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HENRY D. THOREAU'S COLOR RED, RELATIONSHIP TO NATURE, AND RELIGIOUS
IMAGERY IN ROBERT FROST'S "ROSE POGONIAS" AND OTHER POEMS

by

JENNIFER D. FRY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of English

Ann Beebe, PhD, Committee Chair

College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Texas at Tyler

December 2021

The University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

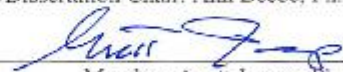
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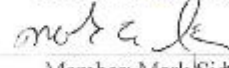
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Abstract

HENRY D. THOREAU'S COLOR RED, RELATIONSHIP TO NATURE, AND RELIGIOUS IMAGERY IN ROBERT FROST'S "ROSE POGONIAS" AND OTHER POEMS

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In the estimation of contemporaries such as book critic Julian Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau sought to leave a legacy of influence behind him. He never saw such attention in his lifetime. Yet, he found a willing audience in Robert Frost, who began reading his works with gusto at the age of 22 and later listed *Walden* as one of his favorite books. Reading Frost's own works reveals ample influence of Thoreau's writings over Frost's artistry—in terms of the color choices used, but also in advocating a certain view of nature, as well as the use of pagan imagery within his works. This paper examines several of Frost's poems—"Rose Pogonias," "Unharvested," "The Wood-Pile," "Tree at my Window," "For Once, then, Something," and "Pan with Us"—in light of Thoreau's artistry. In order to see the connection, I first unpack the major themes of color usage, stewardship of nature, and religion found within Thoreau's ample corpus. I then apply these themes to Frost's poetics to determine the extent of influence.

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Introduction

In his forward to the 1995 edition of *Walden*, editor Walter Harding observes, “Once the reader begins to view the world through Thoreau’s eyes, it becomes a very different world” (ix). If that reader is Robert Frost (1874-1963), it becomes a very different poem. Frost is able to see “through Thoreau’s eyes” because of a direct influence on Frost’s artistry. Having a clear understanding of the influence of Thoreau over Frost gives greater critical importance to Frost’s work and opens the door to the complex natural imagery found within it. It also highlights Thoreau’s broader influence on American literature, not just through his own writings but also through the fact that his perspective lives on in other writers’ works from the twentieth century and beyond. Yet, the influence of Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) on Frost has been overlooked in recent scholarship dedicated to the poet. As an example of this unfortunate trend, German scholar Astrid Galbraith lists only twelve other studies besides her own 2003 thesis which compare or contrast the two authors, only one of which is recent to the last thirty years. She writes, “A number of critics have associated Frost with Thoreau, pointing to specific and general analogies. Yet their studies have basically concentrated on affinities...” (4-5). These affinities do not necessarily claim an influence of one over the other, however. In one of Galbraith’s cited studies, a 1968 “rewarding” dissertation by Lyle D. Domina from the University of Missouri, Columbia, Domina “demonstrates that both writers share fundamental approaches to life which *cause them to choose similar ways of expression*, thereby placing both writers in the New England tradition...” (5n20, emphasis mine). Is it just a coincidence, in other words, that features of Frost’s work share marked similarities with Thoreau’s—just because they, separately, viewed the world through a similar lens? But merely situating these authors within the New England literary landscape is not enough. Rather, my aim is to show a direct influence of Thoreau’s writing over Frost’s artistry.

Perhaps a more fitting example of the need for a study of Thoreau's influence over Frost is provided by editor Robert Faggen, who published *The Notebooks of Robert Frost* in 2006. In the book's introduction, Faggen lists Emerson and Darwin among prominent thinkers and writers who are mentioned in Frost's terse *Notebooks*; yet he does not mention Thoreau. Faggen asserts that a passage on " 'vicious cycles' of learning" from Notebook 22 "alludes to Frost's interests in Aristotle, Zeno, Emerson, Darwin, and Einstein" (xxvii). But what of his interest in Thoreau? Emerson is mentioned fourteen times by name in the *Notebooks*; Thoreau only five. Mention of *Walden* appears only once. And yet, in 1934 Frost himself listed *Walden* as his third favorite book, calling it "near the height of poetry" ("To *Books We Like*" 738). With the notion of writing as a performance ever in view, Frost was notorious for not revealing his inmost thoughts, even in seemingly private dime-store notebooks. He must have known these notebooks would one day be read by thousands. Indeed, as Galbraith asserts, Frost "was generally restrained in his comments about influences on his verse" (140). But this declaration does not mean there were not any influences. While a careful study of the *Notebooks* might provide insight into his writing process, we will not find a blatant, obvious connection—to Thoreau, or anyone else—in raking through them. Yet the puzzle still lingers, and it remains the work of scholars to tease out the connection.

One such scholar who has teased out the connection between Thoreau and Frost is Ann Beebe, Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas at Tyler. This connection, she asserts, comes through reading. In a lecture for an online class in the summer of 2019, Beebe claimed that "Frost was reading Thoreau at a time... when most people dismissed Thoreau [and] saw him as [an] Emerson-lite, [an] Emerson wanna-be... Frost, in reading Thoreau, is rather revolutionary" (08:53-09:16). My own research has led to the same conclusion. Though critics in Britain had already named *Walden* a classic by the 1880s when Frost was just a boy, early critical reception of Thoreau in the United States nitpicked the humanity's eccentricities to the point of obscuring the important views on nature that he had to convey. For example, in its "Notices of New Books" section for September 22, 1854—just six weeks after the initial publication of *Walden*—the *New-York Daily Times*, precursor to the *New York Times*, featured a short, yet scathing, unsigned review of the book among its other book reviews. The reviewer calls Thoreau "an erratic genius" who is "apt to confuse rather than arrange the order of things" ("Notices" 3). Such a bitter assessment of Thoreau's writing style might have appealed to

Frost's own penchant for highlighting confusion and chaos. For American audiences, it would not be until the 1950s, in the final decade of Frost's own career, that Thoreau himself finally eclipses Emerson's reputation and comes into his own as a scholar, writer, scientist, and thinker. Well before this time, Frost was eager to delve into the perspective of a then-unnoticed naturalist. Galbraith estimates that Frost began reading excerpts from Thoreau's *Journal* as early as 1896, at the age of 22 inside a borrowed book on flower identification called *How to Know the Wildflowers* (1893) by Mrs. William Starr Dana. This early exposure was "likely to have inspired him to read Thoreau's masterpiece," Galbraith concludes (3). According to Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson's chronology of his life, Frost read *Walden* for the first time in 1901 at the age of 27 (936). This is a bit late to be considered a formative step for Frost; yet, the move acted as a rudder to steer his intellectual endeavors, the proof of which is in his poetry and other writings. In fact, Thoreau's subject matter, writing style, and worldview give direction to the later poet. If Henry David Thoreau is Emerson's disciple, Robert Frost is Thoreau's protégé.

Protégés of all stripes first learn to perceive the world through the perspective of their masters. So, what is it for Frost to "see through Thoreau's eyes"? In one sense, it is to see in color. In another, it is to wrestle with humanity's relationship to nature and its variant consequences—what Beebe calls "humanity's obligation to nature" ("Three Ways"). Yet in another sense, seeing through Thoreau's eyes is to sense a calibrated sensitivity to the spirituality of the natural world. Though perhaps at first perceived to be disparate topics present in each humanity's individual corpus, these three elements, in particular, are connected through the rich imagery from the natural world which both Thoreau and Frost share. "Rose Pogonias," for example, is certainly an exemplary poem when speaking of Thoreau's use of color, particularly the reds. Yet, as I will show, it is also through red and other nature-derived images such as the sun that we can see Thoreau's employment of religious, even pagan imagery at work in the poem. "The Wood-Pile" showcases humanity's ideal relationship to nature—his "obligation" to it—but through the presence of the small bird, itself a natural image, the poem overlaps with Thoreau's use of religious, particularly Christian, imagery. It is precisely through natural imagery, then, that we see Thoreau's influence over Frost most vividly, an influence which Galbraith does not acknowledge.

While acknowledging the “many similarities which provide a fruitful basis for comparison between” both Thoreau and Frost, Galbraith fails to concede natural imagery as one such similarity. Instead, she suggests, this feature in both bodies of work is mere coincidence and not worthy of significant study. She claims in her introduction that

[t]hough one also notices the use of imagery, especially nature imagery such as woods, swamps, woodpiles, and woodchucks, *one should not lay too much emphasis on these images or try to derive influences from them, as they simply constitute the dominant characteristics of the country* and have been used in the same way by other authors concerned with nature writing. (2, emphasis mine)

The natural imagery which Thoreau and Frost employ in their work is too generic, in other words—too impersonal, too nondescript, too “dominant.” In Galbraith’s mind, the natural imagery found in these two masterful bodies of work might as well be a dime-a-dozen, because the same flora and fauna may dot any landscape and surround any writer who chooses to look. I take exception to this view. Though the natural world may bear a certain similarity to itself regardless of region, this does not mean that regional nuance is unimportant; nor does the presence of less specific natural imagery in the works of these two authors imply a broad neutrality devoid of significant influence.

In order for us to understand what Frost is doing with Thoreau’s material in his own poetry, I will need to unpack some of Thoreau’s artistry. My focus throughout my thesis, therefore, will be more heavily on Thoreau’s employment of these three topics—the color red, humanity’s relationship to nature, and religious imagery within his works. In Chapter One I argue that Thoreau rejects contemporary scientists’ color naming systems, particularly those based in Europe, in favor of a nomenclature system of his own based in North America. This rejection is a part of his larger project to create a North American-specific Transcendentalist religion based on the natural world as he experienced it, rather than rely on some foreign religion. Color, for Thoreau, represented scientific inquiry into natural phenomena *as well as* spiritual understanding. Red, Thoreau’s most valued color because of its relative rarity within nature, is the link between the two. Through red, Thoreau’s natural imagery and scientific record-keeping merge with his use of religious, even pagan imagery. For example, the color red signals the presence of the sun and its ripening activity; the presence of the sun, vise-versa, signals the presence of red. As a symbol, the sun recalls the ancient pagan religious activity of

sun worship. Thoreau's use of the color red is thus present within Frost's "Rose Pogonias," "Unharvested," and "Come In."

Chapter One describes the natural world, particularly its color, as it presents itself through a Thoreauvian lens. Chapter Two's focus is on humanity's relationship to that world. Here I demonstrate that it is through reading Frost's works through a Thoreauvian lens that we understand humanity's right relationship to nature. Thoreau himself imparted to Frost a special knowledge of the natural world—to borrow a word, a "geognosy"—which is also a pathway to the divine. It is because of this special knowledge that Thoreau advocates for a preservation of the natural world. We see this preservation at work in "The Wood-Pile." "The Wood-Pile" also exemplifies another tenet of Thoreau's view on nature—that of a hopeful absence, what Thoreau's focus on the cyclical nature of the seasons speaks to.

In Chapters One and Two, I place a heavy emphasis placed on nature's descriptions. Chapter Three represents a shift in focus. In Chapter Three, we come to the most significant of my topics—that of religious imagery. I argue that the paganism found within Frost's work is a direct result of Thoreau's significant influence over the poet. Both Thoreau and Frost lived at a time of a widespread Christian consensus within the culture at large, as well as within New England itself. Yet both also chose to reject that consensus in favor of pagan religious expression, which we see manifested most notably in "Rose Pogonias" and "Pan with Us." The presence of a dominant Christian worldview at the time of these two authors' writings is so vital to my argument because it helps to explain from where the blatant paganism found within Frost's poetry comes. Transcendentalism as a heresy is an outcropping of Christianity, a false teaching of the larger religious worldview. Therefore, to understanding them in their truest sense, Transcendentalism, Thoreau's writing, and Frost's poetry must all be understood within a Christian context, even its rejection.

Central to my argument in each chapter will be Christian religious thought as understood during Thoreau's and Frost's lifetimes; I will, therefore, make reference to the Bible and its connections to these writers' works alongside my discussions of color imagery and the natural realm. To do this, throughout my thesis I will be quoting from the Christian Scriptures. All Scripture references will come from the New King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted. The NKJV, as it is abbreviated, offers an update to the cumbersome "thee/thou"

grammatical constructions found throughout the King James Version, while retaining the poetic wording of the 1611 translation. The retention of the earlier translation's poetic wording is important to a study of Thoreau and Frost because it allows us to recognize the authors' allusions to Scripture. The King James Version was the only translation of the Bible available to either Thoreau or Frost. It naturally follows, then, that both authors' biblical allusions borrow heavily from the King James' phrasing.

Again, all three of my topics are connected to each other through the natural imagery of color, swamps, and birds, among others. Instead of Galbraith's dismissive view on the two authors' use of natural imagery, I propose that the rich natural imagery which both authors share is precisely the point of the influence of Thoreau over Frost. Through close readings of "Rose Pogonias," "Unharvested," "The Wood-Pile," "For Once, Then, Something," and "Pan with Us," this essay will demonstrate the heavy influence Henry David Thoreau had on shaping Robert Frost's use of the color red, his depictions of humanity's right relationship to nature, and his use of religious imagery. As I have already stated, all three of these topics are connected to each other through Thoreau's natural imagery found within Frost's work. Each of these topics will form one chapter of my thesis project. I have listed each element in the order in which they will be dealt with, from the least to the most significant. Several of the poems I have chosen contain more than one of these elements, which is why I will be returning to some of them in the different chapters. For example, I discuss "Rose Pogonias" in both my chapters on red and religious imagery; "The Wood-Pile" appears in the discussion of humanity's relationship to nature, and again in discussing religious imagery. Even in its simplicity—a simplicity which Frost himself worked hard to seem effortless—there is a richness to Frost's poetry which lends itself well to multiple applications of study.

In examining Thoreau's works for use in this study, I have left a few of them out of my direct comparison to Frost—namely, *Faith in a Seed* and *Wild Fruits*. They are, as one of Thoreau's recent editors Lewis Hyde put it, works which Thoreau himself did not oversee to completion ("A Note on the Selection" liii). That Thoreau did not "write" these works attributed to him posthumously is not my chief concern. Instead, my reason for excluding them has to do with their being the most recent of Thoreau's publications, which is outside of Robert Frost's lifespan and, therefore out of reach of potentially influencing his poetry. Released in 1993 and 2000, respectively, these two works in particular are not ones which Frost would have had opportunity to read or discover. There is one

posthumously published essay I have included, however—"Huckleberries," not published until 1970. Though not likely to have been a direct influence on Frost, it nonetheless bears striking resemblance to his artistry, which is why I have included it here. Astrid Galbraith lists the *Journal*, *Walden*, *A Week*, Thoreau's poetry, and the essays surrounding the John Brown controversy as works with which Frost would have been familiar (3-4). Because of limited space and focus, I have chosen to eliminate the John Brown essays; for the same reasons I have also not included Thoreau's poetry. I have instead chosen to focus on key passages from *Walden*; select essays like "Ktaadn," "Autumnal Tints," and "Walking;" and *A Week*. I have also included a small sampling of the *Journal*. Former president of the Thoreau Society and preeminent Thoreauvian scholar William Howarth laments the fact that, as of 2017, Thoreau's *Journal* still has not been thoroughly treated by scholars, a fact which he terms "the greatest untold secret of American letters, and also a distorting lens of Thoreau studies." The aim of this thesis is not to examine Thoreau's entire *Journal*; however, in an effort to combat Howarth's assertion and "undistort" my own scholarship, I have chosen several strategic passages from the *Journal* which are particularly relevant to a discussion of Robert Frost's poetics.

Chapter One

The Color Red

In my study of Thoreau's and Frost's writings, I chose to pursue each of my topics—Thoreau's use of red, his understanding of humanity's ideal relationship to nature, and his religious expression—because I find fruitful intersections between the two writers' works across all three of these categories. An understanding of these elements and their connection to Thoreau's natural imagery is crucial to a correct understanding of these authors' contribution to literature today; it certainly gives Frost greater critical clout. The color red, for example, is a recurring image in both Thoreau's and Frost's work, especially in terms of Thoreau's description of New England vegetation in the autumnal season. Frost himself was witness to such beauty. If Thoreau found it problematic, as critic David Cody might suggest, "to convey (to viewers or readers who had never encountered it firsthand) something of the stunning visual impact, of the extraordinary intensity of color, that one encountered in the autumnal landscape in the northeastern United States" (32), Frost did not have to just rely on his words. By contrast, he lived it himself. His borrowing of the same senses of the color red that Thoreau employed testifies to the truth of Thoreau's words and the vividness of his rich descriptions. And yet, if seeing "through Thoreau's eyes" is to see in color, very little is said in modern criticism about the use of this color—or color at all—either for Frost or Thoreau. Again, my aim in this thesis is to highlight a connection between these two writers which has been little researched or discussed.

Though a treatment of color has been left out of a scholarly discussion comparing Thoreau and Frost, a complete discussion of the manifold ways in which these celebrated writers employ color imagery in their works will not be given in this paper, nor is that my stated goal. There is a certain usage of the color red which lies outside the bounds of this thesis—namely, as

it pertains to Native Americans. In a brief survey of Frost's use of the color red, we notice its presence in ten works of poetry—either in single poems or dramatic works. Three of the ten, or almost 30 percent, are about the “Red Man.” Though Thoreau may have influenced Frost in his view of the American Indian, Frost's poetic expressions involving Native Americans and what it means to label them the “red man” reach beyond the scope of this thesis. I will, instead, argue for three specific uses of the color red found within Thoreau's works, and then applied to Frost's poetry. First, Thoreau's use of red is linked to the sun's ripening, maturing effects on produce, notably wild apples. Second, red is spiritually significant to both Thoreau and Frost because of its connection to maturation, climax, and the sun. Finally, red connects to Thoreau's use of both natural and religious imagery. I will begin my discussion with an exploration of Thoreau's creation of a color nomenclature based on North American flora and fauna. As I argue, this decidedly New World color system relates to Thoreau's much larger endeavor to provide an American religious expression rather than one borrowed from Hebrew Scriptures. Above all, Thoreau sought to elevate his beloved New England landscape, and one notable way he did this was through writing about color.

Thoreau himself seems of the opinion that not all those interested in nature share the same enthusiasm for color as he. “The reason why naturalists make so little account of color,” he writes in his journal, dated October 5, 1861, “is because it is so insignificant to them; they do not understand it.” By contrast, he sought to “understand” color as he observed it in nature. Throughout his *Journal* he makes reference to the color of the objects he observes and also offers a reason for his interest. “But the lover of flowers or animals makes very much of color,” he continues on October 5; “[t]o a fancier of cats it is not indifferent whether one be black or gray, for *the color expresses character*” (Journal VI 342, emphasis mine). Thoreau, then, is after Nature's character. As we will see, this character contains within it spiritual as well as physical dimensions. For this and other reasons—namely, the symbolism and sense of poetry which color provides him—Thoreau makes room for recording, delighting in, and writing about color throughout his works. Yet, he would be mistaken about other naturalists' supposed disregard for color, particularly those who lived in his day. Consider two examples. Contemporaneous to Thoreau's life were two books available—one published in 1774 and the other in 1821, just a few years after Thoreau was born—which catalogue the color found in the natural world for use

among scientists of all disciplines. Such works would have been useful to Thoreau's own botanical characterization project, had he chosen to utilize them.

In 1774, within a handbook meant to relay the observable characteristics of minerals called, in English, *A Treatise on the External Characters of Fossils*, German geologist Abraham Gottlob Werner published a catalogue of some 54 natural colors within which he listed the name he had coined for each color and its corresponding mineral. Colors, he suggested, were among the most important attributes of minerals (Baty 16). Paint historian Patrick Baty calls the work “the first modern textbook of descriptive mineralogy” (16). Importantly, according to Baty, “Werner’s system was designed to be of practical application to natural philosophers (scientists) as well as geologists” (19). Color names which Werner employed in his list included “a descriptive word that tended to be based on either a mixture... or a pigment... or a familiar object” (16, 19). In truth, the only thing lacking about the list was the absence of color swatches to aid in identification, a flaw which was only natural considering that the advent of reliable color printing was still some eighty years off (Baty 235). Thoreau himself describes the problem ironically, even arrogantly, in a journal entry from February 13, 1852: “Color, which is the poet’s wealth, is so expensive that most take to mere outline or pencil sketches and become men of science” (III 301). Herein lies the nugget of his view on color representation within the sciences—it was nonexistent as far as he was concerned. Science was monochromatic; poetry was colorful. In this he shows himself a true product of his time. Thoreau, therefore, sought to convey such invaluable scientific data as color through poetry, which is one reason for his highly descriptive, prolific prose. Yet color was not lost on the scientists of his day. If one were to exclude painting and specimen-collecting¹, pencil sketching to represent scientific phenomena was indeed all there was available to the scientific world for identification and record-keeping prior to the advent of additional visual imaging. Photography was at its infancy, having been invented in 1839 when Thoreau was just coming of age. Color photography was more than a century further out. Werner’s scientific system of nomenclature, then, would have been sorely needed for naturalists like Thoreau and others.

Werner’s color terminology was taken up by his students at Freiberg Mining Academy in Freiberg, Germany, as well as other scientists. Werner himself continued to add to his list after its publication. The first English translation of his mineralogy catalogue came out in 1805 and

included 22 additional color names (Baty 24). Forty years after its initial publication in German, Scottish painter Patrick Syme, known for his realistic paintings of flowers, set out to remedy the flaw in Werner's work with an influential work of his own entitled *Werner's Nomenclature of Colours, with Additions, Arranged so as to Render it Highly Useful to the Arts and Sciences, Particularly Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Morbid Anatomy. Annexed to which are Examples Selected from Well-Known Objects in the Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Kingdoms* (1814). In the intervening years, Syme doubled Werner's initial list to include 108 colors and added examples within the natural world from mineral as well as animal and "vegetable" species, which included all manner of flowering plants and their fruit. In 1821, Syme published a second edition of the book which added two more colors to Werner's list. More than just a word list, the book included actual color swatches which Syme had prepared to be cut to size and physically pasted into each copy. In this way, rather than to paint each color sample on the corresponding page, he could more accurately represent the colors his carefully selected text described (Baty 84). It was a small volume, "almost pocket-sized and laid out in a logical and practical fashion—ideal for field work," according to Baty (28). Syme's book was truly, in Andre Karliczek's words, "remarkable" for its time (Karliczek 235).

According to Giulia Simonini, author of a chapter in a recently-published, brilliantly produced update to Syme's 1821 edition, aptly called *Nature's Palette: A Colour Reference System from the Natural World* (2021):

Syme's colour chart was perhaps the only one used by English-speaking botanists until 1886, and numerous 19th-century English-speaking naturalists also referenced to it in their works, making Syme's color terminology highly influential. (172)

Was not Thoreau one such botanist? Surely such an important, though expensive, volume would have made its way to the New World to aide American naturalists with their own identifications. Of the twenty-nine vegetable references in Syme's reds and purples sections, Thoreau mentions fifteen of them—just over half—in his journal entries about wildflowers (see Appendix A Table 1). I am convinced that Thoreau would have been able to find meaningful correlation between his own findings and Syme's ordering. If he was as interested in color as he claims in his Journal, would Thoreau have missed such an invaluable book for his studies? Perhaps more importantly, why would he have overlooked it, or chosen to pass it by? We know that he read extensively. He was familiar with the classical canon as well as important American and foreign

works. In his perusal of libraries, he may have come across listings for these books or even the books themselves. However, no mention of either author is found in his extensive writings, his commonplace books notwithstanding². It is clear by an examination of Houghton and Mifflin's index to the 1906 edition of Thoreau's works that he did not write about either Werner or Syme in the works published at that time, for neither man enjoys the benefit of an entry in the index. In addressing the question of why Thoreau may have ignored a significant field guide to aid in his botanical work, Thoreau contemporary Julian Hawthorne offers this somewhat sour view: "[O]f color or form as valued by artists, I doubt whether he took heed" (as qtd in Furstenau, 35n73). The absence of either Werner's or Syme's name among Thoreau's papers certainly points to a penchant for paying little or no attention to "artists." However, here I argue another, perhaps more plausible explanation.

Though he himself admitted to being "uncertain" about color names, (*Journal* IV 245), Thoreau may have rejected Syme's color list because he was working on a nomenclature of his own, one also based on the natural world. Having his color naming system solely based in nature was not enough for him, however; it needed to be something other than European. David Cody, in a note to an essay from 2003 on Emily Dickinson's poem "The Name—of it—is Autumn," suggests that the work of Dickinson, Thoreau, and other contemporaries "may reflect a similar desire to create a distinctly American 'chromatic nomenclature,' as Thoreau put it" (46n6). In a note on his discussion of "Autumnal Tints," found within his essay "Colorizing New England's Burying Grounds" (2012), Jason D. LaFountain concurs:

It is important to recognize the sheer ambition of Thoreau's essay. He calls for nothing less than the development of an autochthonous American color theory, based on the qualities observed in New England's autumnal foliage. (26n37)

A careful word study from Thoreau's collected works will help to bear this out. A survey of Delphi Classics' e-book, *Complete Works of Henry David Thoreau* (2013)—which, due to copyright laws, contains only a partial reprint of his fourteen-volume *Journal* but includes "rare works often missed out of [other] collections," per the publisher³ (Delphi Classics)—reveals 78 instances of Thoreau's use of the word "color" throughout his extensive corpus. Of those 78 uses, 18, or 23 per cent, reference the color red in some form; 17, or just under 22 per cent, reference brown or "flesh-color"; nine, or almost 12 per cent, reference yellow; six, dark or light

gray; six are also given to white or “the absence of color”; five are given to green; and blue and purple enjoy four uses each, or 5 per cent. Nine references are either multi-colored or ambiguous, one being from a translation of his. And thus, with eight principal colors, we have a rudimentary color naming system (see Appendix B, Table 2 for a detailed list of Thoreau’s usage). Syme himself built on Werner’s initial list of eight primary colors to include a final ten—white, grey, black, blue, purple, green, yellow, orange, red, and brown (Baty 27). Thoreau’s nomenclature includes red, brown, yellow, gray, white green, blue, and purple; only Syme’s orange and black are excluded from this list. Red is the most used color of the eight primary colors in Thoreau’s color system. When comparing Thoreau’s “Autumnal Tints” essay to Japanese haiku in 1975, international scholar Koh Kasegawa asserts that

[t]here is surely a fine eye for color here. The variation of the tints of the plants and trees in fall affords him [Thoreau] an opportunity to show his impressionability and his abundant color vocabulary. (21)

Integral to such vocabulary is the purposeful use of the eye, which, Kasegawa argues, characterizes much of Thoreau’s writings. Color is “a treat to his eye,” notes the scholar. He goes on: “In this essay [‘Autumnal Tints’] he is confined to the sense of sight, which is almost limited to color” (21). As examples of Thoreau’s employment of rich color vocabulary, Kasegawa then points to the sections of the essay on “Purple Grasses” and “Red Maples” which categorize the abundant, richly hued flora of New England in the fall season. Just as with his religious pontifications, Thoreau is interested in a color naming system from the New World as opposed to the Old.

To arrive at his full complement of 108 color names, Syme pairs a principal color with a descriptor derived from nature, such as “aurora” or “hyacinth” in the reds (Baty 242). But where Syme uses two or three words to describe a color, Thoreau sometimes gives an entire phrase, for example the “dust [being] of a yellowish rotten-stone color” (Journal VIII, 332). For Thoreau, “flesh-color” refers to a type of brown (Journal IV, 92), whereas Syme lists it as “flesh *red*” (Baty 242, emphasis mine). There are 18 distinct shades of red as described by Syme, and only seven for Thoreau—from simple red to blushing, bright, and even fiery or flame. One of the descriptors, a “brownish-red,” overlaps with Syme’s. However, the two artists probably are not describing the same color. In Thoreau’s work the term surfaces in a discussion of the dwarf andromeda in his April 17, 1852 entry in the *Journal* (III 430), a botanical which Syme does not

reference as a possible “vegetable” example. In fact, he gives no such example. Instead, Syme references the red-throated loon (Baty, 256), which Thoreau himself describes in his *Journal* entry for November 11, 1858. Thoreau’s loon is unusual, though, because the throat is “pure white... except a dusky bar across the vent” and is therefore not a likely candidate for Syme’s brownish red (XI 309). Editors of the 1906 edition of his *Journal* later labeled Thoreau’s bird the following way: “It must have been a red-throated loon” (309n3). However, this is a descriptor which does not feature in the original narrative surrounding the loon, which to Thoreau’s account is a dead specimen having just been “killed on the river” by his companion “Goodwin” (309). It is unclear, then, whether Thoreau ever encountered Syme’s version of “brownish red” in his excursions within and around New England (Figure 1).

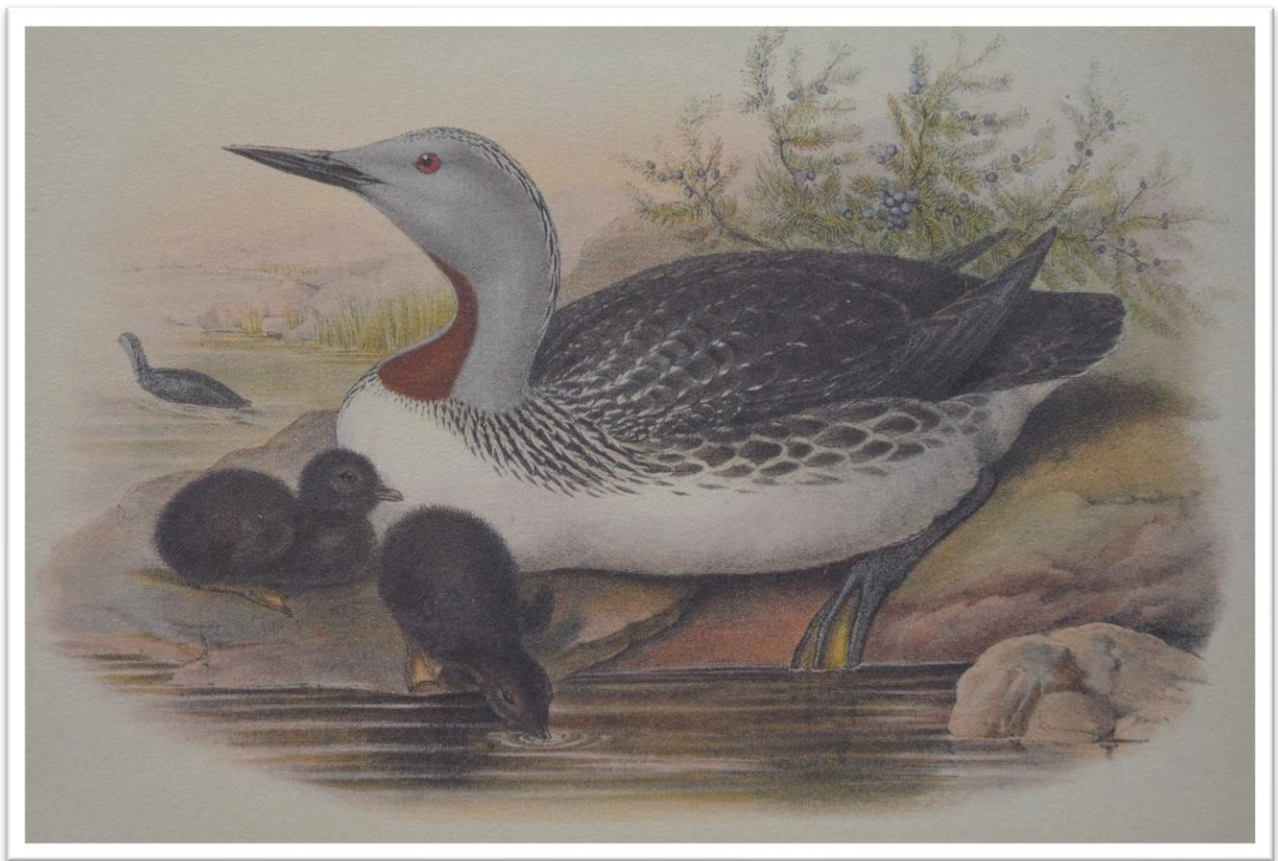


Figure 1. Red-Throated Loon

Illustration taken from *Birds of Great Britain*, vol. 5, by John Gould (1862-73).
Reproduced in *Nature’s Palette: A Color Reference System from the Natural World* (2021), p.
266.

Syme and Thoreau also reference scarlet and crimson, but for Thoreau, “scarlet deepen[s] into crimson” (“Autumnal Tints,” 225). By contrast, even admitting to the patina of years, Syme’s crimson is quite a bit lighter, almost a pale pink by comparison. As an example of the hue, Syme lists only garnet—although the editors of his “fully realized” (Baty 6), modern update also list the red-breasted meadowlark and anemones as appropriate examples (260). Though each color held meaning for him and his Transcendentalist endeavors, as Richard Colyer points out, red was of particular significance for Thoreau.

Thoreau was a master at description, painting with his pen the brushstrokes of observation to the minutest detail. Through such rich depictions in his writings, natural elements such as animals and plants, observes Harding, “become almost human” (viii). Thoreau took copious notes of the world around him—not just during his time at Walden Pond, but elsewhere and throughout the Concord, Massachusetts area, many of which found their way into his extensive *Journal* and later writings. Editor Hyde observes his practice: An essay began as a simple observation jotted down “by pencil in a little notebook as he walked,” which, when germinated in his *Journal*, formed into topical lectures and eventually his polished works (lii). Elizabeth Witherel describes his process more flamboyantly with a metaphor more apropos to a discussion of the naturalist: “The Journal,” she says, “is the hub of Thoreau’s intellectual ecosystem—the network of interconnecting and interacting parts of his mental universe” (15). Thoreau’s affinity for observation transferred well to his essays, spicing them with rich, alluring imagery. In describing wild apples’ beauty, for example, Thoreau captures the varying skin colorations of the fruit⁵:

Painted by the frosts, some a uniform clear bright yellow, or red, or crimson, as if their spheres had regularly revolved, and enjoyed the influence of the sun on all sides alike,—some with the faintest pink blush imaginable,—some brindled with deep red streaks like a cow, or with hundreds of fine blood-red rays running regularly from stem-dimple to the blossom end, like meridional lines, on a straw-colored ground.... (“Wild Apples” 307)

For Thoreau the artist, the choice of color served him well—both to describe the actual object and to yield a deeper, fuller meaning. Here, the sun’s influence produces the red color seen in the fruit, thereby linking the sun to the appearance of red. The sun, then, as a creative agent, controls the color red—and, by extension, whatever the color symbolizes. We see the same creative decision process in Frost’s poems, most notably “Rose Pogonias” and “Unharvested.” As stated earlier, red is a particularly meaningful color for Thoreau, both for its symbolism and

for its rarity in nature. As I will soon show, red is the color which features most in Frost's "Rose Pogonias" and thus controls the poem's interpretation.

Even as he employs the device in his own work, at times Frost disagrees with Thoreau's use of color imagery, particularly his use of red. Take, for example, Frost's "A Masque of Reason," a play written in verse depicting Frost's fictitious forty-third chapter of Job. Here we see the character Job speak directly with God, lamenting the "form of forms," infinity (line 339). Written as a symbol, infinity mimics

how [the sun's] rays turn upon themselves
To quote the greatest Western poem yet.
Though I hold rays deteriorate to nothing,
First white, then red, then *ultra red*, then out. (lines 343-346, emphasis mine)

The sun and its effect on the earth in the form of its rays are directly connected to the color red in this case—a direct borrow from Thoreau's usage of both natural and color imagery, as we have seen. However, here Frost's speaker also openly contradicts the naturalist's usage, thus challenging Thoreau's assumption about the all-consuming power of the sun while boldly declaring that "I hold rays deteriorate to nothing." With this declaration, the speaker suggests that neither the sun nor its rays hold the same influence over the earth which Thoreau would claim they do. Whereas Thoreau might claim that one finds eternal permanence in a right response or attitude toward the natural world, Frost's argument here is that infinity—or, put another way, eternity—amounts to nothing. In Frost's use of color imagery, we see a chromatic degradation: "First white, then red, then ultra red, then out." This "ultra red" is telling. Thoreau's red may bleed from "scarlet to crimson"—from bright to brighter, as it were, thus leading to ever increasing beauty and maturation. Yet here, the in-step hues are used ironically, decreasing in power when the expectation would be the reverse. Red, in other words, is not a sign of fullness or maturation but death; neither is there hope of renewal within the hue, for the end result is to be put "out" like a dying flame. Whether ironic or true, in both writers' work we see not the absence of color, but color in all its fullness.

The color red is Thoreau's most valued color. "We love to see any redness in the vegetation of the temperate zone," he writes in "Autumnal Tints" (1862). "It is the color of colors" (220). Often, he terms it "the high color." This sentiment echoes earlier observations he recorded in his journal from July 11, 1852:

Pogonias and calopogons are very abundant in the meadows. They are interesting if only for their high color. *Any redness is after all rare and precious.* It is the color of our blood. The rose owes its preeminence in great measure to its color. It is said to be from the Celtic rhos, red. *It is nature's most precious color.* (*Journal* IV 217-218, emphasis mine)

Thoreau gives us many of his thoughts on the color red in this one entry; we see him name it “the high color,” “rare and precious,” and the “color of our blood,” frequent euphemisms for red which are used throughout his corpus. For my purposes, the presence of the “high color[ed]” “pogonias” here clarifies the presence of red in Frost’s “Rose Pogonias.” Indeed, how could Thoreau’s New England pogonias blaze red-hot and Frost’s not? The mood of the entry, too, bears striking resemblance to the poem. Thoreau seems to want to shepherd this color in the same way Frost’s speaker and his entourage do the “burning” pogonias (line 9). Both actions, I would argue, are born of the same motivation to revere what Nature and the sun have produced—what the speaker calls “the sun’s right worship” (line 10). There is an additional reason for revering the color, however. Linking red to blood as Thoreau does here suggests the color to have life-giving properties, as a linkage to the sun also suggests. In these and other ways, these densely expressed sentiments pronounce a matchless worth on the hue that we find in other parts of Thoreau’s life work, in particular “Autumnal Tints,” a worth which critic Richard Colyer helps us to unpack.

In his essay entitled “Thoreau’s Color Symbols” (1971), Colyer observes that “Autumnal Tints” is “in fact a study in red” (1006). He calls red “the most personally significant [color] for Thoreau”—for it signified to him the climax of the seasons, as well as the climax of the day (1005). Regularly Thoreau ties this color to the idea of ripeness, an idea which itself is tied to the influence of the sun and its heat over the Earth’s manifold flora. Ripeness also speaks to the idea of maturation. Red holds within its precious hue the possibility of maturity, not just for fruit but also for man. With its profusion of red, writes Colyer, “autumn was the season of humanity’s intellectual and spiritual harvest as well as of his spiritual maturity” (1005). Red also functions like a personal touchstone for Thoreau, “giv[ing] dramatic evidence of his subjective involvement, especially his vital concern with his own progress toward the promised goal of fruition and spiritual renewal” (1007). The organization of *Walden* is based on such a promise of renewal, ending as it does, not as the year with winter, but with the hope of spring and its rekindled life. The last tidbit of wisdom he leaves his readers comes from his essay on “Spring”

and references the sun's death-resurrection cycle: "Only the day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn" (324). With its dependence on the sun, the color red symbolizes both the decay and renewal found in nature. Kasegawa suggests as much when he asserts, "Red, the symbol of maturity and approaching death, comes to prevail after purple, the first color of the decay of nature" (22). Just as on the color wheel, we see here that purple bleeds back into red—red, then, contains the symbolism of both colors. For this reason, Colyer claims that Thoreau's use of red represented "heroism, strength, and health" (1007). The color symbolizes not only the goal of perfection but also of progressing toward that goal. Not coincidentally, red is the color of the western sky at sunset; in Thoreau's writings, the west is symbolic of moving or pointing heavenward. In that sense, then, red is for Thoreau a holy color representing a physical-spiritual union and the hope of renewal.

Thoreau's use of red bleeds into his use of religious imagery—pun intended. A short explication from a famous passage in "Autumnal Tints" will bear this out. Of the Red Maple, he writes: "It flashes out conspicuous with all the virtue and beauty of a Maple—*Acer rubrum*. We may now read its title, or rubric, clear. Its virtues, not its sins, are as scarlet" (225, italics in original). Here, Thoreau combines several elements borrowed from Christian imagery to arrive at his conclusion, which I will endeavor to unpack. The message hinges on the word "rubric," itself a play on the Latin "rubrum." The scientific name for Red Maple, the moniker "*Acer rubrum*" is composed of the plant's Latin-derived genus and species. The presence of "species" here is instructive, and the first layer of religious imagery we see in the passage. According to the European-based Wordsense Online Dictionary, the term "species" can also refer to "[e]ither of the two elements of the Eucharist after they have been consecrated." Not just the final level of animal taxonomy, the term "species" connotes Christian communion. Through his conscious word usage, Thoreau describes the maple in terms of communion—not a communion with Christ or the Holy Spirit, but with nature. In its association with the blood of Christ, this "communion" also carries a sense of the color red. But there is more. The tree's "species" is "rubrum," what Thoreau rightly identifies with "rubric," a linkage which adds a further layer to the use—or misuse—of religious imagery in the passage. In the illuminated manuscripts of the Bible dating to the Middle Ages, "the initial capitals and highlighted words in red ink were known as 'rubrics'" (Daly Goggin, 29). "Rubrum" is the neutered, or a-gendered, form of "ruber," Latin for "red" or "ruddy;" "rubric" here is the English derivative of the Latin "ruber." These manuscript

capitals were known as “rubrics” chiefly because of their bright red color. As a student of Latin, Thoreau understood the two meanings that his chosen word conveyed—“species” and “red.” As he says, “We may now read its title... clear” because we understand the intricate imagery at play. Clearly, Thoreau is trying to highlight the connection between red and religious imagery, if only to denounce it in the next line.

In the last line of this brief passage, we read that “Its [that is, the Red Maple’s] virtues, not its sins, are as scarlet.” This comparison is a direct allusion to the passage out of Isaiah which reads, “Come, let us reason together, says the LORD. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow” (1:18). It is also Thoreau’s direct challenge to the biblical offer. In many ways, Thoreau understood the complex symbolism of the color red and its use in religious imagery; yet, it is also a history he is prepared to challenge. According to Maureen Daly Goggin, professor of English at Arizona State University and author of “The Extra-Ordinary Powers of Red in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century English Needlework” (2012), red has a complex religio-social history. She writes, “The color of fire, sun, blood, and wine, red... has been used to invoke life and death, the sacred and the profane, youth and old age, martyrs and demons, purity and corruption” (29). In both Thoreau’s and the biblical passages, red is used to invoke the sacred and the profane. In borrowing so heavily from the biblical phrasing, Thoreau’s use of scarlet—itsself one of the deepest, brightest shades of red—is meant to recall to readers’ minds the employment of the specific shade of red in the biblical narrative. God calls sin “as scarlet” because of the color’s propensity to stain. Indeed, according to Michael Pastoureau, author of *Blue: The History of a Color* (2001), “for ancient cultures, red was long associated with dyed cloth, white with undyed cloth and thus purity and cleanliness” (as qtd in Daly Goggin 29n4). Such associations between red and white set up a contrast or dichotomy, one which the biblical narrative echoes and which Thoreau’s passage seeks to disrupt. Trumpeting that the maple’s “virtues... are as scarlet” reverses the age-old symbolism associated with the color red.

We have explored ways in which Thoreau employs red and its myriad color symbolisms within his works: as an extension of the sun’s influence; as an outward sign of humanity’s spiritual and physical maturity; and as a way of overturning the dominant religio-cultural narrative surrounding the particular color. The exact color nomenclature Thoreau utilizes does

not appear in Frost's poetry. However, this does not mean that elements of Thoreau's use of red are not at play. On the contrary, as we will see, Frost captures the essence of what Thoreau meant by his various descriptions of the color red, especially in "Rose Pogonias" (1913). Let me offer a close reading to illustrate.

The small, sun-soaked meadow which Frost's speaker and his companions visit is a "temple of the heat" (line 8). This term "heat" contains within it a sense of the color red. Often, to describe its temperature we are apt to call something "red-hot," and will ubiquitously use the color to denote whether an object is hot or cold. The use of the phrase in the poem both includes the color red and extends Thoreau's reverence for nature to illicit a worshipful response. Indeed, the start of Frost's next stanza makes this clear: "There we bowed us in the burning / as the sun's right worship is" (lines 9-10). The speaker focuses on the richness of red when he says "wings of color / ... tinged the atmosphere" (lines 15-16), a description which brings to mind not just red but the orange-red of flame shooting upward, as well as the ritual of burnt offering and sacrifice. The lines also connote the holiness of the burning bush in Exodus 3—for, though aflame, none of the grasses are consumed. The use of "burning" from line nine also connects to the idea of red and the imagery of fire: The closer the flames are to the object they consume, the greater tinge of yellow they wear; the further the flame travels from its object, the truer red it becomes. Thus, red reaches upward, heavenward, toward the sun, praying for the sun's life-giving properties. The imagery of flame that is used in Thoreau's essay on "Spring" conveys a similar meaning: "The grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire . . . as if the earth sent forth an inward heat to greet the returning sun" (*Walden* 302). In this passage, Thoreau describes the life-sustaining inner-flame of spring. Colyer unpacks the imagery for us. "Faith is symbolized in the flaming grass, the 'inward heat' which has survived the winter to greet the sun" (1000). In its connection to the color red, this "inward heat"—described by both Thoreau and Frost—draws the reader back not just to faith but also to the fullness and maturity of the autumnal season.

To further extend the reading, let us look at line two's use of "jewel-small." Here, Frost brings to mind not just the size of the plot of meadow-land he describes within the forest, but also the worth of such land. The term "jewel" holds within it a host of meanings, not the least of which is related to color and value. When one thinks of "jewel," what typically comes to mind is

something of great worth. Jewels are prized both for their color and their beauty—the principal color usually being either the deep blue of the sapphire or the heavy scarlet of the ruby. The beauty of jewels comes from the way in which they are prisms to reflect shimmering patterns of light. In this little word, “jewel,” the poet connects Thoreau’s color symbolism with his fascination with the sun. Indeed, this connection is echoed through Frost’s earlier description of the meadow being “sun-shaped.” Frost opens the poem with the descriptive line “a saturated meadow” (line 1), which indicates being saturated by the sun’s rays. Rays of sunlight could be characterized as white or yellow—or even, in fact, incorporating all colors, like a rainbow. Thoreau himself uses the color yellow to describe the sun and sunlight (Colyer 1004). However, red is the central color within a rainbow, acting as a dividing line between the rainbow and whatever else is around it; situated either on one side of the rainbow or the other, red acts as a “gateway” to the other colors. Here, the meadow is “saturated” with red. The term “saturated” also connotes the idea of being soaked as though from water. Water holds its own significance for Thoreau, apart from his bold, red color, which I will later unpack in this essay. We say that a thing is sun-saturated when it has long sat warmed by the sunshine. The warmth of sunshine is usually connected to the summertime, the time in which, according to Thoreau’s journals, pogonias bloom in New England. In the poem, then, the presence of the red pogonias mimic autumn’s profuse red color, tying the summer season more directly to the autumnal symbolism of humanity’s spiritual maturity and renewal.

Let us now turn to the third and final stanza, where Frost’s and Thoreau’s nugget of truth lies. The speaker says:

We raised a simple prayer
Before we left the spot,
That in the general mowing,
That place might be forgot;
Or if not all so favored,
Obtain such grace of hours,
That none should now the grass there
While so confused with flowers. (lines 17-24)

In “praying” that the rose pogonias would be forgotten “in the general mowing,” the speaker clearly does not want the flowers mowed down or cut down in any way—though he and his party have already snipped “a thousand orchises” (line 12). What he means is that he does not want them cut off senselessly, with a disregard for life. His reverential attitude points back to the

importance that the color red holds for Thoreau, as well as the dualism of Transcendentalism's belief in the sacredness of nature. The speaker, however, is not praying for the plants to not *ever* be cut down; just not "while so confused with flowers" (line 24). This is a finite and time-sensitive request, which echoes the "grace of hours" found in line 22. For a look into the significance of this, let us turn back to "Autumnal Tints:"

The impurpled lands! *Such is the consequence of all this sunshine absorbed into the pores and plants of the earth.* All sap or blood is now wine-colored. At last, we have not only the purple sea, but the purple land. (223, emphasis mine)

Again, Colyer explains: Through his use of color, Thoreau "extends the cause-and-effect relationship of sun and flowers to that of the Oversoul and man" (1005). Through the color red, the speaker in Frost's poem notices the spiritual influence that the sun has on plant life—and, by extension, his own life—and wants that influence respected. Once that influence is no longer felt, once the spot is no longer "confused with [red] flowers," then the mowing, or irreverent harvesting, can begin.

Frost's "Unharvested" is another poem in which Thoreau's use of the color red is a controlling feature. The presence of "summer" in line five is important, for it points back to the presence—or at least the influence—of the sun. This echoing recalls the influence of the sun on Thoreau's wild apples, a presence in the poem which naturally lends itself to an understanding of the presence of the color red. Red is present in the poem in other, more obvious ways as well. For example, line ten very clearly reads, "The ground was one circle of solid red." Again, the circle and the presence of red mimic and point back to the sun. These apples from the "fall" are mature and ripe. By applying Thoreau's logic to this poem, we understand that this fruit is red because of the sun's influence on it. The same cause-and-effect Colyer explains between sun and flowers is here present between sun and fruit, the flower's offspring. Thus, the same spiritual effect is also present: The reason the "apple fall / [was] as complete as the apple had given man"—a nod to Genesis 3—is because of the sun's influence. At once, the sun gave of its energy in order to ripen the fruit. The solid circle of red functions as an offering, but here it is not from worshipper to worshipped. Rather, it is the reverse: from worshipped back to worshipper. Nature, as mediated by the sun, has produced this fruit, a communion offering. But who is there to partake? Certainly not the absent, unnamed horticulturalist. Even the speaker's inhaling the "scent from over a wall" does not partake enough—does not enter in or commune,

as it were, because he does not also eat of it. Thoreau's employment of red as a means of disrupting religious cultural norms is another controlling feature of the poem.

The connection between Thoreau's color imagery and meaning can be seen in other works by Frost besides "Rose Pogonias" and "Unharvested," poems such as "Come In," "Mowing," and "The Wood-pile." "Come In," for example, clearly echoes Thoreau's precious color refrain with its connection between the red "last of the light of the sun" (line 9) and the bright splash of color "in a thrush's breast" (line 12); it also mimics Thoreau's sauntering westward with its description of a sunset "that had died in the west" (line 10). If the sun's bright color "still live[s]" on, perhaps there is still hope for man to live on, too—for him to make it, as it were, to the maturity of which autumn speaks so loudly with its color. "Mowing" connects to Thoreau's use of autumn as well, with its speaker wielding a scythe as the symbolic stand-in for the season (Colyer 1000). Our reading of "Rose Pogonias," as well as other poems, changes greatly when we recognize the influence Thoreau's color choices have on Frost's creativity; in this way, by way of the rich alluring color imagery which red conveys, we too begin to see through Thoreau's eyes.

In this chapter, we have seen the way Frost employs Thoreau's myriad senses of the color red—namely, an observation of natural phenomena, as an indicator of the influence of the sun, and as a bridge between natural and religious imagery. An understanding of Frost's use of red is important because in it we see Thoreau's American-based "color nomenclature" realized. In the introduction to my thesis, I asked "What is it to see through Thoreau's eyes?" I answered this question with, "In one sense, it is to see in color." I have endeavored to flesh out what it means to "see" Frost's poetry "in color." If we see the way Thoreau does, we come to understand that color means more than just a record of a characteristic of a fleeting natural phenomenon. Rather, it captures the characteristics of both the spiritual and physical dimensions of an object. Color was one way in which Thoreau taps into a spiritual reality he understood to be all around him and in using that color within his own poetry, Frost bears witness to that reality. In the next chapter, we will pick up the theme of humanity's relationship to nature and how that bears out in each author's works.

Chapter Two

Humanity's Ideal Relationship to Nature

So far, we have addressed how seeing through Thoreau's eyes is to see in color. As I indicated in my introduction, seeing through Thoreau's eyes also means wrestling with humanity's relationship to nature—its “obligation,” to borrow Beebe's word. This is a topic which puts Thoreau's natural imagery, the thread tying each of my topics together, to the most obvious use within Frost's work. Not only does this natural imagery echo the greater reality outside of itself which is found within the natural world; it also brings to readers' minds the “use” of that natural world for humanity's own purposes. This chapter lies in direct opposition to Galbraith's claim that I pushed back against in my introduction, the claim that the “woods, swamps, woodpiles and woodchucks” populating Thoreau's and Frost's work “simply constitute the dominant characteristics of the country” (2). The presence of this natural imagery in both authors' writing is not just coincidence. Instead, I maintain that these images in Frost's poetry purposefully function “in the same way” that they do in Thoreau's writing. Frost borrowed such imagery so heavily from Thoreau because he wished to lend credence to Thoreau's little-acknowledged view on nature. In this chapter, I will argue that in reading Frost through a Thoreauvian lens, we come to understand humanity's relationship to nature as at once aligning with and deviating from the biblical mandate to “subdue” the earth. Additionally, a right response to nature includes the egalitarian ideal of treatment as equals, which approaches nature in an effort to observe it rather than merely to put it to some good use to suit humanity's own fancy. In reading Thoreau as applied to Frost, we also come to understand a right approach to Nature is one of mutual understanding and goodwill: working in tandem to provide for each other's needs rather than subjugating one below the other. Yet, perhaps paradoxically, we also see nature portrayed in the works of both authors as a medium or creative palette to be used by

the artist in producing his work. This is not an unjust view of nature, as some recent critics such as Nancy Craig Simmons assume. Writing about nature is not the same thing as subjugating it; it is, in fact, a way to showcase its unparalleled beauty, something both authors take pains to communicate. As I hope to argue, neither Thoreau's nor Frost's work is as generic or unjust toward the natural world as modern critics make them out to seem.

When it comes to humanity's relationship to nature, a particular way in which we see Thoreau's influence over Frost is through "geognosy," a term taken from Werner's eighteenth-century influential work on minerals mentioned in Chapter One. Historian Patrick Baty says it best: "Geognosy, or earth knowledge, was a term that Werner had used to describe the study of rocks and minerals and the formation of the Earth" (27). This is a special kind of knowledge, one lived through experience in the natural realm. According to Robert Jameson (1774-1854), a contemporary of Thoreau and former student of Werner, this knowledge is displayed best through cartography or map-making, allowing for more accurate representation of the land features within the published maps of the day. In fact, it was an understanding employed by nineteenth-century cartographers to color maps, what Jameson called "geognostical maps"—a term Thoreau might have found useful (Baty 27). The colors used in maps, asserted Jameson in a paper devoted to the subject, "must agree as nearly as possible with nature[;] that is, they must correspond with the most common colour of the rock" (as qtd in Baty 27). We might extrapolate that admonition to include the most common color of the *land*. Thoreau himself was interested in the art of cartography and the location of things, as his work as a local surveyor can well attest. However, he himself never recorded a color-specific "geognostical" map as far as we know. The closest he might have come to using one is in this amusing tidbit from his "Yankee in Canada" full-length travel book, published posthumously in 1867. While describing his reading of a map of Canada on an excursion to the Falls of St. Anne, he writes:

Though the words Canada East on the map stretch over many rivers and lakes and unexplored wildernesses, the actual Canada, *which might be the colored portion of the map*, is but a little clearing on the banks of the river, which one of those syllables would more than cover. ("A Yankee in Canada" 930, emphasis mine)

We have no way of knowing how much "the colored portion of the map" covered, or to what geographical reality, exactly, it referred. We also have no way of knowing whether such color corresponded at all to the rocks and other features Thoreau would have witnessed on the excursion.

Yet, clearly, his own map did not impart to Thoreau the necessary “geognosy” for which he turned to it. Used more broadly, the term “geognosy” can apply to Thoreau’s own natural experiment. Again, he turns to poetry over pure science. In a way that his map of Canada could not, he sought to impart a special earth-knowledge to the brave souls like Frost who would venture to read him.

According to Margy Thomas Horton, author of “Embodiment, Spirituality, and the Tactile Perception of the Air in Thoreau’s *Walden*” (2011), Thoreau’s special knowledge of the world comes through total immersion: If there were a way to hear nature speak and to understand its significance—to glean a “geognosy” from it, in other words—it would be through the body. “Sensations make possible spiritual insights,” Horton writes, for “[t]he body is an epistemological site” (223). Horton maintains that the sense of touch was for Thoreau the most important sense because it is the closest proof of having life: if one could feel, one must be alive. If one can feel a thing in nature—in Horton’s case, the air or the wind—nature must then be reaching out. This is Thoreau’s understanding of “geognosy,” the special knowledge which can only come through the natural world, at work. We see this special knowledge at play in Frost’s works as well, most notably “The Wood-Pile,” “Tree at my Window,” and “Unharvested.” For Thoreau as well as Frost, preserving this special knowledge, in word as well as experience, is of utmost importance in humanity’s relationship to the natural world. By reading Frost through the lens of Thoreau’s nature writings, we come to understand humanity’s right relationship with the natural world.

In Thoreau’s eyes, “geognosy” is solely mediated through the senses—that is, through the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch of nature; this special knowledge of the world is also the pathway to the divine. From a Christian worldview, Thoreau’s view of nature is right in one sense. Though he sought a connection with the divine outside of the stated biblical narrative, which culminates in the redemptive ministry of Christ Jesus, this connection is not necessarily one entirely outside of biblical truth. Apostle Paul will argue in Romans 1, for example, that the attributes of God are clearly seen in what is made (v. 20). In other words, they are firmly revealed through the natural world, what Thoreau is drawn to again and again throughout his spiritual journey. In this way the special earth-knowledge of “geognosy” is also a spiritual understanding. Yet the connection between divinity and nature goes deeper, even to the very foundations of the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world and how it began. Indeed, the Genesis creation story is the backdrop for Thoreau’s assertions about the role of mankind in nature or nature’s role in developing humanity’s ethical consciousness. We cannot consider Thoreau’s views on nature without first considering the ancient understanding of humanity’s role in the natural realm as laid out in Genesis 1 and 2, along with

considering whether or not Thoreau ultimately rejected the Genesis mandates. As a Christian heresy, Thoreau's particular version of Transcendentalism is uniquely situated alongside the Eden story—an origin story as radical and perhaps as belief-altering as Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* would prove to be.

In a podcast designed to make Bible scholarship accessible to a wider audience, Tim Mackie, Ph. D., co-founder of the non-profit BibleProject Animation Studio and adjunct professor of Biblical Literature at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, suggests that there are four mandates or commands given to man in the first pages of Genesis: "In Genesis one, the job is to rule and subdue. In Genesis two, they're [Adam and Eve] put in a garden to work and keep" ("Priests of Eden" 50:10). Mackie calls this "priestly vocabulary," a theme which later biblical writers will pick up on and employ to describe the work of the Tabernacle, thus drawing a parallel between the two (56:10). These mandates to tend the garden are priestly mandates, work which forms the mediating bridge between man and God. And the garden is a "sacred space." Mackie goes on: "The garden is a place where Heaven and Earth are one and it's the reality to which the later Temple and Tabernacle will point. And to do work in that space is worship" (53:05-23). Humanity's duty or "obligation", then, is to "work and to keep" the natural world in as reverent an attitude as one would find in religious observance. The Apostle Paul will call this "your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1b).

Mackie's idea of the Garden of Eden exemplifying the work of the Temple is not new to him; other biblical scholars through the ages have asserted something similar⁶. However, it is an idea that Thoreau would agree with, fixated as he is with finding God in the natural world. It also agrees with Thoreau's "geognosy" being not just natural but also spiritual. Mackie adds layers to this knowledge by stating that, at least symbolically, "Mountains are where earth meets heaven" ("Royal Priests of Eden" 1:09). We see this symbolism at work in a number of passages in the Bible, most notably the Saini drama recorded in the book of Exodus. Other mountains are also considered sacred in the biblical text, such as Mount Seir, a mountain the Children of Israel were expressly told not to invade because it was a locale given by God to another, closely related people group (Duet. 2:5). Further in the biblical narrative, Eden is understood to have been on a mountain. This is a rich symbolism which Thoreau would have understood, appreciated, and applied to himself as he related to the natural world around him. In the famed "Contact!" passage of "Ktaadn," he exults in not just contact with earth, but also heaven. If he enters the woods and, indeed, nature as a whole to "live deliberately" and to seek out the divine, this search culminates in his ascensions to the mountaintop. Through these actions, he strives to reach Eden. Eden is where God's will is perfectly enacted on

Earth. Mackie, and others, will note that it is to this idea—the ideal of God’s will being enacted *within nature*—that Christ’s redemptive work ultimately leads. Humanity’s role, then, is to work and to keep that which God has made. Yet as we will see throughout this chapter, Thoreau at once agrees and disagrees with the biblical understanding of humanity’s role in the natural world.

Though man is commanded to “rule and subdue” the earth, perfectly enacting God’s will within nature in this way does not necessarily lead to exploitation of it, though that was surely Thoreau’s fear. Because he feared humanity’s exploitation, he shows his disagreement of the biblical mandate in the famed first line of “Walking:” “I wish to speak a word for Nature,” he writes—“*for absolute freedom and wildness*” (149, emphasis mine). “Absolute freedom and wildness” suggest a lack of cultivation and, therefore, a lack of humanity’s “ruling” over it. Later nature writers such as Simmons will agree with this hands-off approach, if they do not quite agree with Thoreau. As an example of agreement with the naturalist, “The Wood-Pile” borrows from Thoreau’s perception of humanity’s ideal relationship to nature in the approach the speaker has to the natural world—one of equanimity rather than hostility, to observe rather than to subdue or to take for himself. It is not the bird but the speaker who starts off on a walk, and yet the bird—a personification of the natural realm—compels the speaker to go farther than he might have gone were it not for its presence. “He was careful / to put a tree between us when he lighted,” the speaker notes (lines 10-11) because “[h]e thought that I was after him for a feather—” (line 14). Not only is the bird naturally afraid of the man; here, it seems even to *expect* exploitation from him. The reason the bird hides itself, or at least maintains its proper distance, is because it fears that something will be taken from it unwillingly, merely for sport. The poem reads similarly to Thoreau’s loon passage in “Brute Neighbors”: Both birds are fearful of man because of humanity’s tendency to misuse nature, and they therefore interact cautiously, if also capriciously, with the narrator-speakers. Just as the loon positions itself with “the widest expanse of water” between itself and Thoreau’s narrator (*Walden* 239), Frost’s bird keeps a tree between itself and the speaker.

As stand-ins for the natural world, both Thoreau’s loon and Frost’s “small bird” (line 10) are guarded. Simmons might suggest that the birds act this way because both Thoreau and Frost seek the control of nature through language (223). In her view, this is unethical. “Is not the nonhuman seen as a legitimate interest in its own right?” she asks her audience in her 2000 essay “Speaking for Nature: Thoreau and the ‘Problem’ of Nature Writing” (229). The more ethical approach to writing about nature, according to Simmons, is to simply allow its beauty to come to the forefront as an expression of itself—not to manipulate the natural scenery for our own, human purposes, in other

words. It is interesting to note, though, how many layers removed readers are from the bird's thoughts on being pursued by Frost's speaker: Though the speaker calls it "foolish" to name "what *he* [the bird] thought" (line 13, emphasis in original), he nevertheless supplies his own perception of what the bird might be thinking. In this way, as Simmons might argue, the speaker seeks to control nature through his own language and thus disallows for nature to speak for itself. This is the opposite of what Thoreau might advocate in his essay on "Walking," yet Simmons lays blame squarely on his shoulders, too, when she asserts that Thoreau "us[es] nature 'poetically' " because of his nasty "humanizing or spiritualizing habit" (224). This "habit" is oriented toward the human rather than the non-human; it elevates the one while de-emphasizing the other through humanity's own exploitation of nature—a use which does not allow for nature to speak for itself, Simmons argues.

Let me push back against Simmons' sour view of nature writing. In these passages from Thoreau and Frost, notice what the speaker-narrators are *not* doing: Neither speaker nor narrator is after the birds at all, for sport or otherwise. This positive attitude about nature is a sharp departure from Simmons' accusation of the two writers. Frost demonstrates that the speaker's aim is *not* exploitation but rather *discovery* when he writes, "One flight out sideways would have undeceived him [the bird]" (line 17). If the bird had come out of its fearful hideout, it would have understood the speaker's real purpose and been "undeceived" to the truth about the speaker, that he is not out to get it. The natural world is not topsy-turvy because of human intervention, in other words, but because of its own perception of humanity's intentions. Thoreau, too, leaves off his playful pursuit when an east wind blows in to "fill[...] the whole air with misty rain." In Thoreau's mind, this rain comes as a result of a prayer the loon lifts up to the heavens, presumably a prayer of rescue. According to Beebe's recent scholarship regarding our updated scientific understanding of these birds' habits, this rescue was sorely needed because the loon may have been "stressed." In "Three Ways of Looking at a Loon: '*Gavia Immer*' (Common Loon) in the Works of Henry David Thoreau" (2019), Beebe summarizes the available field research on loons from the last quarter century, asserting that loons' migratory and mating habits would have affected their mood and activity in encounters with Thoreau. In an effort to highlight the bird's perspective, Beebe writes: "Loons dive to feed; diving is hunting for the loon. Interruptions of their feeding torment the birds and necessitate expending energy to escape a perceived threat" (5). Additionally, such a bird in Thoreau's encounter would have been enroute to its wintering grounds and, therefore, would have stopped at Walden Pond to rest and recuperate, rather than to play, Beebe argues. Though Thoreau would likely not have been aware of the birds' mating, migrating, or hunting habits to the detail we have them today, both Thoreau's

narrator and Frost's speaker knew when to leave nature well enough alone. "[I]mpressed" by its prayer for deliverance, Thoreau lets the bird—and, by extension, nature itself—rest rather than continue his game (*Walden* 231). For their parts, the loon and the small bird engage in their own version of discovery with the men, for neither expect at first to be left alone. In their respective responses to the birds, Thoreau and Frost show that the aim of humanity's relationship to nature is a peaceful coexistence filled with mutual discovery.

There is more to this relationship, however. If at a sign from nature Thoreau's narrator abandons his game-dance with the loon in favor of observing other waterfowl in order to "faithfully report... what he's perceived through all his senses" (Simmons 233)—and, therefore, acts justly toward nature—Frost's speaker "forgot" the companionate bird beside him in favor of a manmade stack of wood. This, according to Simmons, is the unjust view. Not only does the speaker "let his [the bird's] little fear / Carry him off" without any reassurance (lines 19-20); his interest in the wood pile is exactly the opposite of his interest in the bird. The wood pile—a cord of neatly chopped, neatly stacked tree limbs—is a blatant statement regarding humanity's influence over nature. Genesis 1 divinely commands man to "have dominion... over every living thing that moves on the earth" (v. 28). The cord is a direct picture of the "dominion" to which this verse speaks: With the "handiwork on which / He spent himself," the man who erected it has shown himself strong over nature (lines 36-37). In "Ktaadn," humanity's dominion over the Earth and its produce is depicted with the felled logs and pork barrels that litter the backwoods rivers. In both works, this is a useless dominion. Though they might have been useful at some point in the recent past, neither cord nor barrels nor logs are useful now. The cord is set "far from a useful fireplace" (line 38) while the logs are tightly jammed upriver to await next spring's freshet to loosen them, or, worse, a mold infestation to begin their decay. Simmons would suggest that this treatment, this dominion over the trees which "move on the earth," does not approach nature "on its own terms"; neither does it cultivate "reverence, humility, responsibility, and care" for the natural world (223). In this view, Simmons herself shows a rejection of the biblical mandate and, ironically, agreement with Thoreau. When the bird takes its "last stand" on the other side of the cord (line 22), it takes a stand against exploitation of this sort just like the flowers forgotten in the mowing do in "Rose Pogonias." Nothing more is said about the bird in Frost's poem, suggesting that its message has fallen on deaf ears. And yet, there remains good out of the spent "labor of his ax" (line 37). According to Dana Cairns Watson, in her 2016 essay "'New Terms of Worth': The Inclusive Economics of Robert Frost's Poetry," Frost's "poetry reflects an extended meditation on how people actually sustain themselves" through their

interactions with nature (309). She speaks of a “natural capital” which nature desires to give to humanity. Humanity’s ideal relationship to the natural world, Watson contends, is an economic one mediated through ecosystem services like clean water and fertile soil, which ultimately sustain human life on Earth. Yet humanity is to be diligent *within* nature in order for nature to provide these things for it: As Genesis 3 maintains, “Cursed is the ground for your [Adam’s] sake; in toil you shall eat of it” (v. 17). The wood-pile and the lumberjack’s spent logs function as a reminder that humanity and nature are to work in tandem in order to provide for each other’s needs.

Humanity is to be diligent in his relationship to nature through other means as well. In *Management Decision*’s 2006 article “The Sweetest Dreams that Labor Knows: Robert Frost and the Poetics of Work,” international scholars Gazi Islam and Michael J. Zyphur suggest that humanity’s ideal relationship to nature is one mediated through work itself. Of the nine purposes for work which they list, not all of them positive, one is to facilitate humans being “creative, productive forces[s] of nature” within their given environments. This purpose ultimately fulfills a need for “self-realization” in humanity. They write:

One way in which humans may be realized through work is by its [that is, work’s] ability to bring about interaction with their environment. More specifically, human-environment interactions which allow the “taming” of the wild give humanity the ability to define themselves not only as apart from their environment, and therefore actualized, but also apart-and-above their environment, by obtaining an identity as masters of their domain. (528)

The purpose of humanity’s involvement with nature, then, is for it to *do* work. Though this view agrees with the divine mandate in Genesis 2:15, “to work and to keep” the garden, it goes directly against Simmons’ articulated view of nature being a legitimate concern in its own right. Work requires a level of manipulation of one’s surroundings and would therefore be “colonizing [and] appropriating the nonhuman”—actions of which Frost’s stacked cord and Thoreau’s jammed logs are symbols, in Simmons’ mind (223). Islam’s and Zyphur’s view also works against Thoreau’s concept of wildness. “[I]n Wildness is the preservation of the World,” he famously writes in “Walking,” given first as a lecture with the subtitle “the Wild” (162). Man is in need of the wild *as such* in order to sustain himself and ought never to tame it solely with the view to fulfill his own personal desires or to become its master, Thoreau would claim. Yet Islam and Zyphur agree with Watson’s assertions of interdependence between nature and man: Humanity’s “fragile psyche[] depend[s] upon nature for health and happiness,” Watson writes (311), an assertion which Frost’s poetry exemplifies,

particularly “Tree at my Window.” Simmons does not offer a view of nature being interdependent but rather argues for its being in danger of “appropriation” through the act of writing—and by extension work in general—if writers are not careful to “enable her [nature] to speak in her own language” by way of carefully recording their own observations (233). In further applying Thoreau’s view to the nature of work, we see that in “The Wood-Pile,” the work that man has done is slowly being reclaimed by nature in order to preserve the wilderness.

In truth, Thoreau—and, by extension, Frost as well—stands between these two views. He at once recognizes that nature is a “force not bound to be kind to man” (“Ktaadin” 113), and thus is its own legitimate interest, but he also understands his own dependence on nature as a life-sustaining power. This power is found for Thoreau on Mt. Ktaadn, where the mountain whispers to him near the summit, “I cannot pity nor fondle thee here, but forever restlessly drive thee hence to where I *am* kind” (108, emphasis in original). Additionally, nature holds within itself a certain meekness, a power under control, which allows itself to be subjugated for a purpose. Both Frost’s wood-pile and Thoreau’s batteau illustrate humanity’s fitting use of natural resources certainly for health, as Islam and Zyphur claim, but also for recreation: Though the cord is capable of providing warmth from a fire yet has not yet been able, it has already provided man with a relaxing activity *within nature*. The boat, too, allows for locomotion up- and downstream in order to permit further exploration.

Nature, much more than meeting needs, longs for a level of encounter with man which Thoreau’s famous “contact” passage in “Ktaadn” exemplifies (113). Indeed, according to famed Thoreauvian scholar William Howarth, Thoreau’s writings are “crowded with encounter,” initiated by both man and nature. Frost’s poems, too, are “crowded with [such] encounter.” In “Tree at my Window,” for example, the entire poem is a record of one humanity’s “encounter” with a companionate tree—an encounter initiated by man and respectful of the tree’s autonomy. In fact, in his use of the term “our heads” to describe the mind of both man and tree, Frost treats the man and the tree as equals (line 13). The tree shows itself to be a formative, stabilizing force for the speaker: Were it not for its presence in the poem, the speaker would be lost to his own “inner[] weather” (line 16). Indeed, it is through this “inner weather” that the poem captures the entire mood of *Walden*. Suggests Howarth, “The *Walden* we think we know offers an unnamed narrator, weary of town life, who builds a small house by a woodland pond. There he lives for a year in solitude, *observing inner and outer weather*” (emphasis mine). The exact same language is found in Frost’s poem as well as Howarth’s brief summary of *Walden*, suggesting that the unnamed Thoreauvian narrator enacts an encounter of his own with nature. Here, at Walden Pond as in the speaker’s bedroom, nature shows

itself to be kind, whereas on the mountaintop and in other inhospitable places it is not. It is this treatment which echoes Thoreau's understanding of nature as an awesome life-sustaining power capable of appreciation in its own right (Figure 2).

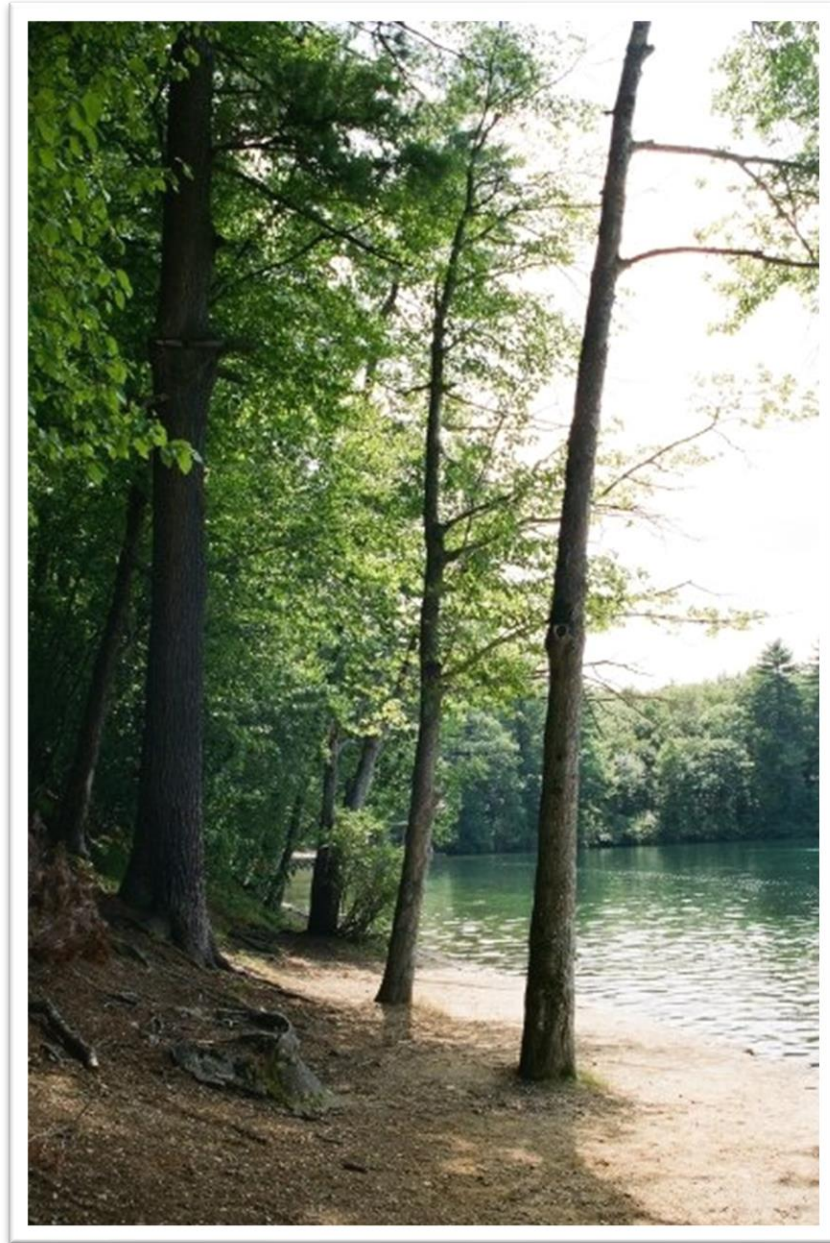


Figure 2. Walden Pond

“I cannot pity nor fondle thee here, but forever relentlessly drive thee hence to where I *am* kind” (“Ktaadn” 108). Photo taken by the author in the summer of 2008.

As we have seen, Thoreau's view of nature is not as unjust as modern scholars claim it to be. Neither is Frost's. Moreover, Thoreau approaches nature as an artist might—as a medium for his own message. This is a move which is not unjust. The nature found in Thoreau's writing is not true nature but “images of natural forms” infused “with eloquent symbolic values” (Colyer 999). Scholars understand through a study of his journal that Thoreau lived at Walden Pond for a little over two years, from July 4, 1845—the nation's as well as his own personal Independence Day—to September 6, 1847. And yet the celebrated work he wrote to commemorate the endeavor, *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*, compresses that timeframe into just one calendar year. Why is this? Howarth offers a clue: The compression of time in Thoreau's narrative is “a signal that he has left literal history and entered the realm of fable.” This is his artistry at work. “[T]ime becomes a summer stream, its current sliding toward eternity,” Howarth goes on. As Galbraith points out, Thoreau borrows this “technical device” from Darwin's own methodology (2n5). Rather than manipulation, time compression was, in a word, the most artistic choice for Thoreau. It was also the most just, if we use Simmons' definition of ecological justice. As Howarth later argues, in *Walden* “the lowliest elements, patiently observed, *evolve into thrilling creation*, from leaves to bodies to words” (emphasis mine). Thoreau's writing, then, becomes not an exploitation of nature but an exultation of it.

Ultimately, Simmons argues that Thoreau—and, by extension, all nature writers who come after him and model their own writing after his, including Frost—should take a hands-off approach to nature (229). At the core of Simmons' issue with Thoreau's nature writing is his copious note-taking, which is largely a record of the natural phenomena around him and his insights into that record. Such a record, Simmons assumes, is directed toward motivating human initiative rather than simply enjoying nature for its own sake, and is, by definition, unjust because it subjugates beautiful nature to the will of mankind. And yet, creation is not subjugation. The minute jotting he engaged in while out on a walk—Thoreau's loathsome, constant record-keeping—is all but lost in his writings, replaced by the sculpted, formed words of his published works. Even God himself looked with compassion on the natural world “in the beginning.” “The earth was without form and void,” reads Genesis 1:2, and yet—much like Thoreau's and Frost's creative acts—God did not leave it this way. Through their artistry, Thoreau and Frost participate in God's act of creation, thereby elevating nature rather than subjugating it. Later in her essay, Simmons comes around to Thoreau's way of thinking by asserting that “Thoreau's compulsion to record... is... a way of enabling nature to speak,

to express itself on its own terms” (229). As I have tried to show, nature’s “own terms” are expressed in both Thoreau’s and Frost’s works.

Simmons’ is a circular argument, one which starts with the thing it seeks to prove. Ironically through the work of his hands, Thoreau has finally taken a “hands-off” approach to nature. Yet her view of the need to approach nature on its own terms is problematic for another reason, as well. Not only is it a circular derision of Thoreau’s beautiful nature writing; Simmons’ argument also does not take into consideration the notion that the natural world has been “cursed” for the sake of man—more specifically, for the sake of the “revealing of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:19). Apostle Paul will tell us that “creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him [that is, God] who subjected it in hope” (v. 20). Nature’s “own terms,” then, are terms of destruction, uselessness, and futility, rather than creation, beauty, or productivity. The birth-rebirth cycle which Thoreau so reveres, and which symbolize for him humanity’s ultimate renewal, is really wasted effort on the part of nature: Tied to a seemingly infinite circle of creation and destruction, this cycle never quite achieves its aim, one of complete redemption and freedom. It is, in a word, futile. And yet, the hope is that this fruitless cycle will one day end and its purpose finally be redeemed. Herein lies Thoreau’s and Frost’s true hopeful vision. Paul goes on: “[C]reation itself will also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (v. 21). This glorious liberty, Paul says, is incomparable to the “sufferings of this present time,” including the sufferings of nature’s decay (v. 18). According to Colyer, Thoreau’s symbolic system came out of the “organic natural processes” of birth, decay, and rebirth. Read in this way, the decay at the end of “The Wood-Pile” can be viewed as a hopeful rather than dreary symbol. Thoreau himself says as much. He writes in “Huckleberries” that “primitive forest[s]... should never be cut for fuel... but stand and decay for higher uses” (1314). Though he meant using such forests as a means of public recreation, these “higher uses” can also mean redemption. Just as Thoreau ends *Walden* with the coming of spring—itself a rebirth from decay—Frost ends his poem with the hope of renewal wrapped up in decay. It is mankind who has left the cord to rot, and yet nature can turn that rot, as it does with fallen forest leaves, into fertile soil ripe for sustaining new life. Not only is this new life redeemed in a new day; it will one day be redeemed for eternity.

In addition to this decay of which Thoreau and Frost speak being a reminder of the eternity that is to come; it is also a hopeful absence. In his 2004 essay on “Ripeness: Thoreau’s Critique of Technological Modernity,” Ken Hiltner argues for Thoreau’s view of humanity’s relationship to nature as being one outside history: “Thoreau was allowing himself to be influenced... by the earth

in a way which, much to his delight, was ahistorical precisely because it was wild. Indeed, only when left to itself, *outside of human history as wilderness*, is the earth able to reveal (and conceal) itself..." (328, emphasis mine). In Thoreau's mind, this is the only true or just relation man can have with his environment. Hyper-focused on wildness as such, the esteemed naturalist pushes back against notions of human interaction with nature which would promote what Hiltner terms "constant presence": actions which would break up nature's growth-decay cycles in order to assert a more permanent human influence, thereby marring the landscape and obscuring what nature intended. Arguably, as a permanent record of humanity's influence over nature, history is one such "constant presence." The critic's view of such presence, more a disruption to nature than any valuable addition to its processes, is negative. Here, Hiltner agrees with Simmons' assertion that humanity's lingering need to capture nature in writing for its own purposes is appropriation and therefore "problem[atic]". Though humanity may ebb and flow in the natural world through individual birth and death, the *effects* of humanity proffer a very real "presence" in that world through the edifices and re-orderings of the natural state left behind as evidence of humanity's influence, such as dams and, in Robert Frost's case, wood-piles. Walls, bridges, and other structures found in such poems as "Mending Wall" and "West-Running Brook" function in a similar capacity. Dorothy H. McGavran, in her 1994 article comparing Robert Frost's work to John Crowe Ransom, titled "Building Community: Houses and Other Structures in the Poetry of Frost and Ransom," says it thusly: "These imperfect human structures work paradoxically, by setting up boundaries to unite or integrate life, to build community[,] and avoid the terror of dispersal in an alien world full of 'desert places' " (2). According to McGavran, it is precisely the cycle of decay and rebirth that the manmade structures found in Frost's work are there to combat.

As the presence of manmade structures in his poetic landscape might suggest, Frost "would [not] abandon human striving... to a cold acceptance of unending cycles of death and decay," McGavran asserts (2). And yet, his wood-pile pushes back against this assertion, for it exists in a sort of limbo state: present, yet also, thanks to nature's continual, unseen work, sliding toward absence—or, in the words of the poet, a state of "...warm[ing] the frozen swamp as best it could / With the slow smokeless burning of decay" (lines 39-40). The wood-pile, then, is the very evidence of Thoreau's influence on Frost, for its very existence, abandoned as it is by a creator who could maintain or at least *use* it, speaks of this hopeful absence—a hopeful undoing, as it were, of humanity's imposition on nature and a pull back toward its regenerative cycles. As Thoreau might put it, nature's hope *is* its regeneration, a reality which Thoreau understood and to which the wood-

pile points. It is for this reason—this imposing on the natural world as humanity does and nature’s battle against it—that Thoreau takes up his concern for the wild. Suggesting as evidence a famous passage in *Walden* which bemoans the “sacrifice [of] the bloom of the present moment to any work” (108), Hiltner asserts that Thoreau “himself was being acted upon by the earth in a way that drew him away from his world” (333). The critic distinguishes between “earth” and “world”—with the “earth” consisting of the planet’s natural processes, while “world” indicates the enactments and expectations of a given human society. Thoreau, Hiltner insists, valued the former above the latter and was fairly entranced with nature’s inner workings, to the expense, perhaps, of all other worthwhile—at least, socially speaking—pursuits. The reason for Thoreau’s enchantment lay for Hiltner in a repudiation of society’s impulse to maintain a “constant presence,” as outlined above. Instead of “presence,” nature offers recurring absence: the ebb and flow of decay and rebirth, summer and winter, springtime and harvest. This is an ebb and flow which speaks of the presence of Nature’s God at work. In the middle of this “absence” is a kind of heaven. To borrow from Harding again, “Thoreau feels no need of waiting to attain heaven in another world. He has high hopes of attaining his heaven right here on earth, and he does his level best to do so” (x). In a hopeful way, a way that Thoreau celebrated, nature exists in a perpetual push-and-pull between the absent and the present.

The draw of nature’s absence-presence dichotomy is much too irresistible for Thoreau. By contrast, the opposite can be said of Frost’s unnamed ax-wielder in “The Wood-Pile.” Though unnamed and even unseen, this character is no less “present” within the poem, if for nothing else than because of the work of his hands that he has left behind—or, to borrow Hiltner’s phrase, because of his own “constant presence.” Though neither seen nor spoken directly to nor heard, the creator of the poem’s wood-pile—himself the embodiment of narrative’s “inciting incident”—shows himself through the seeming permanence of the work of his hands. And yet, the pull of nature’s cycles ultimately gets the upper hand: The decay of this humanity’s work will ultimately serve to erase his constant presence and give it over to Thoreau’s venerated wild, thereby rendering his work meaningless. If Thoreau is being pulled from the world to the earth unwittingly, as Hiltner suggests, this unnamed character of Frost’s is being acted upon in a way that draws him away from the “earth” to the “world”—that is, the societal conventions and concerns which ultimately keep him too busy even to attend to or utilize the work of his own hands. In this way, this invisible character is no better than the Concordian townspeople whom Thoreau records, in his first volume of the *Journal* as well as the first pages of *Walden*, as “so taken up with the cares and rude practice of life—that its

finer fruits cannot be plucked by them” (*Journal I* 381). It is this drawing away—this turning from nature’s ebb and flow to a work of “constant presence”—which prevents the wood-pile maker from sharing in nature’s bounty or even making it useful to himself. Whereas Thoreau partakes in the natural world through deliberate, meticulous observation—ironically, though, through his own “constant presence”—this unnamed actor merely attempts to enter into its processes through the work of his hands, which his neglect eventually abandons. In this way, he is not interested in experiencing what nature has to offer. Nor is he truly in labor “to work and to keep” the natural world as mandated in Scripture. Importantly, Frost himself does not reject either of these views, but his axe-wielder does. Though the axe-wielder attempts to stockpile, thereby creating “a constant presence,” the speaker quickly notes the futility of the unseen humanity’s actions—for the wood-pile, a symbol of the ax-wielder’s purpose, is decaying, sliding ever closer to oblivion and back into nature’s cycle of absence and presence.

Hiltner connects Thoreau’s sense of wildness to what he names as “absence and presence in flux,” which the critic contrasts with the naturalist’s nineteenth-century New England’s societal preoccupation with permanence: Through its various life cycles, nature offers a push-and-pull between absence and presence, while society counters with only presence. Human society will erect monuments to stand for ages, and dam up flowing rivers to serve as stationary reservoirs, while nature tears such work down in a matter of a few seasons. Nature, suggests, Hiltner, is “itself endlessly engaging in *an altogether unpredictable, though nonetheless cyclical (seasonal)*, play of absence and presence” (328, emphasis mine). It is this ebb and flow of the wild—rather more predictable than not, I would say—which so fully captivated Thoreau’s imagination. Unconnected as it is to human society, this, Thoreau’s wildness, is nature’s unpredictability at work. The naturalist’s intellectual pursuits are wrapped up in what Hiltner calls “an epiphany and obsession” centered on “the circle of the seasons,” an epiphany which “would preoccupy him for the last decade of his life” (323). Thoreau is “surprised” to note, for example, that the seasons changed 1854 right as the almanac said they would (330). He is also “startled” to understand in 1852 that “the year is a circle.” In all his assertions of what Thoreau meant by “speaking a word for nature,” and preserving wilderness for the sake of the wild, Hiltner seems to miss a key point: That, rather than be *unpredictable*, nature herself is more predictable—more stable, more “present,” as it were—than society alone could ever be. I would argue instead that Thoreau’s focus on wildness is not an assertion of the unpredictability of nature, but rather the way in which nature falls out of the realm of human control or causation. Within its “circle of the seasons” (*Journal I* 25), there is a very real

predictable pattern—one at which Thoreau himself was “surprised” to notice, as noted above. I will not call this predictability but faithfulness. This pattern is set up from nature’s God—a God, as I have argued, that Thoreau himself went into nature with the express purpose of encountering. It is not the unpredictability of nature which inspired awe in Thoreau, but its very predictability, as evidence of a faithful God. Frost’s decaying wood-pile speaks to that evidence: Though man has neglected the wood—been unfaithful to nature, as it were—nature, as an arm of God, is still able to redeem the wood by reclaiming it to itself. Nature’s cycles may indeed be “absence and presence in flux,” as Hiltner points out, but this flux is for a purpose, and that is to showcase the faithfulness of God.

We have seen Thoreau’s influence over Frost in his use of the wood-pile and its various associations in the poem of the same name: At once, the wood-pile showcases humanity’s at-times destructive influence over nature, which Thoreau sorely lamented, but also the faithfulness of God as evidenced by nature’s recurring cycles, an element of the natural world which Thoreau himself was so obsessive about, particularly in his later years. Another natural image which we see as a connector between Thoreau and Frost are apples—this time neglected cultivated ones. Throughout his essay on “Wild Apples”, Henry Thoreau makes references to part of an apple tree’s harvest being left behind, “lying in a circular form beneath the trees” (295). Some of this partial crop is dropped to the ground through Nature’s “thinning them for us” (294). Rejected by the orchard-owner, “they belong to children as wild as themselves... to the wild-eyed woman of the fields... and, moreover, to us walkers” (303). The apples which are left on the ground are thus up for grabs, to be enjoyed either as fragrance or as food. Thoreau describes the appearance of several of the fallen apples which he has scavenged: They are “rich and spicy” (305), meant to be eaten out-of-doors, and are usually pock-marked with the nibbles of nearby forest creatures (309). One “thus enjoy[s] them without price, and without robbing anybody” (294). He also describes their smell: The blossoms are “so copious and so delicious to both sight and scent. The walker is frequently tempted to turn and linger near some more than usually handsome” tree (294). As if Frost rewrote Thoreau’s essay into verse, near-identical language is echoed in “Unharvested,” a poem first published in the 1936 collection *A Further Range*.

Not just as a rewrite of the naturalist’s essay, Thoreau’s influence over Frost can be keenly felt in “Unharvested” in terms of the neglect of natural resources that the poet as well as Thoreau mourns, a neglect which Frost also mourns in “The Wood-Pile.” This neglect is a direct negation of the mandate in Genesis 2 for mankind to “work and to keep” not just the Garden of Eden but the

entire natural world. As we have seen, Thoreau both agrees and disagrees with this mandate. Here, we see Thoreau's argument for a hands-off approach to nature. As I mentioned in my discussion of "The Wood-Pile" above, in "Huckleberries"—an essay attributed to Thoreau, with the help of editor Leo Stoller, but not published until 1970—Thoreau claims that "primitive forest[s]" should "*stand and decay* for higher purposes" (1314, emphasis mine). This is neglect with an object in mind; within the context of "Huckleberries" it is for the purpose of leaving alone a portion of the natural world in order to preserve it. Nature will take care of itself, he seems to say. In "Wild Apples," Thoreau celebrates this type of neglect, only lamenting future generations' not being able to enjoy the wildness of the apple because of humanity's constant effort at improving it. For this reason, Concord's famed saunterer does not go walking in cultivated orchards but the old, neglected, uncultivated ones to find the spiciest, most tasty fruit—a fruit, as we have established, that is touched by the sun and, importantly, not man. In so praising these "wild apples," he also laments that the apples of today are so unlike their ancestors because of humanity's heavy influence over nature. And thus, we have the need for the purposeful kind of neglect for which he advocates. Frost himself celebrates this type of neglect in "Unharvested;" yet, he also mourns its loss. In "Unharvested" as well as "The Wood-Pile," we witness a futile neglect without purpose. As Frost's speaker in "The Wood-Pile" mourns the loss of a natural resource to humanity's lack of care, he treats the cord with the same sense of reverence as the crowd of speakers does to the plucked flowers in "Rose Pogonias." In "Unharvested," his object of mourning is the "apple fall / As complete as the apple had given man," an allusion, of course, to Genesis 3 and humanity's loss of the Garden of Eden (lines 9-10). Symbolically, in its connection to Eden, the poem also mourns the loss of humanity's perfect "tending and keeping" in Eden. "Complete" is the key word here, for the tree has shed its entire fruit crop, but early, as we will see, and there is no one around to harvest or enjoy the bounty that Nature has given.

Instead of being seen as a failure, the apple tree's not being harvested in the poem should also be viewed as intentional and another form of Thoreau's purposeful neglect at work. The biblical account gives a fitting example. In the book of Ruth, a wealthy landowner whose name is Boaz allows a young widow to glean from his fields after the harvest (2:15). Laborers had already come to gather in the crop, but whatever was dropped in the process was left behind per Levitical law. This was done to provide for the poor and unfortunate in Old Testament Jewish society (see Lev. 19:9-10). In their treatment of gleaning, both Thoreau's essay and Frost's poem point back to this type of ancient statute. Frost affirms such a law in the last line of his poem, which asserts that "smelling

their sweetness would be no theft” (line 14). Both Thoreau himself and Frost’s speaker feel provided for—for Thoreau, by scrounging for forgotten forest apples on his walks; and for Frost, by being able to smell the sweetness of the forgotten cultivated apples, though he did not cultivate them himself. “May something go always unharvested!” the speaker cries out (line 11). In this we see that he longs for others to be provided for in the same way he has been, just that for which Thoreau himself longs. “I fear that he who walks over these fields a century hence will not know the pleasure of knocking off wild apples,” Thoreau writes toward the end of his essay. “Ah, poor man, there are many pleasures which he will not know!” (311). The only difference between the poem and the essay besides meter and rhyme is that in the poem, the speaker does not eat that which he is provided.

There is another layer to this provision, one more controlled by nature than man. In his essay, Thoreau speaks of fruit dropping in the fall, indeed a sign of harvest. However, the poem describes “an apple tree / that had eased itself of its *summer* load” (line 4-5, emphasis mine). Ed Perry, Emeritus Environmental Horticultural Advisor for University of California Cooperative Extension, Stanislaus County, suggests that dropping in midsummer is a sign of neglect, but a June drop is the tree’s doing. Perry writes:

In apples and pears, a second drop occurs once the fruits are about the size of marbles, usually in May or June. This is commonly referred to as ‘June drop.’ Fruit drop at this time of year is thought to occur as a result of competition between fruits for available resources.

The tree’s “summer load,” then, could refer to a June drop. Perry’s description is commiserate with Thoreau’s record of his wild-apple wanderings, a connection which suggests that Thoreau must have also been witness to a June drop, perhaps habitually. This is the “summer load” of which Frost speaks. That the fruit which Frost’s speaker witnesses on the ground is the size of a marble and therefore likely inedible is suggested by the fact that he is not inclined to eat them—however, they are ripe enough at least to be fragrant. The small size may also account for the potent spiciness of Thoreau’s fruit. Here the neglect is not from mankind but from nature itself, but nature’s loss, as we have seen, is also humanity’s bounty.

Thoreau has also influenced this poem in terms of its use of personas. There are at least three personas found in Thoreau’s essay: Thoreau himself, who is the giver of knowledge and insight; the farmer/cultivator; and the walker. On a solitary walk outside, the speaker in “Unharvested” first notices “A scent of ripeness from over a wall” (line 1), which propels him to investigate. The speaker identifies himself with the walker persona by, firstly, being out in nature but also by being

drawn farther into Nature's own affairs through his curiosity. After "leav[ing] the routine road," the poem's speaker finds "an apple tree / that had eased itself of its summer load" (4-5). This same curiosity is seen in Thoreau's walker through his being compelled to search for wild apples which had fallen from the trees, and exploring and digging as if searching for hidden treasure (309). Thoreau's essay is filled with references to the farmer/cultivator persona, who is viewed as the one who rejects the choicest fruit, though he thinks he is gathering the best (303). The poem alludes to that same character as well. The wall suggests cultivation, which could mean that the tree in question was part of an apple orchard and not simply grown wild on its own. The speaker notes that this tree had been "unharvested" and was "out of our stated plan" (lines 11-12), which suggests that its owner may have intended to collect the crop and somehow failed, not unlike Frost's axe-wielder in "The Wood-Pile." In borrowing from Thoreau in this way, Frost identifies himself with the Thoreauvian "walker" persona who leisurely saunters through the woods in search of not just adventure, but solace and deeper, holy purpose—implying, then, that the ideal way to relate to nature is to walk as Thoreau did, to saunter in search of higher ground.

In this chapter, I have endeavored to walk, so-to-speak, as Thoreau did in my discussion of Frost's poetry. We have examined "The Wood-Pile," "Tree at my Window," and "Unharvested" for the ways in which they echo Thoreau's views on humanity's right relationship to nature. According to Thoreau, this relationship should be mediated by the special earth-knowledge "geognosy" which comes through the senses, most notably that of touch; it should echo and yet challenge the biblical mandate to "subdue" the earth through a view of nature as an equal to mankind; it should also motivate humanity to strive toward working within nature in the form of a symbiotic relationship. Yet humanity's relationship to nature can be artistic as well, without being exploitative, as my discussion of Thoreau's purposeful manipulation of the seasons within his writing has shown. All these senses of humanity's "obligation" can be found in the three Frost poems cited. In particular, this chapter pushes back on Simmons' notion that nature writing is exploitation if it does not simultaneously allow nature to speak "on its own terms." Though Thoreau and Frost do allow nature itself to speak, using the natural world as the inspiration for their artistry—as humanity has done for thousands of years—is not in itself unethical. The chapter also challenges Galbraith's view of Thoreau's nature imagery not being a point of influence over Frost. In the remaining chapter, I will examine Thoreau's use of religious imagery as it relates to Frost's use of natural imagery.

Chapter Three

Religious Imagery

In Chapter One, we examined how seeing through Thoreau's eyes is to see in "red." In Chapter Two, we noted that seeing through his eyes means wrestling with humanity's relationship to the natural world. We now consider my third and final point, that to see through Thoreau's eyes means understanding the elements of the natural world through a religious and sometimes pagan sensibility. As I have made pains to communicate, in the introduction and throughout my argument, these three elements of Thoreau's writing are applied to Frost's poetry and connected to each other through both writers' use of natural imagery. Never more is this truer than when we speak of religious imagery, for here natural imagery is doing double duty: At once, it points back to its own reality in nature as well as a higher, transcendent reality in the spiritual realm. A good example of this, as I spoke of at length in Chapter One, is Thoreau's meditation on *Acer rubrum*—the Red Maple—in his "Autumnal Tints" essay. He makes a deliberate choice in the essay to compare the natural color of the maple to a well-known passage from Isaiah which uses a specific color, in this case scarlet, in a negative spiritual sense (1:18). By borrowing the color and religious imagery from this passage of the King James Bible and reorganizing it as he does, Thoreau shows his contempt for not just for the passage itself but also Christian Scripture as a whole, because the way he employs his imagery directly challenges and negates Isaiah's redemptive message. Frost makes similar substitutions, especially in poems like "Pan with Us," through his borrowing and negation of biblical phrasing. Throughout their writing, both Thoreau and Frost use biblical allusions in a "humorous... [and] mock-heroic or Swiftian fashion," as Robert Klevay argues (196).

In referring to “religious imagery” throughout this chapter, I will be comparing both Thoreau’s and Frost’s imagery nearly exclusively with that of the Christian Bible. As I have labored to point out, for both Thoreau and Frost Christianity was the prevailing religious sentiment of the day. Despite being from two distinctly different centuries, each writer lived within a Christian consensus at large as well as among their closer New England circles. An understanding of the Christian consensus at work in the larger culture is, as I have said, central to my argument regarding the ways in which Thoreau influenced Frost. If not the culture at hand, who but Thoreau “taught” Frost a pagan worldview? The rejection of this Christian consensus looms large in their literary works. Though Frost, as Galbraith points out “is not interested in transcendentalist thinking,” he nonetheless borrows significantly from Thoreau’s Transcendentalist religious worldview (138). Because Transcendentalism as a heresy is an outcropping of Christianity, it must be understood within its Christian context. In his unique expression of the heretical Transcendental belief system, Thoreau practiced a secular syncretism—that is, he created a patchwork of belief from among all the religious and mythic texts which he read, which included a worship of the Greek god Pan. Frost’s religious imagery is fraught with paganism and twisted, heretical viewpoints because it borrows from Thoreau’s works. We see this imagery not just in “Rose Pogonias” but also in “For Once, Then, Something,” “The Wood-Pile,” and, especially, “Pan with Us.” This religio-pagan imagery is perhaps the most obvious way in which we see Thoreau’s influence on Frost at play.

As previously mentioned, in “Rose Pogonias” we see a connection to the burning bush from Exodus as well as the blatant “sun’s right worship” of the speaker and his entourage, which is a deliberate conflation or a syncretistic, heretical departure from the cultural Christianity then in vogue (line 10). The entourage “bowed [themselves] in the burning” similarly to Moses taking off his shoes at the burning bush—for they knew the site was “holy ground” (Ex. 3:5). What makes it holy in this case is the redness of the pogonias among the weeds and other grasses which other men might deem worthy only of cutting down: This is Thoreau’s “high color” on display. The meadow is “confused with flowers” (line 24) and therefore should be left alone because of both the flowers’ beauty and their symbolic, redemptive nature. In the last stanza, the speaker raises a prayer presumably to that pagan object which he worships, being in this poem the sun rather than to the God of the Bible. This artistic move points to significant Thoreauvian influence on Frost’s creative expression, particularly in terms of its religious expression. In “The (Un)Plain Bible: New Religious Movements and

Alternative Scriptures in Nineteenth-Century America” (2014), Lydia Willsky argues that, through his writings on nature, Henry David Thoreau sought to participate in a religious experience alternative to the mainstream Christianity that permeated the culture in his day. To do this, he produced a “scripture,” what became *Wild Fruits*, binding only to himself which he nonetheless hoped others would read and emulate (Willsky 27-28). The aim of the book—not published until 2000, more than a century after his death and well after even Frost’s decease—is to influence readers “to go outside, observe the many forms of nature and in the process experience spiritual awakening” (29). Though Frost would never have had opportunity to read *Wild Fruits* as a publication, the characters in “Rose Pogonias” certainly experience a spiritual awakening in the vein Thoreau had hoped for his readers.

This spiritual awakening which Thoreau advocates can be felt through Frost’s focus on the sun in this poem. Colyer calls the sun “the key symbol in *Walden*” (1002). In “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” Thoreau endows the sun with the ability to take life at will as if it were a deity. “If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact,” he writes, “you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter [scimitar], and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career.” The passage comes just after Thoreau has explained that, to get to reality, one has to delve further into the muck of opinion, or even the natural muck found within a swamp, to arrive at hard bedrock. “Be it life or death, we crave only reality,” he says (*Walden* 94). The function of the sun in this passage mimics, even to the point of repeating key vocabulary, the non-literal spiritual function that Scripture takes up in Hebrews 4:12—“For the word of God is living and powerful, and *sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of... joints and marrow*, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” the verse reads (NKJV, emphasis mine). The purpose for Scripture in the biblical passage is to communicate reality to its readers through its transparent sifting of motives and unpacking of opinion, a metaphorical cleaving rather than a literal one. Though he may have also meant a literal death for those who desire to experience the sun as he advocates, by borrowing so heavily from this passage in Scripture, Thoreau clearly means to suggest that the sun carries the same sifting spiritual function. The sun, then, rather than truth as revealed in Christian Scripture, is what ultimately conducts the seeker to unadulterated reality. This, in turn, is Frost’s “sun’s right worship.”

More than simply revealing reality to man, in Colyer’s view, the sun is linked to Emerson’s transcendentalist Oversoul, suggesting that the sun “transmits the influence of a oneness with the Oversoul that is more than material” (1007). Not only does it sift motive; the sun also acts as a

gateway to the spiritual realm. In “Autumnal Tints,” the sun’s influence can be felt in the color of the scarlet oak leaves. “Every such tree becomes a nucleus of red...” Thoreau writes. “It is partly borrowed fire, *gathering strength from the sun* on its way to your eye” (239, emphasis mine). Not only is the sun meant to influence the leaves of the tree, but, through the human sense of sight, it is also meant to wield its spiritual influence and oneness on the observer. Thoreau’s spiritual influence from the sun is seen, and felt, in the “sun’s right worship” from “Rose Pogonias.” Frost’s speaker calls the meadow where his friends are gathered a “temple of the heat” (line 8), the first image indicative of a religious experience in the poem. As manmade structures, temples serve to enshrine important monuments, statutory, or other religious icons; in short, they act as protection from the elements as well as keepers of religious artifacts. James 1 shows us why a meadow such as this one would require protection: “[N]o sooner has the sun risen *with a burning heat* than it withers the grass” (v. 11, emphasis mine). “Temple” in this case indicates that, no matter how hot the sun may get, the “impurpled grasses” extant in the meadow will not be affected. Moreover, it is “the sun’s right worship” to collect the beauties which it produces, in this case the “orchises... tipped with wings of color” (lines 12, 15), before its destructive presence—that is, Thoreau’s cleaving—is too keenly felt. In this case, Frost’s sun acts in a similar way to Mt. Ktaadn for Thoreau—as “a force not bound to be kind to man” (“Ktaadn” 113). Here, the sun’s influence is felt not only by the “burning” participants, but also by nature itself.

Thoreau’s religious connection to the sun is extended in the poem through reverent prayer. Though not expressly stated, we can extrapolate that Frost’s speaker “raise[s] a simple prayer” to the sun (line 17) after his worshipful flower-picking. Yet the image is also a point of departure for both Thoreau and Frost. In “Econony,” Thoreau shows his contempt for what he takes to be humanity’s original mistake:

How vigilant we are! Determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it; all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. (*Walden* 9)

Frost’s speaker takes issue with Thoreau’s assessment here. In his willingness to pray not just for the momentary flowers but for himself, the speaker shows himself indeed to be committing himself to uncertainty. In this the speaker is open to change, a change within himself. Thoreau’s comments echo earlier, more ancient calls to be devout and holy. Habakkuk 2:4 prophesies that “the just shall

live by faith,” an assertion repeated in Romans 1:17. Thoreau laments that he does not see this degree of justice, or faith, in the society of his day, but rather apathy. “Rose Pogonias” is a commentary on the reluctance Thoreau sees in man, and its conclusion shows that man *can* live up to Thoreau’s level of expectation of conduct. Instead of reverencing himself, the speaker reverences the flowers which are symbolic of a nature which is unseen but nonetheless certain. In his worship of and prayer to the sun, Frost’s speaker in “Rose Pogonias” shows that this journey heavenward is possible.

In “Rose Pogonias,” we notice that the chief religious image Frost gleans from Thoreau is the sun. In “For Once, Then, Something,” it is the use of the color white as symbolic of both the spiritual aspects of nature and as nature’s way of reaching out to mankind. In his master’s thesis on color symbolism in the visual arts (2008), Brighton Kelley Hanson informs readers that in ancient times, the Hindi—a culture with which Thoreau would have been intimately familiar through his extensive, extra-national reading—used white in their paintings and other visual media to symbolize water, one of the “four elements of the natural world.” The other three elements are fire, symbolized by red; earth, symbolized by black; and air, symbolized in the ancient Greek culture by the color blue (3). The usage of color in works of art, Hanson notes, forms part of the “tradition of allegorical language” (2). In their use of color to symbolize deeper meanings, both Thoreau and Frost engage in this allegorical tradition. “It is the symbolism carried in the color... that prescribes the appropriateness of the color” in artistic works, Hanson asserts (4). According to Colyer, the usefulness of the color white to Thoreau was in its “potential[... to] stand for a number of things;” however, his use was mainly to suggest spiritual truths. In a number of writings, including *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and *Cape Cod*, Thoreau connects the color white to water and “things of the water” as the ancient Hindi would have. And yet, the naturalist probes the connection further: Thoreau uses water and its symbolic color white in tandem “to stand for purity, ecstasy, contemplation, or depths of Being—the metaphysical medium of the spirit” (Colyer 1001). In his “For Once, Then, Something,” Frost uses the color white in a similar way to Thoreau to suggest a connection to the spirit realm which the speaker is *almost* capable of grasping.

Lines seven through ten of the poem read thusly:

Once, when trying with chin against a well-curb,
I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture,
Through the picture, a something white, uncertain,
Something more of the depths—and then I lost it. (emphasis in original)

Here, the speaker is staring into a well filled with water, which connects back to the water evoked by the Hindi through their usage of the color white. Yet, there is a spiritual element to this well and the water in it. The speaker glimpses “a something white” for a fraction of a moment which seeks to draw him “beyond the picture / Through the picture” to a deeper, lasting connection (lines 8-9). Nineteenth-century hymn writer Edward Mote would have called this connection “my anchor hold[ing] within the veil.” In his hymn, “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less” (1834), Mote equates this veil with a storm—evoking not just the water symbolism but also, through the breaking waves of a storm at sea, the use of the color white. The storm in the hymn separates the speaker from “Christ the Solid Rock,” if briefly. Mote’s storm, and, by extension, the color white, is symbolic of the gap between humanity’s physical realm and the spiritual. Other nineteenth-century writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne have used a veil—this one, black—to symbolize this spiritual separation. For Hawthorne’s character, the Reverend Mr. Hooper, this separation is to last, by choice, through his entire life because “[i]t is but a mortal veil” (Hawthorne 379). After an extended forty days on Mt. Sinai conversing with God, Moses himself is separated through a veil, not from Christ or the intimacy of those around him but from the Children of Israel whom he is leading, because of the glory that radiated from his own face. Apostle Paul will call this a veil of ignorance because “their [the Children of Israel’s] minds were blinded... [E]ven to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart” (II Cor. 3:14a, 15). Like the hymn, Paul will note that Christ is the one who takes away the veil, if the Children of Israel will but turn to him (3:14). Frost’s speaker is similarly hindered in his search for meaning: By choice, he allows his understanding to remain darkened. Thoreau’s use of whiteness is meant to convey that a connection to the spiritual realm mediated by nature is there, if man will but reach out and grasp it. In describing what his speaker sees through Mote’s veil as “white,” Frost depicts nature as offering a religious experience of which the speaker can partake—not unlike the communion elements of broken bread and poured-out wine which Christ offered his followers in the upper room prior to his betrayal and death (see Mk 14:22-24). And yet, more akin to Judas Iscariot, Reverend Hooper, and the Children of Israel, Frost’s speaker chooses separation from rather than connection to this proffered spirituality.

That this “something” drawing Frost’s speaker beyond the mortal realm is white reinforces Thoreau’s religious imagery at work in the poem. Not only does it symbolize water; the color also acts as the primary medium of spiritual connection between mankind and nature. It is only because the object is white that the speaker is able to perceive, if not enter into, a further reality than just what has met his eye. Another reinforcement of this imagery comes in the placement of the “pebble of

quartz” (line 15) *in* the water, a natural element in the poem which has hitherto only given a reflection of the self-indulgent speaker. I John 5:8 will say that “three... bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.” Here, the New Testament writer connects seemingly homely natural objects to a greater spiritual reality beyond their physical nature. This testimony of nature Thoreau taps into through his portrayal of water, something Frost also does in this poem. We know not the depths of this well, only that it is a place where sky and water meet—a container for what Thoreau calls “sky water,” which is a combination of the ancient Hindi depictions of blue and white. In “The Ponds,” he calls this sky water “a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver, whose gilding Nature continually repairs.” Frost’s well takes on the characteristics of this mirror, reflecting not just the speaker’s face but the atmosphere around him. A paragraph later, Thoreau writes, “A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air... continually receiving new life and motion from above.” Sky water is an “intermediate,” a bridge between nature and spirit (*Walden* 184). In its potential for renewal, sky water acts as a vessel for truth, an image “nature continually repairs” in order to present it most fully to mankind. This is the substance Frost’s well is full of, and what his speaker nearly grasps—an opening into the spirit realm. Frost’s well water enacts the drama of the sky water’s role in revealing truth to mankind when it allows the speaker to see his own face “in the summer heaven” (line 5): Both sky and water, blue and white, heaven and earth, have come together in the well. The speaker acknowledges this union when he asks if what he sees is “truth” (line 15). Indeed, it is in the well that he searches for truth but is ultimately unable to perceive it.

Colyer describes Thoreau’s water imagery as what “illustrate[s] this realm that lay beyond man’s normal range of perception” (1002). In her essay on the importance of touch mentioned in Chapter Two, Horton further emphasizes the importance of the sky-water union for Thoreau. If, according to Colyer, water signifies the metaphysical, the air for Horton conveys the means of embodied spiritual insight. In Thoreau’s unique sky-water imagery, both of these come together. Horton argues that Thoreau’s preoccupation with nature is meant as a means of “transcendence of the gap between self and spiritual reality,” a spirituality primarily mediated through the air (Horton 230). Frost’s speaker exemplifies this gap when what he sees in the water is merely a reflection of himself among the clouds and fern leaves. He focuses on himself rather than endeavoring to see past himself; in this way, he closes himself off to further spiritual revelation, and thereby widens the gap. Horton contends that the primary source of spiritual knowledge comes from the air, atmosphere, or wind, and that paying attention to its movements illuminates truth. This view is not extrabiblical.

Christ himself acknowledges a connection between wind and spirit when he says, “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. *So is everyone who is born of the Spirit*” (Jn 3:8, emphasis mine). In this biblical passage, wind is akin to the spirit and moves similarly to the spirit realm. Indeed, in the Old Testament the English words “breath,” “wind,” and “spirit” have the same root in Hebrew. When God “breathed into his [man’s] nostrils the breath of life” in Genesis 2, it is spirit that he imparts into an already-formed physical being as yet without life: Adam becomes a “living being” in effect through the air breathed into him, symbolizing an impartation of spirit (v. 7).

The prophet Ezekiel offers a more powerful image which connects the movement of the wind to the movement of spirit. In Ezekiel 37, the prophet is bizarrely asked of God first, to go to an ancient valley of dry human bones, and, then, pray over them to receive life. He is asked to prophesy to the bones, “Thus says the LORD GOD to these bones: ‘*Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live*’ ” (v. 5, emphasis mine). Ezekiel is obedient to God’s voice not once but twice; the first time, though, the wind, or breath, does not come and there is no life in the bones. “Indeed, as I looked,” writes the prophet, “the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them” (v. 8). This must have been a grisly sight! A great valley of long-scattered bones is suddenly reconstituted into human bodies with all the requisite organs in them—what Ezekiel calls “an exceedingly great army” (v. 10b). And yet this army lay lifeless for want of *breath*, for want of *spirit*. Ezekiel is asked to prophesy once more, but this time to the wind. He is told thus by God: “Prophesy to the breath... ‘Thus says the Lord God: “*Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live*” ’ ” (v. 9). In this biblical passage, *wind* is imbued with the power to give life. Life for the dry bones does not come from the “sinews and the flesh” which dress them; it comes from the Spirit which animates them from *within*. Elsewhere in Scripture the biblical writers will say, “It is the Spirit who gives life” (Jn 6:63). This is the Spirit of God himself. The Spirit, therefore, is the one who inhabits the wind. The passage in Ezekiel would have been a familiar one to Thoreau, as well as Frost, and its symbolism would not have been lost on either poet. Horton goes on: “[I]n order to live a life that is fully... attuned to spiritual reality, a person must take care to perceive both the atmosphere and the wind.” The wind found in Thoreau is endowed with spirit. Just like Ezekiel’s breath which “[c]ome[s] from the four winds,” this wind is endowed with life. Because Frost’s speaker in “For Once, Then, Something” perceives only himself by way of his reflection and is not attuned to the atmosphere or the wind—that is, the Spirit—around him, he is rendered incapable of entering into the life-affirming

spiritual reality beyond the physical realm, what Horton maintains is the “genuine, real, and true” (232). He “lost it” because he could not see past himself, a habitual attitude for the speaker (line 10). The title of the poem, though, suggests that the speaker had hoped for a different outcome *this* time.

Another significant religious image signaling the spiritual realm for both Thoreau and Frost are birds, as exemplified by “Brute Neighbors” and “The Wood-Pile,” respectively. In his stay at Walden Pond, Thoreau encounters a loon as he paddles out into the water—an event which editor Walter Harding maintains actually took place five years after Thoreau takes leave of his residence there (*Walden* 229). The loon is an elusive bird, which teases Thoreau with its horrid cackles and quick dives under the surface. In “The Wood-Pile,” Frost’s speaker finds a bird as he is out on an evening walk in winter. Both the loon and Frost’s small bird give chase to their respective speaker-narrators, in part because they fear humanity’s contact with them, as we have discussed at length in Chapter Two. Thoreau’s loon has been shot at for sport (*Walden* 228), while Frost’s bird “thought that I was after him for a feather— / The white one in his tail” (lines 14-15). The actions of these two birds tie back to Scriptural precedents. Genesis 9:2 records that, after the Great Flood, the birds of the air as well as other creeping things inherit a fear of man. And yet, Thoreau’s and Frost’s birds show themselves to be more cunning. Matthew 13 records Jesus’ Parable of the Sower, a short story in which a farmer goes out to his field to sow good seed. “As he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and *the birds came and devoured them*,” reads verse four (emphasis mine). Later, Jesus provides an explanation—one of his only parables for which he does so. The seed is the word of truth and the “birds of the air” are alternately named “the wicked one” (vs 19), or, as in other gospels, “Satan” (Mk 4:15) and “the devil” (Lk 8:12). In this way, Jesus connects birds to the spiritual realm, thereby solidifying their usage as symbols of spiritual beings. The birds in Thoreau’s and Frost’s works represent spirits in addition to a spiritual connection mediated by nature. Thoreau acknowledges this connection when he calls the loon his “adversary” (*Walden* 229)—in Scripture, a frequent epithet for the devil—and describes the sound it makes as “demoniac laughter” (230). The actions of the two literary birds are not always in step with their counterparts in Scripture, however. Whereas the spirits in Jesus’ parable malevolently snatch away the nourishing seed of faith, both Thoreau’s and Frost’s bird-spirits act as a guide for their speaker-narrators. With his loon, Thoreau’s narrator plays a “checker” game on the surface of the pond, constantly thwarted but still led wildly about; only after “a wind from the east” blows through, what the narrator assumes to be “a prayer of the loon answered,” the narrator ceases his participation in the game (231). Likewise, it is only when Frost’s speaker understands that he is “far from home” (line 9) that the bird appears in order to take

him “on farther” into the forest (line 3): The bird himself leads the way to discovery and spiritual connection.

It is not without coincidence that in “The Wood-Pile,” Frost’s spirit-bird “flew before me” (line 10) as the narrator examines “the frozen swamp” (line 1). For Thoreau, swamps are a place of deep connection to the spirituality which nature offers him. “[I]f it were proposed to me to dwell in the neighborhood of the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived, or else a Dismal Swamp,” he writes in “Walking,” “I should certainly decide for the swamp” (164). The swamp is an important recurring image for Thoreau, both in terms of its connection to nature and its spiritual significance. It is used in his works both literally and figuratively. A place not known to be inviting and generally derided in public opinion, it is a hopeful place for the naturalist because it is an extension of Nature’s creativity. Like Thoreau, Frost himself experiences a swamp firsthand; yet unlike the naturalist, it is not a pleasant experience or spiritual awakening. Whereas an exultant Thoreau finds beauty and even rest for the weary in the swamp, ironically plumbing the depths, as it were, to find solid ground (*Walden* 94), for Frost the trip only brings him misery. In a chronology put together by the editors at the Library of America, a “distraught” Frost “decides to go to the Dismal Swamp on the Virginia-North Carolina border” for three weeks in 1893, presumably because of his future wife Elinor Miriam White’s rejection. The adventure leaves him “[e]xhausted and frightened” and without the necessary train fare to return home to New England (Poirier and Richardson 934). No doubt scenes like this inspire the depressive mood found within “The Wood-Pile.” However, this “frozen swamp” represents more than just gloom, for it also takes on Thoreau’s hopeful, spiritual sense of the locale.

In contrast to Frost, Thoreau’s firsthand experience with the swamp proves much more uplifting. Though gloomy, the writer-naturalist derives a certain vigor from the location, using it as a spiritual dwelling place. Further into his essay on “Walking,” he confides that

I enter a swamp as a sacred place, — a *sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow of Nature. The wild-wood covers the virgin mould, — and the same soil is good for men and for trees. ...A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey. (165)

Not only is the swamp a place of refuge for Thoreau; it also proves a source of intellectual strength as well as the catalyst for religious reform. The “Reformer” of whom he references here is John the Baptist, forerunner to Jesus Christ, who came preaching a message of repentance to his followers in order to “prepare the way” (John 3:3). In Scripture, John is frequently described as one who eats “locusts and wild honey.” His is the spiritual embodiment of the wilderness, another important natural image for Thoreau. To return to the passage above, Thoreau’s pronouncement of a “town [being] saved” is an allusion to the Genesis story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the two cities who were famously consumed by the wrath of God’s fire and brimstone because of the “outcry against it” (18:21). As the spiritual truth conveyed in “The Wood-Pile” is wrapped up in the story, let me further explain.

In Genesis 18, the man of faith Abraham pleads with God to spare those who live in Sodom—the world’s original Sin City, which happens also to be Abraham’s nephew Lot’s chosen residence—for the sake of, first fifty, then forty-five, then forty, then thirty, then twenty, and finally “ten” righteous men. Sparing the city on account of “ten” righteous is a condition to which God agrees (v. 32). In the next chapter we read, however, that God has not spared the city, ostensibly because he does not find those ten righteous men. As a compromise, he sends messengers to whom Apostle Peter later names “righteous Lot” (see II Pet. 2:7) to hasten the nephew’s escape. The presence of only one righteous man does not prevent the city’s destruction “because the outcry against them [the inhabitants] has grown great” (Gen. 19:13). It is not clear how many people lived in either Sodom or Gomorrah, but the exact proportion of righteous to unrighteous within the two cities is beside the point. What is clear is the purpose of Abraham’s “haggling.” According to John H. Walton, *et. al*, in *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (2000), “The discussion of the number of righteous people may concern not whether they can balance the wickedness of the rest but whether, given time, *they might be able to exert a reforming influence*” (50, emphasis mine). Here the Bible commentators agree with Thoreau’s assessment. Clearly in God’s estimation, these “ten” righteous could not exert such “reforming influence.” According to Thoreau, this is because the cities themselves had need of redemptive, reforming landforms.

Perhaps the reason for such a dramatic, defining end to Sodom and Gomorrah was not the sin of the unrepentant inhabitants, according to Thoreau, but the lack of a nearby swamp. Only

in the swamp does Thoreau find “a sacred place” which is able to redeem a village inasmuch as the most righteous of men (“Walking” 165). Thoreau might take the city’s destruction as evidence that it did not have a redeemable swamp, though the land be “well watered everywhere... like the garden of the LORD” (13:10). The reason Thoreau gives for the swamp being able to redeem in lieu of a righteous man is that it is the place true reality is revealed, one with “a hard bottom and rocks in place which we can call *reality*... a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely...” (*Walden* 94). Coming into contact with this reality—mediated through swamp—allows for the greatest spiritual revelation and renewal. Frost’s frozen swamp is such a place of sanctuary and renewal, for the speaker. He enters it as a Christian might his “prayer closet” (see Matt. 6:6). Deliberately, Frost places the bird within the swamp to guide and cheer the speaker toward a deeper spiritual connection. The presence of the swamp, then, suggest the possibility of redemption.

So far, we have seen Frost borrow three prominent images from Thoreau to convey spiritual or religious ideas—namely, the sun, birds, and the swamp. In perhaps the most religious of his borrowings, “Pan with Us,” Frost uses devotion to Thoreau himself as a means of conveying spiritual meaning. Julian Hawthorne, son of famed American author and Thoreau contemporary Nathaniel Hawthorne—whom literary historian Gary Scharnhorst labels “an important book critic” from the turn of the twentieth century (125)—calls Thoreau selfish: “He seemed to himself colossal,” Hawthorne writes of Thoreau in his American literature textbook from 1891 (as qtd in Scharnhorst 128). Scharnhorst calls this opinion “poison[ou]s” (127). Rightly does he suggest Hawthorne’s judgements to be in the vein of the sourness of James Russell Lowell’s poor, yet influential, 1871 assessment. The historical encounters Hawthorne shares with Thoreau are few and far between. He first meets the man when Thoreau comes to survey familial property when Hawthorne is a boy of six years, and does not see him again for another seven years, after the Hawthornes returned to New England from Nathaniel’s political appointment in Europe (Scharnhorst 125-126). Analogous to an unreliable narrator, the younger Hawthorne embellishes his own limited recollections of Concord’s famous naturalist as the years sped by—by Scharnhorst’s account, to suit his pocketbook as well as popular fancy. And yet, embedded within such dubious reporting are the seeds of near-religious devotion which students of Thoreau carry with them even today. In poems like “Pan with Us,” Robert Frost echoes and even amplifies this devotion.

As early as 1915, the younger Hawthorne treats Thoreau as a Christ-figure of sorts, writing that the youth of Concord, against the wisdom of the previous generation, “tried to do as we thought Thoreau would have done” (as qtd in Scharnhorst 131). For those of us who were youth a century

later in the 1990s, this treatment recalls to mind the WWJD movement among Protestant Christian circles—a movement which sought to answer the question, “What Would Jesus Do?” Rather than quasi-sacred pilgrimages to secluded huts, WWJD brought with it the wearing of faddish bracelets to promote remembrance as well as passionate obedience to Jesus’ teaching. As the WWJD movement encouraged Christ-followers to intentionally cultivate his example in their lives, so Hawthorne here suggests this is what he and others did with Thoreau’s example. “We secretly resolved to be Thoreaus the moment we grew up and could have our own way,” Hawthorne recalls at age 69 (as qtd in Scharnhorst 131). Indeed, in the same way that “Christian” signifies “little Christ,” Hawthorne advocates for himself, and others, to be “Thoreavian”—a little Thoreau. Beebe calls Robert Frost “revolutionary” for reading Thoreau when his reputation was little more than an “Emerson wanna-be.” Though in other places and throughout his own meager corpus the younger Hawthorne continually views Thoreau as perpetually catching Emerson’s “orbit” without breaking out on his own (as qtd in Scharnhorst 134)—thereby affirming Beebe’s position—here, his treatment of Thoreau suggests a religious reverence akin to worship. As I will soon show, through “Pan with Us,” Frost cultivates that same worship aimed at Thoreau.

Scharnhorst points out the other religious imagery which Hawthorne employs in his late-in-life treatment of Thoreau, billed as authentic recollections: “In his *Memoirs*, the decaying hut beside the pond became nothing less than a pagan shrine or, as Hawthorne put it with characteristic hyperbole, ‘a little Greek temple, dedicated to Aphrodite, on an inlet in the Aegean Sea’ ” (131). For Robert Frost, a dedication of the little room at Walden Pond might more appropriately go to Pan instead of Aphrodite. Thoreau himself wrote in the “Sunday” chapter of his first and at-first ill-received book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, that “In my Pantheon, Pan still reigns in his pristine glory. Perhaps of all the gods of New England and of ancient Greece, I am most constant at his shrine” (*A Week*, 73). Instead of manmade edifices, shrines for Pan were most often caves or some other natural niche, ecological out-of-the-way places such as those Thoreau was known to frequent. Louisa May Alcott compares Thoreau to Pan in her mournful poem “Thoreau’s Flute,” written just after his well-attended funeral and first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in September 1863. Speaking, doubtless, for friends and neighbors as well as the heretical Transcendentalist crowd, the first line of Alcott’s eulogy reads, “We, sighing, said, ‘Our Pan is dead’ ” (line 1). Pan, a Greek fertility god depicted as a mix between man and beast, usually a goat, prefigures or even anticipates Christian understandings of Christ being a mix of both man and God; Pan is, as I might term him, the Greek imitation of Christ. In a moment, we will return to this

assertion. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, because of his association with herdsmen and the fields, Pan is “antithetical to... Apollo, who represented culture and sophistication” (“Pan: Greek God”). Aphrodite, by contrast, though associated with fertility and therefore a possible female counterpart to Pan, embodies a dependence on society and culture through her revolving door of lovers both human and divine. Associating—dare I say deifying?—Thoreau with Pan as Alcott has done makes sense, especially considering the deliberate ways in which Thoreau eschews society in favor of the natural world in much of his writing. Frost furthers yet also counters this association in “Pan with Us;” reading the work in light of Alcott’s “Thoreau’s Flute” gives us a clearer picture of what Frost is doing in his poem.

In the Greek myth concomitant with Pan, the man-beast pursues Syrinx, a virgin nymph, in order to “know” her in the biblical sense. She, meanwhile, escapes toward the river to seek out the aid of the river nymphs, but along the way is metamorphosed into the reeds that grow on the bank. Furious, Pan fashions a wind instrument for himself out of the reeds which “made a haunting sound when the god’s frustrated breath blew across them”—thus, we have the first panpipes (“Syrinx”). Thereafter, Pan is known for playing these pipes. The *World History Encyclopedia* claims that the panpipe was “first used by ancient Greeks” and “most commonly played by shepherds,” which fits the origin story well (Cartwright). Indeed, in many artistic depictions of the god, including medieval frescoes, he is not seen without his musical instrument somewhere in the scene, usually in hand. With the title of her poem, Alcott directly marries Thoreau to this religious, though pagan, imagery: The pipes which Pan played so readily are now Thoreau’s. In effect, this merging becomes a metaphorical baton hand-off, where Thoreau becomes the stand-in for Pan, a substitution which is solidified through Alcott’s rendition of the “Pan is dead” story fleshed out in the rest of the first stanza. Pan’s—that is, Thoreau’s—flute remains silent, empty of the animating breath given by its owner, and nature revels in her anguish.

In Plutarch’s estimation, the only god in the Greek pantheon to die is Pan. This is a significant observation for Christians as well as for our own purposes. As recorded in his *The Obsolescence of Oracles* (c. 100 AD), a command in the form of a loud, heavenly voice reaches the ears of a sailor named Thamus on his way to a certain Palodes to “proclaim that the great Pan is dead”. Reportedly, the first audience to hear this announcement deeply mourn the profound loss (Plutarch 402-403). Many Christians, including myself, have equated Pan’s death with the death of Christ. Two similarities are worth noting here. First, the dates themselves line up. Thamus was called to “proclaim” the death of Pan sometime during the reign of Tiberus, which was 14-37 AD.

Britannica places Christ's death at 30 AD, seven years before Tiberius' own death and subsequent end to his reign ("Pan"). Additionally, in his first-century teaching on Jesus' initiation of communion—what one Bible commentator calls "the oldest written account[] we have of th[e] event[]" ("The Letters of Paul" 780)—the Apostle Paul asserts that the taking of the elements of bread and wine will "*proclaim* the Lord's death until he comes" (I Cor. 11:26, emphasis mine). Both proclamations thus coincide by way of the written historical record. A look at a painting dated to the Renaissance will further help to solidify the connection between Pan's death and Christ's (fig. 1).



Figure 3. "Apollo and Marsyas"

In a ceiling painting by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli in the apartments of Anne of Austria, begun in 1655 and completed in 1658, called "Apollo and Marsyas," Pan is depicted at the point of

his death, yet alive, being tied to a tree in the shape of a cross; the panpipes so characteristic of the faun-god lay askew at his cloven right foot. Apollo, kneeling, wields a knife blade while clutching Pan's goat-like leg, not to set him free but to flay him alive. Just as Christ on the cross, there is little hope of escape or rescue. The name of the painting suggests the scene to be about Marsyas' losing his music contest and also his life at the hands of Apollo—and so it is. And yet Marsyas, a satyr who also plays the panpipes, is here depicted as Pan. Pan's presence in the painting is important. Satyrs share many of the same characteristics with Pan, especially his association with herdsman. In Greek mythology, both satyrs and Pan are virtually interchangeable. In a move rife with the Christian imagery of substitution, the artist purposefully depicts Marsyas *as* Pan; Pan then takes the place of Marsyas and, therefore, also takes his punishment. Pan's arms being outstretched even invokes the imagery of crucifixion in the scene. The presence of the tree is also significant. Throughout the New Testament writings, Christ's cross is referred to poetically as a "tree" (see Gal. 3:13, I Pet 2:24). Therefore, one could argue, in this depiction, Pan is at the point of death on a cross. In truth, the only real difference between Pan and Jesus Christ is the lack of a resurrection story on Pan's part. Like Jesus' first disciples, Alcott mourns the death of "our Pan" in her poem because she thinks that is the end of it—that hope is lost for the flute to be played again. In connecting Pan to Thoreau, and providing his own form of substitution, Frost provides the resurrection story which Pan lacks.

Frost's allusions to Christ and his resurrection are obvious in "Pan with Us." In Matthew 1:23, we read that the name "Immanuel" "is translated 'God with us.'" Immanuel is the name given by the prophet Isaiah to the one who would be born of a virgin (7:14), whom the New Testament writers identify as Jesus Christ. By titling his poem "Pan with Us," Frost claims the title "Immanuel" for Pan instead of Christ, thus mocking it: Pan is now the one "with us" rather than the covenant-keeping God of the Hebrew people, but the title is no longer comforting. Importantly, as we will see, this ironic substitution does not make him the "son of" God, which means he does not come as a messenger but of his own accord. He lacks the message—the gospel—which Christ came to proclaim. Proclaiming Pan's death, then, signifies nothing. The comparison goes yet further. Because Pan is the stand-in for Christ here, Christ's miraculous story of resurrection becomes his. Pan "came" out of the woods in much the same way that Jesus walks out of the empty tomb ("Pan with Us" line 1): Both are movements from the dark into the light. In fact, in Revelation, Jesus "overcame" precisely through his resurrection (3:21). In his simple wording, Frost usurps this understanding, asserting defiantly that it is Pan rather than Christ who "[over]came."

Not only does the poem pay lip service to a pagan deity in a culture scrubbed clean of such reference; Frost's "Pan with Us" also describes Thoreau as if he were the god of the same name. Frost's Pan "came out of the woods one day," yet Pan is not associated with woods but fields, not with felled trees or flitting wildlife, but herds of livestock and those who shepherd them. As mentioned above, the first players of the panpipes—so integral to Pan's image that they bear his namesake—were shepherds. Though some traditions associate him with the wild, he is most commonly associated with fertility. Not only does this Pan uncharacteristically "c[o]me out of" a place so different than where tradition places him; he also "look[s] his fill / at wooded valley and wooded hill" as if this were his true home and somewhere he longed to return (lines 4-5). These lines could only be describing Thoreau, not Pan. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately," Thoreau famously writes in the middle of the second chapter of his most famous book (*Walden* 87). But he could not stay there forever. As he says later in his magnum opus, he returned to society because he had "several more lives to live and could not spare any more time for that one" (314). Rightly, Frost has his Pan "c[o]me out of the woods," though he gazes lovingly back toward it, like Thoreau does in his own life (line 1). Looking back personifies the writing which Thoreau records in *Walden* and elsewhere to memorialize his own time spent in the woods. Here, Frost suggests that Thoreau remembers in a very physical, commemorative sense that which the woods had taught him: to put in practice "what it had to teach" about life (87).

Later in the poem, clues that this "Pan" is really Thoreau resurface. This Pan tosses his reeded instrument in favor of the surrounding ambient noise of the woods: the "sylvan sign [of] the blue jay's screech" is "music enough for him" (lines 18, 20). Nina Furstenau, in a 2007 master's thesis from the University of Missouri—Columbia, argues that attending to nature's sounds is the special way in which Thoreau perceives the "energy" of the world. "Sound, for Thoreau, indicated the energy behind nature," she writes (32). The naturalist is "unusual[ly] attentive[...] to sounds of all kinds: noises made by ice, church bells, crickets, and more" (38). In Frost's poem, Thoreau is attentive not just to blue jays, but also "the whimper of hawks" (line 17). This is an attentiveness which comes from Thoreau's preoccupation with Eastern religious texts such as the Vedas, rather than with Pan himself, which explains why Frost's Pan "tosses his pipes" (line 16): The "new-world song" of the faun-god does not "teach" what Thoreau longs to know, that is, "the awareness of the energy behind nature... that creates and animates what lies before us" (Furstenau 35). Frost combines Thoreau's love for the woods with Pan's association with fields in the use of "hawks"—for they enjoy making their habitat in the fields, Pan's traditional stomping grounds. By the time Frost

publishes his verse, Thoreau had been dead for over 50 years. Read in light of Alcott's poem, however, Frost's "Pan with Us," with its pagan substitution of Thoreau for Pan, suggests that Thoreau is not really gone, but his spirit is alive and well.

The pipes in Frost's poem carry more than one allusion to religious imagery. In Romanelli's painting, mentioned above, the only reason Pan's "flute" is cast away is because of his impending death. Instead of death in the poem, we have resurrected life and, therefore, no need to cast away the panpipes. Why would he cast them away except that the tune they offer is somehow unfit? Both Frost's pipes and the "flute" in Alcott's title are symbolic of the worldview which Thoreau espouses in his writings, and the message which he proffers to his readers. In Alcott's poem, the "pipe hangs mute beside the river" because "Music's airy voice is fled," indicative, of course, of the death of the musician-writer (lines 2, 4). The engine of Thoreau's syncretistic worldview, then—or "Genius," to use Alcott's term—is stilled (line 8). In Frost's poem, however, the pipes are ultimately rejected like unwanted chaff, though the poet spends three stanzas—15 lines, fully half the poem—describing the relationship that this Pan (read: Thoreau) has with his instrument of choice. They are "of pagan mirth," the speaker claims, valueless because "the world had found new terms of worth" (lines 26-27). This is the history of Western Civilization in two lines of verse. Pagan worship was practiced long before the advent of Christianity and its displacement of the pagan worldview; Christianity, therefore, is the "new terms" with which society uses to approach God. Here is another clue that Frost's Pan is really Thoreau in disguise, for much scholarship has been written about the pagan practices which Thoreau highly regarded or practiced himself. The "world" in the poem is no longer interested in going backwards, to a pre-Christian era. This fits well with the culture in which Thoreau found himself. One important influence I see which Thoreau wields over Frost, particularly as we examine "Pan with Us," is the choice of subject matter. Thoreau lends his own preoccupation with Pan—and, indeed, his skepticism of Christianity—to Frost for this poem. One must not forget the very real influence which Christianity had on the American culture both men were living in, even a century apart. To be sure, one reason *A Week* was such a flop originally was because it may have been too pagan for the culture at hand. Yet here we see a mix of both pagan and Christian imagery. Though he claims that the poem is "about art (his own)" (*A Boy's Will*, ix)—no doubt to obscure his own religious skepticism from a devout reading public—Frost clearly manipulates Christian elements for his own darker purposes. The poem serves to pay homage to a pagan god similarly to the way Thoreau pays homage to the same in his own writings.

In addition to being a symbol of Thoreau's extra-biblical worldview, the pipes in the poem are indicative of Thoreau's dependence on society. Though he recognized that the culture around him had come to "new terms of worth"—that is, new terms of relating to God—as we will see by the end of the poem, Thoreau still longs for an influence over that culture. He longs, in effect, to change these terms; doubtless, he did change them. He may have thrown away his pipes, his influencing tool, but he will come back to them again to see if they can yet affect societal aims. If Thoreau's late-twentieth and early twenty-first century enthusiastic reception are any indication, his "pipes" were able to strongly affect the surrounding culture, indeed. In Julian Hawthorne's sour view—perhaps more honest than his later-in-life recollections—Thoreau the man longed for a lasting influence on the culture in which he lived. The recluse "shunned society because he lacked the faculty of making himself decently agreeable; and yet, no man ever hankered more insatiably after social notice and approbation." In another place, Hawthorne notes, "[t]he more he removed himself from his neighbors, the more he hankered after their sympathy, applause and notice" (as qtd in Scharnhorst, 127). We see Pan mimic the same "hanker[ing]" in Frost's poem, and here again we note Thoreau's influence on the poet. Even as Pan throws away his pipes, he picks them back up again to ask "What shall he play?" (line 30) This all-important question hangs on yet more religious imagery.

If Pan is truly "with us," as Frost's title suggests, then there is an audience for the question in the final line of the poem: "us." We, the members of society at large, are the audience to whom Pan/Thoreau inquires. The imagery Frosts employs through this question mirrors Jesus' parable in Matthew 11 about children in the square:

But what to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying, '*We played the flute for you / and you did not dance; / we mourned to you, / and you did not lament.*' (vv. 15-17, emphasis mine)

In the poem, Pan is poised to do the same thing that these children do: to "play... the flute" for his companions. Earlier we noted that this flute—and, by extension, the songs which are played on it—is representative of the message or the worldview of the instrument-wielder. Both the children and Pan have an audience; and both are looking to that audience for what message to convey. In other words, the question becomes "What is it that my audience wants to hear?" Ron Zeiner, pastor of Bread of Life Church in Uvalde, Texas, gives context for Jesus' parable here. Importantly, Jesus gives this parable, this word picture, at the beginning of his earthly ministry, at a time when John the

Baptist's own ministry is diminishing. Zeiner calls John "the super-prophet" (1:00:00) and suggests him to be "the epitome, the embodiment of the Old Testament" (1:00:47); he is the bridge between Old and New. Yet, this embodiment is not enough. John, in prison for calling out the immorality of Judea's ruler, sends a small contingent of disciples to ask if Jesus is the true Messiah, a message he himself had been proclaiming for some time. "I don't think Jesus' ministry was quite what John expected," Zeiner contends (52:45). The children in the parable bear this out: though they "play the flute," their audience does not do what is expected of them. Zeiner provides the interpretation:

Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament was going to be acceptable because all the flute-players and all the singers of happy songs—they're wanting to call the tune. This is the world saying, 'We wanted you to come the way we wanted you to come.' (1:07:45)

In the question put to his audience, Pan (that is, Thoreau) responds to the "singers of happy songs." Pan stands able, ready, and willing to play for them. If they "play... the flute," he stands ready and willing to dance to their beat. He is, therefore, ready and willing to do their will, as opposed to doing God's will, as Christ had come to do. Earlier, I had said that Pan is the Greek imitation of Christ, and we see this play out here—again, through Frost's brilliant, though simple, poetic language. Pan's question, and its requisite dependence on the whims of his audience, stands in direct opposition to what Christ came to do: to be the messenger of God, rather than bear his own message. If, as Julian Hawthorne suggests, Thoreau is ever on the lookout for how he might influence society, Frost's "Pan" is himself on the same quest. And yet, the opposite is also true. In his willingness to play that which his audience suggests of him, Pan is the embodiment of society's desires. This is a rejection of Christ's stated purpose at its highest level. Jesus doesn't "dance" or play for society's whims, because he came in a way that not even John the Baptist, the prophet appointed to "prepare the way" for him, had foreseen or anticipated. Pan rejects this difference. In the same way that the historical Thoreau turns away from the Christian gospel and toward the pagan, through this poem so does Frost.

In this, the final chapter of my thesis project, I have endeavored to show Thoreau's influence over Frost's use of religious imagery. This imagery, as I have said, is found within the shared natural imagery peppering both authors' works. It includes references to color, swamps, birds, and pagan gods. My guiding research question has been "What is it to see through Thoreau's eyes?" This chapter has answered that question by suggesting that seeing through Thoreau's eyes fosters a change in religious perspective. We see this change in the sun worship from "Rose Pogonias," in the

colorful soul-searching in “For Once, Then, Something,” and in the substitution imagery found in “Pan with Us.” The significance of my argument is located in a larger discussion on the role of religion in culture and whose religion gets to be the dominant, accepted view. As is evidenced by the writing each man left behind, neither Frost nor Thoreau thought very highly of the Christian worldview. In fact, as scholar Erik Inguar Thurin somewhat casually notes in his chapter on Henry Thoreau in a larger 1999 study on Norse mythology in nineteenth-century literature, Thoreau has a “sometimes cavalier attitude to the Christian religion” (60). This attitude has spilled over to Frost, which is seen especially in poems like “Pan with Us.” Together, Thoreau and Frost advocate for a view of religion which stands outside of, even opposed to Christianity, and one which encompasses the wonders of the natural world.

Conclusion

Robert Frost's poetry is not as straightforward as it might at first seem. For all that is said in his poetry, so much is left *unsaid*, a gap between author and readership which my thesis has endeavored to close. Naturally, prose lends itself to being more verbose, and a prose which influenced poetry like Thoreau's, arguably more so. Thoreau wrote some two million words in his *Journal* alone, some of which made it into his formal, published works. For comparison, the Authorized Version of the English Bible contains only 783,137 words, or 39 per cent of the content of the *Journals*. Many of Thoreau's words, according to preeminent Thoreauvian scholar William Howarth, have not yet been published. Though understandably not familiar with absolutely all of Thoreau's work—a good chunk of which had already been released to the public during Frost's lifetime—the poet was familiar with enough of the naturalist's writings for them to be well reflected in his own artistry, a reflection I have sought to clearly paint.

In my thesis, I have examined Thoreau's influence over Frost in several key ways—in his use of the color red, in humanity's right relationship with nature, and in his religious, notably pagan, imagery. Frost's work may not be as blatantly Transcendentalist as Thoreau's, yet Thoreau's heretical views still strongly steer the poetic project that Frost was about. His use of red, for example, points back to the sun's influence and its "right worship." At once, the woodpile exists in and out of nature, symbolizing both humanity's reach for permanence as well as nature's pull into obscurity. And as a substitution for Pan, Thoreau becomes a central figure in Frost's poetic world as he saunters out of the woods for a song. Comparing these three elements in particular demonstrates the wide-ranging influence Thoreau had on Frost in terms of their shared natural imagery. My thesis pushes back against critics such as Galbraith who claim that "natural imagery such as woods, swamps, woodpiles and woodchucks"—two of which I have discussed at length in this paper—"have been used *in the same way* by other authors concerned

with nature writing” (2 emphasis mine). Both Thoreau and Frost use these elements *in the same way* and it is precisely Thoreau’s natural imagery found within Frost’s poems which testifies to his influence over the poet.

Comparing the artistry of these two authors for not just affinities but influence of the former over the latter also allows for a greater reception among critics for Frost. As reviewer David Orr pointed out more than a decade ago, “Frost now occupies a position as unique as it is unstable. He’s a definitive Great American Poet, yet he’s never been embraced by the American academy as eagerly as, say, Ezra Pound.” The reason for this critical coolness has to do with “the fraught matter of his popularity. Unlike almost every poet of comparable ability, Frost can claim a general reading audience...,” the reviewer continues. Thoreau’s own reputation suffered at the hands of American critics for almost an entire century before critical opinion began to warm to his particular perspective. Now, it seems, academics cannot get enough of Thoreau’s eccentric style. What I hope to have shown through my thesis is that Frost is just as worthy of critical attention as Thoreau, even with his “fraught... popularity.” Just because a thing is popular does not automatically make it a thing unworthy of serious thought or study. Frost is a complex poet, one whose “aesthetic is evasive [and] arguably manipulative” (Orr). I hope I have added meaningfully to that complexity by examining some of his poetic choices through a Thoreauvian lens.

Frost himself may not agree with my assessments. As Galbraith maintains in her well-written thesis, he was none too quick to align himself with a school of thought, especially that of the Transcendentalists (138). Galbraith’s scholarly work is centered on the intersection of thought where Thoreau’s and Frost’s work divides; mine, where they converge. As literary men, their writings divide in somewhat predictable ways. Thoreau is categorized a Romantic, Frost a modern writer under Galbraith’s assessment. Thoreau loudly proclaims that his aim is the influence of future generations; pessimistically, Frost maintains that his aim is merely “to entertain” (as qtd in Galbraith 140). Frost is also mum on the books which influenced him, except the scant mention of Thoreau’s description of a woodchopper from Canada in *Walden* which “must have had a good deal to do with the making of me” (as qtd in Galbraith 3). Yet the beauty of literary criticism is that authors need not *agree* with a critic’s stance for it to be a valid one. It is my hope that my assessments will add a greater, illumined richness to the critical conversation about Frost already in motion.

Yet one particular aspect of studies on Frost and Thoreau represents the purpose of my writing and also avenues for further inquiry. In my discussion of color in Thoreau, I have endeavored to highlight an apparent blind spot in contemporary scholarship regarding the author. Not many scholars have written about Frost's or Thoreau's use of color. Of the 89 secondary sources consulted for this thesis, nine of them, or just over ten percent, mention the use of color at all. Of those nine sources, one does not mention Thoreau by name (Baty), and another mentions both Thoreau and the concept of color, but not in the same discussion (Pugh). Two offer only a limited discussion of Thoreau's use of color (McWilliams, Walls), while two more discuss Thoreau's color choices only in their notes (Cody, Horton). Three additional sources offer any substantive discussion of Thoreau's use of color, only one of which is recent to the last decade (Colyer, Kasegawa, LaFountain). The most recent source is the first chapter of a book entitled *The Materiality of Color: The Production, Circulation, and Application of Dyes and Pigments, 1400-1800* (2012). The chapter, called "Colorizing New England's Burying Grounds" by Jason D. LaFountain, includes a brief yet profound discussion of "Autumnal Tints." "Autumnal Tints" is also the subject of a Japanese-based article from 1975 published in the *Thoreau Journal Quarterly* (Kasegawa). LaFountain, it will be noted, references Kasegawa's 1975 study in a note on his discussion, which indicates that he, too, had difficulty finding updated material. The most substantial treatment of Thoreau's use of color, though, comes from a 1971 study by Richard Colyer which is now fifty years old. In a note on her discussion of Thoreau's use of the sense of sight, from her 2011 article on the spirituality of the wind, Horton references Colyer's groundbreaking color study. Further, updated inquiry into this subject is still needed. Because Thoreau thought so much of color, scholars who study him should take the time to unpack his meaning in a more thorough, updated fashion, for much meaning lies in this avenue of study.

I have endeavored to highlight the way in which Thoreau created an American-based "chromatic nomenclature" and how that nomenclature manifested itself in Frost's poetry. Studying Thoreau's influence on Frost's poetry as it relates to views on the natural environment highlights Thoreau's more impactful influence on society at large. In the same way that his "Civil Disobedience" steered the national civil rights conversation more than a century after it was written, Thoreauvian ideas on environmental conservation are helping to steer the contemporary conversation about humanity's role in the environment. His writing may have played a pivotal role in directing our nation's larger conservation efforts, for example. At the

time Thoreau wrote, there were no nation-wide public recreational lands like we have them today. The first of which, Yellowstone National Park, was not consecrated until 1872 by President Grant, which would have been a decade after Thoreau's death. Though not a national park, his beloved Mt. Katahdin has now been sitting inside a state park for almost a century, thanks to the land-loving, conservation-minded former governor of Maine, Percival P. Baxter (1876-1969), who purchased the initial parcel of land for the park, which included the mountain, in 1930. Baxter donated the land to the state of Maine in 1931, according to the Baxter State Park's website, "with the condition that it be kept forever wild," a stipulation which would have pleased Thoreau greatly ("History"). Land in the United States is continually set aside for such purposes even to this day, and Thoreau's writings may have had a hand in getting such an important project started. As I have discussed above, in his essay on "Huckleberries," he writes thusly:

I think that each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, either in one body or several — where a stick should never be cut for fuel — nor for the navy, nor to make wagons, but stand and decay for higher uses — *a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation.* (1314)

Like Thoreau, Baxter and other conservators have taken the long view of natural resources, setting them aside for such a "common possession" as is described here. We, the future generations and beneficiaries of their efforts, are indebted to them. Through the establishment of state and national parks, we as a society have done what Thoreau wisely suggested we do so long ago.

There are still avenues of further research into Thoreau's influence over our society's conservation efforts, however. For instance, what is still not clear is how extensive Thoreau's influence over the broader American culture has been. There has certainly been a shift in recent decades in regards to how society at large should go about interacting with and "using" the environment. If marketing terms like "sustainably sourced" and "responsibly harvested" are any indication of the mood of the national conversation as well as the ethical interests of the Millennial consumer, much ado is given these days to the idea of being ecologically just—that is, to being conscious of humanity's impact upon that environment and our response to that impact. How much of a role has Thoreau's writing, particularly *Walden*, played in shaping these views?

As preeminent Thoreauvian scholar William Howarth reminds us, “in American history he [Thoreau] is the figure who most speaks for nature.” Thoreau came into his own in the 1950s, a time when critics first began to see his message of careful stewardship of the natural resources as worthwhile avenues of study. In the following decades, Thoreau’s work was studied mainly for its scientific record. Since that time, we have seen an increase in environmental activism from the general public, in addition to a growing concern over environmental stability and so-called “green” energy. Some of this concern undoubtedly stems from Rachel Carson’s groundbreaking book *Silent Spring*, which debuted in the fall of 1962 and highlighted the disastrous effects industrialization was having at the time on groundwater and other shared natural resources. How much of this awakened concern stems from Thoreau’s own environmental advocacy remains to be seen. As Howarth also points out, “Thoreau[’s image] as American eco-hero peaked around the first Earth Day (1970).” Yet his masterpiece continued to be required reading in high schools across the nation until at least the turn of the twenty-first century. Perhaps Frost’s own popularity has had something to do with *Walden*’s general reception by the public.

Finally, I have sought to bring attention to the paganism found within Frost by way of Thoreau. There is a push-and-pull in both authors’ works between Christianity and other possible religious thought, including paganism. Though Thoreau might have hoped to create an entirely new religion centered in the Americas, his models for this new religion are ancient, foreign ones—not the least of which were pagan sun worship and worship of the Greek god Pan. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* notes that sun worship has been a longstanding figure in the landscape of human religious history, dating back to ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, and Akkadian religious practices (“Sun Worship”). In many ways, paganism has always been a part of human religious expression, though it was actively suppressed in the Christian Middle Ages. As original as Thoreau’s viewpoint is, he did not succeed in creating an entirely *new* religion. What this shows is not a failure on Thoreau’s part to live up to his own high personal expectations, but rather a conscious rejection of social norms. In borrowing Thoreau’s religious imagery to use as his own, Frost agrees and even amplifies this cultural rejection.

Such agreement between two well-known and well-regarded literary men points to the larger conversation about influencing the culture at large. How much have their religious views permeated modern religious thought today? How much have their views, and others’ views like

them, led to the destabilization of the Christian consensus they worked so hard to reject? As early as 1976, Francis A. Schaeffer points out the erosion of a clear religious consensus in American culture, and that trend has only gotten worse. How much of that backslide can be traced to either Thoreau or Frost? Perhaps Thoreau's and Frost's rejection of Christianity is symptomatic of a much larger movement. This is not an innocent question, for it leads to questions regarding the effectiveness of the American Church. Has the Church in America become impotent through the paganism let in its doors through the study of Thoreau's or Frost's writing? To be fair, Schaeffer traces other, larger factors which have contributed to the decline of the Christian consensus within the United States—factors such as “art, music, drama, theology, and the mass media.” These are factors which are not steered solely by one man's or another's activity, even if it be his life's work, but are, rather, *collective* societal endeavors. Yet because of the influence of these human endeavors on society at large, “values died,” Schaeffer asserts (205). Schaeffer prophetically points to “the coming of an elite, an authoritarian state, to fill the vacuum left by the loss of Christian principles,” what he calls a “*manipulative* authoritarian government.” This type of government has “forms of manipulation at their disposal which the world has never known before,” one of which being “the media.” The media, Schaeffer says, “are influencing behavior” (228). It wasn't just Thoreau's views or Frost's which have controlled the moral decline of our day, then, but their religious views may have contributed to it to a degree. How much they have contributed to this decline lies outside the goals of my thesis, and is a place for further inquiry.

Above all, I have sought to showcase, through his use of color and other means, how Thoreau realized his distinctly American goals. In an 1820 article from the *Edinburg Review*, Sydney Smith (1771-1845) famously wrote, “In the four corners of the globe, who reads an American book?” Through *A Week*, his essays, and particularly *Walden*, Thoreau sought to answer that question. Indeed, *Walden* is a clear answer to Smith's famed question, named a classic in England as early as the 1880s. In 1990, almost a century and a half after Thoreau's death, East Texas State University scholar Richard Turek lists the naturalist among “the most important authors of the whole of American literature,” a writer—together with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman—who “established what we may justly call an American literature distinctly different in many ways from English literature” (xi). Thoreau would have been proud of that assessment, for throughout his life his focus on everything

from botanical species to religious texts was one with a decidedly American flavor. Thoreau ushered in a new era for the American people, an era they themselves had held in doubt for more than half a century. In reading *Walden* and other Thoreau writings, Frost shows himself to be of the same literary lineage as Thoreau. In his borrowing from Thoreau and other ways, Robert Frost contributes a wealth to the American literary tradition.

Notes

1. Though landscape painting was beginning to change people's ideas of color and nature at this time in history, a thorough discussion of the ways in which this development effected such change is beyond the scope of this thesis.

2. Though published in 1966 by K.W. Cameron, Thoreau's commonplace books are still not well studied. In fact, as Robert D. Richardson, Jr., put it in 1986, they are "as important for the study of Thoreau as a naturalist as the Indian Notebooks are for his study of the Indians" (425). Scholars may be reticent to delve into the so-called "fact-books" because, though they are in Thoreau's characteristic hard-to-decipher hand, they are not his words. However, these commonplace books provide important clues to the mind behind the man, such as where his ideas came from and what struck him as important enough to record for posterity.

3. According to its listing on Google Books, the compilation contains "a generous sample of Thoreau's journals." By this the publishers mean, as listed, the complete journals for years 1837-1847; "a detailed example" from the years 1855-1856; "and the complete last year of Thoreau's life." The edition also includes 25 essays, as well as his two translations, a selection of nineteenth-century criticism, and "familial letters" (*Complete Works*). The twenty-five essays include works such as his lectures and selections from his journal which were not expressly prepared for publication by Thoreau himself. See Hyde, "A Note on the Selection," pp. li-liv.

4. Patrick Syme in his *Nomenclature* also notes the varied colorations of apples, but with perhaps less poetic language. Five apple varieties are listed among the different shades of four of his primary colors—green, yellow, orange, and red. He describes them as, alternately, "oil green," "siskin green," "wax yellow," "deep reddish orange," and "aurora red." He also lists as an example of bright "vermillion red" the so-called "love apple," which modern editors have identified as a tomato. See Baty, pp. 160-161, 196-197, 216-217, and 242-43.

5. See, for example, S. Dean McBride, "Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1-2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch" (2000); T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole, *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (2004); and J. Daniel Hays, *The Temple and the Tabernacle: A Study of God's Dwelling Places from Genesis to Revelation* (2014).

Appendix A

Table 1. Syme's Vegetable Examples Found in Thoreau

Syme's Vegetable Examples				Thoreau's Usage ⁱ	
No. ⁱⁱ	Color Name	Common Plant Name	Genus	Latin Name	Reference(s)
82	Tile Red	Pimpernel	<i>Anagallis</i>	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i> (scarlet pimpernel)	VI 487, VII 434
87	Arterial Blood Red	Common Poppy	<i>Papaver</i>	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	I 457
89	Rose Red	Common Garden Rose	<i>Rosa</i>	<i>Rosa</i> spp.	VII 334
90	Peach Blossom Red	Peach Blossom	<i>Prunus</i>	<i>Prunus persica</i>	IX 372
91	Carmines Red	Raspberry	<i>Rubus</i>	<i>Rubus strigosus</i>	IV 179
92	Lake Red	Red Tulip	<i>Tulipa</i>	<i>Tulipa</i> spp.	XIII 199
93	Crimson Red	Anemones	<i>Anemone</i>	<i>Anemone quinquefolia</i>	I 304, 311; IV 21, 54, 76; V 140, 228; VI 210, 253; VII 352; VIII 352; X 379; XII 125, 133, 166; XIII 278
98	Chocolate Red	Common Marigold ⁱⁱⁱ	<i>Calendula</i>	*speaks of two different genera with several species of marigold, but not this genus directly	IV 108, II 216
35	Bluish Lilac Purple	Blue Lilac	<i>Syringa</i>	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	I 420; II 365; III 440; IV 65; V 72, 107, 170, 179, 180; VI 209, 210, 211, 274; VII 295, 333; IX 69; X 439; XI 261, 262, 301; XIII 209, 239, 304; XIV 171

ⁱ References are taken from Houghton and Mifflin's 1906 edition of Thoreau's fourteen-volume *Journal*. Genus and species are as listed in Ray Angelo's online *Botanical Index to the Journal of Henry David Thoreau* (2021).

ⁱⁱ "Number" corresponds to the order in which the colors appear in Syme's original 1821 text, *Werner's Nomenclature of Colors*, as reproduced in *Nature's Palette* (2021).

ⁱⁱⁱ The "common marigold" does not appear in Thoreau's writing, but a similar genus, *Bidens*, does; this genus is known commonly as the "bur-marigold," which is a smaller, less full flower than the common marigold with only several petals rather than dozens. However, in both flowers the center--the location of Syme's "chocolate red" exemplar --is so similar that it is likely Thoreau would have come across this specific color. The other genus and species mentioned in relation to marigolds is the *Caltha palustris*, also known as the marsh marigold.

Appendix A (Continued)

Table 1. Syme's Vegetable Examples Found in Thoreau (Continued)

No.	Color Name	Common Plant Name	Genus	Latin Name	Reference(s)
37	Violet Purple	China Aster	<i>Aster</i>	<i>Calistephus chinensis</i> , a related genus to Aster	XI 267
38	Pansy Purple	Sweet Violet	<i>Viola</i>	<i>Viola tricolor</i> (pansy)	I 178, 180
39	Campanula Purple	Peach-Leaved Bellflower	<i>Campanula</i>	<i>Campanula persicifolia</i>	II 389; IV 187, 232, 246; V 357; VII 452
42	Plum Purple	Plum	<i>Prunus</i>	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	VI 255; XIII 282; VII 368, 378
43	Red Lilac Purple	Primrose	<i>Primula</i>	<i>Oenothera</i> spp. ^{iv}	I 200, 237; II 60; V 419, 432; VI 90, 489; VIII 465; XII 304; XIII 68
45	Pale Blackish Purple	Iris	<i>Iris</i>	<i>Iris</i> spp. ^v	IX 407

^{iv} Though Syme points to *Primula vulgaris* as an example of his "red lilac purple," the same coloration can also be found in the *Oenothera* (evening primrose) genus.

^v This plant example is found in the contemporary book *Neerland's Plantentuin* by Cornelis Antoon Jan Abraham Oudemans (1865) and supplied by the editors of *Nature's Palette*; it is not original to Syme. The book from which this example comes would not have been published within Thoreau's lifetime.

Appendix B

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color"

	Color	Quote	Page No. ^{vi}	Work ^{vii}
1	Red	" <i>Red, then, is Day's color</i> ; at least, it is the color of his heel. He is 'stepping westward.' We only notice him when he comes and when he goes." ^{viii}	2124	<i>Journal</i> , June 24, 1840
2		"The whole tree is <i>much like the heart in form, as well as color</i> . Was not this worth waiting for?"	1217	"Autumnal Tints"
3		"It was quite conspicuous fifteen rods off, and <i>the color of spring-cranberry juice</i> . This beautiful blushing ice! What are we coming to?"	2540	<i>Journal</i> , Jan. 24, 1855
4		"It [a red butterfly] tells of July with its <i>fiery color</i> . It promises a heat we have not experienced yet. This is a field which lies nearer to summer."	2454	<i>Journal</i> , May 15, 1853
5		"It is <i>the surveyor's color</i> also, most distinctly seen under all circumstances."	583	"Chesuncook"
6		"Perhaps a few [wild apples] on the ground show their <i>red cheeks</i> above the early snow, and occasionally some even <i>preserve their color</i> and soundness under the snow..."	1279	"Wild Apples"
7		"... the depth of the brilliant grove revealed steadily increases, suggesting that the whole of the inclosed valley is filled with <i>such color</i> ."	1207	"Autumnal Tints"
8		"I think that the change to some <i>higher color</i> in a leaf is an evidence that it has arrived at a late and perfect maturity..."	1200	"Autumnal Tints"

^{vi} Page numbers come from the Delphi Classics e-book, *Complete Works of Henry David Thoreau* (2013).

^{vii} Lists individual essays, journal entries, or chapters from larger works within in Thoreau's literary corpus.

^{viii} Emphasis mine; used to highlight where in the quote the word "color" can be found.

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
9	Red (continued)	"The focus of their <i>reflected color</i> is in the atmosphere far on this side. Every such tree becomes a <i>nucleus of red</i> , as it were..."	1218	"Autumnal Tints"
10		"Such is <i>the change in the color</i> of the bare portions of the earth (i.e. bare of trees and bushes) produced by rain. Also the oak leaves are <i>much redder</i> ."	2957	<i>Journal</i> , March 25, 1859
11		"... its [dwarf andromeda] <i>fine brownish-red color</i> [is] very agreeable and memorable to behold."	2401	<i>Journal</i> , Apr 17, 1852
12		"The very forest and herbage... must acquire a <i>bright color, an evidence of its ripeness</i> --as if the globe itself were a fruit on its stem, with ever a cheek toward the sun."	1201	"Autumnal Tints"
13		"This is <i>the favorite color with lumbermen</i> ; and red flannel is reputed to possess some mysterious virtues, to be most healthful and convenient in respect to perspiration."	522	"Ktaadn"
14		"Hundreds of eyes are <i>steadily drinking in this color</i> , and by these teachers even the truants are caught and educated the moment they step abroad."	1212	"Autumnal Tints"
15		" <i>The highest, intensest color belongs to the land</i> , the purest, perchance, to the water."	2417	<i>Journal</i> , June 26, 1852
16		"The <i>high color</i> of this minute, unobserved flower [the hazel] at this cold, leafless and almost flowerless season! Moreover, they are so tender that I never get one home in good condition. They wilt and turn black."	2447	<i>Journal</i> , Mar. 27, 1853

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
17	Red (continued)	"Yet the white is tinged with the <i>ground color of the reddish oak leaves</i> and even green pine-needles. Nature has now gone into her winter place."	2493	<i>Journal</i> Jan. 11, 1854
18		"It will show how <i>our prejudices interfere with our perception of color</i> , to state that yesterday morning, after making a fire in the kitchen cooking-stove, as I sat over it I thought I saw a little bit of red or scarlet flannel on a chink near a bolt-head on the stove, and I tried to pick it out, — while I was a little surprised that I did not smell it burning. It was merely the reflection of the flame of the fire through a chink, on the dark stove."	2959	<i>Journal</i> , Mar. 31, 1859
19	Brown	"The inside of the rind, which is uppermost, approaches a <i>chocolate-color</i> ; the puffball is a rough dirty or brownish white, the dust which does not fly now..."	2734	<i>Journal</i> , April 22, 1856
20		" <i>General color above, a rust of brown or tawny brown</i> , with mouse-color seen through it; beneath, rather hoary mouse-color; but nowhere white;..."	2576	<i>Journal</i> , Nov. 7, 1855
21		"There is somewhat singularly refreshing in <i>the color of this nut, the chestnut color</i> . No wonder it gives a name to a color."	2434	<i>Journal</i> , Oct. 15, 1852

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
22	Brown (continued)	"They [pears] are not so handsome as apples,—are of more earthy and homely colors,—yet <i>they are of a wholesome color enough</i> . Many, inclining to a rough russett or even ferruginous, both to touch (rusty) and eye, look as if they were proof against frost."	3077	<i>Journal</i> , Oct. 11, 1860
23		"The color of their [boys swimming] bodies in the sun at a distance is pleasing, <i>the not often seen flesh-color</i> . I hear the sound of their sport borne over the water."	2414	<i>Journal</i> , June 12, 1852
24		"... [the cleared land] is russet, <i>the color of withered herbage</i> , and the ground finely commixed, a light straw-color where are rank grasses next water;..."	2601-2602	<i>Journal</i> , Dec. 23, 1855
25		"He raised the blood peach, which, as he showed us with satisfaction, was <i>more like the oak in the color of its bark</i> and the setting of its branches,..."	266	"Friday," <i>A Week</i>
26		"They [hares] used to come round my door at dusk to nibble the potato parings which I had thrown out, and were <i>so nearly the color of the ground</i> that they could hardly be distinguished when still."	467	"Winter Animals," <i>Walden</i>
27		"It is truly a grotesque vegetation, <i>whose forms and color we see imitated in bronze</i> , a sort of architectural foliage more ancient and typical than acanthus, chicory, ivy, vine, or any other vegetable leaves."	482	"Spring," <i>Walden</i>

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
28	Brown (continued)	"... we could not easily have distinguished a bear there by his color."	661	"The Allagash," <i>Main Woods</i>
29		"Some different in their [peeping frogs] color; one is like a pale oak leaf at this season, streaked with brown; two others more ashy. Two have crosses like this on back, of dark brown."	2405	<i>Journal</i> , May 1, 1852
30		"Caught a wood frog (<i>Rana sylvatica</i>), the color of a dead leaf. He croaked as I held him, perfectly frog-like."	2412	<i>Journal</i> , May 27, 1852
31		"It [musk tortoise] is defended both by its form and color and its instincts. As it lay on the mud, its color made it very inobvious..."	2524	<i>Journal</i> , Sept. 11, 1854
32		"... of so uniform a color, that half a dozen rods off I should not have detected him [muskrat] If not accustomed to observing them. Saw the same thing yesterday."	2715	<i>Journal</i> , April 8, 1856
33		"The central stripe on the back [of the snake] was not bright-yellow, as Storer describes, but a pale brown or clay-color."	2868	<i>Journal</i> , April 26, 1857
34		"The most common color of open land (from apex at 5 PM) is tawny brown, the woods dark green."	3023	<i>Journal</i> , Aug. 6 1860
35		"The sternum, with a large black spot on the rear angle of each scale and elsewhere a rich brown color, even reminded me of the turtle-shell of commerce."	2913	<i>Journal</i> , June 18, 1858

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
36	Yellow	"The <i>yellow blossom</i> appears first on one side of the ament and is the most of bright and sunny color the spring has shown, the most decidedly flower-like..."	2399	<i>Journal</i> , April 12, 1852
37		"An aura fading into a <i>general saffron color</i> . At length the redness travels over, partly from east to west, before sunrise, and there is little color in..."	2423	<i>Journal</i> , July 9, 1852
38		" <i>This color fades to a pale yellow</i> . The color is wholly in the scale above the bone. Of the bright colors, the yellow marks on tortoise-shells are the fastest."	2563	<i>Journal</i> , Oct. 18, 1855
39		"Every part is flower (or fruit,) such is <i>its superfluity of color</i> ,—stem, branch, peduncle, pedicel, petiole, and even the <i>at length yellowish</i> ..."	1202	"Autumnal Tints"
40		"It is another example of the oddity of the Orientals that <i>yellow is 'the east a regal color</i> , more especially so in China, where it is exclusively royal."	2883	<i>Journal</i> , Oct. 14, 1857
41		" <i>A delicate, but warmer than golden yellow is now the prevailing color</i> , with scarlet cheeks."	1212	"Autumnal Tints"
42		"I like the smell of it [white pine wood], all ready for the borers, and <i>the rich light-yellow color of the freshly split wood</i> and the purple color of the sap at the ends of the quarters..."	2446	<i>Journal</i> , Mar. 24, 1853

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
43	Yellow (continued)	"Each one [fungus] is burst a little at top, and is full of <i>dust of a yellowish rotten-stone color</i> , which is perfectly dry and comes forth like a puff of smoke on being pinched..."	2755	<i>Journal</i> , May 11, 1856
44		"The snow about the mouth of the cave within had <i>the yellow color of the flame</i> to one approaching, as if the lamp were close to it."	2861	<i>Journal</i> , Jan. 20, 1857
45	Gray	"... the <i>gray color</i> and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant;..."	348	"Where I Lived...", <i>Walden</i>
46		"I found one stone on the top of the bank, <i>of a dark gray color</i> , shaped exactly like a giant clam (<i>Macra solidissima</i>), and of the same size;..."	803	"The Beach Again," <i>Cape Cod</i>
47		"Their [caddice-worms'] small cylindrical cases built around themselves, composed of flags, sticks, grass, and withered leaves, shells, and pebbles, <i>in form and color like the wrecks which strew the bottom,—</i> "	1045	"A Winter Walk"
48		"There is a friendliness between the sun and the earth in pleasant weather, <i>the gray content of the land is its color.</i> "	2181	<i>Journal</i> , April 9, 1841
49		" <i>For color: It [a stuffed fox] was, above, brownish-gray</i> , with dark-brown or black line down the middle of the back. Sides gray with small dark-brown spots."	3058	<i>Journal</i> , Sept. 11, 1860

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
50	Gray (continued)	"Thus far <i>the color of the hair</i> . The fur [of the muskrat] within <i>slate-color</i> . Tail black; feed a delicate glossy dark slate, with white nails the hind feet half webbed..."	2735	<i>Journal</i> , April 22, 1856
51	White	"These <i>tawny-white oaks</i> are thus by <i>their color</i> and character the lions among trees..."	3158	<i>Journal</i> , Nov. 17, 1860
52		"So clean and tough, made to withstand the winter. <i>This color reminds me of the upper side of the shrub oak leaf</i> . I love the few homely colors of Nature."	2858	<i>Journal</i> , Dec. 3, 1856
53		"The asters cordifolious and macrophyllus also are common, <i>asters of little or no color</i> , and sometimes without petals."	595	"Chesuncook"
54		"... silvery dust lies on every seared leaf and twig, deposited in such infinite and luxurious forms as by their very variety atone for <i>the absence of color</i> ."	1044	"A Winter Walk"
55		" <i>The proper color of water</i> is perhaps best seen when it overflows white ice."	2991	<i>Journal</i> , Feb. 8, 1860
56		" <i>One side of the houses this morning was one color—i.e., white</i> with the moist snow plastered over them,—so that you could not tell whether they had blinds or not."	3203	<i>Journal</i> , March 22, 1861

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
57	Green	" <i>How much of beauty--of color as well as form--on which our eyes daily rest goes unperceived by us!</i> No one but a botanist is likely to distinguish nicely the different shades of green with which the open surface of the Earth is clothed,—not even a landscape painter if he does not know the species of sedges and grasses which paint it."	3014	<i>Journal</i> , Aug. 1, 1860
58		"... <i>its waters are of a misty bluish-green or glaucous color.</i> Many years since I used to go there to collect the sand by cartloads, to make sandpaper with..."	417	"The Ponds," <i>Walden</i>
59		"... the leaves [of the green hemlock] fast losing their <i>lively green color</i> , and know that it was for our breakfast."	679	"The Allagash," <i>Maine Woods</i>
60		"Though warm, it is clear and fresh, and the air imparts to all surfaces <i>a peculiar fine glaucous color</i> , full of light without mistiness..."	2808	<i>Journal</i> , July 12, 1856
61		"We saw rather beach and poverty-grass, and merely <i>sorrel enough to cover the surface.</i> "	895	"Provincetown," <i>Cape Cod</i>
62	Blue	"I am quite excited by this prospect of blue flowers in clumps with narrow intervals. Such a profusion of the heavenly, the elysian, color, as if these were the Elysian Fields."	2412	<i>Journal</i> , June 4, 1852
63		" '...in color or taste from the sea azure.' The 7th of May they saw divers birds whose names they knew, and many others in their 'English tongue of no name.'"	888	"Provincetown," <i>Cape Cod</i>

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
64	Blue (continued)	"Only one of the epithets which the poets have applied to <i>the color of the sea</i> will apply to this water."	2504	<i>Journal</i> , May 8, 1854
65		"A sympathy between <i>the color of the weather-painted</i> house and that of the lake and sky.... <i>This is the New England color</i> , homely but fit as that of a toadstool."	2837	<i>Journal</i> , Aug. 26, 1856
66	Purple	"There were distinct patches of <i>the color of a purple grape</i> with the bloom rubbed off. But first and last the sea is of all colors."	810	"The Beach Again," <i>Cape Cod</i>
67		"I see the light purple of the rhodora enlivening the edges of swamps— <i>another color the sun wears</i> . Is it not the most showy high-colored flower or shrub?"	2457	<i>Journal</i> , May 23, 1853
68		"I was the more surprised and charmed because <i>grass is commonly of a sober and humble color</i> . <i>With its beautiful purple blush</i> it reminds me, and supplies the place, of the Rhexia..."	1202	"Autumnal Tints"
69		"Tall and slender ash trees, whose foliage is turned to a <i>dark mulberry color</i> , are frequent."	912	"Concord to Montreal," <i>A Yankee in Canada</i>
70	Multi-Colored or Ambiguous	" <i>Blue is reserved to be the color of the sky</i> , but yellow and red are the colors of the earth flower."	2927	<i>Journal</i> , Oct. 24, 1858
71		" <i>The dear wholesome color</i> of shrub oak leaves, so clean and firm, not decaying, but which have put on a kind of immortality, not wrinkled and thin..."	2848	<i>Journal</i> , Dec. 1, 1856

Appendix B (Continued)

Table 2. Thoreau's Use of the Word "Color" (Continued)

	Color	Quote	Page No.	Work
72	Multi-colored (continued)	"The reason why naturalists make <i>so little account of color</i> is because it is so insignificant to them; they do not understand it."	3209	<i>Journal</i> , Oct. 5, 1861
73		"It [<i>the Red Maple</i>] varies much both in form and color. A great many are merely yellow, more scarlet deepening into crimson, more red than common."	1206	"Autumnal Tints"
74		"It is remarkable that no pains is taken to teach children to distinguish colors. I am myself uncertain about the names of many."	2389	<i>Journal</i> , Jan. 28, 1852
75		"In stormy weather they [Concord-area bodies of water] are sometimes of a dark slate-color. The sea, however, is said to be blue one day and green another without any perceptible change in the atmosphere."	404	"The Ponds," <i>Walden</i>
76		"Of two patterns which differ only by a few threads more or less of a particular color, the one will be sold readily, the other lie on the shelf..."	312	"Economy," <i>Walden</i>
77		"She said she could tell the color of a great many words, and amused the children at school by doing so."	1792	Corresp., R.W. Emerson, Jan. 12, 1848
78	Translation	"... and what mode of life / Have each, and to one another what / Hostilities, attachments, and assemblings; / the entrails' smoothness and what color having / They would be to the divinities acceptable;..."	1622	<i>Prometheus Bound</i>

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