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Thoreau's Orientalism: A study of Confucian and Taoist elements in Thoreau's readings and writings

Kim, Eui-Yeong, Ph.D.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1991

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THOREAU'S ORIENTALISM: A STUDY OF CONFUCIAN AND TAOIST ELEMENTS IN THOREAU'S READINGS AND WRITINGS

BY

EUI-YEONG KIM

B.A., Dankook University, 1983
A.M., University of Illinois, 1986

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1991

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Director of Thesis Research

Head of Department

Committee on Final Examination†

Chairperson

George Kendrick

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† Required for doctor's degree but not for master's.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction: State of the Art

This study attempts to elucidate the influences on Thoreau of the Orient, particularly Confucianism and Taoism, which has not received a systematic, scholarly treatment so far.

In the tradition of Thoreau scholarship, particularly in interpreting his Orientalism, complex problems occur. First, how can the radical conflict between the Western-oriented scholarly view and Thoreau's Eastern-oriented philosophic life be reconciled? Some scholars tend to interpret Thoreau's Orientalism with a preconceived Western notion which treats Orientalism as part of Western style, assuming that the West has authority over it. Ernest Leisy, for example, when reexamining the source materials for A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (in order to enlarge the inventory of sources furnished in the authorized edition of 1906), focuses only on Western literature as original sources of Thoreau's quotations for his Week, ruling out Oriental sources.[1] Furthermore, some of those who have studied Thoreau's use of Oriental works with some depth have often tended to pit Thoreau's Orientalism against his Occidentalism, choosing for one or the other as the principal influence. James Russell Lowell, for one, when he comments on Thoreau's engagement with his idealism about

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[1] Ernest E. Leisy, "Sources of Thoreau's Borrowing in A WeeK," in American Literature, Vol. 18 (March 1946), pp. 37-44.

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nature, scorns Thoreau's preference for the Oriental scriptures as if Thoreau were an uneducated Westerner practicing a type of crustacean philosophy, saying, "We think it must be this taste that makes him so fond of the Hindoo philosophy, which would seem admirably suited to men, if men were only oysters."[2] The conclusion of such unconvincing evaluation is always oriented toward an explication of the superiority of Occidentalism over Orientalism.

The main reasons for such discriminatory treatment of the Orient seem to derive from the following. First of all, the critics tend to decipher Orientalism in Thoreau exclusively through a Western consciousness which absolutely believes that Occidentalism is superior to "all the non-Western peoples and cultures," as Said states. This attitude, Said continues, has "long prevailed in a tradition of the Western mind."[3] Of course, one may say that since the Western world has been so long separated from the Eastern both geographically and historically, it is natural that cultural dissonance appears between the two worlds. My argument is not against the problems resulting from cultural misunderstandings caused by historical and geographical separation, but against scholarly attitudes that are biased against Orientalism. As a matter of fact, the goal of scholarship in humanities is the pursuit of unbiased, pure knowledge about human

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[2] James Russell Lowell, Pertaining to Thoreau (Detroit, Edwin B. Hill, 1901), p. 26.

[3] Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York, 1978), pp. 2-28.

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imagination and consciousness in all cultural territories. However, in practice, the Western scholarship on Orientalism has digressed too much from this original scholarly theory and principle. It is as if the "high-handed executive attitude of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century European colonialism" has come to the fore again; scholars' general tendency has been the articulation of Occidental superiority over Oriental backwardness in discussions of literary or philosophical subjects.[4]

What we now need is a larger perspective. Certainly the study of literature or philosophy from a comparative perspective should embrace equally every subject of importance to human life, without any discrimination between East and West. Then we can understand not only the interrelations between Eastern and Western literatures or philosophies, but also the very integrity of the human imagination of each side, as art and voice of pure metaphysics.

However, some invidious scholarship on Thoreau's Orientalism, based upon absolute Western consciousness distorts Thoreau's integral philosophy of life. In order to rectify this scholarship, one who attempts to interpret Orientalism in Thoreau, as Said suggests,

> must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text--all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and

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[4] In order to crush all these biased scholastic phenomena on general theoretical grounds, Edward W. Said discussed excellently the significance and plausibility of Orientalism in much more detail in Orientalism (Pantheon Books, New York, 1978).

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finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf.[5]

Since for Thoreau the Orient was a source of knowledge and idealism, and he had already eradicated the old dichotomy of East and West, his Orientalism should be explored not as a momentary facet or marginal element of his life, but a source of illumination for his whole philosophy and life. Let us look at one of the most important statements which reveal Thoreau's response to and receptive attitude toward the Orient:

> Ex Oriente Lux may still be the motto of scholar, for the Western world has not yet derived from the East all light which it is destined to receive thence.[6]

By itself this statement seems almost too simple and ambiguous to draw a scholar's attention or to indicate the fundamental issues of Thoreau's life. But when we ponder over the role the Orient played in establishing the authenticity of Thoreau's whole life and the ideas of Transcendentalism, we see that the declaration was by no means accidental; nor was it an ephemeral slogan for the expression of his early reading of Oriental literatures. Rather, it was a metaphor for the most fundamental goal of his spiritual biography. Accepting Oriental philosophies as props of his life, and as a means to make a new nation, a new civilization, Thoreau tested them

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[5] Edward W. Said, Orientalism, p. 20.

[6] Henry David Thoreau states this in the "Monday" chapter in A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, in The Writings of Henry David Thoreau (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, Cambridge,1906), vol.I, p. 186. The Writings of Henry David Thoreau consists of both Thoreau's published works and the Journal, which appeared posthumously. To distinguish between the two in all future citations, the former will be referred to as Writings and the latter as the Journal.

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by living them out in accordance with their practical issues. He believed that a little of the Orient could be transplanted congruously to the soils of the new world. In the last twenty-five years of his restless activity, Thoreau never waived in his belief that the Orient could find roots in the American character. Thoreau himself tells us that he was "better acquainted with those of the Hindoos, the Chinese, and the Persians, than of the Hebrews."[7] Though he has never visited the Orient in actuality, he frequently journeyed there on wings of books, so to speak, and collected an assortment of the Oriental wisdom which he blended with his own ideas. Throughout his whole life, until a few months before his death, he continually and enthusiastically read Oriental books.

In order to give more concrete shape to this reasoning, let us see some examples of Thoreau's own receptive attitude toward the Orient. In the October, 1843 when Thoreau edited selections from Chinese literature for the "Ethnical Scripture" series for the Dial, he culled passages from a book entitled The Chinese Classical Work, Commonly called the Four Books by David Collie.[8] In the book, David Collie made some biased comments on the thought of Confucius, which might have reflected well the scholarly tendency of Western Orientalism in the nineteenth century. Here, for example, is Collie's estimation of Chinese philosophy: ". . . the

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[7] Ibid., p. 90.

[8] David Collie, The Chinese Classical Works, Commonly Called The Four Books (Malacca, 1823). W.B. Stein reprinted the book in 1970.

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Confucian system is compounded of a number of self-evident, sound, practical truths, intermingled with many abstruse, highly sounding, false, and highly dangerous theories."[9] Collie pitted Confucianism against his own Christianity. He continuously put forth an invidious comparison between the sage and Christ in footnote after footnote. However, Thoreau's receptive attitude toward the Chinese tradition was pure and enthusiastic, rather than a repetition of Collie's distorted viewpoints on Confucius. "This translation," he wrote, "which seems to have been undertaken and performed as an exercise in learning the language, is the most valuable contribution we have yet seen from the Chinese literature."[10]

Further evidence of Thoreau's pure receptive attitude toward the Orient may be found in one passage in his Journal:

> Reading the hymns of the Rig Veda, translated by Wilson, which consist in a great measure of simple epithets addressed to the firmament, or the dawn, or the winds, which mean more or less as the reader is more or less alert and imaginative, and seeing how widely the various translators have differed, they regarding not poetry, but the history and philology, dealing with very concise Sanskrit, which must always be amplified to be understood, I am sometimes inclined to doubt if the translator has not made something out of nothing,--whether a real idea or sentiment has been thus transmitted to us from so primitive a period. I doubt if learned Germans might not thus edit pebbles from the seashore into hymns of the Rig Veda, and translators translate them accordingly, extracting the meaning which the sea has imported to them in very primitive times. While the commentators and translators are disputing about the meaning of this word or that, I hear only the resounding of the ancient sea and put into it all the

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[9] Ibid., Chung Yung, p. 10.

[10] The Dial (Boston, 1843), p. 493.

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meaning I am possessed of.[11]

Even though the translator dealt with Oriental ideas absurdly, Thoreau, being possessed of a great intuitive faculty, saw in them a deeper sense than the speakers put into them. However, some invidious scholarship and criticism on Thoreau's Orientalism distorted his integral philosophy of life.

The second problem in studies of Thoreau's Orientalism happens in relating his ideas to Oriental sources. There are some controversies among scholars with regard to the association of the sources of his philosophy with life among the Orientals. So far, studies of Thoreau's Orientalism have been executed one-sidedly in favor of Hindu and Persian influences. By giving all the credit for Thoreau's Orientalism to these influences, scholars have long oversimplified and slighted the importance of the Chinese tradition.

Arthur Christy was a pioneer in studying the influence of the Orient on Thoreau. His The Orient in American Transcendentalism, which has exerted a significant impact on subsequent Thoreau scholarship, contains a valuable annotated bibliography of Oriental texts used in Concord. In his book, Christy, mentioning Emerson's role in encouraging the young Thoreau's forays into Oriental thought, points out that Thoreau's concern, like his mentor's, centered on India and that he also "used the Hindu to bolster his own thought." In contrast to the tradition of disparagement of Confucian ceremonialism, Hindu asceticism, and Hindu pessimism,

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[11] Thoreau, Journal, VIII, pp. 134-135.

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Christy insists that Thoreau learned from the Hindus, the Chinese, and the Persians a mystical love of nature.

However, Christy's book contains little history of Thoreau's contact with Chinese and even Hindu thought. Moreover, Christy invariably appears to lack balance and accuracy in dealing with the Chinese and Hindu influences on Thoreau. In dealing with Hinduism in Thoreau, his discussion focuses on yoga in general, and the Bhagavad-Gita in particular, though Thoreau, as we know, also read the Laws of Menu, the Sankhya Karika, the Vishnu Purana, and a number of other Hindu books. He insists that Thoreau's major business at Walden Pond was to practice "a Yankee yoga." By granting all the credit of Thoreau's Orientalism to the Hindus, this scholar has slighted the relevance of the Chinese tradition on Thoreau. He says, "There is nothing essentially Confucian in Thoreau's temperament." It was because he insists, "It is impossible in Thoreau to find the same parallels that were found between Emerson and Confucius."[12] He thus asserts that Thoreau made use of excerpts or implications from the Chinese classics only as illustrations or external examples of his own ideas. They were, at most, like baggage--out of context and confusing. From this, he concludes, "It is fruitless to attempt finding in him a resemblance to the ethics of Confucius."[13] All these unfortunately embryonic evaluations have dissuaded scholars from seriously considering the

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[12] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 195.

[13] Ibid., p. 196.

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Chinese influence on Thoreau. This accounts for the absence of a systematic study.

Another early study on the subject is likewise superficial; Henry Seidel Canby misinterprets Thoreau's Orientalism in his Thoreau. Although he admits that Thoreau found great moral and religious parables in the Bhagavad-Gita, Menu, Confucius, the Vedas, and the Upanishads, Canby omits discussion of the influence of Chinese philosophy on Thoreau. In dealing with Hindu thought, he also makes a serious mistake. Namely, he insists that Thoreau was acquainted with the dialogues of Krishna and King Arjuna in the Bhagvad-Gita just before he was going to the pond to live. He refers to Emerson's journal, in which Emerson wrote with tremendous enthusiasm to his correspondents about the Gita. But Thoreau had already been acquainted with the Bhagavad-Gita in his college days, as will be discussed in detail in the later chapters. Furthermore, Canby hesitates to admit Thoreau's indebtedness to the Orient saying, "The Yankee did not become an Oriental."[14]

The next major critical study which made significant use of Thoreau's indebtedness to the Orientals is Sherman Paul's The Shore of America.[15] Paul shows, by referring to his college essays that in his college days, he was acquainted with Oriental literature like The Gulistan of Sadi. He also notes that Thoreau read Confucius and Zoroaster at the same time that he was reading the

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[14] Henry Seidel Canby, Thoreau (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1939), p. 201.

[15] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America (Urbana, 1958), pp. 69-75.

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seventeenth-century English poets, citing "Miscellaneous Extracts" and his 1838 Journal entries as evidence. Pointing out that the "Sayings of Confucius" Thoreau selected for the Dial of April, 1843 were already in his notebook by 1838, he does not rule out the possibility that the selections might have contributed to such themes of his Journal such as "friendship and virtue and the eloquent silence of the 'sovereign principle' of the universe." Certainly these were early influences, but Paul seems not to have known that Thoreau read Confucius from 1845 to 1854, especially during his Walden period. Instead, he values The Laws of Menu as the most important Oriental scripture for the direction of Thoreau's life; for Thoreau, according to Paul, read Menu before the Bhagavad-Gita and by the later date, at least, Menu was in his possession. On this basis, he insists that Thoreau fabricated his idea of the poet-as-seer patterned after the ideal of the superior man. He seems to believe that the spiritual contemplation and ascetic discipline, which the Brahman, according to Menu, regards as the most important things, later led Thoreau to go to Walden Pond.

Another scholar who has devoted many hours to Thoreau's literary career is Walter Harding. His standard work, The New Thoreau Handbook[16] (a revised edition of his previous A Thoreau Handbook [1959], in cooperation with Michael Meyer), provides a very concise deliberation on the subject, together with

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[16] Walter Harding and Michael Meyer, The New Thoreau Handbook (New York University, New York and London, 1980), pp. 91-120.

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bibliographic material which is most valuable. His biography The Day of Henry Thoreau (New York, 1965) is one of the most fascinating descriptions of Thoreau's life available, providing landmark dates in a chronology of Thoreau's life that offer clues to his readings in Oriental literature. In relation to Thoreau' readings of the Orientals, he says that Thoreau was highly eclectic, as were all of the American Transcendentalists; even though he read the Orientals widely, he took from them only those ideas that were particularly enticing to him and neglected the remainder.[17] Relying on Christy's appraisal of Thoreau's Orientalism, Harding gives all the credit for Thoreau's Orientalism to the Hindus.

William Bysshe Stein, in a series of exegeses which include "Thoreau's Walden and the Bhagavad Gita,"[18] "Thoreau's A Week: The Path of AUM,"[19] and "The Yoga of Walden,"[20] attempts to find hidden symbols of yogic exercises in A Week and in Walden. It is pathetic that in his article, "Thoreau's First Book: A Spoor of Yoga," when he explored the narrative method of A Week in association with the traditional meditative disciplines of the Hindu yogis, he ruled out the importance of the Chinese influences on Thoreau, saying, "Though on occasions he (Thoreau) alluded to

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[17] Ibid., p. 130.

[18] Topic, VI, (1963), pp. 38-55.

[19] Washington and Jefferson Literary Journal, I, (1966), pp. 9-16.

[20] Lit. E.& W., XIII, (June, 1969), pp. 1-26.

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the writings of the Chinese and Moslem sages, more often than not he invokes the authority of the Hindu wisdom books to Orient his speculations."[21]

Recent dissertations on Thoreau and Oriental literature have brought forth original approaches and discoveries. David George Hoch's dissertation, "Annals and Perennials: A Study of Cosmogonic Imagery in Thoreau, contains one of the most impressive discussions on Thoreau's Orientalism.[22] It is one of the first studies which attempts to explore the aesthetic aspect of Thoreau's Orientalism embodied in his works. On the assumption that the aesthetics of Hindu yogic asceticism coincide with Thoreau's preoccupation with the process of artistic creation, he discusses Thoreau's A Week as the mystic journey of the poet to the "ubiquitous center of creation." In order to trace the date when Thoreau gained knowledge of the Orient, Hoch compares the chronological order of Oriental quotations of A Week with those of the "Note Book" and concludes that Thoreau had already read some Orientals before writing A Week. What is regrettable in his study is that he uses the Chinese traditions as a cosmetic tool to give better shape to his reasoning regarding the Hindu influence on Thoreau.

Roger Chester Muller's thesis, "The Orient in American Transcendental Periodicals: 1835-1886," surveys eleven

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[21] ESQ, XLI, (4th Quar., 1965), p. 4.

[22] David G. Hoch, "Annals and Perennials: A study of Cosmogonic Imagery in Thoreau," Kent State Univ., Ph.D., dissertation, 1969 (microfilmed).

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Transcendental periodicals which included a number of articles on Oriental sources.[23] His explanation of the Oriental material, especially Emerson's and Thoreau's edited selections for the Dial, is quite valuable in evaluating source materials and their uses in the Transcendental context. Especially for the future study of Thoreau's indebtedness to China, Muller offers some excellent discussions of Thoreau's selections from Chinese literature for the "Ethnical Scripture series." Unlike those who slighted the importance of the Chinese tradition, Muller favored the influence of Confucianism on Thoreau, saying, "Thoreau's selection in the Dial and his translation of the same passage in Walden indicates that he interpreted it in a much more Transcendental fashion, fitting it to his own conception of the immanence of God in all things."[24] Also in "Thoreau's Selections from Chinese Four Books for the Dial,"[25] this scholar examines how Thoreau applied his selections from Confucianism to his writings and to his life. He insists that Thoreau was attracted to Confucian ideas about the "relationship of the individual to the government, their anti-materialist sentiments and their conception of the immanent spirit."[26]

Miriam Alice Jeswine's dissertation, "Henry David Thoreau:

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[23] Roger Chester Mueller, "The Orient in American Transcendental Periodicals: 1835-1886," Dissertation, Univ. of Minnesota, 1968 (microfilmed).

[24] Ibid., p. 84.

[25] Thoreau Journal Quarterly, vol. 4, no. 4, October 15, 1972.

[26] Ibid., p. 7.

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Apprentice to the Hindu Sages" (1971), also focuses on Thoreau's Indian connections. She examines three Hindu sources for Walden: The Law of Menu, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Sankhya Karika. What is noteworthy in her study is that she examines in detail the Hindu works which Thoreau read, as well as his notes and extracts for them.

In Transcendental Self (1985), A. K. B. Pillai analyzes Thoreau's Walden in view of the psycho-philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism.[27] In the first chapter, Professor Pillai made an excellent distinction between Transcendentalism and Romanticism. In regard with the Chinese philosophy in Thoreau, however, he is somewhat naive. By accepting Christy's unfortunately premature assessments of Chinese tradition in Thoreau, the professor strongly argues that Confucianism did not exert any influence on Thoreau's life at all. "As Christy has pointed out," he wrote, "Thoreau was not much helped by Confucianism, its ultimate point being good conduct and perfection within the earthly realm."[28] Thoreau's pathway was from the earthly to the spiritual, and through the spiritual to spiritual perfection, to a merging with the Godhead. According to Pillai, Thoreau then undoubtedly identified himself with Hinduism. In order to put more concrete evidence behind his reasoning, Pillai classified by nation the number of references Thoreau made in Walden. Because Thoreau made more references to

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[27] A. K. B. Pillai, Transcendental Self (University Press of America, Lanham, New York, and London, 1985).

[28] Ibid., p. 29.

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India than to any other nation, Thoreau's indebtedness to the Orient should be mainly linked to India, according to Pillai. Based upon this assumption, Pillai links Thoreau's Walden life to that of Indian hermit practicing yogic meditation. The following statement by Miriam Alice Jeswine, defining the nature of Thoreau's Walden life, can be used as an answer to Pillai:

> Actually, there is no evidence in any of Thoreau's writing, the Journal, essays, books, or commonplace books, that Thoreau had ever looked at the book which contains selections from Yogic writings. Nor is there any record of his having borrowed the book from the Harvard University library where it was available to him.[29]

In "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," Lyman V. Cady, like Pillai, also takes Christy's words literally in order to rule out the Chinese aspects of Orientalism in Thoreau, saying that for the most part he uses Confucian materials in a non-Confucian way. However, this remains to be proven.

Yao-hsin Chang's dissertation, "Chinese Influence in Emerson, Thoreau, and Pound," is apparently the only study on Thoreau's indebtedness to Confucianism.[30] Chang devotes some thirty-five pages to Thoreau in his thesis and largely bases this brief study on Walden. But Chang's study contains little history of Thoreau's contact with Chinese philosophy. Chang, noting Emerson's notion of Confucianism, insists that in the same way as Emerson, "Thoreau was obsessed with self-culture."

Although the critics have discussed Oriental influences on

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[29] Miriam Alice Jeswine, "Henry David Thoreau," p. 20.

[30] Yao-hsin Chang, "Chinese Influence in Emerson, Thoreau, Pound," Dissertation, Ph.D. Temple University, 1984.

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Thoreau, few have attempted to discover the Chinese strands in Thoreau's philosophy of life. Instead, their concerns have been with the Hindus and Persians. The major reason for their predilection for the Hindus and the Persians seems to derive from the partial viewpoint through which they have seen Thoreau only as a seeker after mystical divinity; thus, they have attempted to explore Thoreau's Orientalism in relation only to Hindu mystical idealism. As a result of such narrow views, the themes of Thoreau's writings have been interpreted as those of "an anarchical individual," "a twice-born Yankee," "a hermit," and "a casuist." As a matter of fact, Thoreau was not an anarchical individualist content with an abstract idealism hidden in the pages of his writings, nor a hermit who sought after mystical divinity. His nature was such that he felt compelled not only to reflect his life and his moral conduct, but also to act upon any principles derived from his reflections. It was necessary for him to engage with life; to assert himself, not on paper, but as a participant. The following sentences explain why Thoreau went to live at Walden Pond; they also explain the conduct of much of his life:

> I want to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and to reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then not get the whole and genuine meanness of it and publish its meanness to the world; or if were sublime, to know it by experience, and

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> be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.[31]

This is not a passage written by a man who desired to disengage or retreat. It sounds more like that of a man eager to fuse.

In essence, Thoreau's Transcendental philosophy derives from a sense of anxiety that because man become vitiated by commercialism and materialism, he gradually deserted his innate divinity, which could potentially help him to achieve union with the Ultimate Reality. As a result, the route to supremacy was blocked by vain desire and man became possessed of the attributes of sheer brutes. For this reason, Thoreau mocks at beginning of Walden, "Talk of a divinity in man. Look at the teamster on the high way, wending to market by day or night; does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty is to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him compared with the shipping interests?... See how he cowers and sneaks," he continued, "how vaguely all day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, a fame won by his own deeds."[32] For Thoreau, it was hard to find a virtuous man awakened by inner power in the society in which he lived:

> Only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life to be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who has quite awake.[33]

Thoreau was much disillusioned that everyone was leading a "life of

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[31] Writings, II, Walden, pp. 100-101.

[32] Writings, II, p. 8.

[33] Writings, II, p. 100.

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quiet desperation" and deplored the dismal condition of widespread passivity and spiritual feebleness. He could no longer sit as a spectator to the misery of his neighbors; thus, he decided to "brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his root," he says as "if to wake my neighbors up."[34] Since he believed that self-reform was a foundation for reforming not only the outward life of an individual, but also ultimately that of society, he decided to take up a semi-isolated residence in a small house on the shore of Walden Pond. The purpose of his sojourn was by no means to live the life of a hermit, but rather as that of a seeker after truth, who desired to enlighten, guide, and teach his neighbors a way of life in communion with the Law of Spirit.

In my view, the mode of Thoreau's philosophical life corresponds closely to that of the Confucian Gentleman (Chün Tzu) advocated in the Confucian Four Books rather than that of a Hindu Yogi or the recluse of the Hindu writings. Besides, the Confucian mode of his philosophy may be seen as the central theme of his life. I think that the principles practiced by Thoreau throughout his life reverberate with the major points of the Confucian canon. In addition, Thoreau seems to imply that he is attracted by the pragmatic efficacy and delicate inculcation of morality he saw in the Confucian teachings. Throughout his writings, Thoreau is particularly concerned with the self-cultivation of noble qualities or supreme virtues and also encourages his fellow compatriots to cultivate their own virtues. Part of my dissertation tries to

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[34] Writings, II, p. 94.

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delineate this core of Confucian thought-- the cultivation of the self--which are scattered throughout his Journals and the two books.

Besides the humanistic philosophy of Confucius, the mystical propensity of Lao Tzu closely parallels Thoreau's life-long goal of achieving communion with Nature. Striving to experience Nature as the rhythm of the soul, Thoreau was fond of sauntering daily for several hours through Concord's fields and forests, in that "vast, savage, howling mother of our Nature."[35] Just like the Chinese Taoists, Thoreau opposed the artificiality of mundane living and encouraged all men to follow the invariable law of Nature. As Lyman V. Cady points out, there are profound similarities between Walden and Tao Te Ching in their nature mysticism, love of the simple and primitive, distaste for convention and governmental interference, and repeated use of paradox. Most Thoreau scholars admit that had Thoreau come in contact with Taoism, he would have found the philosophy of Lao-Tzu and Chuang-Tzu more congenial to his taste than Hinduism or Buddhism. Nevertheless, they deny that Thoreau had been acquainted with Taoism, or had read the Tao Te Ching. The primary reason for their denial is that Thoreau had no access to any translation of Taoist literature. However, we now know that there is some quite convincing evidence to prove that Thoreau must, in one way or another, have been acquainted with Taoist literature. Besides, there is direct evidence for Thoreau's use of Taoist sources. To reconstruct the missing link, part of my

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[35] Journal, II. p. 337.

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dissertation will focus on proving the assumption that Thoreau may have read Taoist literature and thus integrated Taoist principles into his own spiritual disciplines.

In order to trace these influences in New England Transcendentalism and Thoreau's works, my dissertation will proceed as follows: the next two chapters will deal with the study of the growth of American Transcendentalism and the exposure to and incorporation of Oriental elements into that American tradition. These chapters will be titled The Origin and Nature of New England Transcendentalism and The Orient in Romanticism and Transcendentalism. The next three chapters will deal with the chronology of Thoreau's exposure to and use of Oriental sources, and his borrowing and identification of Confucianism and Taoism in his writings. These chapters will be titled Thoreau's Chronology of Oriental Sources and Thoreau and Confucianism: Thoreau's Identification with the Confucian Chün Tzu; The Puzzle of Taoism in Thoreau's Works. The last chapter, the conclusion, will summarize the findings of this dissertation and attempt to show how, in our view, the Transcendental movement and Thoreau were positively influenced by Chinese thought and philosophy.

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CHAPTER II

The Origin and Nature of New England Transcendentalism

A. The Origin and Nature of New England Transcendentalism

It is a generally accepted fact that New England Transcendentalism emerged sometime between 1815 and 1836, coming to full bloom after the publication of Nature in 1836. With William Ellery Channing as its first proponent,[1] New England Transcendentalism began as a movement against Unitarian epistemology and Lockean psychology. Later, when America was striving for its cultural independence from Europe, the movement's objective was to explore the spiritual underpinnings and the moral significance of the new democracy. Although it was only regional in characteristics, the Transcendental movement must be seen as a real and significant phenomenon in the history of American culture, a phenomenon that still affects the intellectual life of contemporary America.

Thus far, however, attempts to define the New England

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[1] Channing was a Unitarian minister, who in his sermons, opposed the Unitarian doctrine in favor of the spiritual. For this reason, Goddad stated that "Indeed the more one studies his character and beliefs in relation to his time, the more one must feel that he was not a Unitarian at all, but rather the first of the Transcendentalists," in Harold Clarke Goddard, Studies in New England Transcendentalism (New York, 1960), pp. 27-28; also refer to Octavius B. Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England (New York, 1959), pp. 113-114 and David Bowers, "Democratic Vista," in Literary History of the United States ed. by Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, Thomas H. Johnson, Henry Seidel Canby (The Macmillan Company. New York, 1943), vol. I, pp. 345-357.

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Transcendental movement have been too belletristic and too religious to do justice to the integrated aspirations of that remarkable generation. Some scholars, by placing it in the contemporary religious context, interpreted the Transcendental movement as just another example of the prevailing pious commotions that took place in America during the first half of the nineteenth century.[2] Scholars who recognized the value of Transcendentalism's contributions to society explored the equalitarian implications of the doctrine of "the inner light," or the intuitive reason and viewed Transcendentalism as the "metaphysics of democracy."[3] Scholars who were seeking for the literary significance of Transcendentalism perceived the movement as a literary phenomenon and regarded it merely as the manifestation of the European Romanticism that was devoted to the coming of "the American Renaissance."[4] New England Transcendentalism, however, was not merely a literary movement, nor a religious or social movement. Rather, it was a movement that encompassed the endeavors of a whole

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[2] See Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War (New York: Harcourt, 1965), Book I; Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944), Parts I and II; Winthrop Hudson, Religion in America (New York, 1965), pp. 158-203.

[3] See Bowers, "Democratic Vistas," in Spiller, Thorp, Johnson and Canby, The Literary History of the United States (New York, 1948)), vol. I, pp. 345-57; George Hochfield (ed.), Selected Writings of the American Transcendentalists (Signet Classics, 1966), p. xvi; F.O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance (New York, 1946).

[4] See Studies in New England Transcendentalism (New York, 1908), p. 108; George Hochfield, "An Introduction to Transcendentalism," in Brian M Barbour (ed.), American Transcendentalism: An Anthology of Criticism (Notre Dame and London, 1973), pp.350-52.

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generation. What is now needed is a broader perspective on the wide range of projects that the Transcendentalists undertook: the Dial, the "Transcendental Club," Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and antislavery activities. New England Transcendentalism was a cultural revolution that brought about concrete changes for which the Puritans aboard the "Mayflower"-- in search for a new haven that would promise a fuller, freer and more satisfactory way of life--had laid the spiritual foundation.

A new haven, a new country, and a new culture--it is this vision of a Brave New World that inflamed the whole generation. To be sure, the contemporary American myth, as R. W. B. Lewis suggested, "saw life and history as just beginning," and thus "introduced a new kind of hero, the embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes"--

> "the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure and an individual emancipated from history...an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources."[5]

In the same vein, shortly before the onset of his career as a Transcendentalist, Emerson asserted that, "Our age is the Revolutionary age, when man is coming back to Consciousness."[6] Later, reconsidering the early period of the Transcendental movement, on the occasion of the ending of the Civil War, he found the key to

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[5] R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1955), p. 5.

[6] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in The American Tradition in Literature, Scully Bradley, Richmond C. Beatty, E. H. Long, George Perkins (ed.), vol. I, (Random House, New York, 1981), p. 1329.

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the revolutionary movement in the fact that:

> The mind had become aware of itself. Men grew reflective and intellectual. There was a new consciousness. The former generation acted under the belief that a shining social prosperity was the beatitude of man and sacrificed uniformly the citizen to the state. The modern mind believed that the nation existed for the individual, for the guardianship and education of every man. This idea, roughly written in revolutions and nation movements, in the mind of the philosopher had far more precision; the individual is the world.[7]

The awakening of that consciousness was not only Emerson's subject matter, but also the core of the revolutionary character of Transcendentalism.

Awakening to this consciousness, the generation of the 1830s eagerly turned to the world-at-large for nourishment, inspiration, and guidance. The Transcendentalists had derived this organic metaphor from Kant and his successors and the Romantics and used it as a model for New England Transcendentalism.[8] It was important for them in this context to recognize that the mind with reason and intuition grew rather than remained fixed in a mechanical operation. In addition, borrowing from logic and religious and philosophical elements of mysticism in the writings of Platonists and Neoplatonists, the Transcendentalists combined the "Idea in the

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[7] Emerson, "Historical Notes of Life and Letters in New England," cited from F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance (New York, 1946), p. 6.

[8] The conception of a super-sensual Reason as the Transcendentalists understood it was derived in simplified form mainly from such secondary sources as March's edition (1829) of Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, Linberg's translation (1832) of Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy, and Carlyle's Sartor Reartus(1836).

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mind of God" with "Reality itself" as a monistic idealism.[9] More importantly, it was in the Oriental scriptures that the New England Transcendentalists found the prototype of the fundamental law that human thought is universal and immutable. Some elementary forms of thought, which, together with other borrowed concepts, appeared in the writings of the major Transcendentalist group as the equalitarian principles of the self-cultivation and new democracy.

The source of this vitality did not lie in foreign influences alone, but also in the American past. Transcendentalism was a movement distinctly Protestant in character, with roots that went deep into the Puritan soil of New England. Although it proclaimed rejection of the Puritan theocracy of stern authoritarianism, Transcendentalism retained the essence of its purity its ancestral character-- the moral courage, purity, nobility, and sincerity that the early Puritans had embodied in its noblest form as the old New England character.[10] Professor Carpenter has emphasized that "Transcendentalism in New England enveloped the religious idealism of their own Puritan past primarily and only borrowed the forms and

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[9] Carpenter, Emerson Handbook (New York, 1953), p. 125; Sherman Paul, The Shores of America (Urbana, 1958), p. 5.

[10] Discussing "Democratic Vistas" of Transcendentalism, David Bowers remarked:"the worldliness and "common sense" of a Franklin or a Jefferson had apparently made a clean break with earlier orthodoxies while retaining their zeal for moral enlightenment; and the same tendency had but recently moved even further from theological sanction in the equalitarian theory of Jacksonian democracy." Literary History of the United States edited by E. Spiller, et al. Vol. I, p. 347.

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phrases of German thought secondly."[11] Like their ancestors, who sought freedom of conscience in a new land, the Transcendentalists were inclined to construe life ethically, to subordinate the aesthetic, intellectual, and even political and economic aspects of human nature to man's significance as a moral agent.[12]

In order to better understand the origin and nature of Transcendentalism in New England, it is necessary to review its generative process. Therefore, this study will begin with a brief discussion of the philosophical and religious tendencies of Europe in the eighteenth century. It is only in their light--or as a part of them--that the story of American Transcendentalism can be understood.

The history of eighteenth-century religious thought in Europe shows the impossibility of making Christianity meet the standards of rationalistic common sense.[13] It is the history of a continuous drift through all the forms of rational or "natural" religion, leading from the ancient sanctions of revelation and dogma to the open seas of mechanism, pantheism, idealism, materialism, antinomianism, or outright atheism. Just as the diverse movements

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[11] Frederic Ives Carpenter, Emerson Handbook (New York, 1953), p. 128.

[12] For example, Emerson argued that every act of the individual springs from his inner nature as a unique embodiment of humanity, and no occupation is inherently ignoble. See "The Divinity School Address."

[13] For a general sense of the eighteenth-century radical attitudes toward Christianity, see Nicholas Capaldi, The Enlightenment: The Proper Study of Mankind (New York, 1967); Frank E. Manuel (ed.), The Enlightenment (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965), pp. 43-99.

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of the revolutionary age in Europe were both fruitions of the eighteenth century and revolts against it, New England Transcendentalism--whatever else it may have been--was both a fruition of early American Unitarianism that representatively eighteenth-century movement, and at the same time, a revolt against it.

Western intellectuals of the eighteenth century believed that the Newtonian world-system and the law of motion constituted a perfect model of science. At the same time, they revered Francis Bacon's inductive experimental method as the only true path to knowledge. They also accepted Descartes' conception of reason as a set of clear and distinct ideas that were founded on the methodological doubt of intellectual authorities of the past, especially that of Aristotle and the scholastic philosophers. Above all, the average intellectuals of the eighteenth century were enchanted by John Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding, with its sensationalist psychology that denied the existence of innate ideas on the assumption that the mind was a blank page onto which ideas of the external world were inscribed through the senses, or a kind of mechanical organizer of the sensations that were fed to it by "experience."

Related to this quadrumvirate was the assumption that there was a body of truths-- about man, society, nature--that could be rationally perceived and was universally true. The enlightened eighteenth-century civilians' consciousness radically possessed new attitudes toward knowledge. Being trapped by the assumption that everything in nature could be explained in empirical rather than

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spiritual terms, they claimed that only the physical, the tangible, and the measurable were real. To them, to understand the world meant to know what its structure was and how it worked, to describe it rather than to explain it, and to discover its mechanism rather than its purpose. These claims inevitably brought them into conflict with organized Christianity, where they were faced with a dogmatic and authoritarian church. In a rationalistic view, miracles and providence were not supported by any convincing evidence, and, if true, would make any coherent analysis of the empirical world impossible; divine intervention in the universe, when it was allowed at all, was relegated to the first act of creation or impulsion. Comprehension of the universe would be advanced, it was believed, by observation and experimentation above all else. Whatever was outside of this scope was beyond their knowledge. Fortunately, the nature of man and of the mind were within this scope. "Men," as Locke stated,

> may find matter sufficient to busy their heads, and employ their minds with variety, delight and satisfaction, if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything.[14]

The recognition of the chasm between man's finite intellect and the infinite universe, as Lovejoy suggested, was "one of the most prevalent intellectual fashions of a great part of the eighteenth century," emphasizing an extreme preassumption of the rationalistic

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[14] John Locke, "The Essay on Human Understanding," op. cit. Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Harvard University Press, 1936 and 1964), p. 8.

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simplicity of the truth.[15] This intellectual attitude was, in fact, an almost universally prevalent characteristic of the period.

While the varied tides of emotion were sweeping over Europe, the New England religious world was in process of a spiritual revival. When the rationalistic and free thinking tendencies of Europe reached the colonies of the New World, they had, particularly in the accessible region around Boston, immediate effect.[16] "Heresies" began to creep into the religious world of New England.[17]

To counteract this spiritual "deadness" and the doctrinal heresies of the time, Jonathan Edwards initiated the Great Awakening, which swept the colonies during the first half of the eighteenth century. However, the objective of Edwards' religious principles was not to revitalize faith in the tradition of old Puritans, but to apply it to the intellectual trends of the times. Edwards' religious concept, unlike the earlier Puritan fervor, was too rationalistic and profound to be called "retrogressive." Frothingham suggests that, because of his rationalistic writings on

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[15] Ibid., p. 9.

[16] For more detail, see William Walker, A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States (New York, 1894), p. 85.

[17] Arminianism, for example, appeared in Massachusetts, challenging the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and refusing to hold God responsible for evil. Though the Arminians believed that man was saved by the sovereign grace and mercy of God, they held, nevertheless, that man could aid its reception by attending to what was called the "means of grace"; Gradually, more and more efficiency was attributed to these "means." Arminianism appeared to be subtly undermining the doctrine of the Trinity.

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idealism, Jonathan Edwards himself was "transcendental" to a certain extent.[18]

The New England revitalization, however, did not bridge the gap that divided the religious world. Rather, it enlarged it. Edwards' Great Awakening had grown and merged with the opposing movements he had sought to destroy; and the followers of the disputed belief followed steadily diverging paths. While New Calvinists, as the adherents of Edwards were called, developed an American theology in opposition to the age of Reason; the radical school in their aversion of enthusiasm by the indulgences of the Great Awakening-- and constantly in closer touch with various forms of European rationalistic thinking--grew more and more radical until the disparities between their own and the New Calvinists' views had become so wide that the term Unitarian was finally applied to them.

Riding on the wave of liberalization and rationalization, the Unitarians were eager to eliminate the traditional Calvinist dogmas and rituals from their faith. Believing that human reason grounded in natural experience was the arbiter of truth the Unitarians felt that human dignity was no longer compatible with the submission to a dogmatic and irrational faith. Consequently they converted the sovereign and potent God of the Puritans into a compassionate Father whose world followed the strict rules of cause and effect. The old law of predestination was invalidated in favor of a

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[18] O. B. Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England (New York, 1959), p. 108.

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thoroughgoing Arminianism, and Christ became a symbol of human perfection, a teacher and example of the ideal life, who was no longer a person of the Trinity.[19]

The overemphasis on human reason in the process of freeing Christianity from the toils of Calvinist theology resulted in a self-contradictory argument. In fact, the purpose of the liberalization and rationalization of religion was to remove the last vestiges of obscurantism and superstition clinging to the simple teachings of Christ rather than to question the divine authority of those teachings--which the Unitarians understood to refer primarily to conduct--or the right of Christ to speak on God's behalf. However, while appealing to natural reason as the only arbiter of the credibility of the miracles, the Unitarians realized that their resting the authority of Christ on miracles was contradictory. While claiming to have a rational faith, with nothing but natural laws as their guides, they had irrationally insisted on the historicity of miracles. Because of this contradictory argument, the Unitarian church faced a dilemma it did not know how to solve.

The young men who had grown up within the Unitarian communion,[20] and who later came to be called Transcendentalists, began to complain about the "pale negation" that Unitarianism provided. At the heart of their complaint was the fact that New England piety

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[19] Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 129.

[20] Many of them--Emerson, Brownson, Ripley, and Parker-- had been educated in Harvard College and the Harvard Divinity School, which are solidly Unitarian institutions, and many of them served as Unitarian ministers.

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was dying. The real reason for their discontent, however, was their dissatisfaction with Lockean philosophy and Newtonian psychology--the entire structure of thought about man's nature and his relationship to the universe-- which had upheld institutionalized religion, materialism, and the mechanization of consciousness. In their view, a search for a more acceptable concept of theology was necessary.

While New England was suffering from the legacy of the Enlightenment, mainly the liberalization and rationalization of religion, the Romantic movements were sweeping over Europe. The realization that a radically new world was taking shape around them, a world that could only be understood with a new perspective on man, caused the young men to explore new ideas. Their restless spirit had led them to the Greek philosophies, to Kant and his followers, and then even to the Orient. The ideas of the divinity of nature, the glory of human aspiration and freedom, the power of intuition as opposed to reason, and the creative energy of poetic imagination were derived from these sources.

Synthesizing all these ideas, Emerson, the leading Transcendentalist, discussed New England Transcendentalism in his first book, Nature. Emphasizing that "The sun shines today also; There is more wood and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thought," he asked his fellow Americans to cast aside "the dry bones of the past," and to live lives enjoying "an organic relation to the universe."[21] To Emerson, the universe was no longer a fixed

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[21] The American Tradition in Literature, vol. I, pp. 1266-67.

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mechanism, it was a living cosmos in which man could grasp the presence and purpose of deity through intuition. Unlike Locke, who saw the mind as a passive entity, Emerson perceived the mind as an active entity that could give man immediate access to supersensual knowledge as postulated by Kant and his followers.

Emerson followed up this conception of Nature the following year in his Phi Beta Kappa oration, "The American Scholar," in which he postulated his heroic proposals for the American intellectual. Applying the conceptions of Nature to the world of literature and scholarship in the widest sense, he intended to encourage American originality and individualism in the realm of letters. Then, in 1838, came "The Divinity School Address." Delivering it before the senior class of Divinity College, Emerson made the most dangerous declaration of the credo of his Transcendental thought in another specific application of his philosophy in Nature.[22] Revolting against both the Puritan and Unitarian orthodoxies, he postulated that "The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul." This sentiment, he said, "dwelled always deepest in the mind of man in the devout and contemplative East; not alone in Palestine..., but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China."[23]

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[22] After this address, there were a number of controversies among the conservatives and the Transcendentalists. In behalf of the conservatives, for example, Professor Andrew immediately challenged the intuitional philosophy, under the title, "The Latest Form of Infidelity." For the others, see two articles in the Princeton Review, XI, 37, and XII, 31; Harold C. Goddard, Studies in New England Transcendentalism (New York, 1960), p. 34.

[23] The American Tradition in Literature, p. 1319.

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Having Denied Christ the sole attribution of divinity and finding the divine element in the scriptures of the East, Emerson finally developed his idea of the Over-Soul:

> Each creature is only a modification of the other; the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organization, holds true throughout nature. So intimate is this unity, that, it is easily seen, it lies under the undermost garment of nature, and betrays its source in Universal Spirit.[24]

According to this idea, the formless spirit unites with the cosmic substance, and out of this union of spirit and matter, life comes into existence. Emerson considered the universe to be composed of Nature and the Soul. He defined Nature as: "which philosophy distinguishes as the Not Me, that is both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, Nature, in the common sense, refers to essences unchanged by man, space, the air, the river, the leaf."[25] He reasoned that Nature originated from the same divine source as the soul of man, but that nature was not subject to human will:

> The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconsciousness. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not,like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature, as we are

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[24] William Gilman, Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson (The New American Library: New York, 1965), p. 206.

[25] Ibid., p. 187.

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aliens from God.[26]

The search for an original affiliation to the universe, therefore, was one and the same as having direct contact with God. Having had the elated, liberating experience of this communion, as Emerson attested in the "transparent-eyeball" passage of Nature, he felt that the terrains of faith had to be reformulated. More adequate theories of philosophy and psychology had to be found to replace those of Unitarianism. What had begun as a predicament of faith, therefore, ended--in two decades--in something more than just a disagreement within the church; it ended in what Emerson called a "silent revolution in opinion," a revolution that made it possible for Thoreau to approach nature in a new and intimate way.

Meanwhile, three years before the latest of the events we have just been chronicling, something resembling a Transcendental organization had come into existence. Although the movement lacked a fixed structure-- due to its extreme individuality and spontaneity--it maintained an informal discussion group, which later became known as the "Transcendental Club". It was formed in Cambridge in 1836, at the celebration of the Harvard College Bicentennial. Here, Emerson's Nature came into the limelight, and a group of young scholars began to adopt the views of Transcendentalism and formed a study group to discuss the "new views" in philosophy, theology, and literature.

The first meeting of the group was held in Boston at the residence of one of the members, George Ripley, a minister. The

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[26] William Gilman, p. 187.

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following meeting was held at Emerson's in Concord, where most of the meetings were eventually held. Besides Ripley and Emerson, other members of the group were: Theodore Parker, an earnest minister; Amos Bronson Alcott, a progressive teacher and philosopher; the poets W. E. Channing and Jones Very; Elizabeth Peabody and Margaret Fuller, thoughtful women writers and teachers; and, of course, several others whom history has cast into oblivion.[27]

The scope of the contributions of the Transcendental movement to the history of America is broad and deep. During its peak, the movement influenced most of the active literary minds of the country, either through the regular club meetings or the Transcendentalist writings. The Dial, the famous Transcendental magazine, was published from 1840 to 1844. It contained more articles and poems by more famous men of letters than any other American magazine of similarly small scope and short life span. The Dial made it possible for many writers and poets to have their works appear in print. It provided Thoreau with a great opportunity to be introduced to the reading public; it also helped several minor poets such Jones Very and Ellery Channing. It gave Margaret Fuller and Amos Bronson Alcott a new voice. In addition, the Dial helped to familiarize the American public with the new realms: the writings of the German romantic poets and the Transcendental philosophers, and more importantly, the "ethnic

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[27] It may be pointed out that Thoreau was not a founding member of the club; it was in the fall of 1837 that he associated himself with it. But once he joined, he scrupulously attended its subsequent meetings held at Emerson's house.

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scriptures" or religious literature of the East, including texts from the Vishnu Sarma, the Law of Menu, Confucius, the Zoroaster's Desatir, and the Chinese Four Books. In offering these Oriental works to its readers, Transcendentalism exhibited its power to overcome the limits of all individual religions, and to do perfect justice to all expressions of religious sentiment. The wide range of endeavors the Transcendentalists undertook helped stimulate the American Renaissance, flowering brilliantly in the masterpieces of Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville.[28]

Additionally, Transcendentalism has played an important part in the shaping of the new American character. The image of the self-reliant man, the devotee of his conscience, the divinely inspired democratic individual-- ardently depicted in the writings of the whole Transcendentalist group--symbolized and helped to shape a new type of character with ideal human attributes that seems to have become a permanent element on American culture.[29]

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[28] All of them differ widely in their choice of subject matter and literary form. Primarily novelists, Hawthorne and Melville were concerned with the psychological and allegorical analysis of certain types of human personality and moral situations; primarily poets and essayists, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman focused, each in his own way, upon the underlying relation of man to nature. See Literary History of the United States edited. by R. E. Spiller, et al. vol. I, pp. 345-357.

[29] For example, Walt Whitman's Leaves of Glass was not only an celebration of novelty in America, but also it dramatized a new American hero who separated from the past. Emerson had Americanized the issues of Transcendentalism in his first book, Nature, where, boldly discarding "the dry bones of the past," he turned America from European traditions and demanded of his fellows a society founded freshly on their own firsthand experience with the American environment. See "Nature" in The American Tradition in Literature edited by Sculley Bradley et. al., vol. I, p. 1266.

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And, probably of equal importance to its literary goals to create a new American character, Transcendentalism, as Carpenter suggested, "played a significant role in practically reforming American social institutions."[30] Witnessing the desperate lives of their contemporaries, caused by the abandonment of their innate divinity, the Transcendentalists could not remain passive. So they attempted to transform a material society into an idealistic one. However, their attitudes toward reform differed, depending on personal temperament. The Emersonian group (those who were engaged in writing and lecturing as their career), including Thoreau, for example, was skeptical about attempts to reform society by institutionalizing the Transcendental movement, insisting on the principle: "reform man first and then nature and circumstance."[31] Contrary to Emersonian and Thoreauvian attitudes, George Ripley, Amos Bronson Alcott, and their followers seem to have believed that reforming nature and circumstance first was the way to reform man. For this reason, while they were propagating a new set of ideal human attributes through their writings and lectures, the Transcendentalists by no means restricted themselves to a theoretical individualism. Rather, they attempted to bring such an ideal character to bear on actual events in order to make it prevail. Consequently, they attempted to create a society in which the Transcendental goal of individual self-realization could be fulfilled, a society in which man could complete himself by living

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[30] Frederic Ives Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 125.

[31] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America, p. 151.

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intellectually and spiritually as well as materialistically. George Ripley of Brook Farm, Theodore Park at the Melodeon, Bronson Alcott at Temple School and Fruitlands--they were seeking to harmonize the Americanized divine life with their own idealism, while protesting against the rapacious commercialism of the State Street. The Transcendentalists condemned the undulation of possessions, the dedication to "trifles," and the exploitation of the privileges of character by the powers of property. Though Emerson insisted that "We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state..,"[32] he never attempted the pragmatic reforms of other Transcendentalists. Instead he tried to be an active reformer by participating as an inspiring leader and lecturer of the movement.

Thoreau also firmly believed in self-reform as a way of reforming society. However, thus far, critics have thought of Thoreau merely as a seeker of mystical divinity, and his Orientalism has been researched mainly in relation with the mystical idealism of the Hindu. In order to further deepen our insight into the importance of Thoreau's indebtedness to Confucianism, a later chapter of this study contain a detailed discussion of Thoreau's attempt to find a way of reforming society.

As we have seen in the scope of New England Transcendentalism, in its essence, Transcendentalism was an attempt to complete in the world of thought what the American revolution had begun in the

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[32] The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 12 vols., (Boston and New York, 1909-14), vol. II, p. 75.

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world of action. The movement gradually developed into a great tidal wave of change, that, pervading almost every sphere of action and affecting life in a wide variety of ways, swept over America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Transcendental movement was not merely a literary movement or a religious movement; it was a cultural revolution. In this light, the Transcendentalists attempted to solve the most acute and troubling problems of the nineteenth century. Just as New England Transcendentalism reconciled science and religion and made the resuscitation of Christianity in a new and viable form seem possible, it also healed the split between mind and matter and restored the intellectual to a place in the world of action; it provided the basis for a new social order in which human dignity and freedom might triumph over the powers of materialism and machinery.

B. The Relation Between Romanticism and Transcendentalism

Most critics have viewed New England Transcendentalism in the context of the international Romantic movements that occurred in varying degrees throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth. Robert E. Spiller, for example, remarked that "the waves of German and English literary romanticism ...were beating against the East coast." Examining the influences of Hinduism on Thoreau, R. K. Dhawan similarly declared that "the chief characteristic of Transcenden-

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talism is romantic idealism."[33] In his recent studies of this subject, Professor George Hochfield also suggested that American Transcendentalism was a provincial manifestation of the more general phenomenon of Romanticism.[34] If Romanticism is simply described as the literary movement that swept over Europe and America during the first half of the nineteenth century, New England Transcendentalism can be regarded as a variety of Romanticism. However, the Romantic movements were by no means uniform literary movements which occurred simultaneously in different regions of the Western world, but a series of distinct upsurges that varied in their scope and character from one country to another and from one generation to the next. Because it was in each case determined by specific literary, political, and religious circumstances, "the Romanticism of one country," as Arthur Lovejoy states, "may have little in common with that of another, that there is, in fact, a plurality of Romanticisms, of possibly quite distinct thought--complexes."[35]

The history of European Romanticism suggests the complexity of its nature. With the passing of the Age of Reason, a widespread desire for some new standard of truth arose in Europe. In response to this desire, there emerged in both England and on the Continent,

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[33] R. K. Dhawan, Henry David Thoreau: A Study in Indian Influence (New Delhi, 1985), p. 24.

[34] George Hochfield, "An Introduction to Transcendentalism," in Selected Writings of the American Transcendentalists (New York, 1966), p. ix.

[35] Arthur O. Lovejoy, Essay in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948), p. 235.

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but mainly in Germany, what we call the Romantic movement: a theory of the world and attitude toward life. The full flowering of the Romantic movement began with Kant's postulation of his transcendental philosophy in the late eighteenth century. As a reaction had set in against Locke's theory, Immanuel Kant, in The Critique of Pure Reason, maintained that there was a body of knowledge innate within man, and that this knowledge transcends the senses. Stimulated by Kant, this philosophy lived in the intellectually sophisticated movement of Romanticism. It elaborately encompassed the systems of Fichte, Schelling, Goethe, Schleiermacher, and Hegel, and --to a lesser extent-- the thoughts of Coleridge, Carlyle, and Victor Cousin. These Romantics sought to free the consciousness from the tyranny of sensation and to restore it to an active, generative force in the acquisition of knowledge.

However, the forms and times of occurrence of the movement varied from country to country because it was in each case determined by the specific literary background as well as by social, religious and political factors. In the area of literature, for example, English authors excelled at lyric poetry, the French concentrated on drama in their battle against the stronghold of the Neoclassical theater, while German expressed their transcendental yearnings in a number of different art forms.[36] Meanwhile, admitting Transcendentalism as a manifestation of Romanticism, the

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[36] For more detail, see René Welleck, Concept of Criticism (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 128-198.

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prosaic form of literature flourished in New England.

Viewed historically, on the other hand, German Romanticism developed many contradictory ideas by merging with the idea of "organicism" to produce the idea of the organic or "absolute," state.[37] This ides in turn combined with political nationalism that eventually was used to justify the infinite conquests of Hitler.[38] French Romanticism resembled the German variety in the structural organization of its groups and in its rapid development. However, it differs from the German movement in that it remained almost exclusively within the realm of art, and it is distinguished above all else by its furious coup against the stifling dominance of the native Neoclassical tradition.[39] The Romantic movement in England showed less systematic, less dogmatic, and less self-

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[37] The idea of 'Organicism' was postulated by Fichte in "the Destination of Man." To cite a few sentences from Fichte's writings in illustration of the extremity of the movement: "I understand thee now, spirit sublime! I have found the organ by which to apprehend this reality, and probably all other. It was not knowledge, for knowledge can only demonstrate and establish itself; every kind of knowledge supposes some higher knowledge upon which it is founded; and of this ascent there is no end. It is faith, that voluntary repose in the ideas that naturally come to us, because through these only we can fulfil our destiny..." cited in Octavius B. Frothingham Transcendentalism in New England (New York,1959), p. 36.

[38] A. O. Lovejoy, "The meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas," Journal of the History of Ideas, II, p. 258 (June, 1941). Frederic I. Carpenter cited in Emerson Handbook (New York, 1953), p. 137.

[39] See Lilian R. Furst, "Romanticism in Historical Perspective," in A. Owen Aldridge, Comparative Literature: Matter and Method (Urbana, 1969), p. 82.

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conscious trends than its Continental counterparts.[40] The English Romantic movement was "never as self-conscious or, possibly, as radical as the German or French movements..."[41] Instead, it was absorbed in developing its own Romantic theory of poetry by combining Kantian philosophy, as Rene Welleck described, "sensualism, associationalism, inherited from the eighteenth century and new or old Platonic idealism."

Though an offshoot of European Romanticism, American response to Romantic idealism has by no means shown the same pattern as that of Europe. It was around the year 1820 when the Romantic movement began to exert its influence on the mind of the New Englander. The New England Transcendentalists were indebted largely to German Romantic idealism which had reached them through the recollections of the English Romantics.[42] Although the Transcendentalists had derived the organic metaphor from the idealism of the Romantics and

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[40] This is the case because there was no any Romantic 'school' in England as there had been in German; and there were few manifestions or literary discussions compared with those in German and the violent controversies that were to sway France. See Lilian R. Furst, "Romanticism in Historical Perspective," in A. Owen Aldridge Comparative Literature: Matter and Method pp. 76-77.

[41] See Rene Welleck, "The Concept of Romanticism," in The Concepts of Criticism ,pp. 128-198, in which Welleck stated that the English Romantic attitudes, beliefs and techniques were confined to a small group of great poets.

[42] In discussing the Oriental influences on the Romantic movement, Raymond Schwab remarked, "Coleridge and Carlyle translated Kant for Anglo Saxon minds," in The Oriental Renaissance (New York, 1984), trans., Gene Patterson-Black, Victor Reinking, p. 198. For

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used it as a model for New England Transcendentalism, their receptive attitude toward and reaction to it were quite different from those of the Romantics. While the Romantics used the principles of Romantic idealism (derived by analogy from Kantian epistemology) mainly for aesthetic purposes, the Transcendentalists modified and expanded them into practical realistic guidelines for the American mind. In Transcendentalism in New England, Frothingham described clearly this point:

> With some truth it may be said that there never was such a thing as Transcendentalism out of New England. In Germany and France there was a transcendental philosophy, held by cultivated men, taught in schools and professed by many thoughtful and earnest people; but it never affected society in its organized institutions or practical interests. In old England, this philosophy influenced poetry and art, but left the daily existence of men and women untouched. But in New England, the ideas entertained by the foreign thinkers took root in the native soil and blossomed out in every form of social life.[43]

The Transcendentalists embodied the idealism that was the source of the vitality of the cultural revolution, making visible "their own new heavens and new earth" to America. They developed this idea, however, not only to revitalize the piety of their own Puritan religion in a new way and to stimulate a "renaissance" in literature, but also to reform American social institutions.[44]

In other words, the attitude of the Transcendentalists toward romantic ideas, although influenced by European and English Romantics, was quite different from that of the Romantics.

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[43] O. B. Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England, p. 105.

[44] F. I. Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 125.

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Professor Pillai thus declared that though the Romantics had some affinity with the American Transcendentalists, they, unlike the Transcendentalists, "had no heart to absorb it into himself[Coleridge] and grow."[45] Emphasizing the practicality of Emerson's ideas, Professor Carpenter also described the difference between the Transcendentalist and the Romantics as follows:

> His love of Nature and the woods, for instance, was part of the American pioneer experience and was not merely a form of escape from industrial civilization, as in Europe it often had been. His "joyous expansiveness" reflected the historic joy in growth and development natural to nineteenth century America. Similarly, his "egotistic" self-reliance was a pragmatically valuable formation of American experience. In attacking "the dead hand of the past," and "the courtly muses of Europe," Emerson was continuing in literature the political ideals of the American Revolution and was attacking the "colonialism" which continued to follow the alien traditions of feudal Europe. The romantic revolution, which in Europe sought to destroy many of the native European traditions, in America destroyed rather the tyranny of alien tradition.[46]

Nevertheless, the critics have called the New England Transcendentalists in New England pure Romantics. Perry Miller, for example, discussed the American Transcendentalist as a disciple of the European Romantics.[47] Miller, on the assumption that Thoreau would have already completely discerned one of the major problems of the Romantics through Emerson's Nature, suggested that Thoreau strove throughout his career with the traditional romantic

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[45] A. K. B. Pillai, Transcendental Self (Lanham, New York, and London, 1985), p. 2.

[46] Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 140.

[47] Perry Miller, "Thoreau in the Context of International Romanticism," New England Quarterly, 34 (June, 1961), pp. 147-159.

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problems of "balance" and "combination" with the world outside of him.[48] James McIntosh has made a similar suggestion:

> Like the European Romantics who conceived of the mental faculty of imagination as separating themselves from nature, the Transcendentalist as a self-conscious romantic, combined a powerful wish to love nature and even to merge with it, with a consciousness of separation.[49]

In order to support his hypothesis, McIntosh attempted to compare Thoreau's conflict between the desire for a separated self and the desire for nature with the conflicts of the European Romantics. It is true that all the aforementioned ideas of Thoreau are "romantic." If Thoreau had not adapted these ideas to the particular conditions of American life in order to insinuate their historical significance and their dispositional value, and their "eternal" truth, we would have to call him a pure romantic. But Thoreau went to the woods to solve some of the practical problems of life and to be instructed by nature. Although he would have been the first to admit that perfect life was an unattainable ideal, he knew from early on in his life what he should aim for. It was "the perfect

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[48] Miller, while illustrating Thoreau's romantic qualities, argued hat the Romantics were confronted with some dilemma in interpreting Nature because of the major problems "of striking and maintaining the delicate balance between object and reflection, of fact and truth, of minute observation and generalized concept." In the light of this, he interpreted Emerson's Nature as a combination of the two poles of the Romantic dilemma which with its Platonic ascended from the lowly level of "Commodity" into the intellectual vistas of "Prospects." Ibid, p. 150.

[49] James McIntosh, Thoreau as Romantic Naturalist: His Shifting Stance toward Nature (Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1974), p. 19.

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correspondence of Nature to man, so that he is at home with her."[50] "I love to see anything that implies a similar mode of life and a greater nearness to the earth."[51] "In society you will not find health, but in nature. You must converse much with the field and woods, if you would imbibe such health into your mind and spirit as you covet for your body.... Without that our feet at least stood in the midst of nature, all our faces would be pale and livid."[52] It was for this reason that he wished to live a life far away from the bustling New England of the nineteenth century.

According to Professor Carpenter, Charles Cestre, in his "Le Romanticisme d'Emerson," defined Emerson as a pure Romantic by emphasizing Emerson's "love of Nature and the woods, his glorification of the instinctive and the subconsciousness, his praise of intense emotion, and his joyous expansiveness and optimism," and defined him as a pure Romantic.[53] Yvor Winters, who has analyzed Emerson's ideas more than his philosophical point of view, has proclaimed them to be "the common-place ideas of the Romantic movement." Emerson himself, however, gave a fine answer to such misleading assertions:

> One of these signs is the fact that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state, assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common, was

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[50] Thoreau, Journal, X, p. 127.

[51] Journal, XIV, p. 88.

[52] Journal, I, p. 306.

[53] F. I. Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 138.

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> explored and poetized. That which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the times. It is a great stride. It is a sign--is it not? of new vigor, when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art or Provencal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into today, and you may have the antique and future worlds.[54]

In fact, Emerson considered himself "a practical idealist whose primary concern was with American actuality."[55]

Thus far, in terms of explaining its origin and nature, I have surveyed its history and compared the character of New England Transcendentalism with that of Romanticism. In the next chapter, we will discuss in detail the 'Orient' in both Romanticism and the New England Transcendentalism and trace the root of Thoreau's Orientalism from comparative perspective.

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[54] Emerson, "The American Scholar," in The American Tradition in Literature, p. 1313.

[55] F. I. Carpenter, Emerson Handbook, p. 139.

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CHAPTER III

The Orient in Romanticism and Transcendentalism

Although the New England Transcendentalists, as I have mentioned above, formulated their own distinctive principles, they were substantially indebted to Kant and his successors in German philosophy, the Platonists and Neo-Platonists of Europe, the Romantic movement in Germany and England, and, above all, to the Orient. All the major American Transcendentalists were deeply influenced by the scriptural philosophy of the East. But the American Transcendentalist was not a precursor of the studies of the Orient at that time; instead, he inherited such an intellectual tendency from Europe. He was so much a part of nineteenth-century European Orientalism that a study of its genealogical origin is essential to our comprehension of Orientalism in New England Transcendentalism. Although most scholars are aware that the Orientalism in New England Transcendentalism is genealogically related to the Orientalism of European, few have attempted to elaborate upon the similarities between them. Instead a number of separate studies on either of American or European Orientalism have been published.[1] Most American scholars seem to have viewed

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[1] In the European field, Marie de Meester's Oriental Influences in the English Literature of the Nineteenth Century(1927); J. Hoops's Orientalische Stoffe in der englischen Literatur(1926). For more detail, see, Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 49.

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nineteenth-century New England Orientalism and European Orientalism as unrelated phenomena.[2]

It is Raymond Schwab's La Renaissance Orientale, a comprehensive study about the nature of the parallel interests in the Orient, that has recently become known to most leading Anglo-American authorities on New England Transcendentalism.[3] Raymond Schwab suggests that New England Transcendentalism, as a provincial manifestation of International Romanticism, was a response generated by Western contact with the Orient.[4] Schwab calls the New England Transcendental movement and the Western Romantic movements an Oriental Renaissance on the assumption that the impact of Sanskrit on the West allowed the Westerners to become familiar with a transcendental world beyond that of the scripture and the classics. Schwab also assumed that the leading figures of this cultural transformation and organization were scholars because he believed that cultural transformations take place on the basis of men's desire to first know and then organize new things. Based upon this methodology, Schwab traced the process of the assimilation of the nineteenth-century European consciousness to the Orient

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[2] Arthur Christy, the leading scholar of nineteenth-century American Orientalism, saw that there was no basic unity between the Oriental interests of the New England Transcendentalists and those of the Romantics. For a fuller description, see his The Orient in American Transcendentalism, pp. 49-50; Frederic Ives Carpenter's Emerson and Asia (Harvard University Press, 1930) contains a description of the relation between the influences of Plato, Plotinus, and Hinduism.

[3] Raymond Schwab, La Renaissance Orientale, trans. by Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York, 1984).

[4] Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance, pp. 11-24.

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in The Oriental Renaissance. The first recognition of the Orient by Europe, according to Schwab, began with geographical explorations, the prestige of Egyptology, and the various colonial missions to the Orient. Then, under the influence of a surge of interest in the study of Sanskrit that was centered in Paris and spread from there across the Continent. Europe began to integrate the Oriental ideas into the body of its scientific, institutional, and imaginative structures. As a result, the Orient brought about a great metamorphosis in the imagery of the Western mind just like the Renaissance had done in the fifteenth century. India played the main role in this change; Indian ideas appeared in abundance in Western literature: from the pre-Orientalism of Milton and Dryden, the English Romantics to Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, the Transcendentalists, to Richter, Novalis, Schelling, Heine, Goethe, and Friedrich Schlegel, the German Romantics. On the whole, Schwab's The Oriental Renaissance is an admirable pioneer work.

Regrettably, the scholar seems to have made some conceptual errors, and overlooked some important factors while developing his arguments. First of all, he treats the characteristics of Orientalism in New England Transcendentalism in the same vein as those of European Romanticism. Of course, genealogically, Orientalism in Transcendentalism had its roots in the European Orientalism. But its response to the Orient was quite different from that of Romanticism. "For the American Transcendentalists, the Orient was the home of the oldest philosophic truths;" as Arthur Christy described it, "for the European Romantics, it was a

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source of poetic glamour."[5] Especially in the nineteenth century, when the Orient became more accessible, the Transcendentalist responded to it as a mandate of history and as a matter of birthright by applying it to the creation of a new personality and a new democracy for the New World.

Secondly, his approach is much too Indo-centric. By giving all the credit for the contemporary surge of European interests in the Orient to the impact of Hinduism, Schwab slights the importance of Europe's earlier contact with other Oriental cultures, especially with the Chinese-- a contact which also played a significant role in awakening Europe's interest in Eastern cultures.

Thirdly, while discussing the Oriental influences, he seems to have neglected the intellectual milieu of the eighteenth century in which the European had to turn to the Orient for inspiration. We do not think that the Oriental impact was the only important factor in the development of Romanticism, however; the Oriental influences would have been quite meaningless if they had not fulfilled a prior need: a need stemming from the immediate cultural and intellectual predicament created by the impoverishment of religion and the mechanization of consciousness of eighteenth-century rationalism and empiricism.

In order to modify Schwab's interpretation, to correct a few seeming misapprehensions and to make amends for his occasional

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[5] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 50.

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omissions, this section offers a description of the nature of Orientalism in the Transcendental and Romantic movements from a comparative perspective. Before discussing the subject, we should briefly recall the historical background of the contact between the East and the West because such a historical survey will provide us with some significant facts that will help us understand the nature of Orientalism in both Romanticism and New England Transcendentalism.

Mutual contact between the two hemispheres had existed long before the Christian era. The Mediterranean world had, indeed, enjoyed some contact with the East. Pythagoras, for example, travelled widely, exploring the confidential instructions of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Brahmans.[6] There is also a legendary episode that Socrates had dialogue with learned Indian. According to Eusebius, some intellectual Indians actually visited Athens and conversed with Socrates; when he explained "the object of his philosophy," as "an inquiry into human affairs," one of the Indian visitors burst out laughing: "How could a man grasp human things without first mastering the Divine?"[7] In a historical study reviewing the essential affinities between Greek philosophy and Indian thought, H. G. Rawlinson stated that the theory of metempsychosis, which played an important part in Greek philosophy, probably stemmed from the influences of Indian thought:

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[6] H. G. Rawlinson, "India in European Literature and Thought," in The Legacy of India, edited by G. T. Garratt (Oxford, 1951), pp. 4-5.

[7] Cited in Rawlinson, The Legacy of India, p. 8.

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> Both Pythagoras and Empedocles claimed to possess the power of recollecting their past birth. Metempsychosis is referred to in many passages in Pinder, and, with the contemporary doctrine of Karma, it is the keystone of the philosophy of Plato. The soul is for ever travelling through a 'cycle of necessity'.[8]

In order to further illustrate his point, Rawlinson cited some examples from the Phaedrus: "Each soul, returning to the election of a second life, shall receive one agreeable to his desire." But most noticeable of all the examples is the well-known apologue of Er the Pamphylian, with which Plato appropriately ended the Republic. Er perceives the disembodied souls determining their next incarnations by the hand of "Lachesis, daughter of Necessity." Need I mention Orpheus reincarnated in the body of a swan, Thersis in that of an ape, or Agamemnon in that of an eagle? A number of other scholars also have admitted the historical possibility that Greek philosophy was influenced by India.[9]

But the first direct contact between the two worlds took place in 326 B. C. when Alexander invaded Asia. At that time, Plotinus, the founder of Neo-platonism, joined a military expedition to the East to acquire firsthand knowledge of Indian philosophy. Concentrating on the mystical doctrine of emanation and absorption, Neo-platonism thus showed a striking resemblance to Vedanta and Yoga systems. The absorption of the self into the World Soul is

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[8] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[9] Richard Garbe, The Philosophy of Ancient India (New York, 1923), p. 38; F. W. Bussell, Religious Thought and Heresy in the Middle Ages (London, Robert Scott, 1918), p. 171; W. S. Urquhart, The Vedanta and Modern Thought (Oxford University Press: London, 1928), pp. 192-198.

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depicted by Plotinus in words that echo a typically Indian thought:

> Souls which are pure and have lost their attraction to the corporal will cease to be dependent on body. So detached they will pass into the world of Being and Reality.[10]

In addition, Buddhism was well known in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria(A.D.150-218). Clement of Alexandria repeatedly remarked about the demeanor of Buddhists in Alexandria: "The Greeks stole their philosophy from the barbarians."[11] As a result, Neo-platonism contains many points that evidence for its contact with Buddhism, especially the ritual of sacrifices. After the decline of Alexandria in A.D. 642, the contact continued into the Middle Ages, with the Arabs acting as mediators between East and West--until 1258, when their capital, Baghdad, was destroyed by the Mongols.

Unlike India, China was practically unknown to Europeans during the classical age of ancient Greece and Rome. Though the names "Seres" and "Sera" were referred to from time to time at the end of the pre-Christian era, they only denoted "the Silk-people and the Land of silk."[12] Until the thirteenth century, when the Mongols founded an empire extending to both Europe and Asia, the

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[10] Cited in H. G. Rawlinson, ibid., p. 18.

[11] Cited in Rawlison, p. 19.

[12] Early Sino-European contacts are discussed in the following: Wolfgang Franke, translated by R. A. Wilson, China and the West (University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1967), p. 1; Sir Henry Yule, Cathay and the Way Thither (New York, 1913); Adolf Reichwein, China and Europe (New York, 1925); Arnold H. Rowbotham, "A Brief Account of the Early Development of Sinology," in Chinese Social and Political Science Review, VII, No. 1 (April, 1935), pp. 113-38.

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two cultures had remained virtually unknown to each other for centuries.[13] During the thirteenth century, the European merchants established the trade routes to Cathay and the church began to send a small number of some missionaries.[14] At that time, the Marco Polo narrative and Sir John Mandeville's Travels, a collection of fables and wonders of the Far Eastern civilization, appeared and stimulated the first real interest in China. Europe responded by sending more caravans of missionaries and traders to China.[15]

Meanwhile, through the Arabs, Indian myths, fables, and folktale found their way to Europe, reappearing in improbable works, such as Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and Isolde, Boccaccio's Decameron, and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. One example of the migration of a tale may be seen in the famous story of Barlaam and Josaphat. The story is the uplifting tale of the young Indian prince Josaphat, who was so moved by the various patterns of human agony and distress that he encountered, that he renounced the world and became an ascetic. Translated from Greek into Arabic, and from there into a number of European languages, the legend was immensely popular. In the sixteenth century, Josaphat was finally made a Christian saint, although it is now evident that Josaphat was really the Bodhisat or Bodhisattva, and that his story merely

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[13] Wolfgang Franke, China and the West, pp. 1-3.

[14] For a fuller account, see volume III of Yule's Cathay and the Way Thither and Karl A. Wittfogel and Feng Chia-Sheng, History of Chinese Society (New York, 1949), pp. 639-40.

[15] William W. Appleton, A Cycle of Cathay (New York, 1951), pp. 5-20.

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echoed Gautama Buddha's Great Renunciation.[16] Tracing the process of migration of the story, Rawlinson has suggested that numerous apologues were derived by the text, including the story of the Three Caskets and the tale of the Pound of Flesh. Both stories were used by Shakespereare in The Merchant of Venice.[17]

These separate cases have been cited again and again in order to demonstrate the historical contact between East and West. However, a genuine upsurge of European interest in the Oriental cultures to the point where it became a literary movement such as the Oriental Renaissance did not occur until the eighteenth century for the Chinese, and the nineteenth century for the Indian culture.

The reason was that the cultural consciousness of the Western world before the eighteenth century was dominated by two almost unchallenged sources of authority: scripture and the classics. Each in its own way upheld the idea that civilization had declined from a former Golden Age. The most rational preoccupation for contemporary man was therefore, the study of the more fortunate ancients and their society. Since Renaissance, the humanist educational movement was based largely upon a revival of Greek and Latin learning. The Reformation had taken the form of a revolt against the Roman Church, accused of having departed from the true faith as revealed in the Bible. Protestant scholars, from Luther onwards, therefore, stressed the supreme authority of the Bible.

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[16] Rawlinson, p. 26. For a fuller account, see Arthur Christy, "The Sense of the Past," in The Asian Legacy and American Life (New York, 1945), pp. 7-8.

[17] Ibid., p. 26.

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The development prior to the eighteenth century had thus strengthened the reverence with which men approached the texts that enshrined the twin sources of European civilization.

Because of the unchallenged authority of the twin sources, when humanity was discussed in both the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, it was a family matter inside a hermetic little Mediterranean room. Although their adventurers had made an inventory of the globe by wars and trade, the completion of a vast perspective of universal humanism did not occur until the end of the eighteenth century when the Orientalists, making use of new channels, brought back a view of humanity that differed from that of the gold-hunters and the slave merchants. As we can see from an anecdote of Vasco da Gama,[18] whenever Europe discovered Oriental Asia before the end of the eighteenth century, they attempted anachronously to find "analogous classicisms" of their own consciousness. It was because the known world to the European consciousness there, as Raymond Schwab describes, "had been wholly classical... or a classified world."[19] The educated European had therefore virtually no standards of comparison aside from his own society and the classical antiquity on which it had modelled itself.

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[18] When Vasco da Gama landed at Goa, the Zamorian asked him what he was seeking; he answered, "Christians and spice." Cited in Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance, p. 16; Hampson also made a similar suggestion: "Merchants were indifferent anthropologists," Norman Hampson, The Enlightenment, p. 25.

[19] Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance (New York, 1984), p. 23.

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In the seventeenth century, the authority of the classics and scripture began to gradually deteriorate because of the growing tendency to comprehend the universe through reason. When the step by step advances in science revealed the superstitious nature of "the Mediterranean classicisms," the European began to question the unique, God-given character of their own faith.[20]

It is generally agreed that a growing tendency to see European civilization in the context of pagan civilizations was the more immediate force that caused the authority of the old standards of European faith to disintegrate.[21] For this trend of intellectual idolatry toward the pagan cultures, ironically, the missionaries, active in the pagan lands, were originally responsible. Merchants, seamen, and military adventurers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were on the whole indifferent anthropologists, who, on each voyage, yearned to find only parallel classicisms there.

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[20] The seventeenth-century cosmologists, for example, reduced the status of the earth to that of one planet among many, which gave a fatal blow to the authority of the Bible, in which a geocentric universe is assumed as the real crux of the matter. The authority of the Bible also suffered from the geologists' discovery of evidence of the rise and fall of the earth's surface, which raised doubt about the 6,000-year span that the Old Testament allowed. These first hints of a new chronology and of evolution caused doubt about the Revelation. The authority of the Bible was vehemently rejected in the following centuries, and finally the old standards were ousted by the thinkers of the Enlightenment. For a general discussion on the subject in connection with Orientalism, see Norman Hampsom, The Enlightenment (Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 15-28.

[21] For a general discussion on the subject, see Francois Jost Introduction to Comparative Literature (New York, 1974), pp. 88-108; Norman Hampson, The Enlightenment, pp. 43-128.

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Soon, however, the missionaries, after settling in the new lands, acquiring the local language, and investigating these alien cultures, sent relatively faithful accounts of the state-of-their culture, their mores, and customs to their homelands. These accounts were eventually published in Europe as a way of justifying the missionaries' own works.[22] Works of this nature-- one may almost regard them as travel literature of utopian or imaginary exoticism--were extremely popular.[23]

As a result of certain repeated conjunctions of personnel and resources, seventeenth-century thinkers began to look in a new way at the pagan civilizations. They compared them with the cultures with which they had long been familiar, such as the Greek and Roman cultures. In the course of making such inquiries, the Mediterranean classicists were confronted with a serious dilemma--because their knowledge about non-European societies, which provided them with a chance to see their place in the universe from

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[22] Examples of such reports are to be found in The Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791, 73 vols., ed. Reuben Gold Thwaits (Cleveland, 1896-1901). Extracts appeared in the Mercure de France, and a one-volume abridged version has been edited by Edna Kenton (New York, 1925).

[23] The reports of voyages, as Professor Francois Jost described, "were being clearly transformed into a literary a literary genre." For more detail, see Francois Jost's Introduction to Comparative Literature(New York, 1974), pp. 109-126. Outstanding among those works which set the trend was Sir Thomas More's Utopia(1516). The popularity of this new genre in ensuing generations produced numerous accounts of earthly paradise: Andreae's Christianopolis(1619), Campanella's City of the Sun(1623), Bacon's New Atlantis(1627), and Harrington's Oceana(1656). For a general discussion of these traditions in connection with Orientalism, see Arthur Christy, The Asian Legacy and American Life (New York, 1945), pp. 10-16.

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an objective viewpoint, resulted in a growing skepticism about the superiority of the classical-Christian civilization. Tracing such a process in his The Enlightenment, Norman Hampson remarked that "the intellectual challenge of non-European societies issued a much more direct and fundamental challenge to the authority of the traditional European standards than any which seemed likely to come from the scientists."[24]

Of the pagan civilizations that constituted an intellectual challenge to the old standards of European faith,[25] China

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[24] For a fuller account, see Hampson's The Enlightenment (Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 15-40.

[25] In the American Indian and Egyptian civilizations, the contemporary thinkers also discovered practical examples to support the arguments for their favorite doctrines and theses against the rituals, dogmas, and superstitions in the traditional picture of European history and society. Its typical illustration for such a trend can be seen in a chapter of Montaigne's Essais, where the most prominent difference between the contemporary Europeans and Brazilians is exposed by the exclamation that terminates the description of the cannibals: "Good Lord! They don't wear any breeches!" Speaking of the Indians of Brazil, Montaigne observed: "There is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting that every one gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not use in his own country.... They are savages at the same rate that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress," The Essays, trans. Charles Cotton (Chicago, 1952), p. 93. In a similar way, Raleigh also remarked on the result of his inquiry into the American Indians: "We found the people most gentile, loving and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and as live after the manner of the golden age," (cited in Hampson's The Enlightenment, p. 27). Bossuet, on the other hand, in his Histoire universalle, one of the synoptic histories in which the century delighted, deployed considerable erudition to show how gentile and Judeo-Christian history were interwoven to serve as a vehicle for the operation of divine providence by comparing "the Mediterranean classicisms" with the Egyptian civilization. Bossuet's Discours was admittedly an extreme statement of Christian parochialism. Besides, Bossuet insisted that, though the Greeks boasted of their philosophy, they built neither the first nor the great early civilizations. It was the Egyptians, Bossuet thought, who first

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unquestionably posed the greatest threat. The very existence of the enormous middle kingdom, heir to a tradition of continuous civilization that was older than that of Europe, and which from 1644, under the vigorous new Manchu dynasty, asserted once more the concept of being the world's center, posed unprecedented problems for Europe. The very existence of the Chinese empire constituted a dilemma because, to quote Voltaire, "authentic histories trace this nation back, through a sequence of 36 recorded eclipses of the sun, to a date earlier than that which we normally attribute to the Flood."[26] Eventually, the influence of Chinese culture increased skepticism toward the authority of the classics and scripture. From whatever angle the European viewed the Chinese phenomenon, they could not reconcile it with the traditional picture of European history, based upon the classics and scripture. Descartes thus invoked the example of China, in his Discours de la methods(1637), to prove the fabrication of classical-Christian history by emphasizing on a variety of social habits. John Locke, in particular, as Norman Hampson suggests, counted poignantly on such testimony to deny the existence of innate ideas.[27]

In the middle of the seventeenth century, as a result of the stimulus of Jesuit narratives and translations as well as the

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established an orderly government, who, "grave and serious," had sought to make the people happy, cultivated virtue, studied the laws, and practiced wisdom; Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Discours sur l"histoire universelle, Abbé Velat and Yvonne Champailler edited (Paris, 1962), pp. 196-7.

[26] Quoted in Norman Hampson, The Enlightenment, p. 26.

[27] Ibid., p. 27.

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enthusiasm of various essayists and philosophers,[28] the cult of Confucius began in Europe.[29] In France, as early as 1642, La Mothe le Vayer in his Vertu des payens, for example, refused to consign Plato, Socrates, and Confucius to the perpetual fires.[30] In England, such later works as Dryden's Religio Laici revealed how favorable the philosophical climate was for a broad-minded reception of the sage.[31] By 1660 the reputation of Confucianism was established in Europe.[32]

The ancient Chinese philosopher became the patron saint of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.[33] Because, to the philosophes of the Enlightenment, Confucianism approximated the sort of natural religion they were advocating--free from rituals, dogmas, and

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[28] The missionaries, in their anxiety to justify themselves, flooded Europe with translations of the Chinese classics and the writings of the sage. In Sapientia Sinica (1662), as William W. Appleton described, the missionaries introduced the Ta Hsueh (Great Learning), Lun Yu (Analects) of the Confucius, and Chung Yung (Doctrine of the Means with his biography and a chronology to the Western world), William W. Appleton, p. 40.

[29] Ch'ien Chung-shu, "China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth Century," Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography, I, No. 4 (1940), pp. 351-84; Tsen-Chung Fan, "Chunses Culture in England from Sir William Temple to Olive Goldsmith," Harvard University Summaries of Ph.D Theses 1931, pp. 223-26.

[30] Arnold H. Rowbotham, "La Mothe le Vayer's Vertu des Payens and Eighteenth Century Cosmopolitanism," in Modern Language Notes, vol. LIII, No. 1 (January, 1938), pp. 10-14.

[31] Preface to Religio Laici (London, 1682), W. Appleton cited in The Cycle of Cathay, p. 40.

[32] William W. Appleton, p. 37.

[33] Adolf Reichwein, China and Europe: Intellectual Collection of Essays from the Bicentennial (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, Press, 1978), p. 77.

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superstitions. Leibnitz, a leading philosopher of the period, declared:

> If this should be carried out, I fear lest we soon be inferior to the Chinese in everything that is deserving of praising. I say this, not because I envy them any new light--on that I should rather congratulate them--but because it is to be desired that we, on our side, should learn from them those things which hitherto have, rather, been lacking in our affair, especially the use of practical philosophy and an improved understanding of how to live--to say nothing at present of other arts. Certainly missionaries should send to us to teach us the use and practice to them to teach revealed religion. And so, I believe that if a wise man were chosen to pass judgment, not upon the shapes of goddesses, but upon the excellence of people, he would award the golden apple to the Chinese--except that we should have the better of them in one supreme, but superhuman, thing, namely, the divine gift of the Christian religion. [34]

In the same vein, Voltaire expressed his unreserved admiration for Confucius in his Philosophical Dictionary(1764): "I have read his books with attention, I have made extracts from them; I never found in them anything but the purest morality, without the slightest tinge of charlatanism."[35] Elsewhere he wrote no less enthusiastically: "The happiest period, and the one most worthy of respect which there has ever been on this earth, was the one which followed his laws."[36]

The eighteenth century witnessed a dramatic shift in the European attitude toward Chinese culture, while the Confucian

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[34] Quoted in Arthur O. Lovejoy, Essay in History of Ideas, p. 106.

[35] Cited in Reichwein, China and Europe, p. 89.

[36] Cited in H. G. Creel, Confucius and the Chinese way (New York, 1960), p. 261.

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reputation continued to prevail.[37] China became synonymous with the Orient when the Chinese vogue, chinoiserie, swept over Europe; and turned persons of taste and culture into addicts to things Chinese. The Chinese vogue continued to thrive in the arts of gardening and architecture. Chinese motifs, designs, and decorations prevailed in architecture and eventually led to the emergence of the rococo style.[38]

By the mid-eighteenth century, the passion for everything Chinese had affected Europe so completely that the satirist James Cawthorne described in reproachful and almost plangent terms, the contemporary European's tendency of losing their traditional character by favoring Chinese things:

> Of late,'tis true, quite sick of Rome and Greece'
> We fetch our models from the wise Chinese,
> European artists are too cool and chaste,
> For Mand'rin only is the man of taste.[39]

Cawthorne found evidence for the Europeans' deteriorating task everywhere: Mandarins drowsed on gold chimney pieces, ladies fought over rare porcelains, cows lounged on Oriental cowshed, and Confucius supervised over the calf-bound classics in the study.[40]

The most brilliant critic of Romanticism, Professor Lovejoy,

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[37] Norman Hampson, The Enlightenment (Penguin Books, 1968), p. 26.

[38] William W. Appleton, A Cycle of Cathay (New York, 1951), pp. 92-97.

[39] James Cawthorne, "Essay on Taste," in Poems (London, 1771), and William W. Appleton also quotes the poem in the opening of chapter VI, Appleton, p. 90.

[40] For a fuller account, see W. W. Appleton, pp. 65-120.

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defines this cultural phenomenon as a precursor to the Romantic movement against a frigid Neo-classicism.[41] He stated that the image of a previously unrecognized kind of "beauty stimulated by the Chinese influence, and especially by the conception of Sharawadgi(Chinese garden) as an aesthetic standard which took place during the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, helped pave the way for the European Romantic movements. In another article," The First Gothic Revival and the Return to Nature," Professor Lovejoy again maintains that, parallel to the Gothic anti-classic revolt, the cult of China had released the imagination of the artist, in disobedience of the reserved and perfunctory idealism of Neo-classicism.[42] Besides Lovejoy, a number of other books also have described how the Chinese garden played a significant role in awakening the consciousness of the eighteenth-century European aesthetes.[43] Unanimously their authors quoted Sir William Temple's remark as the first exponent of the asymmetrical Sharawadgi[44] garden style, "where the beauty shall be great, and

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[41] See Arthur O. Lovejoy's article "The Chinese Origin of a Romanticism," in Essay in the History of Ideas, pp. 99-135.

[42] Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The First Gothic Revival and the Return to Nature," in Modern Language Notes, XLVII, No. 7 (November, 1931), pp. 419-46.

[43] Elizabeth W. Manwaring, Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England (New York, 1925); Eleanor von Erdberg, Chinese Influence on European Garden Structure (Cambridge, Mass., 1936); Ch'en Shou-yi, "The Chinese Garden in Eighteenth Century England," Tien Hsia, II, No. 4 (April, 1936), pp. 321-39.

[44] This term is discussed by Y. Z. Chang, 'Sharawadgi," Modern Language Notes, xiv, No. 4 (April, 1930), pp. 211-14; Mary Quan, "Chinese Influence upon Eighteenth Century Gardening," Master Essay (Columbia University Press, 1948), chi. I, p. iv.

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strike the eye, but without any order or disposition of parts that shall be commonly or easily observed."[45]

Though this revolution was mainly evident in the arts of gardening and architecture, it speedily extended to literature and all the arts; and its later and purely literary manifestations were at least greatly facilitated and accelerated by the introduction of a new canon of aesthetic excellence and by its repetition and elaboration by a succession of influential writers in the following decades.[46] A turning point in the history of modern taste was reached when the ideals of regularity, simplicity, uniformity, and easy logical intelligibility, were first openly challenged, when the assumption that true beauty is "geometrical" ceased to be one to which "all consented, as to a Law of Nature."[47]

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[45] Sir William Temple, "Of Gardening," Works (London, 1814), vol. III, p. 237.

[46] The first unmistakable signs of the looming change of Romantic aesthetics were manifested in E. Young's Night Thoughts (1742) and in Akensides's Pleasures of Imagination (1745). Historically, these two works have much in common in that they stand midway between the conventional Neoclassicism and a fresh outlook which admits irregularity and imagination to gain respectability in poetic practice. In 1759, Young revealed in his Conjectures of Original Composition the most decisive document of the herald of the new aesthetics. He proclaimed the superiority of the new ideals that lewd away from the old notions. This reminds us of the aesthetic conception of the Chinese garden: "An Original may be said to be of a vegetable nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it is not made: imitations are often a sort of manufacture, wrought by those mechanics, art and labor, out of pre-existent materials not their own." E. Young, Conjectures on Original Composition (Manchester, England, 1918), p. 7. For a general discussion on this subject, Lilian R. Furst, "Romanticism in Historical Perspective," pp. 61-89.

[47] Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Chinese Origin of a Romanticism," in Essay in the History of Ideas (Baltimore, 1948), p. 118.

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Stimulated by the wave of this aesthetic reorientation which prevailed under the influence of Chinese art through most of the eighteenth century, the horizon of creative thinkers expanded; the thinkers were no longer satisfied with the artificiality of the bane of Neoclassicism. The Romantic movement as a furious reaction against the dogmatism thus occurred in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. Stimulated by Kant and his followers, the Romantics sought to free the consciousness from the tyranny of Neo-classicism and to restore it as an active, generative force in the achievement of knowledge. "This new view" of them, as René Wellek described, "emphasizes the totality of man's force, not reason alone, nor sentiment alone, but rather intuition, intellectual intuition, imagination."[48] The necessities of their restless spirits had led them to seek "their analogies and models in prehistory, in the Orient, in the Middle Ages, and finally in India..."[49] Because in the unchanged, primitive form of Oriental civilization, they could find the primitive revelation and the foundation of natural religion for their aesthetic systems, as Goethe illustrated: "Here I want to penetrate to the first origin of human races when they still received celestial mandates from God in terrestrial languages."[50] Edgar Quinet described the Orient

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[48] René Wellek, "The Concept of Romanticism," in his Concept of Criticism (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 165.

[49] Ibid., p. 166.

[50] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, West-Ostlicher (Stuttgart: Inder Cottaischen Buchhandlung, 1819), translated, with introduction and notes by John Weiss as Goethe's West-Earthly Divan (Boston: Roberts

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in more concrete terms: "In the first ardor of their discoveries, the Orientalists proclaimed that in its entirety, an antiquity more profound, more philosophical, and more poetical than that of Greece and Rome was emerging from the depths of Asia."[51] Hugo, when writing about himself in the preface to Orientales, made a similar suggestion:

> He gave himself over to the poetry that came.... He seemed to see in it, shining from afar, a great poetry. It was a spring at which he had long wanted to slake his thirst. There, in effect, everything was great, rich, fruitful, as in the Middle Ages, that other sea of poetry. But since he says so implicitly, why shouldn't he say it explicitly? Until now, it seem to him, the modern age has been seen too much in terms of the century of Louis XIV and antiquity in terms of Rome and Greece. Would we not have a higher and broader view of the modern age... of the ancient world by studying the Orient.[52]

Edgar Quinet thus called this historical event "The Oriental Renaissance." In his view, the event corresponded to the end of the neoclassical age just as the classical Renaissance had corresponded to the close of the medieval age. In the same way, it promised "a new Reformation of the religious and secular world." Completing the parallel between the two Renaissance, Raymond Schwab described the nature of the two in more specific terms:

> The first Renaissance thrust us back onto the known so that we could know it better; it gave us counterparts which became reassuring; it immortalized the dispute between the ancients and the moderns, an examination for which different centuries had proposed different candidates rather than different criteria--an

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Brothers, 1877), p. 67.

[51] Edgar Quinet, Genie des religious (Paris, 1841).

[52] Victor Hugo, Les Orientales (Paris:Hetzel, 1820), op, cit, in Schwab, p. 12.

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> examination, in short, that had always taken place within the same school. The second Renaissance challenged us, as if it were juxtaposing us with another us, forcing us to revise the known. An unknown seized us which, since it would perhaps always have to remain unknown, became mysterious--mysterious within every mind. Yes, here our horizons opened--and our wounds as well. [53]

It was by uniting "the unknowns with "the known through a common origin that the world became truly round; half the intellectual map was no longer a blank."

But it was the scriptural philosophies of the East that captivated European Romantics as they came to discover them through the pioneering efforts of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In 1785, Sir Charles Wilkins, who must always be remembered in connection with the Bhagavad-Gita and Concord Orientalism, published his translation of the Bhagavad-Gita.[54] Wilkins, the first Englishman to acquire a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit, devoted himself to the translation of the Bhagavad-Gita into English.[55] Besides the Bhagavad-Gita, Wilkins also published a grammar of Sanskrit; and a translation of the Mahabharata. During the same decade Sir William Jones, a great pioneer of Sanskrit studies and comparative philology and founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, also produced the English versions of the Laws of Menu and Kalidasa's

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[53] Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance, p. 475.

[54] Sir Charles Wilkins (1750-1830) came to India as a writer in the employ of the East India Company's Civil Service and aided William Jones in organizing the Asiatic Society of Bengal. For a fuller account of him, see George Handrick, "Introduction" to a facsimile reproduction of Wilkins' translation of the Bhagavad-Gita (Gainesville, Florida, 1959), pp. v-xiv.

[55] Ibid., p. vi.

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dramatic masterpiece Shakuntala. These works, along with those of another great Indiologist, H. T. Colebrooke, found avid readers in England and America--Emerson and Thoreau among them. Colebrook, a president of the Society for nine years, gave the study of Sanskrit a scientific basis.[56]

As to China, a reference should be made to the following French Orientalists. During the same period when Indiologists were translating the Hindu scriptures, Jean Pierre Abel Rémusat, one of the principal founders of the Société Asiatique in 1822 in France, was making progress in Chinese studies. He was the first Frenchman to acquire a thorough knowledge of Chinese, and he published the first rough synopsis of Chinese grammar in French, which encouraged other contemporary French sinologists to study Chinese culture.[57] He published a number of translations of Chinese literature, [58] including in 1814, his Essai sur le langue et litterature chinoises. But his principal works are a translation of Tao Te Ching, published in 1816,[59] L'Invariable Milieu in 1817, "Mémoire sur la vie et les opinions de Lao-Tzu," and the Iu-kiao-li, which appeared in 1826.

Jean Pierre Giullaume Pauthier(1801-1873), known as a talented poet, a good Indic scholar, and even as a sinologist, made an

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[56] Rawlinson, pp. 31.

[57] Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance, p. 65.

[58] For a detailed list, see The National Union Catalogue Pre-1956 Imprints, Vol. 488, p. 270.

[59] J. P. Abel Rémusat, Lao-tzu (Paris, A.A. Renouard, 1816).

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important contribution by introducing all the Oriental philosophies to the Concordians.[60] To introduce Chinese literature to the contemporary reading public in Europe, early in 1831, he published his Mémoir sur l'origine et la propagation de la doctrine du Tao, and L'Univers: Histoire et Description de Tous Les Peuples and Le Tao-te-king, ou le livre de la Raison Supreme et de Vertu. The latter two works were published in 1837 and 1838 respectively. More importantly,in 1841, Pauthier published Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient [61], for which he had collected writings from the Chinese, Indian, and Islamic cultures. This book, in particular, was a favorite with Thoreau. Thoreau used this book for guidance in his self-cultivation process during the Walden period, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Besides the two French Orientalists, there are yet two other prominent Orientalists to be mentioned: Anquetil Duperron and Eugéne Burnouf.[62]

In the meantime, Europe became familiar with Sanskrit through a strange coincidence. One of the Company's attendants, Alexander Hamilton, was imprisoned in Paris during the Napoleonic Wars.[63]

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[60] Especially, Thoreau made use of Pauthier's translations of Chinese literature for his A Week and Walden, which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

[61] Jean Pierre G. Pauthier, Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient (Paris, chez Firmin Didot-chez Auguste Desrez, 1841).

[62] Christy described about the two Orientalists' career in detail, see Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, pp. 43-45.

[63] Alexander Hamilton had lived in India for a long time, where was employed by the East India Company. Hamilton also married a young Bengali woman. For more detail, see Schwab's The Oriental Renaissance, pp. 67-68.

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He passed away his time by teaching Sanskrit to his fellow prisoners, and among his pupils was the German poet and philosopher Friedrich von Schlegel, who on his return to Germany, published On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians (1808). This was H. G. Rawlinson puts it, "the most important event of its kind since the rediscovery of the treasures of classical literature at the Renaissance."[64] Sanskrit poetry, thus made available, inspired Schiller, Heine, Goethe, and others. Similarly, Indian philosophy impressed many German Transcendentalists. Schopenhauer, a self-taught authority on the Upanishads, declared:

> That incomparable book stirs the spirit to the very depth of the soul. From a very sentence deep, original, and earnest spirit. Indian air surrounds us, and original thoughts of kindred spirits. And oh, how thoroughly is the mind here washed clean of all early engrafted Jewish superstitions![65]

And once again referring to the Upanishads, he concluded: "It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."[66] Here Schopenhauer was speaking of his personal response to India, and at the same time he was also speaking for many of his contemporary intellectuals. Rawlinson stated that through Schopenhauer, Sanskrit philosophy profoundly influenced German transcendentalism and even Kant's great precept, "that things of experience are only phenomena of the thing-in-itself," is

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[64] Rawlinson, p. 32.

[65] Cited in Rawlinson, p. 32.

[66] Ibid., p. 32.

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essentially that of the Upanishads.[67]

In France, under the influence of Orientals studies, on the other hand, Victor Cousin professed a system of impartial and universal eclecticism by integrating the truth of various systems in his Cours de philosophie.[68] Cousin lived on the Continent when the epoch of idealism--whose main proponent had been Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling--was close to an end in Germany; and France had taken up the movement after the fashionable sensationalism of the Encyclopedists, Condillac and Helvetius. Cousin attempted to be the mediator between intuition and reason. Because he could not entirely abide by either one of the systems, as Christy describes, he argued that the rational thing was to decline "all the exclusive views that could not be admitted, and to reconcile what was left to a comprehensive point of view capable of including and thus explaining and complementing all acceptable facts."[69]

For the method and general principles of his eclecticism, Cousin defined that the philosophy of an age was the collective expression of all the elements of which that age was composed; it

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[67] It does not appear to be clear through which channel it came to Kant, see Rawlinson, p. 32.

[68] Victor Cousin, Cours de l'Histoire de la philsophie (Paris, 1829), translated by Henning Gotfried Linberg as Introduction to the History of Philosophy (Boston, 1832). This volume exerted a significant influence not only on Emerson's and Thoreau's formulation of their Transcendental ideas, but also helped them become acquainted with Hinduism, Confucianism, and more importantly, Taoism. We shall see in the next chapter how important parts of this book were in the two Transcendentalists' lives.

[69] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. xi.

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should thus be studied in the general civilization from which it emanates. Based upon this methodology, he attempted to discover the archetype of philosophy in the fundamental laws that described human thought as immutable and universal. For this purpose, Cousin traced the historic development of mental science, believing that each epoch of intellectual culture must evolve in the same systems or elementary forms of thought. According to Cousin, there exist four of these primitive systems. They are observable in the early stage of speculative science, and reappear successively in every age and country in which it has been cultivated. These four systems are the philosophy of Sensationalism, Idealism, Skepticism, and Mysticism; and they are said to follow a uniform order of succession. After all, it was in the primitive and unchanging forms of Oriental civilization that he sought for the earliest traces of their systems because:

> In the East, every thing is enveloped; philosophy, as well as all the other elements of humanity, exist there; but its condition is that of envelopment. That is the general character of its existence; although combined with strong symptoms and with a manifest commencement of separation. That which was enveloped, was destined to be developed. The world takes one step forward. Civilization descends from the center of Asia, across the plains of Asia Minor and of the Nile, to the Mediterranean, and to the coasts of Greece. The Mediterranean and Greece are as much the empire of liberty and movement, as the elevated plateau of the Indo-Chinese world is the empire of immobility and of despotism.[70]

The eclectic method as will be discussed in a later chapter was admirably suited for the goal of a group of American

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[70] Victor Cousin, Introduction to the History of Philosophy translated by Henning Gotfried Linberg, p. 39.

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Transcendentalists, especially for Emerson and Thoreau.

The situation in England was somehow different. Since few English writers came in direct contact with Oriental lore, we can only conjecture to what extent the Orient, through Germany, influenced Coleridge, Carlyle, and other English Romantics. Southey, the author of an "Indian epic," The Curse of Kehama(1810), according to Schwab, gained his knowledge of the Hindu religion from the Bhagavad-Gita, the Gita Govinda, the Vedas, and the Laws of menu. In 1811, Shelley, who knew Southey's Indic epic and its Persian counterpart, Thalaba, plunged into pantheistic visions as shown in Queen Mab. Though there was little evidence of his reading the Orientals, Wordsworth showed, according to Sarrazin, the characteristics of "a pantheistic idealist" in the tradition of German metaphysics, and, like Goethe's and Shelley's, Wordsworth's pantheism was characterized as "essentially moral and provincial."[71]

But India claimed no monopoly and shared its popularity with China. By 1816, Confucianism and Taoism also prevailed in the German intellectual sphere. For example, Hegel was teaching Taoism, Confucianism, and the philosophy found in I Ching at Heidelberg. Though the material was available only through secondary sources, the translations of the Jesuits, the basic ideas of the philosophies were conveyed. In his lecture, Hegel illustrate the point:

We still have his(Lao Tzu's) principle writings; they are

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[71] Raymond Schwab, The Oriental Renaissance, op, cit, p. 194.

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> available in Vienna and I have seen them myself. One special passage is frequently quoted from them: "The nameless Tao is the beginning of Heaven and Earth; with a name of Tao is the Mother of the Universe(All Thing).... To the Chinese what is origin of things, is nothingness, emptiness, the altogether undetermined, the abstract universal, and this also called Tao..."[72]

For more concrete evidence for the prevalence of Taoism in Europe, we can cite Main de Biran's remark: "The philosophers of the most distant antiquity taught, with a marvelous accord that seems to give proof of the origin of a shared tradition, the unity of a reason supreme, universal, and creative."[73] Then he alluded to Rémusat's Mémoir on Lao Tzu, a philosopher whose "reason" was very close to the universal consent of Mencius.

The pattern of the American response to the Orient was quite different from that of the European. The early Puritans were perhaps too preoccupied with the immediate business of settling in tne New World to share the growing European interest in the Orient. Because of its own peculiar circumstances, the earlier response of America to the Orient has shown almost the same pattern as that of Europe. Like in Europe, until the end of the eighteenth century, for example, the vogue of Chinese teas, porcelain tea services and tableware, and fine silks for clothing and household uses persisted for many years in Salem.[74] Hergesheimer, in his delightful novel,

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[72] Gorge Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, edited and translated by E.S Haldane, vol. I, p. 125.

[73] Cited from Raymond Schwab's The Oriental Renaissance, p. 220.

[74] For the fullest and most detailed account, see Kenneth Scott Latourette, "The History of Early Relations between the United States and China," in Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of

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Java Head, described a typical wealthy sea captain's room from the end of this period, describing in considerable detail how the vogue for Chinese objects prevailed in America.[75] It was in the eighteenth century that the differences between the European and the American response to the Orient became apparent in the remarks of Franklin and Jefferson, both respected sons of the Enlightenment. Franklin knew Sir William Jones personally,[76] wrote "An Arabian Tale"--about a Mohammedan recluse contemplating the enigma of Providence--and apparently discussed the idea of reincarnation, as his own epitaph suggests.[77] To a similar degree as Europe, Confucian China inspired his prolific brain. In 1749, he requested George Whitefield to continue preaching among the greatest by describing Confucius as follows:

> On this principle Confucius, the famous Eastern reformer, proceeded. When he saw his country sunk in vice, and

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Arts and Sciences, vol. 22, (August, 1917), pp. 7-207; Samuel Eliot Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (Houghton, Mifflin, Boston and New York, 1930).

[75] Joseph Hergesheimer, Java Head (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1930), p. 27.

[76] It is worth noting that Sir William Jones'sympathy for the American pursuit of liberty won him many friends on the Atlantic coast. Sir William vigorously objected to the British condemnation of the American Revolution. Conscious of his authority as a lawyer, he wrote in 1780 to Lord Althorpe: "As to America...this I know, that the sturdy transatlantic yeomanry will neither be dragooned, nor bamboozled out of their liberty. His principles, in regard to our internal government, are, unless I am deluded by his professions, such as my reason approves, and, which is better, such as I know to be approved in clear terms by our recorded constitution." Cited in "Account of Book," Asiatic Annual Register (London, 1804), VI, 13.

[77] Chester E. Jorgenson and Frank Luther Mott, ed. Benjamin Franklin : Representative Selections (New York, 1962), pp. 26-34.

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> wickedness of all kinds triumphant, he applied himself first to the grandees; and having, by his doctrine, won them to the cause of virtue, the commons followed in multitude. The mode has a wonderful influence on mankind; and there are numbers who, perhaps, fear less the being in hell, than out of the fashion. Our western reformations began with the ignorant mob; and the wise and great.[78]

In order to justify his own view on the necessity of social reforms, Franklin compared his view to the wisdom of Confucius.

Jefferson, too, seems to have been indebted to Sir William Jones's legal works and knowledge of the Orient, considering his boasting of having a replica of his Shakuntala.[79] While he touted educational programs as "the key-stone of the arch of our government," as H. G. Creel suggests, Jefferson preferred the Chinese examination system.[80] As one of the chief contributors to the establishment of the new republic, Jefferson played a significant role in opening the trade route to the Orient, and it was said that to this end he authorized the excursion of Lewis and Clark(1803-6), which marked the beginning of the westward movement. Indeed, this idea of a passage to the East was "one of the ruling conceptions of American thought about the West," as Henry Nash Smith pointed out, and dominated many of the patrons of western

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[78] "Franklin to George Whitefield, July 6, 1749," in Benjamin Franklin: Representative Selections, p. 198.

[79] J. P. Rao Rayapati, Early American Interest in Vedanta (New York, 1973), p. 59.

[80] H. G. Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way (New York, 1960), p. 5.

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expansion.[81]

America's response to the Orient, as can be seen from the writings of Franklin and Jefferson, differed considerably from that of Europe. Since European Enlightenment has been conceived mainly as a revolt against the dogmatic authority of the Mediterranean classicisms, its response to the Orient ultimately proved fatal to it. Contrary to this, American Enlightenment, as Adrienne Koch indicates, "opened with the developing arguments for separation from Great Britain, culminating with the Declaration of Independence."[82] Efforts were then made to securely establish the new political order and the new cultural foundation for which the revolution had been fought. The period of American Enlightenment(1765-1815), which we may say was the first revolutionary phase, witnessed the making of an entirely new kind of revolution against imperial power, catching the imagination of the entire civilized world, with incalculable consequences for the redirection of thought and reconstruction of society. In order to make a success of their common undertaking-- the creation of a new nation, a new civilization to inspire future generations-- the restless spirit of America was led to search far and wide for everything that might prove useful, even in the Orient. This pioneering spirit, in my view, symbolized the American response to the Orient-- a response which distinguished the cycle of American

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[81] Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land:The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York, 1957), p. 22.

[82] Adrienne Koch, The American Enlightenment (New York, 1965), pp. 19-20.

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Orientalism from that of Europe.

In this respect, the nineteenth-century American response to the Orient was a continuation of the cultural revolution that had been initiated by the founding fathers of the republic. For in its essence, Transcendentalism was an attempt to complete in the world of thought what the American Revolution had begun in the world of action. The first phase of the revolution, which we have already seen above, implanted the democratic ideals of equality and liberty in the American spirit, but the metaphysical conceptions of democracy--its new conception of the nature of man, his place in the world, and his relation to the divine-- had hardly been thought about as yet and, certainly, never been adequately expressed. In order to complete the latter phase of the revolution in America, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, "the chief intellectual spokesmen," as Lewis described it, "have participated in the making of a new culture."[83] For this, they described the New World "as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World."[84] The Democratic Review in 1839 aptly described the contemporary American intellectual milieu as follows: "Our national birth was the beginning of a new history...which separates us from

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[83] R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 2.

[84] Ibid., p. 5.

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the past and connects with the future only."[85]

The New England Transcendentalists also participated in lively and creative dialogues that resembled those of the contemporary American myth. As with Thoreau, other Transcendentalists, such as Emerson and Whitman, participating in the debates about the making of a new culture, attempted to incorporate a new American who was, as Lewis describes it, "an individual emancipated from history..., standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling" into their literary works.[86]

In doing so, all the Transcendentalists had one thing in common: an openness toward the Orient. Although their Orientalism was part of the corresponding intellectual tendency, their response lacked the literary exoticism and cultural dilettantism of the Romantic movements. While the Romantics made use of the Orient only for literary purposes with mystical predilections, the Transcendentalists responded to the Orient as a mandate of history and as a matter of birthright on the conviction that a little of the Orient could also be transplanted to the soil of New England. In other words, they were not metaphysical idealists, complacent to develop theories for theory's sake in seclusion from real life ; nor mystics, appeased to bridle a purely subjective realm of ecstacy and inattentive to the world. Instead, they carried over the Oriental idealism into the sphere of practical religion, so

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[85] The Democratic Review (New York, 1839), op. cit., Lewis, p. 5.

[86] R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 5.

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that they could put it into practice; they could feel it; they could live according to its principles. The main reasons for their peculiar reaction to the Orient could be found in the fact that the Puritan blood was, as H. C. Goddard suggests, "still within their veins."[87]

Emerson, the leading Orientalist among the New England Transcendentalists, -- though his early response to the Oriental civilization had been sarcastic, viewing it as a "mingled web of superstition and ignorance,"[88]-- became increasingly fascinated by Asia as an "El Dorado" (or "wonderland of literature and philosophy").[89] The history of his intellectual growth shows his knowledge of Greek philosophy and the theological concepts of Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism.[90] Emerson was not a philosopher, but he searched for

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[87] Harold Clarke Goddard, Studies in New England Transcendentalism (New York, 1959), p. 189.

[88] The very first entry of his published Journals (for January, 1820, I, p. 21) reveals such an attitude toward the Orient: "The ostentatious ritual of India which worshipped God while outraging nature, though soften as it proceeded West, was still too harsh a discipline for the Athenian manners to undergo."

[89] Ibid., p. 27.

[90] Professor F. I. Carpenter included the whole range of Asian traditions which benefitted Emerson, from Arabian literature to Indic philosophy and from Persian poetry to Confucian ethics. Carpenter especially focused on Emerson's liability to the wisdoms of the Brahmans. Emerson's early interest in Plato, Carpenter suggests, led him to the Neo-platonists, notably Plotinus, and then on to Brahmanism. That is, Emerson reached India by way of Neo-platonism, which was "the fusion of Greek Platonism with a Mysticism brought from the Orient by way of Alexandria." Doubting this view, some Indian scholars have suggested that Emerson's exposure to the Orient, especially to India, well proceeded the

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philosophic concepts about the nature of God. His restless spirit had led him to the Greek philosophies and from there to the Oriental scriptures. He eventually embraced the Oriental faith as a central force of his life, for there he could find the concept of the immanence of God which he had been seeking.

Emerson believed that Occidental idealism had been derived from the Orient, from what he called "the first philosophy, that of mind."[91] Oriental idealism as "the first philosophy," had a special appeal to Emerson, to the degree of lamenting Occidentalism's "unhappy divorce" from it.[92] Elsewhere, he further commented, "All philosophy, of East and West, has the same centripetence."[93] He wrote at the end of his essay "Book":

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publication of his essay Nature. Based upon his early readings of contemporary magazine articles on Indian subjects, Man M. Singh, in his "Emerson and India" (Ph.D. diss. Pennsylvania State University, 1947), argued that at the age of eighteen, Emerson was already an Orientalist. More recently, Kamal K. Shukla and J. P. Raoypati have also argued the case along similar lines, in their "Emerson and Indian Thought" (Wayne State University, 1973) and in Early American Interest in Vedanta (New York, 1973, pp. 91-101) respectively. Kenneth Walter Cameron proved that Emerson's interest in India began much earlier than was generally believed by analyzing the text and outlining contemporary Orientalism at Harvard and Massachusetts in his essay, "Young Emerson's Orientalism at Harvard," Indian Superstition (Hanover, N. H., 1945), pp. 13-38.

[91] Entry of 1833, The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. William H. Gilman and others, vol. III, p. 235.

[92] Entry of November 15, 1834, ibid., p. 362. Victor Cousin also remarked in a similar words: "The idea of religion is, as it were, the idea itself of the East; art, the state, industry, every thing is there formed around religion, for religion, by religion," Victor Cousin, Course of the History of Modern Philosophy, trans. by O. W. White (New York, 1866), vol. I, p. 33.

[93] Ibid., p. 52.

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> After the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, which constitute the sacred books of Christendom, these are, the Desatir of the Persian, and the Zoroastrian Oracles; the Vedas and Laws of Menu; the Upanishads, the Vishnu Purana, the Bhagvat Geeta, of the Hindoos; the books of the Buddhists; the Chinese Classic, of four books, containing the wisdom of Confucius and Mencius.... These are scriptures which the missionary might well carry over prairie, desert and ocean, to Siberia, Japan, Timbuctoo. Yet he will find that the spirit which is in them journeys faster than he, and greets him on his arrival,--was there already long before him... Is there any geography in these things? We call them Asiatic...[94]

In another essay, on Plato, Emerson remarked on his conviction that the basis of Plato's thought was Oriental:

> Meantime, Plato, in Egypt and in Eastern pilgrimages, imbibed the idea of one Deity, in which all things are absorbed. The unity of Asia and the detail of Europe; the infinitude of the Asiatic soul and defining, result-loving, machine-making, surface-seeking, opera-going Europe--Plato came to join, and, by contact, to enhance the energy of each. The excellence of Europe and Asia is in his brain.[95]

In the essay, Emerson not only contrasted East and West but also pointed out the similarities between them. In Plato, he seemed to find an illustration of the necessity and possibility of such a synthesis--a synthesis upholding of the idea of a balanced world as well as a balanced soul. Just as he called Plato "a balanced soul" for uniting East and West, so we are justified in calling Emerson balanced for the same reason.

The first document of this fortuitous unification of East and

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[94] The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1903), 12 vols., VIII, p. 187.

[95] The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, with a Biographical Introduction and Notes, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1903-12), vol. IV, pp. 53-54. In all future citations this collection will be referred to as Works.

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West is Nature, a sort of Transcendental manifesto, whose publication turned out to be a momentous event in the history of American literature. In the essay, Emerson attempted to integrate, or reintegrate God and man, mind and matter once and for all--on the ground of nature. In upholding nature as an ideal norm, Emerson postulated the concept of the immanence of God that insists on the one in many, the many in one, and thus the ultimate unity of the universe as follows:

> Standing on the bare ground--my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space--all mean egotism vanishes. I became a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God.[96]

Throughout his life, Emerson valued this kind of experience, referring to it as "a certain wonderful light," "certain moments," and "a certain brief experience."[97] This mystical experience, no matter how rare and transitory, assured him of the truth of universal identity. "Every man," he said, "has had one or two moments of extraordinary experience, has met his soul, has thought of something which he never afterwards forgot, and which revised all his speech, and molded all his forms of thought."[98] Based upon this intuitional experience, Emerson eventually developed his doctrine of the Over-Soul.

Twenty years after the publication of Nature, Emerson attested

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[96] Journal, III. p. 452.

[97] The first two phrases appears in an entry of May 26, 1837 (Journal, IV, pp. 248-49), and the third appears in his essay "The Transcendentalist"(1843).

[98] Entry of 1841, Journals, V, p. 569.

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more concretely to such a happy fusion of East and West in a short poem, "Brahma," he wrote at the height of his intellectual and artistic maturity:

> If the red slayer think he slays,
> Or if the slain think he is slain,
> They know not well the subtle ways
> I keep, and pass, and turn again.
>
> Far or forgot to me is near;
> Shadow and sunlight are the same;
> The vanished gods to me appear;
> And one to me are shame and fame.
>
> They reckon ill who leave me out;
> When me they fly, I am the wings;
> I am the doubter and the doubt,
> And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.
>
> The strong gods pine for my abode
> And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
> But thou, meek lover of the good!
> Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Since this poem's publication in the first issue of the Atlantic Monthly in 1857, critics have interpreted the meaning of the poem in various ways. Some, led by the title, have read it in view of Hinduism. For its probable source, they searched the whole range of Indian religious classics from the Upanishads to the Law of Menu, from the Vishnu Purana to the Gita, and viewed the ideas expressed in the poem as an imitation of the Indian classics.[99] Others, despite its obvious Oriental imagery, have read the poem strictly as an expression of Christian thought. Perry Miller, for example, interpreted it in the context of New England Puritanism:

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[99] For a fuller account for this, see Carpenter, Emerson and Asia, pp. 110-23; Christy, pp. 164-70. See also K. R. Chandrasekharan, "Emerson's Brahma: An Indian Interpretation," in New England Quarterly, No. 33 (December, 1960), pp. 506-12.

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> In the final form, I think it fair to say, Emerson's debt to the Orient is much less than the title suggests: this is not a rendition of anything in the Bhagavad-Gita; it is New England's old Puritanism decked out in Oriental imagery.[100]

H. H. Waggoner argued the case along similar lines, and after an extensive discussion, commented: "Emerson's strongest expression of his religious intuitions, intuitions he found inexpressible except in the form of paradoxes deriving from the Medieval and Renaissance tradition of 'negative theology.'" [101]

But the Transcendentalist's goal was not so much to articulate any particular religious tenets as to embody once and for all personal insights that had matured over the years during which he had striven to fuse East and West in his slow process of self-liberation. In other words, as Christy pointed out long ago, it was "the crystallization of Emerson's Oriental interests," "the high water mark of that flood of Orientalism which inundated Concord during the second quarter of the last century and baffled the practical Yankee villagers."[102] In this sense, it was more than Indian, more than Christian, it was a symbol of the Emersonian response to the whole impact of the Orient.

But Emerson was not content to merely affirm the divinity of Oriental mysticism that was most congenial to his intellectual inclinations. Rather, he attempted to apply this belief to the

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[100] Perry Miller, The American Transcendentalists (Garden City, N. Y., 1957), p. 219.

[101] H. H. Waggoner, Emerson as Poet (Princeton, 1974), p. 160.

[102] Christy. p. 164, 170.

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brutal system of slavery and the dehumanized institutions created by the enormous increase in material wealth and mechanical inventions during the nineteenth century. Rejecting a life measured by wealth, Emerson had proposed a purposeful life, developing the spiritual realm in which man would overcome his dross and achieve a life in communion with Divinity. "The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal," he said, "is solved by the redemption of the soul."[103] For this purpose, Emerson emphasized a social morality obligatory on all, and taught the potency of the fundamental goodness of human nature in the moral supervision of the world. "The great art which religion teaches," he said, "is the art of conducting life well, not only in a view to future well-being, but in the very best manner, if there were no future state."[104] In this respect, Emerson does not seem to be related to that of the Hindus and the Persians. Rather, his philosophy of life was a paradigm of the Confucian Chün Tzu(Gentleman). Further evidence for this reasoning can be found in the fact that Emerson borrowed the principles on how to live in reality from Confucius and Mencius and preached them to his contemporaries.[105]

Of course, at the core, the Transcendentalists' goal as

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[103] Works, II, p. 341.

[104] Journal entry from 1825, Journals, II, pp. 41-42.

[105] For a general discussion on Confucian influences in Emerson, see Yao-Hsin Chang, "Chinese Influence in Emerson, Thoreau, and Pound," (Temple University, diss., Ph.D, 1984), pp. 1-51.

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writers, was to attempt to pit the "divine spirit in man" against "historical Christianity" not to only criticize the churches, but to reject them entirely.[106] From a cultural perspective, however, it was a testimony of the contemporary American intellectual climate in which people craved for a metaphysical democracy. Especially in light of the contemporary American myth, Oriental religion-- which tends toward mysticism since it is based on a monistic view and embraces all levels of human experience-- was especially suitable for what the Transcendentalists sought to create: "a new metaphysics for democracy out of the theological and intellectual material of the American past."[107] The tenets of The Bhagavad-Gita, the Oriental work that had the most decisive influence on Emerson,[108] upheld the supremacy of contemplation, and an indifference to all relations to country and family, and provided Emerson with valuable guidelines that helped him formulate the credo of Transcendentalism, which emphasized a separation from the past. David Bowers analyzed Emerson's fusion of East and West in the context of "the metaphysics of democracy":

> The idealistic view of the universe as an embodiment of a single, cosmic psychic, now manifesting itself as man, now as nature, and achieving through the interaction of the two in history its own secret intent, permitted the self-asserting impulse of the individual-- his determination to be himself at all costs-- to be explained as the consciousness of his identity with the world-psyche, while his self-transcending or outgoing

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[106] George Hochfield, Selected Writings of The American Transcendentalists, p. xxi.

[107] David Bowers, "Democratic Vista," p. 15.

[108] Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 23.

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> impulses could be attributed to the consciousness of his own finitude, to the fact of his awareness that he is only one fragmentary expression of the world-psyche among others.[109]

The initial function of Oriental idealism was thus to serve as a sort of prototype and repository of wisdom, which American, and in particular New England authors, could borrow for their self-imposed assignment of creating a new metaphysics for a new America that was to be separated from the past. Thoreau and Whitman were inspired by this model, but did not slavishly copy it.

The fullest portrayal of a curious blending of East and West was given by Walt Whitman in Leaves of Grass. Leaves of Grass was not only an admirable celebration of the newness of America, but also, more importantly, by fusing East and West, an exemplification of the major trait of the new American character.[110] Especially in "Song of Myself, Whitman symbolized the new brotherhood of man in terms of the mystic unity of creation as he declared at the outset of section 21:

> I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,
> The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with me,
> The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into a new tongue.

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[109] David Bowers, "Democratic Vistas," in Literary History of the United States edited by Robert E. Spiller, et al. Vol. I, p. 350.

[110] Though Whitman denied his acquaintance with the Orient when he wrote his poetry, most critics view the Orient as vital to his thought as to Emerson's. In 1957, Gay Allen cited the critical that Emerson was "the one single greatest influence on Whitman during the years when he was planning and writing the first two or three editions of Leaves of Grass," in Gay Wilson Allen, Walt Whitman Handbook (New York, 1957), p. 450.

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I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men,

Through such mystical experiences, Whitman attempted to destroy the old concept of the self. He tried to create a liberated and innocent self which stood alone on a new plane of existence as the prototype of the new American character.

If "Song of Myself" be considered the revelation of a new American prototype from a Brahminic perspective, then "Passage to India" constitutes the creation of a new history by returning to "the first philosophy" of the Orient. In the poem, Whitman journeys into the past--from the recently constructed Suez Canal, to Christopher Columbus, to Alexander the Great and most of the ancient heroes and peoples, to the very "secret of earth and sky." Section 7 of "Passage to India" expresses what Mircea Eliade called man's nostalgia for origins[111]:

Passage indeed O soul to primal thought,
Not lands and seas alone, thy own clear freshness,
The young maturity of brood and bloom,
To realms of budding bibles.
O soul, repressless, I with thee and thou with me,
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin,
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,
To reason's early paradise,
Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,
Again with fair creation.

Whitman, like Emerson, also reaffirmed the Transcendental belief in man's capacity to regain his original innocence.

The reason that Whitman chose to entitle his poem, "Passage to India" was that he felt convinced that the Orient, as the goal of

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[111] Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York, 1967), p. 44.

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Columbus's voyage, represented all great human endeavors, and that as the cradle of mystic wisdom, the Orient represented all religious aspirations.[112] In Columbus's passage to India Whitman saw the twofold symbol, a supreme symbol of man's quest, both physical and spiritual. As a personal symbol, Whitman, in his own way, was a Columbus who strove to explore the spiritual foundations and the moral implications of the new democracy.

In light of the contemporary American myth, Columbus was also more than a personal symbol, as Whitman wrote in "Passage to India"; "the shore thou foundest verifies thy dream." Because America was discovered during Columbus's passage to India, the passage to India had to be America's passage as well. It became America's chief goal, duty, and carte blanche to execute Columbus's unfulfilled vision to a passage to India. Like Thoreau and Emerson, Whitman was convinced of America's unique role as a bridge connecting the two worlds - a unifier of East and West.

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[112] The following notebook entry will prove the points: "Passage to India. Completion Pacific R. R. 1869? quite a long piece--The spinal India: That the divine efforts of heroes, & their ideas, faithfully lived up to will finally prevail, and be accomplished however long deferred. Every great problem is The passage to India (put this in literally). Columbus, type of faith? perseverance. O for the free, clear O the way! the free, clear passage! At outset draw a simple picture of the setting out of the Columbus expedition of discovery.... A main idea is to be that a brave heroic thought or religious idea faithfully pursued, justifies itself in time, not perhaps in its own way, but often in grander ways.... What else remains?... what other passage to India? A religious sentiment is in all these heroic ideas & underneath them. What Thou too O my Soul, (what is thy) takest thou passage to India? To The mystic wisdom-the lore of all old philosophy To All the linked transcendental streams, their sources....," Quoted in Walt Whitman's Workshop, ed. Clifton Joseph Furness (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), p. 201.

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After all, America was a New World, discovered as Columbus searched for a passage to India - a climactic moment in the westward course of human civilization. To "keep the New World new," and to "preserve all the advantages of living in the country,"[113] the Transcendentalists attempted to establish a new history and a new set of ideal human attributes by incorporating the wisdom of the Orient.

In order to explain the concept along the lines of Thoreau's Orientalism, I have examined the nature of Orientalism in the Romantic and the Transcendental movements. Like Emerson and Whitman, Thoreau devoted himself to the exploration of a new American ideal based upon his experience of the Orient. We will, in all the remaining chapters, discuss the nature of Thoreau's response to the Orient in detail.

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[113] Journal, XII, p. 387.

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CHAPTER IV

Thoreau's Chronology of Oriental Sources

The Americans, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, were late in their studies of the Orient in comparison with the rest of the Western World. When the Oriental books that were first translated in Europe found their way to America, her response to them differed from that of Europe. That is, they were received with a degree of eagerness and enthusiasm, as was already manifested by Franklin and Jefferson. The Americans responded to the Oriental civilization as a symbolic return to the source of light, the source of life, and as a means to make a success of their common undertaking--the creation of a new nation, a new civilization. As time went by, the American intellectuals' response to Oriental culture grew more enthusiastic than before; the evidence of such a trend toward the Orient in Emerson and Whitman has already been demonstrated. Thoreau was no exception to the case. As Emerson and Whitman translated Columbus' passage to the Orient into a symbolic return to the source of light and to the source of life, so Thoreau set a unique pattern of Orientalism for its special value in the new idealism of the New World. He adopted the Orient as the embodiment of a free, unique, individual growth as the mainstay for the last twenty-five years of his life.

Most scholars have generally agreed that Thoreau's first acquaintance with Oriental literature occurred sometime after his

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graduation from Harvard College in 1837.[1] But upon examination of the record of his reading during his college days, Thoreau's first exposure to the Orient seems to have begun by his freshman year. In September, 1834, he borrowed an Oriental book, entitled A Voyage to Cochinchina from Harvard College Library.[2] Besides this, on December 8, 1836, Thoreau read two reviews of Victor Cousin's Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie both in the North America Review and in the Edinburgh Review,[3] borrowing these from the library of "The Institute of 1770," Harvard's oldest debating club. Thoreau had been elected a member on July 3, 1834 and, for the last three years of his college life, was a member in very good standing of "the Institute of 1770." Even though he was not conspicuous in the society, Thoreau continually participated in the debating club. The records of the society show no fines against Thoreau's name

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[1] Franklin Benjamin Sanborn was of the opinion that Emerson and Thoreau became acquainted in 1837, and that it was Emerson who first drew Thoreau's attention to the literature of the Orient, in his The Life of Henry David Thoreau (Boston and New York, 1917), p. 128; Though Sherman Paul says that the time of Thoreau's first reading Oriental books was before he went to live with Emerson's in 1841, he does not mentioned the exact time when Thoreau read about the Orient. See The Shores of America, p. 69; Mariam Alice Jeswine insisted that Thoreau's interest in the Orient emerged after his graduation from Harvard, in her "Henry David Thoreau: Apprentice to the Hindu Sages," p. 3.

[2] John Aldrich Christie, Thoreau as a World Traveler (New York, 1965), p. 122 mentions that A Voyage to Cochinchina by Sir John Barrow. This book and Hugh Murray's Historical and Descriptive Account of British India(1832) were read by Thoreau during his college days. Kenneth Walter Cameron, ed., Emerson the Essayist, II (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1945, rpt., 1972), p. 192 lists Sir John Barrow's book among Thoreau's borrowings from Harvard College Library for September 30, 1834.

[3] The Edinburgh Review, vol. LIX (April...July, 1834), pp. 359-372.

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caused by his absences. From the debating club, Thoreau took a lot of advantage in nourishing his Transcendentalism. There Thoreau met Jones Very," who was already one of the most accomplished Transcendental poets as well as one of the first purchasers of Emerson's Nature." Though Very was not a great influence in Thoreau's life, his Transcendental poems were, along with Emerson's poems, Thoreau's favorites in the senior year at Harvard.[4]

But even before this, Thoreau seems to have been familiar with Victor Cousin's idealism through his personal contact with Orestes A. Brownson who was, as Perry Miller called him, "the self-appointed apostle of Victor Cousin."[5] As early as 1836 during an interval of schoolteaching at Canton, Massachusetts, Thoreau had lived for six weeks or more[6] with Orestes A. Brownson, who was then at work both on another review of Victor Cousin for the September, 1836 issue of The Christian Examiner[7] and on New Views of

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[4] For more detail, see Kenneth W. Cameron, "Thoreau Discovers Emerson: A College Reading Record," Bulletin of The New York Public Library, LVII (July, 1953), PP. 319-34.

[5] He had reviewed Linberg's translation of Introduction to the History of Philosophy(1832) and again reviewed Ripley's volume in The Boston Quarterly Review (October, 1838, pp. 433-444). For more detail, see, Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists (Cambridge, 1950), p. 107.

[6] Examining Thoreau's class mark book, H. S. Canby suggested that Thoreau might have "spent as much as three months in the stimulating society of Brownson." H. S. Canby, Thoreau, pp. 37-38.

[7] Discussing the necessity of new idea and reform in the article, the Transcendentalist remarks: "These works [Cousin's Orientalism] will... afford us important aid in rescuing the Church and religious matters in general from their present lamentable condition." Orestes A. Brownson, "Cousin's Philosophy," in The Christian Examiner, XXI (Sep., 1836), p. 34.

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Christianity, Society, and The Church (November, 1836). In his New Views of Christianity, Society,and Church, with a great sense of urgency which was felt especially in America where its desire to make all things new promised so much for the new democracy, Brownson postulated the necessity of a universal eclecticism which insisted on the balanced soul of "Spiritualism represented by the Eastern world, the old world of Asia, and Materialism represented by Greece and Rome." In so doing, Brownson had high praise for the nineteenth-century European discovery of the Orient on the conviction that it would have made a great contribution to awakening the contemporary European to a sense of their position in the prison house of materialism and rationalism:

> At the very moment when the sigh had just escaped, that mystic land reappeared. The English, through the East India Company, had brought light to its old literature and Philosophy of modern Europe or of classical antiquity, and men were captivated by their novelty and bewildered by their strangeness. Sir William Jones gave currency to them by his poetical paraphrases and imitations; and the Asiatic Society by its researches placed them within reach of the learned of Europe. The Church rejoiced, for it was like bringing back her long lost mother, whose features she had remembered and was able at once to recognize--Germany, England, and even France became Oriental. Cicero, and Horace, and Virgil, Aeschylus, Euripides, and even Homer, with Jupiter, Apollo and Minerva were forced to bow before Hindoo Bards and Gods of uncouth forms and unutterable names. The influence of the old Braminical or spiritual world, thus dug up from the grave of centuries, may be traced in all our Philosophy, Art, and Literature. It is remarkable in our poets. It molds the form in Byron, penetrates to the ground in Wordsworth, and entirely predominates in the Schlegels. It causes us to feel a new interest in those writers and those epochs which partake the most Spiritualism.[8]

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[8] For more detail, see Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists, pp. 114-123.

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At their first meeting, as William Channing's describes it, "the two sat up talking till midnight," and then "struck heartily to studying German, and getting all they could of the time together, like old friends."[9] The external evidence that Brownson then introduced Thoreau to Cousin is very scanty; however, in a study of Thoreau's college essays written during the time he stayed at Brownson's, we may note some internal evidence for such an occurrence. An entry in his college essay dated March, 1836 on the "Advantages and Disadvantages of Foreign Influence on America," shows that he might have borrowed some ideas from Cousin's works. In the "Advantages and Disadvantages of Foreign Influence on American Literature," there are some interpolated passages which echo Cousin's ideas, though we cannot say with absolute certainty that Thoreau read Cousin. In the "Lecture X of Introduction to the History of Philosophy, for example, the French philosopher described that the spirit of a nation constitutes the idea of his country which, by infusing itself into all the elements-- its language, its religion, its manner and customs, its art, its laws, and its philosophy--"gives to that people a common character, a distinct physiognomy in history." "The Spirit of a people," he wrote, "is not a dead substance, it is a principle of development and of action." It is the idea which is expressed in the mind of all, by the soil which they inhabit, by the institutions, the laws,

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[9] William Ellery Channing, Thoreau: The Poet-Naturalist with Memorial Verses (Boston, 1940), p. 32.

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the religion, and the manners and customs, in which they all participate."[10] In the "Advantage and Disadvantage of Foreign Influence on America," while emphasizing the necessity of a unique American literary idea, Thoreau made the following statements which may be an interpolation of the context of one of chapters in Introduction to the History of Philosophy: "The nations of the Old World have each a literature peculiarly its own. There is the growth of centuries; successive ages have contributed to form its character and mould its features," but America has not. Unfortunately, American literature was "still in the gristle," and still being molded by English models. The main reason there was not an independent American literature, in his view, derived from the utilitarianism of the native mind. "Utility is the rallying word with us," Thoreau wrote; "we are a nation of speculators, stockholders and money-changers. We do everything by steam, because it is most expeditious, and cheapest in the long run; we are continually racking our brains to invent a quicker way or cheaper method of doing this or that." The consequence in literature was the saleable book, and authors who were "too fashionable to write for posterity."[11] The independence and maturity of our native literature, therefore, had to be achieved against the popular taste. "Its future eminence must depend ...

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[10] For more detail, see Victor Cousin, Introduction to the History of Philosophy, trans. by Henning G. Linberg (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, and Wilkins, 1832), pp. 294-327.

[11] F. B. Sanborn, The Life of Henry David Thoreau (Boston and New York, 1917), op. cit., pp. 130-134.

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upon the impressions it now receives, and the principles it imbibes: independent character!" "Manly and robust"--such was the character of foreign critics.

Thoreau wrote the essays "National and Individual Genius" during his junior year, probably while at Brownson's. In it, Thoreau stated that human nature is universally the same, and that it may be studied as readily in America as in Europe, and that history, too, can be unlocked by a knowledge of man.[12] This corresponded exactly to Cousin's eclectic philosophy. Synthesizing all these factors, it is quite probable that Brownson then introduced Thoreau to his mentor Victor Cousin's idealism, while providing the young scholar with some spiritual conversation.

Four months later, on April 3, 1837, while his senior year's second term was still in progress, Thoreau had borrowed Emerson's Nature from the library of the debating club; in it, his mentor embodied "an original relation to the universe" by fusing Oriental idealism taken from the Hindus, the Chinese, and Persians with those of the Greeks, the Kantians, and the Romantics. This eventually played, as Sherman Paul points out, a decisive role in fixing his own conception of spiritual heroism of a quest for a new American character.[13]

Then, significantly enough, in June of 1837, Thoreau withdrew a whole translation of Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie, translated by H. G. Linberg as Introduction to the History of

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[12] Sanborn, Life, pp. 106-112.

[13] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America, pp. 1-48.

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Philosophy(Boston, 1832), along with Emerson's Nature, and Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. Both writers unquestionably were, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, exposed to the East through references and allusions in contemporary German literature.[14]

In my view, among the books Thoreau borrowed from the library of the debating club,[15] Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy and Emerson's Nature played the most decisive role, not only in nurturing Thoreau's growing Transcendentalism, but also in inspiring him to seek further access to Oriental literature. However, in the tradition of Thoreau scholarship so far, the influence of Cousin upon Thoreau has been oversimplified or slighted; thus, when they trace the root of Thoreau's Transcendentalism, most scholars have attempted to associate it exclusively with Emerson's Nature.[16] Although Perry Miller

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[14] Cameron, "Thoreau Discovers Emerson: A College Reading Record," pp. 332-34.

[15] For Thoreau, the most attractive book among the new volumes was Nature. On April 3,1837, while the second term of his final year in college was still in progress, Thoreau had borrowed Nature from his debating library. Aside from the copy of Nature in the library, sometime between that date and June 25 he purchased a copy and presented it to William Allen with the dated inscription, "To William Allen from his friend and classmate D. H." Since he was on good terms with Allen, Thoreau provided him with a gift, a book which he thought was especially valuable; and on the same day Thoreau withdrew the Institute copy of the book for temporary solace. During the final summer term at Harvard, he bought another copy. Emil A. Freniere, "Henry David Thoreau," Ph. D. (The Pennsyvania State University, 1961), p. 104.

[16] Arthur Christy, though he admitted that the Transcendentalists adopted the eclectic method of Victor Cousin, did not describe the exact idea of the philosopher, in The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. xi; Sherman Paul maintains that

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insisted Brownson's long article extolling Cousin's eclecticism in the Christian Examiner(XXI) would have provided Emerson with the motifs of Nature, he seems not to examine the affinities between Emerson and Cousin.[17] In my view, the scope of the influence of Victor Cousin upon Thoreau's Transcendentalism seems to be as great as that of Emerson. For the proof of this reasoning, I would like to offer a brief description of Cousin's major principles from a comparative perspective--digressing from the purpose of this chapter-- because I believe that it is in the light of Cousin that we can fully understand the nature of Thoreau's response to the Orient as well as the philosophic side of his Transcendentalism.

The Introduction to the History of Philosophy contains a full exposition of Cousin's philosophic system on the basis of eclecticism which was, as I have already described in the previous chapter, adopted by the Romantics and Transcendentalists as a means to reconcile the extreme polemics between intuition and reason in nineteenth-century Europe and America. For this purpose, the French philosopher adopted the term "History of Philosophy" as a means to penetrate into the realm of true humanity, believing that "The study of human nature throws light on the history of philosophy, and the study of the history in return, throws light on

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Thoreau "might have learned from Cousin, the way of understanding," by referring to Perry Miller's suggestion. But he was not aware that Thoreau read a full translation of Cousin, see his The Shores of America, p. 40.

[17] Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists (Cambridge, 1950), p. 107.

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human nature."[18]

Cousin believed that there exists the idea of truth, of the true in itself, in its highest degree, under its purest form, existing since the beginning of the world, beyond all the general ideas which govern humanity such as "the idea of useful, the idea of the just, the idea of beautiful, and even the idea of the divine." But by running to an extreme materialism and rationalism, human beings lost the capacity to correspond to true idea. Cousin wrote:

> The world, such as man found it, was a stranger to him; the world, such as the science of mathematics and physics, and, following in their train, industry, have made it, is a world like unto man, reconstructed by him in his own image. In fact, look around you, you will perceive scarcely any thing but yourself; you will find every where the form, more or less degraded and enfeebled, of human intelligence and freedom. Nature had made only things, that is, being; and, in giving them his form, has fixed upon them the impress of his personality, has elevated them into images of freedom and intelligence, and has thereby communicated to them a portion of the worth which resides in him.[19]

In order to portray how man reconstructed the true ideas in his own image, Cousin first illustrated the process of transformation using the idea of justice. With the idea of justice which corresponds to the true idea, man established ideal institutions such as a new state of society, civil and political society. With time, the ideas of justice were reduced to enacting of the legal order of the State, which distinguish right from wrong rather than make them

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[18] Introduction to the History of Philosophy, p. 90.

[19] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

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embrace the dignity of the whole man in the original line.[20] In the same way, the ideas of beautiful were diverted by man's own artificial image. Additionally, the perception of God became separated from the natural state. As "the triumph of the idea of justice resulted in the creation of the State," Cousin wrote, so "the triumph of the ideas of the beautiful" and "religious intuition" resulted "in the creation of art" and "the ritual of worship."[21] Eventually, by digressing from all the ideas that corresponded to its natural form, man became imprisoned in his own limited ideas which can be imperfectly perceived only in the "inferior spheres rather than perceived perfectly by distinctly recognizing itself as the object of its thought."

Interestingly enough, an entry in Thoreau's college essay, entitled "Barbarism and Civilization," dated June 22, 1837, the very month when he read The History of Philosophy, reflected Cousin's above ideas as follows:

> The justice of a nation's claim to be regarded as civilized seems to depend mainly upon the degree in Art has triumphed over Nature. Civilization is the influence of Art, and not Nature, on Man. He mingles his own will with the unchanged essences around him, and becomes in his turn the creature of his own creations.... If it tend to cherish and develop the religious sentiment,--continuously to remind man of his mysterious relation to God and Nature,--and to exalt him above the toil and drudgery of this matter-of fact world, it is good.[22]

Besides this, there is a further group of interpolated

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[20] Ibid., pp. 11-13.

[21] Ibid., p. 17.

[22] F. B. Sanborn, The Life of Henry David Thoreau, p. 180.

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passages in A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers that is likely to have echoed Cousin's ideas of criticizing man's transmutation of the true ideas of justice into fixed institutions:

> I love man--kind, but I hate the institutions of the dead unkind. Men execute nothing so faithfully as the wills of the dead, to the last codicil and letter. They rule this world, and the living are but their executors. Such foundation too have our lectures and our sermons, as commonly.... If, for instance, a man asserts the value of commonwealth, his neighbor still tolerates him, that he who is living near him sometimes even sustains him, but never the State. Its officer, as a living man, may have human virtues and a thought in his brains, but as the tools of an institution, a jailer or constable it may be, he is not a whit superior to his prison key or his staff.[23]

Thoreau fully developed this concept in his "Civil Disobedience" and in "Life Without Principle," where he thought of the State as a dead institution. Influenced early by Cousin as well as Emerson, Thoreau assimilated these writings with reading of Eastern scriptures and took Oriental concepts and refashioned an affinity with Hindu and Chinese thought in his slow process of self-discovery.

In terms of finding a solution to rescue man from the prison house of his subjectivity which restrains him from a life in communion with the true idea, Cousin postulated a universal eclecticism. For this purpose, Cousin sought the earliest traces of his systems in the prehistoric and unchanged forms of Oriental spiritualism, especially in Indian mysticism. It was because he believed that unlike the Western civilization which was running toward extreme rationalism and materialism on the basis of man-made

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[23] Writings, I, p. 169.

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principles, Oriental civilization was still governed by the eternal principles. As an exemplary model for the case, the philosopher described an episode in the Bhagavad-Gita in the great national epic Mahabharata as follows:

> Open, for instance, the Bhagavad-Gita; it is a short episode in an immense poem. Two great armies, the Pandoos and the Kouroos, are in the presence of each other, and are ready to engage in battle. A bondless carnage is at hand. In one of the two armies there is a young warrior, individually very brave, but who, upon the eve of shedding the blood of his relations and friends, for the two armies are composed of friends and relations, finds his courage failing. He requests another personage to advance his chariot into the middle of plain, for the purpose of ascertaining the situation of affairs, and having cast a brief glance upon the two hosts, the good Ardschunas avows to Crishna, his uncertainty. Why is the reply? "Truly, Ardschunas, your pity is exceedingly ridiculous. Why do you speak of friends and of relations? Why of men? Relations, friends, and men, beasts, or stones, all are one.... The principle of every thing is eternal; What value has aught else? You are, as a Schatrias, a man of the caste of warriors, doomed to the combat. Therefore, do battle; a fearful carnage will be the result. Be it so; tomorrow the sun will shine upon the world, and will illuminate new scenes, and the eternal principle will continue to subsist. Beyond this principle, every thing is illusion.[24]

By the above passage we can arrive at the conclusion that it was in his college days that Thoreau became unquestionably acquainted with the Bhagavad-Gita, a work that eventually, as Henry S. Canby said, along with Emerson's Nature, "went deep down into his consciousness and gave him a new birth."[25] While developing his idealism in indebtedness to the Orient, Cousin also introduced Thoreau to some

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[24] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[25] Henry Seidel Canby, Thoreau (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Com., 1939), p. 199.

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Oriental sources of Chinese, Persian, and other Hindu philosophy, along with referring to a number of the Orientalists such as M. Abel Rémusat, Colebrook, William Humboldt, Wilkins, Abbe Parraud, William Schlegel, M. de Chezy, and Burnouf, whose translations of the Oriental scriptures later played a significant part in developing Thoreau's Transcendentalism. In the meantime, the philosopher introduced Thoreau to Lao-Tzu by dealing with Taoism as one of the significant sources for his system in dependence upon the name of Abel Rémusat. We will come back to this point in the coming discussion.[26]

After investigating the primitive systems of the Oriental civilization in comparison with those of the Occidental one, Cousin came to the assumption that each epoch of intellectual culture evolved the same systems or elementary forms of thought such as Sensationalism, Idealism, Skepticism, and Mysticism, which, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, reappear successively in every age and country. He also believed that beyond all of the uniform order of succession, "there exist in consciousness vastly more phenomena than mankind had hitherto thought of."[27] Based upon these conclusions, he postulated a universal eclecticism that the historic development of mental science must be traced to the fundamental laws of human thought as universal and immutable. The reason for his postulation of eclecticism was that he found a repudiation of both the empiricism and sensationalism of the

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[26] Victor Cousin, p. 407.

[27] Ibid., p. 415.

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Lockean school that rejected all the truths which could not be admitted and the idealism of the Kantian school that manifested too much "in the subjective laws..." which "arrived at its last terminus in the absolute subjectivity of the "I" in Fichte."[28] Because he could not abide absolutely by either one of the systems, he attempted to reconcile "all the truths which they contain, which can be done only by regarding them in a point of view which, being more comprehensive than that of either the one or the other systems, may be capable of including, and thus of explaining and completing them both."[29] For this, the French philosopher was entirely occupied with the method of psychology on the conviction that "From psychology, which is the vestibule...and the antechamber of science, we reached the sanctuary itself, that is, metaphysics."[30]

For the prevalence of this eclectic mode of life, Cousin emphasized the role of "a great man" who should be possessed of the following capability:

> He must be one who combines knowledge the most diverse, and erudition of the greatest extent, with philosophical views of a high character; one who is not ignorant of any of the facts which make up the immense history of humanity, and who controls all these facts by thought; who, while able to follow them into their whole development, can also conceive their secret relations, their true order, and trace this order to its only source, in the comprehension of the constituent elements

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[28] Ibid., p. 412.

[29] Ibid., p. 414.

[30] Ibid., p. 415.

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of humanity.[31]

Besides the possession of erudition, Cousin's great man should also have the following two characteristics:

> The great man,is the harmonious combination of what is particular with what is general; this combination constitutes the standard value of his greatness, and it involves a twofold condition: first, of representing the general spirit of his nation, because it is in his relation to that general spirit that his greatness consists; and secondly, of representing the general spirit which confers upon him his greatness, in his own person; in a real form, that is, in a finite, positive, visible, and determinate form, so that what is general may not suppress what is particular, and that what is particular may not dissipate and dissolve what is general; that the infinite and the finite may be blended together in that proportion which truly constitute human greatness.[32]

In an entry entitled "The Superior and the Common Man," dated May 5, 1837, Thoreau echoed Cousin's idea of "a great man." Like Cousin's great man, Thoreau's superior man "does not wantonly rend the meanest tie that binds him to his fellows; he would not stand aloof even in his prejudices, did not the stern demands of Truth, backed by conviction, require it. He is ready enough to float with the tide; and when he does stem the current of popular opinion, sincerity at least must nerve his arm." He knew that Cousin's great man has questioned "the reality of outward existence"; he has laughed "through his tears at the very mention of a mathematical demonstration."[33] Since then, Thoreau's life was directed to the proof of "a great man" of Cousin who was devoted to the discovery

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[31] Ibid., p. 92.

[32] Ibid., pp. 297-298.

[33] Sanborn, Life, p. 138.

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of "the true idea." In order to discover a true code that can lead man to live in communion with the Spirit of Law, Thoreau studied intensely the immense history of humanity. Cousin's eclectic mind eventually led him to search far and wide and appropriated anything and everything useful, even from the Orient. Thoreau has made use of this method for his Transcendental systems throughout his entire life. Two years before his death, he described the reason why he adopted the method:

> A man receives only what he is ready to receive, whether physically or intellectually or morally, as animals conceive at certain seasons their kind only. We hear and apprehend only what we already half know. If there is something which does not concern me, which is out of my line, which by experience or by genius my attention is not drawn to, however novel and remarkable it may be, if it is spoken, we hear it not, if it is written, we read it not, or if we read it, it does not detain us. Every man thus tracks himself through life, in all his hearing and reading and observation and travelling. His observations make a chain. The phenomenon or fact that cannot in any wise be linked with the rest which he has observed, he does not observe.[34]

In addition, Thoreau possessed the characteristics of Cousin's great man who lives in harmonious combination with the general spirit of his nation and with his greatness. Since Thoreau fully shared the national mythology of his day in which the American intellectuals were seeking a new set of ideal human attributes in separation from the history and habits of the Old World, he attempted to discover the ideal character by living in nature. Throughout his entire life, Thoreau made his walks a spiritual crusade to reconquer his holy land from the invasion of materialism

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[34] Journal, XIII, p.77.

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and rationalism--as he said, to "keep the New World new," to "preserve all the advantages of living in the country."[35] This mode of life corresponds clearly to that of Cousion's great man who lives in harmony by integrating the general spirit of his nation with his greatness.

Meanwhile, Emerson was one of the organizing participants of the Hedge Club (also known as The Symposium or Transcendental Club), which began its meetings on September 16, 1836.[36] There were seventeen regular or casual members including such-well known figures as Bronson Alcott, George and Sophia Ripley, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, Theodore Parker, Jones Very, Convers Francis, and Frederic Hedge. Thoreau joined in the fall of 1837, after his graduation from Harvard.

Emerson gave Thoreau admission to his personal library with its many volumes of Oriental works, and inspired him to read Oriental philosophy. Emerson was aware of Sir William Jones' translation of The Institutes of Menu(1820's); he mentioned the name Menu twice in his journals in 1821.[37] Emerson was introduced to Oriental literature by his aunt, Mary Moody Emerson who was influenced by the works of Rammonhun Roy and probably read his

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[35] Journal, XII, p. 387.

[36] Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists, pp. 116-117.

[37] Ralph Waldo Emerson, The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks, 13 vols., ed. William H Gilman, et. al.(Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1960), I, p. 259.

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Translation of the Isopanishad.[38] Emerson alluded to his aunt's "Hindoo mythologies" in his letter to her on October 16, 1823.[39] But Emerson's "Address to the Harvard Divinity School" in 1838 betokened that his antagonism to the "exotic Orient" had changed to a compassionate understanding of its philosophies. He said that a similarity for the sacred

> dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East; not alone in Palestine, where it reached its purest expression, but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China. Europe has always owed to Oriental genius its divine impulses.[40]

His Journal for the same year included an entry which similarly matched Oriental religion to Christianity: "The heart of Christianity is the heart of all philosophy. It is the sentiment of piety which Stoic & Chinese [,] Mahometan & Hindu labor to awaken."[41] During the same year Emerson read and extracted parts of The Law of Menu translated by Sir William Jones, mistakenly titling these extracts "Selections from the Vedas."[42] More

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[38] Ibid, p. 117. See Christy, p. 382 for further details of Roy's translation of the Isopanishad.

[39] When Mary Emerson recommended that Ralph look for some of the answers to the questions he had asked her about spiritual problems that had been perplexing him, his reply indicated that he still felt that the East exotic and little else. Nevertheless, he does evidence some interest; he said, "I am curious to read your Hindu mythologies." Ralph L. Rusk, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I (New York, 1937), pp. 116-17.

[40] The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York, 1950), p. 71.

[41] The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Merton M. Sealt Jr., V (Cambridge, 1965), p. 478.

[42] Ibid., p. 205.

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significantly, during the same year Emerson also noted that "the beautiful costume of the Chinese is worn on the streets of Boston."[43] Apparently, he had been attracted to Chinese literature; his Journal for the same year contains three printed pages of extracts from Marshman's Sentences of Confucius.[44]

It was Emerson who encouraged Thoreau to keep a journal, which was begun on October 22, 1837.[45] From his first journal onwards, he quotes from and alludes to a wide variety of philosophical texts with many references to the Orient. Between November the first and tenth of 1837, Thoreau made extracts from Hugh Murray's Historical and Descriptive Account of British India(1832) in one of his literary notebooks.[46] He copied descriptions of Alexander the Great's meeting with the "uncouth sages" of India who "assured him that Pythagoras, Socrates, Diogenes entertained many opinions extremly similar" to those of the Indian philosophers.[47]

Sometime between 1837 and 1838, Thoreau read The Phenix: A

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[43] Ibid., p. 165.

[44] Ibid., pp. 120-122.

[45] On October 22, 1837, Thoreau made the first entry acknowledging that it was Emerson who advised him to keep such a record: "What are you doing now?" he asked. 'Do you keep a journal?' So I make my first entry today." Journal, I, p. 3.

[46] Hugh Murray, Historical and Descriptive Account of British India, 3 vols. (New York:Harper's Family Library, 1832; vols. pp. 47-49); the extracts were copied in HM 945, a commonplace book in the Huntington Library, and reprinted in Kenneth Walter Cameron, Transcendental Apprenticeship (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1976), pp. 117-118.

[47] Cameron, Transcendental Apprenticeship, p. 117; it is also located in Kenneth Walter Cameron, Transcendental Climate (Hartford, 1963), III, p. 968.

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Collection of Old and Rare Fragments,[48] which contains excerpts from The Chinese Four Books, "Oracles of Zoroaster," and quotations from Mencius as well as introductory essays and other occult information and quotations. Emerson also read this work first in 1837 and made notes on the Confucian and Zoroastrian passages in it.[49] One of the Confucian passages which he extracted is the one that related the story about the soldier of the kingdom of Ci losing his buckler; Thoreau noted the same passage in "Miscellaneous Extracts."[50] He also selected it for use in "Ethnical Scriptures" in The Dial, April, 1843.[51]

Cameron assigns 1839 as the dates for Thoreau's notes on The Phenix as found in "Miscellaneous Extracts."[52] Considering an entry in the Journal written in 1838 that says, "How thrilling a noble sentiment in the oldest books,--in Homer, the Zendavesta or Confucius," it is certain that Thoreau had already read the work before 1839. More significantly, in "Society" and The Service which were written in the same year of his reading of the Confucian work, Thoreau reflected a number of Confucian themes such as virtue, solitude, society, and friendship, all of which he adopted

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[48] William Gowan, The Phenix: A Collection of Old and Rare Fragments (New York, 1835).

[49] The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes (Cambridge, 1911), p. 338, pp. 387-88; V (1965), p. 342.

[50] Ibid., VI (1966), p. 338; Cameron, Transcendentalists, I, p. 274.

[51] "Ethnical Scriptures," the Dial, III (April, 1843), p. 493.

[52] Cameron, Transcendentalists, I, p. 274.

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as mainstays of his whole life.

In August of 1839, Thoreau took a trip up the Concord and Merrimack River with his brother John; it provides the impetus for his first book, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. While he was on the two-week journey, he made entries in his journal on the subject of the self, friendship and society as he extended his inquiry into an authentic way that he had determined since his college days. In the opening pages of his Journal, Thoreau wrote, "My desire is to know what I lived that I may know how to live henceforth."[53] Journal entries recording his searching for the ideal relationships of man, society, and the universe suggest that Thoreau began to fuse the mode of a Confucian gentleman(Chun Tzu) with his conception of spiritual heroism. We will come to that in the appropriate chronological place.

On April 26, 1841, Thoreau went to live at Emerson's, staying for nearly two years and helping with odd jobs in exchange for room and board. This extended stay helped Thoreau to find time to explore Emerson's library, using the large collection of Oriental works not only to enrich his own writings, but also to help him capture the spiritual disciplines of the East. Journal entries recording his impressions of Oriental literature suggest that Thoreau then began to assimilate the Orient into his fabric of thought. This is evidenced by his Journal entry for August 7, 1841:

The impression which those sublime sentences made on me

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[53] Journal, I, p. 9.

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> last night has awaken me before any cock crowing. Their influence lingers around me like a fragrance, or as the fog hangers over the earth late into the day.[54]

Two days later, Thoreau remarked on a more intense impression of the Orient:

> Its Spirits, like a more subtle ether, sweeps along with the prevailing winds of the country. Its influence conveys a new gloss to the meadows and the depths of the woods, and bathes the huckleberries on the hills, as sometime a new influence in the sky washes in waves over the fields and seems to break on some invisible beach in the air. All things confirm it. It spends the mornings and the evenings.[55]

In the meantime, Emerson became editor of The Dial in March, 1842; he continued until the magazines ceased publication in 1844. In the July, 1842 issue, a series of "Ethnical Scriptures" commenced with Emerson's selections from the Hitopadesa translated by Charles Wilkins in 1787; this interested Thoreau enough that he made eight pages of notes on it in the Literary Notebook sometime between December 1840 and January 1841.[56]

The stated purpose of these scriptures reveals the attitudes of both Emerson and Thoreau towards Oriental writings: the collection was intended to bring together "a series of selections from the oldest ethical and religious writings of men, exclusive of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures."[57] Emerson and Thoreau

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[54] Journal, I, p. 267.

[55] Thoreau, Journal, p. 268.

[56] Cameron, Transcendentalists, I, pp. 295-298; Cameron, Literary Notebook, pp. 5-13.

[57] Margaret Fuller, et. al. The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion, 4 vols., 1840-1844 (New York:Russell and Russell, 1961), III, p.82.

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collaborated on these selections, hoping to create a Bible of all nations, deemphasizing "the civil-historical and ritual portions" and bring together "the grand expressions of the moral sentiment in different ages and races, the rules for the guidance of life, the burst of piety and abandonment to the Invisible and Eternal."[58] They selected passages from Chinese, Indian, Persian, Chaldean, and Egyptian Sources.

It was in January, 1842 that The Dial printed the selections from the Ordinances of Menu[59] that Thoreau himself had made. Thoreau read this book frequently during the summer of 1841 and it became "a personal discovery."[60] Thoreau himself referred to Menu as "a manual of private devotion," saying that "One may discover the root of a Hindoo religion in his own private history, when, in the silent intervals of the days or the night, he does sometimes inflict on himself like austerities with a stern stisfaction."[61] This work, along with the Confucian classics, had a great impact on Thoreau's way of life on virtue and self-cultivation.[62]

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[58] Ibid., p. 82.

[59] W. Jones trans., Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordiances of Menu, According to the Gloss of Culluca... (Calcutta, 1974).

[60] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 215.

[61] Journal, I, p. 279.

[62] Sherman Paul insists that The Law of Menu be the most important Oriental scripture before he read the Bhagavad-Gita. He explores Thoreau's early life on which he led to search for an authentic way in association with the five stages of the Brahmin's life advocated in The Law of Menu. For more detail, see his The Shores of America, pp. 71-75.

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For the April, 1843 issue of The Dial, Thoreau edited selections from Chinese literature for the "Ethnical Scriptures" series. The selections were taken from Joshua Marshman's The Works of Confucius; contains the Original text, with a Translation that he discovered in Emerson's library.[63] But the editor's identity for this issue of the "Ethnical Scriptures" seems in doubt, considering the fact that the twenty-one quotations which the April, 1843 issue contained were obviously identical with those of Emerson's journal which Emerson had taken from the Phenix in 1837.[64] But considering the fact that Thoreau edited the issue all by himself when Emerson was abroad, it seems that the two friends were commonly interested in the Confucian doctrines of self-culture and a return to virtuous life which are revealed in the issue. Editing the "Saying of Confucius" for The Dial in April, 1843 Thoreau selected exclusively from the passages of Confucian teaching for those who desired to be the gentleman which corresponded to his goal of self-cultivation as a direction in life.

In the October, 1843, issue of The Dial, Thoreau made another selection from Chinese literature for the "Ethnical Scriptures" series. This time, the selections were based upon The Chinese Classical Work, Commonly Called the Four Books by David Collie.[65]

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[63] The Dial, III, pp. 493-494.

[64] Roger C. Mueller, "The Orient in American Transcendental Periodicals (1835-1886)," pp. 57-58.

[65] The Chinese Classical Work, Commonly Called the Four Books, trans., Rev. David Collie (Malacca, 1828).

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From this work Thoreau chose forty-five items, arranging them under seven headings; the collection was prefaced by an editorial note by Thoreau commenting on Collie's work as "the most valuable contribution we have yet seen from the Chinese literature." In a letter to Margaret Fuller(June, 1843), he had high praise for the work:

> I have the best of Chinese Confucian books lately, an octavo published at Malacca, in English. Much of it is the old Confucius more fully rendered; but the book of Mencius is wholly new to me.[66]

Thoreau's selections thus were taken chiefly from the books of Mencius. Mueller attributes the main reason for the preponderance of quotations from Mencius to the fact that Thoreau had edited the saying of Confucius for the April, 1843, Dial.[67] The Chinese, as characterized by Thoreau in The Dial were represented by the thoughts of two men, Confucius and Mencius. By reading his own meanings into the Four Books, Thoreau reinforced his desire to become a great man that had been fixed during his college days. The maxims Thoreau selected were not only the ethical heart of Confucianism, but also those that most urgently appealed to him. He was especially interested in the living mode of Chun Tzu who alone possessed the vision to see beyond personal profit and material interest to the broader interest of moral sense. That is almost identical with his conception of spiritual heroism.

Late in March, 1843, when he read ardently the Confucian books

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[66] The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Ralph L. Rusk, 6 vols.(New York, 1939), III, p. 179.

[67] Mueller, pp. 79-80.

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for editing the Confucian quotations for the "Ethnical Scriptures" series, Thoreau began to build a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond on land owned by Emerson. He moved there on July 4, 1845 and as is well known, stayed there for two years, two months, and two days. While living by Walden Pond, Thoreau presented in his two books--A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers and the first draft of Walden which he wrote there--the same image of the Confucian Chün Tzu, which he admired and strove to emulate throughout his life. He not only envisioned for himself the qualities of the ideal Chün Tzu--humanity, wisdom, and devotion--but also exerted his influence on the masses toward achieving such an ideal. We will explore in later detailed discussion how the Confucian concept of the Chün Tzu was interwoven into the main threads of his life.

During his life on Walden Pond, Thoreau read a number of Oriental books. Among them were two important works-- the Bhagavad- Gita and Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient by G. Pauthier--that could be considered as the most influential sources for his experimental life á la Orient at Walden Pond.

Thoreau regarded the Bhagavad-Gita as one of the most important works that he had read. In A Week, he says that unlike Western works it does full justice to contemplation: "The reader is nowhere raised and sustained in a higher purer, or rarer region of thought than in the Bhagavad-Geeta."[68] In Walden, he also had high praise for the Bhagavad-Gita:

In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and

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[68] Writings, I, p. 142.

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> cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhavat-Geeta, since whose composition year of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial.[69]

Considering the fact that the record of his reading the work did not show up until the time when he borrowed it from the Harvard College Library on October 9, 1854, his reference to the Bhagavad-Gita in the two books seems to have been based upon his earlier acquaintance with it through Cousin and Emerson.[70] Thoreau, as we have already seen above, had first read about the dialogues of Krishna and the king Arjoon in Victor Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy during his college days. According to Professor George Hendrick, Emerson also "had first read about it in Victor Cousin's Cours de philosophie" fourteen years before he borrowed it from Cabot's copy in 1845.[71] The beginning of Thoreau's residence at Walden Pond in 1845 coincided with an upsurge in Emerson's Oriental reading.[72] In a letter to John Chapman on May 30, 1845, Emerson said that he "very much wanted " the Bhagavad-Gita.[73] In the meantime, he borrowed a copy of it from James Elliot Cabot and delayed returning it: "I have tried

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[69] Writings, II, p. 328.

[70] Kenneth Walter Cameron, "Books Thoreau Borrowed from Harvard College Library," Emerson the Essayist, II (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1945; rpt. 1972), p. 196.

[71] George Hendrick, in an Introduction to a facsimile reproduction of Charles Wilkins' translation of The Bhagvat-Geeta (Gainesville, Fla., 1959), p. x.

[72] Sherman Paul, p. 71.

[73] The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Ralph L. Rusk (New York, 1939), III, p. 288.

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once or twice to send it home, but each time decided to strain a little your courteous professions that you could supply your occasional use of the book from the Library..."[74] He returned Cabot's copy on September 28, 1845, after a copy from London arrived. Considering their personal relationship, Thoreau may have read the book at this time. As a token, he copied many passages, thought about and digested it, and wrote much in an unpublished journal.[75] Much of the material from that journal found its way into A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers which he was writing at the time.

The Oriental sources Thoreau read during his Walden period were not exclusively the Hindus,[76] but also the Confucian books. As Lyman Cady's investigation of Confucian quotations in Walden in comparison with Collie's translation which Thoreau had used for the materials in The Dial indicates, Thoreau read enthusiastically the

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[74] Ibid., p. 293.

[75] Miriam Alice Jeswine, "Henry David Thoreau: Apprentice to the Hindu Sages," dissertation, Ph.D (University of Oregon, 1971), p. 8.

[76] When in "Thoreau's First Book: A Spoor of Yoga," he discussed the influence of Oriental literature on A Week, William B. Stein insisted that the Oriental texts cited in it were exclusively the Hindu books such as Rajah Rammonhun Roy's Translation of Several Principle Books, Passages, and Texts of The Vedas, William Ward's A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos(1822), and Charles Wilkin's translation of the Hitopadesa(1787), which Thoreau mentions and quotes in Walden and A Week, See, William B. Stein, ed., "Thoreau's First Book: A Spoor of Yoga," Emerson Society Quarterly, No.61 (4th Quart. 1965), pp. 4-12.

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Confucian books and practiced their concepts on Walden Pond.[77] "I realized," he thus said, "what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works."[78] According to Cady, all nine quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden were not based upon Collie's text, but on a translation directly from the Chinese into the French by G. Pauthier, first published in Paris, in 1840.[79] G. Pauthier assembled the writings from Chinese, Indian, and Islamic cultures into a volumes entitled Les Livres Sacrés de la l'Orient in which his translation of the Four Books appeared.[80] I agree with Cady's suggestion only in that Thoreau read ardently the Confucian sources translated by G. Pauthier and made favorable use of some French versions of Pauthier for his quotations for the two books. In my view, the French version Cady has found was not the only one available to Thoreau. There were at least two more Confucian books Pauthier translated in that period. I have found Pauthier's other translation of the Four Books, so far unknown to scholars. It was contained in L'univers: Histoire et Description de Tous Les Peuples, published in 1837, by Firmin Didot Freres. In this work, Pauthier has dealt in detail with Chinese history, literature, philosophy and art. On the section of philosophy, he

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[77] Lyman V. Cady, "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," American Literature (March, 1961), pp. 20-32.

[78] Writings, II, p. 124.

[79] Cady's dating of the first publication was inaccurate. The first edition of the book was published in 1840.

[80] G. Pauthier, Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient (Paris: chez Firmin Didot-chez Auguste Desrez, 1840).

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translated not only the Four Books but also Tao Te Ching into French. The second Confucian volume Pauthier translated into French is Confucius and Mencius which was published in 1842. To me, either L'univers or the Confucius et Mencius was the volume more probably utilized by Thoreau rather than Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient. In the Catalogue of the Stephen H. Wakeman Collection of Books of Nineteenth American Writers, an inventory of the tomes auctioned by the American Art Association in New York, on April 24-29, 1924, Arthur Christy discovers the following piece:

> 985. Thoreau(Henry D) Manuscript Note Book, containing... Translation or portion of two French Works with his notes on the same....Closely written in on about 225 pages and consisting of approximately twenty eight thousand and two hundred words....Translations from the French: Portion of "Confucius et Mencius...Traduit du Chinois, Par M. G. Pauthier." Written on 23 pages. Thoreau has translated many paragraphs, and interspered are notes by Thoreau on the same...[81]

This item conclusively authenticates the fact that Thoreau had a copy of portions of Confucius and Mencius which might have been torn out of either L'univers or Confucius et Mencius.

In September, 1847, after completing his experimental life on Walden Pond to seek out an ideal self, Thoreau returned to society, saying "it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one."[82] With re-entry into the society, as his "next excursion," Thoreau reported the results of his experimental life to the benefit of his fellow men by publishing the two books.

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[81] Christy, p. 276.

[82] Writings, II, P. 213.

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On May 30, 1849, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers was published. But the book went relatively unnoticed. Two of the three reviewers who observed it gave it unfavorable attention. By 1853, only 219 copies had been sold, and 75 given away. The remaining copies came back to Thoreau who had to make a thousand dollars worth of pencils in order to accumulate enough profit to repay the debt contracted in publishing the book. But Thoreau was never disappointed with it. Rather, through lectures and writings he devoted himself more intensely than before to the actualization of the ideal world he experienced on Walden Pond. During this period, his reading of the Orientals continued. On September 11, 1849, Thoreau borrowed two Oriental books from the Harvard College Library: Garcin de Tassy's Histoire de la littlerature hindoui et hindoustani(1839-1847) and Alexandre Langlois' French translation of a portion of an appendix to the Mahabharata, Harivansa, ou Histoire de la famille de Hari, ouvrage forment un appendice du Mahabharata(1834-1835).[83] Thoreau's translation of the Harivansa, I, lecture twenty-one, titled The Transmigration of the Seven Brahmins, was not known until Arthur Christy discovered it and had it published in 1932.[84]

Thoreau's journal for 1850-51 produced material for a lecture

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[83] Kenneth Walter Cameron, "Books Thoreau Borrowed from Harvard College Library," Emerson the Essayist, II, p. 195.

[84] Henry David Thoreau, trans., Transmigration of the Seven Brahmins (New York, 1932), Arthur Christy, ed. from a manuscript in the Widener Collection of Harvard College Library.

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entitled "The Wild," delivered at the Concord Lyceum in April, 1851.[85] The goal of this essay, finally published under the title "Walking" in the Atlantic Monthly in June, 1862, was to develop the earlier spirit of discovery in the virtue of the "wild." Thoreau made use of the conception of the "wildness," which corresponded to the quest for an ideal self experienced in his earlier life, for the special value of the new idealism of the New World, the liberation and enlargement, the conditions of a free and unique individual growth, associated primary with "Nature." In so doing, Thoreau saw Eastern literature as the root of knowledge from which the West would produce fruit and as the light which would illumine Western man to connect his newly created fables to those of the past.

In 1855, when Thoreau received a gift of fifty-four Oriental books from Thomas Cholmondeley, he wrote to thank Cholmondeley and made reference to the emblem: "And now you have gone to the East or Eastward, having assisted to shine westward behind you; have gone toward the source of light! to which I pray that you may get nearer and nearer."[86]

During this period, Thoreau's interest in China continued. In 1852, Thoreau read Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China, During

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[85] Cameron, "Books Thoreau Borrowed from Harvard College Library," p. 195.

[86] The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau, ed. Walter Harding and Carl Bode (New York, 1958), p. 398.

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the Years 1844-5-6 by Evariste Regis Huc(New York, 1852)[87]. As indicated in the following letter dated December 12, 1856 Thoreau also continuously read the Confucian Books:

> I do not remember anything which Confucius has said directly respecting man's "origin, purpose and destiny." He was more practical than that. He is full of wisdom applied to human relations,--to the private life,--the family,--government, etc. It is remarkable that, according to his own account, the sum and substance of his teaching is, as you know, to do as you would be done by. He also said (I translated from the French), "Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men."[88]

As is indicated in Thoreau's translating a portion of the Confucian teachings from a French version, Thoreau was then reading The Great Learning which was included in Pauthier's Confucius et Mencius. In my view, the Confucian principles advocated in The Great Learning played a significant part, along with The Law of Menu, in determining the conduct of his life as a great man.

In his essay "Walking," which is "perhaps the finest brief statement of what he lived for,"[89] contains many allusions to his spiritual heading toward the East:

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[87] Thoreau's journal indicates as follows: "The salutations and common places of all nations, which would sound to us formal often, are always adapted to their circumstances, and grow out of their necessities. The Tartar inquires, 'Has the rain been abundant? and Are you flocks in property? Have your mares fruitful?' and the answer is, 'All is at peace in our pastures.' Serene and Biblical, and no man's invention. M. Huc met with a family in China remarkable hospitality." Journal, IV, p. 15.

[88] Writings, XI, p. 350.

[89] Townsend Scudder, "Thoreau," The Literary History of the United States, eds., Robert C. Spiller, Willard Thorp et. al., (New York, 1951), I, p. 408.

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> ... and I may say that mankind progress from east to west.... We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. The Atlantic is a lethéan stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World and its institutions.[90]

Since Thoreau fully shared the national mythology of his days in which America was seeking a new set of ideal human attributes in "separation from Europe," Thoreau transformed the passage to the Orient into a symbolic return to the source of light, the source of life. Thus, when he bathed in the unchanged and primitive form of Oriental philosophy in the Bhagavad-Gita, "The Law of Menu," and the Sankya Karika, and translated The Transmigration of the Seven Brahmans from the East, the Transcendentalist revealed the East as the source of ideas and adopted them as a mainstay of his life. However, Thoreau's Eastern acquaintances were not exclusively limited to the Hindus. As can readily be seen from this chronology, Thoreau's debt to the Confucian materials is greater than critics have realized. From the time when he first read Confucius in 1837 until his death at the age of forty-five, he continued to be attracted to Oriental work.[91] It is, therefore, perfectly legitimate to discuss Thoreau's Orientalism in terms of

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[90] Writings, V, p. 218.

[91] Until the last month of his death when he revised "Walking" to submit to the Atlantic Monthly on March 11, 1862, he was interested in Confucius. In the last portion of the essay, Thoreau associated the wild with the mode of a Confucian life as he said, "In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wildness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey," Writings, V, p. 229.

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Indian and Chinese influences.

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CHAPTER V

Thoreau and Confucianism: Thoreau's Identification with the Confucian Chün Tzu

While it is the purpose of this chapter to present Thoreau's Orientalism generally, we believe that the mode of Thoreau's philosophical life corresponded closely to that of the Chün Tzu, advocated by the Confucians in the Four Books.[1] We also believe

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[1] Modern scholarship has long suspected that many of the Confucian texts traditionally supposed to be written by Confucius and Mencius are actually comparatively late works. Namely, the Four Books, which consist of the "Confucian Analects" (Lunyu), the "Great Learning" (Tahueh), "The Doctrine of the Mean" (Chung Yung), and the "Works of Mencius" (Mung Tzu), are a collection of the work of his disciples and followers, their records of Confucius' sayings and their interpretations or developments of his thought. The "Analects" includes Confucius' sayings which, after his death, his disciples arranged in twenty books on the basis of the memoranda of their conversations with the Master. The "Great Learning" is an accumulation of treatises written by the followers of Confucius in the third and second centuries B. C. "The Doctrine of the Mean" which was written by Tze Tze, a grandson of Confucius, contains "the law of the mind." "The Works of Mencius," written by the disciples of Mencius, the second sage in the school of Confucius contains the central ideas of Mencius such as the goodness of human nature and his theory of "benevolent government." Mencius' chronology is not at all certain. His date are given as from 371 to 289 B. C. But it is impossible to state with finality exactly which texts and which ideas are genuinely the product of pro-Confucian and Mencian times. In terms of avoiding this difficulty, this study will attribute the authorship of the Confucian ideas in the Four Book exclusively to Confucius and Mencius, following Emersonian epigram, "Always the seer is the sayer" (The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Boston, 1903-04, vol. I, p. 134). For a full account of the historical conceptions of Confucianism, see Lin Yutang's The Wisdom of Confucius, New York: Random House, 1942); Fung Yulan's A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, ed. by Derk Bodde, New York, 1960, pp. 39-40); Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, ed., Sources of Chinese Tradition (Columbia University Press: New York, 1960).

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that the principles practiced by Thoreau throughout his life reverberated with the major point of the Confucian canon.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Thoreau continuously and enthusiastically read Oriental books throughout his life. However, traditional Thoreauvian scholarship, has treated his Orientalism with contempt. For example, in his examination of the significance of Thoreau's Walden experiment in Henry David Thoreau: A Critical Study, Mark Van Doren asserts that "the total influence of Oriental philosophy upon Thoreau was neither broad nor profound," and that he "took figures and sentences, not ideas, from his Oriental reading."[2] Furthermore, some scholars who made in-depth studies of Thoreau's use of Oriental works too often tends to pit Thoreau's Orientalism against his Occidentalism, opting for one or the other as the predominant influence. One conclusion such unconvincing evaluation leads to is that the latter usually wins out over the former. Thomas Woodson is representative of these cases. He states that "Thoreau is no Oriental mystic with a Yankee accent," but rather someone who based his Orientalism on the Western predilection for discursive thought and the desire to "communicate knowledge to other rational beings." In the western tradition, this desire was in turn balanced by a willingness to escape from rationality through creative imagery.[3]

What is also even more regrettable in the tradition of Thoreau

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[2] Mark Van Doren, Henry David Thoreau: A Critical Study (Boston, 1916), p. 95.

[3] Thomas Woodson, "The Two Beginnings of Walden: A Distinction of Styles," E L H (1968), vol. 35, pp. 440-473.

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scholarship is that scholars have long oversimplified or slighted the importance of the Chinese influence on Thoreau. Of the scholars who interpret Thoreau's Orientalism as a series of exegeses, few attempt to relate Thoreau's to Chinese thought. Arthur Christy's The Orient in American Transcendentalism which, since its publication in 1932, has exerted a significant impact on subsequent Thoreau scholarship, is typical in its neglect of the study of Chinese thought on the Thoreau canon. Although Christy admits that Thoreau read the Confucian classics with enthusiasm, he concludes that "There was nothing essentially Confucian in Thoreau's temperament... it is fruitless to attempt finding in him a resemblance to the ethics of Confucius."[4] Lyman V. Cady has also argued the case along similar lines:

> Thoreau rarely sees these sayings in their proper implications; nor does he share their feeling for the social bonds and conventions within which Confucius's morally mature and self-disciplined "superior man" is to function. Man for Confucius and his school is society-centered: for Thoreau man is nature-centered. To repeat, Thoreau reads his own meanings into the passages and uses them ingeniously to add exotic reinforcement to his own distinctive and highly individualistic ideas. In short, he for the most part uses Confucian material in a non-Confucian way.[5]

Gary Simon, having investigated Taoist parallels in Thoreau, ventured the same view by referring to Christy's and Cady's

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[4] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, pp. 197-198.

[5] Lyman V. Cady, "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," American Literature, vol. 33, (March, 1961), p. 31.

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opinions.[6] Unfortunately, all these premature assessments have dissuaded some scholars from seriously considering the Chinese influence on Thoreau, which accounts for the absence of a systematic study.

The main reason for their oversimplification of the Confucian aspect of Thoreau's Orientalism perhaps derives from the partial view by which scholars have interpreted Thoreau's Orientalism. They see it only in terms of his search for nature-mysticism, which eventually put him very close to Indian thinkers. As a result of such partial exploration, Thoreau's experimental life at Walden Pond has been considered, as Professor George Hendrick points out, "as the account of a mystic who, through Contemplation, had come to terms with the universe and himself, basing much of his philosophy upon the Gita."[7] On this basis, they argue that at Walden Thoreau negated much of the actuality of the phenomenal world in order to achieve the aims of the Yogi--communion with the Brahman. They also conclude that the mode of Thoreau's Walden life was that of an Indic Yogi or a hermit.

Even though Thoreau craved contemplation, he by no means forgot society. "I think that I love society as much as most," he wrote in the beginning of "Visitor" in Walden. "I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room, if my business called me thither... I have three chairs

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[6] Gary Simon, "What Henry David Thoreau Didn't Know About Lao Tzu," Literature East and West, No. 17 (1973), pp. 253-74.

[7] George Hendrick, The Bhagvat-Geeta, p. xiii.

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in my house," he continued, "one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society."[8] As Joseph Lawrence Basile sums it up, Walden is a book about humanity, what it is, what it should do, and what it must be socially.[9] It is clear now that Thoreau did not go to Walden to escape the humdrum world around him, nor to practice being an ascetic. Witnessing that with the startling headway of industrialism and urbanism, the dehumanization of humanity was looming, Thoreau attempted to experiment with ways by which his fellows could extricate themselves from the toiling and moiling life they were leading. To use his own metaphor, he wanted to be a chanticleer to wake them up from their spiritual slumbers and help make them into a new generation of people. Despite his contempt for his town's people--and he could be ruthlessly sarcastic about them--he always had abundant faith in the inner virtue and inward, spiritual grace of humanity as well as its inherent capacity to cultivate in itself what it had been endowed with. Having looked for and discovered this in the self-image he gained in the life he lived in the woods, Thoreau explained why he left Walden:

> I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world.[10]

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[8] Writings, II, p. 155.

[9] Joseph Lawrence Basile, "Narcissus in the World of Machines," The Southern Review, 12 (winter, 1976), pp. 122-132.

[10] Writings, II, p. 355.

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With re-entry into society as his "next excursion," Thoreau reported the results of his experimental life to give the benefit of it his fellows by publishing A Week, and Walden. Then, through lectures and writings, he devoted the remainder of his life to the actualization of the ideal world he experimented with at Walden Pond. The major project occupied Thoreau in the last decade before his death was the application of the experience of the quest for the ideal self at Walden Pond to the real world. He assimilated the earlier spirit of self-discovery into the spirit of the "wild." Thoreau made use of the concept of "wildness" for the special value of the nurturing of the New World-- a world of liberation and enlargement, of the conditions of a free and unique individual.

As is manifested in this brief outline of his life, the mode of Thoreau's Transcendental life was undoubtedly a paradigm of that which Confucian advocated in the Four Books: that of the Chün Tzu. Confucius describes the Chün Tzu thus: "When lacking in moral quality, he attends to his own virtue in solitude; when advanced to dignity, he makes the whole world virtuous as well."[11] Besides simple affinities, there were real connections between Thoreau's and Confucian philosophy. Admitting that he was better acquainted with Chinese than with Hebrew ideas in A Week,[12] Thoreau read Confucian ideas unremittingly and enthusiastically throughout his life and adopted Confucian ideas as some of the props for his

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[11] James Legge, "Confucian Analects," BK. iii, chap. iv, 2, in The Chinese Classics, vol. I, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press,1960), p. 165.

[12] Writings, I, p. 72.

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Transcendental system. An eloquent witness to this is Thoreau's own writings. Thoreau disseminated elements of Confucian images, allusions, and affinities in his college essays and the Journals of the late 1830s and early 1840s, all of which were written while he was ardently reading the Confucian books. The central allegory of A Week is that of the self-explorer advocated in the Confucian canon. In Walden this allegory blossoms fully.[13]

Nevertheless, the study of the Confucian canon in Thoreau has been, for the most part, slighted or regarded as a dead end. Rather, scholars conclude that Thoreau's reading of the Chinese tradition was primarily concerned with "flora and fauna."[14] According to Christy, nothing but the depiction of nature and a Chinese natural history has attracted Thoreau's attention. From this dubious viewpoint, Thoreau's use of quotes and allusions from the Chinese classics has been treated as merely illustrative or externally exemplary of his own ideas. At best, they seem out of context and confusing.

But what we have to keep in mind is that Thoreau was one of the most eclectic writer among the Transcendentalists. He achieved in various ways a rare synthesis of heterogenous seemingly mutually exclusive strands of thought.[15] For such a synthesis, Thoreau was,

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[13] William Drake, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," in Thoreau: Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 69, 70.

[14] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 196.

[15] Walter Harding and Michael Meyer, The New Thoreau Handbook, p. 121.

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in the words of Victor Cousin:

> not ignorant of any of the facts which make up the immense history of humanity, and who controls all these facts by thought in order to conceive their secret relations, their true order, and trace this order to its only source in the comprehension of the constituent elements of humanity.[16]

As we can surmise, it is because of his continuous reading of the Chinese classics that Thoreau valued the Confucian strands as props for his own fabric of thought. In the words of Lin Yutang:

> Thoreau is the most Chinese of all American authors in his entire view of life and being a Chinese, I feel much akin to him in spirit.... I could translate passages of Thoreau into my own language and pass them off as original writing by a Chinese poet without raising any suspicion.[17]

Though Thoreau did not wish to change America into a Confucian country, he seems to have thought that a little of China could be transplanted congruously to the soil of the New World. In order to rescue his fellows who were spiritually fallen into the dismal condition of widespread lethargy, Thoreau advocated, as did Confucius, the innate goodness of human nature and insisted on the pursuit of a renewed and spiritual life in the materialistic society. His advocacy of the simplified life became the perpetual theme of his philosophy. It is therefore appropriate for us to have his Chinese interests re-examined not as a passing phase or a peripheral element he lived with, but as Chinese influence on his overall philosophy.

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[16] Victor Cousin, p. 92.

[17] Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living (New York, 1959), p. 128.

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This chapter attempts to trace the fundamental Confucian replications, implications that served to unify Thoreau's Transcendental themes. As a first step in the task, the first part of this chapter will concentrate on examination of the early ideas which closely parallel those of the Confucian books, since it is in their light or in its result--that we can more exactly trace the process by which Thoreau adapted Confucianism to his own Transcendental system, especially in the program of self-cultivation. Secondly, I will focus on digging out the Confucian ideas which Thoreau embedded in his Walden.

Thoreau tells us in his most often quoted sentence that "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."[18] He felt that with the startling headway of industrialism, urbanism, and immigration, individuals were lost and dwarfed, and that their personalities were truncated by the burdens of labor which destroyed the leisure they needed to loaf and invite the divine soul. In one of his college essays, entitled "Following the Fashion," Thoreau used the imagery of shipwreck to show his contempt for a life of drift and chance, subject to external things. He saw such a life as one of "surrender," an abdication of one's inner "strength and powers. Here are his words,

> The majority of mankind are too easily induced to follow any course which accords with the opinion of the world. Nine out of ten will tell you, in answer to the question, "How shall you act with regard to this matter?" "I haven't concluded; what do you think best?" or something

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[18] Writings, II, p. 8.

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similar."[19]

In another college essay, "The Varying Pursuits of Man," dated September 2, 1835, Thoreau again lamented humanity's abandonment of its innate divinity in pursuit of a materialistic life:

> When we hear it said of a man that Money is the idol which he worships; that his whole soul is wrapped up in the pursuit of wealth,--we figure to ourselves one who is continually striving after something which he is destined never to obtain, and who does not enjoy life as it passes, but lives on expectation. In short, one who has painted to himself an imagery Elysium, toward which no step in his progress brings him nearer.[20]

In "Mankind Classified," written in the same year,[21] Thoreau, in the Confucian manner, recorded his abhorrence of humanity's loss of innate divinity-- its falling into artificiality:

> A large portion of mankind are wrapped up in the pursuit of what they imagine to be pleasure; which, like their own shadows, is always within a certain distance, but which no effort on their part can bring nearer; so that their only real enjoyment lies in the anticipation of pleasure. The fault seems to lie not so much in the object, as in the means employed. They have a false idea of pleasure.[22]

In these and many other journals, Thoreau repeatedly verbalized his constant scorn of people's being trapped by manmade things which eventually caused them to lose the channel to divinity.

Upon leaving Harvard, Thoreau had three avenues to enter public life. If he had taken up a religious profession, he would

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[19] F. B. Sanborn, The Life of Henry David Thoreau, pp. 66-67.

[20] Ibid., p. 76.

[21] Mencius said, "When external things contact with the ear or eye, they lead them astray," (Mencius, vi. a. 2), Legge, p. 407.

[22] F. B. Sanborn, p. 165.

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have become a minister; or he could have taught, which would have helped nurture literary tastes; or he could even have taken up the pencil-making he had inherited from his father. The church did not meet his taste; teaching he tried but abandoned over the issue of flogging students; trade he detested. Rather, from the very beginning, he seems to have decided on a thorough self-reliance and self-culture as his vocation, to fit the duty of the Chün Tzu, or superior person:

> The object of the superior man is truth. Food is not his object. There is ploughing;--even in that there is sometimes want. So with learning;--emolument may found in it. The superior man is anxious lest he should not get truth; he is not anxious lest poverty should come upon him.[23]

On October 27, 1837, Thoreau sent a letter to his sister Helen, whose teaching had helped finance him at Harvard, to explain why he had to give up a vocation as a "Man of Business, a Man of Pleasure, and a Man of the World":

> You know we have hardly done our own deeds, thought our thoughts, or lived our own lives hitherto. For a man to act himself, he must be perfectly free.[24]

"He declined to give up," said Emerson, "his large ambition of knowledge and action for any narrow craft or profession, aiming at a much more comprehensive calling."[25] Elsewhere Emerson again commented on Thoreau's determination: "It required rare decision to

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[23] "Confucian Analects," BK. xv, Chi. xxxi, Legge, p. 303.

[24] The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, 20 vols. (Walden edition, Boston and New York, 1906), VI, p.12.

[25] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Thoreau," A Century of Criticism, ed. Walter Harding (New York University Press, 1970), p. 23.

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refuse all the accustomed paths and keep his solitary freedom at the cost of disappointing the natural expectations of his family and friends."[26] From his graduation from Harvard in 1837, his vocation was to be self-culture, "to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear."[27] And he was never diverted; he never forgot in the last twenty-five years of a life filled with restless activity that his purpose was to seek out the authentic and the essential. He was looking, as he did sauntered into Concord, for the real world. He was sure that this ideal could be found there. The first of Thoreau's explorations into the relationships of humanity, society, and the universe began with the self, friendship, and sound. The Journals of this period were almost exclusively devoted to the description of those themes.

It was at this time, when he sought the authentic, that Thoreau read the Confucian books and recorded the excerpts from them which he would use for the Dial and the two books. 1838 was the most crucial year for Thoreau's first acquaintance with the Confucian classics. In encomiastic language, Thoreau praises the Confucian books by saying that he was "thrilled by their sentiment"; moreover, he likens the Confucian canon to "a strain of music wafted down to us on the breeze of time through the aisles of innumerable ages. By its very nobleness it is made near and

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[26] The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 12 vol., Centenary edition (Boston and New York, 1903), vol. X, p. 452.

[27] Journal, I, p. 3.

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audible to us."[28] At the very time when his prodigal outpouring of praise for Confucius commenced, Thoreau recorded in his notebook the following Confucian passage extracted from The Phenix:[29]

> Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great speeches, elaborate discourse, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unknown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks, but what language does it use to preach to men, that there is a sovereign principle which makes them to act and move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature; it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent.[30]

What Confucius is trying to explain here is the sovereign principle of the universe, an impersonal providence which governs all above and below and which vouches for an ideal cosmic harmony. As he said in the "Analects": "The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced, but does Heaven say anything?"[31] Though for Confucius, Heaven never speaks any language directly, the universe is a moral universe, and nature has certain signals to reveal the moral quality. Confucius called it "the Decree of Heaven."[32] More precisely, Heaven for him is the symbol of the unity which permeates the universe as "a sovereign principle." This is the starting point of Confucius' ethical philosophy. It forms the backbone of his thought system to the

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[28] Journal, I, p. 55, Christy, p. 188.

[29] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America, p. 69.

[30] The Dial (April, 1843), p. 494.

[31] "Confucian Analects," BK. xvii, chap. xix, James Legge, ed. The Chinese Classics, p. 326.

[32] For more detail, see Yao-hsin Chang, "Chinese Influence in Emerson, Thoreau, and Pound," p. 37.

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extent that the whole of Confucianism would be meaningless without this basic assumption underpinning it. In the beginning of "The Doctrine of the Mean," Confucius explains the point : "What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature; an accordance with this nature is called The Path of Duty; the regulation of this path is called Instruction."[33] Confucius' portrait of humanity follows from this description of the cosmic order. According to Confucius' view, on the other hand, humanity is possessed of a capacity to detect such an impersonal ethical force of the universe through the phenomenon of nature because human nature has been derived from Heaven. Nature reveals signals to indicate the quality of Heaven. Chao Kung's chapter in the Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un Ts'ew) illustrates the point well:

> Heaven and Earth have their regular ways, and men take these for their pattern, imitating the brilliant bodies of Heaven and according with the natural diversities of the earth. Heaven and Earth produce the six atmospheric conditions, and make use of the five material elements. These conditions and elements become the five tastes, are manifested in the five colors, and are displayed in the five notes. When these are in excess, there ensue obscurity and confusion, and the people lose their proper nature. The rules of ceremony were therefore framed to support that nature.[34]

These characteristics of nature played the same role in dictating what the essence of the human mind and even society would be for Confucius. In this way, Confucius adopted nature as the basis for his ethical categories; he termed rules of conduct, ritual, rites,

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[33] "The Doctrine of the Mean," i, 1, James Legge, The Chinese Classics, p. 383.

[34] "The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen," Chao Kung 25, James Legge, The Chinese Classics, V, p. 708.

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proper behavior, propriety, and accordance of humanity with divine realms the term li.[35] Hsün Tzu, one of the most conspicuous Confucian scholars clearly explained the concept of li as follows:

> Li is that whereby Heaven and Earth unite, whereby the sun and moon are bright, whereby the four seasons are ordered, whereby the stars move in the course, whereby rivers flow, whereby all things prosper, whereby love and hatred are tempered, whereby joy and anger keep their proper place. It causes the lower orders to obey, and the upper orders to be illustrious; through a myriad changes it prevents going astray. But if one departs from it, he will be destroyed. Is not li the greatest of all principles?[36]

The li discriminates between the virtuous and the mean and ascertains what is right and wrong, as well as ascertaining that these qualities must also be present in nature.[37] Nature for Confucius, therefore, was a guiding providence, and one's fulfillment as a human being comes from acting in accordance with the principle of nature which corresponds to the mandate of Heaven. Thus the "Appendix" to The Book of Changes describes the ideal life of Chün Tzu as follows:

> The great man is he who is in harmony with his relations with Heaven and Earth; in his brightness with sun and moon; in his orderly procedure with the four seasons; in his relations with good and evil fortune, with the

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[35] In the Confucian tradition, the term li is usually translated as "rules," "ceremony," "ritual," or "propriety." Once the term came to mean etiquettes, in the temple or at court, but finally the term came to denote all standardized customs, especially those covering interpersonal relationships. For more detail, see Donald J. Munro, The Concept of Man in Early China (Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 26-27.

[36] Cited in Munro, p.33.

[37] For more detail, see Donald J. Munro, The Concept of Man in Early China, pp. 23-35.

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spiritual operations of the Providence.[38]

Interestingly enough, Thoreau, in his Journals of this period, presented the same allusion to the "sovereign principle" of the universe that he found first in Confucius. He began his journal with an exploration of the relationship among humanity, society, and the universe, conceiving of an impersonal God. To Thoreau, the probing into the relationships among these entities were the dimension of human conduct--of being--that raised the question of how to live-- the problem that from the start compelled his experimental life and search for an authentic way. "My desire is to know what I have lived," in the opening pages of his Journal, he wrote, "that I may know how to live henceforth."[39] He was not content with the Christian beliefs in a personal God, or in a salvation in heaven. The Sabbath bell did not always awaken pleasant associations in him, but made him "sick at heart of this pagoda worship" and his female-dominated home where sanctimonious recreations had to be endured every Sunday afternoon. He was prompted to write:

> Thus much let a man do: confidently and heatedly live up to his thought; for its error, if there be any, will soonest appear in practice, and if there be none, so much he may reckon as actual progress in the way of living.[40]

At this time Thoreau read the Confucian books and Zoroaster. From Phenix he inscribed excerpts in the "Miscellaneous Extracts"

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[38] "Appendix," iv, i, 6, James Legge, trans., The Book of Changes (Hong Kong University Press, 1960), p. 68.

[39] Journal, I, p. 9.

[40] Journal, I, pp. 54-55, pp. 31-33.

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and alluded to Confucius and the Zenda-Avesta in his Journal in 1843. Alongside of his Confucian selections, he wove the Confucian concept of the eloquence of silence and celestial music (revealed in the above quotation) into the whole of his themes: the bravery of virtue, solitude, society, friendship, and sound and silence [41]--themes that he attempted to bring together in his first extended composition, The Service. [42]

Thoreau agreed with the Chinese sage that the silence of nature is eloquent only to those spiritually alive and intellectually alert. He wrote in the autumn of 1837:

> Nature make no noise. The howling storm, the rustling leaf, the pattering rain are no disturbance, there is an essential and unexplored harmony in them. Why is it that thought flows with so deep and sparkling a current when the sound of music strikes the ear? When I would muse I complain not of a rattling tune on the piano cordant drumming is intolerable."[43]

His earliest distinction was between harmony and discord, the joy of the universe and the scream of humanity. But in 1838, the very year when he likened the Confucian canon to "a strain of music wafted down to us on the breeze of time through the aisles of innumerable ages," he used the imagery of sound as a spiritual language, as producer and agitator of nature. He was probably most indebted to Confucius for this image. On August 5, 1838, he wrote:

Some sounds seem to reverberate along the plain, and then

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[41] Thoreau listed the titles of the essays he wrote in these Journals in the Index Rerum. See F. B. Sanborn, The Life of Henry David Thoreau, p. 519.

[42] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America, p. 52.

[43] Journal, I, p. 12.

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> settle to earth again like dust; such are Noise, Discord, Jargon. But such only as spring heavenward, and I may catch from steeple and hilltops in their upward course, which are the more refined parts of the former, are the true sphere music,--pure, unmixed music,-- in which no wail mingles.[44]

In the plain and on the hilltop, in the dusty and in the "refined," he began to give the dimensions of the Confucian universe. In a journal entry for April 8, 1838, Thoreau described the language of the "sovereign principle" of the universe in remarkable parallel to the Confucian passage he recorded in his notebook:

> I felt that the heavens were all around,
> And the earth was all below,
> As when in the ear there rushes a sound
> Which thrills you from top to toe.[45]

In another poem, "The Cliffs & Springs," he recorded the imagery of sound as a pervading power of the universe in the same manner:

> Fondly to nestle me in that sweet melody,
> And own a kindred soul, speaking to me
> From out the depths of universal being.[46]

More importantly, Thoreau adopted, as did Confucius, the significance of sound as the herald of virtue. In the second section of The Service,[47] Thoreau described a passage which reveals a surprisingly close parallel to the Confucian notion of the moral universe. "The universe needed only to hear a divine melody," Thoreau wrote, "that every star might fall into its proper

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[44] Journal, I, p. 53.

[45] Journal, I, p. 46.

[46] Collected Poems of Henry David Thoreau, ed. by Carl Bode, (Chicago, 1943), p. 92.

[47] The Service, ed. by F. B. Sanborn (Boston, 1902).

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place, and assume its true sphericity." The brave person, the spheral person coincident with the universe, was accordingly "the sole patron of music." "His language," Thoreau wrote, "must have the same majestic movement and cadence that philosophy assigns to the heavenly bodies. The steady flux of his thought constitutes time in music. The universe falls in and keeps pace with it.... Hence are poetry and song."[48] Music for Thoreau was Heaven's voice, the echo of the soul; and thus, as the sound of necessity, it allied him with the universe and the cause of right, a remark surprisingly close to the concept through which Confucius perceived the spherical language as a basis for the moral categories. Not only was it the means of union--"He is no longer insulated, but infinitely related and familiar"--but the binding force of friendship and the "herald of virtue." Hereafter, he always responded to sound as the indication of the sovereign principle of the universe: "There is as much music in the world as virtue."[49] In an entry for December, 1840 Thoreau remarked that:

> The brave man is the sole patron of music; he recognizes it for mother tongue,--a more multifluous and articulate language than words, in comparison with which speech is recent and temporary.[50]

An observation parallels to the Confucian view of the language of the universe. Thoreau mentioned God's music on July 31, 1840: "Any

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[48] The Service (Boston, 1902), p. 11.

[49] The Service, pp. 12-13.

[50] Journal, I, p. 102.

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melodious sound apprises me of the infinite wealth of God."[51] Then, on August 12, 1840 he said, "When I hear a strain of music from across the street, I put away Homer and Shakespeare, and read them in the original."[52] An entry for August 18, 1841 reveals a sense of the mysterious "music" of the interior silence preceding audible music:

> I did not hear the strains after they had issued from the flute, but before they were breathed into it, for the original strain precedes the sound by as much as the echo follows after, and the rest is the perquisite of the rocks and trees and beasts. Unpremeditated music is the true gauge which measures the current of our thoughts, the very undertow of our life's stream.[53]

Thoreau continued to express his feelings about music on January 8, 1842 when he described his music box in the following manner:

> These single strains, these melodious cadences which plainly proceed out of a very deep meaning and a sustained soul, are the interjections of God. They are perhaps the expression of the perfect knowledge which the righteous at length attain to.[54]

One month later, he described his feeling about the unstruck sounds:

> I was always conscious of sounds in nature which my ears could never hear--that I caught but a prelude to a strain. She always retreats as I advance. Away behind and behind is she and her meaning. Will not this faith and expectation make to itself ears at length? I never saw to the end, nor heard to the end; but the best part

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[51] Consciousness in Concord: The Text of Thoreau's Hitherto "Lost Journal"(1840-1841), ed. Perry Miller (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1958), p. 139.

[52] Ibid., p. 152.

[53] Journal, I, pp. 271-72.

[54] Journal, I, p. 317.

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was unseen and unheard.[55]

He again mentioned nature's sounds on February 8, 1857, when he said that "Debauched and worn-out senses require the vibrations of an instrument to excite them, but sound and still youthful senses, not enervated by luxury, hear music in the wind and rain and running water" and again, that "music is perpetual, and only hearing is intermittent"[56] In these and many other journal entries, Thoreau set forth a philosophy of sound as the source of virtue which evolves around the Confucian notion of the impersonal ethical force of the universe. It is not being claimed, however, that his adopting such a philosophy of sound as a moral force resulted exclusively from his readings in the Chinese classics. His propensity of the moral concern Thoreau undoubtedly inherited from his New England Puritan background.[57] It was intensified by his reading Greek and European authors and Hindu philosophy,[58] which exerted a good deal of influence on his thinking.

Going beyond his use of the Confucian allusion in a philosophy

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[55] Journal, I, 317.

[56] Journal, IX, pp. 244-45.

[57] R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. 21; Leo Stoller, "Thoreau's Doctrine of Simplicity," in Thoreau: Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 37.

[58] The ritualistic verses of the Rig Veda interrelated music, astronomy, physics, and metaphysics through the mystical sound OM. According to Swami Prajnanananda, the theory of sound in the vedas was further elaborated in the ancient Sanskrit work of the Vedic Age(1000-550 B. C.). For more detail, see, Swami Prajnanananda, Historical Development of India Music (Calcutta; Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960), pp. 40-83.

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of sound, Thoreau deciphered the Confucian canon in a way to appropriate to his own Transcendental idea. A selection of Confucius in the Dial and his translation of the same passage (from Pauthier's French version) in Walden shows that he interpolated the Confucian notion of the deity the immanence of God in all things in his own Transcendental mode. In the October, 1843 issue of the Dial, Thoreau quoted a following from "The Doctrine of the Mean" for the Dial:

> Confucius exclaimed, 'How vast the influence of the Kwei-shin(spirit or gods). If you look for them, you cannot see them: if you listen, you cannot hear them: they embody all things and are what things cannot be separated from. When they cause mankind to fast, purify, and dress themselves everything appears full of them. They seem to be at once above, and on the right, and the left.' The Ode[59] says, "The descent of gods cannot be apprehended: with what reverence we should conduct ourselves. Indeed that which is least is clearly displayed. This cannot be concealed.[60]

This is a passage on which Confucian scholarship is much divided.[61] One thing seems obvious, however: that although Confucius took accurate records of the omnipresent power whose creation is the world, he has no intention of develop his views on the power of spiritual beings or agencies. There the translator translated--and

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[59] The Ode is the Book of Odes (Shi King).

[60] The Dial (October,1843), p. 209. Cf. "The Doctrine of the Mean," xvi, i, 2, and 3, Legge, p. 397.

[61] The Sung school explains the term Kwei-shin (spirit or gods) with reference to their physical theory of the universe, derived, as they think, from The Book of Changes(Yi King). Chu's master, Ch'ang explains, "The term Kwei-shin are the energetic operations of Heaven and Earth, and the traces of production and transformation." The scholar Chang says The Kwei-shin are the easily acting power of the two breaths of nature." For more detail, see Legge, The Chinese Classics, p. 398.

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rightly too--as "the subtle powers of the Heaven and Earth." We can observe how Thoreau fused the quotation with his Transcendental system in Walden. In the chapter on "Solitude," Thoreau put the same passage with his own translation from Pauthier's Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient, along with a remark that all men want to be near "The perennial source of our life, whence in all our experience we have found that to issue, as the willow stands near the water and sends out roots in that direction."[62] He continued to point out that this source is near us at all times: "Next to us is not the workman whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to talk, but the workman whose work we are."[63] This sentence that precedes the passage from Confucius makes it clear that Thoreau saw the Confucian notion of the impersonal ethical force as the Transcendental Spirit:

> How vast and profound is the influence of the subtle powers of Heaven and of Earth!
>
> We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them: we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them: identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them.
>
> They cause that in all the universe men purify and sanctify their hearts, and clothe themselves in their holiday garments to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtle intelligences. They are everywhere, above us, on our left, on our right: they environs us on all sides.[64]

Since he was essentially an eclectic thinker, capable of adapting

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[62] Writings, II, p. 147.

[63] Writings, II, p. 148.

[64] Writings, II, p. 149.

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ideas from various sources that seemed to be mutually exclusive, Thoreau took from the Confucian canon only the ideas that particularly appealed to him and read his own meanings into the passages to reinforce those of his own tentative ideas that were essential to further development.

Another internal evidence of his interpretation of the Confucian notion in his own Transcendental mode may be found in his interpolation of a metaphoric passage from Mencius. In the Dial, Thoreau quoted the following:

> Benevolence is man's heart, and justice is man's path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart.[65]

Thoreau used his own translation of this passage from Pauthier in A Week: "Mencius says: 'if one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart he does not know how to seek them again. The duties of practical philosophy consist only of seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.[66] In Walden, Thoreau interpolated the same passage in his own Transcendental mode:

> I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, 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

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[65] The Dial, (October, 1843), p. 206.

[66] See, Writings, I, p. 280.

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themselves.[67]

Here Thoreau was indulging in one of his Transcendental plunges which proves that he deciphered Confucian ideas in a much more Transcendental manner, appropriating them to his own creed of self-cultivation. By interpolating Mencius, Thoreau revealed a veiled reference to his desire to seek his "lost heart."

The Journals of his early periods reveal the delirious pains of that discovery. When he wrote in his college essays: "what you can get of moral or intellectual excellence out of this little plot of ground you call yourself, by the sweat of your brow--is your portion,"[68] his primary concern was not nature, but self-cultivation-- reaching for the world of the infinite. As we will see below, the infinite he sought, like the one Confucius sought, he found within himself. "The perfect man," he wrote, "has both genius and talent.... The body is the first proselyte the Soul makes. Our life is but the Soul made known by its fruits, the body. The whole duty of man may be expressed in one line--Make to yourself a perfect body."[69] Make to yourself, he might have said, a perfect virtue. In my view, in a more than adequate way, Thoreau expressed what Confucius wanted to say. That Thoreau quoted him as saying, "All things are contained in ourselves. There is no greater joy than to turn round on ourselves and become perfect."[70]

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[67] Writings, II, pp. 18-19.

[68] Sanborn, p. 67.

[69] Journal, I, p. 119.

[70] The Dial, (October, 1843), p. 205.

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The Confucian person is, as Lim Boon Keng described, possessed of an intellectual faculty enabling him to perceive the cosmic order on the assumption that man derived his nature from Heaven and that the inherent goodness of his nature is a divine gift.[71] Confucius repeatedly told us that "Man is born for uprightness"("Analects," BK., vi, chap. xvii),[72] and showed his concern for the inner spirit, which was to be effected by the appropriate modes of behavior. Mencius also dwelt on the subject by taking his cue from his master. In the October, 1843 issue of the Dial, Thoreau quoted him: "The human figure and color possess a divine nature." The best way in which man can keep his nature, according to Confucius, is by cultivating two obvious virtues--sincerity and magnanimity. Significantly, Thoreau quoted the passage containing the point as follows:

> The superior man's nature consists in this, that benevolence, justice, propriety, and wisdom, have their root in his heart, and are exhibited in his countenance. They shine forth in his face and go through to his back.[73]

This capacity of man to be loyal to his own nature Confucius called "truth" or "sincerity." And sincerity, as Thoreau quoted him saying, is "the Taou or way of heaven; to aim at it is the way of

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[71] Lim Boom Keng, "The Confucian way of Thinking of the World and of God," Asiatic Review, XV (April, 1919), pp. 175-76.

[72] The Master frequently says, "What Heaven has conferred is called the Nature" (James Legge, "The Doctrine of the mean," I, 1); "Men are all alike in nature, (Legge, "Analects," XVII, 2) in The Chinese Classics (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), vol. I.

[73] The Dial, (October, 1843), p. 205.

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man"("The Doctrine of the Mean," xx, 18).[74] By this account, Confucianism, like Thoreau's own Transcendentalism, regards the attainment at sincerity as the most excellent thing which can lead man not only to the reform of society, but also to eternity:

> The possessor of sincerity does not merely accomplish the self-completion of himself. With this quality he completes other men and things also. The completing himself shows his perfect virtue. The completing other men and things shows his knowledge. Both these are virtues belonging to the nature, and this is the way by which a union is effected of the external and internal. Therefore, whenever he--the entirely sincere man --employs them,--that is, these virtues,--their action will be right.[75]

In The Service (1840) while he was demanding the moral equivalent of war as a spiritual crusade for truth that would electrify the feeble virtue of his age, Thoreau depicted the exact concept of Confucian self-culture in his own idiom. "The exploit of a brave life," Thoreau wrote, "consists in its momentary completeness."[76] The imagery of warfare was only a way of embodying the life of endeavor as opposed to "livelihood." "Effort," he wrote, "is the prerogative of virtue"--"It is not enough that our life is an easy one; we must live on the stretch." And again: "It concerns us, rather, to be somewhat here present, than to leave something behind us."[77] The bravery he defined was that of being, that of the perfectly related but integral self.

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[74] The Dial (October, 1843), p. 206.

[75] "The Doctrine of the Mean," xxv, 3, Legge, pp. 418-419.

[76] The Service, p. 24.

[77] Ibid., p. 23.

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"For an impenetrable shield," he wrote, "stand inside yourself. For armor of proof, mea virtue me involvo--I wrap myself in my virtue." Elsewhere he further commented, "The state of complete manhood is virtue, and virtue and bravery are one."[78] In an entry for January 1, 1842, Thoreau also remarked that "Virtue is the deed of the bravest" in parallel to Confucian doctrine. "Heaven," as Thoreau quoted Confucius as saying, "created all men having their duties and the means or rules of performing them. It is the natural and constant disposition of men to love beautiful virtue."[79]

Thoreau was not one to be content with an abstract idealism hidden in the page of a journal. "I am startled," he had written in 1840, "when I consider how little I am actually about the things I wrote in my journal. . . . What a tame life we are living! How little heroic it is!"[80] His nature was such that he felt compelled to reflect not only upon his life and his moral conduct, but also to act upon any principles derived therefrom. It was necessary for him to engage with life-- to assert himself--not on paper, but as a participant. On the occasion when he desired to engage in life as a member of society, Thoreau went to live at Emerson's.

In the Concord life, however, instead of finding a world congenial to his idealism, he found monotony, ugliness, and decay; therefore, his life became an increasing struggle to maintain the

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[78] Journal, I, p. 98.

[79] The Dial, III (1843), p. 205. Thoreau took the passages from The Chinese Classical Work, commonly called the Four Books, trans. David Collie (Malacca, 1828), p. 173, p. 168, p. 164.

[80] Journal, I, p. 143, p. 115.

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integrity of the Transcendental spirit and by 1845 disillusion and defeat were his companions. The most noticeable events that made their major contributions to Thoreau's disillusion were, I think, derived from his disappointment in Emerson's insufficiency, his brother John's death, and his night in jail.

After reading Nature and hearing its author's Phi Beta Kappa oration, "The American Scholar," Thoreau took Emerson as a mentor and guide on the road to truth. "When tne master meets his pupil as a man," he wrote in January, 1841 (a year before going to Emerson's) "then first do we stand under the same heavens, and master and pupil alike go down the resistless ocean stream together."[81] Because of this deference to Emerson, Thoreau accepted his suggestion to join his household as gardener and handyman in exchange for free room and board; later he became everyone's helper: Emerson's nature tutor and Cato, Lidian's squire, the children's friend-- in time, as Emerson lectured away from home, not only the man of the house, but secretary and managing editor of the Dial.

In fact, Thoreau's purpose in going to Emerson's was to become neither the man of the house, nor the secretary and managing editor of the Dial, but to participate as a member of a Transcendentalist holy movement for the reformation of society. However, with close association with and close observation of Emerson, came the realization that he was by no means the man Thoreau previously expected, but a man of ceremony and order, possessed of the

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[81] Ibid., I, p. 204.

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inevitable feet of clay. The Journal entry for August, 1841 began to reveal his feeling of disappointment: "If any man assist me in the way of the world, let him derive satisfaction from the deed itself, for I think I never shall have dissolved my prior relations to God. If any have been kind to me, what more do they want? My obligations will be my lightest load."[82] As Sherman Paul suggests, "if Emerson was to learn gardening from his junior, Thoreau was to learn the Transcendental craft from Emerson," gained in helping Emerson edit the Dial.[83] But in a Journal entry written in 1842, Thoreau showed a more discouraged feeling about his life at Emerson's: "I feel as if my life had grown more outward since I could express it." He wrote continually his feeling of disillusionment: "Society affects to estimate men by their talents, but really feels and knows them by their characters. What a man does, compared with what he is, is but a small part. To require that our friend possess a certain skill is not to be satisfied till he is something less than our friend."[84] The only thing Thoreau took advantage of at Emerson's was the Oriental books in his library, which became the initial engagement with the Oriental life he would lead at Walden Pond.

The second disillusionment Thoreau felt in Concord arose from the death of his brother in 1842. No one had been or ever was closer to Henry than John Thoreau was. Between the brothers there

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[82] Ibid., pp.279-80.

[83] Sherman Paul, The shores of America (Urbana, 1958), p. 100.

[84] Journal, I, p. 349, 352.

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was a sharing of experience and aspiration in pursuit of a ideal world. They operated a private school together after Henry resigned his teaching job in the town school after two weeks because he refused to flog the students. The brothers took a long voyage together to the White Mountains via the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. When John was stricken with a fatal case of lock-jaw, Henry was stricken with a nearly fatal case of sympathetic lock-jaw. In this respect, we can say that the ideal world he attempted to seek out in A Week embodied his reminiscence of that journey with John.

The third corroding experience was Thoreau's imprisonment in the Concord jail because he had refused to pay taxes. With regard to government, Thoreau's principles are almost purely Transcendental. There are, for Thoreau, only individuals and the only fundamental law is the law of morality. If political expedience and the law of morality clash, it becomes the duty of the individual citizen to follow the divine law--that is, the voice of his conscience within.[85] The government he idealizes is, therefore, not a government by force but a government by co-operation. Thoreau constantly keeps in mind the danger of central government. No matter for what good purpose a government is established, it too soon becomes institutionalized. Founded to serve the individual, it inevitably ends in subordinating the individual to its own purpose. The protection of the institution of slavery by the federal, state, and even local governments of Thoreau's own time was to him convincing evidence of this inherent

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[85] Harding, A Thoreau Handbook, p. 145.

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danger. For this reason, institutions or any organizations on the base of an artificial formula or a set of rules is an archenemy: "I love man--kind but I hate the institutions of the dead kind. Men execute nothing so faithfully as the will of dead, to the last codicil and letter. They rule this world, and the living are but their executors."[86] For Thoreau, an enthusiastical pursuer of the spiritual life, it was hard to devote himself, in one way or another, to the "dead institution," which it was the state; thus, he refused to pay taxes. However, Thoreau found out that the gap between his quest and reality was too wide to be filled by refusing action itself. The disillusion bound to harass him resulted in his writing "Civil Disobedience," an essay in which he severely criticized the state as a "dead institution."

These disillusions created the sharpest conflict in Thoreau's life. This reaction was as intense as his initial inquiry. For Thoreau the depression resulted from the disparity between what he sought and what he found. He was to seek out a new authentic faith with which he could settle down.

At this time, Thoreau read Oriental scriptures ardently. It was the Oriental scriptures which provided Thoreau with confirmation of his own views on the way of piety, the activity of contemplation that directed man not only to a union with the spirit, but also to nature. This is evidenced by his Journal entry for August 7, 1841: "The impression which those sentences made on me last night has awakened me before any cock crowing. Their

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[86] Writings, I, p. 142

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influence lingers around me like a fragrance, or as the fog hangs over the earth late into the day."[87] Two days later, Thoreau remarked on a more intensive impression of the Orient: "Its spirit, like a more subtle ether, sweeps along with the prevailing winds of the country. Its influence conveys a new gloss to the meadows and the depths of the woods, and bathes the huckleberries on the hills, as sometimes a new influence in the sky washes in waves over the fields and seems to break on some invisible beach in the air. All things confirm it. It spends the mornings and evenings."[88] The evidence in his Journals of this period shows that he was first attracted to "Hindoo" writings, and first of all to The Law of Manu.[89] The references in his Journal from that time on show his fascination and rapidly broadening acquaintance with these texts.[90]

Besides The Law of Manu in Emerson's library, there were two translations of the Confucian books in English. The first book of these was Joshua Marshman, The Works of Confucius: Containing the Original Text, with a Translation.... The second was David Collie, The Chinese Classical Work, Commonly Called The Four Books, which I mentioned in the previous chapter. Significantly, the items in Thoreau's selections from "Saying of Confucius" for the April,

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[87] Journal, I, p. 267.

[88] Journal, I, p. 268.

[89] Arthur Christy, The Orient in American Transcendentalism, p. 188.

[90] In an entry for May 31, for example, he wrote: "That title, 'The Laws of Menu with the Gloss of Culluca,' comes to me such a volume of sound as if it had swept unobstructed over the plains of Hindostan..." Journal, I, p. 261.

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1843 issue of the Dial such as virtue, self-cultivation, and sound and silence corresponded to the themes of the Journals of this period. In the October issue, Thoreau reflected more clearly the current of his attitude toward society. The selections were categorized under headings(except the first section, which deals with perfection, or the superior man): "The Scholar," "The Taou," "Of Reform," "War," "Politics," and "Virtue." Thoreau also continued to read the French version of the Confucian books during his Walden period, and translated them into quotes for Walden. For Thoreau, the Confucian canon, though gilded by the patina of antiquity, still preserved immutable wisdom which enthralled him throughout his life. In addition, Thoreau seems to imply that he was attracted by the pragmatic efficacy and delicate inculcation of morality he found in the Confucian teachings. Thoreau was particularly concerned with the Confucian notion of the self-cultivation of noble qualities, or supreme virtue. He encouraged his compatriots to cultivate their own virtues. He captured the spirit of Confucius and his insistence on virtuous behavior and the way of life. Since, like Confucius, he believed that self-reform was a foundation for reforming not only the outward life of man, but also ultimately his society, he decided to take up a semi-isolated residence in a small house on the shore of Walden Pond. The purpose of his sojourn was by no means to live the life of a hermit, but rather to live as the Confucian Chün Tzu. He strove for the authentic; he wanted to enlighten, guide, and teach his neighbors a way of living necessary to a spiritual life. To do

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this he experimented with whether heterogenous Oriental ideas could be actualized in the Western world.

In the following paragraphs, I will try to delineate the core of Confucian thought, the cultivation of the self, that Thoreau relied on in Walden. In Walden, Thoreau used the same image of the Confucian Chün Tzu which he cherished and endeavored to follow throughout his life. He not only visualized for himself the characteristic of the ideal Chün Tzu-- humanity, wisdom and devotion--but also tried to influence the masses in achieving such an ideal. This exemplary figure, Thoreau believed, could lead the unenlightened universe to an awakening of inward life through spiritual regeneration. By analyzing the Confucian quotations Thoreau used, we can understand how the Confucian concept of the Chün Tzu was interwoven into the main threads of Walden. At Walden Pond Thoreau undertook a program of self-development that was remarkably similar to the one advocated in the Four Books. The emphasis on the crucial concept of the Chün Tzu and the completion of program of self-cultivation, provide some valid comparative grounds between the two thinkers.

As did the philosophers and prophets of so many ages and cultures, Confucius offered a return to virtue as a solution for the ills and evil of his day. Unless men individually embraced the ideal of jen--humanity, benevolence, perfect virtue--there was no hope that society could be spared the evil, cruelty and violence that was destroying it. Out of selfishness, men seeks for their own needs and interests, or those of their families, rather than

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caring about their own moral prosperity. Witnessing this prevalent chaos in the social life of his time,[91] Confucius complained that the moral law of the universe was being neglected by the wise and the dull alike,[92] and that virtue and righteousness were not being cultivated.[93] Confucius felt so disappointed with the spiritual decay of the time that the ideal principles of the Duke of Cho had virtually ceased to energize him any more.[94] Moreover, he was disappointed with the behavior of men. His inventory of the moral deficiencies of the "small man" is surprisingly long, and he even went so far as to declare that he saw nc one around him who would

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[91] The society Confucius encountered was not a stable one. China was split into a number of small feudal states which were perpetually alternating or making war upon each other or upon what the Chinese people called the barbarians, who pushed them on all sides. The monarchs of the central court of the Chou Dynasty, who had once given harmony and security to the nation, became feeble and ineffective before the force of the more powerful feudal lords. Kings were commanded about by their vassals, rulers dethroned or executed by their ministers, fathers slain by their sons. All was chaos and lawlessness among the ruling class and there seemed to be no higher authority, physical or spiritual, which men might beseech. For more detail, see Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York, 1960), compiled by Wm. Theodore de Pary, Wang-tsit Chan, and Bouton Watson, pp. 15-31.

[92] See, James Legge, "The Doctrine of the Mean," iv, 1; v, pp. 387-389.

[93] In chapter III of "Book VII. Shù R," "the Master said, "The leaving virtue without proper cultivation; the not thoroughly discussing what is learned; not being able to move toward righteousness of which a knowledge is gained; and not being able to change what in not good;--theses are the things which occasion me solitude," James Legge, p. 195.

[94] Ibid., vii, v, p. 196.

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willingly take good care of his own moral prosperity.[95] Thus he awoke to the desperate need to "renovate the people" by "rectifying their hearts."[96] In spite of all these moanings and stinging criticisms, Confucius never questioned the virtuousness of human perfection. The ideal image of man and society kept floating before his eyes and never failed to inspire him in his attempt to realize it. The Four Books is thus, essentially, an exposition of the ways in which Confucius and his disciples and followers tried to work out a way for man to become morally healthy and escape the dire fate of spiritual deficiency. To Confucius there is nothing, of which the mind of the moral man cannot conceive.[97] He was confident that, with self-denial and a return to propriety(li), one could become a man of perfect virtue for the world to admire. The Master thus said,

> To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him.[98]

Mencius was more optimistic than his master. He actually arrived at the position that all who are bent on the attainment, can become

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[95] The Master said, "It is all over! I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself," see, Legge, "Confucian Analects," BK. v, chap. xxvii, p. 183.

[96] Legge, "The Great Learning," 1-4, pp. 356-357.

[97] See, "The Doctrine of The Mean," chap. xiii, 1-4, Legge, pp. 393-395.

[98] "Confucian Analects," BK. XII. chap. i, 1, Legge, p. 250.

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like Yao and Shun.[99] In this respect, the goal of Confucius's teachings can be said to be the rearing of a Chün Tzu, a potential ruler of society who alone possesses the vision to see beyond personal profit and material interest to the broader interest of the state and mankind.

Transcendental philosophy, like Confucianism, evolves around the humanistic concern that, vitiated by commercial and materialistic pursuits, man has gradually abandoned his innate divinity, the potential by which man can claim to become a Chün Tzu. Sadly, the channel to divinity is often obstructed and man become a sheer brute. "Talk of a divinity in man!" Thoreau sneers at the beginning of Walden:

> Look at the teamster on the highway, wending to the market by day or night; does any divinity stir in him? His highest duty is to fodder and water his horses.[100]

The truly virtuous man or the paradigmatic Chün Tzu was hard to find, and Thoreau mourned, "How many men are there to a square thousand miles? Hardly one."[101] Thus, Thoreau's zeal for the cause of Captain John Brown, a true man and Chün Tzu in his mind, can be understood.

Not only did Thoreau complain that everyone was leading a life

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[99] From the ancient legends, Confucius selected the figures of the sage-kings Yao and Shun, King T'ang, the wise founder of the Shang dynasty, and above all the great ancestors of the ruling house of the Chu, Kings Wen and Wu, and the Duke of Chou, to be his ideals. Confucius embodied these men as the prototypes of an ideal man in his system. For more detail, see Sources of Chinese Tradition, pp. 18-19.

[100] Writings, II, p. 8.

[101] Journal, VI, p. 200.

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of quiet desperation, but he also deplored the dismal condition of widespread lethargy and spiritual malaise. He wrote that:

> only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake.[102]

However, he could no longer sit as a spectator of the dismal condition of his contemporaries. So, as a responsible Chün Tzu, Thoreau decided to "brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up."[103]

So long as man can carry out the principle of self-cultivation advocated by Confucius and restore his awakened intelligence, he can embark on individual moral reform as the first step to the reformation of society. The point is well elaborated in the beginning of "The Great Learning":

> The ancient who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their heart. Wishing to rectify their heart, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in investigation of things.[104]

As manifested above, the reform formula in the Confucian classics prizes the development of a well-balanced individual, a well-

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[102] Writings, II, p. 100.

[103] Writings, II, p. 94.

[104] James Legge trans., "The Great Learning," in The Chinese Classics, vol. I (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), pp. 357-8.

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ordered family, a well-governed state, and a happy stable world. But for the attainment of this goal, one must complete the more basic formula which begins with "investigation of things." Man's intellectual mind is a gift from Heaven, according to Confucius. It is certainly molded to perceive true principles in nature, and there is not a single thing in which the principles do not inhere. But so long as all principles are not investigated, according to James Legge's commentary taken from the scholar Ch'ang, man's knowledge becomes incomplete.[105] By this account, at the outset of its lessons "The Great Learning," instructs learners in regard to all things in nature, to proceed from what knowledge he has of their principles, and to pursue his investigation of them, until he reaches the extreme point. After exerting himself in this way for a long time, he will find himself possessed of a wide and far-reaching penetration. Then, the qualities of all things, whether external or internal, the subtle or the coarse, will all be apprehended, and the mind, in its entire substance and in its relations to things, will be perfectly intelligent. This is what Confucius called the perfect of knowledge and the road to the reform of society. For this reason, Confucius said repeatedly, "Take care of the heart of the individual, and the world will take care of itself."[106]

Like Confucius, Thoreau believed that all reform must come

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[105] For the brief account of the meaning of the investigation of things, I have followed chiefly Legge's commentary from The Chinese Classics, pp. 365-366.

[106] "The Doctrine of the Mean," Legge, p. 382.

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from within, and that when each individual reformed himself, then the reformation of society would automatically follow.[107] Thoreau thus devoted himself to a quest for self-perfection--as Norman Forester put it a quest "undertaken in all purity of body and mind and soul."[108] As Thoreau himself said in Walden, "I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."[109] To investigate the true principle in nature, "I love to see," Thoreau wrote, "anything that implied a simpler mode of life and a great nearness to the earth."[110] He saw a close association with nature as a means toward a fuller life. It was a purgative, a panacea for the ills of civilization: "I have come to this hill to see the sun go down, to recover sanity and put myself again in relation with Nature."[111] "Nature, the earth herself, is the only panacea. They bury poisoned sheep up to the necks in earth to take the poisoned out of them."[112] Elsewhere he remarked further: "It is important, then, that we should air our lives from time to time by removals, and excursions into the fields and woods,--starve our

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[107] Walter Harding, A Thoreau Handbook, p. 143.

[108] Harding, A Thoreau Handbook, p. 153.

[109] Writings, II, pp. 100-101.

[110] Journal, XIV, p. 88.

[111] Journal, VI, p. 329.

[112] Journal, XII, p. 350.

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vices."[113]

It was, therefore, an almost inevitable corollary of Thoreau's search for the ideal life that he should become involved in a search for the Chün Tzu, the man in perfect correspondence with the moral order of the universe. "It is the marriage of the soul with Nature that makes the intellect fruitful, that gives birth to imagination."[114] The chapter "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" dwells on the crucial task of the Chün Tzu: to extend the personal influence of a moral or virtuous man to a social and even universal scope. In a passage in this chapter, Thoreau alluded to the famed lines from The Great Learning. Singing a hymn of praise to dawn, Thoreau asserts that "morning brings back the heroic ages." He finds each morning to be "a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself."[115] Getting up early and bathing in Walden Pond was for him something of a religious exercise.

> Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night.[116]

As Thoreau executed the ceremonial of purifying himself in Walden Pond, he was both physically and spiritually vitalized. He perceived that he was truly awakened not only to the day, but to life itself. Significantly, in doing so, Thoreau cited the

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[113] Journal, XII, p. 343.

[114] Journal, II, p. 413.

[115] Writings, II, p. 98.

[116] Writings, II, p. 99.

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following Confucian passage in his eulogy of the "auroral character":

> They say that characters were engraved on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.[117]

For both Confucius and Thoreau, "morning" takes on symbolic significance, suggestive of perennial renewal. The auroral freshness encourages awareness, simplicity, and purity, all conducive to discovering the inner self, to feeling spiritual union with the cosmos.

In the Confucian classics and in Walden, therefore, the rituals of rebirth and the characteristic use of morning imagery are two cardinal notions. There is an ambition for the extensive moral renovation of the universe to be carried out here and now. Both thinkers underscore that the Chün Tzu, the innately divine man, is the only person who can initiate and perform this reform. In Thoreau's words, the Chün Tzu is "the only one in a hundred millions ... awake enough to a poetic or divine life."

Recognizing in the process of moral improvement the step from the personal to the cosmic level, Thoreau emphasizes the cultivation and preservation of individual goodness and sincerity as its root. In Walden, Thoreau refers to the famous passage in The Works of Mencius:

> A return to the goodness produced each day in the tranquil and beneficent breath of the morning causes that in respect to the love of virtue and the hatred of vice, one approaches a little the primitive nature of man, as

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[117] Writings, II, p. 98.

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> the sprouts of the forest which have been felled. In like manner the evil which one does in the interval of a day prevents the germs of virtues which began to spring up again from developing themselves and destroys them.
>
> After the germs of virtue have thus been prevented many times from developing themselves, then the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice to preserve them. As soon as the breath of evening does not suffice longer to preserve them, then the nature of man does not differ much from that of the brute. Men seeing the nature of this man like that of the brute, think that he has never possessed the innate faculty of reason. Are those the true and natural sentiments of man?[118]

This passage, the longest one among Thoreau's Confucian quotations, is taken from the "Kao Tzu" chapter of The Works of Mencius and is primarily concerned with the subject of human goodness, the pivotal question of Confucianism. The perfectibility of humanity endorses that man can aspire to divinity in his moral attributes. In opposition to Kao Tzu, who argued that human nature is indeterminate, neither good nor evil, and hence susceptible to external influences, Mencius drew forth a counter example, Mount Niu, a once beautiful mountain now deforested and denuded of vegetation. Mencius posed a rhetorical question: "To these things is owing to bare and stripped appearance of the mountain, and when people see it, they think it was never finely wooded. But is this the nature of the mountain?" Mencius believed that the present condition does not represent the true nature of the mountain. Neither then, does man's evil state represent what his true nature is, but is, rather, the result of his giving in to temptations and abuses:

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[118] Writings, II, pp. 347-48. Cf, Legge, Mencius, BK. vi, pt. i, chap. viii, p. 408.

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> And so also of what properly belongs to man-- shall it be said that the mind of any man was without benevolence and righteousness? The way in which man loses his proper goodness of mind is like the way in which the trees are denuded by axes and bills. Hewn down day after day, can it-- the mind-- retain its beauty?[119]

Mencius' poetic and half occult allusion to the pure and renovating influence of "the calm air of the morning" must have struck the Transcendentalists like Thoreau and Emerson as extremely congenial. The Transcendentalists, of course, have propounded the general divinity in man, they insist again and again on the cultivation of reason as the sole way to gain, or rather, regain access to the Over Soul. Cultivation of reason underscores the Confucian self-discipline as well as the Transcendental apotheosis of the intuitive faculties in man: of reason demands a shunning of physical and material desires in order to move toward metaphysical and non-material virtues.

In addition, Thoreau's constant use of dawn imagery in Walden carries heavy overtones of the Mencian "calm air of the morning." Thoreau affirmed that "The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour.[120] He goes on to say that

> All memorable events, I should say, transpire in the morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say 'All intelligences awake with the morning.'

Mencius also believed that in the morning "the germ of virtue" remains intact and clean because of the unadulterated calm air of

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[119] "Mencius," BK. vi, pt. i, chap. viii, 1-2, Legge, pp. 407-408.

[120] Writings, II, p. 99.

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the morning. Therefore, the initial step toward self-discipline is the essential preparation of the innate goodness of the mind,

> if it receives its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not grow. If it loses its proper nourishment, there is nothing which will not decay away.[121]

The Confucian Chün Tzu, a man who is able to invigorate his moral self, conserved his virtue forever tranquil and clean as in the morning.

Furthermore, Thoreau, like Mencius, glorified the dawn qualities of the Chün Tzu and deplores the loss of the true self in the course of materialistic pursuits. The condition of a truant individual resembles the denuded Mount Niu, as suggested in the Mencian passage. In the Walden chapter "The Bean Field," Thoreau also presents to us a parable, bemoaning the fact that the seeds he had planted, the seeds of virtue, were worm-eaten and hence did not sprout. Thoreau determined not to plant beans and corn with so much industry another summer; instead he would plant such seeds only, "if the seed is not lost, as sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence, and the like."[122] The symbolism of the seeds of Nature and of human nature figures prominently here. Thoreau loved the seeds because they bound him to the earth. In other words, they argue for his sense of kindredness with Nature. Furthermore, in his mind, the actual seeds became seeds of virtue because they symbolize the potential harvest of spending months in solitude and

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[121] "Mencius," BK. vi, pt. i, chap. ix, 3, Legge, p. 409.

[122] Writings, II, p. 174.

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in constant communion with Nature. However difficult they may have been, the virtues and the exalted inner life are the highest goals Thoreau strove to achieve. The seeds of sincerity or truth, significantly enough, were the cardinal virtues to which Confucius staunchly adhered. They were the sole approach to the restoration of "the proper goodness of the mind."

The cultivation of beans represents the cultivation of the mind or of a moral personality; extraneous thoughts are weeded out. Knowing rather than eating, beans is Thoreau's primary concern: "Not that I wanted beans to eat, for I am by nature a Pythagorean so far as beans are concerned."[123] As a Pythagorean, Thoreau, in tilling the soil (and symbolically the soul), meditates on the material world that he might understand its essence. Beans in the Pythagorean sense yield clues to the world of the spirit and serve to harmonize the self with the informing universal spirit. Pythagoras, then, set an example of asceticism and philosophical inquiry by which Thoreau could better cultivate his own Transcendental virtues. Thoreau did not care for beans, his interest in them was as a poet and philosopher rather than as a consumer or politician. If beans and laboring in the beanfield serve a higher purpose, "perchance ... only for the sake of tropes and expression, to serve a parable maker one day," as Thoreau put it, then the entire chapter on "The Bean Field" can be understood as a parable of the spirit's cultivation of virtue in "sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence, and the life." To know beans

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[123] Writings, II, p. 172.

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is to know humanity and the way to cultivate human perfection.

When Thoreau quotes a long passage from the Works of Mencius in the chapter "Spring," he apparently desires to illustrate how dangerous it may be should man lose his morality. The primary concern of the Chün Tzu is precisely with how to preserve and cherish virtue. In another chapter, "Higher Laws," Thoreau recalls a similar passage from Mencius, which defines the quality which distinguishes the Chün Tzu from that of the ordinary people:

> That in which men differ from brute beasts says Mencius, is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men (i.e. the Chün Tzu) preserve it carefully.[124]

We can understand this passage in terms of three closely related aspects. First, it contains the idea of the cultivation of virtue which we have just examined. Second, it emphasizes the concept of dualism-- the spiritual as opposed to the material aspects of the universe. Third, it refers implicitly to another passage cited from Confucius which Thoreau uses in the same chapter. Its implications will be discussed later on.

As to the distinction between "the common herd" and "superior men," Thoreau expands the scope of the Mencian passage by adding Transcendental strains to it. The original Mencian text points out that there is little difference between man and beasts. Man is only one kind of the myriad kinds of creatures in the universe; he has both human and animalistic natures. But, despite only small external difference, man and other animals are not the same. "The

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[124] Writings, II, p. 242.

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common herd," unfortunately, does not realize the actual, subtle disparity that exists between the human and the non-human species, making no efforts to distinguish themselves as human species. As a result, they do no better than brutes. The Chün Tzu, alone, recognizes the difference, and nourishes the moral self daily to the state of the sage.

For Thoreau, the Mencian passage carries new significance. He uses it to stress the close relationship between man and the animals. In Walden, he relates a story: one day he picked up the lower jaw of a hog and discovered that it had sound white teeth and tusks. He concluded that besides the spiritual, there was also an animal health and vigor in human life. He followed Mencius in assuming that the "animal in us... awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers."[125] Mencius maintained that man's potential for spiritual and moral development can ennoble him above the animal ranks. In this capacity, any man can aspire to the state of the sage. The willingness or unwillingness to cultivate this capacity distinguishes a Chün Tzu from the rest of mankind. Thoreau's approach was similar to Mencius': man must redouble his efforts to curb his sensual desires. In other words, while Thoreau reveres both our "primitive rank and savage instinct" and our spiritual nature, it seems that his reverence for the spiritual is much greater.

With this in mind, we can understand the seemingly equivocal passage in the chapter "Higher Laws," which Thoreau quotes from The

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[125] Writings, II, p. 242.

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Great Learning. The line, "The cultivation of the person depends on rectifying the mind" may thus be explained this way: if a man is under the influence of passion, he will be incorrect in his conduct. The grave consequences of the failure to maintain one's "mind" and avoid interferences from the outside are obvious. Man must not be perturbed by passion, distress, or outward factors that may affect his serenity. Concentration and tranquility of the mind are prerequisite to the moral cultivation of the Chün Tzu. If he is ruffled by external objects and fails to concentrate his mind on the inner world, he would look but not see, hear but not understand, and eat but not know the taste of what he is eaten-- Thoreau thus quotes the following lines-- "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Theng-Tseu, 'one looks, and one does not see; one listens and one does not hear; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food.'"[126] The thrust of the passage here is the rectification of the mind.

Thoreau's quotation of the Confucian text only takes the middle part of the passage and leaves out the first and last parts. By a semantic twist and turn of the phrase Thoreau charged it with heavy Transcendental overtones: "The absence of mind" becomes "The soul not being mistress of herself." In the Confucian text, when man's mind is susceptible to distraction from outside and fails to sustain concentration, he may eat and not know the taste of what he eats. Interestingly, Thoreau emphasizes the recognition of the true savor of food. He believes that "He who distinguishes the

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[126] Writings, II, p. 241.

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true savor of his food can never be a glutton." Thoreau continues:

> Not that food which enterth into the mouth defileth a man, but the appetite with which it is eaten. It is neither the quality, nor the quantity, but the devotion to sensual savors; when that which is eaten is not a viand to sustain our animal, or inspire our spiritual life, but food for the worms that possess us.[127]

Thoreau does not reject the material or the sensual per se; but he thinks that it is vital for man to rise above the sensual in order to reach the divine. Man should never, Thoreau expostulates, live the "slimy beastly life, eating and drinking."[128]

Moderation and balance are part and parcel of the attributes of the Confucian Chün Tzu. The judicial balancing of inner virtues and external polish is characteristic of the ideal figure, who always seeks the middle path, who is flexible and never goes to extremes. He will by nature act with equal respect to the material and the spiritual, fulfilling the injunction of "Chung Yung" or "The Doctrine of the Mean." The reward for this balance and moderation is, according to Confucius, the formation of "the ultimate trinity with Heaven and Earth."[129]

In fact, Thoreau envisioned for himself the role of a Chün Tzu. In "Higher Laws" he asserts that once the material component is integrated and purity is achieved, "man flows at once to God." With the same creative prerogative enjoyed by that "Artist of Kouroo" who "was disposed to strive after perfection" and oblivious

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[127] Writings, II, p. 241.

[128] Writings, II, p. 242.

[129] "The Doctrine of the Mean," xxii, Legge, p. 416.

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of the passage of time because of his single-mindedness purpose and resolution, Thoreau, as the Chün Tzu in the Confucian sense, achieved the creative characteristic of divinity. Thoreau has definitely identified himself with the artist in an earlier chapter, "The Bean Field," in which he described himself as "dabbling like a plastic artist in the dewy and crumbling sand," as he makes his field "the connecting link between wild and cultivated fields," literally fulfilling the "Chung Yung" injunction to integrate the spiritual and the material in union with Heaven and Earth.

In Thoreau's view, man can never be completely material or totally spiritual. Along with the spiritual there is always the "reptile" sensual nature. Along with the material the callings of the conscience or the inner voice are always present, always urging man to improve his life. Therefore, Thoreau chose to live in the middle, to exist both in the realm of the spiritual and in the realm of the animal, to establish and to maintain the dialectic of the spiritual and the animal, to live eternally in the "doctrine of the mean."

However, the cultivation of personal virtue marks only the first step the Chün Tzu should take. His ultimate goal is to ensure general reform, to help others regain their innate godlike qualities by opening "the channel of purity," and to eradicate the animal aspects in man that have obstructed his communion with the Cosmos. Thus, in "Solitude" in Walden, Thoreau quoted a line from the Analects: "Confucius says truly, 'virtue does not remain an

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abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors."[130]

Thoreau explains that the purpose of Walden is "to wake my neighbors up," using this metaphor for moral reform. In the "Ethnical Scriptures" selected by Thoreau for the Dial, there are the lines from the Confucian texts:

> Perfection (sincerity) is the way to heaven, and to wish for perfection is the duty of a man. It has never been the case that he who possessed genuine virtue in the highest degree, could not influence others, nor has it ever been the case that he who was not in the highest degree sincere, could influence others.[131]

Thoreau thinks that general moral reform can materialize only when initiated by a virtuous person, or a Chün Tzu. He sees self-reform as a prerequisite for social reform. The Chün Tzu sets up an example of virtuous conduct; the common people follow suit. Thoreau uses a passage from the Analects to show the relationship between the Chün Tzu and the common people:

> You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishment? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man (a Chün Tzu) are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; when the wind passes over, it bends.[132]

Apparently Thoreau's main concern in this quote from Confucius is still with the intention of "waking up" the common people from a state of moral lethargy-- from what he calls "somnolence." Although in Confucius the Chün Tzu may be characterized as an ideal ruler, it is also clear that the Chün Tzu, being an ideal

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[130] Writings, II, p. 149.

[131] The Dial, (October, 1843), p. 206.

[132] Writings, II, p. 182.

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statesman, exemplifies moral integrity. The qualities of a Chün Tzu are set up to regulate the conduct of the common people. The Chün Tzu is like a hinge on which a peaceful and efficient state moves:

> Wherever the superior man (the Chün Tzu) passes, renovation takes place. The divine spirit which he cherishes above and below flows on equal in extent and influence with heaven and earth.

So quotes Thoreau from the Confucian text.[133]

To return to the "Golden Age" or a paradise in this world, Thoreau envisions a noble goal for the Chün Tzu: "I am convinced that if all men were to live as simply as I then did, thieving and robbery would be unknown."[134] The Chün Tzu, a paragon of mankind, bears the social responsibility of rectifying the degenerate times and restoring man's lost grace by setting himself up as an example for others to emulate.

The Confucian Chün Tzu not only must emanate personal virtues but must also take on himself the task of exerting his influence on the common people while pursuing a moderate path between the material and the spiritual realms of life. Sustaining a spiritual communion with the transcendental truth of the universe, he set his two feet firmly on the earth. This is the reason why in the chapter "Economy" for Walden, Thoreau advocated the same ideas to which Confucius subscribed: the ideas of rectifying mind or morality, of making use of nature, and of benefiting myriads of

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[133] The Dial, (October, 1843), P. 205.

[134] Writings, II, p. 182.

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creatures. The rationale is quite simple: unless we have acquired the "necessities of life," we are unable to face or solve the metaphysical and moral problems that come along after our animal needs are satisfied. Thoreau makes two points: first, for those whose channel to God is obstructed by material pursuits, the "necessities of life" are redefined as the basics on which man can live healthily. Second, for those whose means are meager, Thoreau offers a workable plan to help them meet life's basic needs.

As a visionary of the way of living for those who feed on more than they need, as well as for those who suffer from shortages, Thoreau is fulfilling the duty of a Chün Tzu, by exerting his influence on the common people using himself as example. The Chün Tzu, in the words which Thoreau quotes from Confucius:

> wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.[135]

Thoreau explains the noble intentions he had when he embarked on the experiment at Walden Pond:

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner and to reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then not get the whole and genuine meanness of it and publish its meanness to the world; or it if were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to

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[135] The Dial, p. 207.

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give a true account of it in my next excursion.[136]

Setting himself up as a positive example for the common people to follow, Thoreau stresses the importance of leading a simplified way of life.

Thoreau's experiment at Walden Pond was a quest for an ideal self, a paradigmatic Chün Tzu who not only perceives but also treads the right path of life. Having looked for and discovered this self-image in the life he lived in the woods, Thoreau explains why he left Walden, in the chapter entitled "Conclusion." He says: "it seems to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one."[137] With his re-entry into society, Thoreau made his account at Walden known to the world. He wanted it to be a guidebook for his contemporaries. He lived to the marrow of his life at Walden Pond and then went back to the world to expostulate to his fellow to follow his example. As Confucius says, "Thus the Chün Tzu must himself be possessed of the good qualities, and then he may require them in the people."[138]

Throughout Walden, Thoreau repeatedly encourages all men to undertake the initiative of renovating one's self. Thoreau quotes quite properly a terse line engraved on the bath tub of King Tching-thang (or Ch'eng T'ang): "Renew thyself completely each day: do it again, and again, and forever again."[139] The renewal of

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[136] Writings, II, pp. 100-101.

[137] Writings, II, p. 323.

[138] "The Great Learning," ix, iv, Legge, p. 371.

[139] Writings, II, p. 98.

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one's spiritual life becomes the recurring theme in Thoreau's book. Thoreau wishes everyone would explore his own "streams and oceans" or "higher latitudes," and set out on a similar voyage of inward discovery:

> Be a columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. There are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet.[140]

For Thoreau, "explore thyself" becomes the gauge of character and everyone is encouraged to measure himself against it. Instead of exploring the external world, man should first turn inward to himself for moral cultivation. Consequently, all men may reach the emancipation of mind and "with Heaven and Earth form a trinity." In his lifetime, Thoreau, on the one hand, attempted to cultivate his own character and to practice self-discipline by going to live at Walden Pond. On the other hand, he continued to impart his discovery and experiences to the world. What he wished was to establish an ideal society here and now. Together with personal discipline and social commitment, Thoreau becomes, no doubt, an embodiment of the Confucian Chün Tzu.

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[140] Writings, II, p. 353.

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CHAPTER VI

The Puzzle of Taoism in Thoreau's Works

Besides the humanistic philosophy of Confucius, the mystical approach of Lao Tzu also closely parallels Thoreau's life long goal to achieve a close communion with Nature. Attempting to experience Nature as the rhythm of the soul, Thoreau was fond of strolling through Concord's fields and forests, in that "vast, savage, howling mother of our Nature for several hours per day."[1] Just like the Chinese Taoists, Thoreau resisted the artificiality of mundane living and encouraged all men to follow the immutable law of Nature. Because of these surprising affinities between Thoreau and Taoism, most contemporary scholars believe that had Thoreau come in contact with Taoism, he would have found the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu more acceptable to his taste than Hinduism or Buddhism. Lin Yutang, for example, noting Thoreau's affinity with Taoist thought, declared that Thoreau was like Chuang Tzu, "with the ruggedness and hardness and impatience of an individualist."[2] Theodore Dreiser also remarked in passing that Thoreau's attitude resembled that of Buddha, Jesus, and Lao Tzu.[3] Sherman Paul made a similar comment: "one wonders what Thoreau

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[1] Journal, II, p. 337.

[2] Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of Laotse (New York, 1948), pp. 7-8.

[3] Theodore Dreiser, ed. The Living Thoughts of Thoreau (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), p. 8.

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would have done with Lao-Tzu's Tao Te Ching" and the central idea of an organic conduct of life - that whether or not one subscribes to Spirit, one must go with the current of life, not against it. Here the wisdom of Lao Tzu would have supported Thoreau.[4] Lyman V. Cady, while asserting that Thoreau for the most part used Confucian materials in a non-confucian way, remarked: "The teachers and students who read Walden and The Book of Tao are struck by the affinity of the two writings and the profound similarity of the points of view, their nature mysticism, love of the simple and primitive, distaste for conventions and governmental interference, and the repeated use of paradox."[5] In spite of admitting these striking affinities between Thoreau and Taoism, the critic ruled out the possibility that Thoreau might have been familiar with Taoist works. Cady gave the following reasons for his opinion:

> Certainly Thoreau makes no reference to this school or its representatives directly or indirectly. It seems quite clear that Thoreau was unacquainted with this aspect of China's ancient heritage. The reason is not far to seek. The translations into Western languages of the Taoist literature and their publication lagged behind those of the Confucian books on which after the Sung period the all-important civil service examinations were set at the time Westerners were getting their first acquaintance with Chinese civilization. One French and two German translations appeared in the 1840's, but these apparently did not come to the attention of Thoreau, much less the earlier Jesuit translations into Latin.[6]

A decade later, David T. Y. Chen, in his Thoreau and Taoism

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[4] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America, p. 74, p. 228.

[5] Lyman V. Cady, "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," American Literature, pp. 31-32.

[6] Ibid., p. 32.

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(1972) stated that indeed Thoreau "very probably read Laotse," a thesis based upon the assumption that the similarities between the two writers were "too striking, to be mere coincidence."[7] His discussion was specific and positive. To support his argument, he collected pieces of indirect evidence, such as the names and works of the great contemporary French sinologists J. P. A Rémusat and G. Pauthier, who were known to the Transcendentalists. Chen argued, in brief, that because Thoreau read Pauthier's Confucian works, he perhaps also read Pauthier's Taoist work. In addition, seven short poetic paradoxes with an unmistakably Lao Tzean clarity of expression suggested to Chen that Thoreau was copying a recently discovered writing style. Although he was less assured that Thoreau read Chuang Tzu, he noted a striking resemblance between Thoreau's metaphysical and figurative writing style and that of Chuang Tzu. But not long after Chen's argument for Thoreau's early acquaintance with Taoism appeared, Gary Simon(1973) repudiated it as inconclusive, for "although a French translation of Tao te ching, he argued, "was published in 1842, it is almost certain that Thoreau neither saw this copy nor the two German versions which appeared in 1844."[8] With this skeptical view in mind, Simon professed to discuss the relationship between Thoreau's philosophy and Taoism in terms of parallels rather than influences. He

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[7] David T. Y. Chen, "Thoreau and Taoism," in Asian Response to American Literature (Vikas Publications: Delhi. Bombay. Bangalore. Kanpur. London, 1972), pp. 406-416.

[8] Gary Simon, "What Henry David Didn't Know About Laotsu: Taoist parallels in Thoreau," in Literature East and West (March 1973), vol. 17, No. 2, p. 254.

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focused on a comparative examination of the concepts of nature, mysticism, primitiveness, and disregard for the conventions of society in the works of Thoreau and Lao Tzu.

John Emerson, in his "Thoreau's Construction of Taoism" published in 1980, held another opinion on this subject. Contrary to Simon, who ascribed the affinities between Thoreau and Taoism to the Hindu influences and the New England Puritan heritages, Emerson linked the source of the affinities to the indirect influence expounded in the Confucian literature.[9] Emerson based his argument on the following two assumptions: Confucianism and Taoism both contained elements of nature-mysticism, and Taoism influenced later Confucian writings. Based upon these viewpoints, he argued that Thoreau's specific interest in Confucianism was in the end a search for Taoism. For Thoreau's alienated and reclusive inclination, according to Emerson, reflects of the ancient Chinese way of life as described in Confucian writings. These writings were enough to motivate Thoreau to live according to an American version of Taoism. In addition, Emerson likened Thoreau's way of thinking to the convergent progression of biology and the random diffusion of anthropology.

In his recent study on this subject, Beongcheon Yu (1983) took a reconciling position in this dispute. Though many notable resemblances between Thoreau's and Taoist thought exist, he wrote, "there is no evidence whatever that Thoreau had even heard of

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[9] John Emerson, "Thoreau's Construction of Taoism," Thoreau Journal Quarterly, vol. XII, No. 2, (April, 1980), pp. 5-14.

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Taoism; nowhere did Thoreau, or Emerson, mention Taoism, Laotzu, or Chuantzu." Therefore, he continued, "we must assume for the time being that neither man had any knowledge of Taoism until someone comes up with the missing link."[10] Because of Yu's reconciling commentary on Thoreau and Taoism, to relate Thoreau to Taoism is to speak no longer of "influences," but of "parallels." David M. Teeter's thesis on "Simplicity in Lao Tzu and Thoreau (1987) clearly reflected this tendency.[11] There Teeter presented a particularly interesting discussion by comparing the Tao Te Ching to Walden from a hermeneutical perspective. On the assumption that mythology and literature are related forms of cultural expression, Teeter attempted to find descriptions of symbolic experiences in both the Tao Te Ching and Walden. As a first step, Teeter paralleled the theme of the Tao Te Ching-- a total rejection of the normal, outward-directed way of life--with the mode of Thoreau's experimental life at Walden where he rejected the dehumanized industrialism and materialism of the nineteenth century. In so doing, Teeter interpreted the theme of "Hun-tun," a transliteration of the ancient Chinese "chaos" included in the Tao Te Ching, as a symbolical expression of a nostalgia and quest for the beginning world, "for the dark watery womb state of inchoation." He then applied this concept of change to the concept of change at

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[10] Beongcheon Yu, The Great Circle: American Writers and the Orient (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1983), p. 44.

[11] David M. Teeter, "Simplicity in Lao Tzu and Thoreau," a dissertation, Ph. D, (California Institute of Integral Studies, 1987).

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biological, annual, social and psycho-spiritual levels. He utilized this particular hermeneutical method to explain Thoreau's method in the making of Walden. In addition, Teeter chose "simplicity" as the concept that, he believed, would constitute the primary link between Lao Tzu and Thoreau. Teeter associated this concept with the concept of a return to the cosmological and ontological chaos. This explains the similar world views of Thoreau and Lao Tzu. The primary resemblance, as he wrote, "ramifies commonly into their views on work, compassion, society, spiritual practice and even manifests in their writing styles."[12]

As discussed above, critics have offered a variety of approaches to sclve the mystery of the affinities between Thoreau and the Taoists. However, because of the absence of evidence that Thoreau read Taoist literature, the canonical notions of Taoism in Thoreau have been seen as a result of his enthusiastic reading of Hindu, Confucian, and Buddhist works.

But we now know that there are several convincing pieces of evidence proving that Thoreau must, in one way or another, have been acquainted with Taoist literature. Besides, there is direct evidence for Thoreau's use of the Taoist sources. In order to discover "the missing link," I will now focus on proving the assumption that Thoreau may have been acquainted with Taoist literature and thus integrated Taoist principles into his own thoughts and writings.

To begin with, as I mentioned in chapter IV, Thoreau

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[12] David M. Teeter, ibid., p. 2.

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undoubtedly became familiar with the Bhagavad-Gita in his college days, through Victor Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy. Besides this in the book, Victor Cousin mentioned the name of Lao Tzu and the Tao Te Ching in connection with the French sinologist Abel Rémusat. In "Lecture XIII of Introduction to the History of Philosophy, the French philosopher, praising the Asiatic society of London for providing the Western world with the translations of the Oriental scriptures, referred to the name of Lao Tzu as follows:

> The illustrious president of the Asiatic society of London, Colebrook, has at length, from 1824 to 1825, furnished European criticism with the only solid foundations it yet possesses, upon which our knowledge of the philosophic systems of India may be safely grounded. It was in 1826 that M. William de Humboldt furnished his profound analysis of the philosophical episode of the Mahabharat, which is called the Bhagavad-Gita. The ingenious author of the memoir on Lao-Tseu continues his elegant inquiries concerning the Chinese philosophy.[13](underline is mine)

The author of the memoir on Lao Tzu that Cousin referred to is Jean Pierre Abel Rémusat, with whose works Thoreau was familiar through Victor Cousin's book. Rémusat was, as Arthur Christy stated, one of the indefatigable, self-taught frontiersmen. He learned Chinese and, unaided, published his Essai Sur la langue et la literature Chinoises in 1811. When the College de France founded the Chair of Chinese in 1841, Rémusat was appointed. He was also one of the principal founders of the Société Asiatique in 1822 and served as its secretary for many years. His principal works are L'Invariable

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[13] Victor Cousin, Introduction to the History of Philosophy, translated by H. G. Linberg, p. 407.

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milieu, published in 1817, and the Iu-kiao-Li, which appeared in 1826. Rémusat's activities were entirely in the field of Chinese, one that exerted less influence in Concord than that of the Hindu, but his name was well-known to the Concordians.[14] This sinologist was repeatedly referred in link to Lao Tzu and Tao Te Ching by Victor Cousin in The Introduction to the History of Philosophy. In "Lecture IV of Second Series," Cousin, while explaining the currents of the philosophical schools of China, again praised Rémusat's pioneering contribution to the introduction of Lao Tzu to the Western world:

> But in China, the school of Confucius being expected, which is comparatively recent and almost exclusively moral and political, the other philosophical schools, the existence of which moreover is incontestable, are shrouded in manuscripts which are interdicted to the masses: they will go out from them, I hope; but they have not yet gone out. We are indebted to certain learned men, and in particular to our skilful sinologue, M. Abel Rémusat, for ingenious view upon points of the Chinese philosophy, and even upon the whole of an important system.[15]

To this praising passage, the French philosopher added the following footnote to illustrate Rémusat's contribution to the study of Lao Tzu in detail:

> Memoire of Life and Opinion of Lao-Tsu, Chinese philosopher of the sixth century before our era, Paris, 1823. And Mélanges asistiques, Vol. 1st, p. 88.[16]

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[14] Arthur Christy, p. 45.

[15] Victor Cousin, Couse of the History of Modern Philosophy trans. by O. W. Wight (New York, 1866), pp. 366-367.

[16] This essay also was contained under the title of Mémoire sur la vie et les opinion de Lao-Tzu, philosophe Chinois de VI Siècle avant Notre ère in the Histoire et Mémoires de L'Institut Royal de France Acadèmie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, published in

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All these facts indisputably prove that it was in his college days that Thoreau first read about Lao Tzu in Victor Cousin's book and recognized that there was Taoist literature available to him.

In the Mémoire sur la vie et les opinions de Lao-tzu which Cousin mentioned in the Introduction to the History of Philosophy, Rémusat shared the prevailing attitude of contemporary Oriental scholars toward Tao Te Ching, who saw Taoism as a branch of Buddhism or Hinduism. With this attitude, he translated four chapters of The Book of Tao into French, using Chinese texts for reference in an attempt to show the similarities between Taoism and Plato as well as Pythagoras. But even before the appearance of this Mémoire, in 1816, as The National Union Catalogue Pre-1956 Imprints reveals,[17] Rémusat had already translated the Tao Te Ching into French under the title of "Lâo-tzu."[18] In addition, in 1835, Stanislas Julien, the learned successor of Rémusat, also translated another version of Lao Tzu, entitled LAO TZÜ[19] In 1842, Rémusat with M Stanislas Julien translated again the entire work of Lao-Tseu.[20]

Importantly, when Rémusat published the Taoist books serially,

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1824.

[17] The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints, ed. The American Library Association (1974), vol. 315, p. 315.

[18] A. Rémusat, Le Livre des récompenses et peines (Paris, A. A. Renouard, 1816).

[19] Stanislas Julien, trans., LAO TZÜ (Paris, Oriental Translation Fund, 1835).

[20] Lyman Cady, p. 32.

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Thoreau and Emerson had access in turn to the author's translations. According to Christy, Rémusat's chief works were L'Invariable Milieu and Iu-kiao-li. On October 27, 1830, on the one hand, Emerson found promising definitions of nature in the Invariable Milieu; Thoreau, on the other hand, was interested in the Iu-kiao-Li, and in 1858, copied several quotations from the novel for his journal(Emerson also referred to the novel in his journal in 1827).[21] Keeping in mind that Thoreau was already familiar with Rémusat's pioneering work on Lao Tzu through Victor Cousin's book, it is quite probable that Thoreau and Emerson might have also read the author's Mémoire on Lao-Tseu and the translations of Tao Te Ching which were published between the 1810's and 1840's.

Furthermore, it is interesting to find seeming evidence that Thoreau may have read Rémusat's Mémoirs. In the Sunday chapter in A Week, Thoreau's narrative is reminiscent of Rémusat's. Attempting to show the similarities between Taoism and Pythagoras, Rémusat described words meaning of "God" which he found to be different in every language. He wrote:

> d'après des considérations astrologiques, de la réunion de trois des voyelles consacrées aux planètes, et combinées dans un certain ordre mystique propre à figurer la diffusion de la lumière du soleil, représentée par 1, dans toutes les planètes, depuis la lune, qui est la premiére et qu'on désigne par A, jusqu'à Saturne, qui est la derniére et qui est marqué par Q.
> .....
>
> Des Juifs, il paraît que ce nom avait passé aux nations voisines, et s'étoit introduit, avec des idées un peu

[21] Christy, p. 276.

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différentes, chez plusieurs sectes religieuses ou philosophiques. Juba, nom que les Maures donnoient à leurs rois, signifioit Dieu dans leur langue; ce mot, qui a été pris par les anciens (2) pour celui d'un roi de Mauritanie mis au rang dex dieux, par quelques modernes pour une altération de Jehovah.[22]

according to astrological considerations, the connection of three of the vowels devoted to planets, and combined in acertain mystical order suited to represent the diffusion of the sun's light, represented by 1, on all planets, starting with the moon, which is the first and which is referrd to by A, up to Saturn, which is last and which is marked by Q.

.....

From the Jews, it appears that that name had been passed on to neighboring nations, and had been introduced, with somewhat different ideas, into various religious or philosophical sects. Juda, a name which the Moors gave to their kings, meant God in their language; the word, which was taken by the ancients (2) as that of a king in Mauritania put on the rank of gods by a few moderns as deformation of Jehovah.

The following are Thoreau's descriptions for convenience. I have extracted several passages from the Sunday chapter of A Week, that bears closely resemble to Remusat's descriptions:

(1) Jehovah, though with us he has acquired new attributes, is more absolute and unapproachable, but hardly more divine, than Jove.
(2) Every people have gods to suit their circumstances.
(3) One memorable addition to the old mythology is due to this era - the Christian fable. With what pains, and tears, and blood these centuries have woven this and added it to the mythology of mankind! It would seem as if it were in the progress of our mythology to dethrone Jehovah, and crown Christ in his stead.
(4) "God is the letter Ku, as well as Khu." Why need Christians be still intolerant and superstitious?[23]

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[22] J. P. Abel Rémusat, "Mémoire sur la vie et les opinions de Lao-Tzu, in Mémoires de L'Institut Royal de France, Académie Des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Tome septième (Paris, De L'Imprimerie Royal, 1823), pp. 45-46.

[23] Writings, I, pp. 81-85.

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By comparison, it is curious that there are some affinities between Thoreau and Rémusat. According to the French translator, though the concept of God is expressed differently in every language, the variety of expressions has after all resulted in the same essence. Thoreau's view about God resembles that of Rémusat. He upheld the concept of the immanence of God as his basic principle. He denied Christ the sole attribution of divinity and thus found the divine element in other religions also. Keeping in mind that Thoreau read Remusat's other translations, it seems that the similarities between Thoreau and Rémusat were not mere accidental. It seems that Thoreau used Rémusat's Mémoire as a source for his Sunday chapter in A Week.

Additional evidence for Thoreau's familiarity with Lao Tzu's work can be found in G. Pauthier's Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient and L'univers: Histoire et Description de Tous Les Peuples. We know already from Lyman V. Cady's work that all nine quotations from the Confucian books in Walden were not taken from Collie's text, but from G. Pauthier's French translation of the Chinese original.[24] But the French version, Cady found, was not the only one available to Thoreau. As I mentioned in Chapter IV, there were at least two additional Confucian books that Pauthier translated during that period: L'univers: Histoire et Description de Tous Les Peuples(1837) and Confucius and Mencius(1842). Interestingly, in

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[24] Lyman V. Cady, stated that all nine quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden were taken from Pauthier's Les Livres sacrés de la l'Orient. See "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," American Literature, pp. 20-32.

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all of these versions, Pauthier referred to Lao Tzu and his own translation of Tao Te Ching. This might have greatly helped Thoreau to become familiar with the Taoist tradition.

In L'univers: Histoire et Description de tous Les Peuples published in 1837 by Firmin Didot Frères, Pauthier gave detailed explanations of Chinese history, literature, philosophy, and art. In doing so, in the section on philosophy, he translated chapters 11, 16, 25, 30, 33, 41, and 75 of Tao Te Ching into French and added a commentary that reveals that he had the same view as Rémuast: that Taoism should be seen as a Hindu tradition. Remembering that, as I have discussed in Chapter IV, Thoreau had a copy of portions of Confucius and Mencius (which might have been torn out of L'univers and might have been used for the Confucian quotations for Walden), we can easily surmise the possibility that Thoreau might have read the Taoist chapter.

In Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient, published in 1840, on the other hand, Pauthier, while translating the Confucian text into French, added several footnotes to help the readers understand vague passage of the text. Among them, there are several crucial footnotes which could have helped Thoreau to not only know about the meaning of Taoism, but also about the fact that there was another French translation of Tao-te King.

In terms of examining his footnotes, let us first read the Confucian text from the very page on which Pauthier attached a footnote:

> Tseu-lou dit: Ne pas accepter d'emploi public est contraire à la justice. Si on se fait une loi de ne pas

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> violer l'ordre des rapports qui existent entre les différents âges, comment serait-il permis de violer la loi de justice, bien plus importante, qui existe entre les ministres et le prince? Désirant conserver pure sa personne, on porte le trouble et la confusion dans les grands devoirs sociaux. L'homme supérieur qui accepte un emploi public remplit son devoir. Les principes de la droite raison n'étant pas mis en pratique, il le sait(et il s'efforce d'y remédier).[25]
>
> Tsze-lu then said to the family, 'Not to take office is not righteous. If the relation between old and young may not be neglected, how is it that he sets aside the duties that should be observed between sovereign and minister? Wishing to maintain his personal purity, he allows that great relation to come to confusion. A superior man takes office, and performs the righteous duties belonging to it. As to the failure of right principle to make progress, he is aware of that.'[26]

This is a part of the episode of Tszu-lu, one of Confucius' disciples, recorded in the Book XVIII, Wei Tsze of "Analects."[27] While translating this Tsze-lu episode, Pauthier added the following footnote to inform the readers that there also was an

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[25] G. Pauthier, Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient (Paris, 1841), p. 214.

[26] "Analects," xviii, vii, 5, Legge, pp. 335-336.

[27] The whole story is this: One day, Tszu-lu, having fallen behind his master, accidently met an old man carrying a basket on a staff. He asked the man, "did you see my master, Sir?" The old man replied, "you are unaccustomed to labor, nor can you distinguish the five grains." Then asked Tsze-lu, "who is your master?" He then stuck his staff into the ground and began to pull up the weeds. Tsze-lu clasped his hands on his breast in a respectful manner and stood still. He kept Tsze-lu through the night, killed fowls, and prepared food for him. He also brought out his two sons and presented them to Tsze-lu. The next day, Tsze-lu walked on and told Confucius. Confucius said, he is a recluse, and sent Tsze-lu back to talk with him. When Tsze-lu arrived, he had left. Tsze-lu explained the sentiments of his master, saying the passage quoted above. What Confucius tried to emphasize here is the necessity of an engaging life with society, taking the opposite position from the Taoist school, which emphasizes a secluded life.

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anti-Confucian school of philosophy:

> Si l'homme a des devoirs de famille à remplir, il a aussi des devoirs sociaux plus importants, et auxquels il ne peut se soustraire sans faillir; tel est celui d'occuper des fonctions publiques l'on peut être utile à son pays. C'est manquer à ce devoir que de s'éloigner de la vie politique et de se retirer dans la retraite lorsque ses services peuvent être utiles. Voilà la pensée du philosophe chinois, qui avait des sectateurs d'une doctrine contraire à combattre. Voyez notre èdition du Livre de la Raison suprème et de la Vertu du philosophe Lao-tseu le contemporain de Khoung-Tseu.[28]
>
> If a man must fulfill his duties to his family, he also has more important social duties, and which he cannot abandon without failing; such as the duty to fulfill public functions if he can be useful to his country. It is to fail this duty to seek to distance oneself from political life and to retire to a retreat while his service could be useful. Such is the thought of the Chinese philosopher, who had to combat the followers of a contrary doctrine. See my own translation of Livre de la Raison suprème de la Vertu by the philosopher Lao-tseu, contemporary of Confucius.

In the footnote, Pauthier described not only the characteristics of the two opposing schools from a comparative perspective, but mentioned the name of Lao Tzu and his own translation of Tao Te Ching.

The internal evidence for Thoreau's reading of this footnote is quite convincing. Lyman V. Cady pointed out that in A Week, Thoreau refers very favorably to a French translator and believes that Thoreau must have meant Pauthier. In addition, Cady stated that the source which Thoreau used for the quotations in A Week was from Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient.[29] With this, I entirely

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[28] G. Pauthier, Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient (Paris, chez Firmin Didot-chez Auguste Desrez, 1841), p. 214.

[29] Lyman V. Cady, "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," American Literature (March, 1961), pp. 20-22.

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agree.[30] I found an external piece of evidence to reaffirm Cady's suggestion that Thoreau might have made use of Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient for the quotations in A Week.[31] In the Monday chapter in A Week on the Concord and Merimack Rivers, he wrote:

> "Assuredly," says a French translator, speaking of the antiquity and durability of the Chinese and Indian nations, and of the wisdom of their legislators, "there are some vestiges of the eternal laws which govern the world."

Interestingly enough, the quoted passage is found in the introductory chapter of Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient: "Assurément, il y a quelques vestiges des lois éternelles qui governent le monde."[32] The quotation indisputably establishes the fact that Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient was the sources of the Confucian quotations in A Week and that Thoreau had understood the canonical concept of Taoism and the translations of the Tao Te Ching.

One may, of course, argue that Thoreau might have skipped the pages, on which Pauthier referred to Taoism. But it is from the very same page, on which the French translator added the footnote to refer to Lao Tzu and his translation of Tao Te Ching that Thoreau quoted a Confucian passage in A Week. Here is Pauthier's text:

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[30] But, as I have argued in chapter 4, disagree with Cady's assertion that Thoreau's quotations from the Confucian books in Walden were exclusively from Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient.

[31] In order to prove his reasoning, Cady exemplified that the close concurrence of Thoreau's English quotation in A Week with the French text shows that in every respect the French source commands the form and wording of the English equivalent.

[32] G. Pauthier, Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient, p. viii.

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> "On dit que Lieu-hia-hoei et Chao-lieu ne soutinrent pas jusqu'au bout leurs résolutions, et qu'ils déshonorèrent leur caractère. Leur language était en harmonie avec la raison et la justice; leurs actes étaient en harmonie avec les sentiments des hommes."[33]

The quotation from the "Analects" in Thoreau's A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers is the following:

> "They say that Lieou-hoei and chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with the sentiments of men."[34]

In addition, the footnote containing the reference to Lao Tzu and Tao Te Ching is located just below the text Thoreau quoted in A Week. The external evidence is very scanty, but what there is confirms our conclusion that Thoreau read the footnote and must have learned about the meaning of Taoism and the identity of Lao Tzu.

Another footnote from the section of Mencius will support this assertion more clearly. Pauthier identified the Mencian notion of ideal government with that of Lao Tzu while translating Bock II, Kung-sun Ch'au. In that section, Mencius urged "the leader of the

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[33] Pauthier, p. 214. See Lyman V. Cady, "Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden," American Literature, XXXIII, 1 (1961), p. 22.

[34] Writings, I, p. 171. The passage in "Analect" succeeds the very episode of Tsze-lu in the "Analects," in which, after criticizing the oldman who went into retirement, Confucius illustrated the characters and manners of the six famous recluses who have retired to privacy from the world: Po-î, Shu-ch'î, Yü-chung, I-yî, Chu-chang, Hui of Liu-hsia, and Shâo-lien. The Master said, "Refusing to surrender their wills, or to submit to any taint in their persons;--such, I think, were Po-î and Shu-ch'î." Then, Confucius illustrated the mode of Hui of Liu-hsia and Shâo-lien as Thoreau quoted above. See, "Analects," xviii, 1-4, Legge, The Chinese Classics, pp. 336-337.

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princes" to practice benevolence as "the sovereign of the kingdom":

> Celui qui dompte les hommes et se les soumet par la force des armes, ne subjugu pas les coeurs; pour cela, la force, qu'elle soit, est toujours insuffisante. Celui qui se soumet les hommes par la vertu, porte la joie dans les coeurs qui se livrent sans réserve, comme les soixante et dix disciples de Khoung-Tseu se soumirent à lui.[35]
>
> When one by force subdues men, they do not submit to him in heart. They submit, because their strength is not adequate to resist. When one subdues men by virtue, in their hearts' core they are pleased, and sincerely submit, as was the case with the seventy disciples in their submission to Confucius.[36]

The French translator observed that the Mencian emphasis on the benevolence as a coinciding principle of Taoism, saying "Conférez le Tao-te-king, de Lao-tseu"--for, while translating the Tao Te Ching into French, Pauthier had already known about the Taoist theory of government: "When the government is lazy and dull, its people are unspoiled; When the government is efficient and smart, its people are discontented."[37]

Judging from all these factors, it is quite convincing that through Pauthier's footnotes, Thoreau not only learned of Lao Tzu and his Tao Te Ching, but also grasped the essential notion of Taoism from hints in the translator's comparsion between Confucianism and Taoism. In addition, in his college days, as we have seen above, Thoreau, through Victor cousin, had heard of Rémusat's works on Lao Tzu and realized that there were a number of

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[35] Pauthier, p. 236.

[36] "Mencius," ii, i, iv, 2, James Legge, pp. 196-197.

[37] Lin Yutang's The Wisdom of Laotse (The Modern Library. New York, 1948), p. 265. The ideas also expressed in chapters 57, 58, 59, and 60 of the Tao Te Ching.

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the Taoist books available to him.

On the other hand, Pauthier repeatedly mentioned Le Tao -te-king, ou le Livre de la Raison Suprême et de Vertu in Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient, published in 1838. David Chen argued that because Thoreau read the Confucian works of Pauthier, this book was Thoreau's probable source of information of Taoism. In the meantime, by referring to a book advertisement, Chen stated that the first volume of Le Tao-te-king could be available in 1837. This seems unlikely, however, in light of Pauthier's footnote in L'Univers:

> On peut consulter à ce sujet une traduction que l'auteur a donnée d'une Sainte légende chinoise sur Lao-Tseu, dans un ouvrage intitulé: Memoire sur l'origine et la propagation de la doctrine du Tao, fondée en Chine par Lao-Tseu, traduit du chinois et accompagné d'un commentaire tiré des livres sanskrits et du Tao-te-king de Lao-Tseu, etc., suivi de deux Oupanechads de Vedas, avec le texte sanskrit et persan. Paris. DONDEY-DUPRÉ. 1831. Dans cette notice Lao-Tseu est considére comme une divinité qui a fait plusieurs apparitions dans le monde.[38]
>
> On this subject, we may consult a translation which the author did of a Chinese Holy Legend on Lao Tzu, in a work entitled: Memoire on the origin and propagation of Taoist doctrine started in China by Lao Tzu, translated from Chinese and accompanied by a commentary taken from Sanskrit books and from Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, etc., followed by two Upanishads of Vedas, with Sanskrit and Persian text. Paris, DONDEY-DUPRÉ, 1831. In that account Lao Tzu is regerded as a divinity who has made deveral appreances in the world.

If Le Tao-te-king had been available in 1837, Pauthier would have mentioned it also in this footnote, but he did not. Judging from this, it is quite likely that the first volume of Le Tao-te-king

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[38] M. G. Pauthier, L'univers: Histoire et Descrition de Tous les Peuples (Paris, Firmin Didot Fréres, 1837), p. 111.

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appeared in 1838.

Additionally, according to Chen, the book was translated into Latin verse and into French prose from the original Chinese text. In addition, the book contained translations of the commentaries by Hai Ho and various other Chinese scholars. Considering Chen's statement that "the explications of the commentaries provided by the translator... serve... not to enlighten, but to confuse his reader," it seems that the book was also written with the same prejudice toward Taoism as the previous two books.

But even before the publication of Le Tao-te-king, early in 1831, Pauthier had published another Taoist book, Memoir sur l'origin et la propagation de la doctrine du Tao(Libraire Orientale de Dondey-Dupre, Paris). Though the book reflects Pauthier's prejudice against Taoism -- namely, he viewed it as an emanation of Hinduism, he translated the 13 chapters of Tao Te Ching from the original Chinese text and, at the end of each translated chapter, added his commentary relating to Tao Te Ching and the Hindu Scriptures.

I have described Pautier's versions in detail because I strongly believe not only that Thoreau might have read one of them, but also that he might have based his own philosophical ideas on Taoist materials. In addition, there are several facts that point to the possibility that Thoreau might have read Pauthier's Le Tao-te-king, ou le Livre de la Raison suprême et de Vertu. David Chen, while arguing in his "Thoreau and Taoism" that Thoreau "very probably read Laotse on the supposition that the similarities

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between the two thinkers were "too striking, to be mere coincidence," specified what he called "indirect evidences."[39] Considering that Thoreau, as we have seen above, already knew from reading Pauthier's books that there was a French translation of the Tao Te Ching, Chen's indirect evidences is quite trustworthy. On June 26, 1840, in his entries for a single day, Thoreau wrote seven paradoxes in his journal, all of which show close parallels to Lao Tzu's:

> The highest condition of art is artlessness.
> Truth is always paradoxical.
> He will get to the goal first who stands stillest.
> There is one let better than any help, and that is,--let-alone
> By sufferance you may escape suffering.
> He who resists not at all will never surrender.
> Stand outside the wall, and no harm can reach you. The danger is that you be walled in with it.[40]

We can see the same paradoxes in Laotse's book. For the convenience of comparison, they will be presented in the same order as Thoreau's paradoxes:

> The greatest skill appears like clumsiness(Chapter XLV, Line 6).
> Truth sounds like its opposite (LXXVII, 13).
> The sage puts himself last/ And finds himself in the foremost place (VII, 5-6).
> By action without deeds/ May all live in peace (III, 14-15).
> To yield is to be preserved whole (XXII, 1).
> Is it not because he does not live for Self/ That his Self is realized (VII, 9-10)?
> The sage regards his body as accidental/ And his body is

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[39] David T. Y. Chen, "Thoreau and Taoism," in Asian Response to American Literature, pp. 406-416.

[40] Journal, I, p. 153.

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therefore preserved (VII, 7-8).[41]

Since he had been already acquainted with Pauthier's translation of Le Tao-te-king through his reading of Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient, which probably appeared as early as 1840, we can hardly deny the probability that Thoreau read the book and quoted the paradoxes from Le Tao-te-king. Besides, the similarities between the paradoxes of Thoreau and those of Lao Tzu are too striking to be mere coincidences. "The chances for an author to write seven unrelated paradoxes which correspond exactly to the other," as Chen pointed out, "are slim indeed."[42]

Another piece of indirect evidence Chen cited in support of his assumption that Thoreau read Lao Tzu is that The Book of Tao consists of many rhymed sentences. In Chapter VI of Tao-te-king, Pauthier described this fact as follows:

> Lao-tseu, dans la plus grande partie de son livre, a employe des rimes ou consonnances finales.[43]
>
> Lao Tzu, in the greater part of his book, employs rhymes and final consonnances.

Interestingly enough, just two days before he wrote his paradoxes, Thoreau mentioned the rhymed scriptures in his journal:

> There is no doubt but the highest morality in the books is rhymed or measured, - is, in form as well as substance, poetry. Such is the scripture of all nations. If I were to compile a volume to contain the condensed

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[41] All the above selections are cited from David Chen's quotations taken from Lin Yutang's The Wisdom of Laotse, except the second paradox, which is taken from John C. H. Wu, trans., Tao Teh Ching. See David Chen, "Thoreau and Taoism," pp. 409-410.

[42] Ibid., p. 410.

[43] G. Pauthier, Le Tao-te-king, p. 58. See, David Chen, p. 410.

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wisdom of mankind, I should quote no rhymeless line.[44]

We already know that whenever Thoreau spoke of the "scriptures of the nations," he included the Chinese ones. In A Week, he wrote, "The reading which I love best is the scriptures of the several nations, though it happens that I am better acquainted with those of the Hindoos, the Chinese, and the Persians, than of the Hebrews, which I come to last. Give me one of these bibles, and you silenced me for a while."[45] What made Thoreau so sure that the scriptures of all nations " are rhymed or measured, -- is, in form as well as substance, poetry"? As we know, none of the Confucian texts are rhymed. And as David Chen put it, "no translator has ever attempted to versify them."[46] If Thoreau had only known The Four Books, without any realization that the Book of Tao consists of rhymed sentences, it is absurd to think that he would have made this comment.

Furthermore, there is another piece of indirect evidence in support of my assumption that Thoreau might have read Lao Tzu. In the entry for January 29, 1841, Thoreau wrote:

> If I make a huge effort to expose my innermost and richest wares to light, my counter seems cluttered with the meanest homemade stuffs; but after months or years I may discover the wealth of India, and whatever rarity is brought overland from Cathay, in that confused heap, and what perhaps seemed a festoon of dried apple or pumpkin will prove a string of Brazilian diamonds, or pearls from

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[44] Journal, I, p. 151. See also David Chen, p. 410.

[45] Writings, I, p. 72.

[46] David Chen, p. 410.

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Coromandel.[47] (underline is mine)

In my view, the expression, "whatever rarity is brought overland from Cathay, in that confused heap" alludes to Pauthier's biased view toward Tao Te Ching, which led him to regard Taoism as a branch of Hinduism. There are two additional reasons why he mentioned "rarity." For one thing, the Confucian classics were on the whole better known and better translated. They were not a rarity. For another, the Tao Te Ching upheld a position that was contrary to the Confucian teaching with which he was familar; it was therefore indeed "a confused heap."

One may argue again that if this reasoning is credible, why did Thoreau never make any direct reference to Taoism in his writing? Though we may not be able to provide a conclusive answer, considering the indirect relationship between Thoreau and the French translators, we can find a probable reason as to why he did not directly mention Taoism. For this matter, let us turn our attention to Thoreau's quotation in the Monday chapter of A Week: "'Assuredly,' says a French translator [Pauthier], speaking of the antiquity and durability of the Chinese and Indian nations, and of the wisdom of their legislators, 'there are some vestiges of the eternal laws which govern the world."[48] After referring favorably to Pauthier, Thoreau subsumed all types of Eastern meditation on the Supreme Being under the Hindu term "Brahman":

So many years and ages of the gods those Eastern sages

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[47] Journal, I, p. 182.

[48] Writings, I, p. 176.

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> sat contemplating Brahm, uttering in silence the mystic "Om," being absorbed into the essence of the Supreme Being, never going out of themselves, but subsiding farther and deeper within; so infinitely wise, yet stagnant.[49]

This passage implies that Thoreau regarded Taoism as belonging to the Hindu tradition. I think that Thoreau's viewpoint followed that of the French translators. For example, Pauthier asserted in his Mémoir:

> les doctrines morales de Lao-tseu, ressemblent à celles des Yoguis et des Sannyasis de l'Inde exprimées en partie dans le Bhagavad-Guita et dans les Smritis de la philosophie Sankhya de Patandjali.[50]
>
> Lao Tzu's moral doctrines resemble those of the Yogis and Sannyasis of India, expressed, in part, in the Bhagavad-Gita and the Smritis of the Sankya philosophy of Patandjali.

Furthermore, in L'univers, he made this even more emphatic:

> principe qui a produit un de ses fruits nécessaires, l'anachorétisme, dont l'origine est dans l'Inde, comme le principe spirituel et contemplatif qui s'est étendu et développé en Chine, en Perse, en Chaldée, dans l'Asie mineure, dans les Thébaide africaines et dans tout le monde chrétien.[51]
>
> a principle which has produced one of its necessary outcomes, anachoretism, or originating from India, as the spiritual and contemplative principle which spread and developed in China, Persia, Chaldea, Asia Minor, in African Thebaid and the whole Christian world.

On the other hand, Rémusat was also no exception to this tendency. In his Mémoires he held the same views as Pauthier:

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[49] Writings, I, p. 176.

[50] G. Pauthier, Mémoire sur L'orient et la Propagation de la Doctrine du Tao, fondée par Lao-Tseu (Paris, Libraire Orientale De Dondey-Dupré, 1831), p. 49.

[51] Pauthier, L'univers, p. 114.

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> Seulement on conçoit que, depuis I'introduction du bouddhisme à La Chine, les idées Indiennes sur les avataras ou incarnations ont pu être adoptées par les Tao-sse, et qu'aprés avoir fait cet emprunt aux Bouddhistes, il ne restoit aux premiers, pour relever I'excellence de leur religion, qu'à faire de Bouddha lui-meme une des incarnations de l'ame de Lao-tseu. Je ne m'arrête pas à l'idee que les Bouddhistes aient à cet égard rien recu des Tao-sse, parce qu'outre I'antiquité bien connue des opinions Indiennes sur les avénements de la divinité, ces opinions ne tiennent pas, chez les Tao-sse, à un systme suivi et bien lié, comme chez lez Bouddhistes, oú elles sont la conséquence du dogme fondamental de l'émanation.[52]
>
> However, we understand that, with the introduction of Buddhism in China, Indian ideas on avatars or incarnations may have been adopted by the Taoists and that, after having made that borrowing from the Buddhists, the formers could only make Buddha himself one of the incarnation of Lao Tzu's soul in order to revive the excellence of their religion. In this respect, I do not stop at the idea that the Buddhists never received anything from the Taoists because, besides the well known antiquity of Indian opinions on the advents of divinity, for the Taoists, these opinions are not linked to a consistent and well--rounded system as is the case for the Buddhists for whom they are the consequence of the fundamental dogma of emanation.

In my view, the similarities between Thoreau and the two French translators in their attitude regarding Taoism as an emanation of the Hindu philosophy was not mere coincidence. I strongly believe that Thoreau must have followed the biased view of the two translators.

In addition, Thoreau's life was a ceaseless search for the Truth, a search for an acceptable concept of God. After repudiating of the Western concept of a personal God, he turned his

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[52] M. Abel Rémusat, Mémoire sur la Vie et les Opinions de Lao-Tseu, Philosophe Chinois du VI. Siêcle avant Notre Ére in Mémoirs de L'Institut Royal de France, Acamémie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Tome Septième (Paris, De L'imprimerie Royale, 1824), p. 11.

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attention to the impersonal God of the Oriental religions. He believed Reality to be Brahman. Therefore, he viewed even the Western concept of God as emanations of Brahman:

> In the same Asia, but in the Western part of it, appeared a youth, not being absorbed into Brahm, but bringing Brahm down to earth and to mankind: in whom Brahm had awaked from his long sleep, and exerted himself, and the day began, - a new avatar. The Brahman had never thought to be a brother of mankind as well as a Child of God.[53]

What Thoreau sought so devotedly was Brahman. His interest lay not only in the actualities of the world, but also in its potentialities. His sole spiritual objective, therefore, was not to discriminate between different sects, but to discover Brahman. In other words, no matter what it was called, whether Lao-tzu or Yogi, as a transcendental practitioner, he was passionately devoted to the discovery of the Ultimate Reality.

Judging from all available evidence, the fact that he did not directly mention Taoism may be explained by the fact that (1) he fused Taoism and Hinduism in his mind, following his French sources, and (2) he was not interested in--even if he were able to--discriminating between different Eastern religions.

The essential affinities between Thoreau and the Taoist philosophers Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu are apparent throughout Thoreau's writings. The three share a deep devotion to Nature; hostility toward social conventions, hierarchy, wealth, and government; and the extensive literary use of hyperbole, paradox, puns, irony, and humor. In the following, some significant

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[53] Writings, I, p. 176.

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parallels between the Taoists' and Thoreau's thoughts, specifically, their similar mystical conceptions of Nature, their interesting symbolism of water, and their ideals of the political institution of man, will be investigated to prove that Thoreau must have been familiar with Taoism and that, therefore, the Taoist ideas should be treated as "influences" rather than "parallels."

No serious reader of Thoreau can fail to notice his passionate interest in Nature. With regard to nature studies, Thoreau's main contribution was primarily literary rather than scientific; yet we have often been struck by the range and depth of his observation of natural phenomena. Significantly, more than any other manifestation of nature, it was water - rivers and rivulets, marshes, rains and dew, lakes, streams, and ponds - which fascinated Thoreau. The concept of water as a living and a life-giving part of nature is expressed very vividly in Thoreau's Journal:

> How dead would the globe seem ... if it were not for these water surfaces! We are slow to realize water, - the beauty and magic of it. It is interestingly strange to us forever. Immortal water, alive even in the superficies, restlessly heaving now and tossing me in my boat, and sparkling with Life! I look around with a thrill on this bright fluctuating surface on which no man can walk, whereon is no trace of footstep, unstained as glass.[54]

In A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Thoreau again described the water as the source of life. The river, the central image in the book, is introduced in the first chapter, "Concord River." All of the narratives, descriptions and poems that make up

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[54] Journal, VI, p. 246.

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the book are created out of the image of the river. Thoreau described the river's ecological function by using the American Indian name "Musketaquid" or "Grass-ground River." The repetition of the word "grass-ground" underscored the life-engendering quality of the river. He discussed how it overflowed and fertilized the meadows that it had carved out, how it produced fish, and how it attracted game. For the extinct Indian as for the white settler, the river's natural cycles produced the necessities of life. After Thoreau emphasized the river's role as the "perennial" source of life, he turned it into a symbol of all nature. The river, with its "healthy natural tumult," thus became a hierophany for the creative power of nature.[55] In Walden, water is an ever-present, pervasive force. The ripple, gurgle and splash of water is to be heard throughout the pages of the book.

Like Thoreau, who used the metaphor of water to express his Transcendental ideas, Lao Tzu showed an endearing reverence toward water. To Lao Tzu, water was an emblem of the highest good, or the Tao:

> The best is like water.
> Water is good; it benefits all things and does not complete with them.
> It dwells in (lowly) places that all disdain.
> This is why it is so near to Tao.[56]

In addition, Lao Tzu apotheosizes water by the use of a paradox: the unassuming, the low will ultimately prove the strongest:

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[55] Writings, I, p. 5.

[56] Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chap., 8, Wing-Tsit Chan, trans, The Way of Lao Tzu (Indianapolis. New York, 1963), p. 113.

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> The great rivers and seas are kings of all mountain streams
> Because they skillfully stay below them
> That is way they can be their kings.[57]

In another instance, Lao Tzu wrote:

> There is nothing softer and weaker than water,
> And yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things.
> For this reason there is no substitute for it.[58]

In the same vein, Thoreau used the vision of water as his source for literal and metaphysical imagery. To Thoreau, water--the ever-flowing and ever-transparent object-- was at once the symbol of the microcosm (man) and of the macrocosm (the mystical universe). In A Week, Thoreau clearly demonstrated these points. Literally, the voyagers followed the Merrimack River to its headwaters; metaphysically, they sought the source of all rivers in the center of the world. The poem Thoreau introduced early on the Tuesday chapter gives a clear statement of this:

> Rivers from the sunrise flow,
> Springing with the dewy morn;
> Voyageurs 'gainst time do row,
> Idle noon nor sunset know,
> Ever even with the dawn.[59]

The imagery of this poem corresponds with that of Lao Tzu.

Thoreau also described the spiritual direction of the voyage on the water in the tone of Lao Tzu. At the beginning of the voyage, in the first sentence of "Saturday," Thoreau pointed out

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[57] Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Chap. 66, Wing-Tsit Chan, The Way of Lao Tzu, p. 218.

[58] Tao Te Ching, Chap. 78, Wing-Tsit Chan, p. 236.

[59] Writings, I, p. 188.

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that "Concord, too, lies under the sun, a port of entry and departure for the bodies as well as the soul of man."[60] This establishes the Taoist direction of the journey. Like Lao Tzu, who made use of the image of water to describe the quest for Tao, Thoreau had access to the center of creation through the port of Concord River. This Taoist attitude toward water can be illustrated more clearly with a passage from an early draft of the Concord River chapter of A Week: "I was born upon the banks, River, My blood flows in thy stream, and thou meanest forever at the bottom of my dream."[61] This passage clearly illustrated Thoreau's desire to live in communion with the source of Tao and of all creation and his use of the imagery of water.

In Walden, on the other hand, while exploring the spiritual, inner self of man in communion with Nature, Thoreau associated man's spiritual self with Walden Pond-- the vast, physical body of water, for he believed that it is in the pond that man "measures the depth of his own nature."[62] And, when Thoreau listened to the sound of Heywood's Brook falling into Fair Haven Pond, he concluded: "What is it I hear but the pure waterfalls within me, in the circulation of my blood, the streams that fall into my heart?."[63] The rising of the water was experienced as a moment

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[60] Writings, I, p. 12.

[61] Thoreau, "Concord River" and "Saturday," early MS. Berg Collection, New York Library, p. 6.

[62] Writings, II, p. 186.

[63] Journal, II, p. 300.

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of illumination, almost a Joycean epiphany:

> The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has known it, and flood the parched uplands; even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before sciences began to record its freshets.[64]

Indeed, Thoreau regarded water with reverence and piety. It is by drinking and bathing in pure water that man cleanses his spirit of all the dross and corrupting matter which encrust him. Subsequently, "when the channel of purity is open," man "flows at once to God."[65] Meditating by Walden Pond became a daily ritual of self-renewal for Thoreau:

> Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraved on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that.[66]

It is Thoreau's belief in the purifying effect of water which explains what may otherwise seem to be an obsessive concern with the purity of Walden Pond. Repeatedly, Thoreau mentioned the "wonderful purity" that he was able to see in Walden Pond-- "this vision of serenity and purity"-- because he lived "reserved and austere, like a hermit in the woods, so long."[67] Thoreau wrote

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[64] Writings, II, p. 366.

[65] Writings, II, p. 243.

[66] Writings, II, p. 98.

[67] Writings, II, p. 197.

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that Walden Pond was "remarkable for its depth and purity,"[68] and went on to speak of its "crystalline purity,"[69] of "pure Walden water," and the "pure sea-green Walden water."[70] Likening human mind to a body of water, Thoreau urged his fellow men to strive for self-exploration:

> Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes ... Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought.[71]

Most significantly, water, by nature serene and constant, became the utmost emblem of virtue for Chuang Tzu and for the Transcendental truth of Thoreau. Chuang Tzu compared water to the tranquility of mind and the clarity of spirit[72]:

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[68] Writings, II, p. 198.

[69] Writings, II, p. 201.

[70] Writings, II, p. 320.

[71] Writings, II, p. 353.

[72] In relation to metaphysics of Tao, there are some differences between Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. Namely, Lao Tzu gives only the result, a definitely established monistic system of archetypal imagery where center is constituted by the Ultimate Reality, which develops stage after stage by its own creativity down to the world of multiplicity. In the meantime, Lao Tzu does not reveal this experiential aspect of his world-view in except through vague, symbolic hints and suggestions. Chuang Tzu, on the other hand, is interested precisely in the experiential aspects of Taoist mysticism which Lao Tzu leaves untouched. Chuang Tzu is not only concerned with constructing a metaphysics of a cosmic scale from the Ultimate unknowable down to the concrete world of variegated colors and forms, but also, with representing the peculiar kind of experience itself into the poetic form. In Chuang Tzu, Chuang Tzu admirably combined his philosophical reasoning faculty and poetic intuition.

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> Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony. Though virtue takes no form, things cannot break away from it.[73]

Furthermore, Chuang Tzu stressed the importance of maintaining virtue and the genuine self inside one's mind. If man can keep his inner self and forget his outer form, naturally revealing his moral integrity to the world, other men will willingly become his followers. Chuang Tzu used the metaphor of water to account for the inherent appeal of the Taoist sage.

> Men do not mirror themselves in running water - they mirror themselves in still water. Only what is still can still the stillness of other things. Of those that receive life from the earth, the pine and cypress alone are best - they stay as green as ever in winter and summer. Or those that receive life from Heaven, Yao and Shun alone are best - they stand at the head of ten thousand things. Luckily, they were able to order their lives, and thereby order the lives of other things.[74]

The mind of the Taoist Perfect Man then, like water, reflects this clear and tranquil nature.

Thoreau also found the constant stillness of Walden Pond to be an emblem of truth that transcends the vicissitudes of the mundane realm. He wrote this beautiful description of Walden Pond:

> Walden is a perfect forest mirror, set round with stones as precious to my eyes as if fewer or rarer. Nothing so fair, so pure, and at the same time so large, as a lake, perchance, lies on the surface of the earth. Sky water. It needs no fence. Nations come and go without defining it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose

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[73] Chuang Tzu, Chuant Tzu, chap. 5, trans., Burton Watson, The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu (Columbia University Press, New York. London, 1968), p. 74.

[74] Chuang Tzu, chap. 5, Burton Watson, The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu, p. 69.

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> quick-silver will never wear off, whose gliding Nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface ever fresh; - a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks, swept and dusted by the sun's hazy brush, - this is the light dust-cloth, - which retains no breath that is breathed on it, but sends its own to float as clouds high above its surface, and be reflected in its bosom still.[75]

Stillness and hence constancy are therefore the two cardinal virtues the New England Transcendentalist saw in water, a mystical element of Nature that unfailingly reflects a pure state of Tao.

While Thoreau described Walden as a perfect mirror, he ascribed the limpidity of its water to the transparent purity of his own character. In a similar view, Chuang Tzu likened the mind of the Taoist Perfect Man to a mirror:

> The Perfect Man uses his mind like a mirror - going after nothing, welcoming nothing, responding but not storing. Therefore he can win out over things and not hurt himself.[76]

Harboring no excessive desire, the mind of the Taoist Perfect Man is not encumbered by it and hence does not change with every craving. Tranquility, or the mind's ability to resist change, is persistently described in Thoreau's, Lao Tzu's and Chuang Tzu's writings as the first step on the way to the eternal truth. In "Higher Laws," Thoreau wrote:

> Who knows what sort of life would result if we had attained to purity? If I knew so wise a man as could teach me purity I would go seek him forthwith.[77]

A Taoist had to gain freedom from desire, or purity of mind, before

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[75] Writings, II, p. 209.

[76] Chuang Tzu, Chap. 7, Burton Watson, p. 97.

[77] Writings, II, p. 242.

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he could experience the Tao.

Thoreau saw not only found the limpidity of water as a symbol of the transparency of his own character, but virtually achieved the organic interrelatedness of Nature and the Soul's rhythms when he sauntered through Concord's fields and forests. There in that "vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature,"[78] Thoreau reclined like a follower of Lao-Chuang Taoism, lingering placidly along Walden's shores. In Walden, Thoreau proclaimed that he wished to:

> walk ... with the Builder of the universe, if I may, not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling trivial Nineteenth Century....[79]

This life in nature that Thoreau longed for and tried to live is precisely the mode of life the Taoists strove after, a life completely in tune with the rhythms of nature. For Thoreau, the goal of his quest was to be "the Builder of the universe;" for the Taoists, the highest achievement lay in "the identification of the self with the universe."[80]

Taoism, as practical philosophy for everyone, emphatically projects the ideas of living simply, in harmony with nature, and doing no violence to one's own nature. Man must be able to lose his self to become one with the Tao. He may achieve absolute happiness through recognizing his unity with the Tao and living the simple Taoist lifestyle in accord with nature. The Taoist repeatedly taught men to give up material pursuits and to roam in

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[78] Journal, II, p. 337.

[79] Writings, II, p. 363.

[80] Writings, II, p. 363.

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the metaphysical sphere, the realm above physical and mundane concerns, to enjoy life. Lao Tzu advised:

> Do not exalt the worthy, so that the people shall not compete.
> Do not value rare treasures, so that the people shall not steal.
> Do not display objects of desire, so that the people's hearts shall not be disturbed.
>
> Therefore in the government of the sage,
> He keeps their hearts vacuous,
> Fills their bellies,
> Weakens their ambitions,
> And strengthens their bones,
> He always causes his people to be without knowledge(cunning) or desire,
> And the crafty to be afraid to act.
> By acting without action, all things will be in order.[81]

In a similar vein, Chuang Tzu wrote:

> When the tailor-bird builds her nest in the deep wood, she uses no more than one branch. When the mole drinks at the river, he takes no more than a bellyful.[82]

The thrust of both remarks lies in a strong caution against accumulating possessions because one's true nature may therefore be obscured by them.

Significantly, this idea was expressed by Thoreau in a remarkably similar way:

> To the bison of the prairie it is a few inches of palatable grass, with water to drink; unless he seeks shelter of the forest or the mountain's shadow.[83]

In the chapter of "Where I lived," he again emphasized the necessity of a life of simplicity:

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[81] Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Chap. 3, Wing-Tsit Chan, p. 103.

[82] Chuang Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Chap. 1, Watson, p. 32.

[83] Writings, II, p. 13.

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> Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottoms and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify.[84]

Then, Thoreau concluded that "In proportion as he simplifies his life, the law of the Universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness."[85] This clearly indicates that Thoreau not only echoed the Taoist contempt for accumulating wealth and property, but also echoed its positive attitude towards man's spartan simplicity and elevation of purpose. Neither did he wish to be associated with the mechanical and competitive aspects of society, nor did he seek the rewards of industrialization. Rather, Thoreau idealized the primitive harmony and a simplicity of nature in his writings.

Like Thoreau, Chuang Tzu felt sorry for "the mass of men" who "lead lives of quiet desperation" and said:

> Once a man receives this fixedly bodily form, he holds on to it, waiting for the end. Sometimes clashing with things, sometimes bending before them, he runs his course like a galloping steed, and nothing can stop him. Is he not pathetic? Sweating and laboring to the end of his days and never knowing where to look for rest - can you help pity him? I'm not dead yet! he says, but what good is that? His body decays, his mind follows it - can you deny that this is a great sorrow? [86]

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[84] Writings, II, pp. 101-102.

[85] Writings, II, p. 214.

[86] Chuang Tzu, chap. 2, Watson, p. 38.

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Chuang Tzu bemoaned that most men tried to reach materialistic goals, conforming to the principles of society. For the Taoists, as well as for Thoreau, the civilized society tended to brutalize man's inner, higher nature. In Walden, Thoreau showed the "positive hindrances" of civilization by testing whether such everyday matters as food, clothing, shelter, furniture, as well as education, law, and reform were really conform with man's "inner necessities." Chuang Tzu questioned the value of materialistic success gained through working laboriously day and night without respite. The paradox of civilization or the mundane value of success, then, was that it actually "barbarized" man, since it drove him or caused him to drift farther away from awareness of his inner self. By the same token, Thoreau contended that he had "civilized" himself by the experience at Walden, since he approached self-realization and oneness with Nature. Chuang Tzu discovered Truth or Tao by successfully abandoning the conventional value system of his environment. He understood the significance of not straining or wasting motion and quickly realized the essential luxury to be derived from leisure. In this respect, Thoreau shared a congenial sympathy with Chuang Tzu:

> There is no Sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work.[87]

Thoreau continued to say,

> Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with

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[87] Henry David Thoreau, "Life without Principle," The Major Essays, ed. by Jeffrey Duncan (New York, 1972), p. 284.

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> the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them.[88]

And expressing his admiration for the Eastern sages, Thoreau turned to the spiritual treasures of the Orient by adding,

> The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Hindu, Persian and Greek, were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich in inward.[89]

In turning to Nature, Thoreau sought not to destroy life's harmonies, but rather to experience the spirit of its beauties. Nature administered to both the physical and spiritual needs for Thoreau; there was a "correspondence" between man and nature - that is, every fact of nature corresponded ideally with a fact of consciousness in man's mind. Thoreau described this correspondence between man and nature in a poem entitled "The Inward Morning":

> Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
> Which outward nature wears,
> And in its fashion's hourly change
> It all things else repairs.
>
> In vain I look for change abroad,
> And can no difference find,
> Till some new ray of peace uncalled
> Illumes my inmost mind.[90]

This inward morning is the kind of wakeful awareness Thoreau stresses throughout Walden: it assesses the constant inspiration to be derived from Nature. What Thoreau was ultimately aiming for, of course, like the Taoists, was a sense of complete oneness with Nature. In order to achieve this Taoist ideal, Thoreau attempted

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[88] Writings, II, p. 6.

[89] Writings, II, p. 15.

[90] Journal, I, p. 291.

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a disciplined, ascetic life-- one of purity, of purifying the channels of perception, of tranquility and clarity of spirit --all these recur in his works. Thoreau observes Nature closely, as did Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, practically giving up his life in society in favor of a life in Nature or the Universe.

Besides their similar Nature mysticism, another profound similarity between Thoreau and the Taoist philosophers is their love of the simple and primitive; and their corresponding distaste for conventions and governmental interference. Lao Tzu was probably the first thinker in China to voice his protest against excessive organization and mechanization. He wrote:

> Govern the state with correctness.
> Operate the army with surprise tactics.
> Administer the empire by engaging in no activity.
> How do I know that this should be so?
> Through this:
> The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world,
> The poorer the people will be.
> The more sharp weapons the people have,
> The more troubled the state will be.
> The more cunning and skill man possesses,
> The more vicious things will appear.
> The more laws and orders are made prominent,
> The more thieves and robbers there will be.[91]

In Chapter 17 of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu expressed the point more clearly:

> The best (rulers) are those whose existence is (merely) known by the people.
> The next best are those who are loved and praised.
> The next are those who are feared.
> And the next are those who are despised.
> It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.
> (The great rulers) value their words highly.

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[91] Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Chap. 57, Wing-Tsit Chan, p. 201.

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> They accomplish their task; they complete their work.
> Nevertheless their people say that they simply follow
> Nature.[92]

As are manifested, in Lao Tzean view, the ideal ruler would undo all the causes of trouble in the world. After that, he would govern with non-action. With non-action, he does nothing, yet everything is accomplished. Therefore it is said in the Tao Teh Ching:

> When the government is non-discriminative and dull,
> The people are contented and generous.
> When the government is searching and discriminative,
> The people are disappointed and contentious.[93]

The ideal ruler of a state should let the people do what they can do themselves. In his famous essay "Civil Disobedience," Thoreau unequivocally stated that he wholeheartedly agreed with this idea: "That government is best which governs not at all."[94] Significantly, Chuang Tzu regarded the false sages as troublemakers, and said that only when the sages were dead would the gangsters cease to appear and the whole universe rest in peace. Thoreau expressed the same paradoxical situation:

> Our manners have been corrupted by communication with the saints, because they had rather consoled the fears than confirmed the hopes of man.[95]

Chuang Tzu likens a ruler failing to leave his people alone, and trying to rule them with laws and institutions, to the process

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[92] Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chap. 17, Wing-Tsit Chan, p. 130.

[93] Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chap. 58, Wing-Tsit Chan, p. 203.

[94] Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience, edited by Owen Thomas (New York. London, 1966), p. 224.

[95] Writings, II, p. 88.

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of putting a halter around a horse's neck; a string through an ox's nose; lengthening the legs of the duck; or shortening those of the crane. What is natural and spontaneous is changed into something artificial. Its result can only be misery and unhappiness. Chuang Tzu believed that happiness could only be achieved when people follow their natural inclination. The political philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu aims at achieving precisely such happiness for every man.

Thoreau's political views are as harsh and paradoxical as that of the Taoists'. "What is called politics is comparatively something so superficial and inhuman," Thoreau complained in "Life Without Principles," "that practically I have never fairly recognized that it concerns me at all." Thoreau placed the individual above the state; and as the Taoist philosophers urged man to follow the course of Nature, Thoreau encouraged every individual to follow the highest dictate - his conscience, in cases where the moral law conflicted with the civil law. "There will never be a really free and enlightened State," Thoreau wrote,

> Until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.[96]

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[96] Walden and Civil Disobedience, p. 243.

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This passage indicates that Thoreau's political views were as inflexible and unyielding as Lao Tzu's. Thoreau cries in "Life without Principle," "that practically I have never fairly recognized that it concerns me at all."[97] But Thoreau realized that the kind of arrangement or the ideal he was imagining was only a remote possibility. His Transcendental utopia - "a still more perfect and glorious State" - could only be like the Taoist utopia - "a small country with few inhabitants" -and could only be achieved if every individual made a voluntary break with the machinery of government and discovered his genuine self in the context of Nature.

The Taoist philosophers learned to liberate themselves from convention and other restrictive bonds which would permanently tie them to institutions or to the machinery of government. In order to create their own ideal state, they opposed any conditions which would conflict with the natural state, including the government, civil laws, and such meaningless terms as philanthropy or vice. Such words, Chuang Tzu argued, would allow man to make invidious distinctions which subsequently would destroy the Tao. By the same token, Thoreau believed that the eternal truth could be apprehended in and through Nature. He could thus scarcely show high regard for such human contrivances such as laws and governments. When he is able to return to Nature after having involved himself in mundane trivialities, Thoreau remarked,

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[97] Henry David Thoreau, "Life without Principle," The Major Essays, ed. by Jeffrey Duncan (New York, 1972), p. 289.

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> Having waded in the shallowest streams of time, I would now bathe my temples in eternity. I wish to participate in the serenity of nature, to share the happiness of the river and the woods. I thus from time to time break off my connections with eternal truths and go with the shallow stream of human affairs, grinding at the mills of the Philistines; but when my task is done, with never failing confidence I devote myself to the infinite again.[98]

For Thoreau as well as for the Taoists, Nature was an endless source of delight and a means by which they could get trivial and distracting human affairs out of their minds. More importantly, Nature afforded the means by which they could apprehend the eternal truths which lie beyond external manifestations. Holding such a view of Nature and human affairs, coupled with a fervent individualism, Thoreau understandably felt that the government was of little concern to him and wished to give it as little thought as possible-- just as the Taoist thinkers who would disdain the existence of the inflexible government or at least attempt to limit its power and scope.

Both Thoreau and the Taoists spurned mundane fame or success, preferring a life in a mystical union with Nature, which in turn freed them from the values of the world. Thoreau seems to have had another source of innermost motivation, a voice which urged him to turn toward the genius of Transcendental morality. Understandably, therefore, in "Civil Disobedience" for instance, Thoreau even advocated going to jail as a gesture of protest against the unjust policy of the government. When Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu expressed their dissatisfaction with the state, they urged men to withdraw

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[98] Writings, II, p. 365.

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from the world. No matter whether a person choose to be imprisoned in his world or to withdraw from it, the decision itself is a kind of spiritual and moral refinement of the self-- thus a transcendence of the self--so that the self might become better attuned to both Nature and the spirit of Transcendental morality. Wishing everyone to once again become part and parcel of Nature, Thoreau and the Taoists, by their own examples, encouraged others to follow their own minds and tried to help them experience the results of their own inner tranquility.

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CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in the preceding chapters to study comprehensively the nature and extent of Thoreau's Orientalism. Our study demonstrates that Thoreau's readings of the Confucian and Taoist books played so important a role in his development as a thinker and writer that these influences cannot be ignored by serious Thoreauvian scholars.

Thoreau was not an original thinker in the traditional sense of the term. His ideas were all borrowed; his originality was in synthesizing them. "Works of art are not produced in a vacuum," says the modern comparatist Hermeren, "every work of art is surrounded by what might be called its artistic field, and this field includes critics, artistic traditions, literary movements, current philosophical ideas, political and social structure, and many things. All these factors may influence the creation of works of art."[1] Thoreau's intellectual heritage was indeed vast and variegated. He was deeply acquainted with Oriental literature, the Greek classics, travel literature, and natural literature. Of all those, it was Oriental literature which influenced him the most.

In the course of seeking for a new mode of his ideal character, Thoreau was highly eclectic. But it was obvious that in

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[1] G. Hermeren, Influence in Art and Literature (Princeton University Press, N. J., 1975), p. 3.

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his adoption of eclecticism as his principal strategy, he received his main impulse from Victor Cousin, who professed a system of universal eclecticism to trace the integral laws of human thought as ubiquitous and unchanging. As Thoreau said, "I don't the least care where I get my ideas, or what suggests them."[2] Whenever he felt the necessity of using some ideas in establishing his own ideal philosophy, he accepted every piece of knowledge, from anywhere in the world, whether religious, political or social, or related to human self-discovery, potentiality, and aspiration. "Like some other preachers," Thoreau thus says, "I have added my texts--derived from the Chinese and Hindoo scriptures--long after my discourse was written."[3] Since he was mentally free, internationalized, and universalized, instead of being confined to the wares of a single Western culture, Thoreau also shopped for ideas in the Oriental department store. Because he conceived them as integral parts of the universal system, Thoreau wove most deeply the wisdom of the Orientals into his own fabric of thought and "captured their spirits," as Paul suggests, "their insistence on behavior and the way of life."[4]

Before dealing with the nature and extent of the Chinese influence on Thoreau, this study examined the origin and nature of New England Transcendentalism in order to explain Thoreau's intellectual explorations in light of their historical and cultural

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[2] Thoreau, Journal, VIII, p. 135.

[3] Thoreau, Writings, II, p. 135.

[4] Sherman Paul, The Shores of America (Urbana, 1958), p. 71.

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context. As we have seen in the range of the New England Transcendental movement, in its essence, it was not merely a literary movement or a religious movement; it was a cultural revolution. Executing in the world of thought what the American revolution had begun in the world of action, this movement gradually developed into a great tidal wave of reformation, prevalent in almost every domain of action and affecting cultural life in a wide variety of ways; it swept over the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Transcendentalists attempted to work out the most acute and troubling problems of the nineteenth century. Just as New England Transcendentalism reconciled science and religion and made the resuscitation of Christianity in a new and vital form seem possible, it also healed the split between mind and matter and restored the intellectual to a place in the world of action. It provided the basis for a new social order in which human dignity and freedom might triumph over the powers of materialism and mechanization.

The American Transcendental movement has been generally treated in the same context as the international Romantic movement of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But, as we have seen, in its characteristics, the Romantic movement was by no means the same as the Transcendentalists. The forms and times of the Romantic movement varied from country to country-- because they were in each case determined by a specific literary background, as well as by social, religious, and political factors. The American response to Romantic idealism especially differed from that of

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Europe. While the Romantics used the principles of Romantic idealism mainly for aesthetic purposes, the Transcendentalists modified and expanded them into practical, realistic guidelines for the American mind.

Besides being indebted to the Romantic movement, all the major American Transcendentalists were highly receptive to Oriental philosophy. Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman were the major exponents of Oriental thought in America. But they were by no means the first. The Oriental influence had imperceptibly entered the European literary and philosophical consciousness long before it was manifested in the writings of New England Transcendentalists of the mid-nineteenth century. In order to explain the root and nature of Orientalism in the New England Transcendentalism and Romanticism-- especially with regard to the Chinese influence on Western consciousness, a section of this study was devoted to a description of a historical survey of contact between the East and the West. As already manifested, mutual contact between the two hemispheres had existed long before the Christian era. Although the Mediterranean world had, indeed, enjoyed some contact with the East, a genuine upsurge of European interest in Oriental culture (to the point where it became a literary movement such as "Oriental Renaissance") did not occur until the eighteenth century for the Chinese, and the nineteenth century for Indian culture. The reason for the delay was that, until the eighteenth century, the European cultural consciousness was trapped in the house of scripture and the classics. But, in the seventeenth century, the authority of

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the classics and of scripture gradually deteriorated as tendencies toward rational comprehension of the universe and toward seeing European civilization in the context of pagan civilization grew. We have already seen in the cases of Descartes and Lock that of the pagan civilizations that constituted an intellectual challenge to the old standards of European faith, China was used as an example to prove the fabrication of classical-Christian history. As a result, during the Enlightenment, Confucius became a "patron saint," providing the philosophes with the source of natural religion they were advocating-- one free from rituals, dogmas, and superstitions. The eighteenth century witnessed a dramatic shift in the European attitude toward Chinese culture. In the middle of the century, the Chinese vogue, chinoiserie, swept over Europe; it turned persons of taste and culture into addicts to things Chinese. The image of a previously unrecognized kind of "beauty stimulated by the conception of the Chinese garden (Sharawadgi) as an aesthetic standard," as Lovejoy stated, helped pave the way for the European Romantic movement. The ungeometrical, unmanicured style of the Chinese garden spread throughout Europe. Because of this aesthetic reorientation under the influence of Chinese culture, the contemporary creative thinker was no longer satisfied with the artificiality of Neo-classicism. The Romantic movement was a furious reaction against the dogmaticism of the eighteenth century. While the Romantics were seeking to free the consciousness from the tyranny of Neo-classicism and to restore an active, generative force in the achievement of knowledge, they turned their attention

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to the Orient and read ardently-- for it was in the unchanged, primitive form of Oriental civilization that they could find the primitive revelation and the foundation of natural religion their aesthetic systems required. This historical event deserved to be called the "Oriental Renaissance"; for, like the classical Renaissance, it promised a new reformation of the religious and secular worlds. Following a new wave of Orientalism at the end of the eighteenth century, the studies of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Islam prevailed throughout Europe.

However, when they spoke of the Oriental Renaissance, scholars tend to attribute all the credit for that historical event to the impact of Hinduism and slighted the importance of European contact with other Oriental cultures, especially with the Chinese. But the Chinese tradition as well as the Hindu tradition, as we have already seen above, played a significant role in awakening Europe's interest in Eastern cultures. To be sure, Chinese civilization, as Joseph Needham states, had made a great contribution to the transformation of Western consciousness. During the last two centuries, the European understanding of the universe as mechanical shifted to an understanding of it as naturally organized. Needham writes:

> If the thread is traced backwards it leads through Hegel, Lotze, Schelling and Heder to Leibniz. . . . and then it seems to disappear. But is that not perhaps in part because Leibniz had studied the doctrines of the neo-Confucian school of Chu Hsi, as they were transmitted to him through the Jesuit translations and despatches? And would it not be worth examining whether some of that originally which enabled him to make a contribution

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> radically new to European thought was Chinese in its inspiration?[5]

All the thinkers Needham refers to above had an impact on Romanticism, and Kant even influenced some of Thoreau's Transcendentalist contemporaries.[6] We should therefore deal with the Chinese influences as one of its major sources of the "Oriental Renaissance."

The Americans were delayed in their studies of the Orient in comparison with the rest of the Western World. When the Oriental books that were first translated in Europe found their way to America, her response to them differed from that of Europe. Unlike the European Romantics, who made use of the Orient only for those literary purposes with mystical predilections, Americans responded to the Orient as a mandate of history and a matter of birthright, on the conviction that a little of the Orient could be transplanted to the soil of the New World. We know already from Nature and "The American Scholar" how Emerson made use of the Orientals to enact his historical proposal for the young American intellectual. We also know that Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass was not only an exemplary celebration of novelty in America, but that it also dramatized a new American hero who separated the self from the past by borrowing Oriental legacies.

As with Emerson and Whitman, Thoreau also created a unique

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[5] Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China (Oxford University Press, 1954), vol. II, pp. 291-2.

[6] Ibid., p. 292.

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pattern for Orientalism in terms of its special value for the new idealism of the New World. He adopted the Orient as the embodiment of a free, unique, individual growth-- the mainstay for the last twenty-five years of his life. The usual critical opinion is that Thoreau's first acquaintance with Oriental literature came some time after his graduation from Harvard College in 1837. But as already mentioned, Thoreau's first exposure to the Orient had already come by his freshman year. In addition, during his junior year, he had been familiar with Victor Cousin's Oriental idealism through Orestes A. Brownson. More significantly, during his senior year, Thoreau read Emerson's Nature and Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy, borrowing from the library of the debating club. However, in the tradition of Thoreau's scholarship so far, the influence of Cousin upon Thoreau has been slighted. But the scope of the influence of Victor Cousin upon Thoreau's Transcendentalism was, as already manifested, as great as that of Emerson. Furthermore, Cousin was one of the major intermediaries for Thoreau's early acquaintance with Oriental ideas. As already mentioned, during his college days, Thoreau through Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy, was introduced to a significant episode of the Bhagavad-Gita, to Confucianism, and to Taoism, all of which played a significant role in establishing the mode of his Transcendental life. Cousin's book should therefore be considered one of the major sources for future scholarship on Thoreau's Transcendentalism and Orientalism.

Influenced early by Emerson, Orestes A. Browson, and Victor

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Cousin and heavily read in the Greek and Roman classics, seventeenth-century poets, and Romantics (particularly Goethe, Wordsworth, and Coleridge), Thoreau fused these writings with the Oriental concepts that he obtained through his later readings of Oriental literature. When he bathed his intellect in the unchanged and primitive form of Oriental philosophy in the Bhagavad-Gita, "The Law of Menu," and the Sankya Karika, and translated The Transmigration of the Seven Brahmans from India, the Transcendentalist Thoreau revealed the Orientals as his source of ideas and adopted them as the props of his life.

However, Thoreau's attention to the literature of the East was not limited to the Hindus. As already manifested in the chronology of his exposure to Oriental sources, Thoreau continuously and enthusiastically read the Confucian books throughout his entire life and adopted Confucian ideas as some of the props for his Transcendental system.

Besides his reading of Chinese and other Oriental literature, he also received some indirect influences from both Europe and his ancestors. By Thoreau's time, America and China had, as was already manifested in Franklin's and Jefferson's writings, been in significant contact for some time--the period of the American Enlightenment (1765-1815). America had received the Chinese tradition with a degree of eagerness and enthusiasm.
Thoreau disseminated elements of Confucian images, allusions, and affinities in his college essays, the Journals, and his two books.

Nevertheless, the study of the Confucian canon in Thoreau has

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been, for the most part, slighted or regarded as a dead end in the tradition of Thoreau scholarship. To justify my belief that the Chinese tradition formed the basis of an organic part of Thoreau's Orientalism, a part of this paper has tried to shed some light on the unique presence of Confucianism in Thoreau's overall philosophy. As already examined, in Journals of his early days, Thoreau presented the same allusion to the "sovereign principle" that he found in Confucius. He wove the Confucian concept of the eloquence of silence and celestial music into the whole of his theme: the bravery of virtue, solitude, society, friendship, and sound and silence. In The service and many other journal entries, he set forth a philosophy of sound as the source of virtue which evolves around the Confucian notion of the impersonal force of the universe.

Besides his use of the Confucian allusion in a philosophy of sound, Thoreau deciphered the Confucian canon in a way appropriate to his own Transcendental ideas. Several selections of Confucius in the Dial and his own translations in Walden showed that he interpolated the Confucian notion of the deity in his own Transcendental mode of the immanence of God in all things. In addition, Thoreau's concept of self-cultivation paralleled the Confucian canon of self-cultivation advocated by Confucius in the Four Books. According to Confucius, the best way in which man can keep his nature is by cultivating two obvious virtues--sincerity and benevolence. Thoreau depicted the exact concept of Confucian self-cultivation in The Service and many other journal entries.

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We have demonstrated that Thoreau was not one to be content with an abstract idealism hidden in the pages of a journal. His nature was such that he felt compelled to reflect not only upon is life and his moral conduct, but also to act upon any principle derived therefrom. To engage with life, he went to live at Emerson's. In the Concord life, however, instead of finding a world congenial to his life, he found monotony, ugliness, and decay. As already mentioned, the most noticeable events that made their major contributions to Thoreau's disillusion were derived from his disappointment with Emerson's insufficiency, his brother John's death, and his night in jail. To overcome the depression resulting from the disparity between what he sought and what he found, he had to seek out a new authentic faith with which he could settle down. It was the Confucian books which provided him with confirmation of his own views on the necessity and value of solitude and self-cultivation. By editing the "Sayings of Confucius" and the "Chinese Four Books" for the Dial in April and October, 1843, Thoreau reflected his receptive attitude toward Confucianism. The selections in the Dial dealt primarily with practical matters such as self-perfection, the superior man, the Tao, reform, virtue, and politics. Thoreau also continued to read the French version of the Confucian books during his Walden period, and translated them into quotes for Walden.

The purpose of Thoreau's going to Walden was by no means to live the life of a hermit, but rather to live as the Confucian Chün Tzu. Witnessing that with the startling headway of industrialism

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and urbanism, the dehumanization of humanity was looming, Thoreau attempted to experiment with ways by which his fellows could extricate themselves from the toiling and moiling they were leading. To use his own metaphor, he wanted to be a chanticleer to wake them up from their spiritual slumbers and help make them into a new generation of people.

In Walden, therefore, Thoreau presented the same image of the Confucian Chün Tzu, which he admired and strove to emulate throughout his life. He not only envisioned for himself the qualities of an ideal Chün Tzu--humanity, wisdom, and devotion--but also exerted his influence on the masses to encourage them to achieve such an ideal. Thoreau shared Confucius' idea of social responsibility to which the Chün Tzu is committed. To Confucius as well as to Thoreau, moral education was the only way to social amelioration. The cultivation of one's character is the first step a Chün Tzu should take before can embarking on a similar journey of inward discovery and self-reform. The ultimate goal is the improvement of the universal lot of mankind.

The moral formula in the Confucian classics prizes the development of a well-balanced individual, a well-ordered family, a well-governed state, and a happy, stable world. The attainment of this goal involves the strenuous fostering of divine nobility in life. Significantly, Thoreau was completely convinced that would man only put his mind and heart to it, he could create a heaven right here on earth. At the heart of both Confucius and Thoreau is a belief that each man has within himself a god-given ability to

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distinguish right from wrong. Unfortunately, man has often ignored that inner voice and has become so callous that he no longer hears that voice. Would he but strive to revert to the god like innocence of childhood or the childlike heart, he would renew that voice and through this voice, himself. Like Confucius, Thoreau had the highest hopes for mankind and was convinced that spiritual rebirth could be achieved.

Besides the humanistic philosophy of Confucius, Thoreau's life-long goal bore a close parallel to the mystical inclination of the Chinese Taoists. However, because of the absence of evidence that Thoreau read Taoist literature, the canonical notions of Taoism in Thoreau have been ascribed to mere coincidences or associated with a result of his enthusiastic reading of Hindu, Confucian, and Buddhist works. But we now know that there are several convincing pieces of evidence proving that Thoreau must, in one way or another, have been acquainted with Taoist literature. We have seen that Thoreau first read about Rémusat's study of Lao Tzu in Victor Cousin's Introduction to the History of Philosophy, and that in the periods between the 1810s and 1840s, Rémusat translated a number of versions of the Tao Te Ching into French; theses were definitely accessible to Thoreau. Furthermore, as already mentioned, through Pauthier's footnotes in Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient, Thoreau not only learned of Lao Tzu and his Tao Te Ching, but also grasped the essential notion of Taoism from hints in the translator's comparison between Confucianism and Taoism. We have also seen that there is quite convincing internal

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evidence for Thoreau's reading of Taoist literature and that his views toward Taoism reflected the two French translators' erroneous views that Taoism and Hinduism were the same tradition.

In order to give more concrete shape to the reasoning, some significant parallels between the Taoists' and Thoreau's thoughts have been investigated. Thoreau's preference for the spiritual life over the life based on material pursuits inclined him to Taoist philosophy. Like Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Thoreau was appalled by the widespread rush among his neighbors to achieve material gratification. Thoreau bemoaned that they had forgotten about the value of the individual and their need to develop their souls. Like a Taoist philosopher, Thoreau encouraged his fellows to return to nature for the joy of life. With this in mind, Thoreau advocated his doctrine of simplicity. He went to the woods, as he proclaimed, "in order to live deliberately, to front only the essentials of life."[7] In nature, consequently, a man is nearest to the divine spirit therein. To Thoreau and to the Taoists, every physical fact of nature could be absorbed into the mind; complete absorption resulted in the feeling of oneness with nature as well as in a sense of liberation from bondage which would be passed on to one's fellow men. We have also demonstrated that both Thoreau and the Taoists commonly used the metaphor of water in their literary and metaphysical imagery.

To Thoreau, the enlightened individual citizen-- one who is thoughtful and awake-- has a conscience which supersedes the laws

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[7] Writings, II, p. 100.

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of government. Individuals, then, have the responsibility to challenge their governments when and where they think they are wrong. They will prefer to be jailed or let life go and choose injustice. The ideal state of the Taoist is one in which a sage or a Perfect Man is its leader. The duty of the sage-ruler is not to do things but rather to undo all the causes of trouble in the world. Thoreau might have been convinced by what Emerson said about the ideal state which truly reflects the Taoist's ideal:

> To educate the wise man the State exists, and with the appearance of the wise man the State expires. The wise man is the State.[8]

When the wise man or the Perfect Man appears and character prevails, everything rights itself. Without governments things are set in their right order; this is how the sages of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu rule-- through non-action.

In conclusion, by focusing on less-known but significant sources of Thoreau's Orientalism, this study tries to throw some positive light on the unique presence of Confucianism and Taoism in Thoreau's overall philosophy. Considering the evidence of Thoreau's familiarity with the Confucian classics and his earnest effort to identify himself with a paragon of virtue, the argument that Confucius exerted influence on Thoreau seems fairly established. Claiming a direct influence, an analysis of the similarities between Thoreau and the Taoists in nature mysticism and political ideals is worthwhile. The segments of evidence that are demonstrated, in my view, are sufficient to conclude that

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[8] Emerson, The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 220.

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Thoreau must, in one way or another, have been acquainted with Taoism. It is hoped that the foregoing arguments have offered sufficient evidence to repudiate the casual claims that the influences of Confucian classics and Taoist thought on Thoreau are tangential.

Thoreau's contribution to American literature is great. He was one of the first Americans to accept the cardinal principles of Confucianism and Taoism. Thoreau brought to light for America the finest interpretation of life hidden in the Chinese tradition and upheld both Confucian and Taoist tenets in the Western World. He was, in a way, a disciple of Confucius and Lao Tzu. It is hoped that this study will motivate scholars who are interested in Thoreau and Confucianism and Taoism to undertake further research and provide further evidence of positive influences from the Chinese tradition on Thoreau.

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