.[17] Diana Taylor extended this analysis. She showed that two of these categories, the idol and the fetish, are strategically used by critics to delegitimate the object-relations of others.[18] However, as soon as this practice of delegitimation reaches to destroy the 'fetish' or the 'idol,' a new object is created out of the fragments (Taylor, 2003); for Mitchell, this is the great irony of iconoclasm.

The Billerica Dam is artificial, and Thoreau used this constructedness as a means to delegitimate the dam through an abuse of both fetishism and idolatry. Thoreau's descriptions made it clear that the dam had caused an enormous amount of ecological harm. In Thoreau's discussion of the fish migration patterns disrupted by the dam, he suggested that it was inevitable that some greater friend of the fish would take a crowbar and smash the dam. This is iconoclasm, and it doesn't acknowledge the reality that the dam was responsible for Henry and John's convenient passage through the locks. In addition, in Thoreau's discussion of the then-recent floods affecting the farmers, his attention to the discovery of the cause of the flooding is particularly telling: "speedy emissaries revealed the unnatural secret, in the new float-board, wholly a foot in width, added to their already too high privileges by the dam proprietors" (1985, p. 32). This is strategic fetishism in Thoreau's denaturing of the float-board through a reduction of the board to simple economic greed. Interestingly, Thoreau did not subject the canal locks to this level of

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[16] W. J. T. Mitchell associated the fetish with what he called 'desire.' However, since Mitchell defined desire as a lack ("in the gap between demand . . . and need"; 2005, p. 73), I have adjusted Mitchell's terminology to reflect my evaluation of how Mitchell would respond to my framework.

[17] The term "scapegoating" has connotations of pathological illness. However, as Kenneth Burke argued, there is a distinction between ritual scapegoating and pathological scapegoating. Ritual scapegoating involves a ritual in which *some* of the sins of the group are transferred to the scapegoat before sacrifice. Pathological scapegoating involves a spontaneous blaming of a scapegoat for *all* of the group's problems (Burke, 1941).

[18] W. J. T. Mitchell (2005) restricted this practice of delegitimation to the iconoclasts.

attack. The description of the canal locks occurs only once in the text. For Thoreau, "These old gray structures, with their quiet arms stretched over the river in the sun, appeared like natural objects in the scenery, and the kingfisher and sandpiper alighted on them as readily as on stakes or rocks" (p. 194).

The shunting of the dam and its float-board into the categories of idol and fetish is clear evidence of Thoreau's failure to recognize the possibility of friendship with nature in 1849. This lack of humility occurred because Thoreau could have had a relationship of giving and receiving insights about nature with the dam, as destructive as it was to the local residents. Alternatively, Thoreau could have left his discussion of the dam as laconic and benign as his description of the locks.

The closest that Thoreau came to experiencing folly inside *A Week* was when the two brothers almost lost fruit that they were preparing to enjoy. Toward the end of "Wednesday," the two brothers were setting up camp. They unpacked their prize melon that had been in the boat from the beginning of their voyage. It was warm, and so they placed it in the cool water at the river's edge. After they finished pitching the tent and returned to the boat, the melon was gone. The two brothers rushed onto the boat and frantically rowed down the river in pursuit of their fruit. Eventually, in the failing light, they were just able to find it. There was no further mention of the episode, and no humility associated with almost losing their prized melon. The Thoreau family was famous for their watermelon parties (Sullivan, 2009).

The internal picture of *A Week*'s irony is just as clear as the external picture, and it is much easier to demonstrate. Steven Fink exposed Thoreau's oversights running up to *A Week*'s publication. Thoreau made two external errors in his compositional choices and his marketing decisions. Both of these mistakes are external in the sense of involving Thoreau's audience. The compositional choice was, unsurprisingly, identical with the technique of constructing and deconstructing his travel narrative, and the marketing decision was Thoreau's willingness to fund his own publication (Fink, 1992).

The construction and deconstruction of *A Week*'s travel narrative inherently made difficulties for Thoreau's audience. Part of this difficulty was the level of trust Thoreau placed into the ability of the audience to detect his technique. As Fink pointed out, large portions of "Monday" were self-reflexive comments (p. 237). However, Thoreau veiled these comments as references to other works, particularly the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Laws of Menu*. This made it more difficult for lay readers to understand that Thoreau was referring to his own text. Furthermore, without this key, readers were apt to be overwhelmed by the complex juxtapositions between the thin thread of empirical observations and the numerous disparate digressions laid out throughout the text (p. 237). Most of the readers were left with no compass with which to navigate the tributaries, and as such, the text appeared merely to "juxtapose the superficial with the profound, alternating between the literal and the abstract, and so giving his reader no real choice in how to use the book" (p. 237).

The problem of audience access to the higher levels of meaning in *A Week* was confirmed empirically by Thoreau's own readers. While there were many positive reviews, a number of them took notice of this problem of access and voiced

their irritation (pp. 241-242, pp. 250-251). Perhaps the most notable example of these review complaints came from James Russell Lowell, a contemporary poet of Thoreau who graduated from Harvard a year after him (Harding, 1982). Lowell is famous for publishing severe criticism of Thoreau's writings, belittling him for being a copy of his mentor. With respect to *A Week*, Lowell thought that the digressions, including Thoreau's semi-intimate address to possible friends, were inappropriate (Lowell, 1849, p. 47 as discussed by Fink, 1992, pp. 250-251). Other critical reviewers were unhappy with Thoreau's transparent pantheism, but by far the most complaints were made against Thoreau's violation of the genre's conventions (Fink, 1992, p. 244, p. 251). Other reviewers were more accepting of Thoreau's genius (p. 242). Nevertheless, there was no consensus among the reviewers (p. 251). The sales of the book were dismal, and the 75 copies that were distributed to the reviewers were provided at Thoreau's own expense (p. 251). Thoreau's publisher did nothing to popularize the book, having no stake in its success (p. 251).

In between *A Week*'s commercial failure and the empirically verified inability of the majority of its possible readers to follow Thoreau's scenario, the most significant failure of Thoreau's project in 1849 was in its archival interface between those internal and external mechanisms. As I discussed in my review of Taylor's (2003) typology of archives and repertoires, the main difference between the two forms is in relation to the scenario in which they are presented to their audiences and the options that exist for response. As Taylor argued, repertoires "enact embodied memory" by allowing people to "participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there,' being a part of the transmission" (p. 2). A repertoire can change its scenario from one performance to the next, or it can change from one surrogate to the next. These alterations to the scenario can happen for any number of reasons, but the most salient is when it is deemed in need of revision to meet the needs of local conditions (Roach, 1996, pp. 28-29). Compared to repertoires, archives have relatively inflexible scenarios, since "what changes over time is the value, relevance, or meaning of the archive, how the items it contains get interpreted, even embodied" (Taylor, 2003, p. 19). Archives are selected over repertoires precisely because they are "resistant to change" (p. 19), and as such, the archive of *A Week* reaches us with the recalcitrance that a repertoire would not have. If *A Week* were a repertoire, the memory would be able to be modified in two important ways. First, since *A Week* did not adequately account for the nature of the publishing industry (indeed, *A Week* is still read far less than *Walden*), embodied transmissions of the memory of the Thoreau brothers' river trip could be made more appealing through careful venue and style choices. Specifically, the seasick readers who can get no farther than common sense might have a better chance of experiencing Thoreauvian grief by witnessing a performance of *A Week* than by reading-to-forget. Second, and perhaps more importantly, because a repertoire is open to alteration as it is transmitted from one performer to the next, those performance choices would always be provisional and open to further experimentation by new imaginations. The only check on this transmission is the existence of a reminder of what a repertoire is supposed to perform. Absent that, there is no check on alterations between surrogates. For Roach (1996),

"discontinuities rudely interrupt the succession of surrogates," and genealogies have revealed that any promise of a preserved origin is a political fantasy (p. 25).

Summary

A Week was both an autobiography and a counter-monument, albeit a durable one that reliably repeats itself. Through this generic invention, Thoreau violated the conventional expectations of the travel narrative, and alienated many of his readers. Thoreau was grief-stricken, and his plan to assuage the intensity of that grief involved recruiting his readers to share in the experience of loss in a process of construction and deconstruction (Fink, 1992), sacralization and desacralization (McGeough, 2011). This two-stage process was supposed to bury Thoreau's brother under the immense weight of dozens of stories of pastoral America, installed within the minds of his readers. Unfortunately, Thoreau was asking far too much from most of his readers, and his expectation of selling a thousand copies evinces Thoreau's ironic shortsighted lack of interest in the public dynamics of the publishing industry. Without a comic frame (Burke, 1937/1984b) and a living repertoire that could stand to alter Thoreau's scenario (Taylor, 2003), Thoreau's audience was/is in jeopardy of not understanding why the two-stage process that results in loss was or is necessary or useful.

As much pain as this failure sustained the intensity of Thoreau's grief, it is clear that he needed to experience what it is like to be an *alazon* to understand why having such an experience is important for himself and his readers. Thoreau had expectations concerning what he was going to be getting out of his relationship with nature and his audience. His shortsighted relationship with the publishing industry shows that he expected it to lack parity. His risky engagement with the audience that he invoked by addressing strangers in the travel narrative industry shows that he did not expect the ambivalence that his book attracted. The next section shows how the ensuing years of Thoreau's life brought him to recognize and profit from his mistakes, to appreciate the awesome value that nature held in store for him during his solitary walks in the middle of the night, as well as to develop a blueprint for bringing a similar experience to his readers that did not invite the wrath of his critics or the apathy of his readers.

Walking to the Crypt of Melancholia

In the early 1850s, Thoreau was working on a lecturing project about walking (Fink, 1992). He had lectured on the topic about three weeks prior to his experience with ether (Milder, 1995). The themes of Thoreau's "Walking" (1862) included the nomadic nature of walking, how it values the wild, and what happens to the walker during the process. Thoreau's argument in "Walking" that I want to highlight here is his notice that walking forces people to pay attention to their sensory experiences, and those experiences occur in the present moment. While simultaneously living in the present moment and not staying in one place, not tracking one's place, walkers are uniquely suited to practicing healthy skepticism. Thoreau's skepticism is a mode of thinking that constantly challenges cultural and environmental knowledge, turning the experience of walking into a powerful and

simple practice for anyone to live with their surroundings and to use that life as a standard to assess the legitimacy of their desires.

In this section, I review the themes embedded in "Walking." It should be no surprise that the essay is a complex weaving of interrelated themes. In my opinion, it is Thoreau's finest essay, holding more potential for political change than "Resistance to Civil Government." Once I have introduced the topics of "Walking," I discuss how the themes are all directed toward the redemptive powers of walking. As I discussed toward the end of Chapter One, Thoreau's breakthrough moment was being anesthetized with ether (Milder, 1995). The psychedelic experience made Thoreau aware of not only the possibility of friendship between himself and nature, but it also made him aware that his condition of melancholia invoked a specific incapacity (i.e., an incapacity to recognize that he had metaphorically incorporated his losses into himself). My purpose of bringing up "Walking" is ultimately to argue that the essay's major power is in its ability to tell the reader how to have a psychedelic experience without a psychedelic compound. That ability gives the walker a profound analogical command of language, making melancholic walkers aware of Arsić's literalization or Abraham and Torok's demetaphorization.

Walking: "The Enterprise and Adventure of the Day"

For Thoreau, walking is a wild art. It is a form of sauntering which aims only to reach the "Holy Land" (1862, p. 657) of "leisure, freedom, and independence" (p. 658). This holy land is forever elsewhere, not in any place where one frequents or stays. According to Thoreau, "It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker" (p. 658). Many of us try to be walkers, to follow the form of the saunterer, but for Thoreau our failure to be "Walkers" is our unpreparedness or faint-hearted unwillingness to leave behind everything that we have claimed and gathered (p. 658). To leave that assemblage of people and things requires courage and readiness, and that prerequisite grows larger in proportion to the people and things that urge us to stay.

Thoreau himself was reliant on walking to live. Thoreau openly admitted, "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements" (p. 658). Thoreau found the public cultural tendency to stay in one place to be toxic, so much so that he thought that mechanics and shopkeepers "deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago" (p. 658). For Thoreau, the attraction of walking is not avoidance of anything or an instrument for some other purpose; walking "is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day" (p. 659). In other words, walking is living.

The challenge of walking is to walk without purpose (p. 659). According to Thoreau, leisure, freedom, and independence emerge from the practice, and it is impossible to saunter to any particular destination or with intention (p. 659). For Thoreau, walking is the witnessing of wildness by perpetually returning to one's senses (p. 659). This is why Thoreau believed that not everyone was cut out to be a walker, because most people are not interested in walking in this way (p. 658). Thoreau confessed that even he sometimes found it difficult to walk properly to the

woods because of his attraction to and preoccupation with civilized occupations and destinations (p. 659). According to Thoreau, when one reaches the wilderness, he or she notices how small the world of civilization was in comparison to the world in which we live (p. 660). This is a striking way to contemplate the limitations of the public sphere and what commonly passes for knowledge within it.

It can be difficult to find the woods if one does not aim for it in one's journey (p. 659). For Thoreau, his best guidance was an observation that his instincts, when allowed their freedom, move toward where the "earth seems more unexhausted and richer" (p. 662).[19] In practice, Thoreau found that this left him "attracted solely by a few square rods of impermeable and unfathomable bog" (p. 666). He even proposed to build his house in such a swamp, so that anyone who wished to visit him had to walk into it (p. 666). The most socialized would not make the trek (p. 666).

Embracing "The Insufficiency of All That We Called Knowledge Before"

For Thoreau, the wild is a holy fertility, but that fertility goes beyond a mere horticultural fortune and reaches an epistemic register (p. 667). Superficially, the wild provides fertile lands for farming and property development. The fertility of swamps is no secret to farmers. Some farmers, wrote Thoreau, had made a commercial enterprise out of the practice of draining and clearing swamps (p. 667). At a deeper level, wild fertility yields a "Sympathy with Intelligence" that provides the humus of our intellectual growth (p. 671). This sympathy with intelligence for Thoreau makes ignorance useful and beautiful (pp. 670-671).

Thoreau argued that useful ignorance is beautiful because it is responsible for correcting and challenging what we think we know (p. 671). For Thoreau, this is "Sympathy with Intelligence" (p. 671). To prove this, Thoreau asked the following rhetorical question: "Which is the best man to deal with,—he who knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he

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[19] In the 19th century, Thoreau found the wild by walking toward the west. Thoreau's correlation of the richness of wilderness (specifically, uncultivated land) and the west seems to have tempted him to make connections between cultural advancement and westward movement, and his writing in this section has made him an easy target for Edward Said's critique of orientalism (1978). To a certain presentist extent, Thoreau deserves to be critiqued as an orientalist, but this criticism needs to be tempered by awareness that his observations were historical, not theoretical. Thoreau did not pretend that any single locale, such as Atlantis, ancient Greece, "The Orient," or any other mythical name was the origin of civilization. In fact, he was moving away from origins, observing that civilization seems to be moving westward, and a glance back toward established civilizations, such as Atlantis, Europe, ancient Greece, East Asia, or beyond, tell us from where the fruit of the wild has been imported. Thoreau's orient was not a specific place, such as Asia, but a cardinal direction, one that is not sound in 2017. Indeed, if Thoreau were alive today, his direction of advancement would not be westward, but would be either downward into the oceans or upward into space at "a tangent to this sphere" (1985, p. 579).

who really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all?" (p. 671). When someone is guided by useful ignorance, they seek more experience to identify the boundaries of what is known, and that experience is obtained because one does not have "the habit of seeking after a law which we may obey" (p. 671). It is a "higher knowledge" that culminates in "a grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before" (p. 671).

Finding "The Literature Which Gives Expression to Nature"
　　When Thoreau was walking through the woods during his nighttime walks, he discovered that the usual sources of literature were not suited to the natural forms of expression that he witnessed (Lebeaux, 1984). As Richard Lebeaux observed, "Nature would provide him with a language, private and yet rooted in external reality, for discussing and imaging his life" (p. 137). This was an involuntary and serendipitous "return to the primitive *analogical* and derivative senses of words" (Thoreau, 1906b, p. 462 as quoted by Lebeaux, 1984, p. 137).
　　The literature that gives expression to nature is one that functions analogically, but in such a way that allows metaphorical encoding (p. 137). For Richard Rorty (1989), such use of language prevents anyone from saying whether the sentences are true or false, at least until others pay attention to them and imbue them with fresh meaning. As Rorty wrote, "One can only savor it or spit it out" (p. 18). This is where Thoreau discovered that a void of metaphorical content allowed nature, of which we are a part, to do its work:

> Where is the literature which gives expression to Nature? He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him; who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved; who derived his words as often as he used them,—transplanted them to his page with earth adhering to their roots; whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half-smothered between two musty leaves in a library,—ay, to bloom and bear fruit there, after their kind, annually; for the faithful reader, in sympathy with surrounding Nature. (1862, p. 668)

One can see the deliberate refrain from signification in the above quote, since Thoreau does not show how the growing of buds between the pages of a book extends to the process of reading, but this certainly does not prevent us from making the words polysemic by interpreting them. The turn of phrase lacks any further direction, and as such, is not determined by Thoreau's compositional choices. Rather, the direction of development is placed within the powers of nature herself, which we are a part of; specifically, the development of those words are expected to *walk*, to follow the restorative development of how *we* understand words to function as buds. Thoreau obviously did not invent botanical embryos, and yet he had imported that world with only the observation that those words would "expand like the buds at the approach of spring" (p. 668). What does that mean to *you*?

Discussion

For Thoreau, the literature that gives expression to nature is the same kind of literature that the melancholic subject naturally produces, but it requires an awareness of the void that it creates, a vacuum that others are induced to fill (Golemba, 1990). It invokes a language that is imbued with analogical meaning, but is not placed "in a fixed place in a language game" (Rorty, 1989, p. 18). It recruits nature (e.g., us) to do the work of imbuing words with analogical meaning, just as the melancholic crypt holds a secret that affects the trajectory of its keeper in dark ways. What Thoreau had accomplished, through his experience with melancholia and his desperate escape to the nowhere of walking, was a recognition of literalization/demetaphorization. This effect is present not only in people with encrypted melancholia, as I discussed in my review of Arsić's and Abraham and Torok's research, but also in those who have received the dispensation of Heaven to be Walkers. These populations are probably the same group of people, since I would argue that it was the darkness of melancholia that led Thoreau's to exile and the swamp. Fortunately, such a process does not require a psychedelic substance. Going on a literal trip yourself goes directly from melancholia to those nighttime walks where one gets lost.

How does getting lost in the middle of the swamp replace the psychedelic experience? The answer to that question was most succinctly answered in *Walden* post-ether. Many of Thoreau's written concerns about losing one's self in *Walden* appeared after his insights in "Walking." Thoreau provided several examples of this happening to himself, to his guests, and to other people in the town of Concord. Becoming lost reproduces the psychedelic experience, which for many alchemists has been "the projection of the contents of the naïve prescientific mind" so that it can be examined (McKenna, 1992, p. 262):

> Not till we are completely lost, or turned round—for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost—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. Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations. (Thoreau, 1985, p. 459)

To find ourselves anew means that we have positioned ourselves without any discernable relation to public culture. This makes the lost walker ideally suited to recognize melancholia that might be buried within one's identity. Once that melancholia is recognized, the walker can examine the crypt and introject any desires from it for as long as they desire. Once this occurs, the experience of returning to civilization will force the subject to "learn the points of compass again" and allow the subject have a wider range of introjections than before.

Coda

The quotation at the beginning of this chapter surreptitiously captures the mechanics of melancholia. The traumatic loss of a brother caused a magical incorporation of a whole person within one's identity in metaphorical fashion, but

one in which the metaphor has been lost to the keeper of that crypt, that "Egyptian temple." Thoreau's journey into his mind, into the woods at night, brings us all back to this metaphor. The process of walking, of renouncing any claim to or recognition of the place upon which we stand, makes it possible for us to realize that our histories often belie a resignation of what is ours in favor of an old identity that we refuse to process.

This is the home of those so-called "many catechisms and religious books twanging a canting peal round the earth." Thoreau was induced, by the secret of the fact that he was living for others even after their departure, to "involuntarily rest of his oar." *His* oar wanted to go to nature to experience the color of bruised berries, to feel the sensation of a river on his naked body, and to write for an audience that may turn out to be his next friend, not a mere patron who would pay him money. This urge to generate meaning and to bury that meaning under a mountain of detail, was the project of Thoreau's first book. It exquisitely demonstrated the acrobatics of an inner world that leaves most people feeling left out, resentful, and suspicious. At the end of the day, Thoreau's first book, a counter-monument and an autobiography of the fusion of two men, failed to transmit the loss that he was attempting to mourn because his quest to achieve fame as a writer led him to the ironic production of an inflexible archive of loss.

The exit from this lack of accommodation, this identification with and insistence on a specific non-metaphorical metaphor, is to get lost in the most profound and literal ways possible. One must lose everything: the self and the world. Thoreau did it by first experiencing an embarrassing commercial failure, and his subsequent understanding that his publication opened himself to the criticism of an industry that he did not care about. By experiencing irony first-hand, by losing promises of fame, fortune, and friends, he retreated into the wilderness, and found himself within it recognizing the most important friendship of his life. Nature showed him how he had been exercising a "trained incapacity" to recognize metaphors (Burke, 1935/1984a, p. 7). The experience of an environment utterly elided of metaphors led Thoreau to understand how to write in a way that would provoke his readers to contribute their own meaning, instead of assuming that they would blindly follow the author's enigmatic secrets.

Chapter Three: Reading Rainbow

As I was desirous to recover the long lost bottom of Walden Pond, I surveyed it carefully, before the ice broke up, early in '46, with compass and chain and sounding line.
—*Walden*, Version C, circa 1849 (Schacht, n.d., "The Pond in Winter," para. 6a)

Walden's discussion of sounding Walden Pond began as a solitary sentence. If we restrict our reading to this sentence, we only get to know that Thoreau did it "carefully" while the pond was frozen, using standard surveying and sounding equipment. The matter of recovering "the long lost bottom of Walden Pond" appears to be an unencumbered and straightforward task. Thoreau is the only subject with whom the reader can identify.

Thoreau expanded this account significantly after his experience with publishing *A Week* in 1849. Not only did Thoreau add detail about his method, but he also discussed how other people dealt with the question of Walden Pond's bottom. By the time Thoreau was finished with *Walden*, the epigraph had expanded:

There have been many stories told about the bottom, or rather no bottom, of this pond, which certainly had no foundation for themselves. It is remarkable how long men will believe in the bottomlessness of a pond without taking the trouble to sound it. I have visited two such Bottomless Ponds in one walk in this neighborhood. Many have believed that Walden reached quite through to the other side of the globe. Some who have lain flat on the ice for a long time, looking down through the illusive medium, perchance with watery eyes into the bargain, and driven to hasty conclusions by the fear of catching cold in their breasts, have seen vast holes "into which a load of hay might be driven," if there were anybody to drive it, the undoubted source of the Styx and entrance to the Infernal Regions from these parts. Others have gone down from the village with a "fifty-six" and a wagon load of inch rope, but yet have failed to find any bottom; for while the "fifty-six" was resting by the way, they were paying out the rope in the vain attempt to fathom their truly immeasurable capacity for marvellousness. But I can assure my readers that Walden has a reasonably tight bottom at a not unreasonable, though at an unusual, depth. I fathomed it easily with a cod-line and a stone weighing about a pound and a half, and could tell accurately when the stone left the bottom, by having to pull so much harder before the water got underneath to help me. The greatest depth was exactly one hundred and two feet; to which may be added the five feet which it has risen since, making one hundred and seven. This is a remarkable depth for so small an area; yet not an inch of it can be spared by the imagination. What if all ponds were shallow? Would it not react on the minds of men? I am thankful that this pond was made deep and pure for a symbol. While men believe in the infinite some ponds will be thought to be bottomless. (1985, pp. 549-551)

Interpreted literally, this is mostly a straightforward survey of surveys. It compares Thoreau's method to the unfounded methods of some of his neighbors. However, despite Thoreau's recognition that there were many stories told about the bottomless Walden Pond, Thoreau was thankful that these stories are symbolically sustainable. Why was Thoreau thankful that others gazed into the pond and saw illusions? Why was Thoreau thankful that others brought their ball and chain to Walden?

Let us return to the riddle of Thoreau's efforts to "recover the long lost bottom of Walden Pond" by exploring the illusions and marvels of his neighbors. How does exploring other peoples' methods serve the purpose of sounding Walden Pond?

The answer to that riddle has to do with a three-fold symbol. If we begin with the fact that Thoreau began this paragraph with a laconic and literal description of his survey of the pond and then expanded it with the suggestion that the pond's depth and purity serves as a symbol that includes other people's attempt to assess its depth, then Thoreau's discussion suggests that the three individuals involved, by their mere presence, are doing interpretation. An interpretation that I propose here has to do with the various techniques that are used to interpret *Walden*. With respect to the multiple claims concerning the bottom of Walden Pond, there are several techniques at work. These techniques fall into three categories: illusive surveying, self-sounding, and friendship.

The first set of techniques involved villagers avoiding the activity of sounding altogether. These people appeal to tradition and perpetuate fallacious foundations for belief, or as Thoreau wrote, no foundation at all. However, Thoreau did not write that he questioned his neighbors about their sounding techniques. Thoreau wrote that he had witnessed his neighbors compromising themselves, planking on the frozen pond, and gazing through the murky blue ice in an "illusive" attempt to reckon the contradictory voids in the bottom of the pond with their own eyes. These people, trusting no instruments but their eyes, fool themselves into seeing holes at the bottom of the pond that lead to who-knows-where. Shadows, tricks of light, and slight variations of texture are all capable of nurturing the delusion that there is only an apparent bottom to the pond. Similarly, this attitude fosters the belief that *Walden* contains holes in its bottom that carry readers to a mythology.

Still others, who did not follow folklore blindly, adhered to strict self-reliance by using an imported fifty-six pound weight attached to a heavy one-inch rope (Harding, 1995, p. 278). Such a monstrosity would need to be carted into the woods, and could not have been carried by Thoreavian sauntering. These villagers came to the pond with expectations and fancy that could not be contained within the "reasonable" mandate of reality. These competitive weight lifters,[20] similar to the ice gazers, fooled themselves into believing that the pond was bottomless because their equipment was more appropriate for exhibition, competition, or anchoring and less appropriate for measuring depth. They were not measuring the pond's depth.

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[20] According to historical records, throwing a fifty-six pound weight was a sanctioned athletic competition (Haug, 1909).

Instead, they were actually measuring their "capacity for marvellousness," which has "never been measured" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 330). By using an exceptionally heavy apparatus that is more appropriate for assessing prowess than for sounding depth, many people have approached the meaning of *Walden* weighed down with technique imported from the competitive elsewhere. These people reach the same conclusion about the bottom of the pond as the villagers who stare into the ice and see the Styx.

Finally, Thoreau discussed his own technique, which used an instrument deceptively similar to the other villagers who brought their burdens from the village to the ponds. In fact, Thoreau's technique is a kind of hybrid of illusive surveying and self-sounding in terms of technique. The only difference was that Thoreau's sounding line was much lighter and more compact, borrowed from the forest and his tackle, the stone being something that must be found with surveying eyes, and the fishing line being an artifact from civilization that must be felt and handled like rope. What made Thoreau's technique successful was the fact that the lighter line and weight allowed him to feel the alternation between when the stone was resting on the pond floor, which cannot be directly assessed, and when the stone was suspended in the water. Thoreau was able to feel this difference because he received "help" from the water, or more accurately, when the sediment was not adhering to the stone. This is similar to the calculation of a mathematical limit, which must be done indirectly. Thoreau's collaboration with the pond enabled him to notice that the pond's depth is both reasonable and unusual.

Thoreau's decision to cast these three techniques as three different personae suggests that we are meant to identify with (at least one of) them. According to Burke, to identify with another only requires the partial joining of interests (1950, pp. 20-23). Anyone who reads about these individuals is likely to identify with at least one of them. For readers who wish to appeal to ready-made illusions or who wish to import their own cultural background to interpret the text, then the amateur surveyor who lays on the ice and the fifty-six pound weightlifter offer safe and hospitable alternatives to friendship with *Walden*. Thoreau did not hold any ill will toward his readers who identify with these foils. In contrast, *A Week* has few accommodations for readers who may be less prepared or willing to engage or participate with Thoreau's swerves and riddles. There is little space for non-friends to engage *A Week*, as his address to strangers is laden with intimate expectation and promise. Instead of foisting on the reader a dilemma between friendship and alienation, the reader of *Walden* encounters alternative options for rhetorical identification. Choosing between the illusive surveyor, the self-sounder, and the friend is a serious and continuing choice in *Walden*.

Yet, despite *Walden*'s hospitality, only friendly collaboration between reader and text yields an accurate assessment of the depth of the text (Buell, 2010). Thoreau had high expectations for friendship, and the demands on the reader that are embedded in *Walden* demonstrate Thoreau's hope. If the reader has any hope of becoming *Walden*'s friend, then they must try to be sensitive to the text's moments of gravitas. Because friendship for Thoreau involved both giving and receiving virtue (Crosswhite, 2010), *Walden* sometimes gives to the reader, and sometimes it

takes from the reader, and this reader is expected to reciprocate. Often *Walden*'s reader gazes into its depth and purity to see or feel the weight of one's self or myths reflected. Being a friend to *Walden* involves a manifold challenge to the reader to generate in the space between brain and page where they should take flights of interpretation, and where they should focus on identifying specific and carefully constructed meaning.

Walden is not simply a chameleon that morphs to fit the reader's fancy. It is much more than that. It only appears that way to *Walden*'s non-friends. Thoreau had many important things to say about a wide variety of activities, and so an interpretation of *Walden*'s passages is not simply right or wrong. If the reader pays attention, *Walden* takes the reader in and pushes back. The reader *can* go too far afield and stumble into traps of irony, and these traps are not simple negations. The reason for this is because Thoreau was not about to let the lay reader flounder into resentment, but as Burke (1937/1984b) pointed out, they should be exposed and then invited into the comic frame. Thoreau learned that lesson after *A Week*. While Thoreau wrote that the villagers reached unfounded conclusions about the pond's bottom, he did not ridicule them. In fact, he was thankful for the fact that the pond is both deep and pure, since it attracts the techniques that form the basis for friendly collaboration. Through the polysemic nature of sounding the pond, I read Thoreau as counting on readers to follow their own bias to reach unfounded conclusions about the text's meaning. Hopefully these readers notice themselves in the comic frame, but if they do not, they must go their own way. Thoreau wanted some of his readers to proliferate illusions of interpretation or impose their own meanings on it. Doing so produces teachable moments, and is preferable to feeling excluded from the experience altogether.

Reading *Walden* becomes richer when it is read as a possible friendship. This is perhaps Lawrence Buell's (1995) most important notice about *Walden*, and one that requires additional work. Buell was able to make this argument by focusing on *Walden* as a work of nature writing and as a work that inspired other nature writers. This argument about friendly collaboration is bolstered by several of Buell's observations about *Walden* and other products of nature writing: (1) it deploys a deceptive operation of metaphor, (2) the persona of Thoreau is not stable, nor does it develop linearly, and (3) there is important intertextual matter that informs the reader about the character of the author. These arguments are also components for the remainder of this dissertation: The first argument about metaphor explains Thoreau's language of desire in Chapter Four (Golemba, 1990), the second argument about Thoreau's personae explains Thoreau's language of ascent, also in Chapter Four (Milder, 1995), and the intertextual argument helps to explain how another nature-writer responded to *Walden* in Chapter Five.

In this chapter, I examine these three sub-arguments and apply them to *Walden* and *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (2007). This comparison reveals textual offers of friendship and how they accommodate faux friends. *Walden* bears out the relationship between metaphor, personae, and the boundary between the text's inside and outside. Two of these sub-arguments support the argument about friendship in reading through *Tinker Creek*. Reading *Tinker Creek* is strikingly

similar to reading *Walden*. My main reason for selecting *Tinker Creek* for comparison here has to do with how it is responsive to *Walden* as a polemic, an argument I develop in Chapter Five. However, I am introducing Dillard in this chapter because her work corroborates two of Buell's arguments that illuminate the friendly potential of *Walden*.

Introducing *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek was Annie Dillard's big break. In May 1968, Dillard earned a master's degree in English, conducting a formal analysis of *Walden*'s "The Pond in Winter." In her thesis, Dillard argued, "Thoreau drenched himself in Walden Pond, instilling in himself, drop by drop, a sense of the world's reality" (1968, p. 10). Walden Pond is responsive to her visitors, Dillard went on to elaborate, and the pure water in its cup fosters no secrets or deceptions. It charts all disturbances and incursions of its contents before returning to its liquid originality. For Dillard, such a grail is a perfect metaphor: "it is not *like* heaven, it *is* heaven" (p. 24). Thoreau, according to Dillard, literally "turns its readers into Thoreaus" (p. 4). While I am mindful of Dillard's notice of literalness in Thoreau's rhetoric, I would insist that the reader doesn't quite become a Thoreau. Instead, a successful partnership between *Walden* and its reader imbues the reader with a few drops of *Walden*'s purity. After Dillard completed her thesis, she "lived quietly on Tinker Creek in Virginia's Roanoke Valley, observing the natural world, taking notes, and reading voluminously in a wide variety of disciplines" (Dillard, 2007, p. 286), similar to Thoreau. In addition, she began to read texts on philosophy, the history of science, and biology with an unusual urgency (Dillard, 1987). She collated her research onto note cards (Dillard, 2007, p. 280), and set herself to write her own semi-Christian version of *Walden*. She published her text in 1974, and the next year, she was rewarded with the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction.

Tinker Creek is not a retread of *Walden*, but it does bear a striking similarity to it in several ways. One of the most salient differences between the two texts is the fact that *Tinker Creek* does not cultivate the comic corrective that is so crucial in *Walden*. There are few moments, if any, in which Dillard catches the reader in a moment of irony. This is likely due to the fact that Dillard's project was to bring her natural explorations into her empirical and textual world to understand a personal divine. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the two texts do contain similarities. Most notably, the two texts are similar with respect to their arrangement into two parts with a significant contrast between them.

Tinker Creek engages in social criticism only indirectly; for the most part, Dillard used her text to explore the intersections between her theological orientation and the natural world. The result is that her text has two main parts, divided into the first and second halves and ordered according to Neoplatonic Christian theology (p. 279). The first half consists of a series of chapters that Dillard identified as *via positiva*, which theologians have described as the rigor of identifying the positive attributes of God (pp. 279-280). The second half consists of *via negativa*, which involves the identification of the traits that God does not possess (pp. 279-280). On the one hand, Dillard's *via positiva* cultivates the wholesome and

apparently divine aspects of her natural observations and research, such as the presentist pleasure of rubbing and scratching a puppy's belly, or the curious alliance between Dillard and spiders, or the satisfaction of using praying mantises to control garden pests without chemicals. The midpoint of the text is a chapter about a flood at Tinker Creek (p. 280). Dillard then allows her mostly rosy picture of creation to be dashed by the predictable brutalities of survival and the disgusting aesthetics of animal excess, both of which are topics in the narrative. Dillard's *via negativa* broods on the disturbing and grotesque aspects of nature that defy her understanding and acceptance. For example, she intuits that the fecundity of "'acres and acres of rats' has a suitably chilling ring to it that is decidedly lacking if I say, instead, 'acres and acres of tulips'" (p. 167). Other examples include the injustice that parasites exist, the hard lifestyle of Eskimos, and the ravenous appetite of the locust.

Dillard's concern with making an artistic statement about God and nature inevitably leads her text away from concerns about Thoreauvian friendship. What remains interesting regarding *Tinker Creek*, then, like *Walden*, is their relationships with metaphor and the importance of intertextual details to its meaning. The remainder of this chapter will be focused on teasing out the metaphorical, personal, and intertextual factors in *Walden*'s possible friendship with its reader and identifying the ways in which *Tinker Creek* validates its predecessor.

Befriending *Walden* and *Tinker Creek*

As I discussed in Chapter Two, Thoreau advanced a complex and groundbreaking theory of friendship in *A Week*. This theory defined friendship as a process that involved the reciprocal giving and taking of virtue that temporarily joins together individuals (Crosswhite, 2010). I argued that when Thoreau published *A Week*, he was prejudiced against endowing inanimate objects with the role of friend. I also argued that the fiasco of that book's publication caused a sustained crisis (Milder, 1995) that made Thoreau confront this error and consider nature itself as a candidate for his model of friendship.

In light of Thoreau's consideration of non-human agents as potential friends, I argue that Thoreau endeavored to make *Walden* do more than *A Week* could accomplish: to engage in friendship between itself and (some of) its readers. To a certain extent, Buell already made this argument in the guise of "a fuller communication in which the reader becomes a legitimate partner, feels freer to make what he will of Thoreau, and ultimately digests Thoreau's texts more fully now that the word has been made flesh" (Buell, 1995, p. 382). However, I find myself clarifying what Buell would readily affirm regarding the finer points of what that partnership entails and how Thoreau engaged a varied readership with parameters on those relationships. The main reason for this, I believe, is that Buell does not respond to Thoreau's theory of friendship. The nature of *Walden*'s collaboration is not the same for all of its readers, and not determined solely by readers or solely by the text. Because friendship between *Walden* and its readers is not pre-established, the text engages the reader as a possible friend (i.e., as a stranger). Depending on how that relationship develops, it is an open question of whether the reader will function as a friend, and it hinges on how the reader engages with the text on the

three fronts that I extracted from Buell's analysis: metaphor, personae, and the world outside of the text.

Metaphor

The common thread between *Walden* and *Tinker Creek* with respect to metaphor is the way in which metaphors seem to be ubiquitous, and yet when the text is examined without relation to the reader, the metaphors are not in abundance. This curious difference between what a New Critic would find in the text and what a reception study would find makes the audience the critical part of textual analysis for both *Walden*, *Tinker Creek*, or any text that deploys a rhetoric that resembles what Henry Golemba has referred to as Thoreau's "language of desire" (1990, p. 7), a concept I explore in detail in Chapter Four. In terms of *Walden*, the textual ecosystem of symbols appears to be a reprise of Thoreau's ideas and practices, and Buell (1995) has noted that there is a temptation (which should be resisted) to read *Walden* as autobiography. A few of the symbols are metaphors, but most the symbols are fertile words and phrases that invite metaphorical interpretation. Furthermore, these symbols and metaphors are released as the text progresses. *Tinker Creek* functions in a similar, albeit more explicit way. Most of Dillard's are reacquired; at least one of her symbols is silently allowed to escape.

The fact that *Walden* contains metaphors is not a controversial claim in light of the research discussed so far, and it should be recalled that this argument did not exist before Francis Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941; Buell, 1995; Bickman, 1992). In that seminal primer of American Studies (Abelove, 2003), Matthiessen noted that the seasons in *Walden* correlate with the spiritual metamorphosis of a naturist into a social critic—an estranged student who returned to the Emersonian promise of Transcendentalism with the boon of naturism. For Matthiessen, Thoreau's *Walden* is a gospel of political economy. Deploying the metaphor terminology of I. A. Richards (1936) to analyze Matthiessen's argument, naturism was merely the vehicle for the tenor of social responsibility.

The problem with this reading of Matthiessen's perspective is that most of what people read as Thoreau's metaphors are actually not 'his' metaphors. As Buell pointed out, Thoreau largely abandons the economy metaphor after it is established in the text's opening chapter (1995, p. 281), creating a precedent for the remainder of the text. However, the curious thing about this claim is that the vast majority of the moments in which the reader thinks that 'economy' is used as a metaphor of environmental ecology, it is not. Instead, aside from passing references to political economy and the economy of living, the opening chapter discusses actual economy, which derives from the Greek οἰκονομία (*oikonomia*), or "household management" (economy, n.d.). In addition, the string of letters forming 'house' appears 93 times in "Economy." Thoreau's 'economy' is literal, following Arsić's proposition to read *Walden* literally and resist metaphorical interpretation (2016). However, Arsić's directive is hardly a common sentiment; given the readiness of Thoreauvian researchers to introduce metaphorical readings into the text, my own practice of allegorizing Thoreau's prose for my chapter epigraphs, as well as my repeated question "What does that mean to *you*?", it is necessary to consider *both* literal (to

the author) and metaphorical (to the reader) interpretations, thereby creating an interpretive situation in which meaning becomes polysemic.[21] *Walden* thus uses environmental imagery in ways that do not exhaust their potential uses, even though there is a common and persistent belief that meaning pre-exists a given act of interpretation. It is probable that, given the mechanism at work in the process of reading *Walden*, the metaphorical functionality is the result of what Buell and Golemba (1990; who I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter) refer to as a co-authorship that makes it difficult to tell when the creation of meaning ends, if it does at all.

In addition to creation, *Walden* appears to be in a constant process of self-destruction and re-creation as it is read. According to Martin Bickman (1992), Thoreau seems to have been particularly fixated on undermining his previous chapters in the first half of the text; after "Economy" and before "The Ponds," each successive chapter unexpectedly appears to discuss a topic in such a way that undermines or abandons the arguments made in previous chapters. Just as the *eiron* undermines an *alazon* and that *eiron* goes on to become someone else's *alazon* (Muecke, 1969), Thoreau undermined many of his 'past' literary constructions, making it difficult to identify when he believed what he wrote. These pasts are not buried under overwhelming mountains of detail, like they are in *A Week.* Instead of being lost and forgotten, the reader is left wondering when or if those details will find a reprise. Various readers over the years have appreciated Thoreau's catch and release treatment of symbols, and some have used his technique more explicitly in their own works.

Like *Walden*, Dillard's *Tinker Creek* is a rich storehouse of fertile symbols, but Dillard's strategy is more explicit, making her text a useful foil. Her technique consisted of producing a master metaphor, and then using that metaphor to pierce an array of secondary symbols for the reader to interpret. The master metaphor of *Tinker Creek* that sets off the interpretive cascade is Dillard's identity claim as a hunter who stalks and pierces symbols, with her book being "the straying trail of blood" (2007, p. 15). Dillard's narrator often releases those pierced symbols, but

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[21] Here I follow Richard Rorty's extension of Nietzsche's definition of truth as dead metaphor, whereas a metaphor, properly speaking, is alive (Edwards, 1997, p. 127): "If you want to be remembered by future generations, go in for poetry rather than for mathematics. If you want your books to be read rather than respectfully shrouded in tooled leather, you should try to produce tingles rather than truth. What we call common sense—the body of widely accepted truths—is, just as Heidegger and Nabokov thought, a collection of dead metaphors. Truths are the skeletons which remain after the capacity to arouse the senses—to cause tingles— has been rubbed off by familiarity and long usage. After the scales are rubbed off a butterfly's wing, you have transparency, but not beauty—formal structure without sensuous content. Once the freshness wears off the metaphor, you have plain, literal, transparent language—the sort of language which is ascribed not to any particular person but to 'common sense' or 'reason' or 'intuition,' ideas so clear and distinct you can look right through them" (Rorty, 1989, p. 152).

they continue to be the object of a narrative stalking as they flee and leave trails, and the narrator keeps them in the wings of the narrative proscenium—ready at hand for the moment when they are returned to the reader's attention for further interpretation. In contrast, *Walden* overrides his statements and chapters in the production of disturbing contradictions for readers to ponder (Bickman, 1992). As Arsić (2016) observed, Thoreau was a meticulous editor of his *Walden* drafts, and his maintenance of contradictions throughout the invention process indicates that contradictions were a deliberate feature of *Walden*.

The constellations of symbols, and the way that they are reprised and cause ironic developments, are clearly aspects of *Walden* and *Tinker Creek* that hinge on how one relates to the texts. The readers who embrace either illusive surveying or self-sounding have a high likelihood of overlooking these changes or concluding that Thoreau was wrong; they conclude that all of the symbols are advocated and that the resulting contradictions should be resolved so that some truth can be attained. In contrast, the reader who befriends *Walden* realizes that we are all wrong and in flux, a truth that should not be elided in favor of some truth that has yet to be synthesized. *Walden*'s friend catches and accepts change, and understands that it is acceptable for symbols to be receptive to metaphorical interpretation, and that metaphors have finite and renewable lifetimes. Once this dynamic is identified, it becomes an edifying reveal of the queerness that Thoreau and Dillard experienced and cultivated throughout their lives. As the next section discusses, this flux is present in *Walden* by what Buell referred to as multiple authorial personae that are neither stable nor presented linearly.

Personae

Thoreau's pursuit of fractured and nonlinear depictions of authorial presence in *Walden* makes it more difficult for readers to become familiar with 'him,' and it makes it more difficult for the reader to know if "Thoreau"/*Walden* is a friend (i.e., to name him/it as a friend). This destabilization also makes it more difficult for the reader to predict Thoreau's specific motives when he wrote his prose. In other words, *Walden* casts Thoreau and its reader as strangers, as possible friends, without saying so. In contrast, *Tinker Creek* makes great effort to cast its reader as a witness to a glorious yet strange creation and a subject in the kingdom of God, which does not require the fragmentation of her narrator. In the next section, I discuss *Tinker Creek*'s sustained attempt to conceal the identity of the narrator without this fragmentation.

The idea that any text is the product of a single author has been a common target of scholarly assault, but this idea has proven to be extremely durable, eliding Buell's disturbing thesis that there is not a singular or coherent Thoreau who wrote *Walden*. This lack of authorial stability has also given Robert Milder (1995) cause to find what he called Thoreau's "rhetoric of ascent" (p. 62), which I discuss in Chapter Four. Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Roland Barthes have each argued that the idea of an author that exercises authority over text or reader-response is problematic (Buell, 1995, p. 372). Yet, despite the efforts of these scholars, there is broad consensus among lay readers *and scholars* that "Thoreau" composed *Walden*

and his philosophy can be extracted from it (see Arsić, 2016, p. 140). The reason for this recalcitrance is that the author's byline is a functional part of the reading process, just as the rhetorical situation associated with a text influences the text's meaning (Bitzer, 1968), regardless of how much it has been constructed to fit the needs of the communicative encounter (Vatz, 1973). When a writer posits a conventional 'author,' he or she acknowledges the text's contribution toward agency and remains what Henry Louis Gates, Jr. referred to as "a participant in an articulated realm of social practice" (quoted by Buell, 1995, p. 372). When a text has a byline, it is necessary to recognize the reality of authorial agency, but it is not necessary to posit a pre-existing singular author for a text to exercise agency on behalf of a mutable individual who transformed during the invention of the text. The reader constructs and reconstructs an image of the author using and interpreting a collection of evidence. Far from being a weakening of the power of the author, this fragmentation might even be useful, as the previous section demonstrated regarding the discarding of symbols. Furthermore, it may also be useful to posit a non-linear progression from naiveté to enlightenment, as Buell discussed.

Two technical facts about *Walden*'s composition make it obvious that the idea of a single Thoreauvian persona within it is a verifiable illusion. First, the composition of *Walden* has a complex history. It started nominally in 1845, proceeded through eight drafts, and was eventually published nine years later in 1854 (Milder, 1995). Thoreau experienced most of the profound transformations in his life during this time, with the obvious exception being the death of his brother. Clapper's examination of the extant handwritten records of *Walden* held at the Huntington Library show that Thoreau was occasionally willing to preserve early portions of the manuscript with only minimal editing.[22] This means that as Thoreau grew in environmental maturity, some of the debunked ideas and preconceptions that he left behind were given sanctuary within *Walden* (Buell, 1995; Milder, 1995).

In terms of biography, Thoreau's relationship with nature went through several transitions. Buell has identified five phases in Thoreau's attitude toward nature: (1) pastime, (2) recreational resort, (3) place of comfort, (4) occupation, and then (5) cause (1995, p. 138). In addition, as I argued in Chapter Two, Thoreau transformed from a man who could not see inanimate objects as friends to one who found opportunities for parity and self-transformation in his openness to friendship with nature. This lesson about nature required considerable embarrassment and financial stress on Thoreau's part—a circuitous route to enlightenment that probably did not end with *Walden*'s publication.

Because of this complex history of self-transformation, as well as Thoreau's tendency to preserve his ironic ideas without comment rather than to elide them, Buell is right to conclude that there is a temptation to read *Walden* as autobiography. However, Buell urges caution.

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[22] This statement cannot be overgeneralized. For example, "Reading" was virtually complete by the time Thoreau left Walden Pond in 1847. In contrast, several paragraphs in the "Spring" chapter, which appeared in the first version, especially the sandbar paragraph, were subjected to thorough editing (Schacht, n.d.).

Reading *Walden* as autobiography is problematic because the text tends to disguise the historical moments in which Thoreau experienced ironic humility. Thoreau's story of self-transformation is highly focused on Thoreau's "odyssey from environmental naiveté to enlightenment" (p. 115). For the most part, I agree with Buell's assessment, and Thoreau's life experiences that do not fit neatly into that rubric tend to be disguised in the text. To find all of the autobiographical notes in *Walden*, the reader must look beyond the author's personae as projected by the text and look to other personae in the text. For example, the carnival of authorial voices in *Walden* does not have a mimetic voice of Thoreau's attitude toward publishing before 1849. Such a naïve Thoreau was never there undisguised in any version of the *Walden* manuscript. In contrast, Thoreau's confident unawareness about his publishing prospects is well preserved in *A Week*. Instead of casting his publishing naiveté with a fresh recollection of his past obliviousness, Thoreau told a short anecdote about a Native American who tried and failed to make money by selling baskets. After introducing this character, Thoreau then identified with this person because he too tried to sell "a basket of a delicate texture" (1985, p. 338). Thoreau protects his embarrassment and the authority of "Thoreau" by identifying with the Native American.

Another reason why it is inappropriate to read *Walden* as autobiography is because Thoreau's personae do not progress linearly (Buell, 1995), a deliberate distortion that defamiliarizes the reader from the author. The fact that the personae are presented in a nonlinear series is easy to establish. The story of the Native American basket-weaver occurs in the opening pages of the text and was added in 1852, whereas passages that were composed relatively early in the composition process occur much later in the text's form; "Reading" appears much later than "Economy," and yet it was complete by 1849 (Schacht, n.d.). One reason why Thoreau would have presented his personae nonlinearly is because he was deliberately trying to throw the reader off of the trail of his own path toward enlightenment. This may have been a way for Thoreau to keep his own way from becoming a mimetic exercise. Of course, it is possible to unravel the nonlinearity, but the illusive surveyor and the self-sounder are less likely to make that discovery. Only *Walden*'s friend has the awareness that a friend also has the responsibility of attending to the messy nonlinearity of an individual before that person's history of lessons can be appreciated, and even then, one cannot be certain of the results. If Thoreau was serious about having each person find their own way, then it makes sense that he would obscure his own example within its pages as much as possible, or at least until the reader has woken up.

Did Thoreau know a Native American who tried to make money by selling woven baskets? We may never know the answer to that question because Thoreau's biography does not inform us whether such a person existed. Even though the multiplicity of Thoreavian personae and their nonlinearity has affected our ability to plumb *Walden* for Thoreau, it has also had the equally important side effect of turning other matter that tells the story about Thoreau and his world into a precious resource (Buell, 1995). As the next section shows, the relationships between

Walden, *Tinker Creek*, and this "intertextual" domain is itself a matter for Thoreau, Dillard, and their respective readers to explore (p. 93).

The Intertexual
The importance of the world outside of any given text, whether it is a pond, a creek, or other textual sources, cannot be overestimated. As Carolyn Porter has argued, "the traditional boundaries between the literary and the extraliterary have faded" (quoted by Buell, 1995, p. 85). This is important for two reasons. First, as Dwight Conquergood (Madison, 2005, pp. 169-171) and Buell (1995) have demonstrated, troubling the boundary between fiction and non-fiction is an important focal point for ethnographers and writers to demonstrate that there is a fuzzy boundary between *mimesis* and *poiesis*. Second, as I discuss in this section, the world outside the text, particularly secondary sources, shapes the reader's interpretation of the text. Because many other authorial texts and secondary sources have been revealed to be either questionable or revealed something questionable, the reader is induced to do a significant amount of detective work. This work goes a long way toward inducing the reader to stand as a legitimate partner of the text. Intertextual data on Annie Dillard also reveals a need for significant work to be done to determine who is narrating *Tinker Creek*. This question of who narrates *Tinker Creek* is an important issue that I address in Chapter Five.
The effect of Thoreau's biography on interpretations of *Walden* has been traced throughout the waxing and waning of *Walden*'s fame ever since the beginning of the 20th century. Buell went so far as to argue that it is this intertextual matter that has produced so many interpretations of *Walden*. Perhaps because of Thoreau's guarded personal life and his ability to destabilize the narrator's persona in *Walden*, Thoreau enthusiasts and scholars alike have zealously investigated the man. This fixation on his biographical details has led to the proliferation of apocryphal stories by a disparate number of people who have pushed their own agendas.[23]
Secondary resources have circulated among Thoreau's readers for decades, which has led Thoreau being placed on the proverbial pedestal and in the virtual gutter. First, James Lowell's animosity toward Thoreau was instrumental in producing the impression that Thoreau was nothing more than a copy of Emerson (Fink, 1992; Harding, 1982). To compound this problem, Emerson's infamous

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[23] The most famous apocryphal story about Thoreau concerns the night he spent in jail. During that night, which would have occurred in July 1846, Thoreau was supposedly visited by Emerson, who asked, "Henry, why are you in there?" Thoreau is said to have replied, "Waldo, why are you not in here?" Neither Thoreau nor Emerson made any mention of this meeting, but we know from Emerson's journal that he did not support Thoreau's political belligerence (Sattelmeyer, 1989). Furthermore, there has been endless speculation about who paid Thoreau's fine. It had to have been someone, since he was released the next day, and someone continued to pay the poll tax repeatedly in the years following the incident (Harding, 1982).

eulogy to Thoreau and his questionable editing of Thoreau's posthumous publications reinforced this illusion (Sattelmeyer, 1995). The effect of Lowell's iconoclasm and Emerson's interference kept Thoreau in obscurity for the remainder of the 19th century, and he would have remained there if it had not been for a publisher's use his oeuvre for profit (Buell, 1995). This delay and the capitalistic motivation that ended it further enhanced the potential for apocryphal stories to creep into Thoreau's biography.

The effect of the seemingly unreliable nature of Thoreau's intertextual details has been to cast Thoreau as a mythical character, one that requires a significant amount of work to sort out. In one sense, the infection of Thoreau's biography with apocryphal details seems to confirm Paul Ricoeur's suggestion that we are here engaging in hermeneutics, and that we should not be satisfied with the obvious (Bessette, 2016, p. 149). The first temptation is to abandon the intertextual and practice New Criticism. However, this doesn't help, as Thoreau seems to have been the first person to warn us off on the first few pages of *Walden* (Buell, 1995). Those pages "reflect a stage of his existence now over and done with" (p. 377).

Since details about Thoreau have been infected with suspicion and intrigue, the effect of the reading experience has been to allow the reader to be an important and active component in the construction of meaning (p. 382). My interpretation of the various methods of assessing the depths of Walden Pond offers the specialness of friendship described in *A Week* to the text-reader relationship, while at the same time offering safe alternatives to friendship should it not obtain. Giving special credence to the text and the reader simultaneously is necessary, and like Pascal's vases, the relationship of *Walden* with its friends invokes a connection that dissolves the boundary between the containers of text and reader in a dynamic way that I discuss in the next chapter.

Like Thoreau's *Walden*, background information about Annie Dillard has been fertile ground for scholarly work, and its use has produced a predictable divergence from New Criticism. In her biographical writings outside *Tinker Creek*, Dillard revealed that she had a more affluent childhood than Thoreau. One of Dillard's ancestors started the company American Standard, a plumbing brass foundry (Dillard, 1987, p. 61). She was encouraged to explore, and was allowed to walk around her neighborhood, alone, as soon as she could say her telephone number (p. 42). Her parents were non-conformists and showered her with attention, and they kept her entertained with comedy, love, and an amazing amount of permissiveness (p. 50-56), with one striking exception (pp. 9-10).

One matter from Dillard's early life that requires close attention is the way in which she wrote from the perspective of a man. When she was ten, her father unexpectedly resigned from his career and sailed down the Allegheny and Ohio rivers for six weeks (pp. 9-10), and she "was just waking up then, just barely" (p. 10). Two years later, she started to write a nature narrative "about a man, a sort of metaphysician, in his fifties" (Dillard, 1988, p. 165 as quoted in part by Clark, 1991, p. 168 and as cited by Slovic, 1992, p. 67). After showing it around, she decided to stop the practice of writing as a man, probably because she did not like people's reactions (Dillard, 1988). This sample, with its gender-nonconforming writing,

perhaps even transgender writing, was the beginning of *Tinker Creek* (pp. 165-166). *Tinker Creek* is curiously agender, displaying a striking "effacement of authorial identity" (Slovic, 1992, p. 66). Twenty-five years after its publication, Dillard confessed that "Because a great many otherwise admirable men do not read books American women write, I wanted to use a decidedly male pseudonym" (2007, p. 280). Even after using her real name when *Harpers* published serialized portions of the text, she continued have a desire to elide her true gender; she wanted to publish her book "with a decidedly male pseudonym" (p. 280) as

> A. Dillard, hoping—as we all hope, and hope in vain—someone might notice only the text, not considering the jacket, its picture, or the advertising; and not remembering some one else's impression of the book, or its writer, or its other readers; not knowing the writer's gender, or age, or nationality—just read the book, starting cold with the first sentence. (pp. 280-281)

The publishers talked her out of it, and also convinced her to allow a picture of her to appear on the dust jacket (p. 281). Dillard adds, "I regret both decisions. I acknowledge, however, that living in hiding would be cumbersome" (p. 281).

I suggest that Dillard's choice to write from the perspective of a man enabled her to be a deft observer and nature-writer. Compared to Thoreau, Dillard had none of the Thoreauvian frugality, no problems with employment, and no traumatic deaths of siblings. However, her father did stage a brief abandonment of his family, enabled by her mother, and she did experience heteronomy by allowing her queer desire to write with a male style and byline to conform to conventional norms. In any event, Dillard induced literalization/demetaphorization: she "enact[ed] a stylistics of bias, writing out the very gesture of perception as a kind of poetics" (Clark, 1989, p. 107). Suzanne Clark argued that Dillard *invented* this stylistic tool, resisting the postmodern argument that "the subjective pronoun *I* is always male" (1991, p. 157, p. 169). In terms of rhetorical invention, this is true. The eliding style to which Clark refers is nothing new, and it is a powerful way to induce melancholia. Transgender people invent this style by presenting a persona that is different from one's "subconscious sex" and the effects of it often require medical assistance (Serano, 2007, p. 82). It may even be possible that writing from the perspective of a man was what her psyche wanted, since she wanted to use a male pseudonym. Even in that case, her choice to abandon that male style and byline at the behest of others would have had the same result. Julia Serano, a professional biologist and a transfemale activist, has described the experience of gender dissonance as "a sort of gender sadness—a chronic and persistent grief over the fact that I felt so wrong in my body" (p. 85). As time goes on this feeling of persistent grief becomes a kind of gender melancholia, buried under a layer of what Butler has referred to as "antimetaphorical activity" (quoted by Prosser, 2006, p. 268).

Clark (1991) argued that Dillard's deliberate eliding of feminine identity in *Tinker Creek* produces a dissonance between the text and the obvious picture and name of a female on the book cover. The narrating subject is agender, but there are several references to men. For example, Dillard wrote, "Like a blind man at the ball game, I need a radio" (Dillard, 2007, p. 54). The narrator makes no reference to a woman or femininity at all in this fashion. The only uses of female pronouns are in

reference to other insects, animals, or specifically to other women and girls that are clearly differentiated from the narrator. The narrator is a hunter, a stalker of symbols who stabs them and forces them to let their blood mark the ground. If I did not know who had written the text, I would probably have guessed that the author was a man who was attempting to conceal his sex.

Walden and *Tinker Creek* are alike in the sense that interpretations of their meaning can change dramatically depending on what the reader knows about them. Thoreau was reluctant to allow his readers to know too much about him through his journal, and he carried his secretive practices into his masterpiece by eliding himself to the point that other people filled in the gaps with legends and assumptions. Perhaps he did this in the hopes that his book would attain its own life and be treated as an equal to its reader. In the cases of *Walden* and *Tinker Creek*, both authored by literary giants, illusive surveyors and self-sounders are likely to idolize and fetishize the text, respectively. Friends see *Walden* eye-to-text. Likewise, Dillard went to great lengths to conceal her gender, first by hiding it from herself, and then, when the prospect of book publication approached reality, she almost hid it from her readers in the hopes of achieving parity with them.

Coda

Readers of *Walden* are free to identify themselves with the text in any way that they please. This is a welcome improvement on *A Week*. Thoreau's readers can choose the role of illusive surveyor, self-sounder, or friend. If the reader chooses to trust tradition and lays prone on its surface for answers, they will coldly see what is readily at hand. If the reader chooses self-sounding and expects to compete for the right to its answers, they will import an endless supply of what they have and their resolve will only become stronger. If the reader chooses to befriend it with a sharing of substance and meaning, they will work with *Walden* and become something unexpected.

No matter what paths they take, the experience is sure to encounter some metaphors. If the reader is attentive enough, they might even notice that many of those metaphors are like newly minted coins that are constantly burying the defaced metaphors of old. This may make the reader aware that the person who wrote the text experienced profound changes across a decade of discoveries, setbacks, and insights. They will realize this path, like any path through life, is a disorganized mess of ironic lessons and loving offers of friendship with the world. Stable boundaries, binaries, and bodies become recognized as useful illusions. Finally, if the reader is motivated enough, they can seek to become more familiar with these myths, and gain an unexpected success in becoming a whole individual, one that finds satisfaction in the knowledge that true friendship involves parity, not deference or agony. As more friendships are formed with *Walden*, it appears less like a rigid codex filled with monochromatic letters, and more like a virtual rainbow of life.

Chapter Four: *Walden*'s Forms

At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it—took everything but a deed of it—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow, perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.
—*Walden*, Version E, circa 1852-1853 (Schacht, n.d., "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," para. 1)

At face value, the epigraph to this chapter appears to be an autobiographical account of Thoreau's life and passion. It begins with a casual account of himself as a surveyor, which involves communication and interaction with his neighbors and the environment. However, the reader makes it not even halfway through the paragraph before Thoreau leaves his imagined series of neighbors and their partitioned lots behind, and goes on to summarize the moments when he rested during his daily walks. He sat long enough for time to come full circle, and followed where the seasons would take him. He took up residence at the place where he was sitting, and contemplated the modifications and divisions that he would have liked to make to that site. He considered each tree near his curtilage and whether the tree should be removed, and even thought of relocating his house in deference to an array of diseased trees. He concluded that it is most profitable to do neither, but to stand again and continue sauntering. This creates a mystical confidence that the next place in which he chooses to rest will also be suitable for residence and imaginary partitioning, and a healthy relationship with his surroundings.

Beyond its face value, the epigraph perhaps symbolizes the relationship between *Walden* and its reader. The paragraph was a relatively late addition to *Walden*. In 1849, when Thoreau had published *A Week*, the beginning of "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For" opened promptly with the business of establishing his residence at Walden Pond. Since the epigraph was produced by a much more mature Thoreau than the one who first endeavored to explain where he lived and for what purpose, it makes sense that Henry Golemba argued that it is an example of rhetorical play (1990, p. 214). I accept this invitation to play, and I cultivate this fertile plot of text and use it to introduce the business of this chapter.

Walden uses an impressive array of literary devices as its rhetorical toolkit. Play is just one example of what Golemba referred to as Thoreau's "language of desire" (1990, p. 233, p. 234), "a language whose meaning seems to evaporate as the reader's eye follows Thoreau's words, enticing the reader to fill the gaps with his or her own meaning, transforming the reader into a coauthor of the text" (p. 7). Additionally, in the spirit of a language that feeds upon the desires of the reader, Golemba appropriates the words of Thoreau's friend, H. G. O. Blake, who described Thoreau's prose as "a letter posted but never quite delivered" (p. 228). We are then asked to speculate as to what that letter contains without having it in our possession. We cannot ask Thoreau what he wrote, since he (other than being deceased) does not have the letter in his possession either. Its status seems perpetually in the delivery[24] between author and reader.

Beyond Thoreau's language of desire, *Walden* also exhibits larger formal structures that potentially disrupt the purported locations of Thoreau's language of desire. Irony is the main trope that emerges from Thoreau's "rhetoric of ascent" (Milder, 1995, p. 62). Unlike Golemba's coining of Thoreau's language of desire, Milder defined Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent as "the architectural staircase designed to conduct the reader gradationally from one plane of being to another *and* to prompt, methodize, and confirm the writer's self-transcendence" (p. 62). Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent turns its self-transcendence on the text itself, sowing doubt about whether those sentences that embody Thoreau's language of desire and the structure of his rhetoric are correct.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the relationship between *Walden* and its reader, defining that relationship as a possible friendship. In Chapter Two, I discussed Thoreau's theory of friendship and Crosswhite's (2010) analysis of it. In *Walden*, friendship occurs on a larger and a smaller scale. The smaller scale is the context of a collection of Pascal's vases, in which friends are actively locked in an evanescent embrace of "indwelling" (p. 166) that allows them to give and receive appropriations of virtue, and because this indwelling is a process, that virtuous process transcends the individuals who at any given moment are engaged in friendship (pp. 168-171). The process will survive particular friendships, transcending to the larger scale of friendship; when friends drift apart, they carry on

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[24] Delivery, besides being a canon of rhetoric, derives from the Anglo-Norman French *delivrer* (delivery, n.d.), which means "to render free, independent" (délivrer, n.d.).

echoes of their past friendships, and when they indwell with new friends, the processes of friendship that had passed out of sight resurface, demonstrating the immortality of friendship. At the same time, friends and their old processes of friendship are subjected to revision, destabilizing virtue.

Like the "indwelling" of friendship (Crosswhite, 2010, p. 166), Thoreau's language of desire passes underneath his rhetoric of ascent like water under a bridge. There are two basic scales of form. The smaller scale is Thoreau's language of desire. It is the stream of Thoreau's language of desire that makes it necessary for the bridge to be built. The larger scale is Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent, which allows *Walden*'s reader and persona to cross over Thoreau's language of desire, change, and move forward in the adventure of life. These two simultaneous occurrences of form make for a complex interaction, making it necessary for me to read the epigraph allegorically so that this chapter can review rhetorical analyses of *Walden*.

I see myself as one of those farmers who hopes that Thoreau's persona will walk over the foundations of my lifestyle, taste the fruit of my wild flavor, improve the future of my stock in life, and make a convincing claim that my word, my deed, is worth more than it is. The ease with which the epigraph lends itself to this kind of reading suggests that there is something queerly playful going on here. Thoreau will play this game in the world of imagination until just before a permanent transaction is made. Then, we will part ways so that I may continue to cultivate the place of my residence with the belief that I have increased the value of my world.

Walden saunters through this world, sometimes with wild unpredictability, and then disrupts this routine each hour. If the reader needs more of a hint that Thoreau is in a serious mood to play, consider the fact that Thoreau's hour lived through the four seasons and somehow induced the future residents to believe that Thoreau knew that they—we—were coming. *Walden* does not sit still for more than an hour. In that hour, it is possible to review the contents of the text and re-experience the transcendence of opposed chapters, the descent into winter, and the recovery of spring (Buell, 1995; Milder, 1995; Bickman, 1992). Then, after that hour is done, the text and the reader continue sauntering through a wilderness, having remade themselves and updated their moral foundations.

The epigraph's two-part structure, folded within a single block of text, is a heuristic for *Walden*'s form and framework for friendship. In the first half, *Walden* tells the reader that its interactions with the reader are happening in a sequential structure, with each interaction occurring in the proceeding present within the reading experience. This is form that occurs on a small scale, conversing with each discrete grower-of-meaning as they are encountered. *Walden* converses with each moment of the reader, flourishes with the presence of the reader, confers advantage to its dynamic companion, and then moves on, having done service with a language of desire. In the second half of the epigraph, *Walden* centers itself for a longer period of time, and beholds the reader as a prospective friend. The intervals of these longer periods of contemplation have moral significance. This is form that occurs on a large scale, anticipating what will appear after the writer and reader alike have learned what they can from each other and moved on as different personae.

This chapter engages in the always-risky practice of creating perspective by incongruity. As James Jasinski (2001) has argued, the most common way that scholars execute Burke's perspective by incongruity is through rhetorical invention. "Extending Burke's insight into the relationship between *metaphor* and perspective by incongruity," Jasinski pointed out, "a number of scholars have examined the use of radical metaphor (or *catachresis*) as a way of generating perspective by incongruity" (p. 434). Golemba and Milder represent the two perspectives that constitute the raw material for my analysis. Like my treatment of Buell's analysis of Thoreau's nature-writing in the previous chapter, I will be engaging with both Golemba and Milder on the finer points of how they conceptualize Thoreau's form—specifically, how their forms interact. Since Golemba and Milder have different interests regarding what *Walden* has to offer, their two perspectives are somewhat incongruous. Buell, Golemba, and Milder are each invested in the idea of collaboration between reader and text, but in different ways.

In this chapter, I examine the patterns created by the interaction of Thoreau's language of desire and rhetoric of ascent. Before I engage Golemba's and Milder's arguments, I review two projects that are helpful in showing how they interact. The first project has to do with Burke's concepts of literature as form (1931/1968) and literature as equipment for living (1941/1973). The second cluster of research has to do with Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) spatial analysis of the interactions between nomadic peoples, the institutions of civilization, and the hybrid groups of itinerant artisans. Once I have provided this theoretical framework, I discuss the forms as they appear in *Walden*. It will not be possible to provide an exhaustive inventory of these forms for two reasons. First, the particular forms as they exist in *Walden* by itself are multiple, and a complete inventory would exceed the scope of a dissertation (none of the sources cited here attempt an exhaustive inventory either). Second, because the forms are due to change, dissolve, and regenerate depending on who is reading the text and which pages are being read, the potential number of forms can be proliferated *ad infinitum*.

Review of Theory

Burke, Deleuze, and Guattari are the main theory sources for this chapter. Burke's theoretical contributions are needed for two reasons. First, Burke has provided a framework for the form of Thoreau's language of desire. Second, Burke has defined literature as equipment for living, which highlights the importance of the interaction between Thoreau's language of desire and his rhetoric of ascent as a model for friendship. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) contributions are needed to show how Thoreau's language of desire and his rhetoric of ascent interact in a way that produces mere agony for some readers and robust friendship for others.

Burke's Literature

In this section, I discuss Burke's discussion of literature as form (1931/1968) and literature as equipment for living (1941/1973). I argue that Thoreau's language of desire has Burkean form. That form interacts with Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent to demonstrate to the reader how friendship provides frameworks for accepting how

the world works (Burke, 1937/1984b). That model demonstration of friendship updates those frames to create and adapt to a dynamic moral environment. The ethical updating exhibited by the Thoreauvian friendship in *Walden* is equipment for living.

Burkean Form

Burke's form is useful here because it helps illuminate the multiple individuated forms of Thoreau's language of desire within *Walden*. Burke proposed a relatively narrow definition of form for literary experiences (1931/1968), and it is compatible with Deleuze and Guattari's (2009) concept of desire (i.e., desiring-production) that I use in this dissertation. Thoreau's language of desire is the second component of the two-part sequential structure that Burke called literary form (1931/1968, p. 31). In Burke's typology (pp. 124-183), Thoreau's language of desire fulfills what he would refer to as repetitive qualitative form. As far as where form comes from, Burke's tracing of individuated forms to an abstract Symbol and then to a pattern of experience (pp. 152-153) also applies in this case; Thoreau's language of desire derives from the pattern of experience known as melancholia, which for many people is a constant companion under capitalism, a primary reason why *Walden* is durable.

Burke's form is a two-part sequence, and it is compatible with Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. In Burke's *Counter-statement*, form is a sequence that consists of two steps: the first step arouses an appetite, followed by a second step that adequately satisfies that appetite (p. 31). At first glance, it may appear that this definition will have to be modified because it assumes that desire is a lack, and as such, it is incompatible with my deployment of Deleuze and Guattari's (2009) positive understanding of desire. However, this is not the case. The important point to keep in mind here is that Burkean form is designed specifically to account for desires in the context of reading. With the exception of some texts generated by interactive computer software, choose-your-own-adventure stories, or suggestive prose/poetry (of which *Walden* is a member), the relevant desires that may be pursued by a reader are done at the behest of conventional meaning that is decoded during reading. For the most part, readers simply do not practice their desires the way they normally do in the business of living. Specifically, the only degrees of freedom that readers have are the affirmative yet binary choice to stop or continue reading and the relatively narrow but positive freedom to interpret the text. This is why it is appropriate to describe the initial step in Burkean form as the arousing of the reader's desire in a context that immediately, by virtue of the reading experience, restricts its independent pursuit by the reader until the second step. The reader actually desires a lack. If this lack is to be satisfied, the reader chooses to wait for the text to do the desiring for them or finds some way into greater interpretive freedom.

In addition to laying out form's textual structure as a simple two-part sequence, Burke also found it necessary to posit a typology of forms (1931/1968, pp. 123-138), and some of those types apply to Thoreau's language of desire. That language tends to exhibit qualitative progressions of form, which escapes the

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audience's notice until the sequence completes, similar to inductive conclusions (see pp. 124-125). The Burkean form that I identify in *Walden* also tends to repeat (see p. 125).

How artists invent the various progressions of literary form was of particular interest to Burke (pp. 138-183), and Thoreau's language of desire can be traced through this inventional process. Artists have various patterns of experience that they use as the material for formal progression, and when a pattern is put into a formula, it assumes the guise of a Symbol (pp. 149-153). Burkean Symbols are derived from bodily processes, such as sleeping and awakening, natural rhythms and cycles, such as the seasons, and recurring human situations or conditions, such as melancholia (see pp. 149-152). Thoreau's melancholia is a pattern of his experience, which I argue produced what I call a "Clarity-Mystery Symbol," of which Thoreau's language of desire is the second part that satisfies the reader's appetite.

Various literary forms owe their success to the existence of certain expectations that audiences have when they read literature, and artists are keen to engineer their works to appeal to enduring expectations (pp. 153-158). Part of the durability of *Walden* as a work of literature is due to the persistence of melancholia as a condition of life under capitalism. Thoreau's language of desire is instrumental in helping readers recover from that condition.

This review of Burkean form helps to illuminate the diversity of ways in which Thoreau's language of desire manifests within *Walden*, and the addition of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) spatial analysis will bring a dynamism to this framework. Because *Walden*'s text was designed to work with meaning recovered by readers at strategic points (Golemba, 1990), the text owes much of its enduring importance to the contributions of readers who became published authors themselves (Buell, 1995), not to mention the countless lay readers who only have themselves and their acquaintances for an audience. There are endless examples in which a particular scholar argues that a particular passage in *Walden* has a particular meaning. Years later, another scholar is likely to produce, and indeed has produced, another reading of the same passage with a wildly and fortuitously different result.[25] In response to this freedom, Golemba argued that there are limits on *Walden*'s meaning. I partially agree with Golemba. My contention, however, is that *Walden*'s perceived patterns of elasticity of meaning mutate at different points in the reading process. As Golemba pointed out, there are moments when *Walden* reserves the reader's interpretive freedoms; there, the prose does not lend itself to multiple meanings. In other locations, Golemba continued, *Walden* deploys a rhetorical device that presents a supple turn of phrase. *Both* of these moments are a product of text-reader interaction. The challenge seems to be that we should ascertain the ley lines dividing elasticity and rigidity, as Golemba does, but my approach appreciates Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent, which I argue causes those ley lines to move, and explaining that movement requires the theoretical assistance of

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[25] The most frequently analyzed passage in *Walden*, concerning Thoreau's loss of a dove, horse, and hound, has resulted in a cornucopia of interpretations (Cavell, 1972).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987). The advantage of this approach is that it becomes possible to understand why it would be useful to publish a document that is often put to seemingly inappropriate purposes (and within a social environment in which the standard of appropriateness is fluid).[26] In other words, my approach has the advantage of explaining aberrant readings rather than dismissing them as outliers. The next section shows how this dynamism can be an effective demonstration of how friendship helps us be and *stay* ethical.

Burke's Literature as Equipment for Living

Burke's theory of literature as equipment for living reveals that the process of reading *Walden* yields directions that help us locate the important lessons for the changing circumstances of life. Burke saw in pragmatism a call to analyze literature's status as a perspective of a situation so that it might be recognized, put to use, tested, and proliferated (1935/1984a, 1941/1973). *Walden* does this by showing that the necessary tools in its kit are not located 'in' its pages. Burke's analysis of literature as equipment for living can be broken down into three key lessons: transforming liabilities into assets, producing perspective by incongruity, and responding to changing situations.

Abandoning a strict focus on inert aesthetic beauty, which is created by the comfortable for the comfortable, Burke argued that the most important pragmatic power of literature is through its function of equipping readers to deal with threats, with irony being simultaneously the most volatile and useful of the lot (1941/1973), which builds frames of rejection and acceptance (Burke, 1937/1984b). Literature furnishes this equipment through the various formal progressions, showing the interrelations of situations and desires (1931/1968). Arousing appetites in the midst of various situations and forcing readers to learn lessons about how characters or personae pursue their desires helps prepare readers to turn "liabilities into assets" (1941/1973, p. 17). Doing this requires readers to be able to question their pieties and recognize the advantages and deficiencies of their "trained incapacities" (1935/1984a, p. 7). Trained incapacities are important, partially

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[26] Golemba provided an example of inappropriate interpreting of *Walden*. When Golemba was "gnawing on this problem" of positing an interpretation that went too far, he saw a television advertisement by the National Bank of Detroit that exploited one of the most famous and most elastic passages in the "Conclusion" chapter: "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours" (1990, p. 184). The video that Golemba recalled focused on a boy who was "traipsing through the woods," and simultaneously dreaming about his future (p. 184). According to Golemba's account, images of a new car, a house, a boat, and other images of middle-class status flashed on the screen, obviously enticing viewers to contemplate the bank's ability to provide low-interest loans so that they could make their similar dreams a reality. I would argue, however, that it is because of the advertisement's use of the sentence out of its context that allowed for such a wild interpretation to take place.

because it is the unfortunate side effect of specialization that affects all life, but also because our interests govern the critical tests of success that would indicate whether it is time to change our perspective and reset our trained incapacities (p. 16, p. 100-102). A change of perspective requires a change in piety, and a change in piety requires a change in our interests (p. 37-49). There are two different kinds of perspectives, or frames: frames of rejection, or "debunking," and frames of acceptance (Burke, 1937/1984b, pp. 21-25, pp. 92-107). The most common frames simply debunk, as it happens in tragedy, but it is possible to combine debunking with a frame of acceptance, which hybridizes it into the comic frame (p. 93-94, p. 166 as discussed by Carlson, 1986, pp. 447-448 as discussed by LeBaron, 2010). A comic frame is powerful, as it accepts our foibles without making ourselves impervious to change, but it is still one perspective. Our ability to see a situation from more than one set of interests creates a new perspective of a situation, a perspective by incongruity (Burke, 1935/1984a, pp. 89-96).

A perspective by incongruity is a parallax view of a situation and the classificatory means of ordering it (p. 69-70, p. 74). Since any perspective involves disciplinary bracketing and the deliberate overlooking of various patterns and phenomena, it is simply not possible for incompatible perspectives to be reconciled so that they can be retired in favor of a superior perspective (Anders, 2011). The deliberate cultivation of incongruent perspectives is akin to the discovery that there are many ways to slice a block of cheese, and that there is no way for a critic to completely avoid the disappointment (or outrage) that one feels when we discover that our favorite method of cheese-cutting is violated by others; the judgment of impiety is a natural reaction, and is sometimes appropriate (Burke, 1935/1984a, p. 102-107). The abandonment of one's ability to impugn impiety interferes with one's critical abilities, making perspective by incongruity useful for studying the metaphorical dimensions of a situation (p. 107-111). A metaphor is a coin: it has two sides, and those sides cannot be reconciled into a single image without destroying the material and form of the coin.

Adequately responding to situations is one of the main reasons to read literature, and as critical beings, we look to literature as equipment for living so that we can deploy the correct strategy competently (Burke, 1941/1973, p. 293-304). According to Burke, artists create literature by programming their own situational strategies into their art (p. 301). We read these stories so that we can hope to learn the strategies vicariously. There are a few important factors that make this a challenging enterprise. First, as it is often difficult to recognize which strategies we read should be applied to the various situations in our lives, similar situations may require subtle strategies and we need to know why difficult strategies are needed when easier ones are available (p. 298-299). Second, and more importantly, some strategies, such as irony, cannot be learned vicariously, and must be learned the hard way by experiencing what it is like to be an *alazon* or by identifying with one in the process of reading (Burke, 1945/1969). Irony is arguably the most difficult strategy of all, and as such, probably requires the use of qualitative progression to convey. Since there is no static guide on "How to Avoid Becoming an *Alazon*," the

strategy that deals with it as a human situation cannot skirt the necessity of becoming or identifying with an *alazon* (p. 512).

Burke's analyses on form and literature as equipment for living are important for the proceeding discussion of how forms are constructed and dissolved. There are definite forms that operate within the reading experience of *Walden*, but what makes the reading experience impossible master is Golemba's (1990) notice that Thoreau's language of desire has a tendency to "evaporate" (p. 7). In the next section, I discuss Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of the historical struggle between nomadic peoples, sedentary peoples, and itinerant peoples (1987). Their analysis has identified an asymmetrical process that causes space to become striated, smoothened, and excavated. Their spatial analysis provides an understanding of why Thoreau's language of desire evaporates, why that special language seems to be nomadic, and helps the current project to capitalize on that instability and use it as equipment for living with friends instead of merely tolerating its agonizing effects.

Deleuze and Guattari's Spatial Analysis of the War Machine

Deleuze and Guattari's main use in this chapter is to analyze Thoreau's language of desire and his rhetoric of ascent as two parallel processes that interact in important ways. *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) spent a significant amount of space discussing the epic history of civilization and how it involves various different processes. Deleuze and Guattari were process philosophers, and so their interest in how and why spatial structures appear to change over time is important for explaining how and why Thoreau's language of desire interacts and morphs with his rhetoric of ascent. In this section, I first discuss Deleuze and Guattari's account of the struggle between nomadic peoples, sedentary peoples, and itinerant peoples. Then, I present their analysis of the three respective spaces that are created by those peoples: smooth space, striated space, and holey space.

The War Machine

Deleuze and Guattari were interested in the historical antagonism between human groups and how their interaction provokes war, and I am interested in their investigation here because it provides an insight into why critics have described *Walden* as an agony. The human groups that Deleuze and Guattari used to theorize about the war machine were the steppe nomads in Mongolia, the sedentary civilizations that provoked them to fight, and the itinerant metallurgists who were struggling to find professional survival in their midst. The conquests of the Kahn family led to bloody battles in northeast Asia, but there was a notorious inability of the nomads themselves to disband or destroy; as Deleuze and Guattari wrote, "The hesitation of the nomad is legendary," which led civilization to assimilate the techniques of the nomadic warriors so that it could wage war (p. 418). Unfortunately, this appropriation of nomadic techniques and its development into organized warfare has proven to be just as dangerous to civilization as the nomads themselves (p. 419). This danger came as a result of the State's inability to allow nomadic technique to derive from its "rhythmic" nature and not from "statistical"

analysis (p. 390). In the midst of war, itinerant metallurgists found a way to form underground connections between these two worlds (pp. 412-413). As I argue later in this chapter, the danger that the State creates for itself in this interaction manifests in the literature on *Walden* in terms of New Critics who wished to distill the nomadic war machine that they surmised as an essential property of Thoreau's prose, ignoring the fact that that agony was a product of *Walden* failing to conform to a framework that ignored the role of the interpreter.

In this section, I proceed through this presentation in three steps. First, I compare Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of nomadic peoples and sedentary peoples. Second, I discuss their analysis of the hesitation on the part of the nomads and the apparatus of capture that sedentary peoples deploy to assimilate the nomad's war technique. Finally, I address their discussion of the itinerant peoples and how they maintain contact with both nomadic peoples and sedentary peoples.

For Deleuze and Guattari, war is produced by a continuing interaction between nomadic peoples and sedentary peoples (pp. 412-413). For Deleuze and Guattari, the home of the nomad is nowhere, similar to the Thoreauvian who walks "*sans terre*" (Thoreau, 1862, p. 657). On the one hand, the steppe nomads were fearsome warriors, but they were, strictly speaking, undisciplined and had a trained incapacity for organizing themselves into armies, following the commands of civil leaders, or becoming civil leaders themselves (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 418). They knew how to set their horses to graze and how to rejuvenate themselves by eating their dead animals (Rubruck, 1900), but they could not become civilized, since that would require becoming sedentary and adopting a home (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 418). The battle prowess of nomads was a significant source of interest to sedentary societies (p. 404). The difficulty here is that it is a moot task to identify where the actual innovation comes from: the nomads or the State (p. 404)?

The inability of nomadic peoples to take control of civilization leads to a legendary hesitation that gives sedentary peoples an opportunity to seize the nomad warrior's mode of operation, impose statistical analysis, and adapt the art of war for sedentary purpose (p. 390). The leaders of civilization had an uneasy success in integrating the nomad's horse and technique into its forces, hence Deleuze and Guattari's naming of the process a *war* machine, as they explain that it is the encroachment of sedentary society and its appropriation of land that induces nomads to fight. The State rationalizes this provocation in the names of national security and resource availability. However, the way that nomadic peoples lived and fought was fundamentally different from the way that civilization builds up structures and performs analysis (pp. 390-391). In the end, the attempts by sedentary peoples to take nomadic warfare turned out to be enormously productive and destructive at the same time, leading to an epic seesaw between nomadic and sedentary ways of life (pp. 474-500).

The danger that the nomadic war machine posed to the State came as a result of the State's inability to allow nomadic techniques to remain nomadic (p. 389). When the State appropriates nomadic techniques, it tends to cherry pick and warps those techniques to suit the ideologies and traditions of civilization through statistics (p. 390). Nomads, by contrast, allow the "rhythms" of nature to dictate

those techniques directly (p. 390). For Deleuze and Guattari, nomads deploy a science based on what they called the "Numbering Number" (1987, p. 389) a quantitative value that acts autonomously. In contrast, States deploy a science that is based on what Deleuze and Guattari referred to as "the numbered number" (p. 391). The difficulty in distinguishing between the numbering number, which is "rhythmic" (p. 390) "with several [numerical] bases at the same time" (p. 391), and the numbered number, which is "a statistical element" (p. 390), is arguably the largest source of problems in modern military organizations. An example that illustrates this problem is the "rule of three" found in the U.S. Marine Corps; according to military lore, the basic military organization, the fireteam, functions effectively only if the fireteam leader is in command of three fireteam members (Freedman, 1998, para. 12). The same principle is in place for squad leaders who usually command three fireteams, and this sometimes is true for even larger command structures. State science would say that any more than three subordinates always leads to inefficiency, and this conclusion has been reached because military strategists have experimented with other command structures and concluded through statistical analysis that deviating from the rule of three is inferior. In practice, however, as command structures become larger in scale, this rule actually becomes less and less important, and high rank officers are often in charge of more than three subordinate units simultaneously. These deviations from the rule are simply an example of nomadic science permitting the numbering number to dictate the most advantageous command configuration.

As Deleuze and Guattari have explained, because there is no clear connection between the wilderness homelessness of the nomad and the sedentary center of the agrarian, anyone who can make a connection stands to reap advantages (pp. 404-415). The period of time of interest to Deleuze and Guattari for this analysis was the fifth to fourth centuries BCE in Asia (p. 351). In this time period, metallurgy was a trade that could be pursued professionally, and Deleuze and Guattari came upon this topic because they asked, "How do the nomads invent or find their weapons?" (p. 403). The nature of the job of the metallurgist required resources that had to come from the wilderness, and required technology and infrastructure that only civilization could provide (p. 409). There had to be some way for these workers to get resources to their foundries, and for Deleuze and Guattari, there were two primary ways that this was done. First, the most primitive way was to follow others until they could find it, and then bring it back to the workshop (p. 409). However, this is obviously risky, since going into the wilderness opened these artisans to attack by the nomads. The artisans were able to avoid confrontation with the nomads by inventing a second strategy: hiring specialized merchants to do the job (p. 409, p. 415).

The story of the war machine is an important empirical basis for what has been a notoriously abstract discussion of three kinds of spaces. In the next section, I present Deleuze and Guattari's use of the story of the war machine, which shows how spatial structures affect each other.

Three Spaces: Smooth, Striated, Holey

For Deleuze and Guattari, the phenomenon of space is itself dynamic and subject to perceptual changes, and these changes can be observed in how the text of *Walden* is perceived: smoothening, striating, and excavating. Deleuze and Guattari argued that these processes are mutually created: space is striated because it is experienced as smooth, space is smoothened because it has been experienced as striated, and space is excavated because it is difficult to discern the boundary between smooth and striated space. These processes also have asymmetrical existence (p. 480). Because these processes operate in directions that undermine and form the conditions for each other's existence, there is no space that is purely smooth, striated, or excavated (p. 388). As I discuss later in this chapter, this forbidden purity and stability also applies to *Walden*'s prose; its text is never perceived as purely smooth, striated, or holey, and that mixture is in flux.

Smooth space embodies the principle of *nomos* (p. 481), which means 'law,' 'custom,' or 'melody' (nomos, n.d.). This principle is not published by civil scientists or lawyers, is not *ad hoc*, and is not represented by creative songwriters. Instead, this 'melody' refers to the self-caused patterns and rhythms of nature. It is the idea that when the ice cracks in the spring, it is best to listen and walk elsewhere. Sailors know that the sea manages its own affairs, and all historical efforts to chart the spatial limits of nautical reality have eventually highlighted the ways in which the current understanding does not fit reality (p. 479). Charts of individual oceans needed to be redrawn and navigational techniques had to be reviewed when the globe's structure was unveiled (p. 479). Furthermore, even after the whole surface of the globe was charted, the exploration of the air and the abyss of space at "a tangent to this sphere" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 579) caused a strangely familiar revolution in charting and navigation techniques. For the nomad as well as the saunterer, a space is smoothened simply because someone else tried to striate it, and it is the moment in which those striations are invalidated during major Kuhnian paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1996) that space is instantly set smooth in our perception.

At some point, people did settle down and became sedentary, and they needed to articulate the principle of *logos* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 369, p. 478), which means 'word' (logos, n.d.). This is the enunciation of the world, its laws, and the efforts of civilization to improve upon mere survival. The sea is a dangerous place, and it can be made immensely safer if ship captains know how to expedite their crossing and have maps at their disposal. When *logos* dominates, the sailor goes the way the calculations indicate, even when those calculations are slightly wrong (p. 479). Shipping lanes facilitate and enable trade, which is enormously profitable for shrinking the size of the global village. For the sedentary member of civilization, a space is striated by considerable effort, and that effort is seen as worthwhile only when there is no chart that adequately accounts for its contours and when Kuhnian normal science experiences a crisis. It only takes one story of a saunterer stumbling beyond the boundaries of a map to inspire new theories of cartography.

The smoothness of *nomos* and the striations of *logos* are constantly revising each other, and this two-way interaction is asymmetrical (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987,

p. 480). It is helpful to compare this interaction with the processes of science and performance. The process of science has been described by Thomas Kuhn (1996), since Kuhn's framework exhibits the same kind of asymmetry. The performance model has been described by Dwight Conquergood (1998). Kuhn made waves in academia when he argued that science does not progress linearly, but instead progresses through an alternation between normal science and periods of crisis. In his framework, the crises sometimes give rise to paradigm shifts, and some theories are abandoned and new ones are created to serve as the basis for the next period of normal science. In terms of scientific progress, this framework can be simplified into the idea that science sometimes has to take one step backward to take two steps forward. In addition to Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Conquergood offered an argument that addresses the problematic relationship between *mimesis* and *poiesis*. Conquergood noticed that it is in the circumstances where there are performing bodies in relationship with other performing bodies that a space of *kinesis* becomes possible, giving rise to a process of "breaking and remaking" that has been a powerful aid in pedagogy, since it dissolves the difference between teacher and student (p. 32). These two kinds of process, the cycle of normal science and periods of crisis for Kuhn, and the rhythm of breaking and remaking for Conquergood (following Homi Bhabha; p. 32), is the same kind of asymmetry that Deleuze and Guattari identified in the interaction between smooth space and striated space. The smoothening of space does not erase the progress achieved by the striation of space, but it does involve a crisis in which an upheaval resets a striated space into a smooth space (p. 480). The gradient of the next space smoothening is dictated by the misalignment between *nomos* and *logos*, which is an epistemic problem. Over time, each movement of striation and smoothening brings about some kind of revision, and the revision harbors the seeds of a future smoothening of space. It is impossible to predict the places and scales that space will be smoothened or striated next.

The volatile interaction between smoothening and striating space creates a hybrid method of *following* that unveils the exciting life of matter (pp. 404-415). The itinerant follows the work, and stays as long as there is a living to be made (p. 409). For carpenters and woodworkers, the act of transforming wood into lumber requires the artisan to follow the grain of the wood and to understand the itinerant lives of trees (p. 409). However, for woodworkers, this following has a stationary base of operation: a workshop with heavy equipment and controlled environmental conditions. This fusion of deference to nature and sedentary accumulation of infrastructure produces many surprises regarding how matter functions. For Deleuze and Guattari, "what metal and metallurgy bring to light is a life proper to matter, a vital state of matter as such, a material vitalism that doubtless exists everywhere but is ordinarily hidden or covered, rendered unrecognizable, dissociated" (p. 411). According to Deleuze and Guattari, metallurgists were the first specialized artisans, and their emergence coincided with the formation of secret groups, guilds, and associations (p. 412). The opacity of these groups and the secrecy of their machinations produce the appearance of subterranean networks,

with artisans who seem to disappear and reappear elsewhere, unexpectedly (p. 412).

Deleuze and Guattari's development of the smooth, the striated, and the excavated is an important way of thinking about how *Walden*'s forms causes changes to how it appears to readers. These changes are not caused entirely by the text itself, and the reader is not solely responsible for *Walden*'s instability. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to analyzing different levels of scale in *Walden* and how they interact.

Thoreau's Language of Desire

Thoreau's "language of desire" (Golemba, 1990, p. 7) fulfills the reader's appetites, rounding out the second step of Burkean form. It should be pointed out that, before 1849, Thoreau was already familiar with the art of writing vagueness into his prose, due to his process of literalization (Arsić, 2016). More than simply writing with an occasional flair for the mysterious, Thoreau's breakthrough involved the development of a Burkean Symbol that utilized his ability to construct sentences with mysterious deficits of clarity. Clarity is the foundation, interspersed with Thoreau's language of desire (Golemba, 1990). In each of the individuated forms, more inviting sentences and paragraphs provide special contrast, producing a striated alternation between a check on the free exercise of interpretation and an open permission to interpret (p. 7). This give and take is the same kind of giving and receiving that occurs in healthy friendship.

To substantiate this argument, this section proceeds in two steps. First, I use J. Lyndon Shanley's (1957) first version of *Walden* to prove that Thoreau already knew how to construct vague passages before 1849. Second, I present Golemba's arguments and discuss some examples that he extracted from *Walden* that exhibit Thoreau's language of desire.

Before I discuss these topics in this section, it is important to point out that the boundary between this section and the next section, which discusses Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent, cannot be perfectly discrete. Ultimately, I argue that these scales of form have a fuzzy boundary that gives rise to a holey space at the borderlands. Because of this fuzziness, it will not be possible to separate the scales of form completely.

Walden's Form before the Crisis

Thanks to Shanley's reconstruction of the first version of Walden, it is easy to establish that Thoreau knew how to deploy sentences that ended up inviting interpretive play before 1849. To provide an example, I analyze Thoreau's famous passage about losing a dog, a horse, and a bird. The context in which the passage appears does not lend itself to the alternations of rigidity and elasticity that Thoreau added to *Walden* after 1849. Instead, this passage is vague because it was written so that almost any contemporary reader would identify with the author, connect with his feelings of loss and his quest for recovery, and agree with his conclusion. The purpose of this identification is to induce the reader to understand that Thoreau and the reader shared a kinship regarding their experiences of nature's secrets.

Before I analyze the passage about Thoreau's lost dog, horse, and bird, I want to quote the passage closer to its original context and then make an easy conclusion about why the passage has sparked so many interpretations:

> You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint "No Admittance" on my gate. [para. 23]
>
> I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves. [para. 24]
>
> To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt, many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it. [para. 25]
>
> So many autumn, ay, and winter days, spent outside the town, trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear and carry it express! I well-nigh sunk all my capital in it, and lost my own breath into the bargain, running in the face of it. If it had concerned either of the political parties, depend upon it, it would have appeared in the Gazette with the earliest intelligence. At other times watching from the observatory of some cliff or tree, to telegraph any new arrival; or waiting at evening on the hill-tops for the sky to fall, that I might catch something, though I never caught much, and that manna-wise, would dissolve again in the sun. [para. 26] (1985, p. 336)

It is safe to say that the passage that discusses the dog, the horse, and the bird—paragraph 24—is not about animals. Since Thoreau probably did not own any animals beyond feeding them on occasion, the reader is waved away from a literal interpretation, and this is what has inspired so many interpretations. Their use here seems to be a parable about something else, which can be informed by examining the context of the surrounding paragraphs.

Thoreau's dog, horse, and bird were lost so that his reader could identify with a persona who is about to show that the secret of nature is secure; alternative interpretations exist because of a failure to consider text that appears before *and* after the passage. Stanley Cavell (1972) argued that it is not important to decode the symbols that connect with these specific animals. Instead, argued Cavell, we connect with the topic of loss more deeply than our connections with these animals or whatever they may represent, as Thoreau was supposedly connecting with loss because "he has not reached the secrets of his trade" (p. 49). If I had quoted the passage out of context, then Cavell's reading would seem to be appropriate and complete. Indeed, we are supposed to identify with Thoreau. However, I have a

larger reading; there is more to this form, reaching into the surrounding text and enveloping paragraph 24. The theme of this form is anticipation of an unbreakable secret, being exposed to it, and then learning that it is secure. Before my quotation begins in paragraph 23, Thoreau had been offering his awkward forensic deliberations about how he had "desired to spend" his past years and thinking about how to get more time out of each second (1985, pp. 335-336). Ignoring the passages after paragraph 24, it makes sense that Cavell would fixate on an allegory of loss. Nevertheless, after paragraph 24, Thoreau then applies this urge to recover loss to his nature walks in the early morning. Like the reader trying to recover a lost secret from Thoreau's lost-animals-paragraph, Thoreau too had tried to do the same in the blowing wind. Alas, he merely "lost [his] own breath into the bargain." Thoreau's use of the word "bargain" is ironic, since it only occurs in *Walden* when loss is conspicuous.[27] Besides, nature's secret has never really been lost because we never had it, just as Thoreau never really had those animals. My reading of the vagueness of the animals-paragraph is a way for Thoreau to speak to many audiences who have experienced their own particular losses when they thought they had a bargain. Trying to listen for words uttered by gusts of wind, or trying to watch all come and go, or trying to catch the falling sun, or something that you thought you had… none of these are likely to be remembered beyond childhood, and so the losses of various animals, which were common in the 19th century, would make for better rhetorical identification so that the reader can be warned that the symbolism of the dog, horse, and bird is truly Thoreau's secret.[28]

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[27] "Bargain" is always used ironically in *Walden*. In "Economy," 'bargain' is used three times. The first use is in the quoted passage, providing maturity to his attempt to hear the wind speak. The second use of 'bargain' in "Economy" refers to the Irish shanty that Thoreau purchased for the lumber that would be used to sheathe his cabin. There, Thoreau had carefully pulled the nails from the lumber and gathered them for reuse in his cabin. Unfortunately, another Irishman stole them while Thoreau was gone. The last occurrence of 'bargain' in "Economy" refers to Thoreau's years teaching, and he laments that he had lost his "time into the bargain" (1985, p. 377). After "Economy," 'bargain' reappears in "Baker Farm." There, Thoreau uses the word 'bargain' twice to describe the bad deals that John Field received in his lifestyle choices involving his work and his extravagant diet. The last occurrence of 'bargain' in *Walden* is in "The Pond in Winter." The epigraph to Chapter Three of this dissertation contains this appearance of 'bargain,' which refers to the illusive surveyor getting "watery eyes" by lying on the ice.
[28] Thoreau's insight into this kind of unbreakable secret may have been discovered early in his relationship with Emerson's daughter, Edith. In a letter on February 10, 1843, he wrote about her unique words, praising the way in which "she talks a language of her own while she understands ours" (quoted by Golemba, 1990, p. 223). This semi-baby-talk produces a mode of communication that "never descends to explanation," and secures an uncommon secret with "an eternal silence" (p. 224). It is interesting that Thoreau should notice that Edith's stories should be so effective

Vague and mysterious sentences are not the key to Thoreau's language of desire. If they were, religious scripture would be far less interesting and enduring, and the wind's political secrets would be old hat. Furthermore, it would be enough simply to tell a story about irony that did not require the audience to identify with an *alazon*, rather than inducing the reader to experience irony for themselves.[29] Nevertheless, symbolic obscurity is a key to the Symbol that I am trying to articulate.

Symbolizing Thoreau's Language of Desire

Thoreau's language of desire participates in what I call a "Clarity-Mystery" Symbol. The initial step in the Burkean format, the arousal of appetite, is "Clarity." This is the textual moment in which we are searching for a way to adapt Thoreau's uncompromising philosophies to our lives. Alternately, the consummating step in the Burkean format, the adequate satisfaction of appetite, is "Mystery." This is the textual moment in which Thoreau hands us the reins, and we indulge in our interpretive freedom. This Symbol often repeats itself using different rhetorical devices. When *Walden* is analyzed in this way, the space of the text is striated, sometimes repeating itself with grooves of Clarity-Mystery-Clarity-Mystery-etc. It is important to recognize that this analysis does not exclude other forms and other ways of reading the text. The Clarity-Mystery Symbol is not ubiquitous in *Walden*; it is simply one part of its formal ecosystem, and there are structural patterns that do not appear to be instances of Burkean form. Some portions maintain clarity, while other portions, such as the 'Secrecy-Identification-Clarity' passage about Thoreau's animals, do not neatly fit into the Clarity-Mystery Symbol.

In this section, I present my argument in two steps. First, I present Golemba's argument and my remedial objections. Then, once the framework for Thoreau's language of desire has been laid out, I discuss some examples.

Befriending Thoreau's Agony of Language

Golemba's analysis of Thoreau's language of desire is the basis for my presentation of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol. Golemba argued that there are repeated instances in which *Walden* alternates between two different kinds of voices. One of these voices is what Golemba referred to as the "primary voice" (1990, p. 214). This primary voice gives way to Thoreau's language of desire long enough for a rhetorical device to stage its disruption of clarity. Then, once order has been toppled, the primary voice returns, leaving the reader perpetually off balance and unable to

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because of her refusal to explain herself; his argument predates a similar argument made by Walter Benjamin, who argued that "it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it" (2007, p. 89).

[29] The first paragraph of "The Ponds" contains an allegory that tells the reader that the true flavor of the huckleberry cannot be carted to town, but must be eaten by the hand that picked it. If it is not, then the vessel used to transport the fruit to will rub off the "ambrosial and essential part of the fruit" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 461). The fact that Thoreau added this observation in Clapper's Version E (1852-1853; Schacht, n.d.) reinforces the point that irony cannot be learned vicariously.

locate truth anywhere except in the "agon over language's inability to communicate profound truths" (p. 233). Like Deleuze and Guattari's war machine, this agon is real, but it is hardly the whole story. The diversity of these rhetorical devices not only conceals its underlying Symbol, but it also forms connections to other portions of the text. Furthermore, beyond the tension between Thoreau's primary voice and his language of desire, it is possible to glimpse a calming demonstration of friendship that engages friends both near and far.

I believe that the primary voice, which Golemba posited in *Walden*, is an unnecessarily agonizing fusion of voices that Thoreau uttered during the nine years of the book's composition. One of these pictures of a primary voice that Golemba painted solidifies the coauthoring process into one specific message about "language's inability to communicate profound truths" (p. 233), and puts Golemba temporarily, self-consciously, out of Buell's company. Golemba's thinking at this point is Hegelian in his insistence that *Walden*'s co-authoring ultimately drives toward a purpose, and that purpose is the discounting of the truth-finding powers of language. Here Golemba has presented a "Thoreau" in such a way that there is a *primus inter pares* ("first among equals"; primus inter pares, n.d.; Burke, 1941/1973, p. 516), a kind of fusion of Thoreauvian voices that subversively assaults language simply to expose its limitations. Ironically, Golemba's attempt to synthesize a purpose for this carnival diminishes *Walden*'s interpretive fertility. As indeterminate as Golemba found *Walden*, deeming the text's meaning indeterminate is itself determining. Golemba even noticed this, which suggests that even he acknowledged that it is necessary to know what it is like to become the *alazon*:

> Regardless whatever value has been found, his language involves loss. His wild rhetoric finds power in that loss as a way to intensify desire, to enkindle the hope that writer and reader could correspond if only they practiced more "ardor and devotion." If only we read his letters more closely, or more often, or read more of his writings, or more interpretations of other readers, or more writings by authors he has read, somehow we could arrive at a settled understanding of what he means. Some of us will pretend that we have in fact achieved such an understanding. Then the "Expedition" can end, the searching cease, the frustration rest. In that hubristic moment when readers pose as "some Oedipus," proud about having "solved" one of language's enigmas, the Sphinx of language "will go dash her head against a rock." (Golemba, 1990, p. 235)

Even though Golemba hedged his claim by admitting that "indeterminacy may be indeterminate" (p. 8), his answer to Thoreau's Sphinx (especially his fixed matrix of alternation between clarity and mystery) limits the possibilities. If Thoreau's point in 1854 was simply to show that there is a higher order of truth that language cannot adequately describe, then the final pages of *A Week*, which concluded that "the most excellent speech finally falls into Silence" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 318), would have made another labor-intensive book superfluous. Golemba was closer to being correct by linking Thoreau's rhetoric to a carnival (1990, p. 2014), which is forever open to change. A carnival is also not necessarily agonizing for all witnesses, although it does have that relationship with the State (Stallybrass & White, 1986). If

the reader accepts Burke's ironic conclusion about adopting the position of the *primus inter pares* and instead prepares for the necessity of returning to a smooth space, then the agony of language that Golemba posited can be adjusted into a comic relationship that fosters and challenges the limits of friendship.

The language of desire, which Golemba positioned in the interstices of *Walden*'s primary voice, is a collection of rhetorical devices that gives the reader clearance to take flights of interpretation. There are two reasons for this variety. First, diversity maintains the subtlety of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol. Second, and more importantly, this diversity conceals the fact that there are two types of Mystery devices: one that functions as a self-contained Mystery in the textual here-and-now, and another that requires a reference to a faraway moment elsewhere in *Walden* or outside the text.

The rhetorical devices that Thoreau used to execute his language of desire are diverse, and this variety conceals the underlying Clarity-Mystery Symbol. Golemba named several devices that Thoreau used to create his language of desire: ambiguity, exaggeration, indirection, paradox, parody, and play (1990, p. 214). My impression is that Golemba thought that these devices are items in a kind of writer's grab bag, whereby Thoreau had access to enough of a diversity of rhetorical devices to produce Mystery that the reader would be unlikely to recognize the underlying Symbol. If a species of life is diverse enough, it cannot be recognized as a species. To some extent, I think this is true for *Walden* as well, since as soon as the reader starts to track the Symbol through the text, the reader is no longer participating in the alternation between frustration and freedom, but is instead fixated on recognizing the devices. As long as the Symbol remains subtle, the reader can be called on to give meaning. Nevertheless, I think that there is a more important reason for this diversity than simply keeping the reader on task.

The rhetorical devices that Golemba identified can be divided into two groups by how they function. Some of these devices function without much else than to be placed in the Clarity-Mystery sequence. For instance, an ambiguous sentence does not cease being ambiguous if it is taken out of context. If anything, it becomes more ambiguous. This is also the case with indirection. These devices can be quoted out of context without them devolving. However, the other devices, which include exaggeration, paradox, parody, and especially play (Bateson, 2000), cannot be removed from their contexts without harming our ability to recognize them. To know exaggeration, we need to know what is being exaggerated. Paradox requires awareness of statements elsewhere in the intratextual environment to produce the experience of inconsistency. If the inconsistent passages are severed from each other, then paradox disappears. Parody also requires awareness of statements made elsewhere, but it is different from paradox because it refers to styles that exist intertextually. If the reader lacks awareness of the shadow style to which parody refers, then parody devolves into mere absurdity. Similarly, if a witness to play misses the "metacommunicative" (p. 188) "play frame" (p. 185), then play becomes serious.

This functionality of the rhetorical devices used to execute Thoreau's language of desire can be read as an allegory of friendships that exist in our midst as

well as distant friendships that do not exist here and now. Since the variety of rhetorical devices keeps the reader on the task of giving or recovering meaning, these devices keep the friendship between text and reader alive. Without the variety, the reader is at a higher risk of discovering the Clarity-Mystery Symbol and disrupting the receiving and giving that needs to occur for the process of friendship to take place. There is a real price to be paid for this formal understanding. Furthermore, beyond the immediate possibility of friendship between *Walden* and its reader, there is an echo of the kind of relationship that we have with our friends that are not in our immediate circle. Most of our friends are distant from us in terms of sheer proximity; long-distance by itself does not dissolve friendship. The use of exaggeration, paradox, parody, and play—the rhetorical devices that function by virtue of distance—are analogies for long-distance friendship when they fulfill Thoreau's language of desire. Our acquaintances might do or say things in our presence that enter our long term memories, and most of the time those memories are given no further thought. Then, when we encounter a situation that causes those memories to resurface, and if we are lucky to remember where the memory came from, we might realize that our old acquaintance was perhaps a friend. The same happens to others who have received our pearls of wisdom. *Walden* helps us recognize this potential, and shows us that *all* strangers, even the sour ones long gone, may continue to impart virtue.

The giving and receiving that occurs during the individuated forms of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol can feel like a struggle. The affinity between agony and friendship demonstrates that the negotiation of meaning in speech communication can be either beneficial or harmful, with a thin line in between, a topic that I return to later in this chapter. Ambiguity, exaggeration, indirection, paradox, parody, and play is a diverse set of rhetorical devices that maintain the subtlety of Thoreau's Mystery, and this population is large enough that they can function locally and globally in *Walden*'s textual environment. This maintains the alternation between giving and receiving meaning between text and reader that *does* friendship in a way that Thoreau merely described in exquisite detail in *A Week*. Not only does this move Thoreau beyond the theoretical into the practical, a matter that is of critical importance in Chapter Five and the Conclusion, but it also furnishes the current discussion with some examples of formal progression.

Individuated Forms of Thoreau's Clarity-Mystery Symbol

While there is no shortage of examples of Thoreau's Clarity-Mystery Symbol, it makes sense to begin with one that has already been quoted in this chapter. The epigraph for this chapter, the opening paragraph of "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," individuates the Symbol. The first seven paragraphs of that chapter were added after 1849 (Schacht, n.d.), and those passages were central to Golemba's attempt to reverse engineer Thoreau's language of desire. The frequency with which Thoreau repeated the Clarity-Mystery Symbol in these seven paragraphs is reason enough to tap the beginning of its rich vein of examples. In addition to the epigraph, I also discuss an example of paradox in Thoreau's "Higher Laws" chapter, which later in this chapter serves as the breaking of ground into the holey space of *Walden*.

According to Golemba, Thoreau interrupts his primary voice several times in the opening paragraphs of "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For." It is perhaps important to clarify that Golemba did not define this pattern in terms of Burkean form. For Golemba, the first pattern that he noticed there was a "three-part structural pattern—Play, then Sentence, followed by Parodic Release" (p. 214). These elements are often sparsely diffused in larger passages. Sentence "echoes the primary voice," whereas Play and Parodic Release are incarnations of punning and exaggeration, respectively (p. 214). While my formal analysis does not fit Golemba's reading, since Burkean form consists of two parts, not three, Golemba's Parodic Release can be read as an initiation of repetitive Burkean form.

The epigraph contains several instances of play; Golemba noticed one of them and recovered its meaning with his desire to see Thoreau play, which makes for a case study of Thoreau's language of desire. When Thoreau identified the etymological origin of house in the word "seat," or *sedes*, he also quipped that it would be better if the seat were a country seat. Golemba read it as a playful pun. I did not read the statement in that way. Instead, I read it as paradox. In the previous chapter in *Walden*, "Economy," Thoreau claimed that he intended to build "a house which will surpass any on the main street in Concord in grandeur and luxury, as soon as it pleases me as much and will cost me no more than my present one" (1985, p. 361). If Thoreau had such an irritation with expensive houses, why would he play on the word "seat" and suggest in a *later* version of the manuscript that it is better if the stone under him were upgraded to an aristocratic mansion (see Schacht, n.d.)? Yes, this passage is a play on words, but it can also be a paradox, depending on how it is read. The playfulness is diminished if the paradox is made salient, and casting the statement as play minimizes the seriousness of the paradox. This is to be expected when it comes to Thoreau's language of desire, and it is therefore against the spirit of that language to discount Golemba's desire to read it his way.

The other example that I want to discuss is located in "Higher Laws" and develops an instance of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol through Thoreau's careful and paradoxical use of 'respect.' There, the term 'respect' is used several times as a key to Thoreau's philosophy. At the end of the chapter, however, the final word is 'respect,' and it is used in a way that clashes with the entire chapter like a braying donkey. In fact, that alarm is so striking that it opens a network of holes in the text for a new nonlinear itinerary of friendship to be explored.

For most of "Higher Laws," Thoreau's philosophy of 'respect' is focused on the context of his vegetarian diet. In a striking change from the younger Thoreau who went fishing with Edward Sherman Hoar, Thoreau confessed (in Version A, Schacht, n.d.), "I have found repeatedly, of late years, that I cannot fish without falling a little in self-respect" (1985, p. 493). He went on to explain that he used to be a fisher, and that he still feels the urge to eat meat. Nevertheless, his urges were gradually lessening, and his access to a variety of grains and vegetables allowed him to lessen the temptation. His primary reasons for leaving fishing behind were that it produced "trouble and filth" (p. 493). The trouble for Thoreau was his sense of disappointment that the catching, fileting, and cooking produces such little edible fish. The filth for Thoreau was his awareness that an omnivore's kitchen requires far

more cleaning to keep up a "respectable appearance each day, to keep the house sweet and free from all ill odors and sights" (p. 493).

The last paragraph of "Higher Laws" produces a paradox by again referring to 'respect.' There, Thoreau tells a story about John Farmer, who was ending a hard day of work, had just bathed, and was about to think about the possibility of a frost that evening. Before he could attend to this problem, however, he heard the sound of a flute player, which is almost certainly a Thoreau disguise (Buell, 1995, p. 376). The sound "harmonized with his mood" and seemed to awaken a voice from within, asking, "Why do you stay here and live this mean moiling life, when a glorious existence is possible for you? Those same stars twinkle over other fields than these" (Thoreau, 1985, pp. 499-500). Alas, John Farmer could not understand how to accomplish such a migration. "All that he could think of was to practise some new austerity, to let his mind descend into his body and redeem it, and treat himself with ever increasing respect" (p. 500).

Thoreau's paradoxical use of 'respect' in "Higher Laws" produces a holey space in *Walden*, but it is difficult to see where the hole goes if one merely looks for incidents of 'respect' in other sentences throughout the chapter. If one does that, then the reader will most certainly stop following the hole before it reaches its destinations. In the next section, I return to Thoreau's use of and engagement with the topic of 'respect.' This wait is necessary, because (as far as I can see, which may not be the whole distance) Thoreau had in mind a lesson that had to do with the principles of striation and smoothening themselves, and goes far beyond a lecture about 'respect.' Recognizing this lesson depends on the reader's crossing of a striation that produces a lesson about friendship and its ability to reconstruct our morals.

It does not take too much imagination to notice that the repeated iterations of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol striate the space of *Walden*. How Thoreau's prose is striated depends on the reader. In the next section, I discuss Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent, which identifies structural forms that occur on larger scales than Thoreau's language of desire. The addition of this scale of structural arrangement complexifies the Clarity-Mystery Symbol considerably, breaking the established understandings of what sentences belong to Clarity or Mystery, and giving opportunities for new striations and glimpses of a subterranean network of intratextual holes.

Thoreau's Rhetoric of Ascent

Thoreau's 'rhetoric of ascent' is a term invented by Milder to refer to the experience of reading *Walden* and observing a Thoreau that transforms and elides his transformations. This produces a tension between Thoreau's endorsement of diversity and his presentation of his own way as a respected truth. According to Milder, Thoreau out-feints this paradox and the reader's suspicions, but the irony of this effort eventually becomes salient. The insight that emerges from this irony settles into another "way," only to be exposed as merely another face of the *alazon*. This cycle of upheaval and regrouping repeats over and over again. What makes this ascent so difficult to track is that Thoreau does not properly order those steps (Buell, 1995), nor does he specify the intervals of the rise and run (Bickman, 1992),

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leaving the reader with little illumination concerning where the next step is located and where it is going. The obscurity actually gives Thoreau the needed cover to produce his language of desire, since it is already difficult to identify what he believed at any specific point in the text. To understand the text, we striate it, and this has two effects. In each possible version of the striated ascent, individual steps taken through the text tend to smoothen how the reader has striated Thoreau's language of desire. In addition, the elusiveness of *Walden*'s grand structure smoothens all candidates for striation. The only "structure" that seems to survive revision is the seasonal progression. I refer to this "structure" in quotation marks because Thoreau's daily observations in "Spring" indicate that earth's seasons, which can be articulated by the cycle of a single day, tend to undermine this simplicity. Without structure, the reader is asked to be familiar with the text in its entirety. Once that happens, we are able to see the moments of Thoreau's itinerary. One of Thoreau's moments of itinerancy is his preoccupation with the problem of respectability, which can only be solved with irony *and* friendship.

This section makes this argument in three steps. First, I present the arrangement form of Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent. Robert Milder (1995) and Martin Bickman (1992) have done the most research in this area. I apply Deleuze and Guattari's spatial analysis of the war machine to the efforts by New Critics to striate Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent. Then, once I have discussed how these efforts to decode Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent led to the agony that Golemba named as the purpose of Thoreau's language of desire, I discuss a fuzzy area where Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent resets the striations that readers keep creating to track his language of desire. This fuzzy area is a fertile ground for us to open a subterranean network in Thoreau's text. My own journey resurrects a specific occurrence of 'respect' that belongs to Thoreau's language of desire. Finally, I address the larger discussion that comes into view thanks to the holey space and the access points that are flagged by those instances of 'respect.' Ultimately, I argue that Thoreau's engagement with respectability is a problem that is insoluble by us in isolation. We need to adjust our assessment of what is respectable through the comic corrective, and that requires an ironic counterpart. However, that comic corrective merely helps us to ascend one level. To maintain our ascent, we also need friendship.

The Spatial Effects of Thoreau's Rhetoric of Ascent

Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent induces readers to posit large-scale striations that disrupt patterns found in Thoreau's language of desire, and the ambiguous middle ground of this process reveals a subterranean network of connections. Thoreau's version of the "organic principle" (Matthiessen, 1941, pp. 133-175 as discussed by Buell, 1995 and Bickman, 1992), his numbering number, has been agonizingly difficult to describe in more concrete terms, and many have been lured into that project. Thoreauvian scholars have inadvertently striated *Walden*'s form, changing its *nomos* into the academic *logos* of New Criticism. This perception of war between text and reader is itself evidence of *Walden*'s ability to make the reader experience irony and understand Thoreau's friendly aspirations. Each step of Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent lingers long enough for the reader to striate

individuated forms of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol. Then, irony becomes salient when the next step of the ascent smoothens the forms and makes Thoreau's language of desire possible and obscures authorial intent. The steps that make up that ascent are rough and difficult to identify, but significant progress has been made. The vagueness of the ascent not only creates voids in the language, but it also leaves room for holes where *Walden* and reader can co-create an itinerary that turns the reader into a kind of artisan that follows both the smoothness of the text as well as the striations. One of these moments of itinerancy is Thoreau's engagement with the concept of 'respect.' Assessing what is respectable is a significant issue during one's ethical journey through life, one that is insoluble without the assistance of irony *and* friendship.

In this section, I make this argument in three steps. First, I show that *Walden*'s examination by New Critics has produced an agonizing reading tradition. Second, I discuss how a transition from agony to friendship can be made. Finally, I discuss the particulars of the interaction between Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent and his language of desire.

New Criticism's Agony over *Walden*

Attempts to structure *Walden*'s form have been underway since 1941 and the resulting theories have been problematic because of the legacy of New Criticism. According to Bickman (1992), Francis Matthiessen's (1941) groundbreaking analysis of *Walden* marked the moment in which academia suddenly intensified its efforts to striate the text's larger forms. The reason for this surge, argued Bickman, was because Matthiessen borrowed a term from Coleridge and described the book's structure as "organic form" (p. 134). This organic form is an "architectural beauty," which "has gradually grown from within outward, out of the necessities and character of the indweller, who is the only builder, —out of some unconscious truthfulness, and nobleness, without ever a thought for the appearance" (quoted by Bickman, 1992, p. 41). After Matthiessen, R. P. Adams (1952 as cited by Bickman, 1992) made the next major attempt to crack this organic form. Adams argued that Thoreau accomplished the organic form through a "pattern of symbolic death and rebirth" that projects "a revolt against static mechanism in favor of dynamic organicism" (1952, p. 424). Later, other scholars, such as Sherman Paul, Charles Anderson, and Lauriat Lane, Jr., proposed their own ideas of this organic form in terms of *Walden*'s seasons (Bickman, 1992). Bickman concluded that although Matthiessen's followers used organicism to "provide insight into the book and make previously unseen connections among its parts, the entire notion of organic form became too vague and automatic, a critical commonplace that served to stop further examination" (p. 42). Bickman pointed out that the organic form filtered out the "many readers' experience of the book as asymmetrical and self-contradictory, of being constantly off balance" (p. 42). He also admitted that this was due to the dominance of New Criticism that has been present in his discipline ever since Matthiessen. The present occupation of this area of research is now supposedly less concerned with the production of new readings of *Walden*, and more concerned with the problem of explaining why there are so many divergent readings (p. 43).

However, the legacy of New Criticism is powerful, which sequesters text from reader. It seems that Bickman's version of the project was still unwilling to consider an interaction between text and reader: Bickman concluded that the "text itself is always moving toward structuring itself, yet always pulling back from doing so" (p. 44). Thus Bickman defended Matthiessen's claim that *Walden*'s meaning is built *only* by its solitary indweller, Thoreau.

The agony between structure and disorganization in *Walden* is a unique product of interaction with New Critics, not a structure or a meaning that is housed entirely within the text. Thoreau's organic form has been grist for the production of academic agony in Thoreauvian studies. This organic form was made possible because of Thoreau's literalization/demetaphorization, which allows nature to take responsibility for his prose's polysemic potential. As *Walden*'s legacy grew, New Critics targeted the symbolic fertility of its organic form. These critics, for theoretical and professional reasons, were obliged to assume that any structuration of the text had to occur without collaboration with the reader. This meant that the pattern of giving and receiving between text and reader was recast as strictly internal to the text, not so much erasing the diversity of reader interpretations as projecting the process of reading into the artifact. The conclusion that Bickman made in seeing the text as self-structuring and self-de-structuring thereby alters Thoreau's numbering number into a numbered number. This move instigates the *Walden* experience to become an agony of language, as Golemba noted. In other words, critics find *Walden* becoming warlike because they sought to appropriate *Walden*'s *nomos* and change it into the *logos* of New Criticism. This effort by New Critics to diminish what could be an interaction of *Walden* with the reader and instead stuff it into the text unwittingly reproduced the same emergence of war that Deleuze and Guattari identified between nomads and the State.

Transitioning from Agony to Friendship

The experience of reading *Walden* can change from agonizing to friendly, but change is difficult, and it will not avoid the alternation of striation and smoothening. The difference between agonizing over *Walden*'s prose and befriending it is relational and attitudinal.

The relational difference between agony and friendship is found in the various ways that people debate with each other (Brockriede, 1972). Wayne Brockriede pointed out that it is remarkably productive to examine the relationship between arguers in terms of a metaphor of sexual relationship. Any arguer who uses coercion or subterfuge to force or trick someone else into having sex or adopting a belief fails to realize the greater possibilities of love and philosophical argumentation (p. 6). Philosophical love, Brockriede argued, cannot take place without reciprocity on both sides of the debate; each side must be equal and willing to change (pp. 6-7). Unfortunately, most texts are unable to change because most authors write with a unified and imperious voice. The beautiful thing about *Walden* is that the text *does* change its mind (both as a property of Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent and as a property of the multiple encounters with Thoreau's language of desire), and so it is possible to engage with *Walden* as a friend during the reading

process. What makes this so difficult to do in the case of *Walden* is that there is still a powerful expectation that Thoreau's rhetoric is a competition. Even Milder (1995) fell into this trap when he argued that *Walden*'s reader is "a rival for interpretive honors whose function is to run a fine race yet place a distant second to the author" (p. 80). What friendship with *Walden* requires is the recognition that the reader is expected and able to keep up with it in a bi-directional relay, to be willing to striate the text and be receptive and responsive when those striations are smoothened by Thoreau's ascent.

The attitudinal difference between agony and friendship is found in the ways that we understand friendship, according to Thoreau's own account in *A Week*. Recall that he posited two different understandings, one that followed a structural framework as an achievement, and another that followed a process framework as an ongoing saga of giving and receiving that survives the denouement of particular relationships. As the irony of Golemba's analysis of Thoreau's language of desire demonstrates, any statement about how *Walden*'s rhetoric functions, even if it accounts for the reader, is itself a striation. The agony of Thoreau's language of desire will be reproduced if we conceive of friendship with *Walden* as a relationship. This produces the expectation of a certain relational identity as a foundation for the proceeding analysis, and the shock that occurs when supposedly foundational identity fails to be durable is the war that Deleuze and Guattari found between nomadic peoples and sedentary peoples (1987). A key to avoiding the agony associated with Deleuze and Guattari's war machine is to appreciate their technique to avoid immuring the process. Deleuze and Guattari's analysis has itself avoided war because they expected resmoothening. All striations are bound to be smoothened, and the current analysis is no different. Therefore, my orientation in my striation is *not* to capture the nomadic nature of the reading experience and take friendship for granted. Eventually, Thoreau moved on, and left his renewed companions to tend to their own improved farms. I expect the same to happen here, and so I shall not make any claims about how *Walden* essentially functions. Instead, I catalog the rhetorical effects that have been observed and to offer an explanation for why it happened. This move avoids the imposition of purpose, and allows the *nomos* of *Walden* to sing its own desires. To do otherwise would halt the procession of my friendship with *Walden* that survives in this text. I have appropriated my own virtue from *Walden*; that virtue also has its own life and does not oblige *Walden* to continue grinding against the river of this dissertation. In other words, *Walden* does not have to remain my friend, for the virtue that I appropriated lives on. Furthermore, as the next chapter makes clear, this friendship will be challenged.

From Striated Ascent to Smoothened Language

Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent in *Walden* sets the pace for a rhythmic striation and smoothening of Thoreau's language of desire. Matthiessen and his followers have produced the beginning strokes of a stable picture of *Walden*'s structure, since *Walden*'s structure involves its readers' contributions to a degree that the State of New Criticism is not prepared to accept. Nevertheless, the accumulated work by these scholars is still important. At an archival level, *Walden* is (mostly) the same

thing it was in 1854.[30] Large-scale structural forms are visible and can be readily verified, although this does not preclude the existence of others. As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, *Walden* accommodates a wide variety of arrangement theories. Whatever the pattern, changes to the author's personae are frequent enough that the changes are noticeable, but not so frequent that it is impossible to discern any structure at all. What is important is the reader's perception of Thoreau. In other words, *Walden* contains personae that linger just long enough to develop an apparent relationship with the reader. These brief and recurring relationships generate expectations about Thoreau's agenda, and these expectations affect how the reader engages with his prose. Specifically, how the reader striates Thoreau's prose into iterations of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol is affected by how the reader perceives the text's persona. The reader uses Thoreau's persona as a lens to read the text, and so when Thoreau changes, the reading changes. This dynamic is a matter of reader perception, and when that perception changes, the striations of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol are reset and the text is smoothened, which makes it available for striation once more.

The research on *Walden*'s rhetoric of ascent has identified various different scales of structure in *Walden*. There are grand-level, chapter-level, and paragraph-level scales, each with different kinds of structure. At its most grand scale, *Walden* has a two-part structure; the first part consists of a series of essay-like chapters (Bickman, 1992). The early chapters tend to be preoccupied with whatever topic is named by the chapter's title, and show less concern for narrative (p. 54). The second part flips this priority, focusing more on narrative and the progression of the seasons (Buell, 1995). When the text is examined at the scale of whole chapters, the early chapters exhibit a certain kind of structure that is less obvious in the later chapters (Bickman, 1992). The early chapters co-exist as contrasting pairs, with each chapter complementing and contradicting its companion (p. 51). At the still smaller scale of individual paragraphs, each chapter contains paragraphs that appear to disagree with the rest of the chapter, and these errant paragraphs are less obvious in the second part of the book in which narrative and seasonal progression dominate (p. 53).

While there is consensus that *Walden* has structures that change depending on the scale being considered, there is far less agreement over the particular details of those structures. At the grand-level, there is much disagreement over where the grand-level transition happens. When I first began to contemplate this question, my initial conclusion was that the transition occurs in Chapter 9, "The Ponds." Bickman located some semblance of a transition at the end of Chapter 12, "Brute Neighbors"

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[30] Thoreau did not issue a second edition of *Walden* during his lifetime (Thoreau, 2007). He did, however, make written alterations to his print copy, which had involved a number of typographic corrections (p. 379). In addition, editors over the decades have continued in this tradition of being faithful to the original text, and only changing it to amend obvious punctuation errors and make the text's conventions of hyphenation and spelling consistent throughout the document (pp. 379-396).

(p. 52). Like Thoreau's own research identifying the boundary separating winter from spring, I would suggest that the transition between *Walden*'s two grand parts is not a single discrete boundary, but is instead many transitions that do not line up with each other and are themselves vague. At the smaller scales of chapters and paragraphs, the structural research has been far more successful in identifying the chapter pairings and errant paragraphs in the first part of *Walden* (p. 53). The second portion of the text has been more difficult to striate, since the major organizing device are the seasons themselves (p. 54). In "Spring," the second-to-last chapter, Thoreau observes that a day is a synecdoche of the seasons, indicating to the reader that the second segment may be exceptionally difficult to striate. If each day is a cycle within the larger cycle of the seasons (with perhaps more than one process at work), then it is equally as difficult to apply such an oscillation to the text. Even though *Walden* becomes more like a narrative as it attends to the seasonal changes (p. 54), Thoreau does not track the progressions of individual days.

My reading of the text places a significant transition from the first to the second parts of *Walden* in Chapters 11-13: "Higher Laws," "Brute Neighbors," and "House Warming." These chapters were expanded considerably after 1849 (see the chart by Adams & Ross, 1988, p. 58 as reproduced by Schacht, n.d.). Bickman made a similar notice of a boundary in Chapter 12, and it is important to keep in mind that Chapter 11 is a contrast-pair with Chapter 12 (Bickman, 1992, p. 51). It is likely that a shift towards narrative emphasis begins in earnest in "The Ponds" (Chapter 9, which also received significant revisions after 1849, Schacht, n.d.), and that the custom of positing contrast-pairs gradually tapers off after "Brute Neighbors" (Bickman, 1992, p. 52). Of course, it is likely that there are other transition markers, which would make the change from the first to second parts less like a boundary and more like a natural process with many degrees of freedom.

The vague boundary that exists in the gray area of Chapters 11-13 is a staging ground for a holely space where Thoreau creates a subterranean passageway that can be followed. I discussed the first indicator of a hole in the previous section where Thoreau ironically deployed 'respect' in "Higher Laws." In addition, up until this point in *Walden*, the chapters had been matched into self-contained contrast pairs, and these chapters tended to contain paragraphs that contradicted their own chapters (pp. 51-55). This custom signals to the reader that the contradiction over 'respect' was a phenomenon that was contained within "Higher Laws." "Higher Laws" ends with a "cul-de-sac" of morality (Milder, 1995, p. 138), and the beginning of "Brute Neighbors" initiates a sharp descent from that "spiritual peak" (p. 138), almost as if Thoreau was trying to "recover the upward direction of his life by cleansing himself through nature" (p. 137). The turn is obviously located at the chapter boundary. The following chapter in *Walden*, "Brute Neighbors," begins with the archetypal dialogue between the self-respecting Hermit and the charming Poet about the prospect of fishing, giving the impression that the author was eating his pride and was on the cusp of abandoning his vegetarian diet for the sake of socializing with a charismatic friend. Nevertheless, if the holely space is explored, it becomes evident that 'respect' is about much more than just Thoreau's diet. In the next section, I discuss the passages immediately after this

dialogue and in "House Warming," which is immediately after Bickman's transition point for *Walden*'s grand structure.

Thoreau's unpredictable and incongruous personae, which come and go like Thoreau's sauntering through his bog, smooth the space of the text, sometimes overwriting previous understandings of Thoreau's language of desire with subsequent re-readings. The ground of the space shifts and exposes the familiar tension between striating and smoothening. Finally, the third kind of space is involved, which shares affinities with both striating and smoothening—an itinerant Clarity-Mystery Symbol. This is a hybrid space that exists in between individual rhetorical devices and Thoreau's shifts of personae. This hybrid space excavates holes in Thoreau's text and illuminates a subterranean intratextual network.

Spatial Excavation between Thoreau's Forms

The most interesting channel of interaction between Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent and his language of desire has to do with a holey space. There is definitely a channel of interaction between the striations of his rhetoric of ascent and the smoothening of his language of desire. At its most simple, Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent is how he keeps his personae obscure, which allows his language of desire to appear as a collection of voids of meaning. In addition, the phenomenon of Thoreau's language of desire becoming resmoothened is easy to establish virtually everywhere in the text... except where the boundary between smoothening and striating is difficult to identify: The smoothening that Thoreau creates with his Clarity-Mystery Symbol regarding respect in "Higher Laws" breaks this mold in the middle of his text, along with the transition from the first half of the text to the second half of the text, opens a subterranean network that connects to multiple places like a constellation of word associations with a secret pattern embedded in the text. This network has a center in "Higher Laws," and the radiating arms are indicated by hints that are found in "Brute Neighbors" and "House Warming."

In this section, I make this argument in two steps. First, I briefly show how the crossing of the striations of Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent induces a temporary smoothening of his language of desire. Then, I explore how the fuzzy boundary between the striated and smooth regions uncovers a holey space that reaches into (at least) ten other chapters. This exploration sets the stage for my discussion in the next section regarding Thoreau's itinerant discussion of respect, friendship, and ethics.

Interaction between the Smooth and the Striated Forms of *Walden*

It is easy to establish that, using the epigraph to this chapter, crossing the striations of Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent can smoothen his language of desire. In Golemba's analysis of the language of desire at the beginning of "Where I Lived," he identified only one instance of play in the epigraph. I find this to be interesting, since there is more than just one instance there that can serve as Mystery. In addition to the play on 'seat,' Thoreau also played on several other words and phrases. Before the 'seat' comment, Thoreau mentioned that he "walked over each farmer's premises." This is also wordplay, but it is subtler, since Thoreau does not provide an

etymological connection. For those readers who do not have a philosophical or argumentation background, it is likely that they will miss the complex meaning of 'premises' until they reach the "Reading" chapter and are warned to be aware of such tricks. If Golemba noticed it, he did not let on. In addition, Thoreau deploys a more complex play when he wrote, "Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly." The latter half of this sentence runs counter to scientific principles of light and visual observation, and perfectly summarizes Thoreau's phenomenology, which becomes the source of surrealism in "The Ponds." After one reads "The Ponds" the phrase is no longer a mystery, showing that how the reader striates Thoreau's language of desire depends in large part on what version of Thoreau the reader has in mind. This shift in striation is the domain of smooth space.

Following the Holey Space in *Walden*

The gap between smooth space and striated space is the ground of holey space (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The previous paragraph just demonstrated that the gap in *Walden* exists at the lowest level of individual statements. At the higher levels, especially his chapter headings, Thoreau casts his structural arrangements into doubt with careful phrasing and framing in "Brute Neighbors." In addition, he makes an even more explicit signal in the following chapter, "House Warming." Together, these hints suggest a larger philosophy about 'respect' that can be found by following that word to another individuation of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol in "Economy," as well as abundant instances of Clarity in which 'respect' is used.

In "Brute Neighbors," Thoreau casts doubt on the chapter organization of his text through deliberate ambiguity. In that chapter, Thoreau begins with the dialogue between the Hermit and the Poet, and then proceeds, after a short paragraph of rhetorical questioning, to tell fable after fable featuring local wildlife. These fables round out the remainder of that chapter. The rhetorical questions that precede these fables are curiously crafted: "Why do precisely these objects which we behold make a world? Why has man just these species of animals for his neighbors; as if nothing but a mouse could have filled this crevice?" (1985, p. 502). What are "these" objects and creatures? What is "this" crevice? One way to read "these" is in reference to the animals and objects referred to in the remainder of the chapter. However, however populous the chapter is, the selection is not complete. There are mice, phoebes, otters, turtledoves, chickens, ants, squirrels, cats, a few loons, ducks, and a common name for a dog. There is a brief mention of a horse in the abstract, but where did the owls go? Warring ants and the loons receive by far the most attention, leaving the rest of the animals with minimal narrative resolution. "These" is ambiguous—a reoccurrence of Thoreau's language of desire made possible by his reference to them before they appear to the reader. Why do *what* objects make up the world? Is it because they happen to be the subjects that constitute the fables contained within that chapter? My reading of these rhetorical questions is that "these" are the objects extrapolated from phenomena, and that question goes beyond the crevice of "Brute Neighbors." Thoreau is asking why it is that our ordering of objects into a bracketed chapter should be taken for granted. When the

question is posed to the reading of *Walden*, Thoreau is asking why it is that the text's world is ordered into discrete chapters. This comparison seems particularly apt, since the book up until this point had been listing a procession of various chapter animals, each with their own companion (Bickman, 1992), almost as if Thoreau were some kind of Noah and *Walden* were his ark.

Thoreau's deconstruction of *Walden*'s internal structural arrangement is made more explicit in the following chapter, "House Warming." There, Thoreau describes what made him feel at home and what he thought would be his ideal house. Instead of a conventional house divided into separate rooms with each serving a special function, Thoreau preferred a house with an open loft and no inner walls that would striate the space into rooms. The ceiling would be decorated with dynamic and tricky shadows, thrown by fire. All the utilities and conveniences would be ready at hand. Our monarchs used such grand halls during a golden age, and visitors were assumed to be familiar as soon as the door was opened. It is not necessary to suggest that Thoreau is speaking of language and metaphor. He makes the connection explicit in the next paragraphs:

> It would seem as if the very language of our parlors would lose all its nerve and degenerate into *paralaver* [parlor talk] wholly, our lives pass at such remoteness from its symbols, and its metaphors and tropes are necessarily so far fetched, through slides and dumb-waiters, as it were; in other words, the parlor is so far from the kitchen and workshop. The dinner even is only the parable of a dinner, commonly. As if only the savage dwelt near enough to Nature and Truth to borrow a trope from them. How can the scholar, who dwells away in the North West Territory or the Isle of Man, tell what is parliamentary in the kitchen?
> However, only one or two of my guests were ever bold enough to stay and eat a hasty pudding with me; but when they saw that crisis approaching they beat a hasty retreat rather, as if it would shake the house to its foundations. Nevertheless, it stood through a great many hasty-puddings. (p. 517)

Scholars tend to interpret these statements as a nudge by Thoreau to attend to the etymological histories of the words that he uses. Doing so helps the reader to realize just how subtle and specific his language is. I agree that the reader should be prepared to maintain this awareness of language's metaphorical origins. However, I think that there is more to this analogy than just a reminder that we need to be aware that "dinner" meant something that took place earlier in the day, a meaning that is itself located earlier in our history. The area where cooking occurs (i.e., the kitchen) is not just a history of meaning located in the past—it is also a location that exists now.[31] Furthermore, the wink of "far fetched" is explained, made far too obvious, and the metaphors of chutes and elevators linking the rooms are too closely associated with the ways that we need to be aware that Thoreau would do away with various rooms and that we must be on familiar terms with his royal hall of text when we open its pages. In *Walden*'s first version, which he completed before

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[31] As I discuss in the Conclusion chapter, Deleuze (1994) deploys Hume's concept of 'contraction' (pp. 70-71) to argue that the past exists in the present.

he left Walden Pond in 1847, his text had no chapter divisions (Shanley, 1957), and we would be wise to read and be familiar with the text without limiting our view to each room, just as ecology seeks to make us aware that no system is closed.

Once the divider names of *Walden*'s chapters are seen to be less like walls and more like survey markers, it quickly becomes apparent to a seasoned surveyor of *Walden* that Thoreau means for us to be shocked by how many connections can appear when we follow other markers. I am, of course, restricting myself to occurrences of 'respect,' and the marker appears in the text many times. Most of the appearances of 'respect' have to do with aspects of meaning, and I am not concerned with the word when it is used in that slight respect. I am interested in its more intense usage, which is related to a traditional angle of view, enhanced with a charge of deference and admiration. We can look at something in a certain respect, but that does not denote the same degree of esteem compared to when we treat something or someone with respect. 'Respect' is used to denote deference or admiration (or lack thereof) 17 times in *Walden*, not including the three times it is used in "Higher Laws." Ten other chapters feature at least one usage of the word, and some have several.

There are likely many other caverns that wait unearthing in the holey space of *Walden*. These holes may be discovered by attending to symbols deployed in any of the various chapters and accounting for them outside of their usual crevices. Once the subterranean network is mapped, it should be possible to enjoy a moment with Thoreau to experience a problem that he perhaps feels is worthy of consideration, and witness the solutions that he would consider. There are most likely other subterranean networks concealed underneath the hall of *Walden*, but it seems to me that the topic of 'respect' is important enough that it deserves a focused discussion. This discussion finds Thoreau subtly identifying friendship as the critical mechanism that makes us virtuous.

Discussion

Thoreau's networked discussion of 'respect' exposes an ethical crisis that must be solved with irony *and* friendship. This crisis becomes salient when Thoreau tells the reader a lot about what he does not respect, less about what he does respect, and far less about what is respectable. In other words, since Thoreau locates ethical truth out in the world and limits our knowledge to our own experience, knowing what is ethical is a paradox. The most helpful key to understand this paradox comes from a specific instance of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol in Thoreau's discussion of fashion. This paradox reaches fever pitch as well as solvency when it comes to our self-respect. It reaches fever pitch because self-respect is all-too-commonly understood to be individualistic self-respect, which is capable of many frames of rejection, but only affords one frame of acceptance (Burke, 1937/1984b). The paradox eventually reaches solvency when individualistic self-respect is understood to be an illusion and replaced with self-consideration and friendship.

Thoreau's usages of 'respect' in *Walden* tell us very little about what he thinks is respectable. Most of the relevant occurrences of 'respect' in *Walden* have to

do with specific things, animals, and people, who are respected by society, a few things respected by Thoreau, and many things that he does not respect. Thoreau is far less clear regarding what or who is truly respectable. He wrote in two separate places in *Walden* that it is respectable to do without salt when one cannot afford it, or to be poor as a farmer. However, these are particular things and conditions; they merely give us economic advice. This partly explains why Buell (1995) noted that Thoreau abandoned the economic metaphor of nature. It is also a reason why Milder (1995) argued that Thoreau was far clearer about what he rejected than what he endorsed.

An instance of the Clarity-Mystery Symbol featuring 'respect' helps illustrate the problem of respectability. The problem of respectability is that it is hard to know what is respectable. Thoreau grappled with this problem when he tried to please his mentor and sold his writing to make a living. What he thought would be respectable was mistaken, and it required a lesson in irony to learn that it is a problem. This is why he demonstrates the irony of self-respect in "Higher Laws." An ambiguous statement in "Economy" captures this conundrum more explicitly. There, Thoreau gives the details of his critique of modern fashion, telling the reader about the superfluous fashionable expenses that many people make to get respect from others. The passage in question follows a report by Thoreau of the attitudes of his neighbors who "behave as if they believed that their prospects for life would be ruined if they should" repair their fancy pantaloons with patches or add extra seams to make them more durable (1985, p. 340). Thoreau muses that a person would sooner attempt to walk to town with a broken leg than with a broken pant leg, and then observes that this person "considers, not what is truly respectable, but what is respected" (p. 340). What does that mean to *you*? What I find amazing about this statement, which was added after 1849, is that 'respect' derives from the Latin 'speciō,' which means, "to look at" (respect, n.d.; specere, n.d.; Schacht, n.d.). 'Speciō' itself derives from the Greek 'σκέπτομαι' (*sképtomai*; specio, n.d.), the philosophy of the skeptic. In *Representative Men*, Emerson showed that the skeptic's philosophy, like the word's meaning, is "to consider" (1983. p. 694). To respect is to give great consideration. In short, what Thoreau wrote was that the man who does not want to consider repairing his fashionable pantaloons does not look back and consider what is truly worthy of great consideration. No wonder respectability is so hard to assess: it appears to be circular, requiring the very thing that would enable its assessment.

The paradox of a person's ability to give an answer to what is truly respectable reaches a fever pitch with individualistic self-respect. Thoreau's usage of self-respect in "Higher Laws" suggests that self-respect equips us with frames of "rejection" or "debunking" (Burke, 1937/1984b, pp. 21-25, pp. 92-107) to resist peer pressure. The ironic use of self-respect at the end of "Higher Laws" allowed John Farmer to appeal to his own bodily authority as a "Farmer" and reject Thoreau's flute. In the second paragraph of "Conclusion," Thoreau observes that patriotic individuals all-too-often do not have self-respect. They use the frame of patriotism to reject their own desires. A hasty reading of that "Conclusion" paragraph indicates that Thoreau would have us explore the world in isolation, encouraging the brutality of nature to deploy the severest storms of correction in a

costly series of learning experiences that would make our lives a depressing solitude. In this version of respectability, the only frame of acceptance is economic necessity, a frame that Thoreau left behind after the first chapter (Buell, 1995).

Even if we could tolerate isolation, individualistic self-respect does not get us very far. The second paragraph of "Conclusion" goes to great effort to produce the illusion that individualistic self-respect is the key to Thoreau's philosophy. Indeed, *Walden* presents different faces to different kinds of readers. To the critic who thinks that *Walden* must stand on its own, it produces a simple lesson: war is to be expected, and one should be prepared to withdraw from it on occasion until the situation becomes tractable. Indeed, this seems to be the lesson that Shannon Mariotti (2010) gleaned from Thoreau. That conclusion is inevitable as long as the options are restricted to a binary opposition between nomadic existence and sedentary life in the city. The smoothening *nomos* is bound to be consolidated by the striating *logos* of the State, which is bound to be resmoothened, and so on (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). This "stealing back and forth" (Burke, 1937/1984b, p. 103, p. 104, p. 141) can go on as long as there are nomads and States; that agony is interminable. The irony here is that Thoreau's presentation of self-respect only *appears* to be individualistic. It is easy to construct frames of rejection, but it is hard to construct frames of acceptance; both are needed for the comic corrective (p. 93-94, p. 166 as discussed by Carlson, 1986, pp. 447-448 as discussed by LeBaron, 2010).

Thoreau's story of individualistic self-respect is an enigma, and the challenge is to follow its pieces until the puzzle gives way. The second paragraph of "Conclusion" contains clues that show that Thoreau did not mean for self-respect to be purely individualistic. Thoreau challenged us "explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone" (1985, p. 578). "Private" and "alone" seem to be sound indications of solitude. However, etymologically, they derive from words that do not indicate isolation at all. "Private" derives from the Latin "prīvō," which means, "to set free" (privo, n.d.). "Alone" derives from the Middle English, contracting "all one" (alone, n.d.). These words indicate that Thoreau wants us to explore the pantheistic world of oneness, a possibility of connecting to anything and everything that is immediately confirmed when Thoreau goes on to claim that he has "more of God, they more of the road" (1985, p. 578). Then in the next two sentences, Thoreau wrote that "It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar" (p. 578), which is an island, or isolated place, and yet we should do precisely that until we "find some 'Symmes' Hole' by which to get at the inside at last" (p. 578). Counting the instances of 'respect' on the island of *Walden* until a hole is found is just one way into its holey space, and there are likely other ways in.

Thoreau's story of individualistic self-respect is an allegory for the fact that the friendship that I have been analyzing in this dissertation looks a lot like stereotypical individualistic self-respect. Friendship is giving and receiving (Crosswhite, 2010), and that giving and receiving leaves behind individual friends, even ourselves, since it is the appropriation of virtue that is friendship, not the union of particular individuals. The advantage that this friendship has for the current discussion is that the virtues that are appropriated are frames of

acceptance. Friendship produces frames of acceptance: In Thoreau's discussion of how to explore "our own higher latitudes," Thoreau reminded us that "there are continents and seas in the moral world to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him" (p. 578). Each person is guaranteed to have a connection to the moral world, which exists outside of ourselves, and yet we can only see inward, and so we must introject our virtue from one another. For Thoreau, the examination of our own desires is the template for our frame of acceptance. The challenge, then, is how to adjust our own frames of rejection and acceptance so that our self-respect can keep us from falling into the same striations of morality. That isthmus or inlet that keeps us connected to the moral world is friendship.

Coda

The two-part structure of this chapter's epigraph is a useful heuristic for interpreting *Walden* in different ways.

At one level, the epigraph is Thoreau's language of desire and his rhetoric of ascent. The first part takes place with interlocutors; Thoreau is taking turns with others in his effort to improve them and their corner of the earth, the cycle of a Clarity-Mystery Symbol. The second part takes place wherever the author's persona sits, with a landscape that radiates out from him, indicating that the appearance of the world depends largely on how the reader understands the author, and that the author is going to move to his next point of ascent after an hour, or a year or two of residence.

At another level, the epigraph suggests the possibilities of our friendship with *Walden*. The first part is a stream of words and sentences that require both author and reader. *Walden* gives wisdom to the reader, and the reader gives meaning to the text, refreshing both. This stream carves what appears to be a canyon into the larger body of the text, and when we are exploring the terrain on foot, the cliffs must be crossed at various bridges. These bridges are the steps of transition in Thoreau's rhetoric of ascent, but at some point, the canyon smoothens and the steps feel more natural, like a story. There are many bridges, and many maps have been published and revised.

We can bring a map, or we can saunter and make new discoveries. If we wander the terrain without a map, we will probably get lost and fall into traps. Without a map, the reader eventually becomes familiar with the text's subterranean geology and its pitfalls, and it becomes less and less necessary to walk on the given path. The canyons that previously challenged the reader are recognized as merely grooves, striations on the surface, and that it is possible follow a network of holes to other parts of the terrain and leave the bridges behind. The entire landscape opens up to us, and we can experience new itineraries.

The giving and receiving does not stop, and we are made aware that many of our past acquaintances are actually good friends. *Walden* trains us to recognize this and help each other build our own comic correctives. Our friendships are not always withdraws from civilization, but rather are sometimes proceedings that happen without particular regard for public life or democracy. Friendship is often thought of as a private affair. It is, but that does not necessarily mean that it is opposed to

public life. It is set free from it. Its only concerns are giving, receiving, and it pays dividends through our cultivations of each other so that we are equipped to live.

Chapter Five: *Walden*'s Queer Agency

There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferrule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other than wonderful?
—*Walden*, "Conclusion" (Thoreau, 1985, pp. 582-583)

To those who are not familiar with world history and Indian mythology, the epigraph to this chapter appears to be a simple tale of artistic serendipity and integrity: an allegory of *Walden*'s transformation from divine scintillation into "a world with full and fair proportions." An artist endeavors to make something that is perfect, and his refusal to compromise with time endows him with endless life. While he does nothing but work, his friends fall away, and his civilization and others decay, and they make room for better ones to parallel the artist's quest. Then, when the work is completed, the staff blossoms and gives rise to something even more wonderful than anything that the artist could anticipate. *Walden* began as something that was a simple striving for a humble yet perfect wooden staff, but it grew over

several drafts. After its completion and even after the death of the author, it has exceeded anything that a Thoreau could anticipate when he went into the woods to practice his art.

This story is far more complex than it appears. The reason for this subtle complexity is the story's containment of large amounts of content within several words: "Kouroo," "Candahar," and "Kalpa." Although the contents of these three words do not suffice to account for the form of Thoreau's story, it begins to reveal the important contrast between content and form, two key concepts in this chapter.

Kouroo for Thoreau was a symbol of epic conflict from which the artist turned away. Kurukshetra, in Hindu mythology, was the site of a devastating vendetta that involved the Lord Krishna as a principal character (Lochtefeld, 2002). The tale of the motivations for the mythical war, the counsel Krishna provided to his friend Arjuna before the fighting, and the battle, is detailed in the *Mahabharata*, "the longest poem ever written" (Akademi, 1960, p. 137; Lochtefeld, 2002). There is no other mention of the conflict or its lost origins in Thoreau's story. Ultimately, the war that takes place in the artist's nation is implicitly acknowledged and set aside all at once, similar to Thoreau's *almost* complete disregard for the Mexican-American war that broke out during his residence at Walden Pond. Thoreau briefly engages with the topic of war and the Mexican-American war explicitly in *Walden* where he discusses the battle of the ants in "Brute Neighbors;" instead of retreating from the battle and withdrawing from the political issue, he allows the symbols of his warrior specimens to fall out of his window-frame, his frame of the world, before they finish fighting. The war becomes, in Erin Rand's words, a "distant enemy" (2008, p. 307).

The dynasty of the Candahars for Thoreau was a symbol of the exhaustion of imperial ambition after Kouroo, which will not happen in the foreseeable future. The story of the *Mahabharata* presents Krisha's mission as a quest to wage a war to end wars; however, his obvious failure to do so by direct confrontation was ultimately an open-ended lesson. The artist's inscription of the last race of the Candahars into sand is Thoreau's way of identifying when Krishna's quest will be complete. The name "Candahar" is a reference to the city of Kandahar, the second largest city in Afghanistan. It is likely that, given the strategic value of the Kandahar province, conflict in the region will not end in the foreseeable future (Holt, 2012; Azami, 2008). Therefore, it is significant that Thoreau indicated that Kandahar will cease to exist and the *name* of its people will wash like sand long before the artist of Kouroo completes his work. It is plausible that as long as there is a tradition of nation states that use words to represent resources as scarce, Kandahar will always be a tempting military target. Nevertheless, the artist *does* make the transition.

Kalpa for Thoreau was a designation for a transition beyond the intervals of time. Consider the statement, "By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star." The statement appears to be a reference to the fact that the stars are not in a fixed position in the sky, and that the artist's quest proceeded to such lengths that the stars shifted and changed configuration. If that were the significance of the statement, then Thoreau's preceding reference to Kandahar would have made it redundant. The statement about Kalpa actually means something more specific than cosmic duration, since Kalpa is not a star (Thoreau,

1995). A kalpa is a single day in the life of Brahma (p. 318). To write that kalpa was no longer the standard indicates that Thoreau was referring to a conceptual shift to a view of time that did not use an interval as a unit. In other words, Thoreau was saying that the artist had graduated into eternity—beyond the intervals of time.

Thoreau's Kouroo myth exposes an impossible dilemma that is caused by representation, which poses the question of whether agency is structure or process—form or content. What matters more: the staff's flowering that turned the artist to stone (Bickman, 1992, p. 46) and the tinder shavings that timelessly await inspiration, or the burning intensity that unfolded during its production and the slow exhuming of its content? After all, the artist's quest involved the departing of his friends, the extinction of whole civilizations, and the development of better ones. Which is more important: the ruination of past relationships, civilizations, and the buried artifacts, or the current ones that depend on their ruination? The staff had to be completed before it expanded, and the embodiment of the art was distilled by the artist's "astonishment." Seen as a representation, a specific structure represents an essential content, and the artist's agency culminates in the achievement of a solid artifact. Yet, the completion is marked by a sudden expansion from within, and it is the searching, shaving, abandoning, fruiting, and creative destruction that has agency. Structures are objects of analysis in the myth, but the system that was produced in the process of reading and analyzing it is the introduction of a spark to a pile of wood shavings and its interval into fire. A representation of becoming of structure over time relies equally on the concepts of form and content; the artist transitioned into an eternal process, but the artist—Thoreau's persona—also stayed to represent the tale.

The unpredictable depth of Thoreau's story and the "undecidability" about how to represent (rhetorical) agency (Rand, 2008, p. 314) are entangled topics. Thoreau's story, both in the microscopic version of the artist of Kouroo and in the macroscopic version of *Walden*, is rhetorical, meant to have an effect that fractures content from form, and I am trying to reproduce part of that effect in this introduction. When represented, the unpredictability of a reading of *Walden* cannot be surmised by either its structural form, its content, or by a coherent fusion between the two. In the same way, the represented agency of the epigraph story cannot be resolved as either structural form or its content. The research on the topic of agency in rhetorical studies has tried to resolve the dichotomy, and yet even our best—Burke (1945/1969), Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (see Rand, 2008), and Erin Rand (2008)—are affected by a paradox over how to analyze agency, and our representations are the cause.

This chapter demonstrates *Walden*'s rhetorical principle of difference that, for all its investment in friendship as a mechanism that allows ethics to be shared, actually alienates some of us from friendship: *Walden* provokes the reader, contorting agency in ways that are contingent on how the reader responds. Erin Rand (2008) has identified the polemic as one particular kind of rhetorical form that does this by jeopardizing friendship (Flannery, 2001), queering the usual conduit between rhetor and audience. This rhetorical form is coextensive with what Sarah Hallenbeck has called the "crisis of agency" (2012, p. 18). In this chapter, I follow

Burke's statements about the paradox of substance that indicate that the crisis of agency cannot be solved from within a representational medium. Burke's paradox of substance, the crisis of agency, and even the crisis of representation, are cut of the same cloth, and the only way out of this chapter is not just through an analysis of what *Walden* as a polemic is or represents, but through a pragmatic assessment of what the reader does when the *Walden* friendship is jeopardized. Addressing the rhetorical form of the polemic with necessary and sufficient formal conditions and indeterminate purpose, as Rand has done, cannot suffice, since such a move essentializes polemics in the rubric of process philosophy (DeLanda, 2002). To get beyond essentialism, it is necessary to deploy the concept of a multiplicity, a tool that Deleuze developed for the question of becoming (p. 10). Using the concept of a multiplicity to analyze Rand's proposed characteristics of the polemic allows me to discuss a number of causal mechanisms to explain why the apparent conventions that Rand posited exist, and to show why Rand's own polemic violates those conventions. We have not exhausted the ways in which a polemic may function.

This chapter makes this argument in two main phases. The first phase focuses on the crisis of agency. Burke's (1945/1969) writings about agency exemplify the paradox of substance, revealing that it is impossible to separate agency from purpose in a representational medium. Deleuze deployed the concept of a multiplicity to finesse this impossibility (Holland, 2013; DeLanda, 2002). The second phase of this chapter centers and then decenters Erin Rand's (2008) theory of the polemic. I show that, *arguendo*, *Walden* qualifies as a polemic under Rand's rubric, and then I use the Deleuzian concept of the multiplicity to explain why many (but not all) polemics have common characteristics. I do this by responding to Rand's polemic with a polemic of my own to map the contingent possibilities of polemics, and then I use *Tinker Creek* as an example of one of those contingencies, which responded to the polemic of *Walden* and maintained friendship.

The Crisis of Agency

The "crisis of agency" (Hallenbeck, 2012, p. 18) is a symptom of contradictions that are inherent in traditional systems of representation. Two missions that undermine each other are responsible for this crisis (Arditi & Valentine, 1999, p. 71). The first mission is to describe and control the intricate motions of the universe; this is the main function of science, which views reality through a physicalist frame. The second mission is to describe and control the intricate actions of agents/actors; this is the main function of free will, which views agents/actors through an accountability frame. Because the universe and agents/actors are of the same substance, from the perspective of action, the forces of motion and action are integrated into a feedback loop and it is impossible to understand either in isolation (Burke, 1945/1969). Deleuze deployed the concept of the multiplicity to provide a perspective from motion, since a multiplicity focuses on causal mechanisms to explain common structural forms (DeLanda, 2002). This makes it possible to analyze the polemic and explain why Rand described it using four formal characteristics, and why it would be a mistake to conclude that those characteristics cause unpredictable rhetorical effects.

I make this argument in two steps. First, I discuss Burke's agency. Burke's treatment of agency makes it evident that there is something paradoxical when the passive universe of motion is supplemented with agents/actors and viewed from the perspective of those agents/actors. Burke's paradox is not an error of analysis—it is a consequence of representation. Second, I discuss Deleuze's concept of a multiplicity, which explains identity as an effect by making it necessary to think about purpose from the perspective of polemical agency (i.e., "thinking with" a polemic, Holland, 2013, p. 37). A multiplicity makes it possible to understand why Rand selected essential formal characteristics to describe polemics.

Burke's Agency

Burke's representation of agency shows that it is entangled with questions of purpose. In Burke's *Grammar of Motives* (1945/1969), Burke shifts his conceptualization of agency between motion and action throughout his short treatment of it. Agency ended up disappearing in a discussion about mysticism, since it shares space with purpose (pp. 292-320). This characterization, embarrassing as it seems, is not unique to Burke. Rather, it indicates a problem inherent in Burke's representational medium of discussion that necessarily involves a moving world populated with actors who must grapple with questions of purpose.

Burke's representation of agency was driven by a necessarily inconsistent commitment between action and motion. The first part of the reason for this was Burke's tracing of the concept to Emerson's *Nature*, where he found the kernel of agency within Emerson's analysis of the endless uses to which natural kinds of "commodity" can be put (p. 277). Emerson's treatment of natural commodities casts agency as a series of means (pp. 277-278). It is made subservient to agents because they are the ones who order the selection of means (p. 277-278). This selection of means to fulfill ends makes agency conceptually derivative of action. Purposive action is required to 'appropriate' those commodities toward the 'appropriate' ends. The second part of the reason for Burke's inconsistency was that he also relied on P. W. Bridgman's development of operationalism; to construct a functional concept of operationalism, Burke acknowledged that science needs a vast array of instruments that "themselves are totally without purpose" (p. 279). For example, a thermometer does not act—it moves, even though it exists "only as a result of human purpose" (p. 281). For Burke, purpose snuck back into agency when he included the acting scientist with the instrument and defined agency as a "corresponding set of operations" that are performed by a scientist (p. 280). The set of operations fulfills purpose by adding the scientist's recording of measurement, which is simply a means for analysis, since "stress upon agency fails to notice the demands of the remaining motivational domains" (p. 280). Agency is motion only so long as purpose is not a part of the discussion, but it becomes action as soon as purpose becomes a salient factor. Historians are fixated on describing history as a series of intervals in time, each of which is "a stage in some historical development" toward a purpose (p. 282). This is illustrated in Thoreau's story of Kouroo because purpose briefly stopped being considered when Kalpa ceased to have significance until the author

explained to the reader that the bodhisattva artist has stayed to tell the tale and added another spark of serendipity.

Agency disappears as a function of the proliferation of purpose. Burke argued, in a striking anticipation of Deleuze and Guattari's social critique, that capitalism is responsible for a transformation of sexual desire "as-agency" into sexual desire "as-purpose" (p. 285). For Burke, the transformation is accomplished through the mechanism of money (pp. 285-286). It would be useful to say that Deleuze and Guattari refined this description as the actions of capitalists to add and delete axioms to maximize profit (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009; Holland, 1999). Burke tried to deny the necessity of purpose by defending the purifiability of agency (1945/1969, p. 287). He wrote, "Since agents act through the medium of motion, the reduction of action to motion can be treated as reduction to Agency" (p. 286). However, he did not even complete the next paragraph before he runs into the agent feedback mechanism that denies this reduction. Because agents act with a purpose in view, a simple movement is subject to "*adjustments* rather than *purpose*" (p. 287). This move is an attempt to separate movement from purpose through the transitivity of adjustment. I find this move unpersuasive. As Deleuze (1994) explained in his appropriation of Hume, agents/actors have memory, which is a container for purpose located in the contracted future, and this intervenes in the world of motion. As long as there are agents/actors, "reduction of action to motion" is impossible.

Burke's (1945/1969) paradoxical engagement with agency and purpose is an implication of describing it in representational language—an instance of the "paradox of substance" (p. 21). Despite the best efforts of language users, any representation of agency is going to put action and motion, process and structure, form and content, into mixture. Furthermore, the transitive power of grammar is not sufficient cover to finesse the paradox, and no amount of defining is going to solve the "crisis of agency" (Hallenbeck, 2012, p. 18). In fact, Burke argued that it is defining that causes the paradox of substance (1945/1969). In the next section, I discuss Deleuze's process philosophy to show how it is possible to avoid the mixture through a non-representational analysis; solving the problem of essentializing polemics requires attacking the problem by thinking *with* polemics.

Deleuze's Process Philosophy

Reading Deleuze (1994) solves the problem of identity by refusing its foundational status, and my deployment of Deleuze's philosophy solves the problem caused by the positing of a stable polemical form. One of the most important missions of Deleuze's process philosophy is to analyze identity in terms of a multiplicity (DeLanda, 2002). Using a multiplicity in process philosophy escapes from representational thinking (Holland, 2013). Resisting representational thinking is important when analyzing the nature of polemics, since polemics are queer, a form marked with an unpredictability (Rand, 2008) that is curtailed when it is analyzed in terms of conventional characteristics. Analyzing the polemical form as a multiplicity preserves and explains its unpredictability.

In Deleuze's discussion of Hegel in *Difference and Repetition* (1994), the problem becomes an issue when identity is taken as foundational and difference is viewed as derivative. When identity is foundational, identities can be opposed, essences can be generalized to other contexts, universals can be complexified so that resemblances can be detected, and analysis can end. Deleuze intervened on this basic assumption of representation by making difference foundational, and viewing identity as derivative. It is important to clarify that Deleuze did not abandon identity. Deleuze was invested in *explaining identity* rather than assuming identity (DeLanda, 2002). Deleuze still relied on foundations, but his foundations were not structural or essential. Rather, Deleuze's foundation was reading and thinking.

One of the most important missions of Deleuze's process philosophy is to analyze identity in terms of a multiplicity (p. 9). Deleuze (1994) proposed that we should analyze process through an appeal to the concept of difference, which he associated with the mathematical concept of the differential (p. 46). The differential is an open-ended array of ways to analyze change, and it is interesting to point out that the methodology of differential analysis in mathematics itself changes depending on the conditions of the problem (which makes it an effective device to demonstrate difference), rather than remaining a static method. DeLanda (2002) explained that when a process is analyzed, it is inevitable that the examination of many examples of it will reveal that there are similarities (p. 10). It is tempting to fixate on those similarities and then conclude that those similarities constitute an essence (p. 10). However, "These would not be essences of objects or kinds of objects, but essences of processes, yet essences nonetheless. It is in order to break this vicious circle that multiplicities are introduced" (p. 10). For Deleuzian analysis, multiplicities are the only way to account for similarities of form without returning to a structuralist analysis of form (p. 10). According to Jonathan Roffe (2010), "A multiplicity is, in the most basic sense, a complex structure that does not reference a prior unity" (p. 181). A useful example of a multiplicity for Roffe is a house:

> A house is a patchwork of concrete structures and habits. Even though we can list these things, there is finally no way of determining what the essence of a particular house is, because we cannot point to anything out of the house itself to explain or to sum it up—it is simply a patchwork. (p. 181)

A house *houses*, and houses *house*. In other words, a multiplicity is not defined by a set of essences or forms, since it is those essences or forms which need to be explained by a multiplicity in the first place. Instead, a multiplicity is an expansive catalog of the possibilities (or 'contingencies,' if we follow Farrell, 1993, p. 77) that may happen during a process. A house might be built of wall frames by carpenters and be inhabited with great success; the same plan could be followed by amateurs and might be a complete disaster. In addition, "We can imagine a time when, in the infancy of the human race, some enterprising mortal crept into a hollow in a rock for shelter" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 344), defying the current stereotype of construction and creating a house merely by occupying it, perhaps for the first time. The causal mechanisms that attend to prior conditions, such as the distribution of weight and the consequences of the choices made by those who constructed the house (e.g., carpenters, geological forces, occupants), explain the emergent similarities that are

found among houses. The identity of a house is something to be explained rather than taken for granted.

Using a multiplicity in process philosophy enables escape from representational thinking. However, it is not possible to do this by using a multiplicity merely to think about something. In other words, to use a multiplicity for solving the problem of identity, it is not enough to think "about the world"— rather, a multiplicity works by "thinking with the world" (Holland, 2013, p. 37). For example, to create a multiplicity of a house and have it work with houses, it would be necessary also to account for the causal mechanisms that affect how a house is built, and the best way to do that is by building a house. It is possible to build a house in the virtual space of thought using the framework of a multiplicity if one follows the causal mechanisms that influence the degrees of freedom that affect builders in their quest to actualize a house. Alternatively, and more topical for the current project, it is also possible to deploy a multiplicity of a polemic. The advantage to this approach is that this dissertation's medium and status as a polemic features the causal mechanisms that influence the degrees of freedom that affect polemicists and their audiences, and it does this automatically. *We* are thus in the position of actualizing the possibilities that a polemic unfolds just by reading, thinking, and responding, achieving a non-representational analysis of polemics through rhetorical agency.

As this chapter moves into the next section, which addresses the polemical scope of queer studies, it is important to keep Deleuze's concept of the multiplicity geared toward explaining a situation of an unpredictable form with characteristics that have been predicted. The current situation is a polemic, a concept that Erin Rand (2008) identified as queer with certain characteristics that she herself predicted. She brought attention to the polemic in order to address the question of rhetorical agency, and answered the issue of whether agency belongs to texts or audiences by focusing on both sides of the rhetorical equation (p. 299). She answered this question by "suggesting that the formal features of texts enable agency" (p. 299). Her definition of rhetorical agency as "the capacity for words and/or actions to come to make sense and therefore to create effects through their particular formal and stylistic conventions" has the advantage of including texts *and* audiences into the topic of agency (pp. 299-300). However, this view is also problematic because it posited *conventions*, which do precisely what DeLanda warned is what happens when essences of process are posited without a continued effort to explain the intensive processes that sustain those characteristics. The next section focuses on deploying a multiplicity to demonstrate the mortality of those conventions, and to show that they are not essential to the rhetorical form of the polemic. This lack of essence is critical to retaining the queerness of polemics, which is arguably the most important insight of Rand's arguments about polemics.

The Polemic's Queer Rhetoric

Erin Rand's rhetoric has failed to resolve the crisis of agency. This is good news. In fact, her attempts at definition have simultaneously reified Burke's paradox of substance and shown that the polemic is a multiplicity. Her strategy was to define

the polemic as a queer rhetorical form and to posit conventional requirements for any empirical test cases *and* to define the polemic in terms of unexpected purposes to which audiences have appropriated it. The characteristics and the purposive characteristic that she posited are specific, predicable, and generalizable. However, because of Rand's dual definition of the polemic, it becomes clear that audiences of her text, herself included, should be prepared for adjustments to the formal characteristics and purposes of the polemic. This becomes clear toward the end of her article where she identified her article as itself a form of "queer polemicization" (p. 314), and as such, she rightly flouted, whether or not she realized it, the arguably essentializing characteristics that she laid out and queered them in a striking display of adjustability. My reaction to Rand's polemic is a provisional acceptance of the formal characteristics that she laid out, but displacing its implicit Hegelian framework with Deleuze's process-oriented multiplicity framework to explain those characteristics. Therefore, I argue that, even though Rand's theory qualifies *Walden* as a polemic, it (like any polemic) requires openness to alternative processes of fulfillment (Arditi & Valentine, 1999). Paradoxically, because Rand's rhetoric was itself polemical, my reaction to her theory has given her a significant measure of success in causing a change in direction that expands the scope of queer studies beyond a framework that has been defined by Hegelian thinking. *Walden* functions in the same way: it is guaranteed success by making Thoreau's thesis a possible "falling away of a friend" (Flannery, 2001, p. 122 quoted by Rand, 2008, p. 307).

I make this argument in two steps. First, I engage Erin Rand's theory on her own initial terms. I follow the characteristics that Rand set out as the necessary and sufficient conditions for the constitution of a polemic and show that, *arguendo*, *Walden* qualifies as a polemic under her conventional analysis. Second, I consider Rand's definitional duality and cast the polemic as a multiplicity. By producing a polemic, this permits a non-representational demonstration of a polemic's characteristics. Rand's failure to control the uptake of her polemic within this project ensures that her polemic has been successful, just as *Walden* guarantees success by insisting that others go their own way, especially when that means leaving *Walden* behind. The reader is then invited to read and respond to *this* polemic, which actualizes its contingent possibilities and produces queerness.

Rand's Polemic

The first part of Rand's theory of the polemic is an elegant exercise in formal theory that has exploded the scope of queer studies (2008). She produced a groundbreaking theory and took seriously the old idea that queerness is not always about sex, but is instead a matter of an unpredictable relationship between speech and its uptake by audiences, which may involve sex. This was made possible because she produced a theory that is capable of focusing exclusively on the formal characteristics of a rhetorical act and its effects rather than its institutional context. This is particularly important to the current project because it has made it possible to analyze the queer dimensions of *Walden*, a text that followed the 19th century's *zeitgeist* and reduced the topic of sex to a single sentence: "Chastity is the flowering of man" (Thoreau, 1985, p. 497). Rand's archetypal example was Larry Kramer's

inflammatory gay rights rhetoric, and she was able to refrain from making Kramer's topic essential to her proof.

Rand laid out four characteristics that are the necessary and sufficient conventional conditions for polemical rhetoric: "[1] alienating expressions of emotion, [2] non-contingent assertions of truth, [3] presumptions of shared morality, and [4] the constitution of enemies, audiences, and publics" (2008, p. 301). As they stand, *Walden* meets these requirements, but *Walden* is more complex than Kramer's rhetoric with respect to how people have responded, which is the concern of the fourth characteristic.

Alienating Expressions of Emotion

According to Rand, the first formal feature of polemics is that they have alienating expressions of emotion. Citing Katheryn Thomas Flannery, Rand found that "the salience of anger is often noted as a primary component of polemics in general" (p. 302). Alienation is accomplished without recourse to content, with polemics deploying emotion in a way that is different from rhetorical *pathos* (p. 302). This form, for Rand, is through a sequence of non-emotional descriptions that build up to an emotional outburst.

Walden accomplishes emotional alienation from its reader in two ways. The first way that this is accomplished is indirectly through its heroic demands on the reader. The second way that *Walden* accomplishes this is through the same way that Kramer did: following a string of descriptions and building to an explicit emotional crescendo.

The first way that *Walden* alienates its reader is through its high demands on its reader. To show why this can result in alienation, it is useful to compare *Walden* to another set of polemics than Kramer's diatribes. A more *Walden*esque set of examples of a polemic that alienates the reader with high demands on its reader are John Milton's classical writings. Richard Weaver (1953) described Milton's writings as a kind of "heroic rhetoric"; what is heroic about Milton's writings is that "the perception of his judgments requires an active sensibility incompatible with a state of relaxation" (p. 143). One has to focus to understand Milton's verse. It is also interesting to note that Weaver himself characterized Milton's writings as polemical. *Walden* is similar. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Golemba (1990) argued that *Walden* was written with "a language that speaks in riddles, a tormenting language that threatens to devour those who fail to decode its mysteries" (p. 232). *Walden* violates our expectations, does not allow us to rest, and brutally challenges his friends to adapt to its literary wilderness. Such a challenge can be profoundly alienating once it is discovered. This is why the faux friendships of illusive surveying and self-sounding, which are discussed in Chapter Three, delay the recognition of the intensity of *Walden*'s terms of friendship.

The second way that *Walden* accomplishes emotional alienation from the reader is particularly salient in two places in the text. One place that this occurs is in "The Ponds." Another place is in the latter part of "Baker Farm" and the beginning of "Higher Laws."

The most obvious example, in my opinion, of *Walden*'s alienation of the reader through direct emotional expression is in "The Ponds." The topic that led to the outburst is Thoreau's description of a pond where Thoreau wanted to build a cabin after he graduated from college, with a Mr. Flint denying his desire. In "The Ponds," Thoreau provides a detailed description of Flint's Pond, or Sandy Pond, and the activities that he engaged in and the sights and sensations that he enjoyed while there, describing the small waves that are produced by the wind and memorialized in the sand. Then, in a fresh paragraph, Thoreau emitted his outburst: "What right had the unclean and stupid farmer, whose farm abutted on this sky water, whose shores he has ruthlessly laid bare, to give his name to it?" (1985, p. 478). He followed up this judgment with a critique of the ways that Flint's capitalistic behavior undermined the true value of the pond. Today, just as in the 19th century, such a revelation of values is highly divisive, alienating most people who identify with Flint and embarrassing the rest of the population that has allowed a country to be "manured with the hearts and brains of men! As if you were to raise your potatoes in the church-yard! Such is a model farm" (p. 479). Historically, churchyards have been used as burial grounds, and so Thoreau is indicting us for being like zombies who have acquired a taste for farmers. We are either like Flint and Emerson and guilty of naming the ponds and waves as "commodities" of nature, or we are complicit through our slow and plodding pursuit of American dreams.

Another way that *Walden* accomplishes emotional alienation from the reader through direct emotional expression is particularly salient in Thoreau's reaction in "Higher Laws" to John Field's American dreaming in "Baker Farm." In "Baker Farm," Thoreau was a guest in the house of the Field family, a family of Irish immigrants. Mrs. Field is perpetually cleaning, and yet the shack remains dirty. The reason, Thoreau claims, is because of the several amenities that the Fields indulged in: a rich diet that included tea, coffee, and meat. Thoreau attempted to intervene with rationality, and treated the Fields like philosophers who would carefully consider evidence. John Field "heaved a sigh" and his wife stared at Thoreau "with arms a-kimbo." (p. 487). On his way home, Thoreau heard a voice of conscience in his head telling him to go live a wild life, and not to concern himself with the self-defeating pursuits and stubbornness of John Field and his ilk. Then, at the beginning of "Higher Laws," Thoreau's emotions literally go raw:

> As I came home through the woods with my string of fish, trailing my pole, it being now quite dark, I caught a glimpse of a woodchuck stealing across my path, and felt a strange thrill of savage delight, and was strongly tempted to seize and devour him raw; not that I was hungry then, except for that wildness which he represented. (p. 490)

Many Thoreavians quote this passage out of context, taking it as a representative anecdote for Thoreau's honor of wildness and how it contradicted his vegetarian preferences. However, when it is combined with the narrative in the previous chapter, it becomes clear that Thoreau's urge is tied to his frustration at his failure to reach the Fields with reason, and his urge to seize the woodchuck is a pendulum effect of the situation. Thoreau's reaction can be savage and alienating, since not everyone would want to eat a woodchuck, let alone a raw one that might still be

alive. It is also unexpected, not only because of Thoreau's transition from philosophy to savagery, but also because the woodchuck encounter was separated from Thoreau's encounter with John Field by the striation of a new chapter.

Non-Contingent Assertions of Truth

According to Rand, the second formal feature that polemics have is the assertion of non-contingent truths. This characteristic is linked to the first characteristic: the reason for polemic's emotional alienation is because of the author's "passionate conviction in a particular version of the truth, even when that truth may not be evident to others" (Rand, 2008, p. 303). Although non-contingent truths do not form the totality of claims made by a polemic, a polemic always has a foundation without a footing. In Rand's words, "Polemics forego the expected methodological construction of an argument through the presentation of evidence and logic in favor of a simple declaration or indictment" (p. 303). This effectively alienates polemics as non-normal from the rhetorical tradition, since "Kenneth J. E. Graham, for instance, explains that the rhetorical is marked by dialogue and debate, involves arguing on both sides of an issue, and is necessarily social in outlook" (p. 303). The polemic runs the risk of being called 'antirhetorical' (Kenneth Graham, as quoted by Flannery, 2001, p. 116 and Rand, 2008, p. 303), and as such, it "violates the norms of rhetoric" (Rand, 2008, pp. 303-304).

In the case of *Walden*, its non-contingent truth is its thesis: each person should find their own way. This truth finds no direct support anywhere in the text; it vanishes soon after it appears, only to re-appear in the conclusion. Thoreau's violation of the norms of rhetoric is evident when his "population thinking"[32] in "Economy" and "Conclusion" is compared to the reasoned pantheism found in the rest of the book. In particular, the placid enlightenment found in "Spring" is jarringly disrupted when Thoreau admonishes the reader to "love your life, poor as it is" (see Buell, 1995, p. 249).

Presumptions of Shared Morality

According to Rand, the third formal feature that polemics have is a presumption of a shared morality. This presumption leads polemics to "take on a discomfortingly moralistic or self-righteous tone. Rather than moving an audience through a series of logical steps to forward his argument," Rand argued, the polemicist "describes his polemical truth as a moral—rather than rational—choice. The audience is therefore not so much persuaded as they are expected or morally obliged to believe" (2008, p. 304). This move displaces "the primacy of reason" (p. 305) and introduces one's moral conscience as a constituent of reason and rhetoric.

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[32] Manuel DeLanda (2002) used this term to describe Deleuze's process philosophy. DeLanda argued that Deleuze's philosophy requires the existence of a population of individual cases that form the basis for manifold analysis. According to Ernst Mayr, "the populationist thinker stresses the uniqueness of everything in the organic world" (quoted by DeLanda, 2002, p. 58).

Walden is replete with the presumption that each of our consciences is sacrosanct. This led Buell to write:

> Thoreau seems to have assumed at some rather early point that readers (as opposed to the general public) will stay with him and complete the process of conversion to which they were already somewhat disposed by immersing themselves so completely in the life according to nature that they will refuse to reenter civilized life again on the same terms as before. Thoreau's refusal to organize the Walden landscape tidily for his readers may be one sign of his intent to get us lost in it. (1995, p. 135)

Walden's reader is free to leave at any time. There are no appeals to fear or vanity designed to induce the reader to stay. In addition, Thoreau's claim that each person should find their own way is coupled with his argument in "Resistance to Civil Government" where he insisted that each citizen has an obligation never to "resign his conscience to the legislator" (1849, p. 190). Thoreau also defended John Brown's morally motivated raid on Harpers Ferry (2001). Rand found that Kramer embraced the role of "moralist," Foucault identified as one as well (Rand, 2008, p. 305); the same description fits *Walden*'s persona and Thoreau as an individual.

Constitution of Enemies, Audiences, and Publics

This characteristic addresses the polemic's contextual relationship with its audiences by "dissolv[ing] the distance between the audience and the text by implicating the audience as the cause of the problem" (p. 306). While Kramer's polemic divides his audience into partisan groups that produce the serendipity of new theories of queerness (pp. 309-311), *Walden* differs because it not only keeps itself a focus of attention, but also invites its surviving friends to take advantage of that attention by acting with the knowledge that the enemy has been provoked.

The special adversarial relationship that polemics have with their audiences proves to be divisive rhetoric (p. 306). Rand characterized polemics as a rhetorical form in which "allegiances of the reader or audience are shaped by the text itself" (p. 306). Polemics target an audience that is complicit with a true adversary and "cultivates the partisanship of the audience" (p. 306). Polemics do this by indicting their audiences for being enablers (pp. 306-307). What this accomplishes is the construction of two different kinds of enemies: a proximate enemy and a distant enemy (p. 307). This construction of two different kinds of enemies that differ in terms of their relative proximity or distance from the rhetor is reminiscent of grammatical third persons in Algonquian and Salishan languages (both of which are Native American) in which the third person actually has two parts: a proximate, or a more topical third person, and an obviative, or a less topical third person (Mithun, 2001).[33] The proximate enemy in polemics is, provocatively and paradoxically, the audience itself (p. 307). This is why Kathryn Thomas Flannery described the warlike

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[33] This division of one's enemies into proximate and primary groups seems have a history that could be further explored. For example, Michael Hardt has noted that Deleuze staged a response to Hegel through his "care in positioning the relation to proximate and fundamental enemies" (1993, p. 53).

quality of the polemic with its invoked audience and the relationship as being like "the falling away of a friend" (Flannery, 2001, p. 122 quoted by Rand, 2008, p. 307). The audience is posited as an enemy because of its complicity with the distant enemy, and the polemic proposes to "activate agency among the proximate audience" to stop enabling the distant enemy (Rand, 2008, p. 308). However, because some audience members may have actually fallen away from friendship because of the alienating effects of the polemic, some audience members would be untethered from the polemic's second persona (Black, 1970 as cited by Rand, 2008). As Rand pointed out, "polemics might be used against the grain, or be taken up by other audiences and for other purposes" (2008, p. 308). In Rand's rubric, this proximate enemy gives rise to a contest over what to do with the polemic: follow the polemicist's demands, or move against it (p. 309). Because the audience of a polemic faces an implicit choice about the future of its relationship with the rhetor, the audience is challenged to create deliberative rhetoric (p. 309).

Walden's constitution of audiences, enemies, and public space is complex. While it is true that *Walden* invokes a proximate enemy that enables capitalism, that problem does not completely bracket the fertility of the experience of responding to *Walden*. In the next section, I discuss a response that has been able to maintain friendship with the text and took it in an unpredictable direction, despite the repelling force that "offends the constituency" (p. 307). For the remainder of this section, I discuss the standard pattern identified by Rand, of *Walden*'s invocation of its proximate enemy, an oppositional response, and the controversy that was generated by that response.

The invoked audience of *Walden* is a discontented crowd, and Thoreau casts many of us as proximate enemies. The text is replete with references to its readers, identifying them as ordinary people who are doing an endless series of labors to rival Hercules. Other references attached to the "you" pronoun in the text identify the reader as spiritually poor and hungry, finding it hard to live and wondering why, and driven into exhausting debt or guilty thievery by capitalism. Thoreau also elaborates his attack in a single sentence that requires heroic attention to follow:

> It is very evident what mean and sneaking lives many of you live, for my sight has been whetted by experience; always on the limits, trying to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient slough, called by the Latins *æs alienum*, another's brass, for some of their coins were made of brass; still living, and dying, and buried by this other's brass; always promising to pay, promising to pay, tomorrow, and dying today, insolvent; seeking to curry favor, to get custom, by how many modes, only not state-prison offenses; lying, flattering, voting, contracting yourselves into a nutshell of civility or dilating into an atmosphere of thin and vaporous generosity, that you may persuade your neighbor to let you make his shoes, or his hat, or his coat, or his carriage, or import his groceries for him; making yourselves sick, that you may lay up something against a sick day, something to be tucked away in an old chest, or in a stocking behind the plastering, or, more safely, in the brick bank; no matter where, no matter how much or how little. (1985, p. 328)

In other words, Thoreau is speaking to everyone who has ever stared at a coin as a child, wondering who the face belonged to, and then later felt resentment for the fact that they will never to appear on one—*æs alienum*. It is what we get when we try to get ahead by getting other people into debt with the retail smile or when we cause inflation with conspicuous consumption. It is any activity that defrauds another in a way that is just outside of the reach of law. It is the result of the corrupting quest to own another's brass… the sustaining force of capitalism… the essence of what qualifies one to be Thoreau's proximate enemy. Thoreau is not addressing Flint, or John Farmer, or John Field. These archetypes either have no motive to read Thoreau, or have confirmed their desperation by resigning their lives to a dog-eat-dog world. Instead, Thoreau is addressing the mass of his readers who live "lives of quiet desperation" (p. 329), still have the Thoreauvian dream of living free and wild, and yet have acquired the habit of squandering their lives so that they may "*play* life, or *study* it merely" (p. 363).

Walden's indictment of the users of capitalism has attracted its own collection of detractors. In fact, it seems to be particularly good at attracting them. Shortly after Thoreau's death, his old nemesis, Lowell (1914), accused Thoreau of being a mere strawberry from Emerson's garden (p. 298). Lowell's distaste for Thoreau became most salient in his pronouncement that he "discovered nothing" (p. 300). Since then, Thoreau's legacy has lived on seemingly in Emerson's shadow, leaving him with the short shrift that would find his major contribution in his essay "Resistance to Civil Government."

It is worth pointing out one recent attack on Thoreau in *The New Yorker*. Kathryn Schultz (2015) came forward to renew Lowell's vitriol, assailing Thoreau's supposed "moral myopia" and reducing him to "pond scum" (her article's title). Schulz's complaint against Thoreau was against Thoreau's supposedly excessive stoicism, the fact that he was "narcissistic, fanatical about self-control, adamant that he required nothing beyond himself to understand and thrive in the world" (para. 6). She seemed to have the same contempt that 19th century entrepreneurs had toward Thoreau, lambasting him for having the temerity to turn his back on the world, and indulging in "original cabin porn" (para. 6). Most of this pro-capitalism rant is factually suspect and partisan, but one claim in it I have to admit is partially true: "Nor was he interested in subjecting his claims to logical scrutiny" (para. 26).

The response to *The New Yorker* piece was substantial, with a mixture of apologia and dismissal, making it an interesting contrast to Kramer's rhetoric. Writers came out of the proverbial woodwork from a variety of naturist and Thoreauvian strongholds, such as the Sierra Club (Mark, 2015), the *Boston Globe* (Primack & Miller-Rushing, 2015), the *New Republic* (Hohn, 2015), and the *Boston Review* (Waxman, 2015). Shultz's article drew so much attention that one of my colleagues, Dr. Joseph Rhodes, notified my advisor and me about the article. Sandy Scott, writing for a blog from Concord, Massachusetts, summed up Shultz's critique as "an amazing, it seems willful, misreading of Thoreau's work" (2015, para. 2). Matthew Towles, in a more investigatory response, traced Shultz's motives to an "effort to contrast our sentimental view of Thoreau with how he lived his life" (2015, para. 4). Donovan Hohn, writing for the *New Republic* (2015), questioned the

very need for such a correction, pointing out that so much time has passed that it is now exceptionally difficult to separate the apocryphal from the genuine origin, and that such a quest is quite beside the point of *Walden*. While each generation has its Thoreau critics, there is no shortage of defenders and realists, making Thoreau's polemical legacy different from Kramer's inflammatory rhetoric. The polemical rhetoric that brought Kramer waves of rejection and serendipitous response has been a tool to increase *Walden*'s visibility in the moments when the public fails to understand its power.

Readjusting the Polemic

The polemic induces its own polemicization, which makes it hard to pin down (Arditi & Valentine, 1999), just like queerness (Warner, 2002). Rand's (2008) article is one such example of this morphing; the first opportunity for adjustment to it was made in the article itself through its own polemicization (p. 314). In addition, I offer more adjustment here. Specifically, I observe that Rand's own empirical analysis 'fails' to move outside of an implicit Hegelian identity framework, since the formal "characteristics of polemics make them especially prone to being put to unforeseen uses" (p. 310). The 'failure' of Rand's argument is the same brand of failure that Rand found in Campbell's and Flannery's statements about agency. These failures are fuel for adjustment of the polemic as a multiplicity. When the polemic is analyzed as a multiplicity, the unpredictability of the polemic is explained and its connection to queerness becomes an effect of process.

I make this argument in three steps. The first step reviews the adjustment that Rand made to the four necessary and sufficient characteristics of the polemic. In this review, I show how the appeal to purpose allowed Rand to depart from those characteristics and identify her article as a polemic, even though it does not meet those four characteristics. The second step in this argument addresses the Hegelian language in Rand's article (the clear empirical preference towards analyzing oppositional provocations to Kramer's rhetoric) and the need to recast the polemic as a multiplicity. I bring attention to the fact that the work that she did to validate the polemic's characteristics favors attention toward provocations that are clearly against Kramer's rhetoric.[34] This means that Rand's language leaves open the possibility that polemics can inspire non-oppositional provocations from the polemic's friends. Recasting the polemic as a multiplicity overcomes this oversight. The last step in this argument actualizes this possibility. To do this, I create a polemic, making the contingent possibilities of polemical multiplicity actual by involving the reader in this process of actualizing the possibilities of polemical multiplicity through thinking and considering how to respond. In addition, I extrapolate from the virtual possibilities of my multiplicity to return to Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* to inform a missing possibility that Rand overlooked.

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[34] Rand (2008) did mention "skeptics or believers" (p. 306), but her article clearly spent most of its audience analysis attending to the opponents of Kramer's polemics.

Rand's Adjustment of the Polemic

The adjustment that Rand made to the polemical form was a move that displaced the structural essence of the polemic and defined it in terms of purpose. Rand's own article displays the mutability of the polemical form, since by identifying her own text as polemical, she demonstrates that it is possible to produce a polemic without adhering to the formal characteristics that she defined. This proves, by her purposive definition and her own example, that it is possible to provoke an unpredictable response in such a way that adjusts the conventional structure of polemical agency.

Rand's additional definition of the polemic sets her definition up for revision. Citing Arditi and Valentine, Rand argued that the polemic

> introduces a critical gap through which the possibility of political dissent arises. . . . It is by virtue of the iterability of the rules of political participation that polemics can intervene both to cite and redefine the rules and therefore potentially to promote radical social change. (p. 313)

This potentiality of having one's own iteration of the rules altered or subverted "necessarily introduces risk" (p. 314). To that end, Rand redefined the polemic: "The polemic, as an excessive form whose volatility and tendency to be taken up in unexpected ways make the risk of undecideability of rhetorical agency especially apparent, is therefore productively queer" (p. 314). Since "the effectivity of any given polemic is never fully determined by its substance or intention[,] this is a move that de-essentializes both the polemical form and queerness itself" (p. 314). Suddenly, Rand's definition of a polemic has become a multiplicity. It has become possible that a polemic can fulfill volatility and have a tendency to be taken up in unexpected ways that do not fulfill the four conditions.

Rand's article is one such example of a polemic that does not fulfill her own requirements. Near the conclusion of her article, she admitted that she was indulging in her "own bit of queer polemicization" (p. 314). This is an important admission, since her article does not feature any of the conventional polemical characteristics. This is okay in her own framework, since to qualify as a polemic it must be available to be taken up by others, used for unexpected purposes, and revised to serve those purposes.

Through Rand's move from polemical form to polemical purpose, however unexpected that adjustment and purpose might be, she has confirmed Burke's observation that actors adjust agency to suit their own purposes (1945/1969, p. 287). In addition, since essences of process are still essences nonetheless (DeLanda, 2002), defining the polemic in terms of its appropriated purposes is still an essence, and following DeLanda, that essence needs to be explained. The next section makes that explanation by analyzing the polemic as a multiplicity, which attends to the polemic's causal mechanisms to explain structural similarities.

A Rhetorical Polemic

Rand perpetuates a Hegelian dialectical framework in her analysis of the polemic's formal structure, and I wonder how many of my readers are responsible for allowing people like her to continue using a Hegelian framework to publish

formal analysis. What does that mean to *you*? Specifically, her casting of the polemic as four structural characteristics, which is a conventional rhetorical form that causes it to be used for unpredictable purposes, fails to account for the causal mechanisms that produce the similarities that polemics have. Rand also focused on responses to Kramer's polemical rhetoric that adopt the position of the polemic's proximate enemy and paid little attention to Kramer's friends. This move ignores the cases in which Kramer's audience maintains polemical friendship but acts with the awareness that a proximate enemy was invoked. These cases would reveal queer strategies that can be deployed with polemics. However, by focusing on oppositional responses, Rand actually reified an essentialist foundation while masking that activity by claiming that she was de-essentializing polemics. In other words, Rand actually reinforced what she set out to disrupt. Furthermore, if the reader does not hold individuals like Rand accountable for perpetuating this kind of structuralist masking of structuralism, then the problem of essentialism will never be solved, no matter how much Hegelian thinkers claim to be ambivalent about identity (see Muńoz, 2009).

In this study, I use this response in two ways. First, in case the polemical nature of my argument is not yet salient, I map the ways that the reader, as a participant in academia, might respond to my insinuation that they are responsible for allowing this situation to continue. Second, in the context of *Walden*, I return attention to Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* as a kind of polemical response that does not fit into Rand's believer/skeptic binary.

The Multiplicity of Polemicization

Rand's four characteristics of the polemic are necessary effects in one contingency of polemicization, but they are not necessary effects in all contingencies of polemicization. The most important tool that helps to construct the multiplicity of a polemic is the idea of contingency, which has to do with how agents/actors respond to appearances (Farrell, 1993). This means that the audience of a polemic is not responding to emotional expressions that the polemic essentially has, but is instead responding to emotional expressions that audiences perceive. This shift from polemical essence to polemical contingency is one way to escape from the piety of essentialism, since contingencies, if they obtain, produce the structures that were previously seen to be essential. Specifically, to show that Rand's analysis amounts to an incomplete multiplicity of the polemic, I map the ways in which someone might respond to the polemical nature of this dissertation. Without waiting for an actual response, I use Dillard's *Tinker Creek* to explore the way that a polemic's audience can be the polemic's friend and address the polemic's "public space" (Rand, 2008, p. 309) through its own straightforwardness (Thoreau, 1840). *Tinker Creek*'s queer rhetoric thus serves as a helpful example of responsibility for others who find themselves at the margins of normalcy.

The most important tool that helps to construct the multiplicity of a polemic is the idea of the contingency, which has to do with how agents/actors respond to appearances (Farrell, 1993). Thomas Farrell has argued that as rhetorical beings, we do not respond to noumenal realities, but rather, we respond to appearances. In

addition, Farrell argued, citing Aristotle, "Contingency is presupposed on the very notion of voluntary agency, since it makes no sense to deliberate over things which are going to be the case anyway or things which could never be the case" (p. 77). Appearances may or may not be identical with reality.

As such, the polemical involvement of emotional alienation is not a matter of characteristics that polemics essentially have, but is instead a matter of how polemics appear. Benjamin D. Powell (2007) has shown, in a review of the cognitive neuroscientific research of Vittorio Gallese, that there are important causal mechanisms, embedded in the processes of mirror neurons, that have to be satisfied for actions, such as emotional expressions, to be successfully communicated. Specifically, the successful perception of an action made by another individual requires that the perceiver not only achieve an embodiment of the same action, but also an "*embodiment* of the intended goal" (p. 113). In other words, the perceptions of the polemic's audience are contingent on what the audience actually embodies. The target of an emotion is often an important part of that emotion (Goldie, 2002). The polemic's friends do not identify with the proximate enemy, and so they do not experience alienation, since the target of their emotions is not themselves. In contrast, audiences who identify as the polemic's proximate enemy experience alienation, since their embodied anger is directed inward. In the case of *Walden*, the contingency of emotional alienation hinges on whether the audience identifies as an adherent of *æs alienum*. The polemic's contingency of emotional alienation is not "just as likely to alienate—rather than satisfy or motivate—the audience," as Rand argued (2008, p. 303), but is instead a contingency determined by the audience.

This shift from polemical essence to polemical contingency is one way to escape from the piety of essentialism, since contingencies *may* posit the structures that were previously seen to be essential. Rand's first characteristic holds for the polemic's proximate enemy, not the polemic's friends, since the polemic causes lasting emotional alienation only in the proximate enemy. For the polemic's friends, the polemic's emotional expressions are not durably alienating; the polemic's friends identify with the polemicist. Rand's discussion of the four characteristics of polemics operates without much regard for rhetorical contingency, and as such, assumes that the polemic's audience is always going to have an arbitrary likelihood of experiencing alienation. When seen as a structure of possibilities rather than a statistic, the four characteristics only obtain for the proximate enemy, which may not be present to a polemic at all, might cause widespread alienation, or some result in between. When Rand's four characteristics are seen only as essential characteristics of how a polemic would appear to its proximate enemy, we realize that it is in our interests to accept that the four characteristics are contingent.

To show that Rand's analysis amounts to an incomplete multiplicity of the polemic, I map the multiplicity of my polemic: the context of an intervention of the enabling behavior of an academic reader who is a member of a discipline that is perpetuating Hegelian thinking. This is helpful because it simplifies the manifold nature of the multiplicity of Thoreau's polemic, which has a long history and a changing rhetorical situation, into a scenario that has been actualized in the current project. This strategy of thinking with polemics instead of about them reveals the

contingencies for which Rand both succeeded and failed to provide accounts, and it allows the reader to expand the contingencies as far as the outcome may warrant. I chose this particular example because, following Rand's account, it involves a polemicist invoking partisanship by naming a proximate enemy as responsible for enabling a distant enemy. In my polemic, I have implicated the reader in a way that highlights the mechanics of co-dependency, which revolves around enablers who allow something undesirable to continue. The outcome of this confrontation is not a binary conclusion; there are several contingencies, which constitute the multiplicity of the polemic. These contingencies are a reflection of the fact that when agency involves actors/agents, agency is subject to adjustment based on the purposes envisioned by those actors/agents. I use the term 'polemic' here because the example conforms to Rand's conventional characteristics and is at risk of provoking feelings of alienation, implicating my reader for enabling academia for perpetuating Hegelian thinking, just as Rand described Kramer did in his gadfly rhetoric to his audiences for allowing the system to abuse gays. I divide audience response into various possibilities: A reader as 'friend' or as 'enemy'. 'Friend' is the polemic's friend: 'friend' accepts responsibility for my claim, and recognizes co-dependency as the true enemy, the inherent barrier that prevents the extinction of Hegelian thinking. 'Friend' ceases the enabling behavior (or does not exhibit enabling behavior in the first place) and can respond in a few ways: either (1) join my camp by engaging the proximate enemy (i.e., attack other enablers), or (2) move on with the reading process having taken individual responsibility (i.e., completely cease co-dependent behavior). 'Enemy' is the polemic's proximate enemy: the 'enemy' denies responsibility for what I have said and does not recognize co-dependency as the enemy. The 'enemy' can respond in a few ways: either (3) fail to change (i.e., continue enabling) or (4) deploy the powers of rhetorical invention to formulate a response to me as to why my polemic is wrong or misguided. Rand's analysis primarily focused on the oppositional responses of Crimp and Edelman, and positioned them into the fourth contingency. The remainder of her analysis involved a cursory acknowledgment of the rest of the respondents to Kramer's rhetoric, lumping them into the first and perhaps the third contingency. This leaves the second and third contingencies relatively unexplored. Unfortunately, the enemy who fulfills the third contingency is usually silent, and so it is difficult to explore it rhetorically. This leaves the second contingency in need of an accounting.

To investigate the actual results of this second contingency, I am not going to guess how the reader is going to respond, but I will I use Dillard's *Tinker Creek* to exemplify a way that a polemic's audience can be the polemic's friend and correct the polemic through its own straightforwardness. Dillard's rhetoric in *Tinker Creek* deliberately cultivates strangeness (Slovic, 1992). Given this pattern of cultivation, which has reached into most of her writings, and in particular, Dillard's use or disavowal of gender nonconforming writing in *Tinker Creek* to induce her own melancholia and blindfold herself to metaphorical meaning (Abraham & Torok, 1994a), her strategy is queer. Moreover, Dillard positioned *Tinker Creek* as *Walden*'s friend and responded in an oblique way by exploiting the other contingencies of *Walden*'s polemics. Specifically, Dillard did not participate in *Walden*'s attack on its

proximate enemy, the enabling behaviors of capitalism, *æs alienum*. In fact, Dillard engaged in no conventional social criticism whatsoever. Within the confines of the text itself (i.e., ignoring supplemental material that Dillard produced), the gender of the narrator is not identifiable if the reader does not assume that the narrator and the author are the same person. Suzanne Clark argued that Dillard's displacement of her gender reifies the absence of women in nature writing, a criticism that has been directed at Thoreau in particular (1991). Thoreau made virtually no analysis on the subjection of women, and some of his comments in *Walden* can be interpreted as sexist (Golemba, 1990). Of course, Thoreau was deliberately presenting the stereotyped individualist man as a front, and so there is cause to be suspicious of his genuineness regarding these comments. Nevertheless, Dillard's strategy of befriending *Walden* and implicitly exposing an oversight in it through her own example is a perfect example of Thoreau's prescription for satirical attack: "Truth does not turn to rebuke falsehood; her own straightforwardness is the severest correction" (1840, p. 118).

Tinker Creek's queer rhetoric thus serves as a helpful example of responsibility for others who find themselves at the margins of normalcy. As many queer people have found the hard way, complaining about intolerable circumstances, such as a dearth of women writers, has the unfortunate effect of drawing attention from the very sources of misery that produce those intolerable circumstances. Michael Warner has written about a similar problem: "those who write opaque left theory might very well feel that they are . . . writing to a public that does not yet exist, and finding that their language can circulate only in channels hostile to it" (2002, p. 130). This is one reason why queerness is driven into silence, where it is then agitated by polemicists like Thoreau and Kramer. Dillard's rhetoric suggests that it may be possible to exploit the imaginative aspects of the public sphere to occlude the enemy from detecting activists,[35] thereby protecting them from retaliation long enough for a counterpublic to take shape. Dillard's *Tinker Creek* exemplifies a form of rhetoric that does this by not producing a 'complaint,' but rather by producing a defilade 'plaint,' which refrains from addressing the object of attack. "Though the folly be not corrected," wrote Thoreau, the poet is satisfied that truth has inspired the voice of genius, and made possible the next level of genius (1840, p. 118). This next level, according to Thoreau, is love, which is a quality that has been sorely missed from polemics, given their warlike quality. However, if the polemic's audience can respond to it beyond complaint, there is an opportunity not only to display queerness in an unlikely safe space of a battlefront, but also to invite additional queer results.

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[35] José Esteban Muñoz (1999) made a strikingly similar observation in his analysis of an exhibit by the late queer *cubano* artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres. The exhibit is of a strangely ordinary photograph taken by Peter Muscato of a ripped blank billboard and a surrounding empty lot fenced off with barbed wire (p. 171). According to Muñoz, viewers of the exhibit are split between awareness and ignorance due to the photograph's representation of "an absence, a lacuna, a void gesturing to something valuable, loved, and missing" (p. 170).

Coda

Thoreau's Kouroo myth serves many purposes. It exposes the necessary mixture of form and content. It also embodies the unfolding flower of *Walden*, showing that purpose can be both perfect and mutable.

The Kouroo myth exposes the necessary mixture of form and content. Burke's analysis of the motion of agency produced a paradox due to the mechanics of representation. Our focus on purpose has allowed us to intervene on agency and adjust it with action, but our intervention within a representational medium has made it impossible to separate action from motion, form from content (Burke, 1945/1969). Deleuze (1994) helps us to get beyond representation by using a multiplicity to think non-representationally (Holland, 2013). Furthermore, by responding to polemics, the reader can think with polemics, multiply the contingencies of polemical response and respond to the emotional challenge to wage war.

The Kouroo myth is the unfolding flower of *Walden*, showing that purpose can be both perfect and mutable. There is a polemical ingredient in *Walden*, and it gives emotional depth to Thoreau's anti-capitalistic rage. That scintillating animosity is still burning *Walden*'s readers, as evinced by the continued fight between Thoreauvian detractors and apologists. However, this warlike behavior does not exhaust the possibilities of *Walden*. There are some who have read it, who appreciate the seriousness of Thoreau's critique of "Economy," and who know that there are ways to engage that discussion without instigating the habit of combat. Annie Dillard is one of those transcendent warriors. She demonstrated how to make her point without piercing *Walden*. Annie Dillard's rhetoric is queer; she not only wore that queerness by eliding her gender within her narrative, but she also walked far beyond it into the natural and uncomfortable world of strangeness (Slovic, 1992). This accepts and cherishes Thoreau's mission to create a work of perfection, and also responds in a way that, as Rand (2008) has pointed out, creates space for deliberative agency.

Conclusion

> There is a dawn lurking behind the hills of every horizon at noon tide; there
> are ears that hear the drowsy cricket, and eyes that see the glittering dews
> even then.
> —*Walden*, "Conclusion," from one of Thoreau's handwritten manuscript
> pages; Beinecke Library, Yale University (Thoreau, 1970, p. 448)

When I began this project, my advisor gave me his copy of *The Annotated Walden* (1970), an intimidating tome featuring a photographic copy of the first edition of *Walden*. In the margin on each page are footnotes explaining various literary references that modern readers are thought to need in order to understand various code words and obscure allusions. The first time I leafed through it, I could not fathom how it could be possible to add any more footnotes, since there are precisely 1,008 of them there. When I found the book in my mailbox, I immediately opened it, and discovered a note from my advisor, telling me that he had owned the book for years and never opened it.

The challenge presented by this artifact is the same challenge that Thoreau had in his quest to recover from melancholia, and it is the same challenge that *Walden*'s reader has in realizing why they are living a life of "quiet desperation" (1985, p. 329). Beginning the recovery of my losses and continuing the heroic adventure of life has been an enormous challenge for me over the years, and I have discovered that my relationship with *Walden* is a symbol of the beginning of that process with myself. After I began to undergo my gender transition, I started to explore ways to unlock another way of understanding *Walden*, just as I was exploring ways to unlock another way of understanding myself. Something was buried in this text that was given to me, just as my lost desires had been buried in my psyche, waiting for introjection. One day, an insight occurred when I was examining the last page of "Conclusion." Beyond "THE END." was a photocopy of a page from one of Thoreau's handwritten manuscript pages (Thoreau, 1970, p. 448). At first I could not read Thoreau's scrawl, and for years I ignored it. After all, Thoreau's effects have all been deciphered and published, right? Then, one day, while I was alone, I looked at the cryptic writing, and the words slowly came to me. I read the words aloud without paying attention to the meaning, and when I repeated the words with the motivation of understanding them, I realized that there was a sentence there that I did not remember encountering before, but it felt familiar, almost like I had it once and then lost it. I went back to check the manuscript: the sentence is not in any Clapper version of *Walden* (Schacht, n.d.). I tried to look up the phrase on the Internet. Nothing. I do not presume to claim that I am the first person to decipher the passage—rather, it was a personal achievement that was key to the futures of my own life as well as the life of this dissertation. That sentence is the epigraph to this chapter.

The epigraph to this chapter is a useful way to introduce the two implications that need to be discussed in this conclusion. These implications, which affect communication studies, have to do with melancholia and queer studies.

First, when I decrypted the epigraph, I realized that the epigraph is an appropriate way to discuss my discipline's engagement with the concept of melancholia. My own deciphering of the epigraph describes how a reader of *Walden* induces the beginning of recovery from melancholia: by producing an environment that encourages the reader to believe that one's desires are legitimate, thus leading to the subject's discovery of melancholia and the long process of the subject's recovery. At the time that I discovered the epigraph, there was still much work to be done to complete this project, and I had already made the important step of recognizing my own melancholia. I only needed to absorb the import from the statement, to make its desires my own, which required work. However, for me, the remaining work was not an achievement *per se*. For others, such as queers of color, that additional work may be far more challenging. Unfortunately, José Esteban Muñoz (1999) assumed that the melancholic subject will become aware of their melancholic condition and that introjection of the contents of the melancholic crypt is only going to be stalled by extrinsic conditions, such as economic class. This assumption homogenizes our epistemic conditions, describing just one possibility of the condition of melancholia.

Second, the epigraph challenges the discipline's habit of dialectical engagement by challenging our preconceptions about the appearances of darkness, sounds, and light. Special subtleties occur when it is noon where we are: many horizons toward the west are producing a different dawn, and not everyone notices; at noon, crickets are chirping softly enough that only the most sensitive ears detect them, and each one is unique; there is just enough moisture on the grass to be seen by the most discerning microscopic perspective, and each drop of dew is different. In other words, the subtleties in *Walden* require a meticulous imagination and attentiveness from the reader for the text to be understood at all, and each interpreter who achieves friendship with *Walden* reaches a wild and legitimate interpretation. Unfortunately, the current scholarship on polysemy has concluded that when the spectrum of possible interpretations reaches a wide enough envelope, a text is no longer exemplifying polysemy, but is instead demonstrating the Derridean concept of dissemination (Ceccarelli, 1998). One of the implications of this project is to place dissemination under the umbrella of polysemy, not outside of it. To some this is an unacceptably queer result, and that when interpretations are far enough afield then they are opposed to the text's meaning. This dissertation challenges Muñoz's (2009) dialectical assumption.

This conclusion chapter explores these implications in two steps. The first step initiates the business of wrapping up the dissertation by addressing the research questions that were proposed in the Introduction chapter. The second step of this conclusion addresses the two implications themselves. Specifically, the implications of both melancholia and queer studies intersect with the research of José Esteban Muñoz. Muñoz produced research on both of these topics, but his understanding of melancholia (1999) did not address Butler's (1997) discussion

about the disavowal of desire, and his metaphysical orientation (2009) was Hegelian. This second step lays out the remedies that need to be made to Muñoz's research so that his efforts to give voice to the disparaged minorities of the queer community can be appreciated through a Deleuzian lens with a robust understanding of melancholia that finds utopian comfort in the present.

<div style="text-align:center">Answering the Research Questions</div>

The first research question, which inquires into the relationship between Thoreau's melancholic writing discussed in the Introduction chapter and his "language of desire" (Golemba, 1990, p. 233, p. 234), was answered by the analysis in Chapter Four. The second research question, which inquires into how this relationship implicates queer studies and queer movements, was partially answered in Chapter Five, and will require additional discussion in this chapter.

Research Question 1

The first research question inquires into the relationship between Thoreau's melancholic writing and Thoreau's language of desire. Thoreau's melancholic writing was, of course, produced out of his melancholia, which was hatched early in his life, and can be traced back at least to Margaret Fuller's rejection of Thoreau's "The Service" from publication in *The Dial* (Fink, 1992). Melancholia is made possible because mourning has been stalled; for whatever reason, the arresting of mourning, made possible by the disavowal of desire, maintains the illusion that the memory of the lost object is the lost object (Butler, 1997; Torok, 1994; Abraham & Torok, 1994a). The encrypted fantasy that occurs at the beginning of mourning is a subconscious skill of demetaphorization, which induces the subject to take literally what is metaphorical (Abraham & Torok, 1994a). Thoreau's "language of desire" (Golemba, 1990, p. 233, p. 234), which I argue was put into increased practice when he recognized his own long relationship with demetaphorization during his experience with ether, was his way of writing with a deliberate blindness and receptivity to metaphorical fertility. A phrase that is written in a language of desire is one that can function metaphorically, but does not by itself. When readers encounter these phrases, they commonly assume that there is a metaphor and are induced to recover it from "a letter posted but never quite delivered (p. 228). The trick with Thoreau's language of desire is that the reader thinks that the recovery is sourced by one's memory of the text, which may be true, but sometimes, the recovery is sourced from elsewhere, a selection made by one's own desires.

Research Question 2

The second research question inquires into how the answer to the first research question implicates the future of queer studies and queer movements. The connection between melancholia and Thoreau's language of desire involves a recognition of the capability of language to be used with open-ended metaphorical functionality that does not erase literal meaning, and that a reader can be called upon to participate as a coauthor in the unique role of adding metaphorical interpretation (p. 7). This addition of a metaphorical layer on top of Thoreau's literal

meaning leads to polysemy. To do this requires an occasional displacement of the text as the arbiter of meaning and supplementing those moments with invitations to the reader to participate as co-author (p. 7; Buell, 1995). This self-adjusting give and take of invitation is the foundation for the friendship that was described in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Five discussed how the incongruous perspectives of friendship intersect with the form of the polemic where friendship between text and reader is jeopardized (Flannery, 2001 as quoted by Rand, 2008). The unpredictability of polemics derives from the ability of the audience to swerve in directions that are not directed by the polemic (Rand, 2008), creating a contingency that possibly maintains or possibly departs from the particular friendship with the polemic. This contingency of the polemic's audience to react in a way that cannot be determined by an essential content of the polemic or intent of the polemicist is why Rand found polemics to be queer (p. 310). This move expands the traditional scope of queerness, putting non-sexual topics within the scope of queer studies (pp. 311-312).[36] However, this general implication does not address communication studies scholarship. Therefore, I want to focus on a few important texts by Muñoz that put these implications into sharp relief for the discipline.

Muñoz

Muñoz's attention to minorities of a minority is an important site for the interaction between melancholia, queer studies, and queer culture, since these were main areas of his research. However, my arguments here point to more work that should be done with Muñoz, since I have found a gap in his discussion of melancholia theory, and I find his discussion of process philosophy to be dismissive. Muñoz's focus on minorities who have the need to live and flourish within the minority status of the queer community is too important to be cast aside because of these oversights. Therefore, I want to address the foundations for his two texts, *Disidentifications* (1999), and *Cruising Utopia* (2009). The first text developed a theory of disidentification that relies on an understanding of melancholia that neglects Butler's (1997) updated arguments about melancholia. The second text deployed queerness from within a Hegelian metaphysic. I do not propose to fix these problems here, since that may require a reexamination of the artifacts that Muñoz

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[36] This move does not delegitimize a concern of queer studies for the impact that capitalism has had in the derogation of populations that do not facilitate the reproduction of capitalistic labor. Queer studies rightfully maintains the timely and sustained attention to the suppressive practices of capitalism. However, my move merely calls attention to Michael Warner's observation that "people didn't sweat much over being normal until the spread of statistics in the nineteenth century" (1999, p. 53) and Leslie Feinberg's (1996) observation that there was a time when gender conformity did not have its current normative power. Furthermore, there may be a future in which those norms might fade. In those contexts, normativity still had rhetorical force, but it did not exist in sex and gender. If that were not the case, then queer forms could not antedate capitalism and pre-capitalistic polemics would not have unpredictable functionality.

examined or analysis of additional material. Instead, I want to provide suggestions for future research so that that Muñoz's critical insights can be appreciated in new ways.

Disidentification

Muñoz's (1999) invocation of disidentification is a departure from the binary of identification and counter-identification (p. 97). This "third term" is invented by virtue of the capabilities that recovered melancholic subjects have through the previous incorporation of their losses (p. 97). However, Muñoz's explication of melancholia theory without attention to Butler (1997) proves to be limited. Here, I address disidentification as a condition involving melancholia, and then discuss what work needs to be done to update Muñoz's analysis.

For Muñoz, disidentification "is a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within" (1999, p. 11). It is a "survival strategy" (p. 18) that involves a constant foregrounding of "that lost object of identification" (p. 30). It is a line that "is not easy to follow inasmuch as it is neither linear nor in any way straight. It is, in fact, a very *queer* trajectory" (p. 39). Specifically, "Disidentification for the minority subject is a mode of *recycling* or re-forming an object that has already been invested with powerful energy. It is important to emphasize the transformative restructuration of that disidentification" (p. 39). From my understanding of Muñoz's argument, because minorities within minorities have their heroes delegitimated by authority figures in the public sphere and by some in queer counterpublic enclaves, queers of color and gender nonconforming individuals have found themselves afflicted with melancholia, and some of them have been able to recover by introjecting from their melancholic crypts.

Unfortunately, Muñoz failed to appreciate the nuances of melancholia theory that Butler published two years prior to the publication of Muñoz's text. Muñoz presented disidentification as a strategy that matches the "oppositional reception" that Stuart Hall proposed can be done to media messages (p. 26) and one that accomplishes its restructuring through de/reterritorialization (p. 58, p. 185). In this analogue, "Disidentification is therefore about the management of an identity that has been 'spoiled' in the majoritarian public sphere" (p. 185). In Butler's (1997) analysis of melancholia, the melancholic subject has disavowed their desire, and when this observation is filtered through Deleuze and Guattari's metaproductive understanding of desire (2009), that disavowal, when combined with loss, shrinks the dynamic ownership of one's desires to static identity. In other words, the melancholic subject affirms the spoiled nature of those desires and resigns oneself to mere existence and desire-as-lack. Muñoz does not explain how any 'unspoiling' might take place. This is evident in his presentation of the mechanics of disidentification. The clearest evidence of this is in one of his endnotes. As Muñoz wrote, "Melancholia is a process that also depends on introjection. In my analysis, this introjection is described as the 'holding on to' or incorporation of or by a lost object" (p. 203). It is obvious that Muñoz was conflating introjection and incorporation, claiming that the two activities are "coterminous" (p. 13, p. 15). In my reading of Butler's analysis, introjection and incorporation are not identical, but

instead share a terminus (i.e., where one ends the other begins). Indeed, all of the research that I have discussed in this dissertation by Butler, Abraham, Torok, Leader, and Arsić indicates that when introjection is restored, introjection grows as it proceeds and swells to occupy the space of incorporation in the "vampiric" (p. 13) manner that Muñoz described. However, that vampirism takes time and *approaches* a coterminous state but never rests. It is important to point out Torok's (1994) observation that introjection and incorporation differ most significantly in the timed nature of how they occur; introjection is a gradual process in which one's menu of desires slowly expands through experimentation and observation, whereas incorporation is a rapid task that is quickly accomplished, and it is sustained during melancholia by the demetaphorized fantasy of swallowing and the burying of that fantasy to make it seem literal (p. 113). In the case of grieving through introjection, incorporation is done first before grieving can commence. This means that the transition from melancholia to disidentification involves a process in which introjection and incorporation are not coterminous, but have, at best, a coterminous limit that will never obtain.

Muñoz's *Disidentifications* does not account for the transition from melancholia to disidentification, but that does not mean that melancholics are doomed. I suggest that future research should search for individuals like Thoreau who have had the experience of melancholia and who managed to 'unspoil' their own identities in a move from melancholia to disidentification. Of course, Chapter Two of this dissertation shows that melancholia is stabilized because of disavowal, and there are many reasons why someone may disavow their desires. Therefore, more examples of recovery should be explored so that queer people can envision utopia in the apparent dystopia of the present.

Finding Utopia in Queerness

The feeling that queerness is displaced by the present and points instead to a utopian future is a result of Hegelian thinking, a sentiment that I do not share. Muñoz (2009) argued that queerness is not yet here, and relied on arguments from Ernst Bloch and Hegelian idealism to make that argument. Unfortunately, Muñoz was dismissive of process philosophy. Deleuze's process philosophy (1994) locates utopia in the unfolding present, not in a future that attacks the present. Thoreau matched Deleuze's conclusion with a narrative of utopia that is more than merely possible or potential, but one that he actually achieved in his day. Furthermore, both Thoreau and Deleuze responded to falsity positively rather than negatively. While I sympathize with Muñoz's project in *Cruising Utopia*, I would submit that his hasty dismissal of process philosophy came from his Hegelian thinking. This section serves to "brag," borrowing a term from Thoreau (1985, p. 361, p. 389), to reassure queers that utopia actually exists now.

Muñoz argued that queerness is not yet here, and relied on arguments from Ernst Bloch and Hegelian idealism to make that argument. Muñoz's (2009) project was a response to what he referred to as Edelman's polemic against the agenda of the present moment in political culture, a culture that stipulates that the future is the child (sexual reproduction; p. 11). Although Muñoz was critical of Edelman for

sending queer thought into a nihilistic negation of political participation, Muñoz confessed that he found a lot to like about Edelman's diagnosis. Nevertheless, Muñoz rejected Edelman's prescription, saying 'No' to Edelman's 'No,' complaining that Edelman's argument "quickly replaced the romance of community with the romance of singularity and negativity" (p. 10). Muñoz's "anti-antirelationality" (p. 14) involved a Blochian understanding of time in which queers retain and cherish memories of the "no-longer-conscious," which is located in the present moment (p. 12). This trace enables "a critical hermeneutics attuned to comprehending the not-yet-here" (p. 12). The not-yet-here is a perfection of the no-longer-conscious, a utopia. In this framework, queerness itself is "a temporal arrangement in which the past is a field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of a new futurity" (p. 16).

Unfortunately, Muñoz was dismissive of process philosophy. Although Muñoz never cited Deleuze or process philosophy by name, he did make a passing reference to the "antiutopian critic" who "has a well-worn war chest of post-structuralism pieties at her or his disposal to shut down lines of thought that delineate the concept of critical utopianism" (p. 10). I can certainly see how process philosophy could be included under the umbrella of post-structuralism, although such an ism suggests that process philosophy eschews all attention to structure, which is simply not true. Muñoz's main project was to respond to the habitual thinking that takes the superficially "pragmatic gay agenda" as the only game in town for queers; this flavor of pragmatism is a myopic desire for belonging that asks for "mere inclusion in a corrupt and bankrupt social order" (p. 20). In this sense, Muñoz found a need for a rejection of the status quo that had enough forward thinking to inspire hope for queer people who did not want to sell their souls to heteronormativity. As much as I consider myself a Deleuzian and a Thoreauvian, I am attracted to Muñoz's project, but, strictly speaking, I do not identify with Muñoz's complaint against "straight time" (p. 22) and I feel the alienating pushback of Muñoz's polemic, which refused to consider process philosophy.

Deleuze's process philosophy locates utopia in the unfolding present, not in a future that attacks the present. Deleuze folded the past and the future within the present, and deployed Hume's concept of 'contraction' to show how processes in the present explain the phenomena of past and future (1994, pp. 70-71). It is tempting to understand contraction as the drafting, signing, and enforcement of contracts. After all, contracts exist in the present moment, and their power derives from the presence of signatures that represent the oaths that the contract's parties made in the past to do something in the future. However, such an analogy is flawed; Derrida (1988) has famously critiqued the idea that a person who signs a document remains the same person who could be subject to that document's future enforcement. Instead, I offer an understanding of contraction from another context: Thoreau contracted melancholia. This contraction, along with the effects of Thoreau's return from melancholia with the boon of demetaphorization, has survived Thoreau's death and continues in the present moment in the form of records, memories, sympathies, and a language of desire that produces recovery. The contraction continues to have a passive (Deleuze, 1994, p. 71) inertia that is an inheritance

passed from instant to instant, which continues to affect the trajectory of Thoreauvian research, the use of his biography in this dissertation to inform the reader, and so on. Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* is utopian because it located the contraction of capitalism's failure. Following Marx, Deleuze and Guattari argued that capitalism produces schizophrenic thinking, which is the agency of capitalism's disruption, which will culminate as permanent revolution (2009; Holland, 1999). In other words, as bad as the present looks to those of us who see a present that "is so poisonous and insolvent" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 30), Deleuze folded harm, plan, and solvency together into an imminent process like Thoreau, producing the image of a toothless Buddhist master relaxing in the certainty that things are actually unfolding as they should.

Thoreau matched Deleuze's conclusion with a narrative of utopia that is more than merely possible or potential, but one that he actually achieved in his day. Thoreau derived immense comfort in his insistence that moral reform begins first with the individual, and that such a technique is bound to have long-lasting effects. As a consequence of this insistence on taking responsibility for one's own moral contributions, Thoreau took it upon himself to refuse to pay for a poll tax, which precipitated his arrest by Sam Staples, the tax collector (Harding, 1982). Thoreau was completely willing to go to jail for tax evasion (p. 199), which serves as one of the most poignant examples of his ability to find utopia in a 'broken' situation. This is why Thoreau found utopia in the present moment:

> I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of singing like the birds, I silently smiled at my incessant good fortune. As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so had I my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest. My days were not days of the week, bearing the stamp of any heathen deity, nor were they minced into hours and fretted by the ticking of a clock; for I lived like the Puri Indians, of whom it is said that "for yesterday, today, and tomorrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday forward for tomorrow, and overhead for the passing day." This was sheer idleness to

> my fellow-townsmen, no doubt; but if the birds and flowers had tried me by
> their standard, I should not have been found wanting. A man must find his
> occasions in himself, it is true. The natural day is very calm, and will hardly
> reprove his indolence. (1985, pp. 411-412)

There are multiple indicators of affirmative utopia in this presentist presentation. First, Thoreau identifies with the Puri Indians who used demonstrative temporal gestures. What is interesting about this finger pointing is that they are all spatial references, which point to places in the present. Second, Thoreau's moment of utopia itself does not defy the value system of enterprise that gave his "fellow-townsmen" cause to dissect the hours of the day and criticize his day as "sheer idleness." Instead, his description of what he did was in terms of "something that a thing *is not*" (Burke, 1945/1969, p. 23), which involved not using a clock or a calendar. This omission of criticism is important and I discuss it in more detail in the next paragraph. Finally, when Thoreau wrote that "if the birds and flowers had tried me by their standard, I should not have been found wanting," he was distancing himself from the dictum of Daniel 5:27: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Thoreau, 1995, p. 109). Instead of rejecting the scales of the enterprising culture that saturated his civilization, he identified with the birds and flowers, who taught Thoreau by example to relax during the passing of the day and to appreciate "the gospel according to this moment" (1862, p. 673).

Both Thoreau and Deleuze responded to falsity positively rather than negatively. Thoreau's positive response is showcased in the long quote in the previous paragraph. There, he follows his two-step progression toward genius that he laid out in his "Persius" essay (1840). There, the first advancement toward genius consisted of the graduation from complaint to plaint, which made it possible to move from plaint to love. Thoreau's omission of a critique of capitalism in his moment of utopia shows that truth's "straightforwardness is the severest correction" (p. 118). The reason why this is not simply a mode of escapism can be seen with more clarity by turning to Deleuze. In Deleuze's project of answering Hegel's dialectic, Deleuze was very much aware that any move against Hegel would feed into the form of the dialectic as a negation, and as Judith Butler has observed, would merely prove Hegelian thinking (Hardt, 1993). According to Michael Hardt, "From this perspective, opposition itself is essentially dialectical, and hence 'opposition to the dialectic itself' can only mean a reinforcement or repetition of the dialectic" (p. 52). Instead of posturing his response as an attack or a negation of Hegel that produces continuity with the target, Deleuze made two powerful responses (p. 53). First, he insisted "that the history of philosophy contains real discontinuities," as exemplified by the Hegel-Nietzsche relationship, since "the Nietzschean attack on the master-slave relation" is "carried out on planes completely removed from Hegel's discourse" (p. 53). Second, and more in line with a Thoreauvian plaint, Deleuze proposed that we should "move away from the dialectic, to forget the dialectic" (p. 53). Deleuze put that dictum into practice in his later writings, in which Hegelian thinking is so refreshingly absent that there is not

even an echo of Deleuze's disposal of Hegel.[37] In this sense, Thoreau and Deleuze share an affinity; Thoreau's utopia forgets capitalism, and Deleuze's utopia forgets Hegel.

While I sympathize with Muñoz's project in *Cruising Utopia*, I would submit that his hasty dismissal of process philosophy came from his embrace of Hegelian thinking. I see two kinds of indicators of Muñoz's hastiness. The first indicator is Muñoz's preference to categorize effective counterpublics as oppositional. The second indicator is Muñoz's admission that his rhetoric is polemical.

The first indicator of Muñoz's hasty dismissal of process philosophy is an assumption that effective counterpublics are automatically oppositional. This can be demonstrated by examining an example from *Cruising Utopia* in which he indulged in what I would characterize as 'queer time,' or what Muñoz, citing Bloch, referred to as the "no-longer-conscious" (2009, p. 12). This kind of time differs from Muñoz's "straight time" (p. 22). This example involved Muñoz's friend, Kevin Aviance, a professional performer who was dancing in a gay dance club:

> There is not much room for steps, and Aviance does not need them. This particular dance is about his hands. His hands move in jerky mechanical spasms. They frame his face and his outfit. He dances to the house music that the DJ is playing especially for him. He is elevated from the dance floor but also surrounded by dancers who are now dancing with him. He is both onstage and one of the throng, one with the music. It makes sense that he is elevated. He is there not because he is simply a better dancer than the other clubgoers around him (he is) but because he is the bridge between quotidian nightlife dancing and theatrical performance. (2009, p. 77)

In this quotation, which I have carefully extracted from its context, there is no critique, no rebuke of heteronormative "straight time." Instead, Muñoz and his queer readers enjoy a utopian moment that actually existed in the present and continues to contract, in which Aviance reveled in an ecstasy that shares similarities with the bliss that Thoreau must have also felt leisurely sitting in his doorway. In the next sentence, however, Muñoz returns to Hegelian negation, stipulating that Aviance himself "defies the codes of masculinity that saturate the dance floor" (p. 77). I see no evidence to suggest that Aviance's purpose was defiance, although he did connote "gender ostracism" (p. 74). The agency of his dance was simple: "He performs the powerful interface between femininity and masculinity that is active in any gender, especially queer ones" (p. 79). Personally, I think that Aviance would have found just as much "self-making" (p. 75) in his dance if he were performing above a crowd that did not espouse such codes. Nevertheless, I must admit that it is possible that Aviance was dancing out of defiance. My point is not to debate about Aviance's motives, and not to suggest that counterpublics never operate effectively with opposition as their framework. Some counterpublics and dances oppose. Nevertheless, I insist that, following Thoreau, a non-oppositional counterpublic,

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[37] As Brian Massumi wrote in his translator's forward to *A Thousand Plateaus*, "Hegel is absent, being too despicable to merit even a mutant offspring" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. x).

especially one that shifts the labor burden of opposition onto the State, can be devastatingly effective.

The second kind of indicator of Muñoz's hasty dismissal of process philosophy is the presence of polemical form in his text. Muñoz makes it clear that not only did he view Edelman's *No Future* as a polemic, but he also viewed his own response to Edelman as a polemic (p. 22). In light of Erin Rand's (2008) claim about the polemic as a queer rhetorical form, I would submit that Muñoz's polemic is ample evidence of a certain irony in his pronouncements that queerness is not yet here, since the practice of polemical rhetoric is an embodiment of queerness wherever it happens. Unfortunately, Muñoz's canonization of Hegelian thinking blinded him from these alternatives to negation.

Before I conclude this dissertation, I want to "brag," following Thoreau (1985, p. 361, p. 389), on behalf of queers, that utopia actually exists now, even though queers like Muñoz and myself have experienced and will continue to endure enormous suffering. Thoreau wrote that his bragging was the kind of cocksure confidence that a rooster exudes when filled with the certainty that it is daytime. Thoreau was so sure that taking responsibility for one's desires would be fulfilling that he did not find it necessary to interfere with the machinations of the expedient State (Thoreau, 1849). As he wrote in "Resistance to Civil Government",

> It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous, wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. (p. 195)

Those "other concerns to engage him" are the exercise of desire and conscience, which are far more important than always trying to fix other people's unwillingness to do the same. To do otherwise would be to buy into the rubric of heteronomy that causes melancholia, which produces its own solution. In this sense, I am served with the question of how to address Muñoz's complaint against capitalism's suppression of queers of color. In Thoreauvian fashion, I respond as Thoreau responded to the illusive surveyor and self-sounder, that I am thankful that Muñoz complained, for he protested in his own way, as I protest in mine. In addition, as Thoreau explained in *Walden*, railroad ties have another name: sleepers. The sleepers are the planks that secure the smooth functioning of the railways. Without the sleepers, there would be no commerce, no capitalism. We who want this are the sleepers, and "I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again" (1985, p. 396). I am thankful that Muñoz complained, for he gives me my own plaint, that this awfulness that is "straight time" will unravel itself as it jostles more sleepers out of their beds and into the waking world.

Coda?

Because this dissertation seeks to expand discussion rather than to close it, this final coda is deliberately incomplete, departing from its conventional meaning. Therefore, the way that I wish to bring this dissertation to a close and continue to

maintain a space for discussion about the topics of Thoreau's melancholia, *Walden*'s friendship, and queer agency is through a return to the situation that started this discussion. Mark Jiminez and Beau Chandler's sit-in at the Dallas county clerk's office in 2012 contains the necessary ingredients that validate the arguments that have been made in this dissertation, but it does so in a way that also raises another question that must be answered by the reader. How does one decide which desires to exercise? In other words, since Jiminez and Chandler's desires involved changes in priority caused by events in the real world, it is important to recognize that Thoreau's compassion for the natural environment is an important lesson that must be appreciated whenever the legitimacy of desire is made salient and questioned. Escaping from the matrix of opposition is difficult because it then turns the search for the limits of one's knowledge into a critique of oneself rather than a critique of others. This can be a difficult task for people who are in relatively comfortable circumstances. However, Thoreau promised an unexpected degree of satisfaction of a life taken to its limits, and all it requires is the constant fronting of oneself.

A coda brings closure via additional structure (coda, n.d.), and the expectation of closure at this juncture created by the codas in each of the preceding chapters must be acknowledged and allowed to fail. It is my hope that this project is able to sustain discussion about melancholia and desire in ways that are serendipitous and not merely representative of my arguments. So, if responses to this project reveal failures, and if the corrections bring improvement, then my argument will have been a success.

Jiminez and Chandler's sit-in is more relevant to my project than a simple effort to contrast *Walden* and "Resistance to Civil Government." In my opening chapter, I used Jiminez and Chandler's encounter with Texas law to show an expression of desire, even though the motivations for that clash that emerged must be placed within the context of LGBTQ activism. The impression that I created in my presentation suggested that the only inherent bar to their quest to get marriage recognition was the law. One would think that as soon as the Obergefell v. Hodges decision in 2015 vacated the Texas ban on gay marriage, the two men would be expeditiously on their way to a traditional marriage ceremony. That was not the case. In reality, Jiminez and Chandler chose to postpone their ceremony due to the illness and death of Chandler's mother (Taffet, 2017). David Taffet reported, "As they worked their way through the grieving process, they decided to set a new date and picked April 20, 2017, their five-year anniversary. Then the November election happened and they decided to push the date up" due to fears that new judges and laws would interfere with their plans (para. 13). We all know how common situational exigencies can be and how deftly they can interfere with our desires; Jiminez and Chandler's situation, which led from a choice to delay and mourn to a choice to sacrifice an anniversary wedding, was no different. Our lives are set with multiple desires and obstacles, and it is the challenge of life to choose which ones to prioritize—the task of planning their achievement that never ends.

Walden is replete with this complex network of competing desires. Set in an environment that Thoreau chose to give the appearance of isolation and rugged individualism (Golemba, 1990), it is easy to fall into the illusion that Thoreau was a

paragon of simplicity and easy choices. That was not the case. Thoreau was busy at Walden Pond and often made himself unavailable to visitors. It is thus understandable that he produced a textual world in which he was beset with attractive sources of introjection. He did this in many different and subtle ways, such as with birds that approved of his simple lifestyle, or during his time boating on the pond and playing a game of chase with a laughing loon, or his being kept awake by moaning melancholic owls, or his address to a friend with whom he enjoyed his longest friendship, Walden Pond. By describing each of these encounters as occasions for identification, he was giving us opportunities to legitimate non-human and non-organic subjects for the mutual appropriation of virtue. These sources of friendship were so abundant a mile from the nearest human neighbor that one has to consider just how much more complex that network of friends was when Thoreau lived with his family or with the Emerson family, hence Thoreau's advice to seek simplicity.

This dissertation therefore appears to be creating a curious paradox. This paradox results from the cultivation of a friendship with the reader, which is also jeopardized. That friendship is at risk because I brought up the possibility that you are responsible for sustaining the oppositional logic of Hegel. I also agreed with Thoreau's claim that each person should exercise their desires, even if that means choosing a path that attacks a federal armory. This is a reality for all activists who desire to clash with others and Right Great Wrongs. If this kind of person experiences gratification from the agon, then it is a curious admonishment to Thoreau's logic to graduate beyond complaint. Does this person have less love as a result? An answer to this paradox has been a guide to my writing of this dissertation, which has had to front other sources with which I disagree. Certainly there are sources cited in this dissertation that contain arguments about Thoreau, melancholia, and gender that I would consider to be incorrect, and I have been tempted to hold these sources accountable for their wrong conclusions. In nearly all of these situations, I found that the result is a distraction, and when I amended my manuscript to set those corrections aside, I found satisfaction in the enhanced directness of my desire to articulate the mythic quest for the restoration of desire. Nevertheless, there have been a number of occasions where correction was unavoidable. In those situations where I felt forced to write a rebuke, I found myself realizing that my correction did not involve a truth that "turns to rebuke falsehood," since the correction did not involve a turn (Thoreau, 1840, p. 118).

There is a kind of confrontation that never requires an assessment of whether the rebuke requires a turn, and Thoreau's friendship provided him with a way. In the first version of *Walden*, Thoreau argued,

> If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. (Schacht, n.d., Ch. 2, para. 22b)

This confrontation with the failings of one's facts occurs when we "settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of . . . that alluvion which covers the globe" (Schacht, n.d., Ch. 2, para. 22a). That alluvion (the

agency of creating river islands, see alluvion, n.d.) that Thoreau cared most to cleave was *you*, your heart and marrow. However, this confrontation was sedentary, and required a wedging downward that was still ignorant of how the site of that sweet edge can be found. Later, when Thoreau experienced ego death from ether and sauntering, he found that blade, which only reveals itself on the occasion of that "grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before" (Thoreau, 1862, p. 671). This happy death cannot be found with a compass and it cannot be produced with intention. Rather, it must be encountered with friendship with nature, and it must occur as an effect of the process of the front. This is a case in which the complainer "must be both plaintiff and defendant too" (Thoreau, 1840, p. 118). Our friendships, like Pascal's vases, involve the fusion of containers, and when a friendship exists, the need to confront falsity in one's self thus applies to friendship and brings us to see both sides of the cutting fact. What does that mean to *you*?

The queerness of polemics proves that the way to these confrontations requires that the way to it needs to be challenged. Thoreau understood that the rock foundation was a limit to be requested from nature's friendship but never to be achieved. When Thoreau claimed that "man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents" (1985, p. 330), he was appropriating Spinoza's virtue (see Spinoza, 1994, pp. 155-156 as discussed by May, 2009, p. 206). When he created the *Walden* polemic, he induced some of his friends to confront him. A polemic is the site of that confrontation with falsity, and it is thus up to the audience to determine whether friendship will be retained. It is this dependency on friendship that makes polemics ethical. It is this dependency on confrontation that makes polemics pragmatic. It is this dependency on the audience that makes polemics rhetorical.

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Vita

Julia Leslie began higher education at Saddleback Community College studying computer science. She also participated in speech and debate for two years with the South Orange County Community College District before transferring to California State University, Fullerton. At Fullerton, she decided to dual-major in speech communication and philosophy, earning her Bachelor of Arts in 2007. From there, she attended The Louisiana State University, earning her Master of Arts in rhetorical studies in 2012. In May 2013, the LSU Communication Studies Department gave her an unsolicited Outstanding Service Award for her three years of volunteering with the Mary Frances HopKins Black Box performance space. Her research interests are philosophy and communication crossover topics, including gender, process philosophy, and do-it-yourself culture.