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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by David Clyde Smith entitled "Henry David Thoreau: The Transcendental Saunterer." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

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HENRY DAVID THOREAU:
THE TRANSCENDENTAL SAUNTERER

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
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David Clyde Smith

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this study to my wife, Cherilyn, whose untiring and faithful support encouraged me when I needed it most. Thoreau long wished for the ideal friend to serve as his companion and to help meet his needs—a friend he never found, but my life has been deeply blessed by my sauntering partner and spouse. May our walk together continue through life.

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ABSTRACT

Thoreau scholars have long been aware of his saunterings and of their relative import in terms of his excursion pieces. But important questions about his walking experience have never fully been answered: Why did Thoreau devote more of his time to walking than to any other activity? What impact did his walks have on his daily life, on his personal beliefs, and on his writings? What does his sauntering experience reveal about him as a person and about his own unique brand of Transcendentalism?

This study probes every aspect of Thoreau's walks in an attempt to answer these questions. A systematic analysis of the frequency, intensity, scope, and Transcendental nature of his rambles and how they matched his unique personality substantiates the formative influence of Thoreau's daily saunterings. Each phase of his walking experience reveals important aspects of Thoreau's life and beliefs. In several ways, walking aided Thoreau's quest to explore the external landscape, enabling him to thoroughly scrutinize nature. In particular, the parochial nature of his sauntering explorations points toward his own notion of the microcosm, the strong influence which Concord held over him, and his ability to project himself imaginatively while sauntering. But Thoreau's most fruitful sauntering was internal, helping him explore the landscape within himself and providing him with experiences which heightened the senses, stimulated emotions, triggered thoughts, and provided spiritual insights. Most importantly, Thoreau's daily excursions fulfilled his essential self, helping to resolve the tensions within him created by his attraction to nature, his need for solitude,

and his counter desire for companionship, and they met his vocational needs, particularly by aiding his writing process.

This analysis of these aspects of Thoreau's walking experience clearly establishes the centrality of his sauntering life. Every aspect of his life revolved around his walks; they are the informing principle of his writings, particularly his Journal, and properly understood, they are the informing principle of his own life. Better than anything else, they reveal his personality, his beliefs, and his goals--especially his daily effort to apply the tenets of Transcendentalism to the world around him.

PREFACE

Henry Thoreau once boasted in a letter to his friend, H. G. O. Blake, "Even now I am probably the greatest walker in Concord" (Correspondence 420). Thoreau's claim, made at a time when he was ill, was not inappropriate. Subsequent history has established Thoreau as not only the greatest walker produced in the city of his birth, but also the most notable ambulator of all major American literary figures. Thoreau's reputation as the "greatest of American walkers" (Sussman and Goode 33) is well deserved. Walking, as Sherman Paul notes, was Thoreau's "most typical mode of action of participation" (Shores 210), and it provided him with the "fundamental metaphor of his art of life, his mode of discovery . . ." (413). Walking in nature made possible the heart of Thoreau's transcendental experiences, and his numerous perambulatory forays provided him with a significant expertise about pedestrianism. According to John Christie, "No traveler ever considered himself a better authority on foot travel than Thoreau" (61).

Despite the apparent importance of Thoreau's walking experience, little attention has been devoted to it. Thoreau remains one of the most celebrated of American nature writers, and his masterpiece, Walden, and his other nature essays have deservedly earned considerable popular and scholarly attention. But no one has comprehensively studied the significance of Thoreau's walking experience in nature. Walking was the most important and most consistent physical activity which Thoreau engaged in, yet little is known about his "sauntering," as he liked to call it.

According to Bronson Alcott, a Transcendental contemporary of

Thoreau, one must know Thoreau as a walker in order to understand him as a philosopher and thinker: "If one would find the wealth of wit there is in this plain man, the information, the sagacity, the poetry, the piety, let him take a walk with him, say of a winter's afternoon, to the Blue Water, or anywhere about the outskirts of his village-residence" ("The Forester" 444). It seems clear that if one is to really understand Thoreau's life and ideas, one must study his walks. Thoreau's walking experience is like a key which helps to open the door to a fuller understanding of his beliefs and actions. Thus the purpose of this study is to examine various aspects of Thoreau's walking experience to determine the impact of sauntering on his life and his writings. This study should help clarify the relationship between Thoreau's views on and experiences with perambulating and his own unique brand of Transcendentalism, and it should establish the paramount importance to Thoreau studies of a proper understanding of his walking theories and adventures.

This dissertation will present a systematic analysis of Thoreau's sauntering experience, beginning with an examination in chapter one of the frequency and scope of Thoreau's walks and the compatibility between the act of walking and his Transcendental beliefs and his own unique personality. An analysis of two levels of Thoreau's walks will follow in chapters two and three, first probing the most basic level of his saunterings--his exploration of nature's surface features, and then studying the deeper level of his internal sauntering and the relationship between walking and the sensory responses, emotions, thoughts, and spiritual insights which were the products of his internal sauntering.

Finally, the ways that walking fulfilled Thoreau's essential self will be examined in chapters four and five, dealing first with the ways that walking helped Thoreau bridge the worlds of nature and society while meeting his conflicting needs for solitude and companionship, and then touching on the ways that walking satisfied Thoreau's need for a vocation and how it aided his efforts to express a personal mythology in his writings.

When reading this study, the reader should keep in mind certain points regarding the text and the bibliography. One point is that quotations from Thoreau's writings are often cited at length. Since no collection of his views on sauntering exists, one purpose of this paper is to make available to Thoreau scholars all the major statements which he made about walking. One bibliographic matter needs clarification. The new standard edition of Thoreau's writings is the Princeton edition (1971—), replacing the 1906 Walden edition, but since only two Journal volumes have been published by Princeton, most of the Journal citations for this dissertation are taken from the 1962 two-volume reprint of the 1906 edition. Wherever a Princeton Journal volume is cited in the text, the word "Princeton" appears in the in-text reference. The reader may assume that Journal citations without the word "Princeton" are taken from the 1962 reprint of the 1906 edition.

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CHAPTER I

THOREAU: THE SAUNTERING LIFE

Would, as Bronson Alcott asserted ("The Forester" 444), one really have to take a walk with Thoreau in order to understand him? If sauntering was the central experience for Thoreau that Alcott suggests it was, why did Thoreau devote so much of his time to sauntering, and what would his walks reveal about his life and thinking? Certainly studying, as this chapter will, the role that walking played in Thoreau's daily life will help answer these important questions. Examining his Journal record of his saunterings, the influences that led him to become such a dedicated walker, and the apparent connections between walking and his own unique personality will reveal the frequency, scope, and personal significance of Thoreau's sauntering experience.

The essential role which walking played in Thoreau's life is evident in the frequency and scope of his walks. The fact is that Thoreau spent more time walking than he did doing any other thing, except sleeping. Walking was, without question, the dominant activity of his life. Joseph Wood Krutch reinforces this when he claims:

Despite the hours devoted to his Journal, and the lesser number spent in the composition of his published works, most of Thoreau's life was not spent either in writing or even in physically inactive meditation but in doing the hundreds of outdoor things which he loved to do and in actively pursuing the duties of that office--inspector of snowstorms and rainstorms--to which he said he had appointed himself. (Thoreau 12,13)

Alcott labelled Thoreau "a peripatetic philosopher," and noted that he was "out of doors for the best parts of his days and nights" ("The Forester" 443). E. W. Emerson points out that "for years, a wanderer in

the outskirts of our village was like to meet this sturdy figure striding silently through tangled wood or wild meadow at any hour of day or night" (84), and Norman Foerster affirms that "walking was [Thoreau's] chief physical activity" (Nature 83).

Just how often and how much Thoreau walked can be judged, in part, by his own account in "Walking": "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least--and it is commonly more than that--sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements" (Writings 5:207; emphasis supplied). Thus Thoreau walked an average of four or more hours a day for most of his adult life. These walks carried Thoreau for many miles in the Concord vicinity. William Channing, Thoreau's main walking companion, observes that Thoreau generally, like Walt Whitman, reserved his afternoons for walking, setting out in the early afternoon and returning by supper time (Poet-Naturalist 65). This afternoon walking time was his "sacred time," though he also sauntered in the morning and even at night as circumstances allowed him to do so.

Thoreau allowed very few things to interfere with his walks. One of the rare exceptions to this was the time when Thoreau declined a walk in order to help a fugitive slave (Moncure Conway, "Thoreau" 38,39). Except for such scarce instances, Thoreau did walk daily, and it was not uncommon for him to saunter "until sunset and after. If the moon was full, he shifted his excursion to midnight, walking occasionally until dawn" (Canby, Thoreau 309,310). Even when Thoreau was heavily involved in surveying and commercially growing cranberries, his "busyness did not keep him out of the fields and woods. He still managed to devote at

least four or five hours of every day to his self-appointed task" (Harding, Days 327). Nothing, not even severe Massachusetts' winters, could impede Thoreau's sauntering experience, as his February 7, 1855 letter to a friend makes clear: "I still take my daily walk . . . and on the whole have more to do with nature than with man" (Correspondence 371).

The extent of Thoreau's saunterings is as impressive as is the frequency of his walks. Though most of his walks occurred in the Concord vicinity, he did engage in several lengthy expeditions away from his home town which involved a significant amount of walking. In A Thoreau Gazetteer Robert Stowell provides maps and commentary on the walks and trips which Thoreau took. These excursions added countless miles to Thoreau's walking mileage and enriched his walking experience, the heart of which belonged to his Concord walks. Thoreau's travels extended to "Maine, Canada, Cape Cod, New York, Long Island, the Hudson River Valley and, shortly before his death, Minnesota" (Richardson, Thoreau 241). Richard Schneider, noting that Thoreau went three times to Maine and to Cape Cod (22), records other trips away from Concord which Thoreau took. Thoreau climbed many of the mountains in Massachusetts and the surrounding states, but he also traveled away from home for more practical or sentimental reasons. Thus he journeyed to Philadelphia to give a lecture, and he made several "trips to New Bedford for occasional visits with his hypochondriac friend Daniel Ricketson" (Thoreau 21,22). These "travels abroad" were generally not as satisfying nor as important to Thoreau as were his daily rambles around Concord, but they provided Thoreau with variety in his walking experience, and "they have the air,

and rightly, of having been done for a change from work at home" (Canby, Thoreau 368).

Many people do not realize just how particular and how serious Thoreau was about his walking experience. They have no idea how frequently and how much he really did walk, and they picture the few walks they know he took as aimless, extemporaneous, and perhaps even frivolous experiences. Such, of course, was not the case.

Thoreau could not have taken his walks more seriously than he did. As Robert Stowell points out, "Thoreau believed that traveling . . . demanded a serious attitude, a proper spirit. Travel was not an escape from daily routine," but an intense effort to gain experience and meaning out of life (Gazetteer x). Thoreau, "no idle stroller . . ., was a serious walker, bent on observing every mark in the landscape" (Thorndike 72). Walking, Thoreau makes clear in his Journal, was therefore a very deliberative act: "Resolve to . . . take no walk . . . but such as you can endure to give an account of to yourself. Live thus deliberately for the most part" (2:249). Though today we view walking primarily as a form of exercise, Thoreau held a much higher conception of it: "But the walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise, as it is called, as the sick take medicine at stated hours,--as the swinging of dumbbells or chairs; but is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day ("Walking" Writings 5:209; emphasis added).

Thoreau felt that walking was the major event of the day, and he viewed walkers like himself as a "select class" who had acquired "a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker." He asserted that one "must be born into the family of walkers," and few could practice as

well as Thoreau could the "noble art" of walking and make possible "the requisite leisure, freedom, and independence which are the capital in this profession" ("Walking" Writings 5:207).

One way to gain an appreciation of the significance in Thoreau's life of his walking experience is to study the references to walking in his Journal. Thoreau's Journal is the record of his life, and its autobiographical value cannot be underestimated. The Journal is the record of a mind, the day by day account of a life lived. Therefore, it is not surprising, given the quantity and quality of Thoreau's saunterings, that his Journal is full of references to his walking experience, references which reveal how much and in what ways walking was a part of his life. In fact, walking is perhaps the primary subject and theme of the Journal.

It is interesting to note how many different aspects of Thoreau's walks are touched on in his journal entries. One note recorded for August 19, 1851, depicts the difficulty the walker has in just leaving the house and commencing a walk. Though walking was very important to Thoreau, it was not always an automatic experience:

How many things concur to keep a man at home, to prevent his yielding to his inclination to wander! If I would extend my walk a hundred miles, I must carry a tent on my back for shelter at night or in the rain, or at least I must carry a thick coat to be prepared for a change in the weather. So that it requires some resolution, as well as energy and foresight, to undertake the simplest journey. Man does not travel as easily as the birds migrate. He is not everywhere at home, like flies. When I think how many things I can conveniently carry, I am wont to think it most convenient to stay at home. (Journal 2: 245)

Despite Thoreau's awareness of the difficulties involved with leaving home and walking, he persisted in taking walks, and he derived enough satisfaction from his walks to provide pleasant memories for the times,

especially during the winter, when he could not entertain as many walks: "In the summer we lay up a stock of experiences for the winter, as the squirrel of nuts,--something for conversation in winter evenings. I love to think then of the more distant walks I took in summer" (Journal 2: 258).

Thoreau made a careful record in his Journal of the daily walking experiences which accounted for these pleasant memories. His journal entries are full of references to the time, conditions, and routes of his walks. No detail seemed too unimportant to record. Typical are these entries: "A clear and pleasant morning. Walked down as far as Moore's at 8 A.M. and returned along the hill" (6:715); "9 A.M.--Walk all day with W. E. C., northwest into Acton and Carlisle" (6:776); and "I did well to walk in the forenoon, the fresh and inspiring half of this bright day, for now, at mid-afternoon, its brightness is dulled, and a fine stratus is spread over the sky" (7:850). The direction of the walk interested Thoreau. "There is an advantage in walking eastward these afternoons, at least, that in returning you may have the western sky before you" (10:1372), he notes. Even the temperature merited attention: "When I went to walk it was about 10° above zero, and when I returned, 1°" (13:1567).

Though most of Thoreau's Journal descriptions describe daytime perambulations, he also recorded his night walks, helping to reveal the nocturnal dimensions of his walking experience. One sample entry records an evening's ramble to an old house: "We walked up to the old Baker house. In the bright moonlight the character of the ground under our feet was not easy to detect, and we did not know at first but we were

walking on sod and not on a field laid down and harrowed" (7:800).

Thoreau's awareness of the difficulty of nighttime sauntering emerges in many entries, including this one:

A very dark and stormy night. . . . Where the fence is not painted white I can see nothing, and go whistling for fear I run against some one, though there is little danger that any one will be out. I come against a stone post and bruise my knees; then stumble over a bridge,--being in the gutter. You walk with your hands out to feel the fences and trees. There is no vehicle in the street to-night. (14:1685)

Whether during the night or day, Thoreau's saunterings carried him through many kinds of environments and landscapes. Because of his walking experience, Thoreau could frequently anticipate what to expect when venturing into various types of terrain. As a result the Journal abounds with such woods-wise observations as this: "You can hardly walk in a thick pine wood now, especially a swamp, but presently you will have a crow or two over your head, either silently flitting over, to spy what you would be at and if its nest is in danger, or angrily cawing" (7:887). Thoreau was equally aware of the difficulties the walker encountered when rambling cross-country through different terrain, and his Journal records the satisfaction he experienced whenever he exposed himself to the rigors of a particularly challenging walk:

We kept on by Heron Pool and through the pitch pine wood behind Baker's, down the path to Spanish Brook, and came out on to the railroad at Walden. Channing thought it was a suitably long stretch to wind up with, like one of our old Nashoba walks, so long drawn and taxing our legs so, in which it seemed that the nearer you got to home the farther you had to go. (10:1261)

The tone of Thoreau's descriptions of his walking experience varies as much as did the saunterings themselves. Somber entries like the preceding ones are often balanced in the Journal by descriptions which present a lighter touch:

Grasshoppers have been very abundant in dry fields for two or three weeks. Sophia walked through the Depot Field a fortnight ago, and when she got home picked fifty or sixty from her skirts,--for she wore hoops and crinoline. Would not this be a good way to clear a field of them,--to send a bevy of fashionably dressed ladies across a field and leave them to clean their skirts when they got home? It would supplant anything at the patent office, and the motive power is cheap. (12:1515)

As with his humorous side, Thoreau's practical side emerges in several Journal depictions of his walks. He records his concern about being sunburned when walking over snow-covered ground (3:378) and his worry about the dangers posed to the pedestrian by bulls in a pasture (4:429). He cautions against sitting underneath white pines in a pine grove "on account of pitch" (4:434), and he warns about the problems posed by the saunterer making contact with trees which are too heavily laden with snow (10:1239).

One notable aspect of Thoreau's practical approach to walking is his interest in the effects of the New England climate on the pedestrian. Thoreau's walking experience, as with every other New England saunterer, was a seasonal one, subject to the ever-changing weather patterns with which Concordians were so familiar. Thus his Journal records the effects of the extremes of cold and heat, moisture and dryness, to which he found himself exposed during his saunterings.

Very apparent are the descriptions of walking in wintertime when the hiker faces the iron New England cold: "I was walking at five, and found it stinging cold. It stung the face" (7:837); "Walking this afternoon, I notice that the face inclines to stiffen, and the hands and feet get cold soon. On first coming out in very cold weather, I find that I breathe fast, though without walking faster or exerting myself any more than

usual" (9:1110); and "Colder weather, true November weather, comes again to-night, and I must rekindle my fire, which I had done without of late. I must walk briskly in order to keep warm in my thin coat" (11:1384).

Thoreau was sensitive, of course, to the effects of snow as well as cold on the walker. Judging by his Journal entries, he seemed especially concerned with the difficulties which snow could pose to the saunterer. He disliked hiking on crusty snow (6:679), and he found himself frustrated when trying to walk in slushy snow: "I grow so fast and am so weighed down and hindered, that I have to stop continually and look for a rock where I may kick off these newly acquired heels and soles" (10:1255). Thoreau was also bothered by the harsh glare which the snow reflected into the eyes of the walker (7:839). Though Thoreau usually found walking in the snow a difficult experience, such was not always the case: "In the early part of winter there was no walking on the snow, but after January, perhaps, when the snow-banks had settled and their surfaces, many times thawed and frozen, become indurated, in fact, you could walk on the snow-crust pretty well" (6:698).

Even when the snow melted in the spring, the walking did not immediately improve:

It is surprising how suddenly the slumbering snow has been melted, and with what a rush it now seeks the lowest ground on all sides. Yesterday, in the streets and fields, it was all snow and ice and rest; now it is chiefly water and motion. Yesterday afternoon I walked in the merely moist snow-track of sleds and sleighs, while all the sides of the road and the ditches rested under a white mantle of snow. This morning I go picking my way in rubbers through broad puddles on a slippery icy bottom, stepping over small torrents which have worn channels six or eight inches deep, and on each side rushes past with a loud murmur a stream large enough to turn a mill, occasionally spreading out into a sizeable mill-pond. (11:1418)

Many of Thoreau's comments about walking conditions, as with the

preceding example, deal with the inherent difficulties of walking after the snow and ice have melted: "It is much worse walking than it has been for ten days, the continual warmth of the sun melting the ice and snow by walls, etc., and reaching the deeper frost, unexpectedly after the surface had been dry. Pastures which look dry prove soft and full of water" (7:852); "For the last two or three days very wet and muddy walking, owing to the melting of the snow; which also has slightly swollen the small streams" (7:858); and "A thick mist, spiriting away the snow. Very bad walking. . . . The ice is soggy and dangerous to be walked on" (10:1257). Eventually, of course, the ground would dry and the walker's lot would improve: "I walk in the fields now without slumping in the thawing ground, or there are but few soft places, and the distant sand-banks look dry and warm" (10:1265).

Thoreau's Journal records his interest in the wind, which brings a welcome dryness to New England in the springtime, posing new problems to the saunterer who has difficulty maintaining his posture and his dignity against the dictates of a strong New England wind (12:1447). Conversation in such a wind is nearly impossible, and the sound of the wind running through the water or the trees creates a sense of confusion. "Nevertheless," according to Thoreau, "this universal commotion is very interesting and exciting" (12:1448). These blustery springtime winds can be rather severe, exposing the walker to a winter-like cold when he is least prepared for it:

The 8th, it is clear again, but a very cold and blustering day, yet the wind is worse than the cold. You calculate your walk beforehand so as to take advantage of the shelter of hills and woods; a very slight elevation is often a perfect fence. If you must go forth facing the wind, bending to the blast, and sometimes scarcely making any progress, you study how you may

return with it on your back. . . . You have no colder walk in winter. So rapidly is the earth dried that this day or the next perhaps you see a cloud of dust blown over the fields in a sudden gust. (13:1608)

In New England the springtime walker must not only face a stiff wind but rain and mud as well. April showers may bring May flowers, but they also create problems for the saunterer. His Journal reveals that Thoreau often found walking after a hard rain to be "very bad" (6:682). He discovered that a "dripping spring rain" makes walking "worse for the time," but it also brings needed moisture (13:1595). Damp walking conditions bothered Thoreau, including the "dewy rain" that wet his feet when he traipsed through low lands (7:795), and the flooding of the meadows which he waded through (13:1621). Rain, of course, brought mud, an unwelcome substance to the saunterer. Muddy walking frustrated Thoreau as this sample entry demonstrates:

Some of the frost has come out, and it is very wet and muddy crossing the plowed fields,--as filthy walking as any in the year. You have the experience of wading birds that get their living on the flats when the tide has gone down and leave their tracks there, but you are cheered by the sight of some radical greenness. (7:842,843)

Once the New England saunterer survived the springtime wind, rain, and mud, he had to face the challenges which summer hiking posed. Thoreau's Journal records the heat of summer walking--"Another remarkably warm and pleasant day, if not too hot for walking; 74° at 2 p.m." (4:1371), and the difficulty of hiking through the thick summer grass which the preceding rains had made possible: "Grass now for a week or more has been seriously in the way of the walker, but already I take advantage of the few fields that are mowed. It requires skillful tacking, a good deal of observation, and experience to get across the

country now" (12:1488). Inevitably, the dryness of summer poses more difficulties than does the early lush grass. During his summer walks, Thoreau tramped through dust, "several inches deep," which covered his clothes and made walking difficult (6:776). But dry conditions allowed Thoreau to walk in places which were normally inaccessible. Thus he hiked through many bogs and swamps in the summertime (6:783; 12:1504), though the dryness coupled with the heat could make him feel "as if the ground were on fire, where it was not" (6:783).

Fall hiking brings relief from summer heat, and Thoreau enjoyed sauntering in the fall. The brisk air, the colorful leaves, and the clear sky invite the New England perambulator to get out into nature and enjoy its beauty. Of particular interest to Thoreau was the experience of walking through fallen leaves. The scent of the leaves--"Leaves now have fairly begun to rustle under foot in wood-paths, especially in chestnut woods, scaring the ducks as you approach the ponds. And what is that common scent there so much like fragrant everlasting?" (11:1364), and the experience of plowing through them--"Now, as you walk in woods, the leaves rustle under your feet as much as ever. In some places you walk pushing a mass before you. In others they half cover pools that are three rods long. They make it slippery climbing hills" (11:1376), especially impressed Thoreau.

Thoreau's seasonal walking adventure is as carefully recorded, though not as artfully groomed, as is the seasonally-organized account of his Walden experience. Thoreau's seasonal record of his saunterings reveals the very intimate relationship that exists between the saunterer and his environment. The numerous Journal entries also help demonstrate the

consistent daily impact that walking had on Thoreau's life. Thoreau, like the mailman, walked in all kinds of weather, in all kinds of terrain, under all kinds of conditions. And the full extent of that experience is faithfully recorded in the record of his life, his Journal.

One cannot help but wonder where Thoreau's interest and acuity in walking came from. What influenced him to become the foremost literary saunterer of his time and to make walking the passion of his life? There are no clear answers to these questions, but some factors deserve consideration.

The influence of his parents must have affected Thoreau to some degree. Thoreau's mother was a dedicated walker who loved to saunter in nature. According to Walter Harding, she frequently took her children on walks in the surrounding countryside (Days 19). Actually, both parents walked in nature and took their children with them. But Mrs. Thoreau was probably the more aggressive walker, rumor having it that one of the Thoreau children was nearly born during one of her rambles (Canby, Thoreau 19,20). A love of nature was inculcated in the Thoreau children by their parents as a result of the excursions they all shared (Harding, Days 10).

When Thoreau was quite young, he rambled about the countryside, hunting, trapping, and fishing (Canby, Thoreau 35-37). He enjoyed this type of primitive contact with nature, but his enjoyment for hunting and fishing was early converted to a love of nature and an interest in natural phenomenon. School took second place. "Thoreau was seemingly more interested in the outdoors than in school and spent all his spare time in Concord's woods and meadows and on her rivers and ponds"

(Harding, Days 30). Edward Waldo Emerson observes that thanks to the influence of Thoreau's parents, Nature was his favorite teacher, and he loved to attend her school (15,16). Even when Thoreau was a student at Harvard, his yearning to walk in nature competed with the pull of the classroom. Harding notes that "when Thoreau was not in the library or the classroom, he was often wont to slip off by himself out into the fields of Cambridge and along the banks of the Charles" (Days 38). His explorations "offered a welcome alternative to study" (39). Thoreau fondly remembered these sauntering escapes from academia:

Suffice it to say, that though bodily I have been a member of Harvard University, heart and soul I have been far away among the scenes of my boyhood. Those hours that should have been devoted to study, have been spent in scouring the woods, and exploring the lakes and streams of my native village.
 ("Autobiography" Early Essays 114)

According to Walter Harding, these early escapes from the rigors of academic life later influenced Thoreau to introduce his own pupils to the same experience. When Thoreau was teaching, he frequently took his students on rambles in the Concord countryside. His first school, "noted for its innovations," was established on a principle of "learning by doing." Thoreau's program involved numerous field trips. "At least once a week, and usually much more frequently, the whole school was taken for a walk in the woods or fields or for a row on one of the rivers or ponds" (Days 82). These excursions introduced his pupils to the history and the natural history of the area (Days 82,83). Children loved to walk with Thoreau, and many of them cherished memories of these excursions into their adult years (Days 87).

One thing that favored Thoreau and his students on their walks was the Concord environment, for Concord was especially well suited for the

walker. Ellery Channing describes the suitability of the Concord countryside for the walker in Thoreau's day:

Concord is mostly plain land, with a sandy soil; or, on the river, wide meadows, covered with wild grass, and apt to be flooded twice a year and changed to shallow ponds. The absence of striking scenery, unpleasing to the tourist, is an advantage to the naturalist: too much farming and gentlemen's estates are in his way. Concord contains an unusual extent of wood and meadow; and the wood-lots, when cut off, are usually continued for the same purpose. So it is a village surrounded by tracts of woodland and meadow, abounding in convenient yet retired paths for walking. (Poet-Naturalist 21; emphasis supplied)

Henry Seidel Canby offers an even more enchanting picture of Thoreau's Concord which helps one understand why someone like Thoreau who grew up in Concord would want to walk so much in the local environs:

In Thoreau's time, the outflowing tide of population toward the cities and the West had left Walden and White Pond, and the woods and the pastures, to the woodchoppers, the hunters and fishers, the barberry and huckleberry pickers, and foraging cattle. Here a man could have solitude and the forest within two miles of the Mill Dam and home. Here, also, on these uplands, the aquatic flora and fauna of the marshes, with their hints of the sea, gave way to the American woods, not primeval by any means, yet still a fair sample of the forest cover which stretched north and east to the Maine wilderness. . . .

And also from these rough low hills and from such isolated knolls as Ponkawtasset or Fair Haven, one could see the first mountain of the noble Appalachian chain--Wachusett near Worcester . . . a friend from Thoreau's youth; and Monadnock, whose name has become a geological term for isolated peaks--and so on into the west and north.

Hence the nature lover in Concord could escape at will by boat or foot from the small-town talk of the Mill Dam or the fog of philosophies in Emerson's parlor or the boarding-house which was home, to woods or river. He could time the blooming of the flowers, write up notes for his Journal under an oak tree, listen to Melvin's reminiscences of famous pickerel, walk to George Minott's, who heard the earliest bluebird and saw the first geese fly over, or stand by the plodding, taciturn farmers while they turned over the sandy Concord soil. (Thoreau 7,8)

Canby further observes that even the varying Concord climate and the variety of animal life, flora, and fauna catered to the woodland saunterer (8).

But more than family and the local environment influenced Thoreau to commit himself to the walking experience so passionately. One literary work which almost certainly caused Thoreau to walk in nature was Emerson's text, Nature. Canby credits Thoreau's conversion from hunter and fisherman to naturalist, to his reading of Nature. This text infused in Thoreau the "Transcendental passion, half spiritual, half romantic," which provided the driving force for his excursions (Thoreau 35,36). When Thoreau read this book in 1837, it "appeared at just the critical moment in his life and there is no question that he read it avidly. It was one of the seminal books in his life" (Harding, Days 60).

Yet another influence on Thoreau's walking experience which has been thoroughly traced by John Christie in Thoreau as World Traveler was the travel literature which Thoreau read. As Christie notes, Thoreau developed his own notions and criteria for the way one ought to travel, and "in developing his theory of a good traveler, he learned as much from the experience of those travelers whom he read as he did from his own 'voyages' and 'excursions'" (64). One example that Christie provides of this is Thoreau's reading of Goethe's travel writings. Thoreau gleaned several pivotal concepts from Goethe including the importance to the traveler of "the exacting eye" (66), personal involvement (67) and personal growth (69), and moral stature (69,70). Thoreau's reading of Darwin also significantly influenced his view of the travel experience. From Darwin Thoreau gained a greater appreciation of the value to the traveler "of experiencing (1) the sight of the marvels of natural phenomena, (2) a knowledge of primitive man, (3) contact with the wilderness (vast, unknown, timeless, and so perpetually intriguing), and

(4) the appeal of the outdoor, uncivilized, adventurous life" (80).

Drawing from his travel reading of Goethe, Darwin, and many other travel authors, and tapping his own travel adventures, Thoreau formulated a philosophy of travel which he used to evaluate his own walking experience and the travels of others which he heard or read about.

Christie points out that Thoreau envisioned the traveler as a person who combined the qualities of the scientist and the poet--one who studied natural phenomena yet who intuited the value and significance of the observed phenomena. The traveler should be a highly moral individual, and travel should be compatible with his profession (81).

Christie elaborates on Thoreau's view of how the traveler should travel and the type of experience he should have:

How should he travel? He should travel in a simple, primitive, original way, standing in a true relation to men and nature, able to give an exact description of what he saw and its effect upon him. He should travel deliberately rather than dilettantishly, in order to confirm or advance his knowledge of something in which he already had an interest. And he should travel for the purpose of examining the variety of phenomena, natural, human, and social, from a comparative viewpoint, to the end that his understanding of the parts could enable him to comprehend the whole. (81)

Perhaps most importantly, one's travel should contribute significantly "to his growth as a person, significant for what it made him as well as for what it told him . . ." (81). Thoreau's travel philosophy forged by his travel reading seems very compatible with the act of walking. He readily applied his emphasis on observation and intuition, his focus on a serious, primitive, and original approach to nature, and his quest for personal experience and growth in the travel adventure to his saunterings.

Certainly other things must help account for Thoreau's total

commitment to sauntering. Harding suggests that the Concord Lyceum meetings which Thoreau attended furthered his interest in natural history and natural science, two areas related to his walking experience (Days 29). But a far more important influence was Transcendentalism. Thoreau was, after all, a Transcendentalist, and to comprehend adequately the nature of his perambulations and their impact on his life and writings, one needs to consider what there was about Transcendentalism which might favor walking over other modes of travel. The frequency of Thoreau's walks and the prominence of walking in his literature implies a compatibility between Transcendental beliefs and the act of walking, but the exact nature of this compatibility needs to be examined carefully in order to discover how Transcendentalism might have influenced Thoreau to commit himself so wholeheartedly to walking.

One consideration is that Transcendentalists favored an active life over an inactive one. Lawrence Porter notes that many Transcendentalists conceived of themselves as men of action (42) and, consequently, they looked for opportunities to convert their passive, idealistic tenets into physical and mental activity. A central concern to Thoreau, as Sherman Paul points out, was "to apply transcendental ideas, to bring them to the test of living--to embody them, to enact them, to realize them vocationally" (Shores 16). Thoreau, even more than Emerson, attempted to apply Transcendentalism to life by living out its principles. Emerson theorized, but "Thoreau ventured forth and made a real effort to insert himself into the physical world, to become its intimate undemanding acquaintance" (Tanner 46,47).

Thoreau's "venturing forth" took the form of sauntering, a mode of

travel very compatible with the Transcendental notion of action. Walking offered the individual a more dynamic form of travel than did horse riding, train travel, boating, or the other travel modes popular in Thoreau's time. A traveler was more physically and mentally involved with walking than he was with more passive forms of travel that relied on something outside of himself to convey him. Thus walking in nature allowed Thoreau to enjoy the kind of active life to which most Transcendentalists aspired.

No activity, however, held value for the Transcendentalist unless its outcome or purpose was transcendental in nature. Walking only served the Transcendental saunterer when it aided him in his quest to transcend the senses and discover ultimate truths. Such a walking experience was very possible because of the productive interplay between the mind and the body during the walking experience. Walking enabled the walker to directly confront physical nature and to glean its transcendental gems without the encumbrance and interference that other travel forms would pose.

Walking for Thoreau was often a highly transcendental experience. The transcendental nature of Thoreau's walking experience is clear in this Journal entry:

I take all these walks to every point of the compass, and it is always harvest-time with me. I am always gathering my crop from these woods and fields and waters, and no man is in my way or interferes with me. My crop is not their crop. To-day I see them gathering in their beans and corn, and they are a spectacle to me, but are soon out of my sight. I am not gathering beans and corn. Do they think there are no fruits but such as these? I am a reaper; I am not a gleaner. I go reaping, cutting as broad a swath as I can, and bundling and stacking up and carrying it off from field to field, and no man knows nor cares. My crop is not sorghum nor Davis seedlings. There are other crops than these, whose seed is not distributed by the Patent

Office. I go abroad over the land each day to get the best I can find, and that is never carted off even to the last day of November, and I do not go as a gleaner.

The farmer has always come to the field after some material thing; that is not what a philosopher goes there for. (Journal 10: 1205,1206)

Only when Thoreau had exhausted the transcendental potential of the walking experience could he think of other things: "Ah! When a man has travelled, and robbed the horizon of his native fields of its mystery and poetry, its indefinite promise, tarnished the blue of distant mountains with his feet! When he has done this he may begin to think of another world. What is this longer to him?" (Journal 3:374).

Another aspect of Transcendentalism which favored walking as a form of travel was its emphasis on democracy. According to George Hochfield, the Transcendental view of Reason or intuition as a guiding force gave each person a special value since each individual possessed within himself the potential for genius and fulfillment. The more important the individual, the more important democracy. Thus in "discovering the link between Reason and democracy the Transcendentalists discovered their mission, which was to elaborate the meaning of democracy as a new unfolding of the human spirit" (41). Transcendentalism "converted the romantic idealization of the common man into an assertion of the infinite potentialities of all men and of their equality before God" (Carpenter, "Transcendentalism" 32).

When this theory of democracy was applied to types of transportation, walking proved the most democratic mode available to the Transcendentalist. Anyone could walk, anywhere, anytime, without cost. Walking catered to no particular class or party; it allowed the individual saunterer to realize his full potential without the kinds of

interference which other travel modes could create. Thus when Thoreau walked, he walked as an American, one who could, like the famous celebrator of democracy, Walt Whitman, follow the good instincts of his Reason at any time and any place.

This notion of following one's Reason or instinct was central to Transcendentalist thinking, and an understanding of it is important to interpreting Thoreau's sauntering experience. Emerson observed in his essay, "The Transcendentalist," that

Although . . . there is no pure Transcendentalist, yet the tendency to respect the intuitions and to give them, at least in our creed, all authority over our experience, has deeply colored the conversation and poetry of the present day; and the history of genius and of religion in these times, though impure, and as yet not incarnated in any powerful individual, will be the history of this tendency. (Works 1:340)

According to Emerson, "Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so . . ."

("Self-Reliance" Works 2:65). In Walden Thoreau makes this claim: "If one listens to the faintest but constant suggestions of his genius, which are certainly true, he sees not to what extremes, or even insanity, it may lead him; and yet that way, as he grows more resolute and faithful, his road lies" (216).

Following one's good genius not only leads a person to the road he should travel, it also strengthens his individuality and creates a strong self-sufficiency, two traits very common to Americans in general, and to walkers in particular. Russel Nye observes that

"Transcendentalism was . . . powerfully individualistic. Each

individual's claim to equality and justice rested on his ability to consult his intuition; ethically, the belief in the validity of one's own intuitive truth led toward each man's responsibility for himself" (Culture 329,330). Emerson's admonition: "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string" ("Self-Reliance" Works 2:47) was the credo of Transcendentalism. Thus self-sufficiency governed every aspect of the Transcendentalist's life as Emerson claimed that it should: "It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views" ("Self-Reliance" Works 2:77).

For the Transcendentalist, walking was the best transportation mode for nurturing one's individuality and self-reliance. As has already been pointed out, walking provides the traveler with the greatest control over his experience; it frees him more than other types of transportation do to follow the dictates of his Reason. Therefore, walking allowed Thoreau a "margin of leisure and spontaneity" (Paul, Shores 169) which he did not experience with other travel modes. For example, when Thoreau compared foot travel with horse travel, he concluded: "It is far more independent to travel on foot. You have to sacrifice so much to the horse" (Journal 2:7).

In his time the most popular transportation forms were horseback, canal boat, and carriages (Huth, Nature 71-73). But these very public forms of transportation offered a Transcendentalist like Thoreau very little in terms of private, meditative, and individualistic experience. Thoreau availed himself of all the transportation forms of his day when

necessary, including railroad and steamboat travel (Maine Woods 3), yet he considered walking the best mode of travel. That he thought walking a superior form of transportation to travel by rail is evident in Walden where he writes:

One says to me, "I wonder that you do not lay up money; you love to travel; you might take the cars and go to Fitchburg to-day and see the country." But I am wiser than that. I have learned that the swiftest traveller is he that goes afoot. I say to my friend, Suppose we try who will get there first. The distance is thirty miles; the fare ninety cents. That is almost a day's wages. I remember when wages were sixty cents a day for laborers on this very road. Well, I start now on foot, and get there before night; I have travelled at that rate by the week together. You will in the mean while have earned your fare, and arrive there some time to-morrow, or possibly this evening, if you are lucky enough to get a job in season. Instead of going to Fitchburg, you will be working here the greater part of the day. And so, if the railroad reached round the world, I think that I should keep ahead of you; and as for seeing the country and getting experience of that kind, I should have to cut your acquaintance altogether. (53)

Though Thoreau frequently boated in the summertime and ice skated in winter, he was consistent during all seasons in his dedication to walking and the independence it granted him. One contemporary of Thoreau's recalls inviting Thoreau to come and see him in Vermont. "I began to tell him," he recounts, "how he could get to Vermont, and he said, 'Oh, I sha'n't go by rail, I shall take a bee line and walk'" (Wood, "Thoreau and the Pines" 107). When Thoreau, traveling by train to visit his friend Bronson Alcott, discovered that the train would be delayed for three-and-a-half hours, "he walked five miles along the track to the next station at Westminster rather than waste his time sitting in the station" (Harding, Days 368,369). Thoreau's fiercely independent spirit was nurtured in true Transcendental fashion by his sauntering experience. Walking allowed Thoreau to go where he wanted to go and do what he wanted

to do wherever and whenever he wanted to.

Non-conformity was a key aspect of the independent nature of Thoreau's walking experience. Emerson, when praising the Transcendental virtues of non-conformity, stated, "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds" ("The American Scholar" Works 1:115), and Thoreau reveled in the non-conformist nature of the walking experience. As George Trevelyan notes, "There is no orthodoxy in walking. It is a land of many paths and no-paths, where every one goes his own way and is right" (Walking 56). Thoreau rebelled against conformity in any form, including conformity in the walking experience which he insisted be original and natural:

When I hear the hypercritical quarrelling about grammar and style, the position of the particles, etc., etc.,[sic] stretching or contracting every speaker to certain rules of theirs,--Mr. Webster, perhaps, not having spoken according to Mr. Kirkham's rule,--I see that they forget that the first requisite and rule is that expression shall be vital and natural, as much as the voice of a brute or an interjection. . . . The grammarian is often one who can neither cry nor laugh, yet thinks that he can express human emotions. So the posture-masters tell you how you shall walk,--turning your toes out, perhaps, excessively,--but so the beautiful walkers are not made. (Journal 2:386; emphasis supplied)

For Transcendentalists, walking was both a democratic, individualistic enterprise and a patriotic act. Transcendentalism advocated a break with America's cultural ties to Europe (Carpenter, "Transcendentalism" 32); thus, Transcendentalists tended to preach the superiority of the American landscape and the virtuous influence of that landscape on those, like walkers, who enjoyed a direct relationship with the American wilderness. Emerson made this clear when he asserted, "The land is the appointed remedy for whatever is false and fantastic in our

culture. The continent we inhabit is to be physic and food for our mind, as well as our body" ("The Young American" Works 1:365). In the same essay, Emerson elaborates on the patriotic nature of relating to the American landscape:

Any relation to the land, the habit of tilling it, or mining it, or even hunting on it, generates the feeling of patriotism. He who keeps shop on it, or he who merely uses it as a support to his desk and ledger, or to his manufactory, values it less. The vast majority of the people of this country live by the land, and carry its quality in their manners and opinions. We in the Atlantic states, by position, have been commercial, and have, as I said, imbibed easily an European culture. Luckily for us, now that steam has narrowed the Atlantic to a strait, the nervous, rocky West is intruding a new and continental element into the national mind, and we shall yet have an American genius. How much better when the whole land is a garden, and the people have grown up in the bowers of a paradise. Without looking then to those extraordinary social influences which are now acting in precisely this direction, but only at what is inevitably doing around us, I think we must regard the land as a commanding and increasing power on the citizen, the sanative and Americanizing influence, which promises to disclose new virtues for ages to come. ("The Young American" Works 1:369,370)

Frederick Garber observes that Thoreau felt much the same way about the American landscape. Thoreau was aware that "the idiosyncrasies of the American landscape were profoundly connected with his own," and he freely praised the superiority of that landscape over non-American landscape (Imagination 52). From Thoreau's viewpoint, the American wilderness was the Holy Land to the patriotic saunterer. Walking kept the American walker in his own country, and it provided him with an original relationship with the American landscape which infused within him those virtues of American life which Transcendentalism espoused. Thus Thoreau could write in "Walking":

If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, and the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and

religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man,--as there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? I trust that we shall be more imaginative, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher, and more ethereal, as our sky,--our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains,--our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests,--and our hearts shall even correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas. Perchance there will appear to the traveler something, he knows no what, of laeta and glabra, of joyous and serene, in our very faces. Else to what end does the world go on, and why was America discovered? (Writings 5:222,223)

So strong was Thoreau's patriotism when walking, that his one sauntering excursion outside the boundaries of the United States, his trip to Canada, proved completely unsatisfactory. Sherman Paul comments that Thoreau's literary account of this trip contains considerable humor--"the result of the irreverence bred of his feeling of American superiority" (Shores 372). The political and cultural differences of this foreign country affected his relationship with the landscape and made it impossible for him to enjoy or profit from his walking experience (Shores 372,376). Thus Thoreau remained at heart an American walker, a saunterer who gleaned from the American wilderness the superior virtues and benefits which Transcendentalism espoused.

The Transcendentalist's advocacy of a non-materialistic society also favored the American walking experience. Transcendentalists found Americans "too materialistic" (Boller, Transcendentalism 95), and they valued those activities like walking which affirmed the participant's economic and spiritual integrity. In "Self-Reliance" Emerson expressed his regret over those forms of material progress which had hampered the

walking experience: "The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle" (Works 2:85). In his essay on Thoreau he praised the economical efficiency of Thoreau's walking experience:

He chose to be rich by making his wants few, and supplying them himself. In his travels, he used the railroad only to get over so much country as was unimportant to the present purpose, walking hundreds of miles, avoiding taverns, buying a lodging in farmers' and fishermen's houses, as cheaper, and more agreeable to him, and because there he could better find the men and the information he wanted. ("Thoreau" 25; emphasis supplied)

For Thoreau, the value of a walk was determined, in part, by the naturalness and simplicity of the experience. Luxurious and complicated forms of travel did not appeal to him:

It is the luxurious and dissipated who set the fashions which the herd so diligently follow. The traveller who stops at the best houses, so called, soon discovers this, for the publicans presume him to be a Sardanapalus, and if he resigned himself to their tender mercies he would soon be completely emasculated. I think that in the railroad car we are inclined to spend more on luxury than on safety and convenience, and it threatens without attaining these to become no better than a modern drawing room, with its divans, and ottomans, and sunshades, and a hundred other oriental things, which we are taking west with us, invented for the ladies of the harem and the effeminate natives of the Celestial Empire, which Jonathan should be ashamed to know the names of. I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a malaria all the way. (Walden 37)

One thing that appealed to Thoreau about walking was the economically carefree nature of the walking experience. He fondly reflected upon that primitive time in man's existence when walking in nature was his primary activity. Life then was much simpler and more in accord with the way Thoreau as a true saunterer wanted to live it:

The very simplicity and nakedness of man's life in the primitive ages imply this advantage at least, that they left him still but

a sojourner in nature. When he was refreshed with food and sleep he contemplated his journey again. He dwelt, as it were, in a tent in this world, and was either threading the valleys, or crossing the plains, or climbing the mountain tops. But lo! men have become the tools of their tools. The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer; and he who stood under a tree for shelter, a housekeeper. We now no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven. (Walden 37)

Closely allied to the Transcendental advocacy of a non-materialistic approach to life was the Transcendental emphasis on naturalness and simplicity. Transcendentalists, in their thinking and in their actions, attempted to simplify life, to reduce its complexities to a manageable condition. Emerson, in particular, praised the simple, natural ways of nature as opposed to the artificial, complex operations of society. In "Spiritual Laws," he observes, "Our society is encumbered by ponderous machinery, which resembles the endless aqueducts which the Romans built over hill and dale and which are superseded by the discovery of the law that water rises to the level of its source" (Works 2:136,137). He concludes that we should

draw a lesson from nature, which always works by short ways. When the fruit is ripe, it falls. When the fruit is despatched, the leaf falls. The circuit of the waters is mere falling. The walking of man and all animals is a falling forward. All our manual labor and works of strength, as prying, splitting, digging, rowing and so forth, are done by dint of continual falling, and the globe, earth, moon, comet, sun, star, fall for ever and ever. (137; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau viewed walking in the same way; it was a natural, simple act completely compatible with the Transcendental emphasis on those qualities. "Simplicity," notes Robert Stowell, "was the keystone of Thoreau's philosophy, so his application of that precept to travel was a sign of great esteem" (x). Thoreau had no tolerance for unnatural or complicated approaches to the travel experience:

They are hopelessly cockneys everywhere who learn to swim with a machine. They take neither disease nor health, nay, nor life itself, the natural way. I see dumbbells in the minister's study, and some of their dumbness gets into his sermons. Some travellers carry them round the world in their carpetbags. Can he be said to travel who requires still this exercise? A party of school-children had a picnic at the Easterbrooks Country the other [day], and they carried bags of beans from their gymnasium to exercise with there. I cannot be interested in these extremely artificial amusements. The traveller is no longer a wayfarer, with his staff and pack and dusty coat. His is not a pilgrim, but he travels in a saloon, and carries dumb-bells to exercise with in the intervals of his journey. (Journal 14:111)

In these several ways walking was a very compatible act with the main tenets of the Transcendentalists. When Thoreau walked, he sauntered in true Transcendental fashion, gleaning transcendental insights from his journeys and applying Transcendental beliefs in simplicity, independence, patriotism, and naturalness to his perambulations, thus greatly enhancing the quality of his walking experience.

Regardless of the external influences like Transcendentalism that might be traced to explain Thoreau's walking experience, the most important consideration would have to be his own personality. There appears to have been something about Thoreau's sense of identity and his character which dictated for him that he would be a walker. The act of walking freed his "self," and it affirmed his identity.

One reason why walking was so important to Thoreau was that he had a built-in need to walk; his personal chemistry dictated it. This need to walk was most apparent when ill health prevented him from walking. Bronson Alcott records such a time, connecting Thoreau's deterioration to his inability to saunter:

Channing writes tenderly of Thoreau's confinement, and I see him this morning and find his hoarseness forbids his going out as usual. 'Tis a serious thing to one who has been less a house-keeper than any man in town, has lived out of doors for

the best part of his life, has harvested more wind and storm, sun and sky, and has more weather in him, than any--night and day abroad with his leash of keen senses, hounding any game stirring, and running it down for certain, to be spread on the dresser page before he sleeps and served as a feast of wild meats to all sound intelligences like his. . . . We have been accustomed to consider him the salt of things so long that we are loath to believe it has lost savor. . . .

I find him in spirits--busied, he tells me, with his Journals, and bating his out-of-doors, in his usual working trim. Fair weather and spring time, I trust, are to prove his best physicians, and the woods and fields know their old friend again presently. ("Journals" 163,164)

Thoreau was fully aware that sauntering was in his blood. As he indicated in Cape Cod, it would take more than "two good drying days to cure [him] of rambling" (Writings 4:217). In his Journal he mentions how "accustomed to a roaming field-life" he was, and comments on the "muscular irritability" he experienced whenever he was deprived of the walking experience (Journal 5:578). Thoreau walked so frequently, and his body was so used to the stimulation of a walk, that being unable to walk created within Thoreau a tremendous amount of pent-up psychological and physical energy. One contemporary of Thoreau's recalls one time when "he had not taken his customary outdoor exercise." Thoreau flew down from upstairs and commenced a very enthusiastic and uncharacteristic dance, much to the amusement of all who were present (Anonymous, "Reminiscences of Thoreau" 95).

Thoreau, then, was a human time bomb waiting to explode, and only his walks sufficiently defused him and allowed him to channel his energy constructively. They were necessary for his emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being. Thoreau was very conscious of the need to "be out-of-doors enough to get experience of wholesome reality, as a ballast to thought and sentiment. Health requires this relaxation, this aimless

life. This life in the present. Let a man have thought what he will of Nature in the house, she will still be novel outdoors." Thus Thoreau states, "I keep out of doors for the sake of the mineral, vegetable, and animal in me" (Journal 4:502,503).

When Thoreau satisfied his built-in need to walk, his personal chemistry so affected his walking experience that his walking style exuded his own personality. This is not surprising since walking styles usually reveal much about the individual walker:

We walk differently at different times, and the way we walk at any given moment expresses our state of mind and emotion at that moment, our content or discontent, our drive and purposefulness or our timidity, languor, indifference, despair. A walking style unmasks the feelings in all their nuances.

But it unmasks much more. It expresses our whole physical and psychological history. A habitual walking style reveals with great accuracy the individual's deepest attitudes toward the world and toward himself, attitudes of which he himself may be unaware. To those who have eyes to see and empathy to feel with him, his walk tells what he is and what he has been. (Sussman and Goode, Magic 68)

Thoreau was aware of this relationship between walking style and personality, and he used to classify and analyze people, not only by their walk, but even by their footprints. In his Journal he records:

I frequently detect the track of a foreigner by the print of the nails in his shoes, both in snow and earth; of an india-rubber, by its being less sharply edged, and, most surely, often, by the fine diamond roughening of the sole. How much we infer from the dandy's narrow heel-tap, while we pity his unsteady tread, and from the lady's narrow slipper, suggesting corns, not to say consumption. The track of the farmer's cowhides, whose carpet-tearing tacks in the heel frequently rake the ground several inches before his foot finds a resting place, suggests weight and impetus. (Journal 7:845)

In the same Journal Thoreau comments further about the characteristics revealed about a walker by his walk: "Why do laborers so commonly turn out their feet more than the class still called gentlemen, apparently

pushing themselves along by the sides of their feet? I think you can tell the track of a clown from that of a gentleman, though he should wear a gentleman's boots" (Journal 7:843). One rather lengthy Journal discussion emphasizes Thoreau's interest in the relationship between a man's walk and his identity:

Coming home last night in the twilight, I recognized a neighbor a dozen rods off by his walk or carriage, though it was so dark that I could not see a single feature of his person. Indeed, his person was all covered up excepting his face and hands, and I could not possibly have distinguished these at this distance from another man's. Nor was it owing to any peculiarity in his dress, for I should have known him though he had had on a perfectly new suit. It was because the man within the clothes moved them in a peculiar manner that I knew him thus at once at a distance and in the twilight. He made a certain figure in any clothes he might wear, and moved in it in a peculiar manner. Indeed, we have a very intimate knowledge of one another; we see through thick and thin; spirit meets spirit. A man hangs out innumerable signs by which we may know him. . . . So I remember to have been sure once in a very dark night who was preceding me on the sidewalk,--though I could not see him,--by the sound of his tread. I was surprised to find that I knew it.

And to-day, seeing a peculiar very long track of a man in the snow, who has been along up the river this morning, I guessed that it was George Melvin, because it was accompanied by a hound's track. There was a thin snow on the ice, and I observed that he not only furrowed the snow for a foot before he completed his step, but that the (toe) of his track was always indefinite, as if his boot had been worn out and prolonged at the toe. I noticed that I and my companion made a clear and distinct track at the toe, but when I experimented, and tried to make a track like this by not lifting my feet but gliding and partly scuffing along, I found myself walking just like Melvin, and that perfectly convinced me that it was he. . . .

It may always be a question how much or how little of a man goes to any particular act. It is not merely by taking time and by a conscious effort that he betrays himself. A man is revealed, and a man is concealed, in a myriad unexpected ways. . . . (13:1584)

Thoreau's own walking stride epitomized his direct approach to life. E. W. Emerson remembered Thoreau's gait this way: "When he walked to get over the ground one thought of a tireless machine, seeing his long,

direct, uniform pace; but his body was active and well balanced, and his step could be light, as of one who could leap or dance or skate well at will" (2). Sanborn was "struck" with Thoreau's "peculiar stride which all who have walked with him remember" ("The Personality of Thoreau" 98). Some have compared Thoreau's walk to the deliberate step of an Indian, noting that when Thoreau walked, he looked directly ahead yet had an Indian-like ability to observe everything (Stearns, "Sketches" 78,79). Others have noted the similarity between Thoreau's determined stride and that of a soldier: "He had a long, measured stride and an erect carriage which made him seem something like a soldier" (Hoar, "Autobiography" 109). However differently Thoreau's walk struck people, all agreed that its no-nonsense, direct approach matched his strident personality and confrontational approach to life and to nature. One could know much about Henry Thoreau just by watching him march down the streets of Concord or saunter in the woods.

One personality trait--his particularity--was especially evident in Thoreau's walking experience. He had strong feelings about how the walker should go about the walk itself; details were important. Mary Hosmer Brown, a contemporary of Thoreau's, recounts that "to take a walk with Thoreau, one must rigidly adhere to the manners of the woods." Thoreau could not tolerate walking with someone who would not be quiet and still when the situation called for it ("Memories of Concord" 150,151).

The amount of vigor the walker employed was also important to Thoreau. Walking should be a buoyant, enthusiastic experience: "There must be respiration as well as aspiration--We should not walk on tiptoe,

but healthily expand to our full circumference on the soles of our feet" (Journal [Princeton] 1:213). The walker's stride should match the fervor of his spirit: "Every time he steps buoyantly up--he steps solidly down again, and stands the firmer on the ground for his independence upon it. We should fetch the whole-heel-sole-and toe--horizontally down to earth" (Journal [Princeton] 1:213,214). The walker's posture also concerned Thoreau who felt that "a man should be collected and earnest in his bearing--moving like one and not several, like an arrow with a feather for its rudder--and not like a handful of feathers bound to a rod,--or a disorderly equipage which does not move unanimously" (Journal [Princeton] 1:171). Even the walking pace deserves attention. Just as "nature never makes haste," the saunterer should avoid undue hurry, pacing himself with the rhythms of nature. "The wise man abides there where he is, as some walkers actually rest the whole body at each step, while others never relax the muscles of the leg till the accumulated fatigue obliges them to stop short" (Journal [Princeton] 1:81).

Thoreau was particular as well about the clothing and equipment which a walker should have, and his concern about these matters reveals primarily his utilitarian side. Thoreau's approach to dressing and outfitting for a journey was very practical, and therefore very compatible with the no-frills approach to life with which he seemed most comfortable. His Walden experiment revealed that his interest in external things was primarily a pragmatic one. Thus, when choosing clothes and equipment, he considered what would work best for the walking conditions, not what was most convenient or fashionable.

According to Harding, he often wore a clay-colored pair of corduroy

trousers which would "not only help to camouflage him in the field but would not soil quickly" (Days 349). Even Thoreau's friends disapproved of his plain walking attire, but this did not bother him in the least (Days 349,350). Thoreau's comments in Walden concerning clothing help one understand his practical approach to walking apparel. Thoreau argues that clothing serves man by keeping him warm and covering his nakedness (21). Clothing also becomes so assimilated with the wearer's own character that he hesitates to part with it when it is worn and old. Patches and worn clothing are often evidences of a strong character (21,22), and new enterprises call, not for new clothes, but new wearers of clothes. "If you have any enterprise before you, try it in your old clothes" (23). Thoreau's Transcendental emphasis is on the internal, not the external, and thus it is the walker himself which receives the greater concern, not his clothes.

Thoreau discusses in "A Yankee in Canada" his commitment to dressing and traveling practically:

I never wear my best coat on a journey, though perchance I could show a certificate to prove that I have a more costly one, at least, at home, if that were all that a gentleman required. It is not wise for a traveler to go dressed. I should no more think of it than of putting on a clean dicky and blacking my shoes to go a-fishing; as if you were going out to dine, when, in fact, the genuine traveler is going out to work hard, and fare harder,--to eat a crust by the wayside whenever he can get it. Honest traveling is about as dirty work as you can do, and a man needs a pair of overalls for it. As for blacking my shoes in such a case, I should as soon think of blacking my face. I carry a piece of tallow to preserve the leather and keep out the water; that's all; and many an officious shoe-black, who carried off my shoes when I was slumbering, mistaking me for a gentleman, has had occasion to repent it before he produced a gloss on them. (Writings 5:31,32)

Thoreau's concern for practical walking apparel even extended to the use of suspenders. After observing a haymaker with suspenders "crossed

before as well as behind," Thoreau decided to cross his suspenders the same way since his had been slipping off his shoulders while he walked (Journal 8:1029).

His practicality is quite apparent in Journal entries like the following which reveal how he handled his clothing during his walks-- "Leave off flannel. Yesterday and to-day uncomfortably warm when walking" (13:1634); "It is a cool and windy morning, and I have donned a thick coat for a walk" (3:278), but his practicality and particularity are even more apparent in his Journal references to the walker's footwear.

A walker, of course, would pay special attention to his boots and shoes which housed the feet he relied so heavily upon to carry him through the walk. Thoreau's Journal makes clear that he gave considerable thought to his footwear, especially in wintertime when protecting the feet is so important. Thoreau matched his winter footwear to the different conditions which he faced:

At first, in clear cold weather, we may be walking on dry snow, which we crunch with squeaking sound under our feet. Then comes a thaw, and we slump about in slosh half a foot deep. Then, in a single night, the surface of the earth is all dried and stiffened, and we stagger over the rough, frozen ground and ice on which it is torture to walk. It becomes quite a study how a man will shoe himself for a winter. For outdoor life in winter, I use three kinds of shoes or boots: first and chiefly, for the ordinary dry snows or bare ground, cowhide boots; secondly, for shallow thaws, half-shoe depth, and spring weather, light boots and india-rubbers; third, for the worst sloshy weather, about a week in the year, india-rubber boots. (6:695)

Thoreau wore boots to protect himself from being cut by meadow grass (7:907), and he wore them in order to "wade through the shallow water where [frogs] were found" (10:1272).

Thoreau's particularity is especially evident in his concern for how

one walked in his boots. He knew firsthand the footwear needs of the naturalist, and shoddy bootmaking or improper walking upset him. Thoreau complained in his Journal that most men, when walking in the outdoors, "ignore the worlds above and below, keep straight along, and do not run their boots down at the heel as I do. How to keep the heels up I have been obliged to study carefully, turning the nigh foot painfully on side-hills" (5:541). More unforgivable were the shoemakers who, "to save a few iron heel-pegs, do not complete the rows on the inside by three or four,--the very place in the whole boot where they are most needed,--which has fatal consequences to the buyer. . . . It is as if you put no underpinning under one corner of your house" (5:541). Thoreau equipped himself with sturdy boots, and he was proud of the fact that by walking properly, he could "cross very wet and miry places dry-shod by moving rapidly on [his] heels" (5:541).

Thoreau's concern for footwear was so particular that his Journal records his interest in shoestrings and laces and the best ways to tie them, something more relevant to walkers than to others: "I always use leather strings tied in a hard knot; they untie but too easily even then" (5:541). Thoreau's frustration with keeping his shoes tied led to this humorous but informative commentary:

I have for years had a great deal of trouble with my shoe-strings, because they get untied continually. They are leather, rolled and tied in a hard knot. But some days I could hardly go twenty rods before I was obliged to stop and stoop to tie my shoes. My companion and I speculated on the distance to which one tying would carry you,--the length of a shoe-tie,--and we thought it nearly as appreciable and certainly a more simple and natural measure of distance than a stadium, or league, or mile. Ever and anon we raised our feet on whatever fence or wall or rock or stump we chanced to be passing, and drew the strings once more, pulling as hard as we could. It was very vexatious, when passing through low scrubby bushes, to become

conscious that the strings were already getting loose again before we had fairly started. What would we have done if pursued by a tribe of Indians? (5:611,612)

Thoreau attempted several things to solve this pesky problem, though he did not go as far as his companion who tried walking without any shoestrings at all. This was too "loose" a procedure for Thoreau (5:612). Thoreau purchased special shoestrings "made of the hide of a South American jackass," but these were no better than his other ones. He "thought of strings with recurved prickles and various other remedies," all to no avail. Finally, while experimenting with knot tying, he mastered the square knot and tied his shoes so well that his only difficulty was in untying them. He thought that all children should be taught this knot to save them the trouble he had gone through (5:612). So rigorous was Thoreau's walking, that this square knot needed "to be as secure as a reef-knot in any gale, to withstand the wringing and twisting" which resulted from his walks (7:907).

As with his interest in the walker's clothing and footwear, Thoreau's utilitarian nature is evident in his concern for the walker's equipment. He held that no walker should venture forth ill-equipped. Thoreau advocated travelling light but practically. In "A Yankee in Canada" he mentions that he kept a "list of those articles which, from frequent experience, [he] found indispensable to the foot-traveler." Whenever he prepared to travel on a lengthy journey, he would consult this list to make sure that he was properly equipped for sauntering (32). Thoreau's list included a handkerchief for carrying things in and an umbrella. He considered himself a knight of the umbrella and the bundle, and he disdained anyone who travelled with excess baggage: "Even the elephant

carries but a small trunk on his journeys. The perfection of traveling is to travel without baggage" (Writings 5:33).

Thoreau's walking experience is particularly revealing of another of his key traits--perseverance. Though Thoreau was "short and rather ungainly in figure" (Hoar "Autobiography" 109), he possessed a physical and mental adeptness for walking which suited him for arduous walks. Emerson described this special fitness for walking in his eulogy for Thoreau:

But Mr. Thoreau was equipped with a most adapted and serviceable body. . . . His senses were acute, his frame well-knit and hardy, his hands strong and skillful in the use of tools. And there was a wonderful fitness of body and mind. He could pace sixteen rods more accurately than another man could measure them with rod and chain. He could find his path in the woods at night, he said, better by his feet than his eyes. . . . He was a good swimmer, runner, skater, boatman, and would probably outwalk most countrymen in a day's journey. ("Thoreau" 28; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau's undaunted approach to life was paralleled in his walking experience by the perseverance and tenacity which he exhibited. Ellery Channing's description of these qualities in Thoreau the Poet Naturalist is revealing:

He [Thoreau] was known among the lads of his age as one who did not fear mud or water, nor paused to lift his followers over a ditch. So in his later journeys, if his companion was footsore and loitered, he steadily pursued the road, making his strength self-serviceable. . . . That wildness that in him nothing could subdue still lay beneath his culture. Once when a follower was done up with headache and incapable of motion, hoping his associate would comfort him and perhaps afford him a sip of tea, he said, "There are people who are sick in that way every morning, and go about their affairs," and then marched off about his. In such limits, so inevitable, was he compacted. (6)

Thoreau took pride in his stamina and recorded in one journal entry Channing's admiration of it: "C. [Channing] kept up an incessant strain of wit, banter, about my legs, which were so springy and unweariable,

declared I had got my double legs on, that they were not cork but steel, that I should . . . have sent them to the World's Fair. . . ." (Journal 3:298).

One can see that walking was an activity which was well-suited to Thoreau's personality. It freed his Transcendental side, allowing him the independence and freedom which he required, and it catered to his practical side, channeling his practicality, particularity, and determination.

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, walking was a daily, integral part of Thoreau's unique approach to life, a vehicle by which he sought to front the cosmos and discover ultimate truth. Edwin Fussell's assertion that Thoreau's walks "were the source and structure of all he wished to be, to know, and to write about" ("Red Face" 143) appropriately emphasizes, as does Thoreau's own Journal record, the central and formative nature of Thoreau's sauntering experience. Matched to his Transcendental beliefs and to his own unique personality, walking offered Thoreau the most desirable form of travel, and he walked as often as he could, soberly dedicating himself to the sauntering life.

CHAPTER II

THE SAUNTERING EXPLORER: THE EXTERIOR

Most of Thoreau's daily walks, which the previous chapter demonstrated were so important to him, were devoted to exploring. Exploring, like walking, was in Thoreau's blood. He had an insatiable, childlike curiosity which motivated many of his saunterings. As Walter Harding notes, "Thoreau was always a boy at heart" who "never lost his sense of wonder" (Days 355). Like a boy, he "fairly itched with inquiries" (Cook, Passage 191) and felt compelled to follow wherever the inquiries of his mind led him. Thoreau's inquisitiveness fed his desire to take a walk "as strange as Dante's imaginary one to L'Inferno or Paradiso" in order to explore and probe the realms of nature (Journal 9:1175).

Thoreau's enthusiasm for exploration is evident in the following observation:

I am reminded by my journey how exceedingly new this country is. You have only to travel for a few days into the interior and back parts even of many of the old states, to come to that very America which the Northmen, and Cabot, and Gosnold, and Smith and Raleigh visited. If Columbus was the first to discover the islands, Americus Vespucius, and Cabot, and the Puritans, and we their descendants, have discovered only the shores of America. While the republic has already acquired a history worldwide, America is still unsettled and unexplored. (Maine Woods 81)

Thoreau was a dedicated saunterer who felt the call to explore. When he considered the landscape around him, he sensed the exciting potential for walkers like himself who, though they lived in the wake of the original explorers, could still make their own discoveries. The early adventurers had left plenty for walkers like Thoreau to explore: "We have

advanced by leaps to the Pacific, and left many a lesser Oregon and California unexplored behind us" (Maine Woods 82).

Though Thoreau felt that applying one's perceptions to the landscape and exploring it was the tonic of life, that "village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it" (Walden 317), most of his contemporaries were slow to sense the possibilities of discovery in their environment and experiences. While Thoreau sauntered, ferreting out the secrets of Nature, his townsmen sat on their porches "practising [sic] idle and musty virtues" (Walden 331). While Thoreau responded to the "incessant influx of novelty into the world," his countrymen tolerated "incredible dulness" (Walden 332). One aspect, then, of Thoreau's walking experience which set him apart from his neighbors was his penchant to explore and probe the world around him. Though most of his townsmen saw little promise in exploring a land that had been explored and settled so long before, Thoreau embarked on many of his walks prepared to discover and rediscover the secrets and truths which Nature might yield to his own transcendental quest.

The walks which Thoreau took to satisfy his curiosity about nature involved the most basic level of his saunterings--his study of natural phenomena. Thoreau's first task when exploring was to establish contact with nature's varied surfaces and to study its external manifestations. This step preceded the more Transcendental phases of his exploratory rambles, considered in the next chapter. Examining, as this chapter will, how walking provided Thoreau with an appropriate travel mode for exploring nature's surface features and how he went about planning and implementing his local and non-local walking explorations will help

reveal the comprehensive nature of his walking experience and the central role that walking played in Thoreau's efforts to study every feature of the landscape.

Fortunately for Thoreau, his need to walk and his desire to explore were very compatible. "All walking," as Borland notes, "is discovery. On foot we take the time to see things whole" ("Streets and Fields" 11). Walking allows the explorer to apply his senses freely to his discovery adventure, to stop and observe when necessary, and to reach areas inaccessible to those travelling in other ways. Descriptions such as this--"We found the traveling good enough for walkers on the sides of the roads, though it was 'heavy' for horses in the middle" (Cape Cod 31)--reveal the advantages a sauntering explorer like Thoreau enjoys over those traveling in some other way. Thoreau's painstaking study of the Concord forests to determine the origin of mixed woods was only possible because of the careful scrutiny of the forests which walking made possible. For example, his walk to a pine grove yielded this report:

But on looking carefully along over its floor I discovered, though it was not till my eye had got used to the search, that, alternating with thin ferns, and small blueberry bushes, there was, not merely here and there, but as often as every five feet and with a degree of regularity, a little oak, from three to twelve inches high, and in one place I found a green acorn dropped by the base of a pine. ("The Succession of Forest Trees" Writings 5:192)

Traveling in any other fashion would not have made possible such careful observations.

Thus walking allowed Thoreau, better than any other travel mode could, to discover, chase, and capture Nature's secrets. Fittingly, Bronson Alcott described Thoreau as "abroad night and day with his leash of keen scents, hounding any game stirring, and running it down, for

certain, to be spread on the dresser of his page, and served as a feast to the sound intelligences, before he has done with it" (Alcott "The Forester" 445). The Concord environment which "afforded by means of easy strolls a wide spectrum of habitats to delight the foot-loose naturalist," provided Thoreau with the perfect opportunity to pursue his "principal profession as a walker and reporter of the seasons" (Worster Nature's Economy 62).

How Thoreau prepared for his walks had much to do with the success or failure of his explorations. Thus one of the most important and interesting aspects of Thoreau's sauntering explorations is the preparation he made for many of his walks. Most of Thoreau's walks were very calculated adventures which produced predictable but rewarding discoveries. John Christie observes that "the excursions which Thoreau took were planned like those excursions undertaken by the most conscientious explorers." Thoreau was very careful about his clothing and his equipment when he prepared for serious hiking (Traveler 59). Channing, Thoreau's most faithful walking companion, provides this description of Thoreau's careful preparation for his sauntering explorations:

Before he set out on a foot journey, he collected every information as to the routes and the place to which he was going, through the maps and guide-books. For Massachusetts he had the large State map divided in portions convenient, and carried in a cover such parts as he wanted: he deemed this map, for his purposes, excellent. Once he made for himself a knapsack, with partitions for his books and paper,--india-rubber cloth, strong and large and spaced (the common knapsacks being unspaced). The partitions were made of stout book-paper. His route being known, he made a list of all he should carry,--the sewing materials never forgotten (as he was a vigorous walker, and did not stick at a hedge more than an English racer), the pounds of bread, the sugar, salt, and tea carefully decided on. After trying the merit of cocoa, coffee, water, and the like,

tea was put down as the felicity of a walking "travail,"--tea plenty, strong, with enough sugar, made in a tin pint cup; thus it may be said the walker will be refreshed and grow intimate with tea leaves. With him the botany must go too, and the book for pressing flowers . . . , and the guide-book, spy-glass, and measuring-tape. . . . He commended every party to carry "a junk of heavy cake" with plums in it, having found by long experience that after toil it was a capital refreshment. (Poet-Naturalist 41,42)

Channing also mentions that Thoreau often travelled with an umbrella which helped protect him when rain and foul weather threatened his explorations (42).

Certain entries in Thoreau's Journal reinforce Channing's view of Thoreau's meticulous approach to the walking experience. Thoreau felt that careful preparation would produce walks which would avoid unnecessary distractions and pitfalls while yielding important discoveries. He recorded this advice in his Journal:

I should say: Never undertake to ascend a mountain or thread a wilderness where there is any danger of being lost, without taking thick clothing, partly india-rubber, if not a tent or material for one; the best map to be had and a compass; salt pork and hard-bread and salt; fish-hooks and lines; a good jack-knife, at least, if not a hatchet, and perhaps a gun; matches in a vial stopped water-tight; some strings and paper. Do not take a dozen steps which you could not with tolerable accuracy protract on a chart. I never do otherwise. Indeed, you must have been living all your life in some such methodical and assured fashion, though in the midst of cities, else you will be lost in spite of all this preparation. (9:259,260; emphasis supplied)

As suggested in this entry, preparation was a principle with Thoreau. In actual practice, he was not always so careful to follow a map or avoid getting lost as he would lead the reader to think, but he did believe in the paramount importance of being adequately prepared for a walking experience, especially if the walk was to take place in unfamiliar or dangerous territory. His concern was consistent:

I think that a wise and independent, self-reliant man will have a complete list of the edibles to be found in a primitive country or wilderness, a bill of fare, in his waistcoat pocket at least, to say nothing of matches and warm clothing, so that he can commence a systematic search for them without loss of time. . . . Why, a truly prudent man will carry such a list as the above, in his mind at least, even though he walk through Broadway or Quincy Market. He will know what are the permanent resources of the land and be prepared for the hardest of times. (Journal 12:1531)

Thoreau believed in being prepared for emergencies, but he was equally concerned with being ready for discoveries. His careful planning included the assemblage of equipment which would improve his ability to make discoveries while on his rambles. Much of this equipment, such as the botany book and book for pressing flowers mentioned by Channing (Poet-Naturalist 42), were a consistent part of Thoreau's walks. Canby mentions additional items including "a stick notched for measuring, a stout cord, a strong knife," and a "spy glass for birds" which allowed Thoreau to observe larger birds like ducks but proved relatively useless for smaller fowl like warblers and sparrows (Thoreau 311). Thoreau wanted every advantage when he foraged into nature, and he carefully selected what to take on his walks so that he would have what he needed once a discovery was made. A good example of his ability to improvise and prepare for discoveries is his use of a hat to preserve botany finds, a strategy which inspired this Journal commentary:

I am inclined to think that my hat, whose lining is gathered in midway so as to make a shelf, is about as good a botany-box as I could have and far more convenient, and there is something in the darkness and the vapors that arise from the head--at least if you take a bath--which preserves the flowers through a long walk. Flowers will frequently come fresh out of this botany-box at the end of the day, though they have had no sprinkling. (4:433)

Thus in the most creative as well as practical ways, Thoreau prepared to

walk safely and productively into nature, ready to discover its secrets and the truths which they would reveal.

Physical and material readiness were important to Thoreau, but mental preparation was even more crucial when it came to the task of making discoveries. Unless the saunterer's outlook is correct, the other preparations avail little. The real secret of the act of discovery resides within the explorer's own mind; his attitude determines the exploration outcome:

It is remarkable that men do not sail the sea with more expectation. Nothing remarkable was ever accomplished in a prosaic mood. The heroes and discoverers have found true more than was previously believed, only when they were expecting and dreaming of something more than their contemporaries dreamed of, or even themselves discovered, that is, when they were in a frame of mind fitted to behold the truth. . . . (Cape Cod 121)

Thoreau firmly believed in the relationship between the explorer's expectancy and a discovery related to his expectancy. This was the psychological principle which guided his walking explorations; he found that he discovered what he mentally prepared himself to discover, that his own powers of suggestion yielded concrete fruits in Nature's vineyard. In his Journal he recorded that "we may detect that some sort of preparation and faint expectation preceded every discovery we have made. We blunder into no discovery but it will appear that we have prayed and disciplined ourselves for it" (9:1065). Time and again Thoreau experienced the fruits of this process in his walks:

It commonly chanced that I make my most interesting botanical discoveries when I [am] in a thrilled and expectant mood, perhaps wading in some remote swamp where I have just found something novel and feel more than usually remote from the town. Or some rare plant which for some reason has occupied a strangely prominent place in my thoughts for some time will present itself. My expectation ripens to discovery. I am prepared for strange things. (9:1065,1066; emphasis supplied)

As Reginald Cook notes, Thoreau seemed to have the "uncanny knack of knowing where to find the objects of his expectation. He knew that the discoverer must take his discovery into his head first." The walker would discover what he had first seen in his head, and, conversely, he would fail to discover what he had not visualized beforehand (190).

Thoreau's saunterings provide an interesting example of the concept of mind over matter. In typical Transcendental fashion, the saunterer's mind or good genius controls his senses and leads him to the quarry he seeks. When the inner image fails, the external stimulus fails as well. The inner picture must be attuned to the outer one for the walker to make the discovery he seeks. Thoreau attempted to clarify this important aspect of his walking experience in his Journal:

Objects are concealed from our view not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray . . . as because there is no intention of the mind and eye toward them. . . . There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate,—not a grain more. The actual objects which one person will see from a particular hilltop are just as different from those which another will see as the persons are different. The scarlet oak must, in a sense, be in your eye when you go forth. We cannot see anything until we are possessed with the idea of it, and then we can hardly see anything else. In my botanical rambles I find that first the idea, or image, of a plant occupies my thoughts, though it may at first seem very foreign to this locality, and for some weeks or months I go thinking of it and expecting it unconsciously, and at length I surely see it, and it is henceforth an actual neighbor of mine. This is the history of my finding a score or more of rare plants which I could name. (11:1385,1386; emphasis supplied)

As Thoreau makes clear, it is the walker's inner vision which guides him; the outer vision is helpless without it. We fail to see things "because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them; for there is no power to see in the eye itself, any more than in any other jelly" ("Autumnal Tints" Writings 5:285; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau's exploratory process contrasts sharply with the existential conundrum described by Martin Heidegger which the modern explorer faces. Thoreau sought the concrete manifestations of nature, but modern man, according to Heidegger, seeks "nothing." If, as Thoreau and Heidegger both maintain, man will only discover what he anticipates, one dilemma for the modern explorer is how to anticipate "nothing" in order to discover it. Thoreau could envision the discovery of a plant or other concrete reality, but how does one expect to find "nothing"? This is the problem which fascinates Heidegger:

Where shall we seek the nothing? Where will we find the nothing? In order to find something must we not already know in general that it is there? Indeed! At first and for the most part man can seek only when he has anticipated the being at hand of what he is looking for. Now the nothing is what we are seeking. Is there ultimately such a thing as a search without that anticipation, a search to which pure discovery belongs? (Basic Writings 100; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau, of course, faced no such difficulty. As a nineteenth-century explorer, he sought to discover concrete phenomena; the abstract "nothing" which Heidegger refers to was not of interest to him. Thus Thoreau, like many pre-existential explorers, successfully anticipated the concrete discoveries which he made.

An important part of Thoreau's process of anticipation was his adept sense of timing. Thoreau could anticipate when and where to walk in order to make the discoveries he sought:

A man must attend to Nature closely for many years to know when, as well as where, to look for his objects, since he must always anticipate her a little. Young men have not learned the phases of Nature; they do not know what constitutes a year, or that one year is like another. I would know when in the year to expect certain thoughts and moods, as the sportsman knows when to look for plover. (Journal 12:1519)

Thus the walker would consider things like the time of day, the season of

the year, and the specific environment to be explored as he fashioned his particular expectation of what might be discovered.

With expectations based upon time and place, the saunterer roves through Nature, his sauntering eye alert to the images in his head. His focused perspective allows him to see what others might not see, to discover what others might miss. After observing a bird during one of his rambles, Thoreau noted in his Journal:

At length the walker who sits meditating on a distant bank sees the little dipper sail out from amid the weeds and busily dive for its food along their edge. Yet ordinary eyes might range up and down the river all day and never detect its small black head above the water.

It requires a different intention of the eye in the same locality to see different plants. . . . How much more, then, it requires different intentions of the eye and of the mind to attend to different departments of knowledge! How differently the poet and the naturalist look at objects! A man sees only what concerns him. A botanist absorbed in the pursuit of grasses does not distinguish the grandest pasture oaks. He as it were tramples down oaks unwittingly in his walk. (11:1352)

With the right sense of anticipation, and with a proper perspective, Thoreau set out on his walks to discover Nature, to see it and appreciate it in a new light. His walks, then, became an extension of his visual projection of them. Much like planning a dream and then dreaming it, Thoreau anticipated his walking adventures and then lived them out, enjoying the fruits of discovery wherever he sauntered. This particular exploration process enabled Thoreau to discover things as varied as plants—"It is a remarkable fact that, in the case of the most interesting plants which I have discovered in this vicinity, I have anticipated finding them perhaps a year before the discovery" (Journal 10:1251) and artifacts—"I never find a remarkable Indian relic—I find a good many—but I have first divined its existence, and planned the

discovery of it. Frequently I have told myself distinctly what it was to be before I found it" (Journal 14:1679).

Thus Thoreau's walking experience was significantly enriched by the physical and mental preparation he put into it. His planning for unexpected interruptions or emergencies ensured safe and profitable walking explorations. His careful assemblage of equipment prepared him to deal with any discovery which he made, and his special ability to foresee discoveries enabled him to discover what others with weaker expectations could not see. Walking, more than any other travel mode, helped him to reach the objects of his discovery which he anticipated.

Not all of Thoreau's exploratory rambles, however, were carefully planned, nor were all of his discoveries clearly anticipated. Some walks were extemporaneous, and, because of his boy-like wonder, Thoreau experienced great joy when these more spontaneous walks led him to sudden and unexpected discoveries. He loved to read accounts of the discoveries made by the first explorers to a given region (Journal 9:1110), and he revelled in the ecstasy derived from his own unexpected finds: "No man ever makes a discovery, ever an observation of the least importance, but he is advertised of the fact by a joy that surprises him. The powers thus celebrate all discovery" (Journal 4:473). He could not "conceive of anything so surprising and thrilling but that something more surprising may be actually presented to us" (Journal 10:1196).

Thoreau's writings contain a number of references to unexpected discoveries made during his saunterings. These finds, made possible by the extended reach of his walks, filled his life with a special and intense exuberance. After one walk during which he had suddenly come

across a particular plant, he recorded in his Journal:

How sweet is the perception of a new natural fact! suggesting what worlds remain to be unveiled. That phenomenon of the andromeda seen against the sun cheers me exceedingly. When the phenomenon was not observed, it was not at all. I think that no man ever takes an original [sic], or detects a principle, without experiencing an inexpressible, as quite infinite and sane, pleasure, which advertises him of the dignity of the truth he has perceived. The thing that pleases me most within these three days is the discovery of the andromeda phenomenon. It makes all those parts of the country where it grows more attractive and elysian to me. It is a natural magic. These little leaves are the stained windows in the cathedral of my world. At sight of any redness I am excited like a cow. (3:441,442)

Thoreau's response to finding some phosphorescent wood during a Maine Wood's excursion proved equally exciting: "I was exceedingly interested by this phenomenon, and already felt paid for my journey. It could hardly have thrilled me more if it had taken the form of letters, or of the human face. . . . I little thought that there was such light shining in the darkness of the wilderness for me" (Maine Woods 180).

The act of walking made such discoveries seem all the more unexpected. The saunterer could travel through thick woods, unaware of what might be on the other side. Just turning a corner or reaching the other side of a woods might yield an unforeseen prospect. Such was Thoreau's experience one July day when, breaking through a "thick wood," he "unexpectedly came into a long, narrow, winding, and very retired blueberry swamp," one that he "did not know existed there. A spot" that was "seemingly untrodden . . . for the most part dry to the feet and with no print of man or beast. . ." (Journal 5:341). The process of such discoveries, walking through difficult terrain while heading toward the unknown, sharpens the saunterer's reaction to the discovery:

Thus hedged about these places are, so that it is only at some

late year that you stumble upon them. Crouching you thread your way amid some dense shrub oak wood some day, descending next through the almost impenetrable hedge, and stand to your surprise on the edge of this fair open meadow with a bottom of unfathomed mud, as retired and novel as if it were a thousand miles removed from your ordinary walks. Not penetrable except in mid-summer. It is as far off as Persia from Concord (Journal 5:342).

Rambling cross-country or along the road could yield the same results. Thoreau's sudden discovery of berry patches along a road evoked this reaction: "I seem to have wandered into a land of greater fertility, some up-country Eden. Are not these the delectable hills? It is a land flowing with milk and honey. Great shining blackberries peep out at me from under the leaves upon the rocks" (Journal 6:403). Thoreau seemed readily transported to his own private paradise whenever his sauntering explorations yielded new discoveries.

Whether planned or extemporaneous, Thoreau's walks led him away from the city and into the wilderness as he sought to establish contact with nature's surface and to study its various manifestations. Following Emerson's call to "interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around us . . . to inquire to what end is nature" ("Nature" Complete Works 1:4), Thoreau walked into the countryside to probe its secrets, but his approach to exploration differed significantly from Emerson's. As Tony Tanner indicates, Emerson's very abstract view of nature allowed him to engage more in "meditative excursions," but Thoreau found himself literally traversing the landscape, drawn to the "solid, angular, three dimensional world outside of himself" (53). Thoreau sought a nature "you cannot put your foot through" (54), and it was through the contact of his feet with nature that he linked with its concreteness, as the following passage from Cape Cod illustrates:

There I had got the Cape under me, as much as if I were riding it barebacked. It was not as on the map, or seen from the stage-coach; but there I found it all out of doors, huge and real, Cape Cod! as it cannot be represented on a map, color it as you will; the thing itself, than which there is nothing more like it, no truer picture or account; which you cannot go farther and see. (64,65)

Emerson might content himself with exploring the Cape by reading about it. Thoreau had to have the Cape under his feet. He had to make contact with what he studied.

Though he ultimately pursued transcendental truths, Thoreau found it necessary to touch base physically with his environment before he could pierce its physical exterior and glean its hidden, abstract gems. Thoreau was not a mystical yoga who could passively meditate and discover life's secrets. His feet had to touch nature's surface; he had to establish physical contact with nature's exterior before he could complete his quest by probing the surface for hidden meanings and insights. This is one reason why walking was so important to Thoreau. The physical contact with the earth which it provided made possible his transcendental quest for the unknown and the unseen.

As an explorer, then, Thoreau's first task was to make contact with nature's surface. This process would in time lead him to deeper probings, but the surface exploration, which walking allowed him to accomplish so well, received first attention. When Thoreau's feet made contact with nature's surface, his senses, directed by his intuition, discovered what they could of the surrounding phenomena. In this manner, Thoreau attempted to take in all of Nature's manifestations; he comprehensively surveyed and studied its many features and physical secrets. As Cook observes, "There was no end to his private quests into

the manifold phases of nature. No professional naturalist ever applied himself to nature's varied phenomena any more assiduously than he did" (Passage 188). According to Canby, "probably no other man alive could have seen so much" (Thoreau 312). The more he explored Nature, the more ambitious his explorations became, as this Journal entry demonstrates:

I was never in the least interested in plants in the house. But from year to year we look at Nature with new eyes. About half a dozen years ago I found myself attending to plants with more method, looking out the name of each one and remembering it. I began to bring them home in my hat. . . . I remember gazing with interest at the swamps about those days and wondering if I could ever attain to such familiarity with plants that I should know the species of every twig and leaf in them, that I should be acquainted with every plant . . . that I saw. Though I knew most of the flowers, and there were not in any particular swamp more than half a dozen shrubs that I did not know, yet these made it seem like a maze to me, of a thousand strange species, and I even thought of commencing at one end and looking it faithfully and laboriously through till I knew it all. . . . I soon found myself observing when plants first blossomed and leafed, and I followed it up early and late, far and near, several years in succession, running to different sides of the town and into the neighboring towns, often between twenty and thirty miles in a day. I often visited a particular plant four or five miles distant, half a dozen times within a fortnight, that I might know exactly when it opened, beside attending to a great many others in different directions and some of them equally distant, at the same time. At the same time I had an eye for birds and whatever else might offer. (9:1091,1092)

Such a commitment to studying every feature of the landscape led to the comprehensiveness of Thoreau's walking experience as his walks attempted to keep pace with his insatiable curiosity.

Walking allowed Thoreau to explore thoroughly the Concord countryside. He walked everywhere and observed everything that he could. His search knew no bounds, as John Burroughs, a naturalist and contemporary of Thoreau's, makes clear:

From his journal it would appear that Thoreau kept nature about Concord under a sort of police surveillance the year round. He shadowed every flower and bird and musquash that appeared. His

vigilance was unceasing; not a mouse or a squirrel must leave its den without his knowledge. . . . He was up in the morning and off to some favorite haunt earlier than the day-laborers;¹ and he chronicled his observations on the spot, as if the case was to be tried in court the next day and he was the principal witness. He watched the approach of spring as a doctor watches the development of a critical case. He felt the pulse of the wind and the temperature of the day at all hours. He examined the plants growing under water, and noted the radical leaves of various weeds that keep green all winter under snow. . . . The first sight of bare ground and of the red earth excited him. The fresh meadow spring odor was to him like the fragrance of tea to an old tea-drinker. . . . (Writings 8:43).

Burroughs also notes how Thoreau sought every manifestation of every season with the greatest eagerness, anxious to grasp all the surface details which nature offered him (44).

Walking, as has been indicated, was the catalyst which made such explorations fruitful. The walk placed the saunterer physically in nature, making a special relationship with it possible:

Each phase of nature, while not invisible, is yet not too distinct and obtrusive. It is there to be found when we look for it, but not demanding our attention. It is like a silent but sympathizing companion in whose company we retain most of the advantages of solitude, with whom we can walk and talk, or be silent, naturally, without the necessity of talking in a strain foreign to the place. (Journal 11:1388; emphasis supplied)

Walking allowed Thoreau to be outdoors most of the time and to confront nature in almost any setting, something that was very important to him: "You must be outdoors long, early and late, and travel far and earnestly, in order to perceive the phenomena of the day. Even then much will escape you" (Journal 12:1513). Sauntering enabled him to examine the minute and particular, to pause and submit the surface of nature to "the closest possible inspection," and it aided him when he sought a

¹Some mornings, of course, Thoreau remained at home and did his writing.

larger view of the earth's surface, when he tried to take in the more general and comprehensive features of the landscape. "Thus he often made a mountain or hilltop the destination of his walks" (Schneider, Thoreau 112,113).

Walking aided Thoreau's explorations in several other ways. For example, despite the preparation and anticipation which preceded most walks, some rambles needed to be extended in order to be productive. This is one advantage of the walking experience; the walker directly controls his own experience. He does not have to follow the train tracks or return when a horse needs water or food. He is free to cut the walk short or to extend it according to his own purposes. Thoreau found that persistence in the walking experience often paid off: "You are commonly repaid for a longer excursion than usual, and being outdoors all day, by seeing some rarer bird for the season, as yesterday a great hawk" (Journal 7:835). A long walk, like a well-planned one, could yield special insights: "It is worth a long walk to look from some favorable point over a pine forest whose tops are thus covered with the brown cones just opened,--from which the winged seeds have fallen or are ready to fall. It is really a rich and interesting sight" (Journal 12:1515,1516).

One particular way in which walking aided Thoreau's exploration of nature's surface details was the way it allowed him to record carefully his discoveries. According to Walter Harding, the longer Thoreau studied nature, the more he attempted to register and classify his findings (Days 290). Thoreau sought to know Nature in every way possible, and he made extensive written records of his observations while on his walks. Thus Thoreau's Journal is permeated with entries based on his field notes.

Walking proved advantageous to him because it allowed him to write down any observation at the time of the observation. He could study a particular phenomenon and record it without interruption or inconvenience. The immediacy and force of many of Thoreau's Journal entries is attributable to the written record which he made of his walks while he was walking. These notes carry the impact of the moment of truth or insight with which they are associated. Thus writing down an observation at the time, made possible by the leisure which walking affords, made such records accurate and vivid.

In much the same way, walking aided Thoreau when he collected specimens for further study. It allowed Thoreau to collect and carry many different objects which he wished to study further. His large pockets proved ample shelter for such prizes, and, excepting very large objects—the one drawback of not having a horse, wagon, or train to help him with carrying such oversize items—he would carry home with him "objects of all kinds,—pieces of wood or stone, lichens, seeds, nuts, apples, or whatever he had found for his uses. For he was a vigorous collector, never omitting to get and keep every possible thing in his direction of study" (Channing, Poet-Naturalist 66,67). During his saunterings, Thoreau collected whatever was valuable to him, regardless of the value others placed on such things: "What I put into my pocket, whether berry or apple, generally has to keep company with an arrowhead or two. . . . These are the perennial crop of Concord fields. If they were sure it would pay, we should see farmers raking the fields for them" (Journal 12:1531).

One further advantage of walking to an explorer like Thoreau was that

it enabled the walker to apply his senses directly to the physical landscape. Nothing artificial intervened between the saunterer and the environment. When rambling, Thoreau ferreted out nature's secrets through his sensual interaction with the physical landscape. Certainly his sense of sight, sharpened beforehand by visualization and anticipation exercises, made him a sharp observer of nature's surface phenomena. For example, while sauntering one day, Thoreau noticed that the "surface of the railroad causeway" had been marked by a storm in such a way that one could tell from which direction the rain came. "All this is perfectly distinct to an observant eye," he noted, "and yet could easily pass unnoticed by most" (Journal 14:1751). Thoreau's observant eye, aided by the various perspectives of the landscape which walking afforded him, missed very little. Thoreau was a hunter, visually seeking his quarry: "For Thoreau the act of observation, the perception and assimilation of fact, was a kind of sublimated hunt" (Slotkin, Violence 519).

Thus Thoreau visually raked the landscape, gleaning what less observant people readily missed, including apples:

My apple harvest! It is to glean after the husbandman and the cows, or to gather the crop of those wild trees far away on the edges of swamps which have escaped their notice. Now, when it is generally all fallen, if indeed any is left, though you would not suppose there were any on the first survey, nevertheless with experienced eyes I explore amid the clumps of alder . . . and in the crevices of the rocks full of leaves, and prying under the fallen and decaying ferns which, with apple and alder leaves, thickly strew the ground. From amid the leaves anywhere within the circumference of the tree, I draw forth the fruit, all wet and glossy, nibbled by rabbits and hollowed out by crickets, but still with the bloom on it and at least as ripe and well kept, if not better than those in barrels, while those which lay exposed are quite brown and rotten. . . . I fill my pockets on each side, and as I retrace my steps, I eat one first from this side, and then from that, in order to preserve my

balance. And here and there is one lodged as it fell between the bases of the suckers which spring thickly from a horizontal limb. In the midst of an alder clump, covered by leaves, there it lies, safe from cows which might smell it out and unobserved by the husbandman; reserved for me. (Journal 11:1387)

As he did with these apples, Thoreau visually explored every aspect of the landscape; every surface feature became familiar to him. According to a contemporary of Thoreau's, Samuel Higginson, "Every living thing, every leaf and flower, were known to him, nor did the smallest objects of interest escape the glance of his observing eye. There was no corner of the way but it contained something for him, though others might look in vain to find it" ("Henry D. Thoreau" 11).

Other aspects of walking aided Thoreau in his quest to explore sensually the landscape. Walking allowed him to touch nature freely, to feel its surface; it allowed him to taste and smell an apple or a berry, to sip a drink of water or touch a plant or animal, and to listen uninterrupted to the surface sounds of the natural world. Every aspect of the walking experience fostered his sensual exploration; sauntering provided the explorer with the leisure and the liberty to apply every sense freely to the environment which he placed himself in. In particular, the isolation and quiet that the walking experience provided ensured the walker's quick response to whatever sensory stimuli the landscape furnished. Typical is this walking experience involving the senses of sight, touch, and hearing, which Thoreau had on a cold, January day:

In the deep hollow this side of Britton's Camp, I heard a singular buzzing sound from the ground, exactly like that of a large fly or bee in a spider's web. I kneeled down, and with pains traced it to a small bare spot as big as my hand, amid the snow, and searched there amid the grass stubble for several minutes, putting the grass aside with my fingers, till, when I

got nearest to the spot, not knowing but I might be stung, I used a stick. The sound was incessant, like that of a large fly in agony, but though it made my ears ache, and I had my stick directly on the spot, I could find neither prey nor oppressor. At length I found that I interrupted or changed the tone with my stick, and so traced it to a few spires of dead grass occupying about a quarter of an inch in diameter and standing in the melted snow water. When I bent these one side it produced a duller and baser tone. It was a sound issuing from the earth, and as I stooped over it, the thought came over me that it might be the first puling infantine cry of an earthquake, which would ere long engulf[sic] me. There was no bubble in the water. Perhaps it was air confined under the frozen ground, now expanded by the thaw, and escaping upward through the water by a hollow grass stem. I left it after ten minutes, buzzing as loudly as at first. Could hear it more than a rod. (Journal 6:683)

In these several ways, walking aided Thoreau in his quest to study natural phenomena. The control it provided for governing the length and direction of walks and for recording and collecting discoveries, and the direct sensual exposure to the landscape which it made possible significantly facilitated Thoreau's explorations.

Walking was especially useful in helping Thoreau probe every surface feature of the landscape. His feet splashed through the water and trudged through the mud of swamps and meadows; they stirred the dust of roads, sauntered through the pine needles of the forest, and climbed the rocks of mountains. With the aid of his feet Thoreau explored every aspect of the various surfaces which the walker could study in the Concord area: "It is a certain faeryland where we live. You may walk out in any direction over the earth's surface, lifting your horizon, and everywhere your path, climbing the convexity of the globe, leads you between heaven and earth. . ." (Journal 2:201).

Thoreau's walking quest frequently carried him to water or to the water's side. Walking allowed the explorer the advantage of wading

through swamps and meadows and of reaching beneath the surface to probe for the natural world which lay under the water's surface. Thoreau often sloshed through flooded meadows or swampy areas, and his aquatic tramps yielded important discoveries. During one meadow jaunt, he explored a small hole at the bottom which proved to be the nest of a fish. He actually picked the fish up and held it to examine it. After releasing it, he felt with his hand for the fish's eggs, which lay in the mud. The objective record of this discovery appears in his Journal: "Pouts, then, make their nests in shallow mud-holes or bays, in masses of weedy mud, or probably in the muddy bank; and the old pout hovers over the spawn or keeps guard at the entrance" (6:1303).

Thoreau devoted numerous walks to exploring the many aspects of water life in the Concord area: "I walk these days along the brooks, looking for tortoises and trout, etc. They are full of a rust-colored water, as if they flowed out of an iron mine" (Journal 7:853). R. W. Emerson remembered the many times that Thoreau waded into pools searching for water plants. In particular, Emerson was struck by the way that Thoreau would discover a plant, and while standing in the middle of the pool, pull his notes out of his pocket to check on when the plant should bloom. At the same time, Thoreau would be listening to bird calls and identifying those birds which happened to be flying about ("Thoreau" 33).

Walking often proved advantageous to Thoreau in studying water life. Once, while boating, Thoreau flushed several young ducks which seemed to "be disturbed" by his boat. Leaving his boat behind, he crept along the shore "in the high grass and behind the trees" until he was directly opposite them. He observed them from a concealed position for quite some

time, and was struck by how easily someone in a boat could miss seeing them in the setting that they were in:

How easy for the young ducks to hide amid the pickerel-weed along our river, while a boat goes by! and this plant attains its height when these water-fowl are of a size to need its shelter. Thousands of them might be concealed by it along our river, not to speak of the luxuriant sedge and grass of the meadows, much of it so wet as to be inaccessible. These ducks are diving scarcely two feet within the edge of the pickerel-weed, yet one who had not first seen them exposed from a distance would never suspect their neighborhood. (Journal 13:1658)

Walking not only enabled Thoreau to study water life that was difficult to observe by other means, it also allowed him to trace the movements of water animals who had left their imprints behind:

Walking over the river meadows to examine the pools and see how much dried up they are, I notice, as usual, the track of the musquash, some five inches wide always, always exactly in the lowest part of the muddy hollows connecting one pool with another, winding as they wind, as if loath to raise itself above the lowest mud. At first he swam there, and now, as the water goes down, he follows it steadily, and at length travels on the bare mud, but as low and close to the water as he can get. Thus he first traces the channel of the future brook and river, and deepens it by dragging his belly along it. He lays out and engineers its road. As our roads are said to follow the trail of the cow, so rivers in another period the trail of the musquash. (Journal 13:1621)

Thoreau even used his aquatic saunterings to study the distinguishing features of a given swamp or meadow, to note what was unique or characteristic about it. In one November Journal entry he records that he "walked through Gowing's Swamp from west to east." He then classifies the three main portions of the swamp which his walk revealed—"first, the thin woody; second, the coarse bushy or gray; and third, the fine bushy or brown." He discusses the features of each of these areas of the swamp including the kinds of trees which surround the swamp, the "very bad thicket" which makes walking difficult as one draws

nearer the center of the swamp, and "the smooth brown and wetter spaces" including the "open pool" which comprise the heart of the swamp. The importance of walking in this particular enterprise is apparent at the end of his analysis where he explains how a man's view of the swamp is superior to that of the animals who live in the swamp, because of the man's ability to walk as he does through the swampy terrain and because of his height which gives him a better perspective of the landscape:

The water andromeda makes a still more uniformly dense thicket, which must be nearly impervious to some animals; but as man lifts his head high above it, [he] finds but little difficulty in making his way through it, though it sometimes comes up to his middle, and if his eye scans its surface it makes an impression of smoothness and denseness,—its rich brown, wholesome surface, even as grass or moss. (Journal 10:1231,1232)

His final view of the swamp results from his climbing the "high land on the south," from which he "looked down over the large open space with its navel pool in the centre." He notes that the swamp appears to have no "natural outlet, though an artificial one has been dug." He ends the entry with a comparison and contrast of this swamp with other swamps which he has explored (1232). Thus he has carefully walked through and then above the swamp in order to observe every aspect of its features. Only walking could have made possible such a thorough examination of such difficult terrain.

Thoreau's walking quest readily bridged the surfaces of land and water. Walking allowed him to explore freely the phenomena of both environments, often at the same time. When Thoreau wrote his sister, Helen, in July of 1843 he informed her that he had explored "inland and along the shore" Long Island where he was staying (Correspondence 127). Thoreau explored the land and the shore wherever he traveled, always

conscious of the distinctive surface features which he observed. His most serious walking during his Canadian trip involved his efforts to explore several waterfalls located deep within a heavy forest. His account reveals the difficult land travel which his quest demanded:

The falls, which we were in search of, are three miles up the St. Anne. We followed for a short distance a foot-path up the east bank of this river, through handsome sugar maple and arbovitae groves. Having lost the path which led to a house where we were to get further directions, we dashed at once into the woods, steering by guess and by compass, climbing directly through the woods a steep hill, or mountain, five or six hundred feet high, which was, in fact, only the bank of the St. Lawrence. Beyond this we by good luck fell into another path, and following this or a branch of it, at our discretion, through a forest consisting of large white pines,—the first we had seen on our walk,—we at length heard the roar of falling water, and came out at the head of the Falls of St. Anne. ("A Yankee in Canada" Writings 5:52,53)

Thoreau was too curious about how these falls looked from below to settle for observing them from above. His curiosity propelled him further into the woods and into more dangerous walking:

I crossed the principal channel directly over the verge of the fall, where it was contracted to about fifteen feet in width, by a dead tree which had been dropped across and secured in a cleft of the opposite rock, and a smaller one a few feet higher, which served for a hand-rail. This bridge was rotten as well as slippery, being stripped of bark, and I was obliged to seize a moment to pass when the falling water did not surge over it, and midway, though at the expense of wet feet, I looked down probably more than a hundred feet, into the mist and foam below. This gave me the freedom of an island of precipitous rock by which I descended as by giant steps . . . till I viewed the first fall from the front. (53,54)

Thoreau continued to work his way downstream, determined to grasp as much of the force and beauty of these water falls as possible. He hiked down the gorge cut by the water cascading over the falls, stopping periodically to take in the magnificent view of the water mixing with the landscape. The picture he gained rewarded him for his difficult walk:

"Take it altogether, it was a most wild and rugged and stupendous chasm, so deep and narrow, where a river had worn itself a passage through a mountain of rock, and all around was the comparatively untrodden wilderness" ("A Yankee" Writings 5:55).

Thoreau's fascination with the blending of the features of the land and the water is even more apparent in his Cape Cod experience. When he hiked the sand-bank which separated the Cape Cod beach from the rest of the land, he was awed by the magical combination of the beach and ocean with the sandy terrain inland. Only walking made such an observation possible. No other form of transportation could have enabled Thoreau to traverse the dune and enjoy the tremendous view on both sides of it, a view which he recorded with near reverence:

This sand-bank--the backbone of the Cape--rose directly from the beach to the height of a hundred feet or more above the ocean. It was with singular emotions that we first stood upon it and discovered what a place we had chosen to walk on. On our right, beneath us, was the beach of smooth and gently-sloping sand, a dozen rods in width; next, the endless series of white breakers; further still, the light green water over the bar, which runs the whole length of the forearm of the Cape, and beyond this stretched the unwearied and illimitable ocean. On our left, extending back from the very edge of the bank, was a perfect desert of shining sand, from thirty to eighty rods in width, skirted in the distance by small sand-hills fifteen or twenty feet high; between which, however, in some places, the sand penetrated as much farther. Next commenced the region of vegetation. . . . (Cape Cod 61,62; emphasis supplied)

The sand-bank he traversed reminded Thoreau of "the escarped rampart of a stupendous fortress, whose glacis was the beach, and whose champaign the ocean. . . . In short," he felt himself "traversing a desert, with the view of an autumnal landscape of extraordinary brilliancy, a sort of Promised Land, on the one hand, and the ocean on the other" (62,63).

This awe-inspiring combination of water and land placed the walker in

proper perspective. Here was a landscape which isolated and overshadowed the traveler: "The solitude was that of the ocean and the desert combined. A thousand men could not have seriously interrupted it, but would have been lost in the vastness of the scenery as their footsteps in the sand" (63).

Though Thoreau walked in and near the water, and though he found himself drawn to those places where water and land merged, the greatest advantages of walking to his exploration experience are most evident in his land explorations, when his feet were planted on the solid ground of the Concord forest, fields, and hills. Walking allowed Thoreau to thoroughly scour the Concord countryside, and it enabled him to reach and study nature's surface in places which would have been inaccessible to those using other travel modes.

When walking, Thoreau was particularly attuned to the forest floor. Walking provided him with the leisure and the flexibility to study carefully the plants and animals which filled the forest. When walking in the woods, Thoreau frequently rested, and he used his resting time, not to meditate idly, but to observe better the flora and fauna around him: "He who traverses the woodland paths will have occasion to remember the small drooping bell-like flowers, and slender red stem of the dog's bane---which were the subject of his study while resting from his walk" (Journal [Princeton] 1:433). Thoreau's Journal is filled with descriptions such as the following which detail the discoveries he made during his many epigeal excursions: "Made a splendid discovery this afternoon. As I was walking through Holden's white spruce swamp, I saw peeping above the snow-crust some slender delicate evergreen shoots. . ."

(Journal 7:821).

Thoreau's walks allowed him to follow his good genius which often led him to new discoveries of forest floor phenomena:

Going by the epigaea on Fair Haven Hill, I thought I would follow down the shallow gully through the woods from it, that I might find more or something else. There was an abundance of checkerberry, as if it were a peculiar locality for shrubby evergreens. At first the checkerberry was green, but low down the hill it suddenly became dark-red, like a different plant, as if it had been more subject to frost there, it being more frosty lower down. . . . Eight or ten rods off I noticed an evergreen shrub with the aspect or habit of growth of the juniper, but, as it was in the woods, I already suspected it to be what it proved, the American yew, already strongly budded to bloom. This is a capitol discovery. (Journal 10:1259)

Walks like this one which led Thoreau to botanical discoveries were seldom easy ones. They frequently entailed hard work and considerable sweat. Just reaching the plants he wished to study, and traversing the terrain along the way, made many such adventures challenging. The rugged nature of Thoreau's walking exploration of the forest floor somewhat transformed the traditional view of the study of plants. In his day many held that botany was an activity primarily for ladies interested in "delicate colors and textures," but Thoreau established the study of plants as "a very rugged, masculine occupation" (Eifert 240).

Of course Thoreau's study of the forest floor led to more than just discoveries of plants. As when he hiked through the wet meadows, he was always sensitive to any imprint or trail which the land's surface might reveal. Walking allowed him to more readily spot such trails and to follow them wherever they led. Typical of his efforts to trace such a trail is this Journal record of a summer walk:

I follow a distinct fox path amid the grass and bushes for some forty rods beyond Britton's Hollow, leading from the great fox-hole. It branches on reaching the peach-orchard. No doubt by

these routes they oftenest go and return to their hole. As broad as a cart-wheel, and at least best seen when you do not look too hard for it. (13:1642)

Though Thoreau's sauntering eye was often focused on the forest floor, walking freed him to alter his perspective at will. Thus, while his feet securely anchored him to the ground, he also observed phenomena above the land's immediate surface, and he frequently found himself drawn to the trees which towered impressively above the forest floor. In Walden he records such rambles:

Sometimes I rambled to pine groves, standing like temples, or like fleets at sea, full-rigged, with wavy boughs, and rippling with light, so soft and green and shady that the Druids would have forsaken their oaks to worship in them; or to the cedar wood beyond Flint's Pond, where the trees, covered with hoary blue berries, spiring higher and higher, are fit to stand before Valhalla. . . . Instead of calling on some scholar, I paid many a visit to particular trees, of kinds which are rare in this neighborhood, standing far away in the middle of some pasture, or in the depths of a wood or swamp, or on a hill-top. . . . (201)

This description ends with "These were the shrines I visited both summer and winter" (202). Thoreau's worshipful description of these trees seems appropriate if one considers that their imposing height naturally draws the walker's eyes heavenward. Standing beneath a tall tree and gazing upward pulls the walker skyward, away from the earth-bound magnetism of the forest floor. A forest of such trees, surrounding the walker and towering around him, forms a ready temple whose focus is more the sky than the land. Thoreau was as fascinated with the merging of this landscape--trees with the sky--as he was with the more secular blending of water and land. Thus it is not surprising that his depiction in Walden and elsewhere of his walks to observe the trees is so spiritual in its language.

Thoreau was as thorough in his study of trees as he was in his study of plants. As already noted, walking freed his senses and allowed him, when in the woods, to hear the sounds of "green pignuts falling from time to time" from the hickory trees ("The Succession of Forest Trees" Writings 5:194). Here, of course, the falling nuts connected the trees with the earth beneath them, uniting these two features of the landscape for the observing saunterer. The falling nuts made Thoreau as aware of the blue jays and squirrels which rained them down from above as he was of the wood mouse which stored them in "its gallery, just under the leaves" (195).

Thoreau found himself exploring, not only the relationship of the trees with the forest floor, but also their relationship with surrounding bodies of water. Again, walking proved pivotal in such excursions. A June Journal entry records Thoreau's curiosity about pine pollen which had "washed up on the shore of three or four ponds in the woods. . . (13:1643)." He conjectured that the air carried pine pollen for great distances, depositing it in lakes or ponds well removed from the pine forest. To test his theory, he hiked to a pond which was considerably distant from any pine trees, and tramped about its shore to see if he could find any evidence of the yellow pollen in the water. After walking completely around the pond one time without discovering any pollen, he reasoned that a recent rain and wind might have pushed the pollen up on the shore, or at least closer to the shoreline than where he had been looking. With the advantage of walking, he carefully worked his way around the pond again, this time discovering "a distinct yellow line of pollen dust about half an inch in width" (13:1643). Thoreau was

delighted with his discovery: "When I thought I had failed, I was much pleased to detect, after all, this distinct yellow line, revealing unmistakably the presence of pines in the neighborhood and thus confirming my theory" (13:1644).

This was not, however, Thoreau's most serious study of the Concord forest. When his neighbors asked him why their hardwood lots, once cut down, often became pine woods and vice versa, he "began his intensive study of the woodlots of the Concord region. Much of the background material for such a study had already been gathered in his years of daily walks in all the Concord region (Whitford and Whitford, "Ecologist" 198,199). To answer their question, Thoreau walked systematically through the Concord woods, collecting seeds of the various trees to study them, carefully examining the forest undergrowth, and digging up seedlings to examine factors like their root systems (199-202).

Thoreau discovered that if a pine wood were cut, the young oaks in the sub-growth which had a deeper root system than the young pines would supplant them, while if an oak wood were cut, the "more abundant seed of the pines was likely to produce a pine stand" (202). The results of his study, published in his essay, "The Succession of Forest Trees," furthered his contemporaries' knowledge of forest growth and maintenance, as did his later study of stump rings (202), an effort made possible only by his ability to walk anywhere in the woods that he needed to in order to reach the stumps where they were located.

The one surface which drew Thoreau even more heavenward than trees were the mountains which he studied and climbed. In particular, the hard rocks of the mountain heights revealed to Thoreau a different side of

nature, and his rock climbing put him in concrete contact with the raw, rugged side of nature's surface. We can read of one such excursion to Mt. Monadnock which Thoreau recorded in his Journal:

We concluded to explore the whole rocky part of the mountain in this wise, to saunter slowly about it, about the height and distance from the summit of our camp, or say half a mile, more or less, first going north from the summit and returning by the western semicircle, and then exploring the east side, completing the circle, and return over the summit at night. (10:1298)

Here we see the typically systematic nature of Thoreau's exploration which only walking could make possible on a surface which was so irregular and rugged. Though his perambulation around this particular mountain was systematic, he was very impressed by the mountain's resistance to any careful analysis. The rugged and varied features of the mountain's surface disoriented the walker and reminded him, as Cape Cod had before, of man's fragile and tentative position when placed in such a vast and overwhelming landscape:

We had thus made a pretty complete survey of the top of the mountain. It is a very unique walk, and would be almost equally interesting to take though it were not elevated above the surrounding valleys. It often reminded me of my walks on the beach, and suggested how much both depend for their sublimity on solitude and dreariness. In both cases we feel the presence of some vast, titanic power. The rocks and valleys and bogs and rain-pools of the mountain are so wild and unfamiliar still that you do not recognize the one you left fifteen minutes before. This rocky region, forming what you may call the top of the mountain, must be more than two miles long by one wide in the middle, and you would need to ramble about it many times before it would begin to be familiar. There may be twenty little swamps so much alike in the main that [you] would not know whether you had seen a particular one before, and the rocks are trackless and do not present the same point. So that it has the effect of the most intricate labyrinth and artificially extended walk. (10:1301)

Though somewhat discomfited by the mountain's inhospitable surface, Thoreau found his attention directed skyward toward the clouds which

offered him both entertainment and insight as they floated overhead, casting their shadows on the valley below. Free, because he was a walker, to gaze at the clouds at will and to observe their patterns and movements, Thoreau recorded his reaction to his observations:

It was interesting to watch from that height the shadows of fair-weather clouds passing over the landscape. You could hardly distinguish them from the forests. . . . We do not commonly realize how constant and amusing a phenomenon this is in a summer day to one standing on a sufficiently elevated point. In the valley or on the plain you do not commonly notice the shadow of a cloud unless you are in it, but on a mountain-top, or on a lower elevation in a plain country or by the seaside, the shadows of clouds flitting over the landscape are a never-failing source of amusement. . . . It was pleasant enough to see one man's farm in the shadow of a cloud,--which perhaps he thought covered all the Northern States,--while his neighbor's farm was in sunshine. (10:1301)

While watching the clouds, the sky's most obvious surface feature, Thoreau conjectured that different calculations might be made as the walker observed them from his elevated vantage point:

It suggested how with tolerable accuracy you might easily calculate the height of a cloud with a quadrant and a good map of the country. . . . Also you might determine the breadth of a cloud by observing the breadth of the shadow at a given distance. . . . Many such calculations would be easy in such a locality. (10:1301)

In these various ways Thoreau's sauntering explorations spanned all the surface features of the landscape, probing the external phenomena of earth, sea, and sky. The contact of his feet or the reach of his senses put him in concrete touch with these surfaces, drawing him close to the Nature whose secrets he sought. Walking allowed him to examine thoroughly the phenomena of each landscape, filling his walks with discoveries and adventures.

One problem, however, which Thoreau faced in his exploration of the landscape was that the features of the land which he sought to explore

and understand changed continually from moment to moment and from season to season. Nature was a chameleon in the hands of seasonal and climactic changes. What seemed true one day might appear different tomorrow or next month, depending on the many conditions which affected the landscape.

As has been mentioned, one important characteristic of Thoreau's walking experience—the direct result of his desire to know Nature in all of its moods—is its comprehensiveness. In an effort to study Nature in all her manifestations, Thoreau walked outdoors at all times in all seasons. Nothing deterred him from his quest to know every feature of the face of Nature. He knew all too well the difference a change in season or climate could make: "It is a little affecting to walk over the hills now, looking at the reindeer lichens here and there amid the snow, and remember that ere long we shall find violets also in their midst. What an odds [difference] the season makes!" (Journal 6:698; emphasis supplied).

Emerson, in "Country Life" exclaimed, "I think sometimes how many days could Methuselah go out and find something new!" (Works 12:150). According to Emerson, each month of the year and each season offered the explorer something new, something exciting (150–152). The world of Nature open to discovery was not the same from day to day, month to month, season to season, and the Transcendental saunterer explored each seasonal and daily manifestation of the landscape with an appropriate air of expectancy, as Thoreau made clear: "Not only different objects are presented to our attention at different seasons of the year, but we are in a frame of body and of mind to appreciate different objects at

different seasons. I see one thing when it is cold and another when it is warm" (Journal 11:1397; emphasis supplied).

Walking proved the best form of travel for the explorer since it allowed him to saunter at any time, and under any circumstances. Bad weather and difficult terrain never deterred Thoreau from walking into Nature to study it. In fact, he often rambled forth under circumstances that kept most of his contemporaries at home. He was as curious about Nature when weather conditions were uninviting as he was when conditions were favorable.

For this reason, many of his spring and summer walks were intentionally taken during inclement weather. Thoreau believed that to explore the wilder side of Nature, one would need to take wilder walks. Wild walks during wild weather yielded discoveries which tame walks during fair weather would not make possible, as this April Journal entry makes clear:

To see the larger and wilder birds, you must go forth in the great storms like this. At such times they frequent our neighborhood and trust themselves in our midst. A life of fair-weather walks might never show you the goose sailing on our waters, or the great heron feeding here. When the storm increases, then these great birds that carry the mail of the seasons lay to. To see wild life you must go forth at a wild season. When it rains and blows, keeping men indoors, then the lover of Nature must forth. Then returns Nature to her wild estate. (3:385; emphasis supplied)

As Burroughs notes, Thoreau "was no fair-weather walker. He delighted in storms, and in frost and cold. They were congenial to him" (Writings 8:24).

Thoreau believed in converting foul weather into an opportunity for further discovery. Walking provided him with the flexibility to adjust his exploration to the demands of the weather. During one spring walk he

recorded:

Such a day as this, I resort where the partridges, etc., do--to the bare ground and the sheltered sides of woods and hills--and there explore the moist ground for the radical leaves of plants, while the storm blows overhead, and I forget how the time is passing. If the weather is thick and stormy enough, if there is a good chance to be cold and wet and uncomfortable, in other words to feel weather-beaten, you may consume the afternoon to advantage thus browsing along the edge of some near wood which would scarcely detain you at all in fair weather, and you will [be] as far away there as at the end of your longest fair-weather walk, and come home as if from an adventure. There is no better fence to put between you and the village than a storm into which the villagers do not venture out. (Journal 12:1439)

Any unusual weather conditions attracted Thoreau to take a walk in hopes of discovering something new, as evidenced in this August Journal entry: "A great drought now for several weeks. . . . A good time to visit swamps and meadows" (6:779).

In his rambles, Thoreau often walked in the rain or overcast conditions, and found such excursions rewarding: "They who do not walk in the woods in the rain never behold them in their freshest, most radiant and blooming beauty" (Journal 4:412). Walking allowed the saunterer to seek shelter from a hard rain wherever he liked, and to explore his surroundings at his leisure:

When compelled by a shower to take shelter under a tree, we may improve that opportunity for a more minute inspection of some of Nature's works. I have stood under a tree in the woods half a day at a time, during a heavy rain in the summer, and yet employed myself happily and profitably there prying with microscopic eye into the crevices of the bark or the leaves or the fungi at my feet. (A Week 300)

Even cloudy days compelled Thoreau to refocus his exploration by altering his walking pattern: "When the air is thick and the sky overcast, we need not walk so far. We give our attention to nearer objects, being less distracted from them. I take occasion to explore some near wood which my

walks commonly overshoot" (Journal 10:1225).

When winter came, Thoreau adapted his walks to the new conditions which he faced. In a December, 1859 Journal entry, he recorded the import of his first winter walk for that particular year:

My first true winter walk is perhaps that which I take on the river, or where I cannot go in the summer. It is the walk peculiar to winter, and now first I take it. I see that the fox too has already taken the same walk before me, just along the edge of the button-bushes, where not even he can go in the summer. We both turn our steps hither at the same time. (13:1558; emphasis supplied)

Winter sauntering was particularly difficult, and Thoreau was fully aware of the diminishing returns involved in casting oneself into a cold, barren landscape in search of discoveries. Thoreau was often frustrated with winter walking, but he held that the few trophies gleaned during such a walk were equal in value to the more numerous discoveries made during summer hiking. The value of a discovery during a walk was in part determined not quantitatively, but qualitatively. For Thoreau, the more vigorous and difficult the walk, the more valued the discoveries, even if they were few in number, as this November, 1857 Journal description indicates:

This month takes a walker's resources more than any. For my part, I should sooner think of going into quarters in November than in the winter. . . . You can hardly screw up your courage to take a walk when all is thus tightly locked or frozen up and so little is to be seen in field or wood. I am inclined to take to the swamps or woods as the warmest place, and the former are still the openest. Nature has herself become like the few fruits which she still affords, a very thick-shelled nut with a shrunken meat within. If I find anything to excite or warm my thoughts abroad, it is an agreeable disappointment, for I am obliged to go abroad willfully and against my inclinations at first. The prospect looks so barren, so many springs are frozen up, not a flower perchance and but few birds left, not a companion abroad in all these fields for me, I am slow to go forth. I seem to anticipate a fruitless walk. I think to myself hesitatingly, Shall I go there, or there, or there? and

cannot make up my mind to any route, all seem so unpromising, mere surface walking and fronting the cold wind, so that I have to force myself to it often and at random. But then I am often unexpectedly compensated, and the thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of; and then the mite which November contributes becomes equal in value to the bounty of July. I may meet with something which interests me, and immediately it is as warm as in July, as if it were the south instead of the northwest wind that blowed. (10:1233)

Despite the barrenness of the landscape, Thoreau was very persistent in his quest to flush discoveries from nature in the wintertime, frequently tramping "eight or ten miles through the deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech tree, or a yellow-birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines" (Walden 265). During harsh walking conditions, he "rarely failed to find, even in mid-winter, some warm and springy swamp where the grass and the skunk-cabbage still put forth with perennial verdure, and some hardier bird occasionally awaited the return of spring" (Walden 267).

As a sauntering explorer, Thoreau was especially aware of the difference that snow and ice can make in the landscape. Winter is a magical time when new worlds carved out by snow manifest themselves to the walker. Thoreau's snow walks, though challenging, opened up new vistas to his sauntering eye:

We cross the fields behind Hubbard's and suddenly slump into dry ditches concealed by snow, up to the middle, and flounder out again. How new all things seem! Here is a broad, shallow pool in the fields, which yesterday was slosh, now converted into a soft, white, fleecy snow ice, like bread that has spewed out and baked outside the pan. It is like the beginning of the world. There is nothing hackneyed where a new snow can come and cover all the landscape. (Journal 7:825)

Each new snow brought with it a transformation of the landscape: "We discover a new world every time that we see the earth again after it has

been covered for a season with snow" (Journal 13:1572). In much the same way, ice transforms the terrain, making possible new perspectives for the winter saunterer:

When the ponds were firmly frozen, they afforded not only new and shorter routes to many points, but new views from their surfaces of the familiar landscape around them. When I crossed Flint's Pond, after it was covered with snow, though I had often paddled about and skated over it, it was so unexpectedly wide and so strange that I could think of nothing but Baffin's Bay. The Lincoln hills rose up around me at the extremity of a snowy plain, in which I did not remember to have stood before; and the fishermen, at an indeterminable distance over the ice, moving slowly about with their wolfish dogs, passed for sealers or Esquimaux, or in misty weather loomed like fabulous creatures, and I did not know whether they were giants or pygmies. I took this course when I went to lecture in Lincoln in the evening, travelling in no road and passing no house between my own hut and the lecture room. (Walden 271)

But even more than offering a new surface to view, snow and ice provided Thoreau with the opportunity to traverse the land in places where summer hiking would have been very difficult or impossible. New discoveries were possible for the walker because winter had extended the solid portion of the earth; during winter, the hiker could walk almost anywhere. Thoreau made this clear in "A Winter Walk" where he observed:

No domain of nature is quite closed to man at all times, and now we draw near to the empire of the fishes. Our feet glide swiftly over unfathomed depths, where in summer our line tempted the pout and perch, and where the stately pickerel lurked in the long corridors formed by the bulrushes. The deep, impenetrable marsh, where the heron waded and bittern squatted, is made pervious to our swift shoes, as if a thousand railroads had been made into it. With one impulse we are carried to the cabin of the muskrat, that earliest settler, and see him dart away under the transparent ice, like a furred fish, to his hole in the bank; and we glide rapidly over meadows where lately "the mower whet his scythe," through beds of frozen cranberries mixed with meadow-grass. . . .

In winter, nature is a cabinet of curiosities, full of dried specimens, in their natural order and position. . . . We go about dry-shod to inspect the summer's work in the rank swamp, and see what a growth have got the alders, the willows, and the maples. . . .

Occasionally we wade through fields of snow, under whose depths the river is lost for many rods, to appear again to the right or left, where we least expected; still holding on its way underneath, with a faint, stertorous, rumbling sound, as if, like the bear and marmot, it too had hibernated, and we had followed its faint summer trail to where it earthed itself in snow and ice. . . . (Writings 5:178-180)

Thoreau experienced a particular relish for winter hiking in places that he could not reach during summer conditions. As suggested earlier, he seemed to have a built-in need to touch his feet to a surface in order to gain satisfaction from it. Merely seeing or observing the landscape was not enough. It was his physical contact with the land which sparked his enthusiasm for exploration, and walking in winter when the earth's surface had hardened made such contact possible, as this Journal description indicates:

I love to wade and flounder through the swamp now, these bitter cold days when the snow lies deep on the ground, and I need travel but little way from the town to get to a Nova Zembla solitude,—to wade through the swamps, all snowed up, untracked by man, into which the fine dry snow is still drifting till it is even with the tops of the water andromeda and halfway up the high blueberry bushes. I penetrate to islets inaccessible in summer, my feet slumping to the sphagnum far out of sight beneath, where the alder berry glows yet and the azalea buds, and perchance a single tree sparrow or a chickadee lisps by my side, where there are few tracks even of wild animals. . . . (8:955)

Thus snow and ice provided Thoreau with important opportunities to make physical contact with landscape that he could only observe in the summer, and this wading through the snow and walking in swamps and meadows filled him with a special joy and satisfaction.

One further advantage of winter exploration for Thoreau was that the snow cover allowed him to explore the movements of nature. Thoreau not only enjoyed tracking animals, but he especially liked to recreate experience by interpreting the various imprints he found in the snow.

His inquisitive nature drove him to solve in detective fashion the snow puzzles which he encountered. His Journal records a number of such attempts to interpret snowy hieroglyphics. One entry begins with an account of his efforts to solve the mystery posed by fox and rabbit tracks:

In Hosmer's pitch pine wood just north of the bridge, I find myself on the track of a fox—as I take it—that has run about a great deal. Next I come to the tracks of rabbits, see where they have travelled back and forth, making a well-trodden path in the snow; and soon after I see where one has been killed and apparently devoured. (13:1570)

A mysterious mark in the snow a few yards from the point where the rabbit was apparently killed led Thoreau to conclude that the fox had also flushed a partridge, but closer investigation helped him realize that an owl was the culprit, first killing the rabbit, and then, startled by the fox, carrying the rabbit to a safer place to enjoy his meal. Thoreau pieced the details together in detective-like fashion:

Now I understand how that furrow was made, the bird with the rabbit in its talons flying low there, and now I remember that at the first bloody spot I saw some of these quill-marks; and therefore it is certain that the bird had it there, and probably he killed it, and he, perhaps disturbed by the fox, carried it to the second place, and it is certain that he (probably disturbed by the fox again) carried it to the last place, making a furrow on the way.

If it had not been for the snow on the ground I probably should not have noticed any signs that a rabbit had been killed. Or, if I had chanced to see the scattered fur, I should not have known what creature did it, or how recently. (13:1571)

This particular discovery was based in part on Thoreau's own anticipation of it: "When I turned off from the road my expectation was to see some tracks of wild animals in the snow, and, before going a dozen rods, I crossed the track of what I had no doubt was a fox. . . ." (13:1571). As indicated earlier, this was a common pattern for Thoreau's

explorations. In this case, he expected to find tracks, and once he did find them, he proceeded to solve the mystery which they presented, making his anticipated discovery of the tracks themselves doubly satisfying.

In the same extended Journal description, Thoreau reveals other aspects of his tracking efforts. Beginning with "Again see what the snow reveals," he describes "fragments of frozen-thawed apples" which he came across quite some distance from the apple trees they came from. Checking for clues as to what carried the apples from the apple trees to the spot where he found them, he discovered crow tracks and droppings which, since no squirrel tracks could be found, led him to conclude that "crows carried these frozen-thawed apples from the apple trees to the oak, and there ate them,—what they did not let fall into the snow or on to the ice" (Journal 13:1571).

He also notes deer mice tracks in the snow, where the mice had "hopped over the soft snow last night, scarcely making any impression." Here he seems excited by the thrill of verifying the presence and activity of creatures normally unseen to man. The tracks are concrete evidence of the mysterious life of the forest which is active at night while man sleeps:

What if you could witness with owl's eyes the revelry of the wood mice some night, frisking about the wood like so many little kangaroos? Here is a palpable evidence that the woods are nightly thronged with little creatures which most have never seen,—populousness as commonly only the imagination dreams of. (13:1571)

As Thoreau puts it, "How much the snow reveals!" (13:1571) to the winter saunterer traversing the snowy landscape.

Tracks in the snow were magnetic to Thoreau, and, because he was walking when he came across them, he usually followed them to see what

they might reveal. A track in the snow was evidence of physical contact with the earth's surface, a reminder of a concrete presence, and Thoreau seemed as attracted to such manifestations as he was to placing his own tracks in the snow and making physical contact himself with the winter surface. The Journal reveals his many attempts to track a fox, or even to reflect on the tracks of people which he came across. One February entry reads, "We walked, as usual, on the fresh track of a fox. . . . And as we were kindling a fire on the pond by the side of the island, we saw the fox himself at the inlet of the river" (Journal 13:1583). In a November entry Thoreau recorded, "Slight as the snow is, you are now reminded occasionally in your walks that you have contemporaries, and perchance predecessors. I see the track of a fox which was returning from his visit to a farmyard last night, and, in the wood-path, of a man and a dog" (Journal 11:1394).

Thoreau notes that the imprints of the dog and the man are universally recognizable: "This would be known for a man and a dog's track in any part of the world" (Journal 11:1395). The walking experience of men and animals, as symbolized by these tracks, is truly universal. Tracks in the snow symbolized for Thoreau the interconnectedness of man's experience, a reminder that men walk the same ground, even if their experiences are not always the same. These tracks pointed to walking as an important common denominator of human experience:

I cannot now walk without leaving a track behind me; that is one peculiarity of winter walking. Anybody may follow my trail. I have walked, perhaps, a particular wild path along some swamp-side all summer, and thought to myself, I am the only villager that ever comes here. But I go out shortly after the first snow has fallen, and lo, here is the track of a sportsman and his dog

in my secluded path, and probably he preceded me in the summer as well. Yet my hour is not his, and I may never meet him!
(Journal 11:1402)

In an earlier Journal account recording a summer walk, Thoreau also focuses on the bond between men which walking signifies:

I see the track of a bare human foot in the dusty road, the toes and muscles all faithfully imprinted. Such a sight is so rare that it affects me with surprise, as the footprint on the shore of Juan Fernandez did Crusoe. It is equally rare here. I am affected as if some Indian or South-Sea-Islander had been along, some man who had a foot. . . . It is pleasant as it is to see the tracks of cows and deer and birds. I am brought so much nearer to the tracker--when again I think of the sole of my own foot--than when I behold that of his shoe merely, or am introduced to him and converse with him in the usual way.
(2:226)

Thoreau's determination to know all the surface features of nature led him to more than just seasonal or climatic walking experiences. His natural inquisitiveness also drove him to night walking. According to Walter Harding, in June 1851 Thoreau "decided it was necessary to see his world by moonlight as well as sunlight to get a complete picture of it." He began hiking late at night during times when a full moon benefited his vision. Quietly sneaking out of Concord, "he would wander out into the fields to see the world in this new light" (Days 297). Walking again suited Thoreau's purposes since other forms of transportation would have been impractical or dangerous for exploring nature in the dark. In his essay "Night and Moonlight" Thoreau acknowledged his commitment to nighttime exploring: "Chancing to take a memorable walk by moonlight some years ago, I resolved to take more such walks, and make acquaintance with another side of nature: I have done so" (Writings 5:323). In this same essay Thoreau shared his enchantment with the novelty and diversity of nighttime sauntering:

Is not the midnight like Central Africa to most of us? Are we not tempted to explore it,—to penetrate to the shores of its Lake Tchad, and discover the source of its Nile, perchance the Mountains of the Moon? Who knows what fertility and beauty, moral and natural, are there to be found? In the Mountains of the Moon, in the Central Africa of the night, there is where all Niles have their hidden heads. The expeditions up the Nile as yet extend but to the Cataracts, or perchance to the mouth of the White Nile; but it is the Black Nile that concerns us.

I shall be a benefactor if I conquer some realms from the night, if I report to the gazettes anything transpiring about us at that season worthy of their attention,—if I can show men that there is some beauty awake while they are asleep,—if I add to the domains of poetry.

Night is certainly more novel and less profane than day. I soon discovered that I was acquainted only with its complexion, and as for the moon, I had seen her only as it were through a crevice in a shutter, occasionally. Why not walk a little way in her light? (323,324)

Thoreau was particularly sensitive to the transformations moonlight and darkness worked on the landscape which he knew so well by daylight. Problems with depth perception made night walking challenging, and objects presented themselves more conspicuously at night, often assuming strange or foreboding shapes:

Many men walk by day; few walk by night. It is a very different season. Instead of the sun, there are the moon and stars; instead of the wood thrush, there is the whip-poor-will; instead of butterflies, fireflies, winged sparks of fire! . . . Instead of singing birds, the croaking of frogs and the intenser dream of crickets. The potatoes stand up straight, the corn grows, the bushes loom, and, in a moonlight night, the shadows of rocks and trees and bushes and hills are more conspicuous than the objects themselves. The slightest inequalities in the ground are revealed by the shadows; what the feet find comparatively smooth appears rough and diversified to the eye. The smallest recesses in the rocks are dim and cavernous; the ferns in the wood appear to be of tropical size; the pools seen through the leaves become as full of light as the sky. . . . The woods are heavy and dark. Nature slumbers. (Journal 2:154)

As has been shown, whether hiking at night, during a rainstorm, or on a cold winter day, Thoreau was committed to exploring every possible aspect of the landscape around him. He freely adjusted his walking to

changing conditions, taking advantage of the exploring opportunities offered the hiker by factors such as snow, ice, wild weather, and a moonlit environment. The act of walking proved effective for aiding him in meeting the demands posed by exploring different surfaces under varying and often difficult circumstances.

One result of Thoreau's comprehensive sauntering adventure was that he traversed the same countryside, time and time again. Amazingly, he never seemed to grow weary of hiking the same ground or seeing the same things. As far as he was concerned, the potential for discovery was never exhausted. Thoreau had a special ability to see the common or the old in a new light since for him, discovery was a matter of perspective; he could saunter through the same territory day after day, seeing the same things, and yet, because of his powers of perception, see those phenomena in different and exciting ways.

The reason then why Thoreau could tolerate so much seeming redundancy in his walking experience is that his walks were governed more by his outlook than by the route, the landscape, or other external features. According to Thoreau, each person is capable of applying his own unique perspective to life, in effect creating a new world according to his own viewpoint. Thus even the most common objects observed by the saunterer offer the explorer exciting discoveries because the act of discovery is controlled by the saunterer's perspective. His exploration is dependent upon his ability to always see things in fresh and original ways. This concept found forceful expression in Thoreau's Journal: "How novel and original must be each new man's view of the universe! for though the world is so old, and so many books have been written, each object appears

wholly undescribed to our experience, each field of thought wholly unexplored. The whole world is . . . a New World" (3:320).

Thoreau's notion of the potential for discovery of the commonplace was not entirely original since Emerson had espoused such a view in Nature. According to Emerson, "It will not need, when the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common" (Works 1:74). By doing this, the explorer will "come to look at the world with new eyes" (75).

As usual, Emerson philosophized, but Thoreau applied. It was Thoreau, not Emerson, who daily walked into nature seeking "the miraculous in the common." It was Thoreau who, according to Channing,

wished to live as to derive his satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, everyday phenomena; so that what his sense hourly perceived, his daily walk, the conversation of his neighbors, might inspire him; and he wished to dream of no heaven but that which lay about him. (Poet-Naturalist 118)

Interestingly, Channing shared Thoreau's viewpoint. According to Thoreau, Channing believed in relation to "walks and life in the country" that "'you don't want to discover anything new, but to discover something old' . . . to be reminded that such things still are" (11:1344).

Such rambling was, as already indicated, primarily a matter of perspective. The walker traversed the same ground from day to day, but walking gave him the advantage of viewing that ground from different vantage points. He could pause, examine the terrain, reflect, and change his position for viewing the landscape at his pleasure. It was this deliberative nature of the walking experience which enabled Thoreau to discover the unusual in the usual, to see the common in uncommon ways.

Thoreau's record of a November walk illustrates this:

Rounding the Island just after sunset, I see not only the houses nearest the river but our own reflected in the river by the Island. From what various points of view and in what unsuspected lights and relations we sooner or later see the most familiar objects. I see houses reflected in the river which stand a mile from it, and whose inhabitants do not consider themselves near the shore. (Journal 4:1487; emphasis supplied)

While sauntering, Thoreau, who believed that "a new prospect and walks can be created where we least expected it" (Journal 2:166), was alert to any prospect which would provide him with a new way of interpreting the face of Nature.

His close scrutiny of the landscape sometimes yielded discoveries that were subtle and difficult to define: "You perceive, and are affected by, changes too subtle to be described" (Journal 10:1259). But most of his sauntering discoveries of common, natural phenomena were describable, and he faithfully recorded them in his Journal and other writings. In particular, Thoreau seemed to take special interest in plants and trees, including the most common ones, and he carefully studied them during many of his walks. In fact, he seemed as interested in the common plants and trees which he encountered while rambling as he was unusual or rare plants; "it was these characteristic plants that were usually distinguished and noted in his walks" (Whitford and Whitford "Ecologist" 196,197). Thoreau's account of one of his pedestrian excursions in "Autumnal Tints" effectively reveals his recognition of the value of the most common manifestations of Nature, including lowly plant life:

I can skulk amid the tufts of purple woodgrass on the borders of the "Great Fields." Wherever I walk these afternoons, the purple-fingered grass also stands like a guide-board, and points my thoughts to more poetic paths than they have lately traveled.

A man shall perhaps rush by and trample down plants as high as his head, and cannot be said to know that they exist, though he may have cut many tons of them, littered his stables with them, and fed them to his cattle for years. Yet, if he ever favorably attends to them, he may be overcome by their beauty. Each humblest plant, or weed, as we call it, stands there to express some thought or mood of ours; and yet how long it stands in vain! I had walked over those Great Fields so many Augusts, and never yet distinctly recognized these purple companions that I had there. I had brushed against them and trodden on them, forsooth; and now, at last, they, as it were, rose up and blessed me. Beauty and true wealth are always thus cheap and despised. Heaven might be defined as the place which men avoid. Who can doubt that these grasses, which the farmer says are of no account to him, find some compensation in your appreciation of them? I may say that I never saw them before; though, when I came to look them face to face, there did come down to me a purple gleam from previous years; and now, wherever I go, I see hardly anything else. . . . (Writings 5:257; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau was perfectly attuned during his walks with plants and other phenomena which others were most likely to ignore. The deliberative nature of his sauntering allowed him to examine the most particular features, features which the casual walker or traveler would readily pass by as demonstrated in this Journal depiction: "Thinking to look at the cabbage as I pass under Clamshell, I find it very inconspicuous. Most would have said that there was none there." In this particular case Thoreau examined the cabbage, and, noting that it was in bloom before one would have expected it to be, he observed that "most would not have detected any change in it since the fall" (Journal 13:1595).

Perhaps the integral relationship between the act of walking and Thoreau's exploration of the commonplace or obscure is best illustrated in his Journal account of a discovery in the fall of a beautiful aspen tree:

After walking for a couple of hours the other day through the woods, I came to the base of a tall aspen, which I do not remember to have seen before, standing in the midst of the woods in the next town, still thickly leaved and turned to greenish

yellow. It is perhaps the largest of its species that I know. It was by merest accident that I stumbled on it, and if I had been sent to find it, I should have thought it to be, as we say, like looking for a needle in a haymow. All summer, and it chances for so many years, it has been concealed to me; but now, walking in a different direction, to the same hilltop from which I saw the scarlet oaks, and looking off just before sunset, when all other trees visible for miles around are reddish or green, I distinguish my new acquaintance by its yellow color. Such is its fame, at last, and reward for living in that solitude and obscurity. It is the most distinct tree in all the landscape, and would be the cynosure of all eyes here. Thus it plays its part in the choir. I made a minute of its locality, glad to know where so large an aspen grew. Then it seemed peculiar in its solitude and obscurity. It seemed the obscurest of trees. Now it was seen to be equally peculiar for its distinctness and prominence. (Journal 11:1381; emphasis supplied)

Because Thoreau could enjoy the exploration of the common and usual as much as the uncommon and unusual, he did not feel the compulsion to travel far and widely which affected many of his countrymen. He could explore whatever he needed to close to home and never fully exhaust the possibilities for discovery. Consequently, most of his walks were local ones, occurring within a ten-mile radius of his home (Journal 3:376). Thoreau viewed these walks as he did his own life---full of inexhaustible possibilities, and he was not bothered by the boundaries of his walking experience any more than he was by the mortal limits to his own existence. No matter how restricted the experience, new discoveries and experiences were still possible:

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you. ("Walking" Writings)

5:211,212)

Thoreau's walking experience, like his life, was quite parochial. At a time when his countrymen traveled abroad or headed west to seek their discoveries, Thoreau remained in the Concord area, devoting, as Walter Harding notes, the majority of his time to a study of "the natural history of Concord" (Days 403). Thoreau's commitment to this small share of New England soil resulted in part from his own love for Concord itself. Concord was, according to Thoreau, the only place for a saunterer like himself to live. He counted it his fortune to have been placed in such a fertile environment: "I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too" (Journal 9:1092). He felt that no other place could have so adequately satisfied his quest to know Nature and to know it thoroughly. To walk daily in the immediate Concord area brought its own special blessing to its native son:

I cannot but regard it as a kindness in those who have the steering of me that, by the want of pecuniary wealth, I have been nailed down to this my native region so long and steadily, and made to study and love this spot of earth more and more. What would signify in comparison a thin and diffused love and knowledge of the whole earth instead, got by wandering?
(Journal 5:652)

Walking so often within the well-established limits of the Concord area also affirmed for Thoreau his roots and his heritage. Concord was the city of his birth; its fields and forests connected to the memories of his childhood. Thoreau's local rambles not only pressed the mud and dirt of Concord into his boots, they also embedded in his inner consciousness a powerful sense of Concord itself. His constant saunterings around his home city so attached him to it, that he was never

quite able to escape its influence on him, nor did he want to.

Thoreau's correspondence during the time when he stayed in Staten Island reveals his deep attachment to Concord. He was unable to shake the influence of Concord even though he found himself in a totally new environment. In May of 1843 he wrote Mrs. Emerson: "I carry Concord ground in my boots and in my hat,—And am I not made of Concord dust? I cannot realize that it is the roar of the sea I hear now, and not the wind in Walden woods" (Correspondence 103,104). In another May letter, this one to his mother, he confided: "All my inner man heretofore has been a Concord impression; and here come these Sandy Hook and Coney Island breakers to meet and modify the former; but it will be long before I can make nature look as innocently grand and inspiring as in Concord" (Correspondence 100). In July, he felt much the same way, expressing to Mr. and Mrs. Emerson that he continually found his thoughts turning to "those dear hills and that river which so fills up the world to its brim." He assured them that the things he remembered of Concord were "better than the environs of New York" (Correspondence 123). With the aid of Thoreau's active imagination, the boundaries of Concord spilled over into any place that he traveled to, causing him to see and feel the Concord environment regardless of his present setting. He could not neatly distinguish Concord from other places, as this August, 1843 statement to his mother indicates:

Methinks I should be content to sit at the back-door in Concord, under the poplar-tree, henceforth forever. Not that I am homesick at all,—for places are strangely indifferent to me,—but Concord is still a cynosure to my eyes, and I find it hard to attach it, even in imagination, to the rest of the globe, and tell where the seam is. (Correspondence 131)

Because of the influence that his native soil held over him,

Thoreau's sauntering explorations centered in the Concord area. The Concord environment made him feel at home; it affected him like a familiar friend. He could not imagine walking or being anywhere else:

And yet there is no more tempting novelty than this new November. No going to Europe or another world is to be named with it. Give me the old familiar walk, post-office and all, with this ever new self, with this infinite expectation and faith, which does not know when it is beaten. We'll go nutting once more. We'll pluck the nut of the world, and crack it in the winter evenings. . . . I will take another walk to the Cliff, another row on the river, another skate on the meadow, be out in the first snow, and associate with the winter birds. Here I am at home. In the bare and bleached crust of the earth I recognize my friend. . . .

I want nothing new, if I can have but a tithe of the old secured to me. I will spurn all wealth beside. Think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from here! When the constant endeavor should be to get nearer and nearer here. . . . Take the shortest way round and stay at home. A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup. Here, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride elect, as close to you as she can be got. Here is all the best and all the worst you can imagine. What more do you want? (Journal 11:1383; emphasis supplied)

While walking, Thoreau's feet touched the friendly Concord soil he knew so well, and his saunterings drew him close to the Concord environment--his "bride elect." But Thoreau confined most of his walks to the Concord area for other reasons as well. He knew the importance to the explorer of thoroughly studying an area in order to know it well. He disdained superficial enterprises of any kind, and exploring was no exception. He viewed the typical traveler's experience as highly superficial; only careful sauntering could make possible a thorough acquaintance with the surface features of the landscape. Thoreau expressed this point of view in his Journal when he described gazing at the nearby town of Sudbury and conjecturing:

I see its meeting-houses and its common, and its fields lie but

little beyond my ordinary walk, but I never played on its common nor read the epitaphs in its graveyard, and many strangers to me dwell there. How distant in all important senses may be the town which yet is within sight! We see beyond our ordinary walks and thoughts. With a glass I might perchance read the time on its clock. How circumscribed are our walks, after all! With the utmost industry we cannot expect to know well an area more than six miles square, and yet we pretend to be travellers, to be acquainted with Siberia and Africa! (10:1258,1259)

Reginald Cook observes that Thoreau's walks, though circumscribed, were intense and highly productive. "He did not range far and wide, but near and close. If he did not carry kingdoms in the shelter of his eye, he had at least pierced the surface to elemental essences. . ." (Passage xv).

Thoreau, then, felt that the successful saunterer concentrated his explorations at home and not abroad. In his Journal he noted that "there would be this advantage in travelling in your own country, even in your own neighborhood, that you would be so thoroughly prepared to understand what you saw you would make fewer travellers' mistakes" (2:206).

Traveling at home gives the saunterer the advantage of always adding to the knowledge he already possesses of the local environment; traveling away from home only contributes to the explorer's ignorance of a new and unfamiliar territory. In his Journal Thoreau argued that

A man must generally get away some hundreds or thousands of miles from home before he can be said to begin his travels. Why not begin his travels at home? Would he have to go far or look very closely to discover novelties? The traveller who, in this sense, pursues his travels at home, has the advantage at any rate of a long residence in the country to make his observations correct and profitable. . . . Would not the American, for instance, who had himself, perchance, travelled in England and elsewhere make the most profitable and accurate traveller in his own country? How often it happens that the traveller's principal distinction is that he is one who knows less about a country than a native! Now if he should begin with all the knowledge of a native, and add thereto the knowledge of a traveller, both natives and foreigners would be obliged to read

his book; and the world would be absolutely benefited. It takes a man of genius to travel in his own country, in his native village; to make any progress between his door and his gate. (2:238; emphasis supplied)

The explorer who, like Thoreau, sauntered at home instead of abroad, allowed himself all the advantages which a thorough examination of the landscape provides.

Thoreau was not easily enticed away from his native fields. He knew that the saunterer who remained home was somehow freer and better able to express himself than the one who travelled afar (Journal 10:1262), and he recognized that there is "nothing like one's native fields and lakes" (Correspondence 341). Walking daily in the same area allowed Thoreau to know his native soil and to know himself better than if he had travelled anywhere else:

It is not the book of him who has travelled the farthest over the surface of the globe, but of him who has lived the deepest and been the most at home. . . . We require that the reporter be very permanently planted before the facts which he observes, not a mere passer-by; hence the facts cannot be too homely. A man is worth most to himself and to others, whether as an observer, or poet, or neighbor, or friend, where he is most himself, most contented and at home. There his life is the most intense and he loses the fewest moments. Familiar and surrounding objects are the best symbols and illustrations of his life. . . . The man who is often thinking that it is better to be somewhere else than where he is excommunicates himself. If a man is rich and strong anywhere, it must be on his native soil. Here I have been these forty years learning the language of these fields that I may better express myself. (Journal 10:1230; emphasis supplied)

Because of these personal benefits, his commitment to exploring the Concord area was a strong and consistent one.

Consequently, Thoreau considered walking and making discoveries in Concord preferable to doing the same anywhere else because these activities reinforced for him his ties to home and his commitment to

discover the uncommon in the common:

If these fields and streams and woods, the phenomena of nature here, and the simple occupations of the inhabitants should cease to interest and inspire me, no culture or wealth would atone for the loss. . . . If Paris is much in your mind, if it is more and more to you, Concord is less and less, and yet it would be a wretched bargain to accept the proudest Paris in exchange for my native village. At best, Paris could only be a school in which to learn to live here, a steppingstone to Concord, a school in which to fit for this university. I wish so to live ever as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, every-day phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive, my daily walk, the conversation of my neighbors, may inspire me, and I may dream of no heaven but that which lies about me. . . .

The sight of a marsh hawk in Concord meadows is worth more to me than the entry of the allies into Paris. In this sense I am not ambitious. I do not wish my native soil to become exhausted and run out through neglect. Only that travelling is good which reveals to me the value of home and enables me to enjoy it better. That man is richest whose pleasures are the cheapest. (Journal 8:981; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau also explored the Concord countryside because he believed that the wildness which could be encountered there was as wild and appealing as that which anywhere else had to offer. His local walks could produce discoveries which made traveling afar unnecessary; he could explore all that he needed to within a short distance of his house as this Journal entry affirms:

I seem to have reached a new world, so wild a place that the very huckleberries grew hairy and were inedible. . . . What's the need of visiting far-off mountains and bogs, if a half-hour's walk will carry me into such wildness and novelty? But why should not as wild plants grow here as in Berkshire, as in Labrador? Is Nature so easily tamed? Is she not as primitive and vigorous here as anywhere? How does this particular acre of secluded, unfrequented, useless (?) quaking bog differ from an acre in Labrador? Has any white man ever settled on it? Does any now frequent it? Not even the Indian comes here now. . . . I have no doubt that for a moment I experience exactly the same sensations as if I were alone in a bog in Rupert's Land,² and it

²Rupert's Land was a territory in north and west Canada during Thoreau's time.

saves me the trouble of going there; for what in any case makes the difference between being here and there but many such little differences of flavor and roughness put together? Rupert's Land is recognized as much by one sense as another. I felt a shock, a thrill, an agreeable surprise in one instant, for, no doubt, all the possible inferences were at once drawn, with a rush, in my mind,—I could be in Rupert's Land and supping at home within the hour! This beat the railroad. I recovered from my surprise without danger to my sanity, and permanently annexed Rupert's Land. That wild hairy huckleberry, inedible as it was, was equal to a domain secured to me and reaching to the South Sea. That was an unexpected harvest. . . . It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess in Concord, i. e. than I import into it. (9:1063; emphasis supplied)

Such claims for his local town were typical for Thoreau. R. W. Emerson comments on Thoreau's penchant to extol "his own town and neighborhood as the most favored center for natural observation" ("Thoreau" 31). Though Thoreau followed the trail of other explorers during his trips to Cape Cod, Maine, and elsewhere, in Concord "he was the discoverer," finding there what others sought in other places. "Within his small township, which he knew he would never fully know, he was demonstrating—by exploring in behavior and method—how men might yet possess a new world" (Paul Shores 392). The end effect of Thoreau's exploration of Concord was that, as Foerster notes, he "became the veritable genius loci of Concord" (Nature 85).

Thoreau's walks in the Concord area produced numerous valuable finds for the Transcendental saunterer. He took particular pride in his Concord discoveries, as this Journal description indicates:

I feel no desire to go to California or Pike's Peak, but I often think at night with inexpressible satisfaction and yearning of the arrowheadiferous sands of Concord. I have often spent whole afternoons, especially in the spring, pacing back and forth over a sandy field, looking for these relics of a race. This is the

gold which our sands yield. (12:1476)

The plentiful arrowheads in the Concord vicinity, evidence of "our predecessors," served as constant reminders to Thoreau that travel abroad was unnecessary in order to make such discoveries. Right in Concord "new earth, new themes" awaited the explorer. The saunterer should not "celebrate . . . the Garden of Eden, but [his] own" (Journal 10:1212).

Often, the beauty or significance of a discovery seemed enhanced for Thoreau because of the local setting where the discovery was made, as in the case of his winter sauntering discovery of pickerel in Walden pond:

Ah, the pickerel of Walden! when I see them lying on the ice, or in the well which the fisherman cuts in the ice, making a little hole to admit the water, I am always surprised by their rare beauty, as if they were fabulous fishes, they are so foreign to our streets, even to the woods, foreign as Arabia to our Concord life. They possess a quite dazzling and transcendent beauty which separates them by a wide interval from the cadaverous code and haddock whose fame is trumpeted in our streets. They are not green like the pines, nor gray like the stones, nor blue like the sky; but they have, to my eyes, if possible, yet rarer colors, like flowers and precious stones, as if they were the pearls, the animalized nuclei or crystals of the Walden water. They, of course, are Walden all over and all through. . . . (Walden 284)

Thoreau's sauntering parochialism and commitment to the Concord area was quite Transcendental in nature. One of the earmarks of Transcendentalism was its focus on the virtues of America as compared with the enticements of other lands. According to Emerson and other Transcendentalists, America had as much or more to offer the traveler than did any other country. "Travelling is a fool's paradise," stated Emerson. "Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places." The traveler who sought abroad what he could not find in his own country was destined to experience disappointment ("Self-Reliance" Works 2:81,82). Emerson, like Thoreau, preached the virtues of home, claiming

that

the soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet. ("Self-Reliance" Works 2:81)

Thoreau, in one of his poems, "I Seek The Present Time," echoed Emerson's sentiment:

I seek the Present Time,

No other clime,

Life in to-day,

Not to sail another way,

To Paris or to Rome,

Or farther still from home.

.

If you love not

Your own land most,

You'll find nothing lovely

Upon a distant coast. (Poems 165,166)

Both Emerson and Thoreau made clear that the traveler would have to know and appreciate his own country and his own home before he could successfully travel abroad, and even then, the influence of home would direct his experience.

Because of this, Thoreau consistently rejected the impulse to travel abroad. His local walking experience met his needs, and he saw no reason to travel overseas when America was the land so many others traveled to see. He queried, "Why should we suffer ourselves to drift outside and

lose all our advantages?" (Journal 12:1531). When Emerson left for London on October 5, 1847, Thoreau stated how happy he was that he could remain to "walk in Walden woods rather than on a wooden deck" (Harding Days 221).

Isaac Hecker, a good friend of Thoreau's, was responsible for one of the most tempting invitations which Thoreau received to travel abroad and transplant his walking experience there. In 1844 Hecker proposed to Thoreau that the two of them travel to Europe and once there walk and beg their way wherever their good geniuses led them: "Let us take a walk over the fairest portions of the planet Earth and make it ours by seeing them." Hecker indicated that he would prefer such a walk to walking "farther in the woods" (Correspondence 154). Thoreau acknowledged the attraction of such an excursion:

Still I am strongly tempted by your proposal and experience a decided schism between my outward and inward tendencies. Your method of travelling especially--to live along the road--citizens of the world, without haste or petty plans--I have often proposed this to my dreams, and still do--But the fact is, I cannot so decidedly postpone exploring the Farther Indies, which are to be reached you know by other routes and other methods of travel. (Correspondence 156)

Thoreau knew, despite the appeal of Hecker's proposal, that he could just as easily meet his own needs while sauntering at home: "Far travel, very far travel, or travail, comes near to the worth of staying at home--Who knows whence his education is to come!" (Correspondence 158). As Reginald Cook notes, Thoreau "could not be induced to go on expeditions the essence of which might better be realized at home" (Passage 16).

One benefit of Thoreau's resolve to do his walking at home was that his local walks helped to place his life in perspective and to reinforce his own centrality in the miniature universe he explored on a daily

basis. It is the nature of walking to do this, to place things in perspective and reduce them to a smaller, more manageable scale.

According to Sussman and Goode,

Walking restores the world to human scale. It puts us humanly in touch with our environment, both man-made and natural. . . . We all need to touch earth from time to time, to feel ourselves man-size and woman-size in relation to our surroundings.

Walking gives us back the human sense of distances and perspectives. It gives us back the human sense of time that is measured in moments. When we walk we experience each step in space and each moment in time. We are aware of the passing sights and sounds and people, of the passing thoughts within our own minds, of the motion and rhythm of our bodies. Proportions and relationships are reaffirmed for us when we walk. (Magic 89,90)

While on his Concord walks Thoreau sometimes gained a vantage point which revealed to him a new view of his own personal boundaries. The insights gained from such walks focused his attention on the limits as well as potential of his own life. These walks helped define his personal microcosm. During one such walk, a climb to the top of a hill inspired this philosophical reflection:

From this hilltop I overlook, again bare of snow, putting on a warm, hazy spring face, this seemingly concave circle of earth, in the midst of which I was born and dwell, which in the northwest and southeast has a more distant blue rim to it, as it were of more costly manufacture. On ascending the hill next his home, every man finds that he dwells in a shallow concavity whose sheltering walls are the convex surface of the earth, beyond which he cannot see. I see those familiar features, that large type, with which all my life is associated, unchanged. (Journal 10:1264; emphasis supplied)

In a similar way, Thoreau pictured one's personal microcosm as a ravine which marked the boundaries of his experience, and in Thoreau's case, of his sauntering life:

We are always, methinks, in some kind of ravine, though our bodies may walk the smooth streets of Worcester. Our souls (I use this word for want of a better) are ever perched on its

rocky sides, overlooking that lowland. . . .

So we live in Worcester and in Concord, each man taking his exercise regularly in his ravine, like a lion in his cage, and sometimes spraining his ankle there. We have very few clear days, and a great many small plagues which keep us busy. . . . Nevertheless, on the whole, we think it very grand and exhilarating, this ravine life. It is a capital advantage withal, living so high, the excellent drainage of that city of God. Routine is but a shallow and insignificant sort of ravine, such as the ruts are, the conduits of puddles. But these ravines are the source of mighty streams, precipitous, icy, savage, as they are, haunted by bears and loup-cerviers; there are born not only Sacos and Amazons, but prophets who will redeem the world. . . . Let us pray that, if we are not flowing through some Mississippi valley which we fertilize,—and it is not likely we are,—we may know ourselves shut in between grim and mighty mountain walls amid the clouds, falling a thousand feet in a mile, through dwarfed fir and spruce, over the rocky insteps of slides, being exercised in our minds, and so developed. (Correspondence 538,539)

In the Concord area Thoreau viewed himself as living in a microcosm. The outlines of his personal "ravine" were traced by the walks he took, and the focus of his microcosm was always himself. He was the center of the circle, and his walks provided the radius to link him with his microcosm's outer limits. Thus wherever he walked, whatever the environment, the heart of the microcosm was where he was, radiating out from his presence. Such was the case at Walden, where he noted, "But for the most part it is as solitary where I live as on the prairies. It is as much Asia or Africa as New England. I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, and a little world all to myself" (Walden 130; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau's local walks helped him explore his own little world, and since they took place within reach of Concord, Concord remained for him a symbol of his microcosm. His own body and presence served as a portable center for his personal microcosm during his saunterings, but Concord clearly marked the center of the external world in miniature which he

explored to learn the secrets of the world outside of Concord. "It contained his tundra, sea bottom, mountain range, jungle floor, bush, steppe, heath, and mead" (Cook, Passage 2). Frederick Garber provides a helpful perspective of the interdependent relationship between Thoreau's self and Concord as the focuses for his microcosm:

It was Thoreau's habit to localize whatever consciousness could absorb, and since the most local was the selfhood within him, all alien materials ultimately ended up there. Thoreau's construction of experience . . . placed his consciousness at the center of a concentric series of enclosures or clearings. Outside the self was Concord, and outside that was the wild and, finally, the world. Everything beyond Concord eventually had reference to the town. . . .

[Thoreau] knew that the deep center was universal and he knew also that exploration in place, in the parochial landscape of Concord, would probably find it. If Thoreau was literally provincial by circumstance (he seems to have had few opportunities to travel), he was imaginatively so only by choice, preferring to make a cosmos out of Concord. (Imagination 64,65)

Concord provided a perfect center for Thoreau's microcosm. William Howarth points out the advantages Concord offered a walker like Thoreau who sought to traverse its landscape in an effort to glean the universal from the particular:

The township has irregular political boundaries . . . , but they enclose concentric rings of hills and ponds, left behind by glacial action in the last Ice Age. The Concord landscape thus possesses a naturally symmetrical, basin-like structure, with its three rivers and village converging at the lowest and most central point. That center, appropriately named Egg Rock . . . lies a half-mile north of Thoreau's home on Main Street. The centrality of his location was a great convenience. Setting out for an afternoon's walk or voyage, he could move in any compass direction and within minutes find a surprising array of topographic features: meadows, forests, swamps, brooks, cliffs, valleys, fields--in short, almost every feature the globe possesses, including some atypical of central Massachusetts. . . . To the eyes of its principal surveyor, Concord was thus a replica of almost all the sights--and sites--the outside world had to offer. ("Concord" 150,151; emphasis supplied)

Converting an area like Concord into a microcosm by studying it in

detail is perfectly suited to the walker. "The walker does not need a large territory," notes Burroughs who adds:

When you get into a railway car you want a continent, the man in his carriage requires a township; but a walker like Thoreau finds as much and more along the shores of Walden Pond. The former, as it were, has merely time to glance at the headings of the chapters, while the latter need not miss a line, and Thoreau reads between the lines. ("The Exhilarations of the Road" 232)

Walking, then, equipped Thoreau to convert the Concord countryside into a Transcendental microcosm which responded to his deliberate and thorough sauntering explorations with insights into the universal.

As with the perspective on travel abroad, Emerson and Thoreau held similar views when it came to the concept of a microcosm. In Nature Emerson noted the relationship of the part to the whole, the microcosm to the macrocosm: "A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world" (Works 1:43). In his poem "Each and All" he reaffirmed the important relationship between the part and the whole: "All are needed by each one; / Nothing is fair or good alone" (Poems Works 9:4). This poem demonstrates how all parts of the landscape contribute to the whole, and the viewer's joy is derived from the sense of the whole which the parts provide: "Beauty through my senses stole; / I yielded myself to the perfect whole" (Poems Works 9:6). For Emerson, then, "every particle was a microcosm containing all the powers and laws of nature within itself" (Boller, Transcendentalism 71).

While on his walks, Thoreau applied this same viewpoint to his discoveries. R. W. Emerson claims of Thoreau, "I know not any genius who so swiftly inferred universal law from the single fact" ("Thoreau" 35).

Thoreau felt that "it was the art of genius to raise the little into the large," and Channing held that Thoreau's ability to do this was perhaps his greatest gift (Harding, Days 454). To Thoreau "there was no such thing as size." Details of the landscape often suggested themselves to larger truths or perspectives. "The pond was a small ocean; the Atlantic, a large Walden Pond." Everywhere he walked, "he referred every minute fact to cosmical laws" (R. W. Emerson, "Thoreau" 38). Though Thoreau found himself more focused on particulars than universals in his later years (Worster, Nature's Economy 96,97), he never lost his desire to universalize his discoveries; the Transcendental part of his sauntering explorations never died out, though it weakened as he aged. As late as March of 1859, Thoreau argued that a scientific examination of the particulars of an object would not suffice; instead the explorer should perceive the "fine effluence" which is "the ultimate expression or fruit of any created thing" (Journal 12:1438). Walking aided Thoreau in his efforts to establish the significance of the particulars of the landscape which he studied by making possible his discovery of particular phenomenon and by allowing him the reflective time he needed to convert his discoveries into larger contexts.

Thus "for Thoreau . . . Concord was the microcosm which would show him all that any corner of the world could show" (Willson, "View of the West" 183). James Joyce had his Dublin, William Faulkner his Yoknapatawpha County, and Henry Thoreau his Concord. Each of these authors relied on a geographical base to provide the microcosm from which the universal nature of their works could be perceived. But Thoreau's Concord is more than a literary focal point; it provided him with a

literal place to survey the landscape and learn firsthand the universal significance of the particulars he discovered. As literary characters, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus walked through Dublin, their particular experiences informing the reader of the universals affecting Ireland and the human condition. But Henry Thoreau needed no literary character to do the same for him. He walked through Concord himself, learning and then sharing with the reader, the universal significance of his particular experiences.

There was yet another aspect of Thoreau's local walking explorations which affected his view of the microcosm. As has been pointed out, the walker's physical self provided one center, a mobile one, from which to interpret discoveries made in the microcosm, and Concord provided a geographical center for such discoveries. But a third factor, the saunterer's imaginative self, broadened the base of the walker's viewpoint. Because of his vast reading and his active imagination, Thoreau was able to project himself into places and situations well removed from whatever his present location was. This allowed him to draw analogies between his local discoveries and other places, and it enabled him to better connect the particulars of his Concord experience with the whole of whatever larger scene he could visualize. Thus imaginative sauntering combined with literal walking to produce discoveries which were locally and universally significant.

Frederick Garber comments on Thoreau's ability to extend his reach beyond Concord by tapping his imagination. According to Garber, Thoreau "postulated a map for his imagination" out of his immediate surroundings and "the geography of the North American continent." He treated the

"North American wilderness" as though it "began just at the edge of the boundaries of Concord and extended out from there in reaches which seemed infinite because they encompassed a major continent" (8). Thoreau's penchant to project himself imaginatively beyond his immediate locale is evident in Walden where he writes:

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub-oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose, stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. . . .

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. . . . (87,88)

Thus Thoreau transcended the physical boundaries of his Concord microcosm by mentally projecting himself to distant places while physically remaining at home:

As I cannot go upon a Northwest Passage, then I will find a passage round the actual world where I am. Connect the Behring Straits and Lancaster Sounds of thought; winter on Melville Island, and make a chart of Banks Land; explore the northward-trending Wellington Inlet, where there is said to be a perpetual open sea, cutting my way through floes of ice. (Journal 3:364)

Other American walkers such as John Finley have done the same as Thoreau, walking locally while imaginatively placing their walking experience in other lands or places (Mitchell, "Introduction" 7,8). In an article entitled "Long Highroad Beckons to the Walker," Finley

suggests that walkers may "walk their thousand miles without going a hundred miles from their homes." He suggests that the saunterer's travel reading coupled with his imagination can provide him with a genuine and rewarding walking experience which reaches beyond his particular vicinity. The walker might

journey in imagination over a like distance of some country, chosen for travel, either one's own country or some foreign land, the "pilgrims" to become acquainted through "collateral reading" and pictures with the landscapes and historic associations through which each one travels at the pace of three miles a day. Thus one might, while walking to and from one's office or daily work, in the course of a month of Spring walk a hundred miles in the south of France with Felix Gras's *Reds of the Midi* from Marseilles up through Avignon and Orange, or traverse the Cote d'Azure by the red rocks and the blue sea. . . . (4)

Thoreau, like Finley, broadened his walking base by reading travel literature. His reading provided him with the material which his imagination could use to engage in mental sauntering away from Concord. According to John Christie, Thoreau's travel reading aided him in sending "his roots wide as well as deep" (Traveler 41). Christie, whose book Thoreau as World Traveler studies the major influence which travel reading had on Thoreau, describes a particular instance illustrating how easily Thoreau's reading affected his walking experience:

So closely did Thoreau identify himself with the travelers on these routes [arctic explorations] that he found it difficult to leave their company. He did much of his reading about the Arctic in the winter months (as, interestingly enough, he did much of his vicarious tropical traveling in the summer), when the world outside the kitchen window lent itself with particular congeniality to his imaginings. When he finally put down his book to pursue his daily outdoor activities, so close to the surface lay the experiences of his reading that like the icebergs on his northern routes they were constantly looming through the Concord landscape, polar "refractions" against a New England background. (Traveler 196)

Thus while Thoreau sauntered, he sometimes found his walking experience

molded by the travel reading which he had done. The combination of the walk itself combined with the local landscape and the impress of his travel reading to feed Thoreau's imagination and lead him to places far from Concord.

As Christie notes, because of his wide travel reading, Thoreau had a remarkable ability to compare his local situation with foreign locales which his reading had introduced to him. While Thoreau sauntered through the Concord countryside, many particulars of the landscape suggested to him larger, more universal features represented by the places which he had read about. Thus the Concord meadow was transformed by his imagination to the "grassy sea" depicted by Humboldt "through which navigators in the Southern Hemisphere sailed" (Traveler 240). Such comparisons "from near to far, small to large, part to whole, immediate to timeless, served the larger purpose of emphasizing that notion of the macrocosm which [Thoreau] was so intent upon conveying" (Traveler 243).

Thoreau's travel reading broadened his perspective: "As he himself was all men in little, so Concord stood for all New England past and present, and New England for all the world" (Christie, Traveler 202). It gave him one more avenue by which to discover the world he sought so earnestly while on his walks. Thoreau was committed to studying "Concord as thoroughly as firsthand experience enabled him to, and the rest of the world as thoroughly as secondhand knowledge and time permitted." He walked through Concord to discover its every detail, but he read about foreign places to learn about the world outside of Concord and to connect that world with Concord (Traveler 204). Thus a walk for Thoreau often functioned at two levels. There was the literal physical level of the

walk itself which placed the walker in the local environment, and there was the psychological level of imaginative sauntering by which the walker applied his travel reading to the literal walking experience. The walker's physical and mental sauntering produced a hybrid experience which related the local, particular adventure with a more distant or universal focus.

The effect of this bi-level perspective is evident in his Journal where Thoreau frequently compares the local landscape and those discoveries made while he walked in the Concord countryside with foreign places and discoveries made abroad. In many Journal entries such comparisons appear when he extols the higher value of a local discovery over that of the foreign one. In one November entry Thoreau argues that

most of us are still related to our native fields as the navigator to undiscovered islands in the sea. We can any autumn discover a new fruit there which will surprise us by its beauty or sweetness. So long as I saw one or two kinds of berries in my walks whose names I did not know, the proportion of the unknown seemed indefinitely if not infinitely great.

Famous fruits imported from the tropics and sold in our markets--as oranges, lemons, pineapples, and bananas--do not concern me so much as many an unnoticed wild berry whose beauty annually lends a new charm to some wild walk, or which I have found to be palatable to an outdoor taste.

The tropical fruits are for those who dwell within the tropics; their fairest and sweetest parts cannot be exported nor imported. Brought here, they chiefly concern those whose walks are through the market-place. It is not the orange of Cuba, but the checkerberry of the neighboring pasture, that most delight the eye and the palate of the New England child. What if the Concord Social Club, instead of eating oranges from Havana, should spend an hour in admiring the beauty of some wild berry from their own fields which they never attended to before? It is not the foreignness or size or nutritive qualities of a fruit that determine its absolute value. (14:1729)

From Thoreau's perspective, there was enough "gold" to mine in the Concord area. No one need travel to California or Australia to seek that which he could find in his own local setting:

Men rush to California and Australia as if the true gold were to be found in that direction; but that is to go to the very opposite extreme to where it lies. They go prospecting further and further away from the true lead, and are most unfortunate when most successful. Is not our native soil auriferous? Does not a stream from the golden mountains flow through our native valley? . . . (Journal 7:918)

A saunterer could mine the Concord area all of his life, "even the cultivated and uninhabited portions," and no one would "dispute his claim." He could "mine anywhere, and wash the whole wide world in his tom"³ (Journal 7:918).

Because of this attitude, Thoreau's walks often affirmed for him the value of the local landscape, despite the travel reading which he had done. This is evident in a November, 1858 Journal entry which describes his view of a local bay while he was walking near Walden: "Some are hastening to Europe and some to the West Indies, but here is a bay never steered for. These nameless bays where the Times and Tribune have no correspondent are the true bays of All Saints for me" (11:1402). A similar sentiment is recorded in other Journal accounts of Thoreau's walks. In one description, he recounts picking up a beautiful lily and observing that "men will travel to the Nile to see the lotus flower, who have never seen in their glory the lotuses of their native streams" (4:443). In a different entry he exonerates local moonlight walks by stating that there is "no need to climb the Andes or Himalayas, for brows of lowest hills are highest mountain-tops in cool moonlight nights" (4:437).

Though in the preceding references Thoreau downplays foreign places,

³A long trough used in Thoreau's time to wash gold.

many of Thoreau's allusions to places he had read about are more positive, comparing something local with something foreign. Thoreau frequently associated his Concord walking experiences with the places and events which he had become familiar with through his reading. Even something as unromantic as cow droppings could evoke a memory from Thoreau's reading. During one walk Thoreau reflected: "I notice some old cow-droppings in a pasture, which are decidedly pink. Even these trivial objects awaken agreeable associations in my mind, connected not only with my own actual rambles but with what I have read of the prairies and pampa and Eastern land of grass, the great pastures of the world" (Journal 10:1222). When hiking in a swamp, Thoreau's spotting of a hummingbird made him think that he "was in the tropics,--in Demerara or Maracaibo" (Journal 8:1015).

There was much in the Concord environment which reminded Thoreau of far-away places. Everywhere he walked, he was aware of both his local region and those regions beyond it. Thus he could exclaim about the invigorating nature of a Concord spring: "A certain dormant life awakes in me, and I begin to love nature again. Here is my Italy, my heaven, my New England" (Journal 7:820). Wherever he went, his travel reading expanded the world of his walks, reaching out to places where Thoreau would never walk nor visit. While on one sauntering adventure, Thoreau observed:

Our humble scenery appears on a grand scale. I see the fair forms of mighty pines standing along a mountain ridge above the clouds and overlooking from a vast distance our low valley. . . . The appearance of those fine-edged pines, a narrow strip of a mountain ridge half a mile in length, is stupendous and imposing. It is as if we lived in a valley amid the Himmalaya Mountains, a vale of Cashmere. (Journal 7:803,804)

Thoreau's travel reading enriched his local walking experience by enabling him to connect the Concord landscape with other parts of America—"Snow ridges cross the village street and make it look as wild and bleak as a pass of the Rocky Mountains or the Sierra Nevada" (Journal 6:673) and to link it with other parts of the world—"If we have not the leopard and jaguar and tiger in our woods, we have all their spots and rosettes and stripes in our autumn-tinted leaves" (Journal 12:1524).

As has been shown, much of Thoreau's walking experience was very parochial. Understanding aspects of this provincialism such as his close ties with Concord and his attitudes about the act of discovery itself helps one better understand why he never tired of hiking the same territory and why he refused to extend his walking experience abroad. An awareness of how Thoreau's self and Concord served as centers for his personal microcosm and how he imaginatively transcended that microcosm through the aid of his travel reading aids an appreciation of the true nature of his local walking experience.

Not all critics, however, have been understanding of nor sympathetic to Thoreau's provincialism (Howarth, "Concord" 143,144). Perry Miller (Consciousness in Concord 75) and Leon Edel ("Walden: The Myth and the Mystery" 276) both view Concord as limiting to Thoreau, and both criticize his failure to travel more than he did. Richard Lebeaux claims that Thoreau did not travel outside of Concord, not so much because of economic necessity, but because he was "psychologically incapable of breaking away from home and mother." Thus his commitment to being "radically adventurous--in behavior and thought--while residing in Concord" was a psychological necessity (Young Man Thoreau 107). It

seems, however, that these scholars have missed the point. Thoreau's Transcendental outlook equipped him to content himself with local explorations. Why travel abroad when the universe lay within the reach of the saunterer's own mind, and its center radiated from his physical presence?

There were times, of course, when Thoreau literally and not merely imaginatively left the Concord area. During his lifetime he took a number of trips which extended beyond the normal bounds of his daily walks. These trips seemed to provide Thoreau with the kind of variety and novelty which his personality demanded of him. He was averse to any type of rut or custom, and so he periodically broke his local walking pattern for a change of scenery and experience. According to Thoreau, these journeys served the purpose of giving his intellect "an airing" (Journal 10:1230). His walking trip to Cape Cod serves as a good example of this. He traveled to the Cape to "transcend his inlander's viewpoint before it hardened into provinciality" and to "ensure freshness of vision" (Couser, "Cape Cod Pilgrimage" 32).

A few of these trips outside the Concord area involved walks to nearby towns or mountains. These modest excursions were usually inspired by Thoreau's curiosity about these places. In his Journal he briefly recalls one such experience: "We journeyed into the foreign land of Sudbury to see how the Sudbury men--the Hayneses, and the Puffers, and the Brighams--live. We traversed their pastures and their wood-lots, and were home again at night" (14:1729). Such trips were informing, but not necessarily inspiring.

But Thoreau was driven well beyond places like Sudbury, travelling to

Maine, Canada, Cape Cod, Minnesota, and other distant places. It was his nature that as soon as he had explored an area and become familiar with it, he felt the impulse to extend his exploration, either by studying the same area more intensely or by expanding the range of his exploration:

"These continents and hemispheres are the prey of a speedy familiarity--but always an unexplored and infinite region makes off on every side from my mind--as near as Cathay, and as far too. I can make no high way or beaten track into it, but immediately the grass springs up in the path" (Journal [Princeton] 1:171).

Thoreau took these lengthy journeys to study different landscapes, to view firsthand nature's varied surfaces. He challenged his neighbors to do the same, urging them to "explore the infinitely advancing frontiers of nature and of the human mind." Once his townsmen, like himself, had explored the local landscape, "other more distant places would undoubtedly call them" (Schneider, Thoreau 72).

Walking played an important role in most of these longer excursions, though it was seldom as satisfying nor as meaningful as was his local walking experience. In "A Yankee in Canada" he reveals the unfulfilled impulse to walk which he experienced during his trip to Canada: "I fear that I have not got much to say about Canada, not having seen much; what I got by going to Canada was a cold. . . . I wished only to be set down in Canada, and take one honest walk there as I might in Concord woods of an afternoon" (Writings 5:3). Thoreau discovered during his Canadian excursion that walking outside of Concord was generally a disappointing experience. His one major walk while in Canada lacked the intensity and insight that characterized his daily saunterings in Concord. When he

returned home, Thoreau desired to return to Canada, hoping for a longer walking adventure into "the wilder parts of Canada" ("A Yankee in Canada" Writings 5:101).

Thoreau's trips to Cape Cod were almost exclusively foot journeys-- "I travelled the length of Cape Cod on foot" (Correspondence 489,490), and he found them considerably more rewarding than his Canada trip. His Journal account of one of these trips reveals his enthusiasm for the walking experience: "Though we walked all day, it seemed the days were not long enough to get tired in" (11:1361). On the Cape, Thoreau was able to do what had been denied him in Canada--to get away from civilization and walk in nature, exploring its unadulterated features. When he was able to do this, whether it was in Maine, the Cape, or somewhere else, his walking experience proved rewarding, though seldom as much as did his Concord rambles.

One interesting difference between Thoreau's walking adventures while exploring away from Concord and his sauntering experiences in Concord was the fact that when away from Concord, he sought the novel and the unusual. When in Concord and faced with the same terrain from day to day and year to year, Thoreau, as has already been demonstrated, studied the common and ordinary aspects of the landscape, contenting himself with viewing these features from different perspectives. When abroad, however, he was ever alert for whatever phenomenon was different from what he might find in Concord. In his Journal he comments, "The discoveries which we make abroad are special and particular; those which we make at home are general and significant. The further off, the nearer the surface. The nearer home, the deeper" (2:262). In Cape Cod he

confesses that "we did not care to see those features of the Cape in which it is inferior or merely equal to the mainland, but only those in which it is peculiar or superior" (259). When on Staten Island, Thoreau's "happiest moments were in his off-hours when he could ramble about the island to his heart's content by himself. . . . The flora and fauna of the area fascinated him, it was so surprisingly different from that of his native Concord" (Harding, Days 148). Even during his Canada trip he experienced the sense of adventure and desire for novelty which characterized most of his walking experiences away from his home:

We had left Concord Wednesday morning, and we endeavored to realize that now, Friday morning, we were taking a walk in Canada, in the Seigniory of Beauport, a foreign country, which a few days before had seemed almost as far off as England and France. Instead of rambling to Flint's Pond or the Sudbury meadows, we found ourselves . . . taking a walk down the bank of the St. Lawrence to the Falls of Montmorenci and elsewhere. Well, I thought to myself, here I am in a foreign country; let me have my eyes about me, and take it all in. ("A Yankee in Canada" Writings 5:30,31)

Because he sought novelty, Thoreau found it particularly rejuvenating to make sauntering discoveries abroad as this Journal entry indicates:

Would it not be worth the while to discover Nature in Milton [Milton, Massachusetts]? Be native to the universe. I, too, love Concord best, but I am glad when I discover, in oceans and wildernesses far away, the materials out of which a million Concords can be made,--indeed, unless I discover them, I am lost myself,--that there too I am at home. (2:156)

When he returned from his Maine trip with Edward Hoar, he noted that "the world appears in some respects a little larger, and not, as usual, smaller and shallower, for having extended our range." His contact with the American Indian excited him most about this excursion--"he is so much the more divine; and anything that fairly excites our admiration expands us" (Correspondence 491). Much of this admiration had stemmed from

Thoreau's portages with his Indian guide over difficult terrain. His shared walking experience with the Indian was something that could not be done in Concord and thus had made the Maine trip particularly rewarding.

Sauntering discoveries made abroad could be profitable in yet another way. When Thoreau came across a new phenomenon away from Concord, he studied it closely, and once familiar with it, he then sought it in Concord. Thus some of the walking discoveries which he made in Concord were the direct result of previous discoveries of the same phenomena abroad: "Thus I have within a week found in Concord two of the new plants I found up-country. Such is the advantage of going abroad,--to enable [you] to detect your own plants. I detected them first abroad, because there I was looking for the strange" (Journal 9:1074). In Huckleberries Thoreau observes, "I have added a few to my number of edible berries, by walking behind an Indian in Maine, and observing that he ate some which I never thought of tasting before" (16).

Most aspects of his walking explorations remained the same for Thoreau, whether he walked abroad or walked locally. Thus, when walking abroad, he applied his travel reading to his foreign saunterings the same as he did when walking in Concord. It is not surprising, then, that we read in Cape Cod how Thoreau and his companion, protected under their umbrellas, traversed a sandy plain in a driving rainstorm, reading a travel book and imagining themselves transported to "such a moor as that on which somebody perished in the snow, as is related in the 'Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life'" (52). When plodding through a different part of the Cape, he observed the "very strange scenery" of the surrounding landscape and conjectured, "You would think you might be in Labrador, or

some other place you have imagined" (Journal 9:1165).

As with his local sauntering experience, Thoreau practiced the concept of the microcosm wherever he traveled. His walks abroad reinforced for him that a man was the center of his own universe wherever he went, a notion he espoused in A Week: "It is an important epoch when a man who has always lived on the east side of a mountain, and seen it in the west, travels round and sees it in the east. Yet the universe is a sphere whose center is wherever there is intelligence. The sun is not so central as a man" (349; emphasis supplied). Earlier in A Week Thoreau had described passing by a wooded island which sparked this observation: "An island always pleases by imagination, even the smallest, as a small continent and integral portion of the globe. I have a fancy for building my hut on one" (243; emphasis supplied). Here is evidence of Thoreau's ability to take any feature of the landscape and convert it into a microcosm, a process he often employed during his saunterings. Even then, the walker himself remained the center of the microcosm, with the particular focal point of the landscape serving as a connector with the rest of the world. Wherever he traveled, Thoreau was himself the center of a microcosm, and he could project himself from that center to any point of the compass on the map of his imagination.

As has been shown, whether sauntering locally or abroad, Thoreau used walking as a medium to establish contact with and study the surfaces of nature. His feet carried him over every kind of terrain in every kind of weather and circumstance. His exploration was thorough, and, because of his careful mental and physical preparation, his walks yielded important discoveries which are carefully recorded in his Journal and his other

writings. Walking helped Thoreau experience particular satisfaction in discovering the common when rambling locally or the uncommon when traveling abroad, and it proved the best travel form for aiding him in his quest to explore nature's surface as thoroughly as possible and to detect the universal significance of the particular phenomena which he studied. Physical and imaginative sauntering allowed Thoreau to create a portable, personal microcosm which expanded or contracted according to the walking environment and the walker's imagination, and which always kept the walker at the center of his personal universe, helping him to discover the physical landscape around him while relating it to those places which he had read about. In these various ways, walking aided Thoreau's quest to explore thoroughly all the surface features of Nature.

CHAPTER III

THE SAUNTERING EXPLORER: THE INTERIOR

As already demonstrated, Thoreau's sauntering exploration of nature yielded important discoveries about the surface features of the landscape. But Thoreau was a Transcendentalist who was most interested, not in surface manifestations, but in what lay beneath the surface. Roger George notes that for travelers like Thoreau, "the journey would be an experiment, not so much with space, but with one's own inner being; the outer landscape, the encounters with others would be far less important than the inner mindscape and the encounter with oneself" ("Traveler" 10,11). Walking, then, aided Thoreau in burrowing beneath the surface by affecting his own thoughts and feelings. Though walking enabled Thoreau to discover things external to himself, it also helped him discover things within himself: sensations, emotions, thoughts, and spiritual insights. While he probed the landscape around him, the combination of walking with his own moods and the environment directly affected the quality of his own experience, leading him to discoveries about the landscape within him; his interior sauntering led him to new sensations and to new insights into his own mind and the mind of God. Thus his sauntering exploration progressed from an initial confrontation of the external landscape to a direct confrontation with himself and with God. As this chapter will demonstrate, Thoreau's walks were complex experiences which involved a dynamic interplay between his outlook, the walking situation, and the immediate environment. Because of this interaction, each walk affected the quality of Thoreau's personal

experience by producing physical sensations and heightened emotions, by stimulating thoughts, and by providing spiritual insights. Thus the experience of the walk—how it touched his inner landscape—this was the real focus of Thoreau's saunterings.

For Thoreau, human experience was paramount; anything disconnected from human experience held little value for him. In his Journal he commented that he was not "interested in mere phenomena, though it were the explosion of a planet, only as it may have lain in the experience of a human being" (6:718). Thoreau thought it important to experience nature and not just to observe it: "A man has not seen a thing who has not felt it" (13:1592). When Thoreau sauntered into nature, then, his goal was not merely to observe surface phenomena, but to convert his observations into "such inward experience as will make nature significant" (5:562).

Thoreau viewed the saunterer's relationship with nature as the most important factor in his explorations. How he related to the landscape, and how, in turn, his contact with the landscape affected his own experience were his primary concerns. In "A Natural History of Massachusetts" he observes: "The true man of science will . . . smell, taste, see, hear, feel better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience" (Writings 5:131). When Thoreau walked in nature, he was no ordinary scientist. His claim that he was a "mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot" (Journal 5:529) was certainly justified. His emphasis on the quality of the saunterer's experience over the objective observation of phenomena was truly transcendental:

There is no such thing as pure objective observation. Your observation, to be interesting, i.e. to be significant, must be subjective. The sum of what the writer of whatever class has to report is simply some human experience, whether he be poet or philosopher or man of science. The man of most science is the man most alive, whose life is the greatest event. Senses that take cognizance of outward things merely are of no avail. (Journal 6:725)

Thus the relevance of the saunterer's observation is determined by its impact on his life, by the way it connects to his own experience.

The focal point, then, of Thoreau's saunterings was the experience he gained as a result of his relationship with the phenomena which he encountered. What interested Thoreau most was not the observation itself, but the influence of what was being observed and his internal response to it:

Sometimes I would rather get a transient glimpse or side view of a thing than stand fronting to it,—as those polypodies [types of ferns]. The object I caught a glimpse of as I went by haunts my thoughts a long time, is infinitely suggestive, and I do not care to front it and scrutinize it, for I know that the thing that really concerns me is not there, but in my relation to that. That is a mere reflecting surface. It is not the polypody in my pitcher or herbarium, or which I may possibly persuade to grow on a bank in my yard, or which is described in botanies, that interests me, but the one that I pass by in my walks a little distance off, when in the right mood. Its influence is sporadic, wafted through the air to me. . . . (Journal 10:1223; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau adds that "the important fact" is not "the phenomenon which excites you as something independent on you [sic]" but "its effect on" you (Journal 10:1223).

For Thoreau, the best walks produced meaningful and stimulating experiences for the saunterer; they touched his inner life:

The question is not where did the traveller go? what places did he see?—it would be difficult to choose between places—but who was the traveller? how did he travel? how genuine an experience did he get? . . . But if I travel in a simple, primitive, original manner, standing in a truer relation to men and nature,

travel away from the old and commonplace, get some honest experience of life, if only out of my feet and homesickness, then it becomes less important whither I go or how far. . . . Perhaps it is easier to live a true and natural life while travelling,—as one can move about less awkwardly than he can stand still. (Journal 3:320; emphasis supplied)

The two most critical factors in determining the quality and nature of the walker's experiences were his attitude and the surrounding environment. The walker's attitude, in particular, significantly affected his experiences while he sauntered. Thoreau advocated an attitude of openness for the saunterer. He felt it important to allow nature's influence free play, to approach his saunterings without preconceptions or prejudices which might interfere with the personal benefits from nature which he sought: "Nature is reported not by him who goes forth consciously as an observer, but in the fullness of life. To such a one she rushes to make her report. To the full heart she is all but a figure of speech" (Journal 4:444). Understanding phenomena was not as important to Thoreau as experiencing and appreciating them, outcomes which were possible if the walker held the right attitude. He records in his Journal, "We shall see but little way if we require to understand what we see. How few things can a man measure with the tape of his understanding! How many greater things might he be seeing in the meanwhile!" (2:184). Thoreau argued that the explorer should "take an original and unprejudiced view of Nature, letting her make what impression she will on you. . . ." (Journal 13:1594).

Holding the right attitude when walking allowed Thoreau the freedom he needed to remain open to nature's various influences. He was as free to saunter as he was to think; he could think and walk in any fashion he pleased, and he enjoyed a free form of sauntering which left him open to

the experiences which nature could stimulate:

There is some advantage, intellectually and spiritually, in taking wide views with the bodily eye and not pursuing an occupation which holds the body prone. There is some advantage, perhaps, in attending to the general features of the landscape over studying the particular plants and animals which inhabit it. A man may walk abroad and no more see the sky than if he walked under a shed. The poet is more in the air than the naturalist, though they may walk side by side. Granted that you are out-of-doors; but what if the outer door is open, if the inner door is shut! You must walk sometimes perfectly free, not prying nor inquisitive, not bent upon seeing things. Throw away a whole day for a single expansion, a single inspiration of air (Journal 2:248; emphasis supplied)

Such free sauntering was advocated by Burroughs who claimed that "success in walking is not to let your right foot know what your left foot doeth. Your heart must furnish such music that in keeping time to it your feet will carry you around the globe without knowing it" ("Exhilarations" 238). Annie Dillard claims that such walking involves a form of "letting go" (31). The yielding of the saunterer's mental control to the influence of nature results in highly stimulating experiences. For example, she describes walking by a creek and giving herself to the magic of the moment as she observes minnows streaking through the water. The resulting experience is very Thoreauvian:

So I blurred my eyes and gazed towards the brim of my hat and saw a new world. I saw the pale white circles roll up, roll up, like the world's turning, mute and perfect, and I saw linear flashes, gleaming silver, like stars being born at random down a rolling scroll of time. Something broke and something opened. I filled up like a new wineskin. I breathed an air like light; I saw a light like water. I was the lip of a fountain the creek filled forever; I was ether, the leaf in the zephyr; I was flesh-flake, feather, bone.

When I see this way I see truly. As Thoreau says, I return to my senses. (32)

This kind of rambling, when applied by Thoreau, freed him to remain open to such experiences as nature held for him.

An open attitude was especially important for Thoreau when his walks seemed profitless, and he was tempted to terminate them. Thoreau sometimes found it best to extend his walks when he felt them a failure because he learned that his disarmed mood under such circumstances often made him more receptive to nature's influences: "When you think your walk is profitless and a failure, and you can hardly persuade yourself not to return, it is on the point of being a success, for then you are in that subdued and knocking mood to which Nature never fails to open" (Journal 13:1580). When describing one walk in his Journal, Thoreau revealed the important relationship between the walker's attitude and the fruitfulness of a walk:

This seems the true hour to be abroad sauntering far from home. Your thoughts being already turned toward home, your walk in one sense ended, you are in that favorable frame of mind described by DeQuincey, open to great impressions, and you see those rare sights with the unconscious side of the eye, which you could not see by a direct gaze before. Then the dews begin to descend in your mind, and its atmosphere is strained of all impurities; and home is farther away than ever. Here is home; the beauty of the world impresses you. There is a coolness in your mind as in a well. Life is too grand for supper. (Journal 5:592)

Thoreau applied somewhat the same attitude to his walks when he became lost or disoriented. He discovered, that even as extending a walk that seemed unrewarding could yield meaningful experiences, so being lost and disoriented could, if viewed correctly, lead to rewarding experiences and insights. In his Journal Thoreau notes that "it is a surprising and memorable and, I may add, valuable experience to be lost in the woods, especially at night." He adds that "not till we are completely lost or turned round,—for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost,—do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature" (5:544). As with the outlook that a

walk is profitless, a feeling that one is lost disarms the walker's conscious expectation and renders him more open to the influences of the environment around him: "In fact, not till we are lost do we begin to realize where we are, and the infinite extent of our relations" (5:544).

According to Thoreau, the saunterer's experience is enriched when he yields himself to a subliminal level of consciousness, when he frees himself from the external controls of his walking experience. Thoreau commented on this in Walden where he describes walking at night in an absent-minded state:

Sometimes, after coming home thus late in a dark and muggy night, when my feet felt the path which my eyes could not see, dreaming and absent-minded all the way, until I was aroused by having to raise my hand to lift the latch, I have thought that perhaps my body would find its way home if its master should forsake it, as the hand finds its way to the mouth without assistance. (170)

He notes that during such walks, the walker is guided "unconsciously" on his course until, at times, he truly becomes lost, resulting in a new discovery of himself and his relation to the world (171). According to this perspective, the walker really cannot be lost, provided he has followed the leadings of his inner genius. If he holds the right attitude—an openness to the influences around him—his experience will be profitable and his walk worthwhile, regardless of the conditions of the walk:

While each travels his own way through the wood with serene and inexpressible joy, though it be on his hands and knees over the rocks and fallen trees, he cannot but be on the right way; there is no wrong way to him. I have found myself as well off when I have fallen into a quagmire, as in an armchair in the most hospitable house. The prospect was pretty much the same. Without anxiety let us wander on, admiring whatever beauty the woods exhibit. (Journal 2:156)

One important advantage a walker has over those who travel in other

ways is that he has to deal only with himself and the immediate environment when applying his attitude to his experience. Thoreau made clear that the traveller's attitude determines the quality of his experience, but with train, horse, or boat travel, the traveller is forced to deal with external factors when attempting to cultivate the right attitude; there is always something outside of himself, such as the vehicle of transportation itself, which he is dependent upon that can make it more difficult to apply the right attitude to his travel experience. A walker, however, experiences no barriers between himself and the nature which he relates to, and if he cultivates the right attitude of openness to nature's influences, his travel will produce rewarding experiences and insights into himself.

Along with the saunterer's attitude, the walker's immediate environment also affects the quality and nature of his inner experience. Thoreau was sensitive to every aspect of the environment when he walked; he was fully aware of the influence of the environment on his moods and thoughts. Channing, noting this, proclaims: "How [Thoreau] was affected by the seasons, who walked with them as a familiar friend! thinking thus aloud the thoughts which they brought; associations in linked sweetness long drawn out. . ." (Poet-Naturalist 114). In his Journal Thoreau observed that "in keeping a journal of one's walks and thoughts it seems to be worth the while to record those phenomena which are most interesting to us at the time. Such is the weather. It makes a material difference whether it is foul or fair, affecting surely our mood and thoughts" (13:1579; emphasis supplied). Earlier in his Journal he had noted, "In a journal it is important in a few words to describe the

weather, or character of the day, as it affects our feelings" (7:837).

The relationship between his internal moods and thoughts and the external environment is even clearer in this Journal commentary: "These regular phenomena of the seasons get at last to be—they were at first, of course—simply and plainly phenomena or phases of my life. The seasons and all their changes are in me." He adds, "After a while I learn what my moods and seasons are. I would have nothing subtracted. I can imagine nothing added. My moods are thus periodical, not two days in my year alike. The perfect correspondence of Nature to man, so that he is at home in her!" (10:1214).

Because of his sympathetic relationship with nature, when Thoreau walked in all seasons and situations, he found his internal world corresponding to the external one. His experiences and thoughts were often directly affected by the environment. This susceptibility to the influence of the environment is revealed in Thoreau's Journal when he reflects that "the temperature of the air and the clearness or serenity of the sky are indispensable to a knowledge of a day, so entirely do we sympathize with the moods of nature" (13:1576; emphasis supplied). Later in this same entry he describes how "our moods correspond" to the conditions of the immediate environment (13:1576).

Of course, Thoreau did not find himself at the mercy of the environment each time he went for a walk. He used internal regulators to control his response to the environment and to help him experience nature in the most profitable way, despite undesirable external conditions. In "A Winter Walk" he describes how "we step hastily along through the powdery snow, warmed by an inward heat, enjoying an Indian summer still,

in the increased glow of thought and feeling" (Writings 5:166). His ability to control his inner landscape when the external landscape threatened it is evident in this observation:

This subterranean fire has its altar in each man's breast; for in the coldest day, and on the bleakest hill, the traveller cherishes a warmer fire within the folds of his cloak than is kindled on any hearth. A healthy man, indeed, is the complement of the seasons, and in winter, summer is in his heart. There is the south. Thither have all birds and insects migrated, and around the warm springs in his breast are gathered the robin and the lark. ("A Winter Walk" Writings 5:168)

A passage in A Week also reveals the frequent contrast Thoreau experienced between the external and internal environment. When describing a very wet walk, Thoreau noted, "We managed to keep our thoughts dry, however, and only our clothes were wet" (299).

There was often a tension in Thoreau's walking experience between his desire to control his inner landscape and his desire to yield himself subconsciously to the influences of nature. He seemed to possess an intuitive sense of when it was best to exert control and when it was best to surrender it. One Journal description of a walk he took reveals this tension between the inner and outer landscapes and his response to it:

The mind is subject to moods, as the shadows of clouds pass over the earth. Pay not much heed to them. Let not the traveller stop for them. They consist with the fairest weather. By the mood of my mind, I suddenly felt dissuaded from continuing my walk, but I observed at the same instant that the shadow of a cloud was passing over [the] spot on which I stood, though it was of small extent, which, if it had no connection with my mood, at any rate suggested how transient and little to be regarded that mood was. I kept on, and in a moment the sun shone on my walk within and without. (2:229; emphasis supplied)

Whether he exercised conscious control over the landscape, or whether he yielded his control to the influence of the environment, when Thoreau walked in the Concord countryside from season to season, he found himself

subject to the influences of the weather. Each season brought him not only exciting discoveries of the external surface, but revelations and experiences which affected his inner landscape.

Winter, more than any other season, affected his thoughts and moods.

Sherman Paul, commenting on this, notes that

Winter . . . had special advantages. It was a most unseasonable time to walk the woods, thereby emphasizing the heroic aspects of the enterprise, contrasting Thoreau's "inward heat" with the house-bound warmth of the villagers, and dramatizing his essential insight that whatever the season, nature is a constant source of inspiration. The cold, of course, opened up a wide range of special associations--purity, chastity, virtue, self-reliance--and winter itself, offering the sharpest contrast with the other seasons, provided the best test of his faith in the abiding life of nature. (Shores 166)

In Cape Cod Thoreau discusses the relationship between a cold environment and the walker's ability to think: "In autumn, even in August, the thoughtful days begin, and we can walk anywhere with profit. Besides, an outward cold and dreariness, which make it necessary to seek shelter at night, lend a spirit of adventure to a walk" (272). More than just the cold made a winter walk rewarding. The slant of the light could evoke within Thoreau a special set of feelings: "Few things are more exhilarating . . . than to walk over bare pastures and see the abundant sheeny light like a universal halo, reflected from the russet and bleached earth." Thoreau found such a light "exceedingly warming to the spirits and imagination. This gives a character of snug warmth and cheerfulness to the swamp. . ." (Journal 11:1398). The combination of the sunlight with melting snow particularly thrilled Thoreau: "How different the sunlight over thawing snow from the same over dry, frozen snow! The former excites me strangely, and I experience a springlike melting in my thoughts" (Journal 8:975).

During winter walking, Thoreau found that nearly any phenomena which contrasted with the bleak landscape rejuvenated his spirits and affected the quality of his thoughts and feelings. Spring-like weather in January could evoke this response: "After December all weather that is not wintry is springlike. How changed are our feelings and thoughts by this more genial sky!" (Journal 13:1572). Hearing the cheering note of a chickadee break the icy, winter silence restored Thoreau's spirits: "All that is evergreen in me revived at once" (Journal 11:1387).

Even when uninterrupted by milder weather or the songs of birds, winter walking offered Thoreau special kinds of experiences. "I do not know of any more exhilarating walking" (Journal 13:1586) Thoreau said of ice walking. Thoreau viewed ice walking as inverted sauntering, that is, like walking on the sky. According to him, "The ice is a solid crystalline sky under our feet" (Journal 13:1587). He was fascinated by the reflections of the sky on the ice, and felt that the ice and sky sympathized with each other as their two surfaces met in winter time (13:1587). Walking on such a surface "purified" and "translated" the saunterer (13:1588). Walking on the snow affected the inner state of the walker as well: "You cannot walk too early in new-fallen snow to get the sense of purity, novelty, and unexploredness" (Journal 6:700). In a different Journal entry Thoreau notes the soaring effect of walking on snow:

Thus we go about, raised, generally speaking, more than a foot above the summer level. So much higher do we carry our heads in winter. What a great odds such a little difference makes! When the snow raises us one foot higher than we have been accustomed to walk, we are surprised at our elevation! So we soar.
(8:964,965)

Winter sauntering, of course, did not always conjure up positive

feelings and experiences. Walking in a barren landscape could create, even for an individualist like Thoreau, an unwelcome sense of loneliness: "My walk is the more lonely when I perceive that there are no ants now upon their hillocks in field or wood. These are deserted mounds. . ." (Journal 10:1228). The fierce New England wind could not only make him feel cold but "world-ridden" as well.

But no matter how he felt, Thoreau found winter more conducive to thinking than the other seasons. Winter sauntering fed his intellectual life:

The alert and energetic man leads a more intellectual life in winter than in summer. In summer the animal and vegetable in him are perfected as in a torrid zone; he lives in his senses mainly. In winter cold reason and not warm passion has her sway; he lives in thought and reflection; he lives a more spiritual, a less sensual, life. . . .

The mind of man in the two seasons is like the atmosphere of summer compared with the atmosphere of winter. He depends more on himself in winter,—on his own resources,—less on outward aid. . . . He migrates into his mind, to perpetual summer. And to the healthy man the winter of his discontent never comes. (Journal 3:292)

Walking in other seasons affected Thoreau in similar ways, altering his inner landscape according to the external conditions which he faced. The warm air of a spring day could stimulate "a revolution in our feelings," causing a "change mainly in us. We feel as if we had obtained a new lease on life" (Journal 7:863,864). Warmer summer air brings moisture with it, something that decidedly affected the quality of Thoreau's experiences during his summer jaunts. Cook notes that Thoreau "was fullest of life when he was wettest" (Passage 15), and such was certainly the case. Rainy weather, like winter conditions, proved conducive to Thoreau's ability to think while he sauntered: "A rainy day is to the walker in solitude and retirement like the night. Few

travellers are about, and they half hidden under umbrellas and confined to the highways. One's thoughts run in a different channel from usual" (Journal 5:551). When commenting on walking in the rain, Thoreau observed in his Journal that "this rain is good for thought. It is especially agreeable to me as I enter the wood and hear the soothing dripping on the leaves. It domiciliates me in nature" (10:1289). His inner response to rain walking is more comprehensively described in this Journal description:

I find it good to be out this still, dark, mizzling afternoon; my walk or voyage is more suggestive and profitable than in bright weather. The view is contracted by the misty rain, the water is perfectly smooth, and the stillness is favorable to reflection. I am more open to impressions, more sensitive (not calloused or indurated by sun and wind), as if in a chamber still. My thoughts are concentrated; I am all compact. The solitude is real, too, for the weather keeps other men at home. This mist is like a roof and walls over and around, and I walk with a domestic feeling. . . . All things have a soothing effect; the very clouds and mists brood over me. My power of observation and contemplation is much increased. My attention does not wander. The world and my life are simplified. What now of Europe and Asia? (8:934; emphasis supplied)

In the fall, the clear, cool atmosphere touched Thoreau's inner landscape as he sauntered about: "It is a great pleasure to walk in this clear atmosphere, though cooler. How great a change, and how sudden, from that sultry and remarkably hazy atmosphere to this clear, cool autumnal one, in which all things shine, and distance is restored to us!" (Journal 6:787). In a similar entry, Thoreau reflects:

I walk over the pinweed-field. There is a light on the earth and leaves, as if they were burnished. It is the glistening autumnal side of summer. I feel a cool vein in the breeze, which braces my thought, and I pass with pleasure over sheltered and sunny portions of the sand where the summer's heat is undiminished, and I realize what a friend I am losing. (6:773)

As with the influence of the other seasons, the fall affected Thoreau's

thinking processes:

Methinks the reflections are never purer and more distinct than now at the season of the fall of the leaf, just before the cool twilight has come, when the air has a finer grain. Just as our mental reflections are more distinct at this season of the year, when the evenings grow cool and lengthen and our winter evenings with their brighter fires may be said to begin. (Journal 11:1368)

Because of the walker's direct exposure to the environment, every external factor offers its influence, including the time of the day. Schneider notes that for Thoreau "times of the day were seasons in miniature" (Thoreau 111). Thoreau discovered that walking before the heat of the day set in created within the saunterer "a feeling of vigor" (Journal 2:226). Morning walking could trigger a special air of expectancy, especially in spring:

As soon as those spring mornings arrive in which the birds sing, I am sure to be an early riser. I am waked by my genius. I wake to inaudible melodies and am surprised to find myself expecting the dawn in so serene and joyful and expectant a mood. I have an appointment with spring. She comes to the window to wake me, and I go forth an hour or two earlier than usual. (Journal 5:537)

Daytime sauntering, however, often seemed more "trivial" to Thoreau than nighttime hiking did (Journal 2:210). As pointed out in a previous chapter, Thoreau went on many evening walks, and during these walks, he not only saw natural phenomena from a different perspective, he also gained important insights into himself. It should be noted, however, that the nighttime sauntering experiences which Thoreau enjoyed were not physical ones. Nighttime sauntering was less physically rewarding because of the walker's greater fatigue—"I do not know but I feel less vigor at night; my legs will not carry me so far; as if the night were less favorable to muscular exertion. . ." (Journal 2:204); "You feel

yourself—your body, your legs,—more at night, for there is less beside to be distinctly known, and hence perhaps you think yourself more tired than you are" (Journal 2:209).

What made nighttime sauntering rewarding was the peace of mind and the intellectual awareness which it brought to the rambler. Walking at night plunged the hiker into a dream-like world which lulled his mental faculties into a very pleasant, subconscious state, one superior to the world-laden condition of the daytime traveller:

He who has spent the night with the gods sleeps more innocently by day than the sluggard who has spent the day with the satyrs sleeps by night. He who has travelled to fairyland in the night sleeps by day more innocently than he who is fatigued by the merely trivial labors of the day sleeps by night. That kind of life which, sleeping, we dream that we live awake, in our walks by night, we, waking, live, while our daily life appears as a dream. (Journal 2:268)

In his essay "Night and Moonlight" Thoreau has much to say regarding the internal benefits of sauntering at night. He comments on the highly sensual nature of walking in the dark—"In the night the eyes are partly closed or retire into the head. Other senses take the lead. The walker is guided as well by the sense of smell. . ." (Writings 5:327), and on the effect night has on the saunterer's mental explorations—"As the shades begin to gather around us, our primeval instincts are aroused, and we steal forth from our lairs, like the inhabitants of the jungle, in search of those silent and brooding thoughts which are the natural prey of the intellect" (330). The special effects of nighttime walking on his own spirit was something Thoreau could not pass by:

There are nights in this climate of such serene and majestic beauty, so medicinal and fertilizing to the spirit, that methinks a sensitive nature would not devote them to oblivion, and perhaps there is no man but would be better and wiser for spending them out-of-doors, though he should sleep all the next

day to pay for it. . . . (331)

Walking in moonlight especially affected the internal experience of the nighttime saunterer. Thoreau found that moonlight influenced his ability to think: "Neither in our thoughts in these moonlight walks, methinks, is there 'the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion,' but we are, perchance, intellectually and morally albinos, children of Endymion whose parents have walked much by moonlight" (Journal 4:457). According to Thoreau, "No thinker can afford to overlook the influence of the moon any more than the astronomer can" (Journal 3:276). He compares the moon's influence on the mind to its influence on the tides:

Is not the poet who walks by night conscious of a tide in his thought which is to be referred to lunar influence, in which the ocean within him overflows its shores and bathes the dry land? Has he not his spring-tides and his neap-tides, the former sometimes combining with the winds of heaven to produce those memorable high tides of the calendar which leave their marks for ages, when all Broad Street is submerged, and incalculable damage is done to the ordinary shipping of the mind? (Journal 3:276)

The influence of nighttime walking and the moon on Thoreau's inner life is even more apparent in this Journal reflection:

As the twilight deepens and the moonlight is more and more bright, I begin to distinguish myself, who I am and where; as my walls contract, I become more collected and composed, and sensible of my own existence, as when a lamp is brought into a dark apartment and I see who the company are. With the coolness and the mild silvery light, I recover some sanity, my thoughts are more distinct, moderated, and tempered. Reflection is more possible while the day goes by. The intense light of the sun unfits me for meditation, makes me wander in my thought; my life is too diffuse and dissipated; routine succeeds and prevails over us; the trivial has greater power then, and most at noonday, the most trivial hour of the twenty-four. I am sobered by the moonlight. I bethink myself. It is like a cup of cold water to a thirsty man. The moonlight is more favorable to meditation than sunlight.

. . . Nature broods us, and has not left our germs of thought

to be hatched by the sun. We feel her heat and see her body darkening over us. Our thoughts are not dissipated, but come back to us like an echo. (2:237)

At night, when the moon worked its magic, Thoreau frequently found the quality of his inner experience deeply affected, as though the moonbeams could penetrate his exterior and reach his heart.

Regardless of whether Thoreau hiked at night or during the day, no matter what the season, every feature of the landscape and environment interacted with him to affect the quality of his experience. Thus Thoreau found himself intimidated by the openness of the Cape Cod road which he travelled during his trip to the Cape. An open landscape was not hospitable to someone from the New England woods: "We shuddered at the thought of living there and taking our afternoon walks over those barren swells, where we could overlook every step of our walk before taking it, and would have to pray for a fog or snow-storm to conceal our destiny. The walker there must soon eat his heart" (Cape Cod 136,137).

Even the quality of the air affected Thoreau, though much more beneficially than the open Cape landscape. He found that his inner state often resulted from the quality of the air in the immediate environment:

The influences which make for one walk more than another, and one day more than another, are much more ethereal than terrestrial. It is the quality of the air much more than the quality of the ground that concerns the walker,--cheers or depresses him. What he may find in the air, not what he may find on the ground. (Journal 2:339)

His Journal record of his walks contains a number of references to the influence of the air on the saunterer. During one walk he noted that the "greater freshness and purity of the air" had the effect of rejuvenating "the spirits" of the walker (4:483). After a March walk, he recorded: "Though cloudy, the air excites me. Yesterday all was tight as a

stricture on my breast; to-day all is loosened. . . . The sides of bushy hills where the snow is melted look, through this air, as if I were under the influence of some intoxicating liquor" (3:360). Not just the quality of the air, but the wind itself, can affect the walker's mood: "The thermometer does not give account of the wind, but our moods are very obedient to it" (13:1602). The wind and the air, the landscape, the light, the weather, the season, the time of day—all these factors combined with the walker's own attitude and outlook to affect the quality and nature of his intellectual and emotional life.

When Thoreau traversed the landscape, the external environment affected his inner self by touching all aspects of his being: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Thoreau experienced nature at all of these levels. At the physical and emotional level, Thoreau enjoyed a powerful sensual intercourse with nature. His walks were highly sensual affairs which sent him into very stimulated emotional states. Emerson wrote in Nature that "the lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other. . . . His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food" (Works 1:9).

Thoreau was the perfect fulfillment of this description. He coveted those experiences in which the walker "sees, hears, scents, tastes, and feels only himself,—the phenomena that show themselves in him,—his expanding body, his intellect and heart" (Journal 5:547). According to Channing, Thoreau "was in the habit of saying,—Give me healthy senses, let me be thoroughly alive, and breathe freely in the very floodtide of the living world" (Poet-Naturalist 199). "I must walk more with free

senses" he declared in his Journal (4:488), and he claimed that "in health all the senses are indulged and each seeks its own gratification.—it is a pleasure to see, and to walk, and to hear. . . ." (Journal [Princeton] 1:204).

Thoreau's senses were particularly sharp, making his commitment to saunter sensually through nature all the more rewarding. Foerster notes that Thoreau perfected his senses "by abstinence from bad habits" and "by incessant use" (Nature 78). The result was senses which were "acute" (R. W. Emerson "Thoreau" 39) and seemingly "double, giving him access to secrets not easily read by others . . . dealing with objects as if they were shooting forth from his mind mythologically, thus completing the world all round to his senses; a creation of the moment" (Alcott, "Thoreau" 56).

During his walks, Thoreau used his senses to read the outer world and to better understand his inner world: "With our senses applied to the surrounding world we are reading our own physical and corresponding moral revolutions" (Journal 4:432). When he applied his senses to the landscape, he often achieved a remarkable sensual connection between his inner state and the external world. Such a situation is described in Walden where he writes,

This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt sleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me. The bullfrogs trump to usher in the night, and the note of the whippoorwill is borne on the rippling wind from over the water. Sympathy with the fluttering alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled. (129)

A more powerful sensual state of harmony is described in A Week : "I see, smell, taste, hear, feel, that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves. . ." (173). Instances like these point to the way that sensory stimuli affected Thoreau's emotional state during his walks, his senses acting like strings emotionally tying his inner landscape to the external one.

As has already been noted, walking gave Thoreau a tremendous edge in his efforts to connect himself sensually with the external environment because it enabled him to confront directly the objective world with his senses. Thus Thoreau freely applied his senses to varying landscapes and conditions. One Journal account reveals the active role his senses played in his explorations: "I still recall to mind that characteristic winter eve of December 9th; the cold, dry, and wholesome diet my mind and senses necessarily fed on. . ." (9:1098). In The Maine Woods he records: "After a dinner . . . I walked across the clearing into the forest, southward, returning along the shore. For my dessert, I helped myself to a large slice of the Chesuncook woods, and took a hearty draught of its waters with all my senses. . ." (129).

Thoreau's sensual probing of the external world was very Transcendental in one respect—it provided him with exhilarating experiences of the moment. His sensual sauntering experiences were noted for their intensity and their emphasis on the "now." These sensual encounters with nature stimulated Thoreau's body and emotions creating powerful carpe diem experiences. Victor Friesen points out that "using one's senses means living now" (4), and Thoreau certainly lived sensually in the here and now, sensually immersing himself "in the natural world in

which he at present [was] living" (1). Thoreau's commitment to experiencing life in the present is especially clear in this Journal proclamation: "The moods and thoughts of man are revolving just as steadily and incessantly as nature's. Nothing must be postponed. Take time by the forelock. Now or never! You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment" (12:1472). The opening stanza of Thoreau's poem "Carpe Diem" preaches the same thought:

Build not on to-morrow,
 But seize on to-day!
 From no future borrow,
 The present to pay. (Poems 21)

Thus Thoreau stated in "Walking" that "we cannot afford not to live in the present" (245), and his walks captured the magic of a given moment each time that his senses connected him to the immediacy of his surroundings.

Walking was the perfect travel mode for providing opportunities for a traveller like Thoreau to experience all the possibilities of a given moment in time. Although walking can offer the hiker reflective time to consider the past and the future, it also makes possible immediate sensual contact with the environment, providing the saunterer with exciting experiences of the moment and freeing him from a consciousness of time. According to Bill Gale, "the rhythmic motion of the limbs" which walking necessitates clears the saunterer's mind and frees him "to look around and really assimilate what he sees. In the proper environment, a good walk acts as a catalyst for the senses" (Wonderful

World 71). Thus the physical motion of walking stimulates mental responses which trigger sensual experiences:

Feet and legs were made for walking. When they move as nature intended them to, the entire body responds joyously. The brain signals its approval, and as you drink in the sights, and sounds, and smells that surround you—enjoying a veritable feast for the senses—your entire being seems to gush with vitality. That's the walker's "high." (Wonderful World 72)

Such was Thoreau's experience.

In his Journal Thoreau recorded his desire to "be intoxicated on air and water!" (2:162). Like Emily Dickinson whose sensual ecstasy in nature was expressed in these lines—"Inebriate of Air--am I--/ And Debauchee of Dew—" (Poems 99), Thoreau found himself during his walks sensually stimulated to the point of natural intoxication, as this Journal account of one of his rambles illustrates:

What is called genius is the abundance of life or health, so that whatever addresses the senses, as the flavor of these berries, or the lowing of that cow, which sounds as if it echoed along a cool mountain-side just before night, where odoriferous dews perfume the air and there is everlasting vigor, serenity, and expectation of perpetual untarnished morning,—each sight and sound and scent and flavor,—intoxicates with a healthy intoxication. . . . After I had been eating these simple wholesome, ambrosial fruits on this high hillside, I found my senses whetted, I was young again, and whether I stood or sat I was not the same creature. (4:455; emphasis supplied)

Such sensual encounters with nature during his ramblings could transport Thoreau to a state of utter rapture. During one August hike, he found himself overcome by sense stimulation as the external environment lifted his mood and transformed him:

Each sound seems to come from out a greater thoughtfulness in nature, as if nature had acquired some character and mind. The cricket, the gurgling stream, the rushing wind amid the trees, all speak to me soberly yet encouragingly of the steady onward progress of the universe. My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow, suddenly recover my spirits, my

spirituality, through my hearing. . . . Ah! if I could so live that there should be no desultory moment in all my life! that in the trivial season, when small fruits are ripe, my fruits might be ripe also! that I could match nature always with my moods! that in each season when some part of nature especially flourishes, then a corresponding part of me may not fail to flourish! Ah, I would walk, I would sit and sleep, with natural piety! . . . Now I have occasion to be grateful for the flood of life that is flowing over me. I am not so poor: I can smell the ripening apples; the very rills are deep; the autumnal flowers . . . feed my spirit, endear the earth to me, make me value myself and rejoice; the quivering of pigeons' wings reminds me of the tough fibre of the air which they rend. I thank you, God. . . . I am impure and worthless, and yet the world is gilded for my delight and holidays are prepared for me, and my path is strewn with flowers. . . . It seems to me that I am more rewarded for my expectations than for anything I do or can do. Ah, I would not tread on a cricket in whose song is such a revelation, so soothing and cheering to my ear! Oh, keep my senses pure! (2:242; emphasis supplied)

As with this experience, Thoreau's sensual interactions with the landscape during his walks deeply touched his inner life. The varied sights, sounds, scents, tastes, and textures that the natural world offered helped bridge the gap between nature and Thoreau's spirit. In typical Transcendental fashion, Thoreau continually sought correspondences between the external landscape and his own internal landscape, and his senses provided him with the material for such correspondences.

It was possible for Thoreau when he walked to be so sensually attuned to his environment that he was scarcely aware of anything except the sense impressions which nature fed him; under such circumstances, he entered a world of pure sensuality. In "A Walk to Wachusett" he shares one such experience:

As we traversed the cool woods of Acton, with stout staves in our hands, we were cheered by the song of the red-eye, the thrushes, the phoebe, and the cuckoo; and as we passed through the open country, we inhaled the fresh scent of every field, and all nature lay passive, to be viewed and traveled. Every rail,

every farmhouse, seen dimly in the twilight, every tinkling sound told of peace and purity, and we moved happily along the dark roads, enjoying not such privacy as the day leaves when it withdraws, but such as it has not profaned. It was solitude with light; which is better than darkness. But anon, the sound of the mower's rifle was heard in the fields, and this, too, mingled with the lowing of kine. (Writings 5:136)

Thus, when Thoreau walked and explored the external landscape, his acute senses not only led him to important discoveries about the world outside himself, they also provided him with stimulating experiences which inspired him and transformed his inner world. During a walk, he utilized every sense to ensure the most meaningful contact with nature. Each sense contributed to his walking experience.

Thoreau was probably more affected by his sense of hearing than by any other sense. When walking, he was easily transported into an ecstatic state upon hearing particular sounds. Commenting on this in his Journal, he notes:

There are few sounds still which never fail to affect me. The notes of the wood thrush and the sound of a vibrating chord, these affect me as many sounds once did often, and as almost all should. The strains of the aeolian harp and of the wood thrush are the truest and loftiest preachers that I know now left on this earth. I know of no missionaries to us heathen comparable to them. They intoxicate, they charm us. . . . I would be drunk, drunk, dead drunk to this world with it forever. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The contact of sound with a human ear whose hearing is pure and unimpaired is coincident with an ecstasy. Sugar is not so sweet to the palate, as sound to the healthy ear; the hearing of it makes men brave. (6:676; emphasis supplied)

The note of any bird often lifted his spirits and renewed him. Such was the case when, walking one day, he heard the cheery note of a bobolink. His response—"Methinks they are the most liquidly sweet and melodious sounds I ever heard. They are refreshing to my ear as the first distant tinkling and gurgling of a rill to a thirsty man"—

indicates the power of the bird's song over him. Overcome, he remarked: "It is the foretaste of such strains as never fell on mortal ears, to hear which we should to our doors and contribute all that we possess or are" (9:1151,1152). Appropriately, Thoreau used a bird's song as the focal point in his poem "The Cliffs & Springs" in which he presents the walker, moved by a veery's song, launched into a timeless, spaceless state of rapture:

When breathless noon hath paused on hill and vale,

 Somewhat it is, sole sojourner on earth,
 To hear the verry on her oaken perch
 Ringing her modest trill—
 Sole sound of all the din that makes a world,
 And I sole ear.
 Fondly to nestle me in that sweet melody,
 And own a kindred soul, speaking to me
 From out the depths of universal being.
 O'er birch and hazel, through the sultry air,
 Comes that faint sound this way,
 On Zephyr borne, straight to my ear.
 No longer time or place, nor faintest trace
 Of earth, the landscape's shimmer is my only space,
 Sole remnant of a world.
 Anon that throat has done, and familiar sounds
 Swell strangely on the breeze, the low of cattle,
 And the novel cries of sturdy swains

That plod the neighboring vale—

And I walk once more confounded a denizen of earth. (Poems 92)

Sounds put Thoreau closer in touch with himself; they directed him to new worlds and states within himself. When he sauntered in winter, the stillness freed him to hear himself better: "Then there is the wonderful stillness of a winter day. The sources of sound, as of water, are frozen up. . . . When we listen, we hear only that sound of the surf of our internal sea, rising and swelling in our ears as in two seashells"

(Journal 11:1426). The sounds projected by a brook could have much the same effect, especially during a night walk:

I hear the sound of Heywood's Brook falling into Fair Haven Pond, inexpressibly refreshing to my senses. It seems to flow through my very bones. I hear it with insatiable thirst. It allays some sandy heat in me. It affects my circulations; methinks my arteries have sympathy with it. What is it I hear but the pure waterfalls within me, in the circulation of my blood, the streams that fall into my heart? What mists do I ever see but such as hang over and rise from my blood? The sound of this gurgling water, running thus by night as by day, falls on all my dashes, fills all my buckets, overflows my float-boards, turns all the machinery of my nature, makes me a flume, a sluice-way, to the springs of nature. Thus I am washed; thus I drink and quench my thirst. . . . (Journal 2:219)

As with hearing, Thoreau had a strong sense of sight which readily affected the nature of his experience when he walked outdoors to explore the landscape. Thoreau was determined to glean visually all that he could from nature—"That I might never be blind to the beauty of the landscape" (Journal 2:162)—and he was as easily intoxicated by what he saw as by what he heard: "In all my rambles I have seen no landscape which can make me forget Fair Haven. . . . The sight of these budding woods intoxicates me,—this diet drink" (Journal 2:9,10). Seeing a bird, like hearing one, could excite Thoreau. When during one walk he spotted

a scarlet tanager contrasted with the green trees and blue sky, he observed: "I am transported; these are not the woods I ordinarily walk in. . . . How he enhances the wildness and wealth of the woods!"

(Journal 5:575).

Sight, like sound, could propel the saunterer within himself. While walking one day, Thoreau observed the rich red color of polk berries and found himself moved from within—"It speaks to my blood" (Journal 2:266). Even seeing something as common as speckled briar leaves in the fall could affect his emotions and his thoughts: "It excites me to a sort of autumnal madness. They are leaves for Satyrus and Faunus to make their garlands of. My thoughts break out like them, spotted all over, yellow and green and brown" (Journal 7:801).

Thoreau used his sense of sight to strengthen his relationship with nature, to match his own experience to her experience. Seeing a "faint tinge of green" in the spring landscape excited Thoreau, inviting him to join in the spirit of nature's triumph over winter: "I revive with Nature; her victory is mine. This is my jewelry" (Journal 8:991). Thoreau found his moods corresponding to the immediate environment in the fall as well, when the sight of nature's "annual fair in October" stunned his visual senses and lifted his spirits: "Did not all these [manifestations of fall color] suggest that man's spirits should rise as high as Nature's,—should hang out their flag, and the routine of his life be interrupted by an analogous expression of joy and hilarity?" ("Autumnal Tints" Writings 5:275).

Thoreau's sense of smell, though not as strong as his sense of hearing and sense of sight, also contributed to his sauntering experience

by connecting him to the natural world in ways that affected his own inner world. In his Journal Thoreau had stated, "There are odors enough in nature to remind you of everything, if you had lost every sense but smell" (4:407), and as he rambled, he sniffed through the environment in somewhat primitive fashion: "Methinks the scent is a more primitive inquisition than the eye, more oracular and trustworthy. . . . The scent reveals, of course, what is concealed from the other senses. By it I detect earthiness" (Journal 4:410). As with seeing and hearing, smelling certain things could intoxicate Thoreau as he walked: "As I walked, I was intoxicated with the slight spicy odor of the hickory buds and the bruised bark of the black birch, and, in the fall, the pennyroyal" (Journal 2:147). Under the right circumstances, a scent could affect the walker's sense of wholeness and health:

Returning toward Fair Haven, I perceive at Potter's fence the first whiff of that ineffable fragrance from the Wheeler meadow,—as it were the promise of strawberries, pineapples, etc., in the aroma of their flowers, so blandly sweet,—aroma that fitly foreruns the summer and the autumn's most delicious fruits. It would certainly restore all such sick as could be conscious of it. The odors of no garden are to be named with it. It is wafted from the garden of gardens. . . . If the air here always possessed this bland sweetness, this spot would become famous and be visited by sick and well from all parts of the earth. It would be carried off in bottles and become an article of traffic which kings would strive to monopolize. The air of Elysium cannot be more sweet. (Journal 5:569)

Thoreau's sense of smell, as with sight and hearing, put him in touch with nature in a very personal way, allowing him to match his experience with that of nature and to identify with her moods. One can see this in his Journal account of a September night hike: "How much excited we are, how much recruited, by a great many particular fragrances! A field of ripening corn, now at night, that has been topped, with the stalks

stacked up to dry,—an inexpressibly dry, rich, sweet, ripening scent. I feel as if I were an ear of ripening corn myself" (2:260; emphasis supplied). Thoreau contended that as long as the body functioned and allowed him to explore sensually his surroundings, to sniff and smell nature's odors, he would feel a correspondence with nature which would affect his own experience:

I still perceive that ambrosial sweetness from the meadows in some places. Give me strong, rank scent of ferns in the spring for vigor; just blossoming late in the spring. A healthy and refined nature would always derive pleasure from the landscape. As long as the bodily vigor lasts, man sympathizes with nature. (Journal 4:439; emphasis supplied)

Of all his senses, taste and touch were Thoreau's weakest. Still, he sensually related to his environment with these senses in the same way as the others, with much the same results. His walks were filled with opportunities to taste or to touch things, and such encounters affected the quality and nature of his walking experiences. Thoreau could sip the sap flowing from scarlet oaks during a November walk and note its "pleasantly astringent taste, this strong oak wine" (Journal 11:1384). He could enjoy the spicy taste of fever-bush berries and find himself so affected as to be transported "in thought to the spice islands" (Journal 12:1520). The taste of tart cranberries could infuse him with vigor: "No tarts that I ever tasted at any table ever possessed such a refreshing, cheering, encouraging acid that literally put the heart in you and set you on edge for this world's experiences, bracing the spirit. . ." (Journal 4:409).

Touch affected him in a similar fashion, connecting his body to the landscape and altering his inner life: "My body is all sentient. As I go her or there, I am tickled by this or that I come in contact with, as if

I touched the wires of a battery. I can generally recall—have fresh in my mind—several scratches last received. These I continually recall to mind, reimpress, and harp upon" (Journal 8:941). Making physical contact with nature had the effect of bonding it to him; when grasping objects during his walk, he was often reluctant to release them, as though releasing them would break his tie with nature: "Acorns, red and white . . ., appear to be fallen or falling. They are so fair and plump and glossy that I love to handle them, and am loath to throw away what I have in my hand" (Journal 11:1366).

Thoreau's sensual interaction with nature was, like the other aspects of his walking experience, thorough and deep. Walking allowed him to place his body in any situation which might appeal to his senses, and so, as he explored to discover the external features of the landscape, he used his senses to cultivate a personal relationship with nature, to match his experience with her own, and to connect his inner life with the external phenomena which his senses probed. His senses helped him humanize his contact with nature and treat nature like the bride he never had. Alfred Kazin argues that "for most of his life Thoreau [made] nature his beloved, the perfect Other" (64), and Thoreau's sensual experiences during his walks bonded him intimately with the surrounding environment.

Such a relationship with nature should not seem that strange, since, according to Annette Kolodny, it is built on "universal mythic wishes" (5). She stresses that "America's oldest and most cherished fantasy" is most likely

a daily reality of harmony between man and nature based on the experience of the land as essentially feminine—that is, not

simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification--enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction. (4)

Thoreau subscribed to the female principle in nature, though his view was closer to the land as mother than the land as mistress:

Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard; and yet we are so early weaned from her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man,--a sort of breeding in and in, which produces at most a merely English nobility, a civilization destined to have a speedy limit. ("Walking" Writings 5:237)

Thoreau felt that withdrawal from nature was an unnatural act, an anti-maternal action. To enjoy, as he did, an intimate relationship with nature necessitated granting her the appropriate maternal role. Lebeaux accounts for Thoreau's viewpoint by claiming that

Thoreau sought in nature the security that his mother did not offer him in [his] early years. Returning to nature was like returning to the mothers's breast; to withdraw to nature was, in some sense, to regress to early childhood, recoup his losses, and gain a sense that he was being cared for by his mother. (48)

Regardless of the reason why Thoreau was attracted to nature as a maternal figure, one thing is certain about his relationship with nature: Thoreau sought in nature a companion and friend, one which he could relate to and interact with. This is not to suggest that he was misanthropic, for Thoreau had his share of human friends and valued human contact. But Thoreau held a special regard for nature as well, and his desire to make special contact with her was made possible by the walks he took which freed him to interact sensually with the environment in most any way that he chose. It was necessary for Thoreau to internalize the landscape, to feel with and respond to his external surroundings—"It is in vain to write on the seasons unless you have the seasons in you"

(Journal 10:1245), and the use of his senses while sauntering made such internalization possible as sense stimulation was converted to emotional and intellectual response.

Because of his desire to interact with and relate to nature, Thoreau's walks were not passive experiences; that is, he did not go on a walk for the sake of observation alone. The ultimate purpose of his walks was to open himself to nature's influences, to walk in such a way that nature reached him through his senses and touched his inner being. This was his wish--to assimilate within himself the landscape he walked in, to internalize the moods and vigor of nature through sensual contact with the environment:

Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each. Let them be your only diet drink and botanical medicines. . . . Be blown on by all the winds. Open all your pores and bathe in all the tides of Nature, in all her streams and oceans, at all seasons. (Journal 5:627)

Thoreau vowed to immerse himself in nature, to acquire a "living sense" of the landscape he traversed (Correspondence 436). As he sauntered, he would "taste the world and digest it" (Journal 3:295), he would become "part and parcel of Nature" (Journal 3:369). These were the expectations he held as he walked in the Concord countryside, seeking not only discoveries of natural phenomena, but also experiences which would affect him within.

His appetite to have intercourse with nature was insatiable: "He fairly gnaws the ground and the trees in his walk, so craving in his appetite for the wild" (Burroughs Writings 8:16). According to Worster, "No naturalist or ecologist has been more intent on knowing nature by his teeth, tongue, and intestines--on engorging nature into the self as well

as merging the self in nature" (Nature's Economy 79). Walking perfectly suited Thoreau's sensual quest to internalize the landscape.

"Kinesthetic sensuousness--an awareness of the sensations in one's skin, muscles, and joints that proceed from a voluntary motion of the body" can, Friesen notes, cultivate within the walker a sense identity with external phenomena (11). The walker can not only imitate the dance of a squirrel in an effort to capture its light-hearted mood, he can in more sophisticated fashion experience sensations

from his own actions, his own participation, as it were, in the processes of nature. Indulging his kinesthetic sense--feeling dried leaves, hoarfrost, bare earth, riverbed underfoot and feeling also the muscles work in legs and feet as he adjusts his stride for each "terrain"--he experiences the world in a simple, primitive fashion. (11,12)

Thus the movement of the walker's body and his sensual response to the textures of the environment produce an inner state which is receptive to the processes of nature. The walk itself becomes a type of dance or celebration of the primitive movements of nature to which the saunterer feels himself allied.

So extreme was Thoreau's desire to know nature in an intimate way that he sought a total emerging of the self with the landscape--"a warm and sympathetic oneness, that escape from the self into the All, to which psychologists have given the chilly name 'empathy'" (Krutch, Thoreau 172). While walking, Thoreau sought within himself corresponding processes for those processes which he observed in nature:

Such an appetite have we for new life that we begin by nibbling the very crust of the earth. We betray our vegetable and animal nature and sympathies by our delight in water. We rejoice in the full rills, the melting snow, the copious spring rains and the freshets, as if we were frozen earth to be thawed, or lichens and mosses, expanding and reviving under this influence. (Journal 12:1460,1461; emphasis supplied)

In Walden, Thoreau queries, "Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?" (138).

It was Thoreau's sensual encounters with nature which helped him identify so closely with the external landscape and which made his walks such participatory adventures during which he attempted in every way possible to interact personally with the environment. Eating offered Thoreau one way to accomplish this while he was on a walk. An example of a participatory eating experience is found in his Journal account of a July walk during which he paused from a surveying job to eat some raw turnips. He equated this action with the eating habits of cows, and identified himself with their primitive appetites and characteristics:

I, too, tried hard to chew a mouthful of raw turnips and realize the life of cows and oxen. . . . These are things which travellers do. How many men have tasted raw turnips! How many have eaten a whole one! Some bovine appetites, which find some fodder in every field. For like reasons we sometimes eat sorrel and say we love it, that we may return the hospitality of Nature by exhibiting a good appetite. (2:220,221)

Eating the natural food like these turnips which was available during a walk offered Thoreau an opportunity to enjoy a very special relationship with nature:

Nature does her best to feed man. The traveller need not go out of the road to get as many [berries] as he wants; every bush and vine teems with palatable fruit. Man for once stands in such relation to Nature as the animals that pluck and eat as they go. The fields and hills are a table constantly spread. Wines of all kinds and qualities, of noblest vintage, are bottled up in the skins of countless berries, for the taste of men and animals. To men they seem offered not so much for food as for sociality, that they may picnic with Nature,--diet drinks, cordials, wines. We pluck and eat in remembrance of her. It is a sacrament, a communion. The not-forbidden fruits, which no serpent tempts us to taste. Slight and innocent savors, which relate us to Nature, make us her guests and entitle us to her regard and protection. It is a Saturnalia, and we quaff her wines at every turn. (Journal 5:611; emphasis supplied)

Such eating of nature's natural foods was often a religious experience for Thoreau, offering him a way to commune with nature and partake "of her divinity" (Friesen 28). His walks not only mimed the processes of nature, they also celebrated the sacramentality of the landscape.

Just the act of picking berries, while rambling through the fields, provided Thoreau with special experiences which reinforced his bond with nature. His Journal recollection of a July berry-picking adventure reveals the value he placed in the activity of picking the berries and the experience picking berries provided him: ". . . I got invaluable experience beside! A half a day of liberty like that was like the promise of eternal life. It was emancipation in New England. O, what a day was there, my countrymen!" (2:221). In a much later Journal entry, he emphasizes the same quality of experience: "When I used to pick the berries for dinner on the East Quarter hills I did not eat one till I had done, for going a-berrying implies more things than eating the berries. They at home got only the pudding: I got the forenoon out of doors, and the appetite for the pudding" (14:1678). The activity involved in berry-picking could naturally alter Thoreau's mood: "The slight distraction of picking berries is favorable to a mild, abstracted, poetic mood, to sequestered or transcendental thinking. I return even more fresh to my mood from such slight interruptions" (Journal 4:466).

Whether picking or eating berries during his rambles, Thoreau considered the immediate environment an important factor for determining the quality of his berrying experiences. Eating could affect the walker's feelings about his environment and aid his adjustment to a new environment. He describes this effect in "A Walk to Wachusett" where he

notes how gathering and eating berries as he climbed to a higher elevation helped him adjust to the more elevated environment:

As we gathered the raspberries, which grew abundantly by the roadside, we fancied that that action was consistent with a lofty prudence; as if the traveler who ascends into a mountainous region should fortify himself by eating of such light ambrosial fruits as grow there, and drinking of the springs which gush out from the mountain-sides, as he gradually inhales the subtler and purer atmosphere of those elevated places, thus propitiating the mountain gods by a sacrifice of their own fruit. The gross products of the plains and valleys are for such as dwell therein; but it seemed to us that the juices of this berry had relation to the thin air of the mountain tops. (Writings 5:142)

Thoreau was ever aware of the interactions between the walker, the environment, and the walking situation. Repeatedly, Thoreau notes the influences of the environment on the quality of the saunterer's personal experience.

No matter what was eaten, whether berries, apples, or a similar fruit, Thoreau discovered during his walks that the environment affected the quality of the taste of the food the walker consumed. According to Thoreau, in a natural setting, food tastes better and retains its original flavor; in a foreign or civilized setting, food loses its flavor and inspirational quality. Thus in Walden Thoreau writes:

The fruits do not yield their true flavor to the purchaser of them, nor to him who raises them for the market. There is but one way to obtain it, yet few take that way. If you would know the flavor of huckleberries, ask the cow-boy or the partridge. It is a vulgar error to suppose that you have tasted huckleberries who never plucked them. (173)

It is a combination of the walker's own exertion—picking the berry—with the value of the natural landscape which preserves the fruit's true flavor for the saunterer. The saunterer's appetite is different from anyone else's because only he earns his food by gleaning it himself and

eating it in its natural setting:

The wild apples are now getting palatable. I find a few left on distant trees, which the farmer thinks it not worth his while to gather. He thinks that he has better in his barrels, but he is mistaken, unless he has a walker's appetite and imagination, neither of which can he have. . . . The saunterer's apple not even the saunterer can eat in the house. (Journal 3:295; emphasis supplied)

In "Wild Apples" Thoreau explains more fully why it is that the saunterer must eat his apples outdoors, and how doing so enhances his experience:

. . . I frequently pluck wild apples of so rich and spicy a flavor that I wonder all orchardists do not get a scion from that tree, and I fail not to bring home my pockets full. But perchance, when I take one out of my desk and taste it in my chamber, I find it unexpectedly crude,—sour enough to set a squirrel's teeth on edge and make a jay scream.

These apples have hung in the wind and frost and rain till they have absorbed the qualities of the weather or season, and thus are highly seasoned, and they pierce and sting and permeate us with their spirit. They must be eaten in season, accordingly,—that is, out-of-doors.

To appreciate the wild and sharp flavors of these October fruits, it is necessary that you be breathing the sharp October or November air. The outdoor air and exercise which the walker gets give a different tone to his palate, and he craves a fruit which the sedentary would call harsh and crabbed. They must be eaten in the fields, when your system is all aglow with exercise, when the frosty weather nips your fingers, the wind rattles the bare boughs or rustles the few remaining leaves, and the jay is heard screaming around What is sour in the house a bracing walk makes sweet [emphasis supplied]. Some of these apples might be labeled, "To be eaten in the wind." (Writings 5:311,312)

Thoreau adds, "In the fields only are the sours and bitters of Nature appreciated" (313). This is one thing that made walking so important to Thoreau. He had to be in the fields in order to experience what nature had to offer him. Only walking could make possible the kind of contact with nature which he needed to experience its "sours and bitters." Thus Thoreau walked into nature, experiencing its tastes in natural settings, eating berries, apples, lichens, or the crust of the earth itself—

whatever would help him satisfy his striking appetite to experience nature sensually:

Going along the Nut Meadow or Jimmy Miles road, when I see the sulphur lichens on the rails brightening with the moisture I feel like studying them again as a relisher or tonic, to make life go down and digest well, as we use pepper and vinegar and salads. They are a sort of winter greens which we gather and assimilate with our eyes. That's the true study of lichens. I expect that the lichenist will have the keenest relish for Nature in her every-day mood and dress. He will have the appetite of the worm that never dies, of the grub. To study lichens is to get a taste of earth and health, to go gnawing the rails and rocks. This product of the bark is the essence of all times. The lichenist extracts nutriment from the very crust of the earth. A taste for this study is an evidence of titanic health, a sane earthiness. It makes not so much blood as soil of life. . . . As some strong animal appetitites, not satisfied with starch and muscle and fat, are fain to eat that which eats and digests,—the contents of the crop and the stomach and entrails themselves,—so the lichenist loves the tripe of the rock,—that which eats and digests the rocks. He eats the eater. "Eat-all" may be his name. (Journal 4:1424; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau's walks, as this description makes clear, involved an effort to "eat" nature, to take it into his system and taste, chew, and assimilate it into his own blood stream. As Mumford points out, Thoreau "tasted the land" (Decades 68). Nothing was exempt from Thoreau's appetite, not even the earth's crust: ". . . I was drawn toward and worshipped the brownish light in the sod,—the withered grass, etc., on barren hills. I felt as if I could eat the very crust of the earth; I never felt so terrene, never sympathized so with the surface of the earth" (Journal 12:1449).

Drinking, like eating, allowed Thoreau to establish sensually a personal relationship with nature while he walked in it. As with eating, taking liquid into one's self from nature's natural supply affected the inner life of the walker, much as a child drinking from his mother's

breast. Thoreau's Journal account of one walk during which he drank from a spring illustrates this: "I lie almost flat, resting my hands on what offers, to drink at this water where it bubbles, at the very udders of Nature, for man is never weaned from her breast while this life lasts—How many times in a single walk does he stoop for a draught!" (4:447). Water, once assimilated into the saunterer's body, works its magic on him, affecting him with the purifying and inspirational qualities which it inherently possesses in its natural state. Such was the experience Thoreau had during a night walk:

Nut Meadow Brook where it crosses the road beyond Jenny Dugan's that was. I do not drink in vain. I mark that brook as if I had swallowed a water snake that would live in my stomach. I have swallowed something worth the while. The day is not what it was before I stooped to drink. . . . There were some seeds of thought, methinks, floating in that water, which are expanding in me. The man must not drink of the running streams, the living waters, who is not prepared to have all nature reborn in him,—to suckle monsters. (Journal 2:242)

Once swallowed in the proper environment, a given liquid influences the walker's body and feelings. A substance like birch sap could alter Thoreau immediately during a walk, leaving its impress on him for quite some time: "Suppose we were to drink only the yellow birch sap and mix its bark with our bread, would not its yellow curls sprout from our foreheads, and our breath and persons exhale its sweet aroma? What sappy vigor there would be in our limbs! What sense we should have to explore the swamps with!" (Journal 9:1137,1138). As with eating fruits, the effect of the liquid on the saunterer is dependent on the environment—the more natural the environment, the stronger the effect. Thus

like wild apples, [birch sap] must be tasted in the fields, and then it has a very slightly sweetish and acid taste, and cool as iced water. . . . I drank some of the black birch wine with my dinner for the name of it; but, as a steady drink, it is only to

be recommended to outdoor men and foresters. (Journal 8:999)

During particularly warm weather, the saunterer could not only establish a relationship with nature by eating and drinking during the walk, he could also bathe in ponds, streams, and rivers, sharing the same water as the wild creatures and allowing the water to cool and refresh himself. During one August ramble, Thoreau bathed in a local stream and then recorded: "With what sober joy I stand to let the water drip from me and feel my fresh vigor, who have been bathing in the same tub which the muskrat uses! Such a medicated bath as only nature furnishes" (Journal 2:253). The immediate environment, coupled with the water which he bathed in and the walker's frame of mind, could make a bath, particularly a stimulating mountain one, an impressive experience: "The cool air above, and the continual bathing of our bodies in mountain water, alternate foot, sitz, douche, and plunge baths, made this walk exceedingly refreshing. . ." (Maine Woods 68).

Even as Thoreau felt bovine in his appetite, he felt amphibious in his desire to bathe during a walk: "Men are inclined to be amphibious, to sympathize with fishes, now. I desire to get wet and saturated with water" (Journal 4:425). Bathing made him feel like an accepted part of nature, like one of her own creatures who inhabited the same waters. One bath caused him to conclude: "I begin to inhabit the planet, and see how I may be naturalized at last" (Journal 6:762). To enter the water was a baptismal rite for Thoreau; the water readily assimilated him into nature and made him feel part of her: "Though the river is thus high, we bathe at Cardinal Shore and find the water unexpectedly warm and the air also delicious. Thus we are baptized into nature" (Journal 9:1147).

Water offered Thoreau more than just the opportunity to immerse himself into his sauntering environment. Water, like air, could be assimilated into the walker's system; it offered the rambler the opportunity to become one with the environment. Such was the case when Thoreau walked along the shore of Cape Cod, "determined to get it into" him (Cape Cod 177). A swamp could present Thoreau with the same possibility for merging oneself with the landscape:

I can fancy that it would be a luxury to stand up to one's chin in some retired swamp a whole summer day, scenting the wild honeysuckle and bilberry blows, and lulled by the minstrelsy of gnats and mosquitoes! . . . Say twelve hours of genial and familiar converse with the leopard frog; the sun to rise behind alder and dogwood, and climb buoyantly to his meridian of two hands' breadth, and finally sink to rest behind some bold western hummock! To hear the evening chant of the mosquito from a thousand green chapels, and the bittern begin to boom from some concealed fort like a sunset gun!--Surely one may as profitably be soaked in the juices of a swamp for one day as pick his way dry-shod over sand. Cold and damp,--are they not as rich experience as warmth and dryness? (A Week 300)

Wading in a swamp, like bathing in a river, often refreshed Thoreau and spiritualized his experience: "I wade in the swamp. . . . The water is now gratefully cool to my legs, so far from being poisoned in the strong water of the swamp. It is a sort of baptism for which I had waited" (Journal 9:1146).

Such experiences suggest one of the real advantages of walking to a naturalist like Thoreau; walking helped him immerse himself in the landscape, to experience it in all its forms. These sensual experiences appealed to his body as much as to his mind or soul. The sense appeals offered by nature wooed his body, and water, in particular, offered physical rejuvenation: "We find it delicious to take off our shoes and stockings and wade far through the shallows on the meadow to the Bedford

shore, to let our legs drink air" (Journal 10:1269).

Thoreau enjoyed such physical refreshment when he chose to walk through rivers and streams instead of just bathing in them. These fluvial excursions were particularly welcome on hot days. In his Journal Thoreau notes that during a very warm July ramble he "made quite an excursion up and down [a river] in the water, a fluvial, a water, walk. Now in water a foot or two deep, now suddenly descending through valleys up to my neck, but all alike agreeable" (4:453). Such water sauntering offered Thoreau a luxurious sense experience: "I wonder if any Roman emperor ever indulged in such luxury as this,—of walking up and down a river in torrid weather with only a hat to shade the head. What were the baths of Caracalla to this? . . . On this road there is no other traveller to turn out for" (4:454). Thoreau coveted these water-walking experiences, but he knew that the conditions had to be just right for him to realize the physically stimulating response that such walking made possible:

That the luxury of walking in the river may be perfect it must be very warm, such as are few days even in July, so that the breeze on those parts of the body that have just been immersed may not produce the least chilliness. It cannot be too warm, so that, with a shirt to fend the sun from your back, you may walk with perfect indifference, or rather with equal pleasure, alternately in deep and in shallow water. Both water and air must be unusually warm; otherwise we shall feel no impulse to cast ourselves into and remain in the stream. To-day it is uncomfortably cool for such a walk. (Journal 4:465)

With the right conditions, a fluvial excursion could provide the walker with the perfect balance between walking as an act of discovery and walking as sense experience. Thoreau's Journal record of one river walk reveals how enjoyable both of these aspects of the walking experience could be during a water ramble:

Now for another fluvial walk. There is always a current of air above the water, blowing up or down the course of the river, so that this is the coolest highway. Divesting yourself of all clothing but your shirt and hat, which are to protect your exposed parts from the sun, you are prepared for the fluvial excursion. You choose what depths you like, tucking your toga higher or lower, as you take the deep middle of the road or the shallow sidewalks. Here is a road where no dust was ever known, no intolerable drouth [sic]. Now your feet expand on a smooth sandy bottom, now contract timidly on pebbles, now slump in genial fatty mud--greasy, saponaceous--amid the pads. You scare out whole schools of small breams and perch, and sometimes a pickerel, which have taken shelter from the sun under the pads. The river is so clear compared with the South Branch, or main stream, that all their secrets are betrayed to you. Or you meet with and interrupt a turtle taking a more leisurely walk up the stream. . . . In shallow water near the shore, your feet at once detect the presence of springs in the bank emptying in, by the sudden coldness of the water, and there, if you are thirsty, you dig a little well in the sand with your hands, and when you return, after it has settled and clarified itself, get a draught of pure cold water there. . . . (4:455)

In any form, moisture appealed to Thoreau when he walked. Getting wet strengthened his relationship with nature and touched his inner life. Water, like the spirit of nature itself, penetrated his skin and altered his personal experience: "To get the value of the storm we must be out a long time and travel far in it, so that it may fairly penetrate our skin, and we be as it were turned inside out to it, and there be no part in us but is wet or weather-beaten,--so that we become storm men instead of fair-weather men" (Journal 3:355). Just the act of walking in the rain affected Thoreau's thoughts and feelings; the contact of the rain with his skin corresponded with a much deeper contact of nature with his psychological self:

. . . You wander indefinitely in a beaded coat, wet to the skin of your legs, sit on moss-clad rocks and stumps, and hear the lisping of migrating sparrows flitting amid the shrub oaks, sit long at a time, still, and have your thoughts. A rain which is as serene as fair weather, suggesting fairer weather than was ever seen. You could hug the clods that defile you. You feel the fertilizing influence of the rain in your mind. The part of

you that is wettest is fullest of life, like the lichens. You discover evidences of immortality not known to divines. You cease to die. You detect some buds and sprouts of life. Every step in the old rye-field is on virgin soil. (Journal 10:1248; emphasis supplied)

The land, as well as the water, offered Thoreau ample opportunities to relate sensually to the environment as he walked through it, strengthening in the process his relationship with nature and affecting the quality of his inner experience. He was as determined to get the earth into himself as he was to assimilate water: "You must love the crust of the earth on which you dwell more than the sweet crust of any bread or cake. You must be able to extract nutriment out of a sandheap. You must have so good an appetite as this, else you will live in vain" (Journal 10:1247). Any sensual contact with the ground or anything associated with the ground excited Thoreau: "The earth looks warm and genial again. . . . I could almost lie down in the furrow and be warmed into her life and growth" (Journal 9:1128). The fetal pose described in this quote provides one more example of Thoreau's attraction to nature as a maternal figure, and it reveals his deep desire to use his walking experiences to bond him to nature.

Even wading through weeds and grass provided Thoreau with the opportunity to bond sensually with the environment—a terrestrial counterpart to his fluvial excursions: "We walked in some trodden path on account of the wet grass and leaves, but the fine grass overhanging paths, weighed down with dewy rain, wet our feet nevertheless. We cannot afford to omit seeing the beaded grass and wetting our feet" (Journal 10:1191). Thoreau even wrote a poem to commemorate this kind of walking experience. He celebrates the walker's contact with weeds and flowers,

and the pollen and dust they cast on the walker's shoes, as the mark which distinguishes the genuine walker from those who never walk through the fields, and thus are only "transported" from place to place rather than travelling like Thoreau through nature and making contact with it:

Tall Ambrosia

Among the signs of autumn I perceive

The Roman wormwood . . .

.

Sprinkles its yellow dust over my shoes

As I cross the now neglected garden

--We trample under foot the food of gods

& spill their nectar in each drop of dew--

My honest shoes Fast friends that never stray

far from my couch thus powdered countryfied

Bearing many a mile the marks of their adventure

At the post-house disgrace the Gallic gloss

Of those well dressed ones who no morning dew

Nor Roman wormwood ever have been through

Who never walk but are transported rather--

For what old crime of theirs I do not gather (Poems 173)

As with water sauntering, walking on land allowed the traveller to confront nature sensually without interference and to merge himself with the landscape, identifying with her moods and qualities. Travelling through weeds could accomplish this for the saunterer as well as wading through a meadow: "The weeds begin to be high in low grounds and low wood-paths . . . suggesting a certain fecundity and vigor in nature, so

that we love to wade through their ranks" (Journal 4:457). Walking on the land, as with water-sauntering, was a completely participatory act for Thoreau. He valued any way that he could not only study nature, but even more importantly, interact with her, and walking provided him with numerous ways that he could participate in nature's processes, including the inadvertent spreading of seeds: "Perhaps Nature would condescend to make use of us even without our knowledge, as when we help to scatter her seeds in our walks, and carry burrs and cockles on our clothes from field to field" (A Week 389). At the most basic level of experience, then, of Thoreau's sauntering adventures, he walked in nature, sensually probing it and actively attempting to assimilate the environment into himself. Sensual contact with the environment led him to internalize the moods and qualities of nature which his sensual experience revealed to him. He sought a total merging of the self with the landscape, seeking within himself correspondences with the processes of nature which he observed and participated in during the walking experience. Whether eating, drinking, bathing, or hiking, Thoreau found his walks filled with opportunities to interact sensually with the environment and, in the process, to enhance his special relationship with nature while affecting the quality of his own inner life.

But walking provided Thoreau with other types of experiences. At a different and perhaps higher level from his sense experience, walking was a very heroic, adventurous act which fed his desire to live a courageous, moral life in a world ruled by the mundane and unheroic. Thoreau was well aware of a tension within himself between the contemplative and the active life—"The struggle in me is between a love

of contemplation and a love of action--the life of a philosopher & of a hero" (Journal [Princeton] 2:240), and walking was one important way that he experienced the active, heroic side of his personality. Influenced by the Bhagavad-Gita (Canby Thoreau xvi,xvii,199-203; Hendrick "Introduction" xii) as well as his own New England temperament (Canby Thoreau xvi), Thoreau found real satisfaction in living the kind of active life which walking made possible:

It is good policy to be stirring about your affairs, for the reward of activity and energy is that if you do not accomplish the object you had professed to yourself, you do accomplish something else. So, in my natural history walks, it commonly turns out that, going for one thing, I get another. (Journal 11:1352)

The Concord countryside served as Thoreau's field of chivalric endeavors for his walks. "To go to nature . . . was made a heroic form of action," and "Thoreau's problem was to make nature itself a proper field of action" (Paul Shores 134).

Thoreau viewed the walks he took in nature as heroic quests which set him apart from his contemporaries who remained in town or near to home and lived out dull and uneventful lives:

Men come tamely home at night from the next field or street, where their household echoes haunt, and their life pines because it breathes its own breath over again; their shadows morning and evening reach farther than their daily steps. We should come home from far, from adventures, and perils, and discoveries every day, with new experience and character. (Walden 208)

For Thoreau, walking was a quest for adventure and honor, an activity which offered the saunterer an opportunity to experience the heroic and the chivalric:

It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises. Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to the old hearth-side from which we set out.

Half the walk is but retracing our steps. We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return,—prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms. If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again,—if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk.

To come down to my own experience, my companion and I, for I sometimes have a companion, take pleasure in fancying ourselves knights of a new, or rather an old, order,—not Equestrians or Chevaliers, not Ritters or Riders, but Walkers, a still more ancient and honorable class, I trust. The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker. . . . ("Walking" Writings 5:206)

Here, Thoreau presents the chivalric aspects of his saunterings, not dealing with a tournament for the hand of a fair maiden, but anticipating the many adventures a walk could offer one who entered it in the right spirit and who gave himself in chivalric fashion to the female principle of the landscape. The physical rigors of the walk, the difficulty of the terrain, the challenges posed by the environment and the walking situation, the mysteries of the exploration—these provided the saunterer with the chivalric quest which he sought. With no horse to carry him, this new knight used his legs to venture forth against all obstacles which might interfere with the exciting experiences a walk could yield. Thus Thoreau proposed a new form of chivalry, one based upon the walker who sauntered with a spirit of adventure and expectation, a man who owed no allegiance to any lord, but sought only the rewards offered by his the walking experiences gained in the fields. In this sense, the experience of the walk is the important thing. There is no holy grail to find but rather holy ground to walk on which transports the walker from the world of the mundane to the world of the heroic.

Thus "A little adventure like a walk" (Journal 2:257) could convert

an ordinary winter landscape into the opportunity for a chivalric experience: "Now for a brisk and energetic walk, with a will and a purpose. Have done with sauntering, in the idle sense. You must rush to the assault of winter. Make haste into the outskirts, climb the ramparts of the town, be on the alert and let nothing escape your observations" (Journal 2:1393). Any contact with nature during a walk had an adventurous quality to it, as the time when Thoreau found himself "covered with seeds" which had stuck to him during a walk. He considered these green seeds which covered his legs "a kind of coat of mail. It was the event of our walk, and we were proud to wear this badge, as if he were the most distinguished who had the most on his clothes" (Journal 14:1683). Even when Thoreau reminisced about walking, he tended to do so in chivalric terms. In a letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson and his wife, Thoreau wrote, "And Hawthorne too I remember as one with whom I sauntered in old heroic times along the banks of the Scamander [Concord], amid the ruins of chariots and heroes" (Correspondence 124).

Thoreau's writings are full of references to his desire to experience adventure during his saunterings. A walk was never fully satisfying to him unless it contained an element of danger or adventure. Though Thoreau eagerly anticipated the discoveries which he hoped to make during a walk, it was the adventure and excitement of the walk itself that most satisfied him. In a letter to his good friend H. G. O. Blake, Thoreau revealed his enthusiasm for the element of adventure in his sauntering experiences. In describing his climb of Mt. Monadnock, Thoreau shared with Blake the inhospitable conditions under which the initial ascent

took place. According to Thoreau, the climb, subject to wild, stormy weather, "was a great deal better than going up there in fair weather, & having no adventure . . . but dull common-place sleep in a useless house, & before a comparatively useless fire--such as we get every night" (Correspondence 596; emphasis supplied). In an earlier letter to Blake, Thoreau had noted that a previous mountain ramble had not been that satisfying because "the mode of it was not simple and adventurous enough" (Correspondence 538).

The more difficult and challenging the walk, the more Thoreau valued it. He found himself drawn to wild, inhospitable landscapes because of the adventure which sauntering in such areas provided. At one point in The Maine Woods he recounts how he and his Indian guide surveyed distant "solemn bear-haunted mountains." Thoreau found himself enticed by the threatening nature of this landscape:

My imagination personified the slopes themselves, as if by their very length they would waylay you, and compel you to camp again on them before night. Some invisible glutton would seem to drop from the trees and gnaw at the heart of the solitary hunter who threaded those woods; and yet I was tempted to walk there. (184)

Emerson had exclaimed, "The characteristic of heroism is its persistency" ("Heroism" Works 2:260), and Thoreau cherished the heroic nature of any walk which tested his persistency and challenged him physically and mentally:

Why not live a hard and emphatic life? not to be avoided--full of adventures and work! Learn much--in it. travel [sic] much though it be only in these woods [sic] I some-times walk across a field with unexpected and long-missed content--as if there were a field worthy of me. The usual daily boundaries of life are dispersed and I see in what field I stand. (Journal [Princeton] 2:177)

Thoreau equated the physical stamina which his walks demanded of him with

bravery and chivalrous action:

As our bodies court physical encounters, and languish in the mild and even climate of the tropics, so our souls thrive best on unrest and discontent. The soul is a sterner master than any King Frederick, for a true bravery would subject our bodies to rougher usage than even a grenadier could withstand. . . . When the sun breaks through the morning mist, I seem to hear the din of war louder than when his chariot thundered on the plains of Troy. The thin fields of vapor spread like gauze over the woods, from extended lawns whereon high tournament is held. . . . ("The Service" Reform Papers 14)

He seemed especially proud of the physically challenging walking which he did and recorded in his Journal the details of a hike which he claimed was representative of his local rambles:

Would it not be well to describe some of those rough all-day walks across lots?--as that of the 15th, picking our way over quaking meadows and swamps and occasionally slipping into the muddy batter midleg deep; jumping or fording ditches and brooks; forcing our way through dense blueberry swamps, where there is water beneath and bushes above; then brushing through extensive birch forests all covered with green lice, which cover our clothes and face; then, relieved, under larger wood, more open beneath, steering for some more conspicuous trunk; now along a rocky hillside where the sweet-fern grows for a mile, then over a recent cutting, finding our uncertain footing on the cracking tops and trimmings of trees left by the choppers; now taking a step or two of smooth walking across a highway; now through a dense pine wood, descending into a rank, dry swamp, where the cinnamon fern rises above your head, with isles of poison-dogwood; now up a scraggy hill covered with shrub oak, stooping and winding one's way for half a mile, tearing one's clothing in many places and putting out one's eyes, and find[ing] at last that it has no bare brow, but another slope of the same character; now through a corn-field diagonally with the rows; now coming upon the hidden melon-patch; seeing the back side of familiar hills and not knowing them,--the nearest house to home, which you do not know. . . ; now reaching on higher land some open pigeon-place, a breathing-place for us. (Journal 6:786)

Such a description leaves the reader winded, gasping for breath, but this kind of walking invigorated Thoreau, providing him with adventurous and heroic experiences.

His writings contain numerous descriptions of the physical challenges

of walks which would have intimidated all but the most dedicated saunterer. Thoreau describes several of these rigorous walking adventures in The Maine Woods, such as this sample passage:

. . . The walking rapidly grew worse, and the path more indistinct, and at length . . . we found ourselves in a more open and regular swamp, made less passable than ordinary by the unusual wetness of the season. We sank a foot deep in water and mud at every step, and sometimes up to our knees, and the trail was almost obliterated, being no more than that a musquash leaves in similar places, when he parts the floating sedge. . . . It would have been amusing to behold the dogged and deliberate pace at which we entered that swamp, without interchanging a word, as if determined to go through it, though it should come up to our necks. (215,216)

As in this description, Thoreau liked to emphasize the difficulty of his walks in his written record of them; he liked to draw the reader's attention to the heroic nature of his sauntering struggles. This is even more evident earlier in The Maine Woods when he depicts his climb of Mt. Ktaadn. During this particular description, he emphasizes the vertical projection of his ascent: "Following up the course of the torrent which occupied this--and I mean to lay some emphasis on this word up--pulling myself up by the side of perpendicular falls of twenty or thirty feet, by the roots of firs and birches. . ." (60). He claims that this difficult walking is "scarcely less arduous than Satan's anciently through Chaos" (60), and points out that this is "certainly the most treacherous and porous country I ever travelled" (61).

Thoreau's walks helped him identify with the adventurous among his countrymen, those who were willing to take risks and respond to challenges. While his contemporaries demonstrated their courage and initiative in other ways, Thoreau used walking as the means to assert his own heroic and adventurous nature: "The timid or ill-shod confine

themselves to the land side, where they get comparatively few berries and many scratches, but the more adventurous, making their way through the open swamp . . . obtain access to those great drooping clusters of berries which no hand has disturbed" (Journal 14:1739; emphasis added).

Thoreau often went out of his way to ensure that his walking experience would provide him with the challenges and difficulties which he thrived on. Fannie Eckstorm argues that Thoreau's orienteering skills were deficient, pointing out that the route of his climb up Mt. Katahdin was an ill-advised one since he could have ascended the mountain by an easier and quicker path (108,109). What Eckstorm fails to understand is that Thoreau typically charted difficult routes for his walks; he shunned easy passages which might deprive him of the adventure and excitement which made walking worthwhile to him. In A Week Thoreau's plans for one hike reveal this tendency: "But I determined to follow up the valley to its head, and then find my own route up the steep, as the shorter and more adventurous way" (182; emphasis supplied). According to Harding, it was Thoreau's custom to select a destination and then to head cross-country, "going through rather than around any obstacle in the way" (Days 432). So extreme was Thoreau's commitment to stick to a straight line until he reached his objective, that he would saunter "across fields, through forests, and over brooks and swamps, stopping for nothing" (Days 294). According to legend, when Thoreau and a hiking companion once "found a farmhouse in their way, they went in the open front door, down the hall, and out the back, leaving the astonished farmer and his family speechless around their dining table" (Days 295). William Channing's description of Thoreau's orientation process

emphasizes the heroic nature of his approach:

He ascended such hills as Monadnoc or Saddle-back Mountain by his own path; would lay down his map on the summit and draw a line to the point he proposed to visit below (perhaps forty miles away in the landscape), and set off bravely to make the short-cut. The lowland people wondered to see him scaling the heights as if he had lost his way, or at his "jumping over their cow-yard fences," asking if he had fallen from the clouds. (Poet Naturalist 45; emphasis supplied)

Though Thoreau's sense encounters with the landscape provided him with remarkable and stimulating experiences of the moment, his heroic walking adventures connected him with the past as well as the present, helping him to identify his own experiences with those of the pioneers who had lived before him. In A Week Thoreau explains the connection between one's personal experiences and history:

All the events which make the annals of the nations are but the shadows of our private experiences. Suddenly and silently the eras which we call history awake and glimmer in us, and there is room for Alexander and Hannibal to march and conquer. In other words, the history which we read is only a fainter memory of events which have happened in our own experience. (292)

Thoreau's walking experience allowed him to live out history, to be one of the "sturdy pioneers" which his Journal indicates he felt called to emulate ([Princeton] 1:167). Lucy Hazard observes that "pioneering was with Thoreau a conscious exploit" (Frontier 166), and Thoreau's writings reveal how his walks provided him with experiences which he identified with those of the pioneers. Lawrence Willson notes that during Thoreau's walking exploration of Cape Cod, he "was constantly conscious of the experiences there of the Pilgrims, and eager in a sense to repeat them" ("Pilgrims" 165). When inland, Thoreau sought the same type of experiences which connected himself with the early settlers:

It is surprising how much room there is in nature,--if a man will follow his proper path. In these broad fields, in these

extensive woods, on this stretching river, I never meet a walker. Passing behind the farmhouses, I see no man out. Perhaps I do not meet so many men as I should have met three centuries ago, when the Indian hunter roamed these woods. I enjoy the retirement and solitude of an early settler. (Journal 4:520; emphasis supplied)

Just as Thoreau's travel reading expanded his microcosm and helped him universalize his sauntering discoveries, so his travel reading contributed to the quality of the walking experience itself, allowing him to identify his adventures with those he had read about. Thoreau's Journal description of a particular winter hike demonstrates how this worked: "We crossed the Great Meadows lengthwise, a broad level plain, roughened only by snowy waves, about two miles long and nearly half as wide. Looking back over it made me think of what I have read of Arctic explorers travelling over snow-covered ice" (6:692).

As has been demonstrated, Thoreau's walks provided him not only with sensual experiences but also with heroic adventures which drew on his inner strength and resources and which elicited from him those inner qualities which he valued so highly--perseverance and courage. The adventurous nature of these walking experiences connected Thoreau with the past as well as the present, and they transformed his inner world from a passive, contemplative, ordinary life to the life of an active, chivalric hero.

Though Thoreau was very interested in the life of the body, in how his walks provided him with sensual experiences and physical challenges, he was far more enthusiastic about the life of the mind and how his walks affected his own thinking processes. Intellectual experiences were more important to him than sensual or emotional ones. More than merely sensually absorbing the landscape within himself or experiencing

firsthand the physical dangers and difficulties of walking, Thoreau sought during his saunterings to absorb cognitively the landscape, to drink and digest mentally all the surface features which he discovered.

Such a process was truly Transcendental as Sherman Paul notes:

The major shift that [Emerson's] Nature described was from outer to inner dominion, from sensation to experience—a process of taking up the Not-me by the Me. Mind, ideas, consciousness were primary, and the external world existed to be assimilated as the stuff of thought. The cognitive act was not a knowing of things, but a having, an inner possession of them. As much of the external world as man transformed into himself and radiated with meaning, so much did he truly possess: and again, this was not knowledge, but an acquisition of being, an enlargement of self. Cognition, therefore, became an activity, a nurture by absorption somewhat like the protoplasm's encirclement of food. It was knowledge by contact, intimacy, sympathy. (Shores 7)

For a walker like Thoreau, the sauntering experience turned inward, probing the walker's inner world of thought while he surveyed the surrounding external landscape. Thoughts, not natural phenomena, became the focus of his walks as his walking experiences touched his inner life and revealed to him a whole new world of the mind. William Harrison stresses this aspect of Thoreau's walking experience when he claims that "for him, a passing thought could excel any deed or even hope and become 'the most glorious fact' of his experience. . . . He found his own thoughts more unfamiliar and startling to him than anything else in his experience" ("Thoreau on Thoughts" 3).

Consequently, mental sauntering, which corresponded to his physical sauntering, is what Thoreau most valued:

Why can we not oftener refresh one another with original thoughts? If the fragrance of the dicksonia fern is so grateful and suggestive to us, how much more refreshing and encouraging--recreating--would be fresh and fragrant thoughts communicated to us fresh from a man's experience and life! I want . . . that he should . . . as it were, [go] a-huckleberrying in the fields of thought, and enrich all the world with his visions and joys.

(Journal 12:1532)

In Walden he emphasized his commitment to mental sauntering:

The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore-paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. (98)

Mental travelling within offered Thoreau the greatest possibilities for exploration: "The landscape lies fair within. The deepest and most original thinker is the farthest travelled" (Journal [Princeton] 1:171).

For Thoreau, such mental sauntering seemed more chivalric and heroic than the actual physical walking which he did:

How you can overrun a country, climb any rampart, and carry any fortress, with an army of alert thoughts!--thoughts that send their bullets home to heaven's door,--with which you can take the whole world, without paying for it, or robbing anybody. See, the conquering hero comes! You fail in your thoughts, or you prevail in your thoughts only. Provided you think well, the heavens falling, or the earth gaping, will be music for you to march by. No foe can ever see you, or you him; you cannot so much as think of him. Swords have no edges, bullets no penetration, for such a contest. . . . (Correspondence 558)

Thus Thoreau believed that the exploration of the external landscape was to be accompanied by a more important exploration of the internal landscape:

Men have, perchance, detected every kind of flower that grows in this township, have pursued it with children's eyes into the thickest and darkest woods and swamps, where the painter's color has betrayed it. Have they with proportionate thoroughness plucked every flower of thought which it is possible for a man to entertain, proved every sentiment which it is possible for a man to experience here? Men have circumnavigated the globe of land and water, but how few have sailed out of sight of common sense over the ocean of knowledge! (Journal 4:472)

As Kenneth Johnston notes, "Man's inner life, not the surface of things, . . . was the ultimate concern of Thoreau" ("Journey into the Interior"

29). The world of the self supplanted the world of nature as Thoreau sauntered about. His final focus was always within, on his deepest thoughts and feelings; this was the landscape which interested him most.

Thoreau sounded the call to explore the inner landscape in Walden: "Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice" (321). He resolved in "Life without Principle" to seek "the gold within me" (Reform Papers 164), and in his essay "Reform and Reformers" he establishes the importance of this inward quest:

. . . How infinitely trackless yet passable are we. Is not our own interior white on the chart? Inward is a direction which no traveller has taken. Inward is the bourne which all travellers seek and from which none desire to return. . . .

Most whom I meet in the streets are, so to speak, outward bound, they live out and out, are going and coming, looking before and behind, all out of doors and in the air. I would fain see them inward bound, retiring in and in, farther and farther every day, and when I inquired for them I should not hear, that they had gone abroad anywhere . . . but that they had withdrawn deeper within the folds of being. (Reform Papers 193,194)

Thoreau's statement, "Let us migrate interiorly without intermission" (Journal [Princeton] 1:119) charts the direction his walking experience took.

How walking furthered Thoreau's quest to explore within himself is an important consideration. How exactly was it that walking helped Thoreau think better or be more in tune with himself? The answer to this question deals in part with the complex relationship between body and mind, both of which are involved in the act of walking and which interact during the walk. The walker is neither all head nor all body as

he saunters through the landscape. His walking experience is the result of the activity of both body and mind and is dependent upon the cooperation between these two aspects of his being, a point Thoreau knew very well: "Men should not labor foolishly like brutes, but the brain and the body should always, or as much as possible, work and rest together, and then the work will be of such a kind that when the body is hungry the brain will be hungry also, and the same food will suffice for both" (Correspondence 220).

Thoreau was fully aware of the separate life of the body during his walking adventures, and he recognized that it could operate on its own:

While the head goes star gazing the legs are not necessarily astronomers too, but are acquiring an independent experience in lower strata of nature. How much do they feel which they do not impart—How much rumor dies between the knees and the ears! Surely Instinct uses this experience.

I am no more freeman of my own members than of universal nature. After all the body takes care of itself--saves itself from a fall.--It eats--drinks--sleeps--perspires--digests--grows--dies--and the best economy is to let it alone in all these. (Journal [Princeton] 1:182)

He even sensed the body's ability to "think" instinctively for itself, as when he would find his way home without having given his course any conscious thought. Such experiences caused him to conjecture, "Perhaps my body would find its way home if its master should have forsaken it--As the hand finds its way to the mouth without assistance" (Journal [Princeton] 2:146).

But Thoreau knew that successful interior sauntering called for cooperation between the mind and body, and he saw a correspondence between the action of the body during walking and resulting mental activity: "The mind may perchance be persuaded to act, to energize, by the action and energy of the body. Any kind of liquid will fetch the

pump" (Journal 2:262). He discovered that walking was the perfect activity to prime his mental pump and get his thoughts flowing.

According to Thoreau, mental energy is dependent on physical energy:

"Indeed, the mind never makes a great and successful effort without a corresponding energy of the body" (A Week 106). And he knew that a good mind was dependent upon a good body because of the energy level needed to walk and to think:

A man may be old and infirm. What, then, are the thoughts he thinks? what the life he lives? They and it are, like himself, infirm. But a man may be young, athletic, active, beautiful. Then, too, his thoughts will be like his person. They will wander in a living and beautiful world. . . . A man thinks as well through his legs and arms as his brain. We exaggerate the importance and exclusiveness of the headquarters. Do you suppose they were a race of consumptives and dyspeptics who invented Grecian mythology and poetry? . . . I trust we have a good body then. (Journal 13:1569,1570)

The relationship between walking and thinking encompasses more than these few reflections. Several authorities on walking have speculated about the effect walking has on the walker's thinking ability.

Mentioning a number of famous walkers who were adept thinkers as well--

Einstein, Freud, Erasmus, and Dr. Samuel Johnson--Sussman and Goode

discuss the theory that man has, like the animals, a complex relationship between the muscles and the brain. When the muscles are not in use, man tends to fall asleep, to cease his thinking activity; conversely, when the muscles are active, the brain tends to remain active: "It is part of our biological inheritance that we respond as a whole, body and mind, to any stimulus, and if the stimulus is lacking, we go to sleep." Pure thinking by itself does not generally provide enough stimulation for most people in order to keep them awake (98,99). Walking, however, keeps the muscles in action and the walker awake and stimulated so he can think.

Walking also drains strong emotions and "leaves the mind free to think." Its "steady, swinging, rhythmic action" promotes thinking much better than do more jarring forms of exercise such as doing calisthenics or jogging (99). The walker, in short, is stimulated to think without being distracted by the form of exercise itself.

John Davis, when exploring the "thought-producing quality of walking" (47), argues that "walking not only provides a means of escape from our daily routines but it also gives us the ability to pursue new avenues of thought." Davis suggests that walking tends to "break through" the "recurring patterns of thought" which are characteristic of mental illness, and free "our minds for original thought," leading the way to creative thinking (47). Bill Gale points to the thinker's need of oxygen as the main reason why walking enhances thinking. As Gale notes, walking increases the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood vessels and the heart, making possible the delivery of more pure oxygen to the brain cells. This rejuvenates thinking whereas a reduction of the oxygen level "results in mental fatigue" (64). Hal Borland agrees that walking stimulates thinking:

Is it possible to walk without some stimulus to thought? I doubt it. The very movement seems to stir the mind into action. The jolt of even the smoothest gait tends to loosen ideas, give them a chance to rub against each other and mingle and find new proportion and arrangement. . . . ("Streets and Fields" 11)

Emerson, Thoreau's friend and mentor, held that "walking has the best value as gymnastics for the mind" ("Country Life" Works 12:141). He felt that walking was the best activity for promoting spontaneous thinking: "Our spontaneous action is always the best. You cannot with your best deliberation and heed come so close to any question as your spontaneous

glance shall bring you, whilst you rise from your bed, or walk abroad in the morning after meditating the matter before sleep on the previous night" ("Intellect" Works 2:328). "We do not determine what we will think," he adds. "We only open our senses, clear away as we can all obstruction from the fact, and suffer the intellect to see" (328). Certainly walking is conducive to such an clearing away of obstacles for natural thoughts to flow. Perhaps this is why most of Thoreau's thoughts were, as John Weiss notes, "of the spontaneous, open-air kind, which [keep] the forehead smooth" ("Thoreau" 33). His thoughts were natural and unforced:

It was because his thinking was observation isolated from all the temptations of society, from the artificial exigencies of literature, from the conventional sequence. Its truthfulness was not logically attained, but insensibly imbibed, during wood-chopping, fishing, and scenting through the woods and fields. . . (33,34)

Norman Foerster observes that the type of thought which Thoreau experienced during his saunterings was most often an impression which he would later sort out during reflective thinking periods after the walk (Nature 126). The thought at the time of the walk, like a seed planted in the ground, later germinated and grew to full fruition when Thoreau reflected on his experience and recorded his observations in his Journal.

Thoreau valued the spontaneity of these thoughts or impressions, and his writings, such as the following Journal entry, reveal the greater importance of these insights over the more conscious, rational thoughts which he sometimes entertained:

I have thoughts, as I walk, on some subject that is running in my head, but all their pertinence seems gone before I can get home to set them down. The most valuable thoughts which I entertain are anything but what I thought. Nature abhors a vacuum, and if I can only walk with sufficient carelessness I am

sure to be filled. (13:1595)

His writings also demonstrate that the mental sauntering which he engaged in to produce these impressions was more important to him than physical walking by itself:

I sometimes think that I may go forth and walk hard and earnestly, and live a more substantial life and get a glorious experience; be much abroad in heat and cold, day and night; live more, expend more atmospheres, be weary often. . . . But then swiftly the thought comes to me, Go not so far out of your way for a truer life; keep strictly in that path alone which your genius points out. . . . Nothing like a little internal activity called life--if it were only walking much in a day--to keep the eyes in good order; no such collyrium. (Journal 3:320; emphasis supplied)

When Thoreau walked, he thought, whether subconsciously or consciously, and his writings reveal the various ways that walking facilitated his thinking activity. In "Walking" he states, "You must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking" (Writings 5:210), and his walks were filled with his own special brand of ruminating as he explored the world within himself, discovering his own thoughts and feelings. Walking seemed to afford Thoreau a real freedom to think so that his thoughts could readily transcend his immediate physical surroundings and saunter in their own direction:

On such a road . . . I walk securely, seeing far and wide on both sides, as if I were flanked by light infantry on the hills, to rout the provincials, as the British marched into Concord, while my grenadier thoughts keep the main road. That is, my light-armed and wandering thoughts scour the neighboring fields, and so I know if the coast is clear. With what a breadth I advance! I am not bounded by the walks. I think more than the road full. . . .

While I am abroad, the ovipositors plant their seeds in me; I am fly-blown with thought, and go home to hatch and brood over them.

I was too discursive and rambling in my thought for the chamber, and must go where the wind blows on me walking.

(Journal 2:229; emphasis supplied)

As the previous quote makes clear, walking was a form of intellectual release for Thoreau. When his thoughts would build up or seem unmanageable, he would walk to clear his head and mentally sort things out. In his Journal he states that he "must get up earlier and take a morning walk" when he is mentally dammed up and "freighted with thought" (5:642).

One aspect of the walking experience which fostered Thoreau's thinking was its privacy. The isolation of the walker, which he controlled at will, made private thoughts and reveries more possible than for those travelling in other ways: "In your thoughts no more than in your walks do you meet men. In moods I find such privacy as in dismal swamps and on mountain-tops" (Journal 3:296). The quiet, which the isolation of the walker makes possible, also fostered Thoreau's mental sauntering. In a letter to his friend Blake, Thoreau described a world-ridden state which he wished to escape and recounted how walking freed him from the "shallow din" which afflicted him so. He determined to "walk in various directions and see if there was not to be found any depth of silence around. As Bonaparte sent out his horsemen in the Red Sea on all sides to find shallow water, so I sent forth my mounted thoughts to find deep water" (Correspondence 331). Thoreau's record of one saunter also reveals how the quiet and isolation of the walking experience led him from the world without to the world within:

I am soothed by the delicious stillness of the evening, save that on the hills the wind blows. I was surprised by the sound of my own voice. It is an atmosphere burdensome with thought. For the first time for a month, at least, I am reminded that thought is possible. The din of trivialness is silenced. I float over or through the deeps of silence. . . . My life had

been a River Platte, tinkling over its sands but useless for all great navigation, but now it suddenly became a fathomless ocean. It shelved to unimagined depths. (Journal 6:770)

Of course walking by itself cannot account for all of Thoreau's inward exploration. As with the other aspects of his sauntering experience, the walking environment affected him, influencing his moods and thoughts. Roderick Nash points out that for Thoreau, "the crucial environment was within. Wilderness was ultimately significant to Thoreau for its beneficial effect on thought" (89). For the most part, sense impressions sparked by the landscape not only stimulated Thoreau but triggered thoughts as well: "Most, if not all, . . . of our ideas may be due to some sort of sensuous impression of which we may or may not be conscious" (Journal 12:1471). When he walked, the action of the walk, the isolation and quiet, and the sense appeals of the environment combined to initiate thought and plunge Thoreau into his own private world.

Of course each type of environment affected his mental sauntering in a different way. Winter walking had its own special impact on his ability to explore his inner world. The harsh winter environment tended to drive the saunterer's focus inward, contrasting each precious thought with the barrenness and bleakness of the landscape:

Friends long since gone there, and you left to walk on frozen ground, with your hands in your pockets. Ah, but is not this a glorious time for your deep inward fires? . . . A day when you cannot pluck a flower, cannot dig a parsnip, nor pull a turnip, for the frozen ground! What do the thoughts find to live on? . . . Does not each thought become a vulture to gnaw your vitals? . . . All fields lie fallow. Shall not your mind? True, the freezing ground is being prepared for immeasurable snows, but there are brave thoughts within you that shall remain to rustle the winter through like white oak leaves upon your boughs, or like scrub oaks that remind the traveller of a fire upon the hillsides; or evergreen thoughts, cold even in mid-summer, by

their nature shall contrast the more fairly with the snow.
(Journal 3:302)

Cold weather drew the walker's attention away from natural phenomena and toward himself and his own ideas: "In this cold, clear, rough air from the northwest we walk amid what simple surroundings! Surrounded by our thoughts or imaginary objects, living in our ideas, not one in a million ever sees the objects which are actually around him" (Journal 13:1586). Even the winter light had a special effect on Thoreau: "This clear, cold, November light is inspiriting. . . . Your thoughts sparkle like the water surface and the downy twigs" (Journal 12:1530). Another entry reveals the effect of winter on one's thinking processes:

But the winter was not given to us for no purpose. . . . We are tasked to find out and appropriate all the nutriment it yields. If it is a cold and hard season, its fruit, no doubt, is the more concentrated and nutty. It took the cold and bleakness of November to ripen the walnut, but the human brain is the kernel which the winter itself matures. Not till then does its shell come off. . . . The winter was made to concentrate and harden and mature the kernel of his brain, to give tone and firmness and consistency to his thought. Then is the great harvest of the year, the harvest of thought. . . . (Journal 6:687)

Thoreau saw winter as a time of mental harvest, when thoughts were ripe for gleaning.

The setting as well as the climactic conditions affected Thoreau's ability to think and the type of thoughts which he thought. The following Journal entry illustrates how walking by a river influenced his mental sauntering:

What a relief and expansion of my thoughts when I come out from that inland position by the graveyard to this broad river's shore! This vista was incredible there. Suddenly I see a broad reach of blue beneath, with its curves and headlands, liberating me from the more terrene earth. What a difference it makes whether I spend my four hours' nooning between the hills by yonder roadside, or on the brink of this fair river, within a quarter of a mile of that! Here the earth is fluid to my

thought, the sky is reflected from beneath, and around yonder cape is the highway to other continents. . . . There my thoughts were confined and trivial, and I hid myself from the gaze of travellers. Here they are expanded and elevated, and I am charmed by the beautiful river-reach. It is equal to a different season and country and creates a different mood. . . . There is something in the scenery of a broad river equivalent to culture and civilization. Its channel conducts our thoughts as well as bodies to classic and famous ports, and allies us to all that is fair and great. I like to remember that at the end of half a day's walk I can stand on the bank of the Merrimack. It is just wide enough to interrupt the land and lead my eye and thoughts down its channel to the sea. (11:1315)

Mountains could, like rivers, have their own special effect on Thoreau when he sauntered by raising his thoughts above the trivial. His Journal account of a climb up Mt. Monadnock describes how the higher altitude of the mountain and the uneven terrain "suggested so many thoughts" and affected him so that he "no longer thought and reasoned as in the plain" (14:1681). Concerning a different hike for the purpose of viewing some of the mountains which stood near Concord, Thoreau recorded:

It is worth the while to see the mountains in the horizon once a day. I have thus seen some earth which corresponds to my least earthly and trivial, to my most heavenward-looking, thoughts. . . . They are the natural temples, elevated brows, of the earth, looking at which, the thoughts of the beholder are naturally elevated and sublimed,--etherealized. . . . (Journal 2:268)

Any aspect of the external landscape affected Thoreau within. Even a dusty road could influence his thinking processes: "At length, we plodded along the dusty roads, our thoughts became as dusty as they; all thought indeed stopped, thinking broke down, or proceeded only passively in a sort of rhythmical cadence of the confused material of thought. . ." ("A Walk to Wachusett" Writings 5:150). Something as simple as moonlight could have a far more beneficial effect, intellectually lighting the walker within even as the moon beams struck the landscape around him:

It must be allowed that the light of the moon [is]

sufficient . . . for the pensive walker. . . . The poet who walks by moonlight is conscious of a tide in his thought which is to be referred to lunar influence. I will endeavor to separate the tide in my thoughts from the current distractions of the day. I would warn my hearers that they must not try my thoughts by a daylight standard, but endeavor to realize that I speak out of the night. ("Night and Moonlight" Writings 5:325)

The process of internalization could be initiated by any external feature. Whether it was smooth water and the humming of mosquitoes—"My thoughts are driven inward, even as clouds and trees are reflected in the still, smooth water. There is an inwardness even in the mosquitoes's hum, while I am picking blueberries in the dank wood" (Journal 6:765), or the ripeness of an October day—"I am riper for thought, too" (Journal 10:1199), Thoreau found himself during his walks being influenced by the external landscape to explore his own inner landscape.

For Thoreau, it was impossible to walk through the landscape without being affected by it, without and within. The relationship between the walker and the environment is a dynamic one which led Thoreau to exciting discoveries and experiences connected to himself and his own thoughts. In his Journal he comments that "the scenery, when it is truly seen, reacts on the life of the seer," and he compares himself to a bee out to "extract its honey from the flower of the world. That is my everyday business. . . . With what honeyed thought any experience yields me I take a bee line to my cell." He concludes that "by the dawning or radiance of beauty are we advertised where is the honey and the fruit of thought, of discourse, and of action" (2:262). Thoreau's comments reflect Emerson's proposition that the beauty in the world has "a relation to thought. . . . The beauty of nature re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation" (Nature

Works 1:22,23). This was Thoreau's goal--to allow the beauty of the external landscape to affect his mind and transform his inner world.

Walking, however, did more than put Thoreau's body in touch with his mind and foster the cooperation of these two aspects of his being as he sauntered mentally and physically through the landscape. Walking also connected his body and mind with his soul, ultimately making possible the spiritual uplifting of his inner world. Thoreau was as aware of the importance of cooperation between body and soul as between body and mind: "Good for the body is the work of the body, and good for the soul the work of the soul, and good for either the work of the other--let them not call hard names, nor know a divided interest" (Journal [Princeton] 1:229,230). Earlier in the same Journal Thoreau states:

I never feel that I am inspired unless my body is also--It too spurns a tame and commonplace life. They are fatally mistaken who think that while they strive with their minds, that they may suffer their bodies to stagnate in luxury or sloth. The body is the first proselyte the Soul makes. Our life is but the Soul made known by its fruits--the body. The whole duty of man may be expressed in one line--make to yourself a perfect body. (1:137,138)

Thoreau firmly believed in the integral connection between the body and the soul: "The great art of life is how to turn the surplus life of the soul into life for the body,--that so the life be not a failure" (Journal 5:533).

When Thoreau sought to feed his soul, he turned within, looking to his own "ecstatic experiences and radiant aspirations, in the dilation of physical health as well as in the intimation of his genius." He tried to harmonize his "different selves, this genius and talent, this head and feet, this soul and body" (Paul Shores 53). Thus his walking experience involved an attempt to unite body, mind, and soul, making possible the

spiritual experiences which were the ultimate type of experience possible during his saunterings.

This uniting process was a difficult but important one: "To make a perfect man--the Soul must be much like the body not too unearthly & the body like the soul. The one must not deny & oppress the other" (Journal [Princeton] 2:240). The important thing to understand is that Thoreau's walks involved a delicate balance between physical activity which met the needs of the body, mental activity, which met the needs of the mind or Reason, and spiritual activity, which met the needs of the soul.

Maintaining this balance was challenging but rewarding for Thoreau:

I have lived ill for the most part because too near myself--I have tripped myself up--so that there was no progress for my own narrowness--I cannot walk conveniently and pleasantly but when I hold myself far off in the horizon--and the soul dilutes the body and makes it passable--My soul and body have tottered along together of late tripping and hindering oneanother [sic] like unpractised Siamese twins--They two should walk as one that no obstacle may be nearer than the firmament. (Journal [Princeton] 1:366)

Walking Thoreau-style involves letting each part--body, mind, and soul--carry out its natural function without interfering with each other. This was the ideal that he aimed at in his sauntering experience: "How wholesome are the natural laws to contemplate. . . . Only let us not interfere. Let the soul withdraw into the chambers of the heart--let the mind reside steadily in the labyrinth of the brain, and not interfere with hands or feet more than with other parts of nature" (Journal [Princeton] 2:85. Thoreau's walks, then, combined the physical, mental, and spiritual, affecting all the levels of experience possible:

I was going to sit and write or mope all day in the house, but it seems wise to cultivate animal spirits, to embark in enterprises which employ and recreate the whole body. Let the divine spirits like the huntsman with his bugle accompany the

animal spirit that would fain range the forest and meadow. Even the gods and goddesses, Apollo and Diana, are found in the field, though they are superior to the dog and the deer. (Journal 5:623)

Because Thoreau applied every aspect of himself to his sauntering experience, his walks affected his physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Thoreau viewed physical and emotional health as dependent upon spiritual health, and he measured his walking experience by the health he enjoyed at the time of the walk. The health of his body, mind, and soul were dependent on walking in nature where nature's restorative influences could affect the saunterer without interference. The physical act of walking combined with the rejuvenating powers of the environment to ensure the walker's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being:

In society you will not find health but in nature--You must converse much with the field and woods if you would imbibe such health into your mind and spirit as you covet for your body--Society is always diseased and the best is sickest--There is no scent in it it [sic] so wholesome as that of these pines--nor any fragrance so penetrating and restorative as that of everlasting in high pastures.

Without that our feet at least stood in the midst of nature all our faces would be pale and livid.

. . . For to the sick nature is sick but to the well a fountain of health. To the soul that contemplates some trait of natural beauty no harm nor disappointment can come. . . . (Journal [Princeton] (1:353,354; emphasis supplied))

When in nature, the very action of walking encourages a corresponding marching of the saunterer's soul, bringing the walker real inspiration and moral courage:

To the sensitive soul, the universe has its own fixed measure, which is its measure also, and as a regular pulse is inseparable from a healthy body, so is its healthiness dependent on the regularity of its rythm [sic], and seeks to express its sympathy by a correspondent movement of the limbs. When the body marches to the measure of the soul, then is true courage and invincible strength. (Journal [Princeton] 1:96)

Thoreau used his walking experience as a way to measure his own vital

signs. The spirit of his walks corresponded with his physical, emotional, and spiritual health: "Measure your health by your sympathy with morning and spring. If there is no response in you to the awakening of nature,--if the prospect of an early morning walk does not banish sleep, . . . know that the morning and spring of your life are past. Thus you may feel your pulse" (Journal 2:1428; emphasis supplied). When Thoreau wrote to his friends, he often described his own health in terms of his walking ability at the time. Such was the case when he wrote Daniel Ricketson in 1857 and noted that there were few signs of spring in himself, though the April weather outside would normally have evoked such. He summarized his condition with this statement: "I am decent for steady pace but not yet for a race" (Correspondence 472,473). Canby observes that poor health affected Thoreau most when it came to his walking experience: "For Thoreau, of course, weakness would be most resented in those sturdy pistons that had to propel him over so many miles of wood and pasture walking. If he could not count on his legs, he was a sad man indeed" (Thoreau 367).

The type of health which Thoreau sought most during his walks was spiritual health. The life of the body and the mind were very important to him, and, from his Transcendentalist viewpoint, inseparably linked with the life of the soul, but it was the life of the soul which he most valued. His walks were ultimately spiritual pilgrimages to the god he found in nature and in himself; they linked him with the divine. In his Journal Thoreau claimed, "My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking-places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, in nature" (2:262). When it came to health,

nature offered Thoreau complete spiritual healing and rejuvenation:

"Nature for Thoreau is therapy for tired and despairing people. It is joy, happiness, communion with God. It builds up the body and renews the spirit. It preserves moral and intellectual health" (Wolf, Mystic 152). As Worster points out, "Thoreau went to the woods deliberately for his spiritual renewal" (Nature's Economy 86).

At the heart of Thoreau's saunterings as spiritual pilgrimage was the Transcendental belief in the divinity of man: "I think that we are not commonly aware that man is our contemporary,--that in this strange, outlandish world, so barren, so prosaic, fit not to live in but merely to pass through, that even here so divine a creature as man does actually live. Man, the crowning fact, the god we know" (Journal 2:196).

Transcendentalists believed that man has divinity within himself even as nature is infused with the divine; the Transcendental Over-soul permeates everything and unites it in a spiritual bond. Thus when man walks in nature, divinity is placed within the context of divinity; spiritual connects with spiritual: "I think that the existence of man in nature is the divinest and most startling of all facts" (Journal 2:196). Emerson made clear that man's soul finds its counterpart in nature—"He shall see that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print" ("The American Scholar" Works 1:86,87). Because of the openness of the walking experience, nothing interfered with this spiritual correspondence between man and nature.

Several critics have noted how Thoreau's walks were essentially spiritual pilgrimages designed, after the initial contact with the landscape, to put Thoreau in touch with the spiritual without and within

himself. Norman Foerster claims that Thoreau's afternoon walks were spiritual quests: "So he sold his mornings to the Philistines, and shutting up his shop, dedicated his afternoons to the gods. Far afield he wandered. . ." (Nature 101). Alfred Kazin notes that Thoreau "had only to walk in the woods" to experience God (69). Thoreau's walks "were as much religious exercises as scientific expeditions" (Schneider Thoreau 110); his saunterings "were sacramental movements, gestures of redemption" (Garber 48). Thus "the walk itself is a movement out toward nature's own marrow, the sacred place where [Thoreau] can dis-cover [sic] what is most truly his" (Garber 49).

In his essay "Walking" Thoreau proclaimed the importance of the spiritual nature of the walking experience:

They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. . . . For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels. (Writings 5:205,206)

He viewed his walks as sanctioned by God--"I have a charter, though it be from Heaven alone, to travel the course I do. . . . It is by the grace of God. . ." (Journal 2:160), and when he walked in nature, it gave him a spiritual freedom which he could not find in the city. In a letter to Isaiah Williams who had described to Thoreau how Transcendentalism had freed him from the shackles of Christianity, Thoreau wrote:

I think I can sympathize with your sense of greater freedom. . . . As for creeds and doctrines we are suddenly grown rustic--and from walking in streets and squares--walk broadly in the fields--as if a man were wise enough not to sit in a draft, and get an ague, but moved buoyantly in the breeze. (Correspondence 52)

One reason why walking spiritually liberated Thoreau is that walking

requires that the saunterer maintain an upright position, with the head pointed toward heaven; the very posture of the walker suggests his spiritual transcendence. Thoreau felt that an upright position drew the walker toward heavenly things and away from the mundane matters of the feet. This was very important to him, as a letter he wrote to H. G. O. Blake indicates:

What a pity if we do not live this short time according to the laws of the long time,—the eternal laws! Let us see that we stand erect here, and do not lie along by our whole length in the dirt. . . . The laws of earth are for the feet, or inferior man; the laws of heaven are for the head, or superior man; the latter are the former sublimed and expanded, even as radii from the earth's centre go on diverging into space. Happy the man who observes the heavenly and the terrestrial law in just proportion; whose every faculty, from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, obeys the law of its level; who neither stoops nor goes on tiptoe, but lives a balanced life, acceptable to nature and to God. (Correspondence 247)

Thoreau's emphasis on remaining upright—"Cultivate the habit of early rising. It is unwise to keep the head long on a level with the feet" (Journal 2:152)—was shared by Emerson who stated in "Self-Reliance":

He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head. (Works 2:89)

Walking in an upright position was by itself an act of worship for Thoreau. He associated walking with spiritual growth and sleeping or resting with apathy or spiritual decline. In the Maine Woods he watched how his Christian Indian guide "spent his Sunday." He was unimpressed by the Indian's spiritual and physical lethargy. While the Indian kept Sunday holy by physically resting, Thoreau remained as active as ever, sauntering about the local landscape (202). Thoreau's religion was an

active not a passive one, and walking was perfectly suited to it. Every day was a holy day for Thoreau, because every day presented the opportunity for a spiritual pilgrimage in nature. Once when Thoreau was reprimanded by a minister for walking on Sunday, he replied that he would go to church instead of walking if he thought he might "hear a true word spoken on that or any other day" (A Week 75,76). Thoreau felt that the only true words he might hear would be spoken in nature and not from a church pulpit, and to hear these words, he would need to walk in nature, not sit passively in a pew.

Thoreau is not alone in advocating walking over church attendance as a form of worship and spiritual renewal. One well-known walker, George Trevelyan, states, "A Sunday spent with both legs swinging all day over ground where grass or heather grows" works its own spiritual reformation on the walker: "I have often known the righteous forsaken and his seed begging for bread, but I never knew a man go for an honest day's walk, for whatever distance, great or small, . . . and not have his reward in the repossession of his own soul" (Walking 21,22). Thoreau was firm in his commitment to walk on Sunday instead of attend church. "The long Puritan Sundays" he endured when a child which required him to be inactive and to observe nature passively from his room (Harding Days 20) made him crave activity all the more. Thus, for as long as he was physically able to walk, he sauntered every Sunday, worshipping his God in his own way. Harding recounts how the only request made by his sweetheart, Ellen Sewell, which Thoreau denied, was her desire that he attend church with her. "Outdoors was where he worshipped, he announced. Not even Ellen Sewall could get him into a church pew" (Days 95,96).

When Thoreau was queried by an Indian guide about what he did on Sundays, he replied that he often spent Sunday morning reading and "went to walk in the afternoon." The Indian's response—"Er, that is ver bad" (Maine Woods 182)—represents the sentiments of Ellen Sewall and most people in Thoreau's day. His spiritual saunters were not popular, but this did not bother Thoreau, and he consistently took his walks, Sunday or not, seeking the spiritual blessings which they provided him.

Thoreau's was the Transcendental, not the conventional, way. According to Paul Boller, "Transcendentalism was a quest for authentic religious experience. It rejected forms, creeds, rites, and verbal explanations and sought to penetrate to the heart of things by a direct, immediate encounter with reality" (Transcendentalism 1). This was what Thoreau's walks were all about—direct confrontations of reality which yielded spiritual insights and blessings. These religious experiences were often very private, the result of the solitude and meditation which walking made possible:

Within a year my walks have extended themselves. . . . I am astonished at the wonderful retirement through which I move, rarely meeting a man in these excursions, never seeing one similarly engaged, unless it be my companion, when I have one. I cannot help feeling that of all the human inhabitants hereabouts, only we two have leisure to admire and enjoy our inheritance. (Correspondence 250,251)

During such isolated encounters with the landscape, Thoreau compared himself with the yogin, who unites himself mystically with the nature he contemplates (251).

At times Thoreau wondered if others experienced nature in the same way that he did, if they worshiped in a similar manner, but his experience taught him that his sauntering pilgrimages set him apart from

his contemporaries:

If there is more splendid moonlight than usual, only the belated traveller observes it. When I am outside, on the outskirts of the town, enjoying the still majesty of the moor, I am wont to think that all men are aware of this miracle, that they too are silently worshipping this manifestation of divinity elsewhere. But when I go into the house I am undeceived; they are absorbed in checkers or chess or novel, though they may have been advertised of the brightness through the shutters. (Journal 2:193)

As with the relationship between walking and thinking, Thoreau's spiritual sauntering involved drawing correspondences between the observable phenomena of the landscape and something dormant within himself, in this case spiritual truths. The transformation from external to internal followed the same pattern as for his mental sauntering.

Sherman Paul notes that for the Transcendentalist,

every external fact is a spiritual fact--a fact of consciousness--and the correspondence holds because the external fact is itself an issue of mind, the spirit projected through man. Fact, then, is unconscious mind; to make it conscious, to transform the external into the internal, is the function of man, the way to self-culture--to his own mind and the mind of God. (Shores 117)

Thus his walks involved spiritual experiences and insights which were triggered by natural phenomena and which raised to a conscious level the spiritual yearnings of his soul. Typical is this Journal account of his discovery of a particular flower, the johnswort, during an afternoon walk:

It affected me, this tender dome-like bud, within the bosom of the earth, like a temple upon the earth, resounding with the worship of votaries. Me thought I saw the flamens in yellow robes within it. The crowfoot buds--and how many beside!--lie unexpanded just beneath the surface. May I lead my life the following year as innocently as they! May it be as fair and smell as sweet! I anticipate nature. Destined to become a fair yellow flower above the surface to delight the eyes of children and its Maker. It offered to my mind a little temple into which to enter and worship. (Journal 4:515)

Any natural fact could inspire Thoreau with spiritual faith. When he observed green ferns surviving into October, he concluded: "Even in them I feel an argument for immortality. Death is so far from being universal. The same destroyer does not destroy all. How valuable they are . . . for cheerfulness" (Journal 10:1220). Seeing the mark left on a tree by a lightning bolt could project Thoreau into a state of awe and reverence: "I was impressed with awe on looking up and seeing that broad, distinct spiral mark . . . mark of an invisible and intangible power, a thunderbolt, mark where a terrific and resistless bolt came down from heaven, out of the harmless sky. . . . It seemed such a sacred spot" (Journal 6:673). Even seeing snowflakes during a winter saunter connected Thoreau with a sense of the divine: "A divinity must have stirred within them before the crystals did thus shoot and set" (Journal 8:952). To sense the divine influence in a snowflake may not seem that surprising, but to glean spiritual nutriment out of plain rocks demonstrates how easily Thoreau's observation of external phenomena was converted to spiritual insights and internal transformations. In his Journal he records his excitement at discovering a place that was especially wild and rugged, marked primarily by rocks:

I believe almost in the personality of such planetary matter, feel something akin to reverence for it, can even worship it as terrene, titanic matter extant in my day. . . . These spots are meteoric, aerolitic, and such matter has in all ages been worshipped. Aye, when we are lifted out of the slime and film of our habitual life, we see the whole globe to be an aerolite, and reverence it as such, and make pilgrimages to it, far off as it is. How happens it that we reverence the stones which fall from another planet, and not the stones which belong to this,--another globe, not this,--heaven, and not earth? . . .

It would imply the regeneration of mankind, if they were to become elevated enough to truly worship stocks and stones. . . . I would fain improve every opportunity to wonder and worship, as a sunflower welcomes the light. The more thrilling, wonderful,

divine objects I behold in a day, the more expanded and immortal I become. If a stone appeals to me and elevates me, tells me how many miles I have come, how many remain to travel,--and the more, the better,--reveals the future to me in some measure, it is a matter of private rejoicing. If it did the same service to all, it might well be a matter of public rejoicing.
(9:1063,1064)

When Thoreau walked, he often responded to nature by analogy, drawing on the similarities between what he observed and his own experience.

Kenneth Johnston explains that "Thoreau's eagerness to journey into the interior, to explore the worlds of thought within, was predicated upon his belief that the divine is immanent in the world. Beneath the surface of things lies the spiritual reality, if one would only see" (29).

Thoreau applied the world without to his world within, making spiritual analogies between human experience and the non-human environment which he walked in. During one November hike, he compared the sun's warming of the landscape with the warmth of the Creator toward man (Journal 2:172).

When walking at night, he concluded, "Our spiritual side takes a more distinct form, like our shadow which we see accompanying us" (Journal 2:204). When looking for signs of life in a sand bank during a March ramble, he philosophized: "The eternity which I detect in Nature I predicate of myself also. How many springs I have had this same experience! I am encouraged, for I recognize this steady persistency and recovery of Nature as a quality of myself" (Journal 8:986). Oak leaves, dying in the fall, seem like "saints or innocent and beneficent beings."

"How spiritual" they appear to Thoreau who senses their analogous relationship to "the perseverance of the saints" (Journal 9:1098,1099).

The landscape easily evokes such analogies from a walker like Thoreau because walking makes possible the kind of close observation and

reflective thinking which make such comparisons possible. Only walking provides the traveller with the leisure and vantage point to ensure the direct flow of spiritual insight from observable phenomena to the walker. Only walking makes possible the natural conversion of the external to the internal without interference or distraction.

Just as sensual encounters with the landscape, made possible by walking, trigger within the saunterer new worlds of thought, so sensual stimuli evoke from the walker spiritual insights and experiences. Sensual contact with nature is simply a first and necessary step for a walker like Thoreau which leads to intellectual and spiritual internalization of the landscape. According to John Christie, Thoreau felt that "the route to the spiritual lay through the concrete; he would see, hear, smell, touch, taste that everlasting something to which he was allied" (Traveller 232). One can readily observe in his writings how this transfer from sensual to spiritual occurred on Thoreau's walks. For example, in his Journal Thoreau records his response to hearing the echoes of his own voice during a woodland saunter. Enchanted, he remarks that it would be interesting to travel about the country looking for places where one's echo could be heard—"prophetic places" suited to the "sacred ears of Nature" (2:164,165). The most simple sounds could launch Thoreau into a spiritual reverie. During one May walk, when he listened to the creak of crickets, he felt that their chirps suggested "lateness, but only as we come to a knowledge of eternity after some acquaintance with time." He commented that their "chant" had an "eternal" quality to it, and concluded that "it is heaven where they are. . . ." These cricket songs affected him as "a glorifying of God and enjoying him

forever" (Journal 6:739). Even the sound of the wind playing against the telegraph wires could transform his inner state, converting his ramble into an uplifting and truly transcendental experience. When, in 1852, Thoreau sauntered through the Concord countryside, depressed by what he had seen and heard the previous day concerning a powder-mill explosion, the sound of these wires raised his spirits and tuned him to the spiritual:

It always intoxicates me, makes me sane, reverses my view of things. . . . When the zephyr, or west wind, sweeps this wire, I rise to the height of my being. A period--a semicolon, at least--is put to my previous and habitual ways of viewing things. This wire is my redeemer. It always brings a special and a general message to me from the Highest. Day before yesterday I looked at the mangled and blackened bodies of men which had been blown up by powder, and felt that the lives of men were not innocent, and that there was an avenging power in nature. Today I hear this immortal melody, while the west wind is blowing balmily on my cheek, and methinks a roseate sunset is preparing. Are there not two powers? (Journal 4:515)

Any combination of sense appeals such as sight and hearing could produce similar spiritual states: "In the sunshine and the crowing of cocks I feel an illimitable holiness, which makes me bless God and myself. The warm sun casts his incessant gift at my feet as I walk along--unfolding his yellow worlds" (Journal [Princeton] 1:255). Another Journal entry concerning a walk taken right after an ice storm offers another example of how Thoreau converted a given sense appeal into a spiritual application:

The bells are particularly sweet this morning. . . . How much more religion in their sound, than they ever call men together to! Men obey their call and go to the stove-warmed church, though God exhibits himself to the walker in a frosted bush to-day, as much as in a burning one to Moses of old. (4:511; emphasis supplied)

Thus Thoreau's senses provided nature with direct access, not only to his

body, but also to his soul.

As with every other aspect of his walking experience, including his mental sauntering, Thoreau's spiritual sauntering was subject to the influences of the environment. The general features and conditions of the landscape affected him as much as did the specific phenomena which he observed. This was especially evident during Thoreau's mountain walks. The higher altitudes and the grander perspectives these saunterings made possible seem to have especially directed him to spiritual truths inherent in nature and within himself as this Journal entry indicates: "Sometimes I come out suddenly upon a high plain, which seems to be the upper level and true surface of the earth--and by its very baldness aspires, and lies up nearer to the stars. A place where a decalogue might be let down or a saint translated" ([Princeton] 1:240). Like John Bunyan's pilgrim, Thoreau ascended the hills and mountains surrounding Concord with a spiritual destination in sight--the actual raised ascent paralleled a spiritual one. When climbing a mountain in the summer of 1844 Thoreau noted, "It seemed a very fit rout for the pilgrim to enter upon who is climbing to the gates of heaven" (Journal [Princeton] 2:360).

Mountains are the saunterer's touchstones between earth and heaven. They are the physical intermediary between the land of the material and the land of the spiritual. To climb them, for Thoreau, was to climb toward the gates of heaven itself:

It will be worth the while to observe carefully the direction and altitude of the mountains from the Cliffs. The value of the mountains in the horizon,--would not that be a good theme for a lecture? The text for a discourse on real values, and permanent; a sermon on the mount. They are stepping-stones to heaven,--as the rider has a horse-block at his gate,--by which to mount when we would commence our pilgrimage to heaven; by which we gradually take our departure from earth, from the time

when our youthful eyes first rested on them,--from this bare actual earth, which has so little of the hue of heaven. They make it easier to die and easier to live. They let us off. . . .

. . . They are the path of the translated. The undisputed territory between earth and heaven. In our travels rising higher and higher, we at length got to where the earth was blue. Suggesting that this earth, unless our conduct curse it, is as celestial as that sky. (Journal 5:563)

Some of Thoreau's walks were taken for the express purpose of seeing distant mountains. Just their view alone could spiritually inspire him and reward him for the trouble of his journey:

I go to Flint's Pond for the sake of the mountain view from the hill beyond, looking over Concord. . . . It is worth the while to see the mountains in the horizon once a day. I have thus seen some earth which corresponds to my least earthly and trivial, to my most heavenward-looking thoughts. The earth seen through an azure, an ethereal, veil. They are the natural temples, elevated brows, of the earth, looking at which, the thoughts of the beholder are naturally elevated and sublimed,--etherealized. I wish to see the earth through the medium of much air or heaven, for there is no paint like the air. Mountains thus seen are worthy of worship. . . . (Journal 2:268)

Climbing a mountain, rather than merely observing it from a distance, provided Thoreau with more direct spiritual experiences, enabling him to better understand his body and soul. In a letter to H. G. O. Blake, he commented that he felt "the same awe when on [mountain] summits that many do on entering a church" (Correspondence 497). He believed that

you must ascend a mountain to learn your relation to matter, and so to your own body, for it is at home there, though you are not. It might have been composed there, and will have no farther to go to return to dust there, than in your garden; but your spirit inevitably comes away, and brings your body with it, if it lives. (Correspondence 497)

In a different letter to Blake, Thoreau's recollection of a mountain walk reveals the spiritual significance of the mountain setting to the walker:

I remember that walk to Asnebumskit very well;--a fit place to go on a Sunday, one of the true temples of the earth. A temple you know was anciently "an open place without a roof," whose

walls served merely to shut out the world, and direct the mind toward heaven; but a modern meeting house shuts out the heavens, while it crowds the world into still closer quarters. Best of all is it when as on a Mt. top you have for all walls your own elevations and deeps of surrounding ether. (Correspondence 285)

Of course, more than mountainous environments compelled Thoreau to saunter spiritually while he walked from day to day. In winter, walking in the snow revealed to him not only tracks of men and animals, but also moral qualities which he wished to apply to his own life:

Why do the vast snow plains give us pleasure, the twilight of the bent and half-buried woods? Is not all there consonant with virtue, justice, purity, courage, magnanimity? Are we not cheered by the sight? And does not all this amount to the track of a higher life than the otter's, a life which has not gone by and left a footprint merely, but is there with its beauty, its music, its perfume, its sweetness, to exhilarate and recreate us? . . . The great game for mighty hunters as soon as the first snow falls is Purity. . . . (Journal 6:677)

The purity of snow seemed to suggest to Thoreau a divine quality within himself, as was the case when he hiked across a frozen Walden Pond one February day and noted: "I go across Walden. My shadow is very blue. It is especially blue when there is a bright sunlight on pure white snow. It suggests that there may be something divine, something celestial in me" (Journal 7:839).

Though not as lofty as mountains, nor as pure as snowy fields, swamps and meadows offered Thoreau their own form of spiritual insight and experience. When he walked, Thoreau's church or temple was the place wherever he was at the time, including swamps: "If there were Druids whose temples were the oak groves, my temple is the swamp" (Journal 4:512). Walking through a meadow could revive a religious sense of the sacredness and eternity of life, a discovery Thoreau made at Walden:

Ah! I have penetrated to those meadows on the morning of many a first spring day, jumping from hummock to hummock, from willow

root to willow root, when the wild river valley and the woods were bathed in so pure and bright a light as would have waked the dead, if they had been slumbering in their graves, as some suppose. There needs no stronger proof of immortality. All things must live in such a light. O Death, where was thy sting? O Grave, where was thy victory, then? (Walden 317)

Whatever the environment or conditions, Thoreau's walks yielded spiritual experiences and insights which affected his inner life. The act of walking which involved the cooperation of body, mind, and soul, and the relationship between specific natural phenomena, the general environment and the walker himself directed Thoreau from his sensual awareness of the physical, external world to the spiritual world beneath nature's surface and within himself.

In much the same way, these same dynamics also provided Thoreau with experiences which sensually tied him to the landscape, provided him with physical challenges and heroic adventures, and triggered his thoughts as he explored his own internal landscape. At each level--physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual--walking made possible experiences which resulted from the harmonious cooperation of the saunterer's body, mind, and soul as they interacted with the environment.

Thus Thoreau's saunterings followed the general Transcendental pattern of converting from the external to the internal. His walks involved a very important internalization process which enabled him, after first making contact with nature and studying it, to explore new worlds within himself--to probe his own emotions, thoughts, and spiritual dimensions as he sought correspondences between the external landscape and his own private world. This is what his walking experience was all about.

CHAPTER IV

SAUNTERING AND THE AFFIRMATION OF THE SELF

More than just a way to transform experience into thoughts and feelings, sauntering provided Thoreau with the opportunity to assert and to fulfill his essential self. Thoreau's self-image was considerably strengthened by his walking experience. Rambling gave him the chance to assert his own individuality by separating himself from society and those influences which he felt corrupted his true being. At the same time, it provided ways to meet his social needs and equip him to be a better member of society.

As this chapter will demonstrate, travel provided Thoreau with a way to affirm the self--"to be free from the constrictions and restrictions of society so that the self could have free play to express itself. . . ." (George Traveler 10). Unlike T. S. Eliot's Prufrock who, trapped and surrounded by a threatening society, found his life measured in coffee spoons, Thoreau used walking to escape the restrictions of society; his life was measured, not in coffee spoons, but in footsteps which took him away from the drawing room world of trivial chatter that so intimidated Prufrock.

The roads and paths which led Thoreau away from society when he sauntered reveal a great deal about the relationship between his walking experience and his need to assert and fulfill himself. Madge Jenison in her essay, "About Roads," asserts that "it is like looking at civilization through a new keyhole to begin to think about roads. All is roads, even the way we think" (379). Certainly the roads which Thoreau

chose to follow matched the course of his own thinking, and examining these roads and the directions his walks pursued can help reveal the significance of the liberating nature of his walking experience.

Thoreau sought those roads and paths which would remove him from all visible signs of civilization, and, in doing so, place him in the "fancy-free" environment which his essential self required. The more he walked away from the taints of society, the freer he was to engage in internal sauntering, to follow the paths that led to the self. One of Thoreau's extended Journal entries directly addresses his desire to walk on a road which would release him from societal constraints and free his thoughts:

Now I yearn for one of those old, meandering, dry, uninhabited roads, which lead away from towns, which lead us away from temptation, which conduct to the outside of earth, over its uppermost crust; where you may forget in what country you are travelling; where no farmer can complain that you are treading down his grass, no gentleman who has recently constructed a seat in the country that you are trespassing; on which you can go off at half-cock and wave adieu to the village; along which you may travel like a pilgrim, going nowhither; where travellers are not too often to be met; where my spirit is free; where the walls and fences are not cared for; where your head is more in heaven than your feet are on earth. . . ; where it makes no odds which way you face, whether you are going or coming, whether it is morning or evening, mid-noon or midnight; where earth is cheap enough by being public; where you can walk and think with least obstruction. . . . It must simply be the way and the life,—a way that was never known to be repaired, nor to need repair, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. . . . That's a road I can travel, that the particular Sudbury I am bound for, six miles an hour, or two, as you please; and few there be that enter thereon. There I can walk, and recover the lost child that I am without any ringing of a bell; . . .

There I have freedom in my thought, and in my soul am free. . . .

Where I am not confined and balked by the sight of distant farmhouses which I have not gone past. In roads the obstructions are not under my feet,—I care not for rough ground or wet even,—but they are in my vision and in the thoughts or associations which I am compelled to entertain. I must be fancy-free; I must feel that, wet or dry, high or low, it is the genuine surface of the planet, and not a little chip-dirt or a compost-heap, or made land or redeemed. Where I can sit by the

wall-side and not be peered at by any old ladies going a-shopping, not have to bow to one whom I may have seen in my youth,—at least, not more than once. I am engaged and cannot be polite. . . .

A thinker's weight is in his thought, not in his tread: when he thinks freely, his body weighs nothing. He cannot tread down your grass, farmers. (2:225,226; emphasis supplied)

As these reflections indicate, sauntering on the right kind of road freed Thoreau's thinking, helping him confront his essential self. Isolated roads which offered few distractions were necessary for Thoreau to experience the "fancy-free" state that made his internal sauntering possible.

But roads such as the one Thoreau describes are difficult for the saunterer to find, since most roads lead toward, not away from, civilization, and, consequently, confront the walker with numerous distractions. Still, Thoreau maintains in "Walking" that there are at least "one or two such roads in every town" (214). In "Walking" Thoreau cites a poem, "The Old Marlborough Road," which describes the ideal road for a saunterer like himself who wishes to escape the influences of the society. The isolation of this road appeals to Thoreau as these lines from his poem indicate:

When the spring stirs my blood
 With the instinct to travel,
 I can get enough gravel
 On the Old Marlborough Road.
 Nobody repairs it,
 For nobody wears it;
 It is a living way,
 As the Christians say.

Not many there be
 Who enter therein,
 Only the guest of the
 Irishman Quin.
 What is it, what is it,
 But a direction out there,
 And the bare possibility
 Of going somewhere? (Writings 5:215)

Roads like the Marlborough Road, which seem to release the walker from a sense of destination and responsibility, attracted Thoreau because he needed such a setting for his walks so they could successfully purge him from the corrupting influences of the city.

Unlike the Marlborough Road, most roads provide the traveler with a goal or destination and a connection with society. Thoreau often found his walking experience undermined when he walked on a road which led to a town or city and which drew not only his body but his thoughts toward civilization and away from the solitude of nature which was so essential to his emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. When on such a road, Thoreau's walking experience became completely mechanical and unrewarding:

When you get into the road, though far from the town, and feel the sand under your feet, it is as if you had reached your own gravel walk. You no longer hear the whip-poor-will, nor regard your shadow, for here you expect a fellow-traveler. You catch yourself walking merely. The road leads your steps and thoughts alike to town. You see only the path, and your thoughts wander from the objects which are presented to your senses. You are no longer in place. It is like conformity,—walking in the ways of men. (Journal 2:204)

The paths which Thoreau chose for his walks was an important

consideration. Hiking a road which presented too many reminders of society could seriously hamper his exploration of the self.

Though Thoreau's spirit was seldom rejuvenated when he walked on a road toward town, when the road carried him away from civilization, he experienced a sense of release and freedom which he considered one of the most important outcomes of his walking experience:

I go along the settled road, where the houses are interspersed with woods, in an unaccountably desponding mood, but when I come out upon a bare and solitary heath am at once exhilarated. This is a common experience in my travelling. I plod along, thinking what a miserable world this is and what miserable fellows we that inhabit it, wondering what it is tempts men to live in it; but anon I leave the towns behind and am lost in some boundless heath, and life becomes gradually more tolerable, if not even glorious. (Journal 9:1160; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau's internal sauntering often began at that point where the road's reminders of civilization left off and the open, inviting world of nature began. The world of Thoreau's spirit was the world of nature. Only when his ramblings carried him away from the world of man and material concerns and placed him in nature did his walks refresh him.

Unlike the world of nature which rejuvenated Thoreau's self, the artificial world of man drained his spirit. This is one reason why his walks were so important to him. While in the city, he found himself stifled. Only in a natural environment could Thoreau revive the self which the city suffocated. So extreme was Thoreau's aversion to a city environment that he did all that he could to avoid even walking through a city:

I do not love to go through a village street any more than a cottage yard. I feel that I am there only by sufferance; but I love to go by the villages by my own road, seeing them from one side, as I do theoretically. When I go through a village, my legs ache at the prospect of the hard graveled walk. I go by the tavern with its porch full of gazers, and meet a miss taking

a walk or the doctor in his sulky, and for half an hour I feel as strange as if I were in a town in China; but soon I am at home in the wide world again, and my feet rebound from the yielding turf. (Journal 9:1159)

The road which offered a pathway to the self was the one which led away from the city into "the wide world." The road that led to the city offered a path, not for the self alone, but for society in general, and this could only mean one thing to a staunch Transcendentalist like Thoreau--conformity. Thoreau viewed main-travelled roads as symbols of the conformity which the men who travelled them exhibited in their own lives. The reluctance of the townspeople to leave the road and break free in their travels signaled for Thoreau their conformity in all areas of life. It took only a snow cover to reveal such a state to Thoreau:

Though the snow was not deep, I noticed that an unbroken snow-crust stretched around Fitchburg, and its several thousand inhabitants had been confined so long to the narrow streets, some of them a track only six feet wide. Hardly one individual had anywhere departed from this narrow walk and struck out into the surrounding fields and hills. If I had had my cowhide boots, I should not have confined myself to those narrow limits, but have climbed some of the hills. It is surprising to go into a New England town in midwinter and find its five thousand inhabitants all living thus on the limits, confined at most to their narrow moose-yard in the snow. Scarcely here and there has a citizen stepped aside one foot to let a sled pass. And almost as circumscribed is their summer life, going only from house to shop and back to house again. . . . It is as if some vigilance committee had given notice that if any should transgress those narrow limits he should be outlawed and his blood should be upon his own head. . . . Let a slight snow come and cover the earth, and the tracks of men will show how little the woods and fields are frequented. (Journal 9:1111)

For Thoreau, the roads and paths a man walked revealed the conformity or nonconformity of his own life, as this Journal anecdote makes clear:

The other afternoon I met Sam H--- walking on the railroad between the depot and the back road. It was something quite novel to see him there, though the railroad there is only a short thoroughfare to the public road. It then occurred to me that I had never met Mr. H. on the railroad, though he walks

every day, and moreover that it would be quite impossible for him to walk on the railroad, such a formalist as he is, such strait-jackets as we weave for ourselves. He could do nothing that was not sanctioned by the longest use of men, and as men had voted in all their assemblies from the first to travel on the public way, he would confine himself to that. It would no doubt seem to him very improper, not to say undignified, to walk on the railroad; and then, is it not forbidden by the railroad corporations? I was sure he could not keep the railroad, but was merely using the thoroughfare here which a thousand pioneers had prepared for him. I stood to see what he would do. He turned off the rails directly on to the back road and pursued his walk. A passing train will never meet him on the railroad causeway. How much of the life of certain men goes to sustain, to make respected, the institutions of society. (Journal 2:260)

Unlike the conformist traveller described in this Journal account, Thoreau frequently walked the railroad and any other pathway which made possible an escape from the restrictions of society. He often viewed roads as obstacles to successful walks, and he left their restricting courses whenever he had the opportunity to walk in paths of his own making which were less confining and less connected to civilization. Even as Robert Frost asserted that there is something which does not love a wall, Thoreau maintained that there is something within the walker which does not love a public road. John Jacobs observes that "the roads of civilized man merely cut across the surface of nature; the travelers on these roads, channels of expediency and commerce, remain outside of nature" (The Western Journey 231). Since Thoreau's goal was to place himself within nature, he frequently left the road to seek the healing powers of the countryside and to avoid anything, even the sound of his own footsteps, which might distract him from the unadulterated contact with nature which his walks made possible: "He had many elegances of his own, whilst he scoffed at conventional elegance. Thus, he could not bear to hear the sound of his own steps, the grit of gravel; and therefore

never willingly walked in the road, but in the grass, on mountains and in woods" (R. W. Emerson, "Thoreau" 39).

As has been mentioned, departing from the road and setting his own course through the fields and woods often marked the point in Thoreau's walks where he began to experience the rejuvenation which he sought: "I felt my spirits rise when I had got off the road into the open fields, and the sky had a new appearance. I stepped along more buoyantly. . . . Before I walked in the ruts of travel; now I adventured" (Journal 2:179). Because of this sense of personal freedom which Thoreau experienced when he, and not the road, dictated the course of his saunterings, he considered the paths which his good genius directed him to take during his walks superior to the public roads of his day. Certainly his rambles through the countryside were better than wagon travel or any other conventional travel mode which would be confined to a road or track:

Flag Hill is about eight miles by the road from Concord. We went much further, going and returning both; but by how much nobler road! Suppose you were to ride to Boxboro, what then? You pass a few teams with their dust, drive through many farmers' barn-yards, between two walls, see where Squire Tuttle lives and barrels his apples, bait your horse at White's Tavern, and so return, with your hands smelling of greasy leather and horsehair and the squeak of a chaise body in your ears, with no new flower nor agreeable experience. But, going as we did, before you got to Boxboro line, you often went much further, many times ascended New Hampshire hills, taking the noble road from hill to hill, across swamps and valleys, not regarding political courses and boundaries, many times far west in your thought. It is a journey of a day and a picture of human life. (Journal 4:431)

Thus Thoreau often "avoided the highways, and was reluctant even to have his feet off the turf or out of the woods" (Benton "Persons and Places" 113). Emerson stated in "Country Life" that "the true naturalist can go wherever woods or waters go; almost where a squirrel or a bee can

go, he can; and no man is asked for leave" (Works 12:162), and Thoreau was very much a true naturalist in this sense, following the paths which nature set out for him and frequently leaving the roads and trails which man had placed for public travel. Trevelyan notes that the real blessings of walking "are not of the road" (Walking 40). Thoreau knew that he would have to leave the road in order to experience the blessings to his soul and spirit which the world of nature, removed from the road, could provide.

Once Thoreau left the road during his walks, he often went across lots, identifying more with the animals who travelled the same way than with the men who remained on the road: "I go across lots like a hunting dog. With what tireless energy and abandonment they dash through the brush and up the sides of hills! I meet two white foxhounds, led by an old red one. . . . They are not tied to paths" (Journal 8:1045). Thoreau traversed the lots of his neighbors in such private fashion that they were seldom aware of how frequently he walked through their property:

Moreover, taking a surveyor's and a naturalist's liberty, I have been in the habit of going across your lots much oftener than is usual, as many of you, perhaps to your sorrow, are aware. Yet many of you, to my relief, have seemed not to be aware of it; and, when I came across you in some out-of-the-way nook of your farms, have inquired, with an air of surprise, if I were not lost, since you had never seen me in that part of the town or county before; when, if the truth were known . . ., I might with more propriety have inquired if you were not lost, since I had never seen you there before. I have several times shown the proprietor the shortest way out of his wood-lot. ("The Succession of Forest Trees" Writings 5:185)

Like the men Thoreau addresses in this passage, Thoreau's townsmen were often unaware of his private, across-lots excursions, assuming that his walks were confined to public roads:

Getting over the wall near Sam Barrett's the other day, I had gone a few rods in the road when I met Prescott Barrett, who observed, "Well, you take a walk round the square sometimes." So little does he know of my habits. I go across lots over his grounds every three or four weeks, but I do not know that I ever walked round the square in my life. (Journal 10:1197)

One reason why many of his contemporaries did not realize how often Thoreau walked through their property in his quest to escape the limitations of the roads is that when sauntering across lots, Thoreau did all that he could to avoid seeing or being seen by civilization. The more private and isolated his walks, the more they refreshed his spirit and strengthened him to return to face the society which he had left. According to Cook, Thoreau was quite adept at "avoiding houses and too-cultivated parts." He went so far as to position himself when passing a house so that a tree would intervene between himself and the windows of a house, and he walked during inclement weather in order to enjoy the privacy such conditions offered him by shielding him from his contemporaries who remained inside (Passage 13). So strong was Thoreau's desire to remove himself from any taint of artificiality or cultivation, that he felt much more comfortable traversing natural ground than cultivated fields--"I love to get out of cultivated fields where I walk on an imported sod, on English grass, and walk in the fine sedge of woodland hollows, on an American sward. In the former case my thoughts are heavy and lumpish, as if I fed on turnips. In the other I nibble groundnuts" (Journal 12:1531).

Thoreau's Journal refers frequently to his desire to isolate himself from houses and cultivated fields which served as symbols of the society from which his walks were designed to liberate him. In October 2, 1859, Thoreau noted, "How much pleasanter to go along the edge of the woods,

through the field in the rear of the farmhouse, whence you see only its gray roof and its haystacks, than to keep by its door! This we think as we return behind Martial Miles's" (12:1523). A June, 1853 entry states even more plainly his preference for an environment untainted by any vestige of civilization: "But I travel chiefly in the fields or pastures parallel with the road." He adds, "These are very agreeable pastures to me; no house in sight, no cultivation" (4:433). Only a few days earlier, Thoreau had recorded, "The fields a walker loves best to strike into are bare, extended, rolling, bordered by copses, with brooks and meadows in sight . . ., where is no high grass nor grain nor cultivated ground nor houses near" (4:431). Canby, very aware of this aspect of Thoreau's walking experience, recorded in his biography of Thoreau:

Avoiding roads, when possible, if he had to follow them he kept on their margins. Usually he crossed fences, navigated pastures by the cow paths winding through juniper and wild apple, and as soon as possible bored into the woods and swamps. He tried to keep a hedge, a grove, or a brush patch between himself and the farmers' houses--sometimes Channing and he, when they went on an all-day walk, played a game to see how many farmhouses they could pass without being observed. The farmers, indeed, saw him on his daily walks only by chance, and then when they were working in the fields or their wood lots. (Thoreau 310,311)

Thoreau's fiercely independent spirit required him to chart his own course, to control his own destiny, even if it was only the matter of where to walk. He derived special pleasure from leaving the road and travelling a new path, especially if that path were one of his own design. Charles Woodbury claims that Thoreau's "energy was exhausted in projecting a new path. He could not follow an old one, even when it was better for him" ("Talks" 67). How this worked is clear from an August 15, 1854 Journal entry:

Before starting on this walk I had studied the map to

discover a new walk, and decided to go through a large wooded tract west and northwest of the Paul Dudley house, where there was no road, there at last to strike east across the head of Spencer Brook Meadow, perhaps to the old Carlisle road. . . . Keeping on through a somewhat swampy upland, we fell into a path, which Channing preferring, though it led us through woods widely out of our course westward, I soon corrected it, and, descending through swampy land, at length saw through the trees and bushes into a small meadow completely surrounded by woods, in which was a man haying only eight or ten rods off. We felt very much like Indians stealing upon an early settler, and naturally inclined to one side to go round the meadow through the high blueberry bushes. . . .

At length, when I endeavored to correct my course by compass, it pointed so that I lost my faith in it, and we continued to go out of our way, till we came out on a side-hill immediately overlooking a stream and mill and several houses and a small mill-pond. . . . We were completely lost, and saw not one familiar object. At length we saw steeples which we thought Westford, but the monument proved it Acton. Took their bearings, calculated a new course, and pursued it at first east-northeast, then east, and finally southeast, along rocky hillsides covered with weeds . . . through dense oak woods and scrub oak, across a road or two, over some pastures, through a swamp or two. . . . After travelling about five miles, for the most part in woods, without knowing where we were, we came out on a hill from which we saw, far to the south, the open valley head of Spencer Brook. (6:777)

This particular instance reveals Thoreau's joy in choosing his own path. Rambles like this one nourished his spirit because they strengthened his sense of self-sufficiency.

When Thoreau was not creating his own path, he usually relied on roads or paths which by their very nature catered more to the walker than to other forms of travel. He sought paths which suggested the freedom and openness which his own spirit required: "An open path which would suggest walking and adventuring on it, the going to some place strange and far away" (Journal 2:258). The magnetic pull of a footpath is even more apparent a little further in the same Journal entry:

For roads, I think that a poet cannot tolerate more than a footpath through the fields; that is wide enough, and for purposes of winged poesy suffices. It is not for the muse to

speak of cart-paths. I would fain travel by a footpath round the world. I do not ask the railroads of commerce, not even the cart-paths of the farmer. Pray, what other path would you have than a footpath? What else should wear a path? This is the track of man alone. What more suggestive to the pensive walker. . . . (2:258; emphasis supplied)

Old roads which appealed primarily to walkers because they were seldom travelled and were in poor repair also attracted Thoreau because they made the kind of private, rejuvenating walking which he aimed at possible. In one extended Journal passage, he praises the virtues of one such road--the old Carlisle road:

Going along this old Carlisle road,--road for walkers, for berry-pickers, and no more worldly travellers; road for Melvin and Clark, not for the sheriff nor butcher nor the baker's jingling cart; road where all wild things and fruits abound, where there are countless rocks to jar those who venture there in wagons; which no jockey, no wheelwright in his right mind, drives over, no little spidery gigs and Flying Childers; road which leads to and through a great but not famous garden, zoological and botanical garden, at whose gate you never arrive. . . . (12:1518)

Road--that old Carlisle one--that leaves towns behind; where you put off worldly thoughts; where you do not carry a watch, nor remember the proprietor; where the proprietor is the only trespasser,--looking after his apples!--the only one who mistakes his calling there, whose title is not good; where fifty may be a-berrying and you do not see one. . . . Others are called great roads, but this is greater than they all. The road is only laid out, offered to walkers, not accepted by the town and the travelling world. To be represented by a dotted line on charts, or drawn in lime-juice, undiscoverable to the uninitiated, to be held to a warm imagination. No guide-boards indicate it. No odometer would indicate the miles a wagon had run there. . . . (12:1519; emphasis supplied)

Like the Marlborough Road depicted earlier, this road for walker, not for commerce, was the kind of road which offered Thoreau the freedom of thought necessary for internal sauntering.

The more open such a road was, the more open his thinking could be. Thoreau's self required space. He did not like standing too close to people when conversing with them, and he could not tolerate the feeling

of being hampered by physical barriers of any kind. One thing that Thoreau's walking experience reveals is how easily the physical elements of the landscape affected his thinking processes. Open space led to open thinking; confined space hampered his thinking. Thus Thoreau could tolerate no fences in his own life, and the same held true for the roads and paths which he sauntered along. Open roads and paths appealed to the openness which marked the breadth of his own lifestyle: "The road through the pitch pine woods beyond J. Hosmer's is very pleasant to me, curving under the pines, without a fence. . . . I love to see a sandy road like this carving through a pitch pine wood where the trees closely border it without fences, a great cart-path merely" (Journal 3:375).

Along with openness and freedom, Thoreau required of a road or path, as he did of his own life, that there be wildness. This is what he found appealing about walking the railroad:

The railroad is perhaps our pleasantest and wildest road. It only makes deep cuts into and through the hills. On it are no houses nor foot-travellers. The travel on it does not disturb me. The woods are left to hang over it. Though straight, is wild in its accompaniments. All is raw edges. (Journal 3:360)

Thoreau experienced this kind of openness and wildness when he hiked the more natural roadways provided by nature herself, such as a frozen river: "It is much easier and pleasanter to walk thus on the river . . . , and this road is so wide that you do not feel confined in it, and you never meet travellers with whom you have no sympathy" (Journal 6:687). In wintertime, Thoreau found "three great highways" heading out from his door, three frozen river branches which offered him the kind of personal freedom in his walking experience which was so important to him: "Could any avenues be contrived more convenient? With this river I am not

compelled to walk in the tracks of horses" (Journal 11:1425). As with the railroad, the river bordered the wildness of nature and offered the winter saunterer or skater a passage into nature unobtainable by any other path:

Before night we will take a journey on skates along the course of this meandering river, as full of novelty to one who sits by the cottage fire all the winter's day, as if it were over the polar ice, with Captain Parry or Franklin; following the winding of the stream, now flowing amid hills, now spreading out into fair meadows, and forming a myriad coves and bays where the pine and hemlock overarch. The river flows in the rear of the towns, and we see all things from a new and wilder side. The fields and gardens come down to it with a frankness, and freedom from pretension, which they do not wear on the highway. It is the outside and edge of the earth. . . . The last rail of the farmer's fence is some swaying willow bough, which still preserves its freshness, and here at length all fences stop, and we no longer cross any road. . . . ("A Winter Walk" Writings 5:177,178)

While at Walden, the pond served Thoreau in the same fashion:

Walden . . . was my yard, where I could walk freely when the snow was nearly two feet deep on a level elsewhere and the villagers were confined to their streets. There, far from the village street, and except at very long intervals, from the jingle of sleigh-bells, I slid and skated. . . . (Walden 271)

Thoreau's self responded to wildness as to space, and these natural, wild paths offered him some of the best opportunities for internal sauntering.

As has been shown, regardless of the surface which he walked on, Thoreau sought those roads or paths which would best foster the personal freedom and individuality which comprised the core of his own personality. Only when traversing paths which were free, natural, and wild could Thoreau experience the rejuvenation and affirmation which he sought in his walking experience. Thus Thoreau walked in non-conformist fashion away from the corrupting influences of the city and, following the wildest, freest, and most natural paths, plunged into nature. Paths

which he associated with society and its burdens robbed Thoreau of his vitality, but paths which seemed divorced from the common concerns of mankind and which offered Thoreau freedom from the conformity which he felt plagued his neighbors, refreshed and liberated his spirit. In this respect, the roads or paths which Thoreau pursued during his walks were vital factors in determining the impact of his rambles on his own emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual well-being. For Thoreau, there was a direct relationship between the condition of his inner-being and the path which he walked.

One thing that this suggests is that walking in and of itself offered no panacea for Thoreau's mental and emotional health. It was where and how he walked that spelled the difference. When he walked in the city, he felt dissipated and drained of his emotional vitality, but when he walked away from the city and into nature, he escaped all that seemed trivial or unimportant, and he rediscovered and rejuvenated his inner spirit. This is one reason why walking was so important to him. His walks away from the city were designed to help him get society and politics out of his head, to clear his thinking for the internal sauntering which put him in touch with himself. Any other transportation form would have reminded him of civilization, but walking carried no such associations. Instead, it freed him from ties to others and to society in general, and it enabled him to maintain a very healthy sense of personal well-being.

The importance of Thoreau's walks away from civilization and their connection to his emotional health is recorded in his Journal entry for January 7, 1857. This particular description of his walking experience

offers one of the most convincing portrayals of how significant his saunterings were to his personal well-being:

There is nothing so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. Nothing so inspires me and excites such serene and profitable thought. . . . In the street and in society I am almost invariably cheap and dissipated, my life is unspeakably mean. No amount of gold or respectability would in the least redeem it,—dining with the Governor or a member of Congress!! But alone in distant woods or fields, in unpretending sprout-lands or pastures tracked by rabbits, even in a bleak and, to most, cheerless day, like this, when a villager would be thinking of his inn, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related, and that cold and solitude are friends of mine. I suppose that this value, in my case, is equivalent to what others get by churchgoing and prayer. I come to my solitary woodland walk as the homesick go home. I thus dispose of the superfluous and see things as they are, grand and beautiful. I have told many that I walk every day about half the daylight, but I think they do not believe it. I wish to get the Concord, the Massachusetts, the America, out of my head and be sane a part of every day. . . . I wish to forget a considerable part of every day, all mean, narrow, trivial men (and this requires usually to forego and forget all personal relations so long), and therefore I come out to these solitudes, where the problem of existence is simplified. I get away a mile or two from the town into the stillness and solitude of nature, with rocks, trees, weeds, snow about me. I enter some glade in the woods, perchance, where a few weeds and dry leaves alone lift themselves above the surface of the snow, and it is as if I had come to an open window. I see out and around myself. Our skylights are thus far away from the ordinary resorts of men. I am not satisfied with ordinary windows. I must have a true skylight. My true sky light is on the outside of the village. I am not thus expanded, recreated, enlightened, when I meet a company of men. It chances that the sociable, the town and county, or the farmer's club does not prove a skylight to me. I do not invariably find myself translated under those circumstances. They bore me. The man I meet with is not often so instructive as the silence he breaks. This stillness, solitude, wildness of nature is a kind of thoroughwort, or boneset, to my intellect. This is what I go out to seek. It is as if I always met in those places some grand, serene, immortal, infinitely encouraging, though invisible, companion, and walked with him. There at last my nerves are steadied, my senses and my mind do their office. I am aware that most of my neighbors would think it a hardship to be compelled to linger here one hour, especially this bleak day, and yet I receive this sweet and ineffable compensation for it. It is the most agreeable thing I do. . . . (9:1104)

This passage clarifies the purgative nature of the walks which Thoreau took away from the city. Only by walking away from society could Thoreau dispel all thoughts of the artificial existence which he associated with the city, and, in doing so, "once more feel" himself. Because his walks away from the city put him so in tune with his essential self, these saunterings were, as he claims, "the most agreeable thing" that he did.

Modern literary heroes like Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom work out their identities while walking in the city, but Thoreau was a true romantic who needed to walk away from the city in order to affirm his identity. According to Robert Stowell, Thoreau viewed walking away from the city and into nature as "an antidote" to the poisonous "threat of America's urbanization" (Gazetteer xi). Thoreau sensed the integral relationship between the environment the walker walks in and the state of his walking experience. The tensions of the city pervade the walking experience of the city saunterer, while the freedom of wilderness rambling relaxes and ennobles the nature walker. From Thoreau's viewpoint, the typical citizen could not free himself from the oppressive effects of his mundane life, as symbolized by the house he lived in, and his walking experience could not escape the tensions of his everyday existence:

But the civilized man has the habits of the house. His house is a prison in which he finds himself oppressed and confined, not sheltered and protected. He walks as if the walls would fall in and crush him--and his feet remember the cellar beneath. His muscles are never relaxed--It is rare that he overcomes the house, and learns to sit at home in it--and roof and floor--and walls support themselves--as the sky--and trees--and earth. It is a great art to saunter. (Journal [Princeton] 1:304; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau used the art of sauntering to escape the inherent tensions of

civilized life, and, as Reginald Cook observes, Thoreau found walking in nature a heroic experience when contrasted with "how trivial man's institution-ridden life might be." He realized "in nature a sense of freedom which the institutionalized life of man thwarted" (Passage 55).

Thoreau's distrust of cities and society in general was well-known to his friends. Thus Channing observes that Thoreau "had no love at all for cities" (Poet-Naturalist 21). Concord itself gave Thoreau reason enough to feel this way, as Richard Lebeaux (Young Man Thoreau) points out. During Thoreau's adult years, this city underwent gradual but major transformations, "moving from isolation to provinciality" (21). It experienced increased industrialization, commercialization (21), and materialism (25). Perhaps more importantly, Concord offered its citizens like Thoreau a somewhat overwhelming array of career choices which created "the identity confusion associated with an increasingly pluralistic community" (23), and its increasingly sophisticated and materialistically-minded residents created pressures for conformity which seriously threatened Thoreau's independent nature--"People were afraid to confront directly the problems of identity definition; moreover, they were afraid of social disapproval, of being unlike their neighbors" (25). In a society such as this, Thoreau, whose personality required frequent isolation and independence, welcomed walks which carried him away from the many distractions of city life. His saunterings freed him from the peer pressure, vocational concerns, and growing materialism which so wearied his spirit.

Thus Thoreau found it necessary to escape these undesirable influences of city life in order to affirm his own identity. Every

aspect of city life repelled him and threatened his personal search for fulfillment: "What is the village, city, State, nation, aye the civilized world, that it should concern a man so much?" he queried in his Journal 3:369), and then added:

I do not value any view of the universe into which man and the institutions of man enter very largely and absorb much of the attention. Man is but the place where I stand, and the prospect hence is infinite. . . . The universe is larger than enough for man's abode. Some rarely go outdoors, most are always at home at night, very few indeed have stayed out all night once in their lives, fewer still have gone behind the world of humanity, seen its institutions like toadstools by the wayside. (3:370)

When Thoreau spent time at Staten Island, he confided to his friend, Emerson, his strong aversion to city life and the aspects of artificial society which it represented to him: "I don't like the city better, the more I see it, but worse. I am ashamed of my eyes that behold it. It is a thousand times meaner than I could have imagined. It will be something to hate,—that's the advantage it will be to me. . . ."

(Correspondence 111,112). So strong was this repulsion, that Thoreau even dreaded hikes into the city library to read books. As much as he enjoyed reading, the city environment proved suffocating to him:

But if I would read their [naturalists] books I must go to the city,—so strange and repulsive both to them and to me,—and deal with men and institutions with whom I have no sympathy. When I have just been there on this errand, it seems too great a price to pay for access even to the works of Homer, or Chaucer, or Linnaeus. . . . (Journal 3:342)

A number of Thoreau's Journal entries record the contrast in his experience between city walking and country walking. One winter entry depicts certain drawbacks of city life which taint the walker's experience:

What a difference between life in the city and in the country at present,—between walking in Washington Street, threading your

way between countless sledges and travellers, over the discolored snow, and crossing Walden Pond, a spotless field of snow surrounded by woods, whose intensely blue shadows and your own are the only objects. What a solemn silence reigns here! (8:969)

A summer entry focuses on the impurity of city life when contrasted with the purity of country life:

As I walk through these old deserted wild orchards, half pasture, half huckleberry-field, the air is filled with fragrance from I know not what source. How much purer and sweeter it must be than the atmosphere of the streets, rendered impure by the filth about our houses! It is quite offensive often when the air is heavy at night. The roses in the front yard do not atone for the sink and pigsty and cow-yard and jakes in the rear. (4:433)

In every respect, Thoreau viewed a city as morally corrupting and generally debilitating:

A true culture is more possible to the savage than to the boy of average intellect, born of average parents, in a great city. I believe that they perish miserably. How can they be kept clean, physically or morally? It is folly to attempt to educate children within a city; the first step must be to remove them out of it. (Journal 2:230)

Thoreau felt that his only hope for self-fulfillment and personal affirmation was to escape the influences of society by walking away from the city and heading into nature. Only when he was completely free from the world of men could he truly find himself:

Society, man, has no prize to offer me that can tempt me; not one. That which interests a town or city or any large number of men is always something trivial, as politics. It is impossible for me to be interested in what interests men generally. Their pursuits and interests seem to me frivolous. When I am most myself and see the clearest, men are least to be seen. . . . (Journal 3:389; emphasis supplied)

In order to be "most" himself, Thoreau sauntered into nature, but this process of walking away from the city was not as automatic as it might seem. Merely physically travelling away from society was not

enough to satisfy Thoreau; physical walking by itself was never enough to appease the transcendental spirit within him. Unless he was able to remove the city from his mind as well as from his body, his walks were considered failures:

Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is,--I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? ("Walking" Writings 5:211)

The effort to forsake the city and saunter into nature called for the united efforts of body, soul, and mind. Within the city, neither the mind, spirit, nor body could properly function. Away from the city, the body relaxed, but this availed little if the mind failed to escape the tensions of city life. Thoreau comments in his Journal on how thoughts of societal responsibilities and concerns spoil his walks: "We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them. When we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both rulers and ruled are without principle? The remembrance of the baseness of politicians spoils my walks" (6:756). It was especially difficult for Thoreau to keep his thinking untainted when he returned from his walks to the city:

Though you may have sauntered near to heaven's gate, when at length you return toward the village you give up the enterprise a little, and you begin to fall into the old ruts of thought, like a regular roadster. Your thoughts very properly fail to report themselves to headquarters. Your thoughts turn toward night and the evening mail and become begrimed with dust, as if you were just going to put up at (with?) the tavern, or even come to make an exchange with a brother clergyman here on the

morrow. (Journal 12:1519)

Certain of Thoreau's contemporaries recognized as Thoreau did how walking away from a city can purge the mind and free the walker from his mundane concerns. In "Walking: An Antidote to City Poison" Sidney Smith observes that "as the body, harassed with the noxious air of cities, seeks relief in the freedom and the purity of the fields and hills, so the mind, wearied by commerce with men, resumes its vigour in solitude, and repairs its dignity" (18). Thoreau's good friend, Emerson, felt the same way: "The crowd in the cities, at the hotels, theatres, card-tables, the speculators who rush for investment, at ten per cent., twenty per cent., . . . are all more or less mad. . . . These point the moral, and persuade us to seek in the fields the health of the mind" ("Country Life" Works 12:159,160). It was from this same suspicion of cities, so typical of nineteenth-century romantics, that Thoreau sauntered out of the city into nature. According to Richard Fleck, Thoreau's walks were important escapes from city life which freed his mind to dwell on those things which were closest to him, and which, consequently, relaxed and affirmed him: "Thoreau found what many seek today--the inner retreat where the mind can relax and divert to the esthetically pleasing. The town and city dweller can be revived in the wilderness" ("Wilderness" 290).

Thoreau's walks away from the city and into nature were necessary for his well-being. The world of man burdened his spirit, but nature offered a world solely for the self:

I love Nature partly because she is not man, but a retreat from him. None of his institutions control or pervade her. There a different kind of right prevails. In her midst I can be glad with an entire gladness. If this world were all man, I could not stretch myself, I should lose all hope. He is constraint, she is freedom to me. He makes me wish for another world. She

makes me content with this. None of the joys she supplies is subject to his rules and definitions. What he touches he taints. . . . I have a room all to myself; it is nature. It is a place beyond the jurisdiction of human governments. . . . There are two worlds, the post-office and nature. I know them both. I continually forget mankind and their institutions, as I do a bank. (Journal 4:511.512)

Only in nature could he experience the personal affirmation which he sought, and only by walking could he place himself in nature in a way which would allow him to reap her full blessings.

The magnetic pull of nature is a recurrent theme in Thoreau's Journal. In one typical entry, he confesses:

In the society of many men, or in the midst of what is called success, I find my life of no account, and my spirits rapidly fall. . . . But when I have only a rustling oak leaf, or the faint metallic cheep of a tree sparrow, for variety in my winter walk, my life becomes continent and sweet as the kernel of a nut. (9:1114)

Another Journal entry records a similar sentiment: "While most keep to their parlor fires this cold and blustering Thanksgiving afternoon, and think with compassion of those abroad, I find the sunny south side of this swamp as warm as their parlors, and warmer to my spirit" (4:1400).

Thoreau's sanity was based, not on the affairs of men, but the affairs of nature. Walking in nature launched him into a world far more fulfilling than the superficial world of human society:

All summer, and far into the autumn, perchance, you unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now you find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to you. Your walks were full of incidents. You attended, not to the affairs of Europe, but to your own affairs in Massachusetts fields. If you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events that make the news transpire,—thinner than the paper on which it is printed,—then these things will fill the world for you; but if you soar above or dive below that plane, you cannot remember nor be reminded of them. Really to see the sun rise or go down every day, so to relate ourselves to a universal fact, would preserve us sane forever. ("Life Without Principle" Reform

Papers 170,171)

Thus walking in nature lifted his spirits and rescued his sense of identity from the unwelcome influences of the town:

I was glad to have got out of the towns, where I am wont to feel unspeakably mean and disgraced,—to have left behind me for a season the bar-rooms of Massachusetts, where the full-grown are not weaned from savage and filthy habits,—still sucking a cigar. My spirits rose in proportion to the outward dreariness. The towns need to be ventilated. (Cape Cod 41,42)

One irony of Thoreau's walking experience is that no matter how much his walks in nature rejuvenated and affirmed him, they also led him back to the city and the society from which he wished to escape. The circular nature of Thoreau's walks, from city to nature and back to city again, reveals a deep inner tension which he experienced within himself. He walked away from the city because he felt an irresistible pull to nature. "Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps," Thoreau announces in "Walking" (Writings 5:226,227). Later in the same essay he asserts: "When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and, to the citizen, most dismal, swamp. . . . A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it" (228,229).

What is interesting, but not surprising, is that Thoreau also felt a pull, be it a milder one, to the city and society. As much as Thoreau loved nature, he could not escape his own ties to his fellow man or to society in general. In 1850 he wrote to his friend H. G. O. Blake, "I see less difference between a city and a swamp than formerly." Referring to a swamp which was too wild even for his taste, he noted, "I prefer ever a more cultivated place, free from miasma and crocodiles. I am so

sophisticated, and I will take my choice" (Correspondence 265,266).

While Thoreau walked in nature, he was ever aware of its positive influence on him, but when his walking experience was interrupted, he became aware of a yearning for society which his walks tended to repress:

When I have been confined to my chamber for the greater part of several days by some employment, or perchance by the ague, till I felt weary and house-worn, I have been conscious of a certain softness to which I am otherwise and commonly a stranger, in which the gates were loosened to some emotions: and if I were to become a confirmed invalid, I see how sympathy with mankind and society might spring up. (Journal 3:301; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau's walks never completely divorced him from meaningful contact with his fellow men, and they were never intended to do so. His walks returned him to the city because he sought experiences in nature which would enable him to function better in society upon his return. While he was in nature, he attempted to separate himself mentally and physically from mundane concerns, but he expected to use his nature experiences to help himself better relate to his fellow men. His writings make clear that Thoreau was no hermit or misanthrope seeking to sever himself permanently from man: "Nature must be viewed humanly to be viewed at all; that is, her scenes must be associated with humane affections, such as are associated with one's native place, for instance. . . . A lover of Nature is preeminently a lover of man. . ." (Journal 4:441).

What the pattern of Thoreau's saunterings reveals is that he lived a border existence between nature and society. Like Cooper's Natty Bumppo, Thoreau sought his moral strength from the wilderness, but he also maintained his ties with society, relating to it as best he could. According to Roderick Nash, Thoreau believed that it was best to alternate between the world of the wilderness and the world of man, to

maintain contact with both worlds (Wilderness 93-95). Thoreau discovered through the aid of his saunterings in nature a particular outlook which strengthened his identity by equipping him to function within, and not without, society with the independence and integrity which were essential to his sense of self.

In his own writings, Thoreau had much to declare about his border life between nature and society. In "Walking" he admits, "For my part, I feel that with regard to Nature I live a sort of border life, on the confines of a world into which I make occasional and transient forays only, and my patriotism and allegiance to the state into whose territories I seem to retreat are those of a moss-trooper" (Writings 5:242). Affirming the role of men in his own life, he states in his Journal, "It is narrow to be confined to woods and fields and grand aspects of nature only. The greatest and wisest will still be related to men" (Journal 2:249). Concerning the unique quality of his experience while he walked in nature he records, "Methinks that for a great part of the time . . . I walk as one possessing the advantages of culture, fresh from the society of men, but turned loose into the woods, the only man in nature, walking and meditating to a great extent as if man and his customs and institutions were not" (Journal 2:253). The inherent tension between his attraction to nature and his ties to his fellow man reveals itself in this Journal entry: "It is with infinite yearning and aspiration that I seek solitude, more and more resolved and strong; but with a certain genial weakness that I seek society ever" (6:776).

These statements, as well as Thoreau's experiences, reveal how his walking experience helped him preserve his identity by bridging the

worlds of the wilderness and the city. In this respect, his sauntering pattern of leaving the city, walking into nature, and then returning to the city once more, paralleled his experience at Walden where he spent a little over two years and then returned to the city as "a sojourner in civilized life again" (Walden 3). Even while at Walden, his walking pattern followed his mutual attractions to nature and to man:

Every day or two I strolled to the village to hear some of the gossip which is incessantly going on there . . . , and which, taken in homeopathic doses, was really as refreshing in its way as the rustle of leaves and the peeping of frogs. As I walked in the woods to see the birds and squirrels, so I walked in the village to see the men and boys. (Walden 167; emphasis supplied)

Thus Thoreau, who could not fully escape the influence of man, used walking in nature as a way to reinforce his personal identity and refresh his spirit so that he could return to the world of man with the inner resources which enabled him to live in society without being corrupted by it. The circular pattern of his walks reveals how Thoreau left the city to seek a relationship with nature which would free him from all the thoughts and emotions which were not genuinely a part of himself. This contact with nature equipped him to return once more to society, better aware of who he was and more confident of the course which he wished to follow as he lived his life surrounded by the artificial and corrupting influences of society. One very important function of Thoreau's walking experience, then, was that it enabled him to retreat regularly from society in order to establish and affirm his own identity, and, upon his return to civilization, to live an independent and fulfilled life within society.

So important was this role of his walking experience, that Thoreau developed a strong concern about the issue of land usage for walkers.

Thoreau was worried about the very real possibility in his own day that private land owners would so restrict their lands that walkers like himself would be unable to take the rambles into nature which preserved and nourished their souls and bodies. From Thoreau's point of view, restricting land usage was but one more way that society threatened the integrity of its individual members, especially those walkers like himself who found their own identities so closely connected to their walking experience.

Several Journal entries reveal Thoreau's deep sense of loss when his neighbors cut down the woods which were the haunts of so many of his walks. In January of 1852 he wrote, "These woods! Why do I not feel their being cut more sorely? Does it not affect me nearly? The axe can deprive me of much. Concord is sheared of its pride. I am certainly the less attached to my native town in consequence. One, and a main, link is broken" (3:330). In March of the same year, he lamented: "The woods I walked in my youth are cut off. Is it not time that I ceased to sing? My groves are invaded" (3:360,361). Increased concern is evident in an entry three years later: "Our woods are now so reduced that the chopping of this winter has been a cutting to the quick. At least we walkers feel it as such. There is hardly a woodlot of any consequences left but the chopper's axe has been heard in it this season. . ." (7:852; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau viewed this depletion of the natural environment as a threat to the rights of local walkers to pursue their vocation. Because he highly valued the availability of a good walking environment which sparsely settled areas provided—"I am glad that men are so dispersed

over the earth. The need of fuel causes woods to be left, and the use of cattle and horses requires pastures, and hence men live far apart and the walkers of every town have this wide range over forest and field"

(Journal 3:386)—he felt that public lands should be preserved for walkers by protecting good walking environments against indiscriminate destruction by unthinking or uncaring citizens. He expressed his concern quite emphatically in his "Walking" essay:

At present, in this vicinity, the best part of the land is not private property; the landscape is not owned, and the walker enjoys comparative freedom. But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only,—when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the public road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come. (Writings 5:216)

Thoreau considered the right to walk where one pleases so essential that he stated in his Journal that he would rather not be born than to live in a world which would not allow him the freedom in a walking environment which his independent spirit required of him:

As for walking, the inhabitants of large English towns are confined almost exclusively to their parks and to the highways.

. . .

Think of a man—he may be a genius of some kind—being confined to a highway and a park for his world to range in! I should die from mere nervousness at the thought of such confinement. I should hesitate before I were born, if those terms could be made known to me beforehand. Fenced in forever by those green barriers of fields, where gentlemen are seated! Can they be said to be inhabitants of this globe? Will they be content to inhabit heaven thus partially? (2:257)

Thoreau's strongest stance on the issue of the individual right of the walker to saunter where he wishes versus the whims of the general public to use or restrict the land as they please appears in his essay

"Huckleberries" which was published posthumously. In this essay he discusses, as in his Journal, his concern about the threats to the walking environment which he observed in his own time:

Among the Indians, the earth and its productions generally were common and free to all the tribe, like the air and water--but among us who have supplanted the Indians, the public retain only a small yard or common in the middle of the village, with perhaps a grave-yard beside it, and the right of way, by sufferance, by a particular narrow route, which is annually becoming narrower, from one such yard to another. I doubt if you can ride out five miles in any direction without coming to where some individual is tolling in the road--and he expects the time when it will all revert to him or his heirs. This is the way we civilized men have arranged it. (Huckleberries 30)

Later, in the same essay, Thoreau reflects:

It is true, we as yet take liberties and go across lots in most directions but we naturally take fewer and fewer liberties every year, as we meet with more resistance, and we shall soon be reduced to the same straights they are in England, where going across lots is out of the question--and we must ask leave to walk in some lady's park. (33)

In "Huckleberries" Thoreau not only laments the potential loss of the local walking environment, he also proposes that each town should do what it can to protect an adequate walking environment for its walkers, including individual citizens bequeathing land for public use:

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.

All Walden wood might have been reserved, with Walden in the midst of it, and the Easterbrooks country, an uncultivated area of some four square miles in the north of the town, might have been our huckleberry field. If any owners of these tracts are about to leave the world without natural heirs who need or deserve to be especially remembered, they will do wisely to abandon the possession to all mankind, and not will them to some individual who perhaps has enough already--and so correct the error that was made when the town was laid out. As some give to Harvard College or another Institution, so one might give a forest or a huckleberry field to Concord. . . . (35)

Part of Thoreau's rationale for advocating the preservation of public lands for use by walkers was his contention that the value of something is determined by its use, and the highest use of something is that which caters to the individual needs of each citizen. According to his scheme of usage, land which was open to the walker, and which, consequently, helped meet the walker's individual needs, was more valuable than land which was excluded to the walker and used for other purposes. When describing one of his favorite walking areas, Thoreau noted:

What shall this great wild tract over which we strolled be called? Many farmers have pastures there, and wood-lots, and orchards. . . . It is a paradise for walkers in the fall. . . . It would make a princely estate in Europe, yet it is owned by farmers, who live by the labor of their hands and do not esteem it much. (Journal 5:588)

Thoreau often commented on how the farmers did not appreciate the true value of their land; only saunterers, by traversing the farmer's land, could sense its real transcendental value, a value greater than that yielded by the agricultural potential of the land.

Land which was plotted on a map or depicted in a real estate document held little interest for a walker like Thoreau who used the personal contact with nature which walking made possible to determine the real value of a piece of property. In his Journal he comments, "How little there is on an ordinary map! How little, I mean, that concerns the walker and the lover of nature" (14:1721).

Thoreau viewed walking on the land as a special act tantamount to declaring ownership; when he sauntered across the fields and woods of Concord, he assumed the guise of a landowner who owned the land through the mental and spiritual act of discovery which he pursued. When sauntering, he responded to a higher law which granted ownership

according to how someone used the land, and the walker used the land in the best possible way:

I affect what would commonly be called a mean and miserable way of living. I thoroughly sympathize with all savages and gypsies in so far as they merely assert the original right of man to the productions of Nature and a place in her. The Irishman moves into the town, sets up a shanty on the railroad land, and then gleans the dead wood from the neighboring forest, which would never get to market. But the so-called owner forbids it and complains of him as a trespasser. The highest law gives a thing to him who can use it. (Journal 8:935; emphasis supplied)

Hal Borland explains how such a view of ownership applies to a walker like Thoreau:

Walkers acquire a special ownership of roads and streets and parks and fields. I shall forever own certain parts of a dozen cities, because I walked their streets, a stranger, and became familiar with their sights and sounds and smells and knew their people, even though they did not know me. Even though I met those people later and they showed me the city that they knew, my ownership was in no way changed. I had made my own discoveries. ("Streets and Fields" 11)

Emerson, like Thoreau, sensed that the real value of the land was a matter of perspective, not legal right:

Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title. ("Nature" Works 1:8)

As he makes clear in his own Journal, Thoreau was Emerson's poet, who traversed the landscape, transcendently redeeming it as he sauntered through it: "In one light, these are old and worn-out fields that I ramble over, and men have gone to law about them long before I was born, but I trust that I ramble over them in a new fashion and redeem them (10:1229; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau not only felt that the rights of the individual walker should

be preserved by allowing him to freely traverse the landscape and to use it as he wished, he also felt that the integrity of the individual walker should be protected against the influence of other individuals who were not walkers in the sense that Thoreau and his fellow Transcendentalists were. Thoreau viewed walking not only as a way to protect the individual from society collectively, but also as a means toward helping him declare his individuality against the potential encroachments of other individuals. He viewed the impersonal nature of society--man's laws, societal expectations and customs as debilitating:

Society is ordinarily for Thoreau not the collection of individual human beings, themselves; it is rather the social machinery--the institutions, traditions, and conventions through which people operate--and stagnate. It is not the humanity that he deplores, but the ingrained stolidity of social actions, the friction of the social machinery. (Taylor, "Individual" 23)

But Thoreau also recognized that individual people could threaten the nature of his walking experience, and, in turn, his individuality, by exposing him to the artificial trappings of society which he sought to escape.

Solitude was a key part of Thoreau's walking experience because during his walks he attempted to empty himself of all that was not truly himself. Solitude was the condition which most fed his soul: "I thrive best on solitude. If I had a companion only one day a week, unless it were one or two I could name, I find that the value of the week to me has been seriously affected" (Journal 9:1102). In a letter to his friend, Daniel Ricketson, Thoreau confessed, "As some heads cannot carry much wine, so it would seem that I cannot bear so much society as you can. I have an immense appetite for solitude, like an infant for sleep, and if I don't get enough of it this year I shall cry all the next"

(Correspondence 493).

Thoreau considered his walking time very sacred time; he was very reluctant to share it with anyone else. His walking pattern not only carried him away from the city, it also carried him away from other individuals who wished to share it with him. Charles Woodbury recollects how Thoreau, when asked by others if they could walk with him, would reply: "'Ah, walking—that is my holy time'" ("Talks" 67). Joseph Krutch points out that Thoreau usually "kept the afternoon sacred for the three- or four-hour walk usually taken alone" (Thoreau 129), and the strength of Thoreau's commitment to preserve his integrity during his walking experience against the encroachments of others is convincingly clear in this Journal entry:

I am invited to take some party of ladies or gentlemen on an excursion,—to walk or sail, or the like,—but by all kinds of evasions I omit it, and am thought to be rude and unaccommodating therefore. They do not consider that the wood-path and the boat are my studio, while I maintain a sacred solitude and cannot admit promiscuous company. . . . They do not think of taking a child away from its school to go a-huckleberrying with them. Why should not I, then, have my school and school hours to be respected? Ask me for a certain number of dollars if you will, but do not ask me for my afternoons. (12:1515; emphasis supplied)

William Hazlitt, a British literary walker, held a view of walking very close to Thoreau's. In his essay, "On Going a Journey," Hazlitt argues that "one of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors nature is company enough for me" (19). He then emphasizes, as did Thoreau, the important role that personal freedom plays in the walking experience, and the threat to that freedom by the presence of others: "The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think,

feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others" (19,20). Like Hazlitt, Thoreau preferred the freedom which solitary rambling afforded. Reginald Cook observes that "usually, when accompanied by a companion on his walk, he felt alienated from direct communion with nature" (Passage 56). For Thoreau, "there was no one whose presence was not, on the whole, less desirable than his absence would have been when" he was engaged in serious sauntering (Krutch, Thoreau 139). Thoreau's Journal reinforces this:

I do not know if I am singular when I say that I believe there is no man with whom I can associate who will not, comparatively speaking, spoil my afternoon. That society or encounter may at last yield a fruit which I am not aware of, but I cannot help suspecting that I should have spent those hours more profitably alone. (10:1233)

Thoreau's preference for solitude during his walking experience was truly transcendental, as Emerson's portrait of the typical transcendentalist reveals:

They are lonely; the spirit of their writing and conversation is lonely; they repel influences; they shun general society; they incline to shut themselves in their chamber in the house, to live in the country rather than in the town, and to find their tasks and amusements in solitude. Society, to be sure, does not like this very well; it saith, Whoso goes to walk alone, accuses the whole world; he declares all to be unfit to be his companions; it is very uncivil, nay insulting; Society will retaliate. Meantime, this retirement does not proceed from any whim on the part of these separators; but if any one will take pains to talk with them, he will find that this part is chosen both from temperament and from principle. ("The Transcendentalist" Works 1:342; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau shares a very similar view in a letter he wrote to his friend, H. G. O. Blake: "It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar, the company grows thinner & thinner till there is none at all" (Correspondence 424).

Thoreau's desire for solitude, however, was not as out of step with his contemporaries as Emerson's description implies. Americans in the mid-nineteenth century were beginning to awaken to the rewards that solitude had to offer:

Although American gregariousness showed itself in the social enjoyments of life, all enjoyments certainly were not social. The pleasures of solitude also made their claim. Whether active or passive, enjoyed indoors or out, they were increasingly important. The American of the 1840's already displayed an ambivalence about society and was beginning to evidence it in his recreations. The joys of being alone, he realized more and more, had their proper place in his world. (Bode, American Life 264)

But whether or not his behavior was typical of others, Thoreau persisted in putting space between himself and others in order to protect his own integrity. Many of his activities, including sauntering, were designed to help him buffer himself from the influence of others. The space which Thoreau sought was mental space, and Thoreau tried to protect his mental space by limiting the physical presence of others which might affect his thinking or hinder in some way the mental sauntering which was so important as he physically hiked about:

There sits one by the shore who wishes to go [boating] with me, but I cannot think of it. I must be fancy-free. There is no such mote in the sky as a man who is not perfectly transparent to you,—who has any opacity. I would rather attend to him earnestly for half an hour, on shore or elsewhere, and then dismiss him. He does not realize that I should by the same act take him into my mind, where there is no room for him, and my bark would surely founder in such a voyage as I was contemplating. I know very well that I should never reach that expansion of the river I have in my mind, with him aboard with his broad terrene qualities. He would sink my bark (not to another sea) and never know it.

Some are so inconsiderate as to ask to walk or sail with me regularly every day—I have known such—and think that, because there will be six inches or a foot between our bodies, we shall not interfere! . . . Suppose a man asks, not you to go with him, but to go with you! Often, I would rather undertake to shoulder a barrel of pork and carry it a mile than take into my

company a man. It would not be so heavy a weight upon my mind. I could put it down and only feel my back ache for it. (Journal 9:1064; emphasis supplied)

The real threat that potential walking companions posed to Thoreau was a psychological one. Unless a companion is perfectly attuned psychologically and spiritually with his fellow walker, he is sure to interfere with the thinking processes and intuitive experiences of his walking companion. George Trevelyan comments on the importance of psychological compatibility among walking companions and the hazards posed by walking companions whose mental outlook proves incompatible with their walking partner:

Silence is not enough, I must have solitude for the perfect walk, which is very different from the Sunday tramp. When you are really walking the presence of a companion, involving such irksome considerations as whether the pace suits him, whether he wishes to go up by the rocks or down by the burn, still more the haunting fear that that [sic] he may begin to talk, disturbs the harmony of body, mind, and soul when they stride along no longer conscious of their separate, jarring entities, made one together in mystic union with the earth, with the hills that still beckon, with the sunset that still shows the tufted moor under foot, with old darkness and its stars that take you to their breast with rapture when the hard ringing of heels proclaims that you have struck the final road.

Yet even in such high hours a companion may be good, if you like him well, if you know that he likes you and the pace, and that he shares your ecstasy of body and mind. (Walking 26,27; emphasis supplied)

Emerson felt that true walkers, the type of individuals who would make good walking companions, were a rare breed with very special characteristics:

Few men know how to take a walk. The qualifications of a [walker] are endurance, plain clothes, old shoes, an eye for Nature, good humor, vast curiosity, good speech, good silence and nothing too much. . . . Good observers have the manners of trees and animals, their patient good sense, and if they add words, 'tis only when words are better than silence. But a loud singer, or a story-teller, or a vain talker profanes the river and the forest, and is nothing like so good company as a dog.

("Country Life" Works 12:142)

Thoreau frequently expressed his frustration with trying to find a walking companion who would truly be a kindred spirit. Like Trevelyan and Emerson, he recognized that true walking involves more than simply physically travelling the same course. Unless the walkers travel the same path in their minds, companionship is detrimental to the walking experience:

Now at least the moon is full, and I walk alone, which is best by night, if not by day always. Your companion must sympathize with the present mood. The conversation must be located where the walkers are, and vary exactly with the scene and events and the contour of the ground. Farewell to those who will talk of nature unnaturally, whose presence is an interruption. I know but one with whom I can walk. I might as well be sitting in a bar-room with them as walk and talk with most. We are never side by side in our thoughts, and we cannot hear each other's silence. Indeed, we cannot be silent. We are forever breaking silence, that is all, and mending nothing. How can they keep together who are going different ways! (Journal 2:220)

In a different Journal entry, Thoreau expresses more vehemently his disdain for those whose manners and spirit made them inappropriate walking companions:

I know of but one or two persons with whom I can afford to walk. With most the walk degenerates into a mere vigorous use of your legs, ludicrously purposeless, while you are discussing some mighty argument, each one having his say, spoiling each other's day, worrying one another with conversation, hustling one another with our conversation. I know of no use in the walking part in this case, except that we may seem to be getting on together toward some goal; but of course we keep our original distance all the way. Jumping every wall and ditch with vigor in the vain hope of shaking your companion off. Trying to kill two birds with one stone, though they sit at opposite points of [the] compass, to see nature and do the honors to one who does not. (11:1388)

Because Thoreau found it so difficult to find a kindred spirit to share his walks with, it should not be surprising that he used walking as a metaphor to express his frustrated desires for companionship in his own

life:

What if we feel a yearning to which no breast answers? I walk alone. My heart is full. Feelings impede the current of my thoughts. I knock on the earth for my friend. I expect to meet him at every turn; but no friend appears, and perhaps none is dreaming of me. I am tired of frivolous society, in which silence is forever the most natural and the best manners. I would fain walk on the deep waters, but my companions will only walk on shallows and puddles. (Journal 7:898)

Walking provided Thoreau with the kind of social experiences which society in general could never offer him. The walk itself offered forms of companionship not found in ordinary social intercourse. A. H. Sidgwick, in "Walking as a Social Form" (Walking Essays 147-178), discusses the social complexities of walking and points out that "it is the walk itself, the conditions under which it is carried on and the state of mind it produces, which is the real and ultimate social form" (Walking Essays 176,177). J. Brooks Atkinson notes that "the success of the journey depends not upon the miles covered nor upon the country seen, but the mood engendered out of doors." Walking companions are not necessary to experience this mood, and they may well be hindrances to it (7). Thus the mood engendered by the walk, and the total experience produced by the walk, help meet the walker's social needs better than human companionship does.

When walking, Thoreau found in nature the kindred spirit that he often failed to discover in his fellow man. Walking in the outdoors soothed him and touched his inner being in a way that the most genuine friendship might. A number of Thoreau's Journal musings reveal how nature functioned as a companion for Thoreau and helped to compensate for his lack of human intercourse. In August of 1854 he noted:

My attic chamber has compelled me to sit below with the

family at evening for a month. I feel the necessity of deepening the stream of my life; I must cultivate privacy. It is very dissipating to be with people too much. As [Channing] says, it takes the edge off a man's thoughts to have been much in society. I cannot spare my moonlight and my mountains for the best of man I am likely to get in exchange.

I am inclined now for a pensive evening walk. (6:770)

In a July 1852 entry he defines even more clearly the attraction away from people and toward nature which guided his walking experience:

By my intimacy with nature I find myself withdrawn from man. My interest in the sun and the moon, in the morning and the evening, compels me to solitude.

The grandest picture in the world is the sunset sky. In your higher moods what man is there to meet? You are of necessity isolated. The mind that perceives clearly any natural beauty is in that instant withdrawn from human society. My desire for society is infinitely increased; my fitness for any actual society is diminished. (4:465; emphasis supplied)

So important were Thoreau's ties to nature that he jealously guarded his relationship with nature against the potential encroachments of human society: "I am sure that if I call for a companion in my walk I have relinquished in my design some closeness of communion with Nature. The walk will surely be more commonplace. The inclination for society indicates a distance from Nature. I do not design so wild and mysterious a walk" (4:466). The tensions between human companionship and intercourse with nature surface in an April, 1852 entry: "If I am too cold for human friendship, I trust I shall not soon be too cold for natural influences. It appears to be a law that you cannot have a deep sympathy with both man and nature. Those qualities which bring you near to the one estrange you from the other" (3:374). Thoreau's rejection of human companionship in favor of a relationship with nature is most clearly expressed in a January, 1857 reflection:

I was describing the other day my success in solitary and distant woodland walking outside the town. I do not go there to

get my dinner, but to get that sustenance which dinners only preserve me to enjoy, without which dinners are a vain repetition. But how little men can help me in this! only by having a kindred experience. . . . I never chanced to meet with any man so cheering and elevating, so infinitely suggestive, as the stillness and solitude of the Well Meadow Field.

Men even think me odd and perverse because I do not prefer their society to this nymph or wood-god rather. But I have tried them. I have sat down with a dozen of them together in a club, and instantly—they did not inspire me. One or another abused our ears with many words and few thoughts which were not theirs. There was very little genuine goodness apparent. We are such hollow pretenders. I lost my time.

But out there! Who shall criticize that companion? It is like the hone to the knife. I bathe in that climate and am cleansed of all social impurities. I become a witness with unprejudiced senses to the order of the universe. There is nothing petty or impertinent, none to say, "See what a great man I am!" There chiefly, and not in the society of wits, am I cognizant of wit. . . . There I get my underpinnings laid and repaired, cemented, levelled. There is my country club.
(9:1106)

Thus, when Thoreau sauntered abroad, he found in nature a form of companionship which met his personal needs better than fellowship with his superficial contemporaries did. Even contact with the most humble flowers and grasses could touch him in a special way and impart to him a feeling of acceptance:

These are the prevailing conspicuous flowers where I walk this afternoon in dry ground. I have sympathy with them because they are despised by the farmer and occupy sterile and neglected soil. . . . I walk encouraged between tufts of purple wood grass, over the sandy fields by the shrub oaks, glad to recognize these simple contemporaries. . . . I did not know by how many friends I was surrounded. . . .

Think what refuge there is for me before August is over, from college commencements and society that isolates me! I can skulk amid the tufts of purple wood grass on the borders of the Great Fields! Wherever I walk this afternoon the purple-fingered grass stands like a guide-board and points my thoughts to more poetic paths than they have lately travelled. (11:1345,1346)

Nature was not the only form of companionship which Thoreau experienced during his rambles. Thoreau also found his imagination and thoughts to be fit companions, and those thoughts and imaginative flights

which his walks initiated became in a sense his special friends. One needs to understand Thoreau's remarkable ability to project himself mentally outside of himself in order to appreciate just how his own thoughts and imaginings could serve as a second self or companion during a walking experience. Thoreau explained in Walden his ability to do this:

With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the drift-wood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I may be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I may not be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you [emphasis supplied]. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. . . .

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. (134,135; emphasis supplied)

In his Journal Thoreau observes, "My thoughts are my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality" (3:328).

Thoreau could carry this notion of the separate life of thoughts to an extreme, equating the echo of his voice with the thoughts of another person. Such was the case during one of his winter walks when, using his voice to echo messages through the woods, he concluded:

It was the memorable event of the day, that echo I heard, not anything my companions said, or the travellers whom I met, or

my thoughts, for they were all mere repetitions or echoes in the worst sense of what I had heard and thought before many times; but this echo was accompanied with novelty, and by its repetition of my voice it did more than double that. It was a profounder Socratic method of suggesting thoughts unutterable to me the speaker. There was one I heartily loved to talk with. Under such favorable auspices I could converse with myself, could reflect; the hour, the atmosphere, and the conformation of the ground permitted it. (4:523)

But despite Thoreau's quest for solitude, despite his efforts to substitute the companionship of nature and of his own thoughts for that of his fellow men, he could not escape his need for ties to people. As has already been noted, Thoreau may have walked away from the city, and away from many of those who wished to walk with him, but he always returned to society and to the fellowship which he needed as much as he needed the contact with nature. As Walter Harding notes, "Although he could not live without nature, ordinarily he used her Anteus-like to return refreshed to man" (Days 329).

Because they refreshed him and strengthened his sense of identity, Thoreau's jaunts nourished his social life, equipping him to deal better with the world of men. He was not as lost in the world of human society as his Journal entries would have us believe. Bronson Alcott shares the following testimony which seems to refute the view that Thoreau shunned close ties to others: "Friendly he is, and holds his friends by bearings as strict in their tenderness and consideration as are the laws of his thinking,—as prompt and kindly equitable,—neighborly always, and as apt for occasions as he is strenuous against meddling with others in things not his" ("The Forester" 445). Samuel Higginson, a younger contemporary of Thoreau's, shares a similar portrait:

It was with joy that we hailed our first approach to this man, and gradually came to know more in regard to his private life.

As our acquaintance grew, we found him to be one of the rarest companions, beneath whose rugged exterior there lay a lively appreciation of all that is vivifying in nature, and a natural yearning toward his fellow-men, together with a kindly sympathy, which was but the basis of his simple philosophy. ("Henry D. Thoreau" 11)

Thoreau's walking experience reveals not only the tensions inherent in his own life between the pull of nature and the pull of society, it also demonstrates his inability to fully resolve the conflicts he experienced between his desire for solitude and his yearning for meaningful human companionship. This conflict provides the focus for an April, 1852 Journal entry:

I have got to that pass with my friend that our words do not pass with each other for what they are worth. We speak in vain; there is none to hear. He finds fault with me that I walk alone, when I pine for want of a companion; that I commit my thoughts to a diary even on my walks; instead of seeking to share them generously with a friend; curses my practice even. Awful as it is to contemplate, I pray that, if I am the cold intellectual skeptic whom he rebukes, his curse may take effect, and wither and dry up those sources of my life, and my journal no longer yield me pleasure nor life. (3:371,372; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau assessed his own sociability more positively than many others have since his day:

I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a bloodsucker for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room, if my business called me thither. (Walden 140)

Even when walking, Thoreau did not completely exclude the possibility of companionship. At times, the idea of a walking companion seemed to appeal to him, as the following Journal musing indicates:

And now, methinks, this wider wood-path is not bad, for it admits of society more conveniently. Two can walk side by side in it in the ruts, aye, and one more in the horse-track. The Indian walked in single file, more solitary,--not side by side, chatting as he went. The woodman's cart and sled make just the

path two walkers want through a wood. (2:258)

Actually, Thoreau's aversion to having a walking companion was not due to any desire on his part to shun company; rather, he had a very difficult time finding a walking partner who would meet the high standard which he set for himself and any who would travel with him. To find someone to saunter with who would not interfere with his walk nor oppress his spirit was a challenging task. John Burroughs, a fellow walker and contemporary of Thoreau, explains the difficulties inherent in selecting a good walking partner:

Every lover of Nature understands Thoreau's aversion to a companion on a walk, except he be a true lover also. It is a rare qualification to be a good walker. We do not go to the woods for society, or to talk politics; and he that would go with me, must leave me to myself, and leave the town behind him. . . . You do not want to be diverted or hindered, but open, like a sponge, yet ready to give or take. (Journals 47)

In addition to the qualms about potential walkers which Burroughs mentions, Thoreau made clear that anyone wishing to walk with him would have to be willing to take a long walk. He had no tolerance for would-be saunterers who were interested only in brief, short rambles:

I do not know how to entertain one who can't take long walks. The first thing that suggests itself is to get a horse to draw them, and that brings us at once into contact with stablers and dirty harness, and I do not get over my ride for a long time. I give up my forenoon to them and get along pretty well, the very elasticity of the air and promise of the day abetting me, but they are as heavy as dumplings by mid-afternoon. If they can't walk, why won't they take an honest nap and let me go in the afternoon? But, come two o'clock, they alarm me by an evident disposition to sit. In the midst of the most glorious Indian-summer afternoon, there they sit, breaking your chairs and wearing out the house, with their backs to the light, taking no note of the lapse of time. (10:1201)

One Concordian who Thoreau did allow to saunter with him testified to Thoreau's lack of tolerance for those who could not handle the rigors of

the walking experience:

He was ready to open that side of himself to any one who w[oul]d pay the price. But that meant, to go w[ith] him in his walk; to walk long & far; to h[a]v[e] wet feet & go so for hours; to pull a boat all day & to come home late at night after many miles. If you w[oul]d do that w[ith] him, he w[oul]d take you w[ith] him. If you flinched at anyth[ing], he had no more use for you. (Burgess, "Notes on Concord People" 188)

Though Thoreau sought walking companions who proved as hardy as himself, his primary concern about a walking partner was that this person be one in mind and spirit with himself. His walking experience was such a private affair that he could not risk sauntering with someone whose personality or outlook might interfere with Thoreau's own thoughts and feelings during the walking experience. Only those who could genuinely understand Thoreau were allowed to associate with him: "I cannot associate with those who do not understand me" (Journal 4:412). In A Week he noted that "if two travellers would go their way harmoniously together, the one must take as true and just a view of things as the other, else their path will not be strewn with roses" (282). Thoreau focused one of his poems on his deeply felt desire to walk with someone of a kindred spirit:

I walk in nature still alone
 And know no one
 Discern no lineament nor feature
 Of any creature.

Though all the firmament
 Is o'er me bent,
 Yet still I miss the grace

Of an intelligent and kindred face.

I still must seek the friend
Who does with nature blend,
Who is the person in her mask,
He is the man I ask.

Who is the expression of her meaning,
Who is the uprightness of her leaning,
Who is the grown child of her weaning

The center of this world,
The face of nature,
The site of human life,
Some sure foundation
And nucleus of a nation—
At least a private station.

We twain would walk together
Through every weather,
And see this aged nature,
Go with a bending stature. (Poems 144)

Thoreau's desire to share his walks with a kindred spirit was very genuine as this excerpt from one of his early essays reveals:

What a difference, whether, in all your walks, you meet only strangers, or in one house is one who knows you, and whom you know. To have a brother or a sister! To have a gold mine on your farm! To find diamonds in the gravel heaps before your

door! How rare these things are! To share the day with you,—to people the earth. Whether to have a god or a goddess for companion in your walks, or to walk alone with hinds and villains and carles. Would not a friend enhance the beauty of the landscape as much as a deer or hare? Everything would acknowledge and serve such a relation; the corn in the field, and the cranberries in the meadow. The flowers would bloom, and the birds sing, with a new impulse. There would be more fair days in the year. ("Love" Early Essays 272,273)

Though Thoreau sought a walking companion as a kindred spirit, he did not look for someone who could not think for himself. Thoreau considered it essential that a good walking companion be someone who maintained his own integrity and did not cater to his walking partner nor to anyone else. The purpose of the walk, after all, was to protect and nurture the private self of each walker. In one Journal observation, Thoreau expressed his delight in "loafers, fishers, and hunters" who he encountered during his walks. What marked them from the others was that they did "not go out of themselves to meet" Thoreau (2:226). Others, who adjusted or altered themselves in an effort to please Thoreau, offended him: "I am bothered to walk with those who wish to keep step with me. It is not necessary to keep step with your companion, as some endeavor to do" (Journal 2:231).

Thoreau expected more from his walking partners than just that they be hardy, of a kindred spirit, and independent by nature. He also insisted that they be able to forsake society during the walking experience. A good walker should be able to reap the full benefits of a walk by emptying himself of all thoughts and associations with the city which he has left behind:

How rarely I meet with a man who can be free, even in thought! We live according to rule. Some men are bedridden; all, world-ridden. I take my neighbor, an intellectual man, out into the woods and invite him to take a new and absolute view of things,

to empty clean out of his thoughts all institutions of men and start again; but he can't do it, he sticks to his traditions and his crotchets. He thinks that governments, colleges, newspapers, etc., are from everlasting to everlasting. (Journal 9:1143)

Since it is easier for common men to forsake society than it is for affluent or important men to do so, Thoreau preferred taking his most serious walks with common men:

I have several friends and acquaintances who are very good companions in the house or for an afternoon walk, but whom I cannot make up my mind to make a longer excursion with; for I discover, all at once, that they are too gentlemanly in manners, dress, and all their habits. I see in my mind's eye that they wear black coats, considerable starched linen, glossy hats and shoes, and it is out of the question. It is a great disadvantage for a traveller to be a gentleman of this kind; he is so ill-treated, only a prey to landlords. It would be too much of a circumstance to enter a strange town or house with such a companion. You could not travel incognito; you might get into the papers. You should travel as a common man. . . . No, you must be a common man, or at least travel as one, and then nobody will know that you are there or have been there. I would not undertake a simple pedestrian excursion with one of these, because to enter a village, or a hotel, or a private house, with such a one, would be too great a circumstance, would create too great a stir. (Journal 9:1152)

Whether they were common or not, Thoreau preferred walking companions who were good listeners: "He was a capital guide in the wood. . . . I do not think he was vain. But he liked to do his thinking out loud, and expected that you should be an auditor rather than a companion" (Hoar "Autobiography" 110). A compatible walking partner would not only be a good listener, but also patient—"I regretted that I had an impatient companion" (Journal 2:157) and morally upright—"I am made somewhat sad this afternoon by the coarseness and vulgarity of my companion" (Journal 3:376).

Despite Thoreau's high standard for a walking companion, and despite his personal need for solitude, the available evidence clearly indicates

that he frequently walked with companions. Thus his retreats from society were not escapes from human fellowship. His walks did not sever his ties to other individuals; rather, they disconnected him from society as a whole so that he could strengthen his own sense of identity and recoup his personal powers before returning to function in society once more. Ellery Channing, Thoreau's most consistent walking companion, claimed that Thoreau had frequent offers by others to accompany him on walks, and that "he usually accepted them" (Poet-Naturalist 119). Walter Harding, more cautious in his estimate of how often Thoreau shared his walking experience with others, notes that Thoreau did allow a few of his close friends to walk with him because he trusted them not to interfere with the private nature of his walking experience (Days 292).

Relatives and close friends comprised one group of people with whom Thoreau frequently sauntered. When Thoreau was younger, his brother John served as his faithful companion during his ramblings (Paul, Shores 104). In an early essay, "Musings," Thoreau reminisced: "In the freshness of the dawn my brother and I were ready to enjoy a stroll to a certain cliff, distant a mile or more, where we were wont to climb to the highest peak. . ." (Early Essays 15). Thoreau's sister, Helen, also provided him with a welcome walking partner as evidenced in the following excerpt from a letter he wrote to her in January 1840: "When Robin Redbreast brings back the springtime, I trust that you will lay your school-duties aside, cast off care, and venture to be gay now and then, roaming with me in the woods, or climbing the Fairhaven cliffs. . ." (Correspondence 37).

Though not a relative, Ellen Sewall, Thoreau's only real romantic interest, also took a number of walks with him, the "accounts of which

she said would fill half a dozen letters" (Harding, Days 95). Other non-relatives also enjoyed a consistent and meaningful relationship with Thoreau during his walks. Foremost among these individuals was William Ellery Channing. Thoreau's Journal and correspondence, as illustrated in the following excerpts, contain numerous references to walks taken with Channing: "Met Channing and walked with him to what we will call Grackle Swamp" (10:1259); "More recently I have taken an interesting walk with Channing about Cape Ann" (Correspondence 521); and "Called to C[hanning] from the outside of his house the other afternoon in the rain. At length he put his head out the attic window, and I inquired if he didn't want to take a walk. . ." (11:1385).

Thoreau's close friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, also took frequent walks with Thoreau (Harding, Days 65). Emerson "celebrated" his woodland walks with Thoreau and counted these excursions a "dear privilege" (E. W. Emerson 108). Paul Williams recounts the scope and significance of these walks in his article, "Emerson Guided: Walks with Thoreau and Channing," published in the Emerson Society Quarterly 35.3 (II Quarter 1964): 66-68. Bronson Alcott, like Emerson, was a close friend and Transcendentalist who accompanied Thoreau on several walks, though Alcott's penchant for philosophical discussion and reflection at times hindered Thoreau's walking experience (Harding, Days 67). Thoreau enjoyed some memorable walks with Alcott, including the exhilarating one described in the following Journal entry which depicts a Platonic meeting of the minds, a bonding of two spirits during the walking experience:

It has occurred to me, while I am thinking with pleasure of our day's intercourse, "Why should I not think aloud to you?" Having each some shingles of thought well dried, we walk and whittle them, trying our knives, and admiring the clear

yellowish grain of the pumpkin pine. We wade so gently and reverently, or we pull together so smoothly, that the fishes of thought are not scared from the stream, but come and go grandly, like yonder clouds that float peacefully through the western sky. When we walk it seems as if the heavens . . . and the earth had met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. I have an ally against the arch-enemy. A blue-robed man dwells under the blue concave. The blue sky is a distant reflection of the azure serenity that looks out from under a human brow. We walk together like the most innocent children. . . . Most with whom I endeavor to talk soon fetch up against some institution or particular way of viewing things, theirs not being a universal view. They will continually bring their own roofs or--what is not much better--their own narrow skylights between us and the sky, when it is the unobstructed heavens I would view. . . . (5:561; emphasis supplied)

Though his family and close friends frequently accompanied him on his rambles, Thoreau also shared his walking experience with less familiar figures. Moncure Conway in his recollection of Thoreau observes, "A day or two later, however, I enjoyed my first walk with Thoreau which was succeeded by many others" ("Thoreau" 39). In a letter to Thoreau, Daniel Ricketson recalled the rambles they had shared together: "I look back with pleasure upon my late visit to Concord. The particular bright spots are my walks with you to Farmer Hosmer's and to Walden Pond, as well as our visit to friend Alcott" (Correspondence 627). In a letter to Daniel Ricketson, Thoreau mentioned, "A young English author, Thomas Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him--therefore excuse this very barren note. . ." (Correspondence 342). Walking was often on Thoreau's mind when he corresponded with his acquaintances, as the following lines from a letter to Jones Very suggest: "I shall improve or take an opportunity to spend a day--or part of a day with you ere long, and I trust that you will be attracted to Concord again, and will find me a better walker than I chanced to be when you were here before." He then adds, "I have often thought of taking a

walk with you in your vicinity" (Correspondence 503).

A gleaning of available material indicates that Thoreau walked with a wide variety of individuals, though he walked regularly with only a few. Journal entries such as the following certainly support such a perspective: "Rice, who walks with me, thinks that the fine early sedge grass would be a capital thing to stuff cushions and beds with. . ." (12:1516); and "5 A.M.—Walk with Blake, Brown, and Rogers to Quinsigamond Pond, carrying our breakfast. . ." (10:1292).

Though he preferred walking alone, it seems clear that Thoreau often walked with others, sharing walking experiences with them while carefully protecting his own private experience from any threatening intrusions. His walks, then, helped him to assert his own individuality against the threatening encroachments of society, collectively, and certain people, individually. But they did not deprive him of the human fellowship which he required as much as he did solitude and a contact with nature.

As has been shown, walking offered Thoreau a way to assert and fulfill his self. Walking away from society helped him preserve and strengthen his individuality, as did following his own path rather than traversing the public roads. Sauntering in nature put him in touch with himself; it stimulated his sense of well-being. Walking also helped Thoreau resolve the tension within him between his ties to nature and his ties to people by helping to connect him with both worlds; his walks carried him away from society, but they also returned him to the city, better equipped to deal with the demands that society made of him. Certainly, his saunterings provided him with complete social satisfaction

as he enjoyed intercourse with nature, his own thoughts, and carefully selected walking companions. Thus, the self, the most important thing to Thoreau, found its fulfillment in the rambles which he took nearly every day of his adult life.

CHAPTER V

SAUNTERING AND THE QUEST FOR VOCATION

Walking served a higher purpose for Thoreau than merely equipping him to assert his self against the influences and encroachments of society. Because of how he went about it, sauntering provided him with a way to realize his personal need for a vocation and for artistic expression. Sauntering appealed to Thoreau's practical and idealistic sides, making possible the kind of personal growth and creative expression which his essential self required. As this chapter will demonstrate, there were several ways that sauntering satisfied Thoreau's quest for a vocation. His sauntering life directly affected his views on the jobs he held like surveying and lecturing, it influenced his adherence to a work ethic which contrasted sharply with that of his contemporaries, and it functioned as an integral part of his writing experience, helping him convert experience into reflection and written observation. Walking helped satisfy Thoreau's strong desire to have a vocation which would cater to his personal needs.

One of the real quandaries which Thoreau faced throughout his adult life was the issue of vocation. Because self-reliance was so important to him, and because he advocated a non-materialistic approach to life, most vocations or jobs seemed unpromising or unfulfilling to Thoreau. Thoreau detested working for others, or for money. He worked when he had to, in order to supply his most basic wants: he taught school, made pencils in his parent's pencil factory, surveyed, lectured, and wrote, but none of these activities fulfilled him in the way that walking did.

Sauntering in nature was the one activity which fulfilled him and provided him with a form of self-employment which superceded the material benefits he gained from his more regular jobs. Rather than hold a regular job, Thoreau devoted the majority of his time to sauntering; thus, sauntering became, in a sense, his vocation, or more accurately, his avocation. That he considered walking his "vocation" seems clear in the following Journal observation: "No doubt my dusty and tawny cowhides surprise the street walkers who wear patent-leather or Congress shoes, but they do not consider how absurd such shoes would be in my vocation, to thread the woods and swamps in" (13:1610; emphasis supplied). Krutch notes that after Thoreau's Walden experience, "traveling in Concord" became his "chief occupation" (Thoreau 127).

Thoreau took walking as seriously as most of his contemporaries took their own vocations, but he did not consider his sauntering as equivalent to everyday work. For Thoreau, walking was something higher and more noble than the mere sustaining of life by a particular wage-earning activity. He shares his feelings about this in A Week when he observes that walking is "the cheapest way to travel, and the way to travel the furthest in the shortest distance" (305). He describes his walking techniques and then adds,

I have travelled thus some hundreds of miles without taking any meal in a house, sleeping on the ground when convenient, and found it cheaper, and in many respects more profitable, than staying at home. So that some have inquired why it would not be best to travel always. But I never thought of travelling simply as a means of getting a livelihood. . . . True and serious travelling is no pastime, but it is as serious as the grave, or any other part of the human journey, and it requires a long probation to be broken into it. (305,306; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau considered sauntering in nature, studying its phenomena, and

cultivating a relationship with it "not an amusement, nor even a serious occupation for his leisure hours, but the work of his life,—a work which he gave himself from year's end to year's end, as faithfully and laboriously, and with as definite a purpose, as any Concord farmer gave himself to his farm" (Torrey, "Attitude" 708).

Channing, in his biography of Thoreau, depicts the serious, work-like nature of Thoreau's walking experience:

He did not walk with any view to health, or exercise, or amusement. . . . No, the walk, with him, was for work; it had a serious purpose; witness the thirty volumes of Journals left by him, and only going back to 1850. As I walk for recreation and variety, after reading, these walks of Thoreau were something aside from my habits; and, unlike my own, had a local aim. . . . The idea he conceived was, that he might, upon a small territory,—such a space as that filled by the town of Concord,—construct a chart or calendar which should chronicle the phenomena of the seasons in their order, and give their general average for the year. This was only one of the various plans he had in view during his walks. . . . (Poet-Naturalist 67; emphasis supplied)

Canby, another Thoreau biographer, presents a similar picture of the intense, vocational nature of Thoreau's walks: "These daily excursions were business for him, and though he heartily enjoyed them, he was at work every instant" (Thoreau 311).

Thoreau took his walking experience so seriously, not because it provided him with any monetary or material rewards in the way that a typical vocation would, but because it met the needs of his soul; it fulfilled the self. According to Sherman Paul, Thoreau found "the heroism of a life in nature . . . essentially private; for [him] its end was individual fulfillment" (Shores 124). Lebeaux probes more deeply into the psychological dimensions of Thoreau's sauntering experience. He maintains that rambling served Thoreau as "a kind of daily moratorium

ritual, a way to create and maintain a time, space, and place for expansion." Walking provided Thoreau with "a time as well as a space which he could call his own." Thoreau's psyche required that he have plenty of time to himself, time for personal reflection and discovery. Therefore, "the afternoon walk was literally an act of self-preservation" (Seasons 129).

Thoreau strongly asserted that the most important consideration in the choice of a vocation was how a particular vocation would affect one's self. Any activity which fulfilled the self he esteemed; any activity which did not directly touch the life of the self or the soul he disdained. He discusses his philosophy in a March, 1853 Journal entry: "It is essential that a man confine himself to pursuits--a scholar, for instance, to studies--which lie next to and conduce his life, which do not go against the grain, either of his will or his imagination" (5:532). Later, in the same year, Thoreau queried: "What other liberty is there worth having, if we have not freedom and peace in our minds,--if our inmost and most private man is but a sour and turbid pool?" (Journal 5:641). In Wordsworthian fashion, he responded to his own question by lamenting: "Ah! the world is too much with us, and our whole soul is stained by what it works in, like the dyer's hand. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread" (5:642; emphasis supplied).

Thoreau valued his personal freedom which he considered necessary for the fulfillment of the self. Walking offered him the freedom he needed to pursue the concerns of the self, and it avoided the pitfalls of other vocations which threatened one's personal freedom: "As I preferred some

things to others, and especially valued my freedom, as I could fare hard and yet succeed well, I did not wish to spend my time in earning rich carpets or other fine furniture, or delicate cookery, or a house in the Grecian or the Gothic style just yet" (Walden 70). Once, when walking down a country road, Thoreau met a fellow saunterer, an old man, who seemed to epitomize in his demeanor the type of vocational experience which Thoreau most desired. This aging citizen of Concord appeared to be simply out walking in nature, discovering what he could as he rambled about. Thoreau's Journal reveals the pleasure he derived from considering this man's approach to "vocation": "I was glad of an occasion to suspect that this afternoon he had not been at 'work' but living somewhat after my own fashion [He] had been out to see what nature had for him, and now was hastening home to a burrow he knew, where he could warm his old feet" (10:1210). The man like this elderly saunterer who could follow his good genius, walking about the countryside as he wished, ignoring societal expectations about regular work hours and wage-earning ability, was the man Thoreau wished to be. He sought a vocation which freed him to pursue his various desires wherever and whenever he wished. Only walking could do this for him. In his Journal he describes a particular walk he took at sunset, and, contrasting his experience with those of the villagers who had left their places of work to go home, and who, consequently, had missed the glory of the sunset which he had witnessed during his walk, he muses:

Who is weary? Why do we cease work and go to bed? Who taught men thus to spend their nights and days? Yet I must confess that I am surprised when I find that particular wise and independent persons conform so far as regularly to go to bed and get up about the same time with their neighbors. (10:1226)

Thoreau did not wish to sacrifice his personal freedom to a vocation which would restrict the times that he could saunter into nature; thus, he avoided all permanent ties to any activity which confined his movements. Only walking provided him with a consistent activity which freed him to pursue the desires of the self.

The closest Thoreau came to being a respectable laborer, from his contemporaries' point of view, was when he undertook the job of surveyor (Krutch, Thoreau 126). Surveying, which involved a great deal of walking, and which usually placed him in nature, offered him a compromise vocation. Though it did not entirely satisfy him, surveying allowed him to earn enough money to maintain his simple existence and to range outside the stifling environment of the city. E. W. Emerson considered surveying Thoreau's "leading profession" (40), and Garber notes how surveying placed Thoreau on the border between the city and nature, providing him with an unwanted material tie to society and a welcome connection with nature:

As a surveyor it was Thoreau's business to walk around perimeters, to perambulate the boundaries of clearings, and, at times, to delineate the contours of those boundaries. His talents as a surveyor, the commercial activity by which he lived and protected his genius, put him out at the line where the clearing ended. He was an explorer on the edge, the civil man performing a civilizing act, the agent of the Concord farmers and those farmers who wanted to pin down the exact location of the fields they had won from the bogs. Since he worked for those people only because he wanted to support his other perambulations, Thoreau occasionally complained about the need to walk around the edges of Concord simply for self-support. (Imagination 14; emphasis supplied)

Despite Thoreau's resentment that material necessities forced him to work for others, and that surveying limited his personal freedom to saunter for his own purposes, this occupation did offer him important

advantages over other potential forms of employment. Canby notes that surveying "was an outdoor job, with amenities, such as the opportunity to note the blooming time of flowers, to flush rare birds, and to check the habits of the trees, while earning a living" (Thoreau 302). Though he usually surveyed "more than thirty days a year," he had the rest of the year to pursue his own goals (303). Surveying, then, offered Thoreau a way to earn money and sustain himself while freeing many of his days for sauntering and other desirable pursuits.

Though surveying restricted the way that he found things in nature, the discoveries Thoreau did make while surveying helped compensate for the fact that he was working for someone else and being denied those experiences provided by sauntering which so readily fulfilled him. In a December, 1857 Journal entry, Thoreau describes one discovery he made while surveying, and he reflects: "Even this is a cheering and compensating discovery in my otherwise barren work. I get thus a few positive values, answering to the bread and cheese which make my dinner. I owe thus to my weeks at surveying a few such slight but positive discoveries" (10:1237). Thus surveying offered certain advantages, however slight Thoreau might have considered them: "In land-surveying Thoreau was merely making that his business which had been his pleasure. It kept him in the pastures, woods, and fields, and exercised that mechanical skill which, like Alcott, he had by nature and training, while it was denied to other Concord authors" (Sanborn, Life 333).

The fact remains, however, that regardless of what occupation Thoreau would have attempted, he would have been dissatisfied because any vocation, even surveying, sacrificed his personal freedom and tied him to

the material world which he sought to retreat from during his saunterings. Surveying was a necessary evil which made possible some time, but never enough time, for sauntering and those other activities which Thoreau valued most highly:

He made his living as a surveyor, part of the machinery, that is, for the definition and exchange of property rights and an essential member of a community devoted to acquisition. But denying this aim and practicing voluntary poverty, he strove . . . to devote the greater part of his time to the activities whose end product was his essays. (Stoller, "Simplicity" 45)

Any suggestion of working for a living was enough to taint Thoreau's experience. Whether it involved surveying, writing, lecturing, or teaching, the fact that he did these activities to earn money degraded him and made him yearn for activities like sauntering which offered him non-materialistic and fulfilling experiences. The world of work cast a pall over Thoreau like the black veil which hung over the minister's face in Hawthorne's story, "The Minister's Black Veil":

I thought to walk this forenoon instead of this afternoon, for I have not been in the fields and woods much of late except when surveying, but the least affair of that kind is as if you had [a] black veil drawn over your face which shut out nature, as that eccentric and melancholy minister whom I have heard of. It may be the fairest day in all the year and you shall not know it. One little chore to do, one little commission to fulfill, one message to carry, would spoil heaven itself. Talk about a lover being engaged! He is the only man in all the world who is free. And all you get is your dollars. (Journal 2:226)

Thoreau's saunterings functioned as welcome retreats from society, while the practical world of work presented unwelcome withdrawals from the world of nature which he sought during his walks:

After spending four or five days surveying and drawing a plan incessantly, I especially feel the necessity of putting myself in communication with nature again, to recover my tone, to withdraw out of the wearying and unprofitable world of affairs. The things I have been doing have but a fleeting and accidental

importance, however much men are immersed in them, and yield very little valuable fruit. I would fain have been wading through the woods and fields and conversing with the sane snow. Having waded in the very shallowest stream of time, I would now bathe my temples in eternity. I wish again to participate in the serenity of nature, to share the happiness of the river and the woods. I thus from time to time break off my connection with eternal truths and go with the shallow stream of human affairs, grinding at the mill of the Philistines; but when my task is done, with never-failing confidence I devote myself to the infinite again. It would be sweet to deal with men more, I can imagine, but where dwell they? Not in the fields which I traverse. (Journal 9:1103)

In an earlier Journal entry Thoreau also confesses his desire to escape the shallow, materialistic work world represented by surveying and to saunter freely into the world of nature which so refreshingly fulfilled his self:

I have been surveying for twenty or thirty days, living coarsely . . .—indeed, leading a quite trivial life; and to-night, for the first time, had made a fire in my chamber and endeavored to return to myself. I wished to ally myself to the powers that rule the universe. I wished to dive into some deep stream of thoughtful and devoted life, which meandered through retired and fertile meadows far from towns. I wished to do again, or for once, things quite congenial to my highest inmost and most sacred nature, to lurk in crystalline thought like the trout under verdurous banks, where stray mankind should only see my bubble come to the surface. I wished to live, ah! as far away as a man can think. I wished for leisure and quiet to let my life flow in its proper channels, with its proper currents; when I might not waste the days, might establish daily prayer and thanksgiving in my family; might do my own work and not the work of Concord and Carlisle, which would yield me better than money. (Journal 3:307,308; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau tried lecturing as a way to combine his interests with a way to support himself, but this also proved a disappointing experience. He wanted to lecture, but he found far more opportunities to survey: "I have offered myself much more earnestly as a lecturer than a surveyor. Yet I do not get any employment as a lecturer; was not invited to lecture once last winter, and only once (without pay) this winter. But I can get

surveying enough. . ." (Journal 6:671). In time, Thoreau had the opportunity to give a number of lectures, talks which often dealt with subjects dear to his heart. His essay "Walking" was born from two lectures which he presented, one dealing with the idea of sauntering and one touching on the qualities of the wild which so attracted him. But even lecturing on these important themes did little to satisfy him since the lecturing experience was engaged in for monetary gain. In a letter to his friend, Daniel Ricketson, Thoreau confessed his frustration at trying to live a divided life, that is, trying to earn a living while wanting to live the kind of life which would deny material motivation for one's actions. He had difficulty resolving such a divided way of life—the world of work and the world of sauntering in nature: "I should like right well to see your ponds, but that is hardly to be thought of at present. I fear that it is impossible for me to combine such things with the business of lecturing. You cannot serve God and Mammon" (Correspondence 356). Thoreau's attitude makes clear that any vocational activity, including surveying and lecturing, which was done for material gain, diminished his sense of self and detracted from the fulfillment which he experienced during his saunterings.

Sauntering in nature was the only activity which he engaged in which truly fulfilled his self and met his personal needs. This activity was the only one which avoided all corrupting ties to the material world. In short, walking in nature was the only "work" which Thoreau consistently committed himself to that fulfilled and rewarded him. For this work, he earned a higher wage than the dollars which his contemporaries labored for.

Sauntering in nature was Thoreau's way of attempting to avoid the curse of work which God afflicted on Adam in the Garden of Eden. Because of his sin, Adam was banished from the Garden and informed that he and all future men would have to subsist by the sweat of their brows (Genesis 3:17-19). Thoreau's saunterings had the effect of returning him to the innocent world of the garden which knew only the honest sweat drawn from a life in nature, not the corrupted sweat of the world of work. Thoreau fled once more to the world of the garden to enjoy the innocence and beauty which the world of work in the city had nearly eclipsed. In an early essay, "Commercial Spirit," Thoreau expresses his desire to escape the curse of work by sauntering daily in nature, enjoying the sabbath experience of a life without toil and care:

This curious world which we inhabit is more wonderful than it is convenient, more beautiful than it is useful--it is more to be admired and enjoyed than, than used. The order of things should be somewhat reversed,—the seventh should be man's day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow, and the other six his sabbath of the affections and the soul, in which to range this wide-spread garden, and drink in the soft influences and sublime revelations of Nature. (Early Essays 117)

For Thoreau, a man's life was not to be measured by his means to get a living, but rather by the life he lived. "To get a living without at the same time living—to feed body without at the same time feeding soul—was to him extremely wasteful and abhorrent" (Dabbs 671). He considered his vocation, not those jobs he held for pay, but those activities like sauntering which made his life a pastime and a pleasure. This is quite clear in Walden when Thoreau, after leaving the cabin of an impoverished Irishman, found himself first questioning, and then, reaffirming his commitment to a life of freely sauntering in nature:

As I was leaving the Irishman's roof after the rain, bending my

steps again to the pond, my haste to catch pickerel, wading in retired meadows, in sloughs and bog-holes, in forlorn and savage places, appeared for an instant trivial to me who had been sent to school and college; but as I ran down the hill toward the reddening west, with the rainbow over my shoulder, and some faint tinkling sounds borne to my ear through the cleansed air, from I know not what quarter, my Good Genius seemed to say,—Go fish and hunt far and wide day by day,—farther and wider,—and rest thee by many brooks and hearth-sides without misgiving. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures. Let the noon find thee by other lakes, and the night overtake thee every where at home. There are no larger fields than these, no worthier games than may here be played. Grow wild according to thy nature, like these sedges and brakes, which will never become English hay. . . . Let not to get a living be thy trade, but thy sport. Enjoy the land, but own it not. Through want of enterprise and faith men are where they are, buying and selling, and spending their lives like serfs. (207,208; emphasis supplied)

To work in the garden, to live a life in nature, not toiling for materialistic ends, but sauntering at the bidding of his "Good Genius" constituted Thoreau's ideal for existence. Thoreau enjoyed hard work; strenuous labor did not bother him in the least. But he resented working hard for someone else; he detested having to earn money when he felt that life had so many better things to offer him. In Walden he explains the secret of his trade—his life sauntering in nature. He discusses the contrast between his rich life spent outdoors and the impoverished, materialistic city life which his contemporaries experienced:

In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. . . .

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt, many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. . . .

So many autumn, aye, and winter days, spent outside the town,

trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear and carry it express! I well-nigh sunk all my capital in it, and lost my own breath into the bargain, running in the face of it. . . .

For a long time I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never yet seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains. However, in this case my pains were their own reward.

For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow storms and rain storms, and did my duty faithfully; surveyor, if not of highways, then of forest paths and all across-lots routes, keeping them open, and ravines bridged and passable to all seasons, where the public heel had testified to their utility. (17,18; emphasis supplied)

At the end of this particular section of Walden, Thoreau concludes: "The life which men praise and regard as successful is but one kind. Why should we exaggerate any one kind at the expense of the others?" (19).

Thus, Thoreau favored any vocation or activity which placed man in nature and which drew him away from the materialistic, money-conscious society found in the city:

How much more respectable also is the life of the solitary pioneer or settler in these, or any woods,—having real difficulties, not of his own creation, drawing his subsistence directly from nature,—than that of the helpless multitudes in the towns who depend on gratifying the extremely artificial wants of society and are thrown out of employment by hard times! (The Maine Woods 244)

Concentrating on work, even outdoor work, rather than giving oneself to the glories of a day, seemed unforgivable to Thoreau: "The mass of mankind, who live in houses or shops, or are bent upon their labor out of doors, know nothing of the beautiful days which are passing about them. Is not such a day worthy of a hymn?" (Journal 5:614). Thoreau coveted his life spent sauntering in nature, and he expressed in his Journal his reticence to give up such a life for more practical ventures:

Thinking this afternoon of the prospect of my writing lectures and going abroad to read them the next winter, I realized how incomparably great the advantages of obscurity and poverty which

I have enjoyed so long (and may still perhaps enjoy). I thought with what more than princely, with what poetical, leisure I had spent my years hitherto, without care or engagement, fancy-free. I have given myself up to nature; I have lived so many springs and summers and autumns and winters as if I had nothing else to do but live them, and imbibe whatever nutriment they had for me. . . . Ah, how I have thriven on solitude and poverty! I cannot overstate this advantage. I do not see how I could have enjoyed it, if the public had been expecting as much of me as there is danger now that they will. If I go abroad lecturing, how shall I ever recover the lost winter? (7:806).

The contrast between his sauntering life in nature and the everyday work world which he was sometimes forced to participate in the focus of a December, 1854 Journal reflection:

Winter has come unnoticed by me, I have been so busy writing. This is the life most lead in respect to Nature. How different from my habitual one! It is hasty, coarse, and trivial, as if you were a spindle in a factory. The other is leisurely, fine, and glorious, like a flower. In the first case you are merely getting your living; in the second you are living as you go along. . . . (7:814; emphasis supplied)

The same sentiment is expressed in an earlier Journal commentary in which Thoreau responds to the situation of a local Concordian whose business had failed, and who, consequently, had turned to fishing as a way to escape his monetary troubles:

See B_____ a-fishing notwithstanding the wind. A man runs down, fails, loses self-respect, and goes a-fishing, though he were never seen on the river before. Yet methinks his "misfortune" is good for him, and he is the more mellow and humane. Perhaps he begins to perceive more clearly that the object of life is something else than acquiring property, and he really stands in a truer relation to his fellow-men than when he commanded a false respect of them. There he stands at length, perchance better employed than ever, holding communion with nature and himself and coming to understand his real position and relation to men in this world. It is better than a poor debtors' prison, better than most successful money-getting. (11:1363)

Thoreau applied this same outlook to his saunterings. The dividends his walks yielded in terms of discoveries and personal experiences easily

surpassed any material gain he might have reaped by using his walking time for wage-earning activities.

Few men of Thoreau's own day appreciated his perspective. The materialistic bent of Concord society made Thoreau's quest for a non-materialistic vocation a difficult and unpopular one. Canby claims that Thoreau "was perhaps the best of many American examples of the creative artist and thinker in search of a career in a country and an era dominantly materialistic in its estimate of success and its offer of a livelihood" (Thoreau xvii). Many artists of Thoreau's time, as Richardson Wright notes, experienced rejection by society and resorted to walking or travelling to make their art possible. In fact, the less accepted the artist, the more likely that he would be a walker (Hawkers and Walkers 129). This was certainly the case with Thoreau whose rejection by society led him to sauntering away from it.

Thoreau defended a naturalist vocation against the prevailing sentiment of his time that a life devoted to studying nature was wasteful. He grew up in a New England society which was "founded on the Puritan ethic, a society that had never admired the leisured style of the Anglican parson-naturalist nor seen any virtue in sauntering through grassy pastures or pine woods" (Worster, Nature's Economy 62). But Thoreau had little tolerance for this viewpoint. From Thoreau's perspective, a life spent sauntering in nature was the most productive and fulfilling life. Why would one shun such a life in order to demean himself by working in the accepted way to earn a living? This was the question he posed in his essay, "Huckleberries," applying it to those English naturalists who apologized for their work in nature:

I have observed that many English naturalists have a pitiful habit of speaking of their proper pursuit as a sort of trifling or waste of time—a mere interruption to more important employments and "severer studies"—for which they must ask pardon of the reader. As if they would have you believe that all the rest of their lives was consecrated to some truly great and serious enterprise. But it happens that we never hear more of this, as we certainly should, if it were only some great public or philanthropic service, and therefore conclude that they have been engaged in the heroic and magnanimous enterprise of feeding, clothing, housing and warming themselves and their dependents, the chief value of all which was that it enabled them to pursue just these studies of which they speak so slightly. The "severer study" they refer to was keeping their accounts. Comparatively speaking—what they call their graver pursuits and severer studies was the real trifling and misspense of life—and were they such fools as not to know it? (Huckleberries 4)

One can see how Thoreau's saunterings put him at odds with society. His walks went directly counter to the Concord work ethic which demanded more practical and materially profitable results than his saunterings provided. Still, he doggedly walked in nature from day to day, as defiant of the work ethic his contemporaries held as he was of most of their other cherished attitudes:

For Thoreau, who found his ease not with others of his kind but within the turrets of pine trees and the mirrors of rivers, wandering was a necessity. Nevermind the Concord work-ethic world judged him irresponsible. He fell into a pattern of wandering that heightened his capacity to perceive, and led directly to his development as a writer. (Zwinger 2)

In effect, Thoreau took that aspect of labor which disturbed Adam Smith—the idea of sauntering from one job to another rather than applying oneself to a single job—and he converted it into a lifestyle which transformed "sauntering into the highest, noblest, form of human endeavor" (Richardson, Thoreau 237).

Thoreau fiercely defended his sauntering life against the charges of others that he was a loafer and unproductive member of society. In "Life

Without Principle" he adamantly expresses his sense of the emptiness and futility of a life of commercial labor when contrasted with the fulfillment and rewards of the sauntering life:

Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives.

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awaked almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. . . . I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business. . . .

If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down! . . .

The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money merely [Thoreau's italics] is to have been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. . . .

Perhaps I am more than usually jealous with respect to my freedom. I feel that my connection with and obligation to society are still very slight and transient. . . . If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure, that, for me, there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting. . . . (Reform Papers 158-160; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau discovered in sauntering the one activity with no commercial ties which brought more than merely material rewards from the endeavor. All other forms of work disappointed him; only the natural, primitive act of walking in nature from day to day could truly fulfill him:

I hate the present modes of living and getting a living. Farming and shopkeeping and working at a trade or profession are all odious to me. I should relish getting my living in a simple, primitive fashion. The life which society proposes to me to live is so artificial and complex--bolstered up on many weak supports, and sure to topple at last--that no man surely can ever be inspired to live it. . . . (Journal 8:932)

Walking was also the only activity which allowed Thoreau to follow his good genius, to be about his own business rather than someone else's business. This, too, was very important to him:

If you would really take a position outside the street and daily life of men, you must have deliberately planned your course, you must have business which is not your neighbors' business, which they cannot understand. . . . You will spend this afternoon in setting up your neighbor's stove, and be paid for it; I will spend it in gathering the few berries of the Vaccinium Oxycoccus which Nature produces here, before it is too late, and be paid for it also after another fashion. I have always reaped unexpected and incalculable advantages from carrying out at last, however tardily, any little enterprise which my genius suggested to me long ago as a thing to be done,—some step to be taken, however slight, out of the usual course. . . .

Our employment generally is tinkering, mending the old worn-out teapot of society. Our stock and trade is solder. Better for me, says my genius, to go cranberrying this afternoon . . . in Gowing's Swamp, to get but a pocketful and learn its peculiar flavor, aye, and the flavor of Gowing's Swamp and of life in New England, than to go consul to Liverpool and get I don't know how many thousand dollars for it, with no such flavor. Many of our days should be spent, not in vain expectations and lying on our oars, but in carrying out deliberately and faithfully the hundred little purposes which every man's genius must have suggested to him. (Journal 9:1061)

Sherman Paul notes that "the point at which a society bears down on the individual is in the choice of vocation: here is the battlefield of values and the gamble for rewards. Thoreau's lifelong postponing of a recognized vocation was his choice" (Shores 21). What Thoreau sought, and what he found in walking in nature, was his "own self-fulfillment" (19). Sauntering, guided by his own good genius, offered him "a life given to adventure, to joy, to experience and being—to the quality of life. Here is a success not of prudence but of spirit, an inner success of consciousness and personality, a success of self" (20). It was this quest for the "success of self" which kept Thoreau from choosing a regular profession in order to achieve public success. R. W. Emerson

asserts that Thoreau "declined to give up his larger ambition of knowledge and action for any narrow craft or profession, aiming at a much more comprehensive calling, the art of living well" ("Thoreau" 23). To satisfy the self, to live well rather than to live comfortably, these were the aims of Thoreau's sauntering experience, but they were also the aspects of his walks which most confused and dismayed his contemporaries.

Thoreau's neighbors generally misunderstood his walks, as they did the philosophical and transcendental ideas which formed the foundation of his walking experience. So private and so non-conformist in nature were Thoreau's rambles, that neighbors or strangers alike had trouble understanding why he spent so much time walking in nature: "I see that my neighbors look with compassion on me, that they think it is a mean and unfortunate destiny which makes me to walk these fields and woods so much and sail on this river alone. But so long as I find here the only real elysium, I cannot hesitate in my choice" (Journal 9:1082). Even Thoreau's Aunt Maria protested, "'I wish [he] could find something better to do than walking off every now and then'" (Harding, Days 234). Typical of how his contemporaries viewed his saunterings is this statement made by Frank Pierce, "'He was a queer kind of a duck. Always used to wear a gray shirt and tramp through the woods every day" (Whitcomb, "The Thoreau 'Country'" 154). When Pierce tried to guess why Thoreau walked so much, he concluded that Thoreau did it for his health (Thomas, "Notes of a Conversation" 192), a conclusion which missed the mark by a considerable distance. Most people who encountered Thoreau on his walks failed to understand the purpose of his rambles. One Staten Island resident concluded that Thoreau was walking about the island for the sake of land

speculation. He could not be convinced that Thoreau was doing so much walking with no commercial purpose in mind. In fact, he tried to hire Thoreau to help him sell his farm (Journal 12:1460).

Given the commercially-oriented society of Thoreau's day, considering him a land speculator was a compliment to him, albeit an unwelcome one. Most contemporaries assumed, however, that because he was walking, Thoreau belonged to some class of undesirable persons. Some were quick to label him as a peddler (Harding, Days 233) or a tinker (Harding, Days 271,272). Others drew more radical conclusions. For example, when Thoreau and Channing sauntered on Cape Cod in June of 1850, a local policeman and some of the local residents suspected them of being bank robbers because a bank was robbed a few days after their passing through the area (Harding, Days 273; Cape Cod 176,177). Thoreau responded to this in good humor: "But the only bank that we pried into was the great Cape Cod sand-bank, and we robbed it only of an old French crown piece, some shells and pebbles, and the materials of this story" (Cape Cod 177). Thoreau certainly needed a sense of humor to deal with the conclusions others drew about his walks. When one farmer spotted Thoreau standing for an extended period of time in a pool of water, he decided that Thoreau was the farmer's own father who had been "drinking some of Pat Haggerty's rum, and had lost his way home." When the farmer went to help his drunk father out, he discovered to his chagrin that his father was elsewhere and Thoreau was simply out on one of his walks examining nature in typical but misunderstood fashion (Journal 10:1279).

For the most part, others judged Thoreau's walking experience rather harshly, considering him an idler or a loafer because they could not

imagine anything productive about the walks which he took. Krutch points out that Thoreau learned from a "post-office loafer . . . that he, Emerson, Channing, and others were known in mild derision as 'the walkers'" (Thoreau 126). According to Reginald Cook,

If a man like Thoreau chose to devote his time and energy to interests which yielded no actual pecuniary profits, public opinion, or what he termed so aptly "the police of meaningless labor," accused him of squandering time. Because Thoreau had no cash to show for his walking and contemplation and recording of notes in private journals, his behavior was regarded with some disapprobation. Because he refused to capitulate to conventional standards, he was considered an idler. The man who walked in the woods for love of them was called a loafer, while the one who cut down forests was considered industrious and enterprising. (Passage 105)

E. W. Emerson defines the negative viewpoint of Thoreau's walks held by several of Thoreau's neighbors: "This is the principal charge made against him in his own neighborhood. Many solid practical citizens . . . asserted that he neglected a good business, which he might have worked with profit for his family and himself, to idle in the woods, and this cannot be forgiven" (31,32).

Because his walking experience was so misunderstood, Thoreau's friends, and even later critics, tended to judge his whole life a failure. They concluded, like Emerson, that "he had no ambition," and that his only real achievement was to be "the captain of a huckleberry party" (R. W. Emerson, "Thoreau" 39). Some felt, like Robert Louis Stevenson, that Thoreau approached life with a "womanish solicitude," that his seeming unmanliness arose from his fear of contact with human society. Thus, "in one word, Thoreau was a skulker" (Stevenson, "Thoreau" 60,61). James Russell Lowell shared a similar view, accusing Thoreau of being too provincial and too unnatural in his seeming

rejection of civilization in favor of walking in the woods: "We do not believe that the way to a true cosmopolitanism carries one into the woods or the society of musquashes. Perhaps the narrowest provincialism is that of Self" ("Thoreau" 49).

Certainly Lowell was right to comment on Thoreau's obsession with the self, for the self was the focus of Thoreau's saunterings. Thoreau cared very little what his contemporaries thought about him, but he cared very much about his own needs and aspirations. His walks, so misunderstood by others, were designed to meet the needs of the self, including the need for self-expression. Thoreau was a true artist, with an artistic temperament, and he felt a genuine need to express himself in artistic form. Writing, much more than lecturing or conversing, provided Thoreau with an effective form of self-expression, and he used his walking experience to give shape and meaning to his writings. In the act of writing, as with surveying, Thoreau came close to experiencing what his contemporaries would consider a worthwhile pursuit, but, ironically, the writing that he did was inseparably linked with those walks he took which his neighbors seemed to disapprove of so strongly.

What Thoreau did was to combine walking and writing into a hybrid vocation which uniquely matched his own needs. According to Jim Vickery, "Thoreau, the non-conformist, lecturer, surveyor, reformer, and writer, was also a fanatic walker. He combined writing and walking into a career suited, perhaps, more to himself than to anyone else" ("The Walking Life" 64). Thoreau's need to walk in nature was paralleled by his need to write about his walks in nature. As an artist, he wanted to convert his sauntering experiences into written form in such a way that

they might apply meaningfully and universally to both himself and to readers. Because of his desire to clarify the meaning and significance of his walks for himself and for others by writing about them, no walk was complete for Thoreau until he wrote about it. The capstone of his walking experience was a written account of it.

Writing, current composition theorists inform us, is an act of discovery. When we write, we discover our true feelings and thoughts about the writing subject. This was certainly the case with Thoreau who knew that the discovery process of his walks was incomplete until he had a chance to write about his walks and, in doing so, to milk the real significance out of them. The reflective nature of the writing process allowed Thoreau to glean additional nuggets from his walking experience, making his saunterings more fulfilling to himself and, because they were presented reflectively in written form, more meaningful to others. Thoreau's advice to his friend H. G. O. Blake concerning how to write about a mountain climb which Blake had undertaken reveals his attitude about the important role that writing plays in capping the walking experience:

Let me suggest a theme for you: to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you,—returning to this essay again and again, until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Give this good reason to yourself for having gone over the mountains, for mankind is ever going over a mountain. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again, especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short. It did not take very long to get over the mountain, you thought; but have you got over it indeed? If you have been to the top of Mount Washington, let me ask, what did you find there? That is the way they prove witnesses, you know. Going up there and being

blown on is nothing. We never do much climbing while we are there, but we eat our luncheon, etc., very much as at home. It is after we get home that we really go over the mountain, if ever. What did the mountain say? What did the mountain do? (Correspondence 498; emphasis supplied)

Thoreau's advice to his friend demonstrates his theory that the walk was not a complete experience until its significance could be discovered through writing about it--the saunterer must cross the mountain with his pen as well as with his feet before he can consider his journey complete. Thoreau's walks, then, ended where they began--at home. According to Vickery, "Inevitably, when walking, Henry . . . ended up where he began: his desk. In the field he had penciled quick notes; at home he honed them, milked them of nutrients, making cream with the results" (Vickery 64). His walks were not complete until he was home once more, writing about them.

The very act of walking, as Thoreau was well aware, improves one's ability to write well; the physical movement which walking entails stimulates not only the blood's circulation, but also one's thoughts and feelings. Thoreau found it necessary to walk, to move, in order to write:

How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live! Methinks that the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow, as if I had given vent to the stream at the lower end and consequently new fountains flowed into it at the upper. A thousand rills which have their rise in the sources of thought burst forth and fertilize my brain. You need to increase the draught below, as the owners of meadows on Concord River say of the Billeria Dam. Only while we are in action is the circulation perfect. The writing which consists with habitual sitting is mechanical, wooden, dull to read. (Journal 2:245)

Thoreau could not produce the kind of prose he aimed at unless his legs had been in motion, and his thoughts free and flowing. Ralph Waldo

Emerson, Thoreau's good friend and mentor, stated that Thoreau depended in his writing experience on "every stride his legs made. The length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing. If shut up in the house, he did not write at all" ("Thoreau" 28). As Stevenson observes, "exercise and composition were . . . intimately connected" for Thoreau ("Thoreau" 70).

Most writers have been aware, as Thoreau was, of the integral relationship between physical activity and good writing. Like Thoreau, numerous authors have walked in order to lubricate their thinking processes and free those thoughts trapped in their subconscious minds which, when expressed, create the most telling effect or make the most profound impression on the reader. According to Sussman and Goode, "When we walk, the natural, rhythmic, muscular action takes over the body, and the mind can fly free, unhampered" (Magic 100). Thoreau's walking/writing experience was soundly grounded in a cooperative adventure of mind and body working harmoniously together to produce the most meaningful experience:

We cannot write well or truly but what we write with gusto. The body, the senses, must conspire with the mind. Expression is the act of the whole man, that our speech may be vascular. The intellect is powerless to express thought without the aid of the heart and liver and of every member. Often I feel that my head stands out too dry, when it should be immersed. A writer, a man writing, is the scribe of all nature; he is the corn and the grass and the atmosphere writing. (Journal 2:254)

With this kind of cooperative activity between mind and body, Thoreau was able to enter a special psychological state during his saunterings which resulted in the mental discoveries which fill the pages of his writing. His sauntering induced his subconscious mind to release his thoughts, the result of free-play between his body, his mind, and the

environment. According to Zwinger, the mental state which Thoreau would often enter we know today as the Alpha state--a state where the saunterer experiences "a heightened awareness and sensitivity, an increased intellectual ability and alertness, yet with a feeling of relaxation and ease, an effortless flowing of creativity, and a sense of remoteness from the everyday world." When Thoreau sauntered,

he entered his own Alpha state. In other words, when Thoreau hit his stride as a wanderer, he hit his stride as a writer. He must have learned early on, of the psychological beneficence of wandering, that when his eye was busy, his mind was free to play with new connections and perceptions. ("The Quintessential Wanderer" 2)

Thoreau's Journal record of one particular walk describes what for him was a typical Alpha state experience:

You must walk so gently as to hear the finest sounds, the faculties being in repose. Your mind must not perspire. True, out of doors my thought is commonly drowned, as it were, and shrunk, pressed down by stupendous piles of light ethereal influences, for the pressure of the atmosphere is still fifteen pounds to a square inch. I can do little more than preserve the equilibrium and resist the pressure of the atmosphere. I can only nod like the rye-heads in the breeze. I expand more surely in my chamber, as far as expression goes, as if that pressure were taken off; but here outdoors is the place to store up influences. (2:229)

As this entry reveals, Thoreau's subconscious mind preserved "influences" during the walk which later reflection would convert into conscious, written observations.

Thoreau, however, did not wait until he returned home from a walk to begin his writing. He took profuse notes of his experiences during his walks which could be used later as source material for reflection and more serious writing. Thoreau did not want to risk losing the uniqueness of a given walking experience by relying on his memory to recount accurately its every detail. Therefore he took careful field notes which

recorded whatever details he deemed important at the time and which somehow captured the uniqueness of the walking environment and situation. These aided his memory when he later attempted to recall his sauntering experiences.

Channing, Thoreau's most faithful walking companion, provides the most detailed description of this part of Thoreau's writing process:

In these walks, two things he must have from his tailor: his clothes must fit, and the pockets, especially, must be made with reference to his out-door pursuits. They must accommodate his note-book and spy-glass; and so their width and depth was regulated by the size of the note-book. It was a cover for some folded papers, on which he took his out-of-door notes; and this was never omitted, rain or shine. It was his invariable companion, and he acquired great skill in conveying by a few lines or strokes a long story, which in his written Journal might occupy pages. Abroad, he used the pencil, writing but a few moments at a time, during the walk; but into the note-book must go all measurements with the foot-rule which he always carried, or the surveyor's tape that he often had with him. Also all observations with his spyglass . . . , all conditions of plants, spring, summer, and fall, the depth of snows, the strangeness of the skies,—all went down in this note-book. To his memory he never trusted for a fact, but to the page and the pencil, and the abstract in the pocket, not the Journal. I have seen bits of this note-book, but never recognized any word in it; and I have read its expansion in the Journal, in many pages, of that which occupied him but five minutes to write in the field. . . . (Poet-Naturalist 65,66)

Channing tried Thoreau's note taking method for himself, but he discovered that it worked better for Thoreau than it did for him:

In our walks C[hanning] takes out his note-book sometimes and tries to write as I do, but all in vain. He soon puts it up again, or contents himself with scrawling some sketch of the landscape. Observing me still scribbling, he will say that he confines himself to the ideal, purely ideal remarks; he leaves the facts to me. . . . (Journal 3:299)

Despite Channing's assertion, Thoreau had more in mind when taking notes in the field than merely recording facts. His field notes were simply the raw material for the creation of a personal mythology:

I, too, would fain set down something beside facts. Facts should only be as the frame to my pictures; they should be material to the mythology which I am writing; not facts to assist men to make money, farmers to farm profitably, in any common sense; facts to tell who I am, and where I have been or what I have thought. . . . I would so state facts that they shall be significant, shall be myths or mythologic. Facts which the mind perceived, thoughts which the body thought,—with these I deal. (Journal 3:299)

Perhaps this offered the ultimate form of self-fulfillment, especially for a literary artist like Thoreau—to create a personal mythology. To fashion a carefully cultivated view of the self from the raw material of his sauntering experiences was Thoreau's greatest writing challenge. In much the same way that Ben Franklin helped create a personal mythology by depicting himself in his "Autobiography" as a young man walking into Philadelphia—an industrious but inexperienced capitalist, and as the ideal representative of the protestant work ethic—a young worker who walks through the streets to cart paper for his own stationer's shop ("Autobiography" 498,441), Thoreau converted the facts of his walking experience into the public self that emerges in his published writings.

In order to accumulate the facts which would make possible his written mythology, Thoreau recorded his observations and sensations during each walk. As with any other aspect of his walking experience, he allowed nothing to interfere with his goals. Thus, he even took notes during night walks, despite the poor lighting. Regarding one evening's ramble, he recorded, "I was compelled to stand to write where a soft, faint light from the western sky came in between two willows" (Journal 6:771). Another evening, he was attracted during his walk to some burning stumps in a field, and he used the light from the burning stumps for writing his notes: "I sit on the untouched end of a stump, and warm

me by it, and write by the light, the moon not having risen" (Journal 3:406). At dawn, Thoreau took advantage of more natural light for recording his observations: "The dawn is at this stage far lighter than the brightest moonlight. I write by it. Yet the sun will not rise for some time" (Journal 4:445). Thoreau did whatever he could to maintain his note taking during his saunterings, including using a strip of birch bark for paper when he had forgotten his notebook: "Having left my notebook at home, I strip off a piece of birch bark for paper. It begins at once to curl up, yellow side out, but I hold that side to the sun, and as soon as it is dry it gives me no more trouble" (Journal 11:1342). During all of this note taking experience, Thoreau found that the environment affected his note taking as much as it did the walking experience itself:

The moon comes out of the mackerel cloud, and the traveller rejoices. How can man write the same thoughts by the light of the moon, resting his book on a rail by the side of a remote potato-field, that he does by the light of the sun, on his study table? The light is but a luminousness. My pencil seems to move through a creamy, mystic medium. The moonlight is rich and somewhat opaque, like cream, but the daylight is thin and blue, like skimmed milk. I am less conscious in the presence of the sun; my instincts have more influence. (Journal 5:598)

Thus he took advantage of any available light and special environmental conditions to record his field notes.

Thoreau's field notes offered him the advantage of spontaneity; colored by the immediate walking environment, they helped establish the tone for his later writings. Thus they formed the nucleus for his serious writing which was drawn from his walking experience and which occurred after varying periods of reflection. In time, the Alpha state revelations were transformed into meaningful prose, but a certain incubation stage was required to make this possible:

Our ecstatic states, which appear to yield so little fruit, have this value at least: though in the seasons when our genius reigns we may be powerless for expression, yet, in calmer seasons, when our talent is active, the memory of those rarer moods comes to color our picture and is the permanent paint-pot, as it were, into which we dip our brush. Thus no life or experience goes unreported at last; but if it be not solid gold it is gold-leaf which gilds the furniture of the mind. It is an experience of infinite beauty on which we unfailingly draw, which enables us to exaggerate ever truly. Our moments of inspiration are not lost though we have no particular poem to show for them; for those experiences have left an indelible impression, and we are ever and anon reminded of them. Their truth subsides, and in cooler moments we can use them as paint to gild and adorn our prose. . . . They lend the writer when the moment comes a certain superfluity of wealth, making his expression to overrun and float itself. (Journal 2:261)

Thus, waiting a while before doing serious writing helped Thoreau, as it has many other authors, write a more effective account of his walking experience: "I find some advantage in describing the experience of a day on the day following. At this distance it is more ideal, like the landscape seen with the head inverted, or reflections in water" (Journal 6:718).

Thoreau's writings, then, are largely accounts of his walking experiences, composed a reasonable period after the original walks and based upon notes taken in the field. The important thing about this process is that it preserves the real uniqueness and nature of Thoreau's personal experiences; it is writing which truly creates a convincing personal mythology. The writing begins with the act of walking and ends with the insights or discoveries resultant from the ramble. The emphasis throughout his writing process and product is on experience; Thoreau writes in true romantic fashion, basing his works exclusively on his own experience. "The poem is drawn out from under the feet of the poet—his whole weight has rested on this ground" (Journal [Princeton] 1:104).

Because of the effect of his field notes on his later writings, Thoreau's works ring with the testimony of personal experience: "The forcible writer stands bodily behind his words with his experience. He does not make books out of books, but he has been there in person" (Journal 3:343). There is always a sense of presence in his writing which draws the reader into the walking experience that is being described. For Thoreau, then, the experience is paramount, the writing secondary—"My life has been the poem I would have writ, / But I could not both live and utter it" (Poems 85), but the experience takes on new meaning and power because of his written expression of it. "He lives as an author," notes Clough, "because of this hard-earned gift, a gift earned by shedding the rhetoric of the classroom, by soaking himself in the simple experience of living in nature, by weighing each phrase for its hard core of reality" ("Affirm and Construct" 111).

Once Thoreau had sauntered, taken his field notes, and allowed time for reflection, he was ready to make his Journal entries--the Journal being the phase of his writing process in which he first attempted to seriously articulate his walking experiences. In the Journal Thoreau attempted to emphasize and relate those sauntering experiences which his notes had previously only sketched. Canby points out that "the rewriting in the Journal is careful, finished, not hurried, usually ready for print as it stands. Thus the Journal is his workshop, as nature was his laboratory" (Thoreau 315).

Canby is probably misleading, however, when he insists that Thoreau's Journal entries were often ready for publication. Many of them are artful, but they also, as Richard Schneider notes, have a certain

unfinished quality to them, as though they are still under composition and not a final product. This is because Thoreau "often saw writing, especially in the journal, more as a continuous probing than as the creation of a finished record" (150). Writing, like walking, involved a process of continuous exploration which never ended, and Thoreau's Journal evidences that "he became a writer whose most sustained exploration was not only of nature but also of a language through which to express his relation to nature" (152). In this respect, Thoreau approached writing as he did sauntering: he pursued each activity as an exploratory process which yielded discoveries which could never be exhausted nor perfected. For Thoreau, whether walking or writing, process was the most important thing, not product. The act of living, the act of writing, the act of exploring--these took precedence over the sum products of these given actions.

Whether considered as process or product, the Journal was a significant part of Thoreau's life. Alfred Kazin, in "Thoreau's Journals," notes that Thoreau wrote in his Journal from the time he was twenty years old until 1861, "when his last illness made impossible those daily afternoon walks that were the sustenance of all his literary work." The majority of the Journal entries follow "the pattern of those walks . . . on which he kept field notes he later carefully rewrote and extended into his Journal" (188,189). Kazin contends that "by and large the Journal is the attempt to shape into words the vision [Thoreau] took back from his walks, a testing-ground for his art, and a commentary on the journal itself--that is, on the necessity of his character" (190). He even credit's the strength of Thoreau's prose with his walking

experience:

Still, without these excited daily inroads into the fields, Thoreau could never have found the measure for his prose. It is a prose, like Hemingway's and Faulkner's, that most characteristically defines the American in literature. We have had greater or at least more comprehensive writers, but none who with such deep intuition grasped in their solitariness the secret of the wilderness, of the legendary unoccupied Western lands, the very tone of man's battle in America against empty space. Emerson had given the call. It was Thoreau who went out and tried it: who wrote as if a sentence were not even true unless you heard it first ring against the ground. (191)

Thoreau's Journal is his major literary work (Cook Passage 206); it contains the fullest account of his life. Nearly all of his other writings are derived and refashioned from it. The fact that Thoreau's walking experience is such a focus of his Journal reinforces its importance in his life and demonstrates how inseparable it was from the other aspects of his existence. The numerous Journal passages already cited in this study help to verify this.

But Thoreau did not confine the literary treatment of his walks to his Journal. Since most of his non-Journal writings were drawn from the Journal, it is not surprising that walking plays such a major role in nearly every essay or book which he wrote. As Christie points out, "every trip Thoreau took became subject for a written account. . . . The great majority of his published writings were accounts of journeys fluvial or pedestrian" (Traveler 61). Friesen agrees, noting that "much of what Thoreau writes deals with his own walks and excursions. . . ." (Sensuousness 76). Schneider observes that "both the nature essays and the journal had deep roots in Thoreau's daily walks" (Thoreau 110).

In particular, Thoreau mastered the form known as the excursion, and he published several essays by that title. Marx argues that the

excursion provided Thoreau with the "only . . . satisfactory structural pattern" which he used. "All of his successful works are accounts of excursions" ("Thoreau's Excursions" 367). Literary excursions were very popular in Thoreau's time (Huth, Nature 84-86), but Thoreau's excursions were not written merely to appeal to the popular taste. As an artist, he felt the need to write about his walking experiences, to discover the meaning of those experiences through the medium of reflective composition. Thus his excursions are more transcendental and more revelatory about the self than are many of the samples of this genre drawn from his day. Walking is central in nearly all of them, but what varies from essay to essay is the change in persona which Thoreau utilizes as he presents the experience of each walk in terms unique to himself. McIntosh notes that in all of these excursions pieces, Thoreau

is a saunterer who must be up to what he sees and tastes, but in each case he is projected somewhat differently: an educated savage-saunterer in "Walking," a self-pleased curmudgeon-saunterer in "Wild Apples," a poet-saunterer in "Autumnal Tints," and a naturalist-saunterer in "The Succession of Forest Trees. (Romantic Naturalist 282)

The particular picture of the self which is presented in each of these pieces helps distinguish them from one another. Each distinct view of the self contributes to the personal mythology which evolves from all of the published works.

Excursions was published after Thoreau's death, and each of these essays varies, not only in persona, but in theme or emphasis. Walking, as has been noted, is central to each piece, but how walking is presented varies according to the perspective which Thoreau wishes to share. For example, Schneider observes that two of these walking essays—"A Walk to Wachusett" and "A Winter Walk"—offer two contrasting "applications of

the journey motif." The idea of a walk unifies both essays, but in "A Walk to Wachusett," Thoreau presents "a rather tame account of his hike with Richard Fuller through fields of hops, across hot valleys, and up the slopes of Wachusett, with the predictable panoramic view of Massachusetts from the summit as climax." Thoreau compares this walk to the notion that life is like climbing hills and then descending into the valley (Thoreau 115,116). In "A Winter Walk" he "also uses the structure of a day's journey as a symbol of human life, but the symbolic ascent of the mountain is replaced by movement from town to woods and back—a stepping beyond the bounds of the villager's usual winter experience." This essay, Schneider argues, "strikes a better balance between concrete fact and idealist theory" than "A Walk to Wachusett" does (116). Lauriat Lane, in an article which studies these two essays, asserts that these two excursions were Thoreau's first writings which presented "two archetypal 'walks' that remain basic models for [his] imaginative prose writings" ("Thoreau's Two Walks" 1).

As with these two excursions, walking supplies the structuring principle for several of Thoreau's writings. John Broderick notes that "the pattern of his own walks" paralleled "the pattern of his most characteristic prose and the structure of some of his controlling ideas" ("The Movement of Thoreau's Prose" 133). Tapping his excursions outside of Concord as well as within the township, Thoreau used walking in his writings as "the factual grounding, the means of spiritual release, and often the literary symbol for their fusion." Thus his writings are "full of movement, are on the go" (135). Each writing is shaped after the walking pattern in the following manner:

The "walk" supplies the structural thread for "Walking," "A Walk to Wachusett," "A Winter Walk," and Cape Cod. The extended walk or "journey" serves for The Maine Woods, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, a "water walk" with occasional scrambling along the bank. Even "Civil Disobedience" records what its author calls "a long journey," the result of "traveling into a far country," and the dislocations of life arraigned in "Slavery in Massachusetts" symbolically culminate in this: "The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. . . ." Walden itself might be regarded as a year-long walk, for as in his daily walk Thoreau moved away from the mundane world of the village toward one of heightened awareness and potentiality, only to return spiritually reinvigorated, so Walden records an adventuring on life which structurally starts from and returns to the world of quiet desperation. (135)

Broderick furthers his case by pointing out how many of Thoreau's paragraphs

move as Thoreau did and as his books do—from the mundane known to the transcendent knowable and back again. By various stylistic means he involves the reader in an intense spiritual experience, only to set him down again in the world from which he has been removed, presumably with more abundant resources for living. (136)

Thus "a surprising amount of Thoreau's best remembered and most effective writing through analysis displays its stylistic kinship to the well-loved walk" (140).

Broderick's observations about the structural and stylistic influence of walking on Thoreau's prose seem justifiable. Walking not only influenced Thoreau's writings thematically, it also affected the organization and style of his prose pieces. Tanner argues that for pedestrian authors like Thoreau, sauntering provides the perfect approach to walking in nature and to writing. In both cases, the experience is natural; no predetermined hierarchy, organization, or meaning is imposed upon nature nor upon the written page. Sauntering in nature and sauntering on the page are both open-ended and free-flowing experiences. As for writing style, "the prose moves as the eye moves and the eye

refuses to consult any hierarchy of importance in its dealings with the world" (Reign of Wonder 59). In Thoreau's case, a journal format was especially suited to his writing style since it allows the writer "to set down his impressions in random order; it caters generously for the impulse of the moment." In the same way, Thoreau's "best essays are in every sense 'excursions'" (60). Sherman Paul notes that Thoreau's saunterings were leisurely experiences, and "his writing was never hurried: it had the same margin of leisure that his life had." His use of allusions in his writing, "which slowed his pace," particularly gave his writing a sauntering style (Shores 160).

One mark of Thoreau's writing style which connects to sauntering is the way that he creates such an appropriate sense of atmosphere for the subject he is writing about; his descriptions seem drawn directly from the particular walking situation, as indeed they were in field-note form. Reginald Cook puts it this way:

Thoreau's writing has atmosphere, rhythmic tension, and flexibility. His atmosphere varies with the subject-matter. Objects described in the daytime had the light of day in them. Nocturnal walks were to be described in sentences that were peculiarly dusky. The tempo depends upon mood and manner, whether eloquent, exclamatory, vascular, whether plain, terse, and direct. There is a supple flex in his most characteristic writing; a natural grace and vigor of mind and spirit. It has an easy gait and a natural emphasis "like a man's tread." It saunters along with an Indian's quiet tread, covering ground, making distance. (Passage 225)

Thoreau was very conscious of his ability to transfer the environment and atmosphere of a particular sauntering experience into written form. So well matched were his descriptions to his subjects, that he lost little if anything when switching from the experience in the field to a written account of it. His sensitivity to this is apparent in the following

Journal entry which presents his concern about a writing style appropriate for depicting night walking experiences:

I have not put darkness, duskiness, enough into my night and moonlight walks. Every sentence should contain some twilight or night. At least the light in it should be the yellow or creamy light of the moon or the fine beams of stars, and not the white light of day. The peculiar dusky serenity of the sentences must not allow the reader to forget that it is evening or night, without my saying that it is dark. Otherwise he will, of course, presume a daylight atmosphere. (4:437)

Thoreau held the same concern that his writing naturally reflect the sauntering environment in his longer works, including his A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers:

I thought that one peculiarity of my "Week" was its hypaethral⁴ character, to use an epithet applied to those Egyptian temples which are open to the heavens above, under the ether. I thought that it had little of the atmosphere of the house about it, but might wholly have been written; as in fact it was to a considerable extent, out-of-doors. It was only at a late period in writing it, as it happened, that I used any phrases implying that I lived in a house or led a domestic life. I trust it does not smell [so much] of the study and library, even of the poet's attic, as of the fields and woods; that it is a hypaethral or unroofed book, lying open under the ether and permeated by it, open to all weathers, not easy to be kept on a shelf. (Journal 2:213)

Thoreau's walks affected his prose style in several ways. The active nature of his rambles, and the many adventures which he encountered while sauntering, infused his prose with a sense of exuberance and vitality which he saw lacking in the writing of others whose compositions were not drawn from the deep well of personal experience: "A writer who does not speak out of a full experience uses torpid words, wooden or lifeless words, such words as 'humanity,' which have a paralysis in their tails" (Journal 4:456). Matthiessen asserts that the rhythmical pattern of

⁴Open to the sky or roofless.

walking can be discerned in Thoreau's sentences, that many sentences seem like individual steps taken by the saunterer. The rhythm of the walk, and the close contact of the walker's feet with the landscape, find expression in the cadences and concrete description which characterize so much of Thoreau's prose (Renaissance 165).

Some Thoreau scholars and literary critics have tended to ignore the connections between Thoreau's sauntering experience and his writings. This has led to avoidable misunderstandings or misinterpretations of some of his works. A good case in point is his essay, "Walking," an excursion piece with an interesting history. According to Harding, it began as one lecture, grew into two separate lectures—one on walking and one on the wild—and was finally published, as Thoreau wished it to be, as a single essay (Days 286). Though far more material appears in Thoreau's Journal about sauntering than is presented in this essay, "Walking" is still regarded as a very important statement about the art of sauntering in the wild. Davis contends that it is "probably the most widely quoted work on walking and the most eloquent summary of its pleasures and purposes" (Walking! 195). According to Alcott, Thoreau's lecture on walking was quite popular—"Never had such a walk as this been taken by any one before, and the conversation so flowing and lively and curious—the young people enjoying it particularly" ("Journals" 161).

Interestingly, the critical response to Thoreau's essay has been mixed. Critics like Garber have hailed it as "the richest and most compelling of Thoreau's late essays" (Imagination vi), while others like Marx have pointed out the incongruity of the ideas and organizational pattern: "In 'Walking,' which begins firmly enough, he cuts ideas loose

from observations, and form crumbles into page after page of tedious, homiletic assertion" ("Thoreau's Excursions" 368).

For those like Marx who ignore the influence of Thoreau's sauntering experience on his written style and structure, "Walking," seems a disjointed, incoherent piece—two lectures unsuccessfully joined. Certainly a straight-forward reading of the text would seem to support such a viewpoint. The essay begins with Thoreau's declaration that he intends "to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness. . ." (Writings 5:205). He next discusses the art of sauntering, sharing a number of observations about his walks, his philosophy of walking, the perils of city-life, and so forth. These ideas fall in a seemingly random order and are only loosely connected by the general subject of walking. For example, at one point in the first half of the essay, Thoreau begins a paragraph by decrying the way that people misused the land, cutting down the forests and deforming the landscape (212). His next paragraph opens with the thought that he can "easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at [his] own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do. . ." (212). In this same paragraph he discusses the isolation nature affords him while he walks, and, in the next paragraph, he switches his discussion to the relationship between public roads and the villages which they connect and lead to (213). One can sense a loose relationship between these ideas, but the paragraphs are not tightly connected.

The essay continues to drift along, covering a variety of topics such as nationalism and the westward movement, until Thoreau rather abruptly

changes his focus from walking to wildness (224). In this second half of the essay he explores the various dimensions of the term "wildness" which define the qualities of nature that appeal to him. His discussion covers all the aspects of the term which help to clarify his meaning, including a study of the merits of wildness in literature (231) and in language and names (236). These sections of the essay, as with their counterparts in the first half, loosely relate to one another, but seem presented in a disjointed manner. For example, one paragraph celebrates natural wildness in man and beast which society should not interfere with. The paragraph ends with the following sentence: "But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious; and tanning their skins for shoes is not the best use to which they can be put" (236). The next paragraph, which touches on the quality of wildness in men's names, begins: "When looking over a list of men's names in a foreign language, as of military officers, or of authors who have written on a particular subject, I am reminded once more that there is nothing in a name" (236). The switch in thought here, as in several places in the essay, seems abrupt. The end of the essay returns, in an almost forced manner, to the subject of sauntering, introducing a mystical note with a description of Thoreau's vision in the woods of an imaginary family living there (243) and a call to "saunter to the Holy Land" (247).

Not all critics have agreed that this essay is a poorly written excursion piece. Some have been more sensitive to how Thoreau's walking experience shapes his prose, and have taken this into account when critiquing "Walking." Harvey, in a perceptive essay, "Speaking without

Bounds," observes that "the structure of 'Walking' is meandering, almost desultory." Fragmented like the Journal from which it is drawn, it unsettles "expectations by providing, instead of a walk between specified locations, a directionless meditation on the activity in its abstract form" (180). Harvey sees this effect as a strength, not a weakness. True sauntering involves a sort of "rootless" experience in which the saunterer is at home wherever he is, physically or mentally, but no distinct destination is focused upon. This, too, "is the secret of successful writing. . ." (181). Thus the sauntering quality of "Walking," its rambling, discursive flow of thought, appropriately parallels the nature of the sauntering experience and frees the writer to follow the course of his thinking in the way that his feet and mind follow the magnetic pull of nature during a walk. The destination in both cases is ill-defined, but the experience itself is effectively recorded.

Egan is another critic who has perceived and appreciated the sauntering structure which characterizes "Walking." He contends that what some feel is a "lack of structural unity" is actually "another structural pattern unifying the essay: the saunter. The essay demonstrates the program of action that it advocates; that is, the essay proceeds from the realm of Understanding to the 'Holy Land' by a meandering course of reflection and association" (22). Garber points out that the "Walking" essay reflects the multi-dimensional experience which sauntering provided Thoreau:

The Journal in particular shows that he never walks without a profound and lively sense of all the implications of his activity. Thoreau's deep grounding in palpable and immediate physicality never got in the way of his awareness that as he

walked in a single movement out and back he was actually moving simultaneously on several planes. In "Walking" he is so aware of the resonances of the pattern that the form of the movement is embodied in the structure of the essay: in its thematic progress from walking to wildness contra civilization, then to the self and back again to walking Thoreau incarnates that pattern, at once spatial and spiritual, which defines and organizes the multiple meanings in his explorations. And the reflection of the pattern in the thematic structure of the essay reveals both the extent to which his walking can take him and the great circle in which, for now, it has to move. ("Unity and Diversity in 'Walking'" 37)

Certainly Thoreau's essay, "Walking," presents in its style, form, and structure the pattern of his own walking experience, one which accurately reflects the spontaneity and rambling aspects of his walks.

Thoreauvians like Harding who contend that "Walking" is "the least organized of his shorter works and might well have been improved by having been split" (Harding Handbook 60) have not understood how ingeniously Thoreau adapted the structure and nature of his sauntering experience for his prose excursion. The disjointed, rambling nature of this essay, which seems so representative of the sauntering nature of his walks, enhances its value. Any criticism of Thoreau's works, as with any study of any aspect of his life, should explore the potential connections between his walking experience and the subject under study. Thoreau's walks were too important to him for scholars to ignore their impact when they examine his life or writings.

One aspect of Thoreau's writing which reveals the important role that sauntering played in his life, is his use of walking as a metaphor in his works. Walking provided Thoreau with an appropriate symbol for many of his most trenchant observations about life. Basically, Thoreau felt that one's life should be experienced like an extended walk or journey: "Our life should be so active and progressive as to be a journey" (Journal

3:334). Walking provided him with the appropriate symbol to describe the pathway of life that all must travel:

There is, however, this consolation to the most wayworn traveler, upon the dustiest road, that the path his feet describe is so perfectly symbolical of human life,—now climbing the hills, now descending into the vales. From the summits he beholds the heavens and the horizon, from the vales he looks up to the heights again. He is treading his old lessons still, and though he may be very weary and travel-worn, it is yet sincere experience. ("A Walk to Wachusett" Writings 5:150,151)

In particular, Thoreau liked to use walking as a metaphor for the rigors of life. It would seem natural for him to think of life's difficulties in terms of walking:

I am astonished at the singular pertinacity and endurance of our lives. The miracle is, that what is is, when it is so difficult, if not impossible, for any thing else to be; that we walk on in our particular paths so far, before we fall on death and fate, merely because we must walk some path; that every man can get a living, and so few can do any more. So much only can I accomplish ere health and strength are gone, and yet this suffices. . . . What risks we run! famine and fire and pestilence, and the thousand forms of a cruel fate,—and yet every man lives till he----dies. How did he manage that? Is there no immediate danger? We wonder superfluously when we hear of a somnambulist walking a plank securely,—we have walked a plank all our lives up to this particular string-piece where we are. (A Week 293,294)

One's progress in life, impeded and hindered by life's difficulties and surprises, parallels the course of the walker who "advances in his walk somewhat as a river does, meanderingly" (Journal 5:661). In a letter to H. G. O. Blake, Thoreau insists that one's goal in life should be like that of the walker—to proceed on the right path and to try and avoid the undesirable byways and detours which life can send one's way:

If one hesitates in his path, let him not proceed. Let him respect his doubts, for doubts, too, may have some divinity in them. . . . When, in the progress of life, a man swerves, though only by an angle infinitely small, from his proper and allotted path . . . , then the drama of his life turns to tragedy, and makes haste to its fifth act. When once we thus

fall behind ourselves, there is no accounting for the obstacles which rise up in our path, and no one is so wise as to advise, and no one so powerful as to aid us while we abide on that ground. . . .

. . . A man cannot be too circumspect in order to keep in the straight road, and be sure that he sees all that he may at any time see, that so he may distinguish his true path.
(Correspondence 221)

Walking also served Thoreau as a metaphor for representing the pitfalls of conformity. Thoreau's saunterings were essentially non-conformist actions, and thus, it seems appropriate that he would refer to the act of walking when discussing the issue of conformity and non-conformity. In his Journal he comments, "We go about these days as if we had fetters on our feet. We walk in the stocks, stepping into the holes made by our predecessors" (6:678). A more familiar passage in Walden expresses this same concept in more poetic terms: "The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity!" (323). Walking, for Thoreau, was meant to be a very personal and individual action. Even as Thoreau pursued his own course during his walks, unmindful of the paths others took, so one should walk through life as an individualist, not joining the parade of traditionalists and conformists whose superficial lives offer few rewards: "I delight to come to my bearings,—not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may,—not live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by" (Walden 323,330).

Thoreau was particularly struck by what he perceived as the solitude or isolation of life which paralleled his own solitary walking

experience. In his Journal (Princeton), he reflects:

How alone must our life be lived— We dwell on the sea-shore and none between us and the sea— Men are my merry companions— my fellow pilgrims—who beguile the way, but leave me at the first turn in the road—for none are travelling one road so far as myself.

Each one marches in the van. The weakest child is exposed to the fates henceforth as barely as its parents— Parents and relations but entertain the youth— they cannot stand between him and his destiny. This is the one bare side of every man— There is no fence— it is clear before him to the bounds of space. (1:288)

Another aspect of the walking experience which Thoreau metaphorically applied to life is the way that things happen accidentally or subconsciously to the walker, and to the person living his life:

There is always some accident in the best things, whether thoughts or expressions or deeds. The memorable thought, the happy expression, the admirable deed are only partly ours. The thought came to us because we were in a fit mood; also we were unconscious and did not know that we had said or done a good thing. We must walk consciously only part way toward our goal, and then leap in the dark to our success. . . . (Journal 12:1441)

Though Thoreau used "walking" metaphorically to convey a number of ideas, this term generally carries a positive connotation in his writing. Sauntering is the activity which he associates with human progress—"Our experience does not wear upon us. It is seen to be fabulous or symbolical, and the future is worth expecting. Encouraged, I set out once more to climb the mountain of the earth, for my steps are symbolical steps, and in all my walking I have not reached the top of the earth yet" (Journal 5:537), and it is the activity which most accurately represents the history of a human life—"A traveller! I love his title. A traveller is to be revered as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from _____ toward _____; it is the history of every one of us. . ." (Journal 2:214). Thoreau envisioned life according

to the terms of his own experiences, and certainly his use of "walking" as a metaphor in his writing helps us better understand not only his ideas, but also that the history of his own life was essentially a walk from one place to another, a journey in which he sauntered toward the Holy Land which he so earnestly sought.

As this chapter has shown, Thoreau, who lived in a society wholly dedicated to the protestant work ethic, found himself isolated from his contemporaries by his vocational commitment to sauntering. He engaged in other forms of labor, but only for the purpose of supporting himself so that he could spend as much leisure time as possible sauntering—his real vocation. Only walking afforded him the personal freedom and independence which he required of a vocation, and walking was the only vocation he tried which offered the non-materialistic rewards he sought. Sauntering also met his need to express himself in writing. Writing was the capstone of his walking experience; it helped him create a personal mythology in his published works, and it allowed Thoreau to reflect upon his sauntering experiences and to infuse them with meaning. Walking proved as integral to his writing process and published works as it was to his daily life. In fact, it touched every aspect of his being. How fitting, then, that he deemed walking as the perfect metaphor for picturing the course of one's life and the perfect symbol for representing the history of a life, especially his own.

CONCLUSION

That Thoreau's sauntering experience was central to his life and to his writings has been demonstrated, but what specific aspects of his rambles offer Thoreau scholars insights into the real significance of his walks? Certainly one consideration would have to be the picture of man and of human experience which emerges in the various accounts of his walking experience. Though one of Thoreau's major tenets was a belief in simplicity, his saunterings reveal the very complex nature of human personality and human experience. One sees Thoreau the saunterer as a complex figure who walks into the countryside seeking a very delicate balance between the components of his own make-up; in each walk the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of his being interact and cooperate as he seeks a balance which will make possible a fulfilling walking experience. While his feet plant themselves firmly on the ground, his emotions alter according to sensory stimuli, his thoughts flow—triggered by the surrounding environment and his corresponding mood, and his spirit soars, launched by the spiritual truths suggested by the landscape or by intuitions within himself. While he saunters externally, carefully observing every surface feature of the landscape, he saunters internally, discovering worlds within as well as worlds without. Thus he relates to different levels of reality at the same time, entertaining the physical world through the aid of his senses, while, simultaneously, plunging into the realm of the mind and the spirit. During this complex experience, the ever-changing influences of the landscape and the walking conditions, and the state of his own attitude and mood supply a dynamic which determines the final outcome of

the walking experience. As a saunterer, then, Thoreau projects the holistic man confronting the realities of the biosphere in which he lives, and his walks readily serve as parables for the very complex interaction between man and his environment which provides the basis for much of human experience.

Certainly Thoreau's walks reveal as much about the specific nature of his own version of Transcendentalism as does any other aspect of his experience. Perhaps no Transcendental figure better illustrates the Transcendental emphasis on the organic nature of human personality and man's relation to the environment than Thoreau does through his walking experience. In fact, all of the basic Transcendental beliefs which Thoreau held are demonstrated in his walking experience. His bent toward simplicity, solitude, individualism, economy, and other Transcendental notions, are revealed as much in his sauntering experience as they are in his experience at Walden Pond. Thoreau discovered and articulated his Transcendental view of life while at Walden, but he applied that view every time he took a walk. One can readily observe in his walking experience the thing which probably set him the most apart from Emerson, Alcott, and other Transcendentalists--his determined commitment to apply the principles of Transcendentalism to life. Walden was only a two-year experiment in this, but Thoreau's walks involved a daily application of his beliefs to a life that he chose to live on his own terms, forsaking what his contemporaries considered a regular vocation to commit himself to his avocation--sauntering. Thus the many internal and external conflicts which a Transcendentalist must face as he attempts to apply an idealistic philosophy to life are frequently illustrated in Thoreau's

attempts to dissociate himself from the city influence while somehow maintaining and nurturing his ties to society, and his efforts to respond to the magnetic pull of nature while granting priority to the role of human experience in shaping the significance of his walks. One sees in Thoreau's walking experience all the tensions that exists between the tenets of Transcendentalism and the prevailing beliefs in orthodoxy and the protestant work ethic held by the majority in his own time.

Thoreau's saunters are significant, as well, for what they reveal about him as a person. Through his rambles, we see his personality—revealed in his walking gait and in the various ways that he applies himself to the different walking tasks. We see his interests, his sense of humor, his several idiosyncrasies; his particularity, his bounding physical energy, his practicality, his dogged tenacity—each aspect of his personality reveals itself through his sauntering adventures. As the central activity of his life, Thoreau's walks reveal more about him as a person than one can glean from studying any other single aspect of his life. They form an integral part of his biography.

And certainly one very important side of Thoreau—his attraction to nature, is better revealed in his walking experience than anywhere else. The paramount role that his senses played in his rambles accounts for the participatory nature of his walking experience, and the resulting intimate relationship with a maternal nature which he enjoyed. For Thoreau, each saunter was a sort of primitive rite celebrating the movements and rhythms of nature, and the eating, drinking, bathing, and wading which he engaged in during his walks reveal his deep desire to immerse himself in the landscape, to absorb nature within him and to

become one with the environment. To understand Thoreau's complex relationship with nature, one must consider his walking experience, for his walks placed him in nature and governed every aspect of his experience with the landscape.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of Thoreau's walking experience is its connection with his writing process and with his published writings. Many of Thoreau's writings originated with the notes he took in the field during his walks, and they present a literary heritage which preserves the personal mythology he so carefully crafted. When reading his works, particularly those which most directly relate to his walks, one sees Thoreau as a Natty Bumpo figure, a man who lives a border life between civilization and the wilderness and who bridges these two worlds with his walks. The personal mythology Thoreau presents reveals a rugged individual, a pioneer figure, who, like Natty Bumpo, maintains his ties to society while experiencing in nature the personal and spiritual renewal which his self requires. Thoreau's literary persona allies itself with figures like Natty and Huckleberry Finn who portray the qualities of the frontiersman and the romantic adventurer. For Thoreau, this perspective emerges from the walks he took, which spanned the border world he lived in, and which provided the adventure and experiences which fulfilled him and gave his life meaning.

Certainly the paramount role of walking in Thoreau's writings evidences the significant role of his walking experience; studying his walking experience helps one better understand Thoreau's craft as a writer, his special ability to fashion experience into art. Walking provides a thematic key to the Journal, his most ambitious literary work.

As a result, walking surfaces as a theme or major factor in most of Thoreau's other writings which find their source in the Journal. And even his prose style and organization often reflect the nature of his walking experience in some of his writings such as the excursion piece "Walking." Thoreau's walks generated the material for his compositions, and any study of his writings would seem incomplete without a consideration of his saunterings and their potential influence on his written works.

Thoreau is a significant figure, then, not simply as a writer, but as walker as well. In his own time, walking helped connect him with other literary saunterers, the most obvious group being literary naturalists. These men explored nature in order to discover its secrets and to experience its delights. They produced a considerable body of literature, the result of their perambulatory excursions into nature. Their writings, like Thoreau's literary treatment of his own naturalist experience, reveal an important relationship between walking in nature and writing about it. As Davis notes, Thoreau was part of "a long line of American naturalists who have traversed large areas of the country on foot, exploring, enlightening, and cataloging as they went." Thoreau was "the seminal walker-writer-naturalist of the Northeast" (Walking! 197), but many other literary naturalists fulfilled the same role in other parts of the country, including John Muir, Gilbert White, John Burroughs, William Bartram, John James Audubon, and others.

The literature produced by these sauntering naturalists, and their influence on each other have been carefully explored by a number of scholars. Reginald Cook discusses these writers in chapter two of

Passage to Walden. On page fifty-one he summarizes the distinguishing characteristics of these walkers and of Thoreau's relationship with them. John Davis studies Thoreau, John Muir, and Edwin Way Teale on pages 197-199 in Walking! In chapter two of Nature and the American Hans Huth examines several literary naturalists such as Bartram, Audubon, Jefferson, and others. Huth also explores Emerson's and Thoreau's influence on their contemporaries, especially the naturalists (87-104). Millard Davis traces the influence of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman on John Muir and John Burroughs in an article appearing in the winter 1966-67 issue of The Living Wilderness (18-23).

Thoreau even owed, in part, his relationships with Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, to his walking experience. Like Thoreau, these men were walkers as well as writers, and their shared walking experience provided them with common ground that made a relationship easier to form and to keep. Certainly this was the case with Whitman and Thoreau. When Thoreau and Alcott first visited Whitman, he informed them that his daily schedule usually involved reading and writing in the morning and walking in the afternoon, "a program remarkably similar to Thoreau's own" (Harding, Days 373). Thoreau acknowledged the popularity of this schedule among literary walkers when he wrote in a letter that Whitman "now has no employment but to read and write in the forenoon, and walk in the afternoon, like all the rest of the scribbling gentry" (Schiller, "Thoreau and Whitman" 189). Whitman and Thoreau shared several walks together (Schiller, "Thoreau and Whitman" 190; Traubel, "With Walt Whitman in Camden" 116), finding common ground in the walking experience even if their own applications of

Transcendentalism differed.

Thoreau's walking experience was actually responsible for his first contact with Ralph Waldo Emerson. George Hoar, a contemporary of Thoreau's, recalls that Emerson was so impressed by the fact that Thoreau had walked eighteen miles to hear one of his lectures, that he invited Thoreau to his house to hear a lecture there. Thus the impression Thoreau made by his walking made his first meeting with Emerson possible ("Autobiography" 109,110). Emerson, like Thoreau, held a very high view of walking. He stated in "Country Life," "I think 'tis the best of humanity that goes out to walk. In happy hours, I think all affairs may be wisely postponed for this walking" (Emerson, Works 12:156,157). In somewhat typical fashion, Emerson could articulate a high ideal, in this case the laudability of walking, but he seldom applied his stated ideals to his own experience. He walked, but not with the fervor or commitment of Thoreau who happily postponed "all affairs" whenever he could to make walking possible. Though both men conceived walking in much the same way—Emerson considered walking an art form, much as Thoreau did--their type of walking experience differed significantly. According to Channing, Emerson believed that "brevity" was "the sole of walking." Thoreau, however, viewed "all virtuous walking" as "a travail." Thoreau's brand of sauntering was considerably more arduous than Emerson's (Poet-Naturalist 133,134). John Muir's essay, "Emerson at Yosemite" reveals some of Emerson's aversion to the kind of difficult, lengthy walks which Thoreau would have thoroughly enjoyed (273-276). The concept of walking united Thoreau with several of his contemporaries, including Whitman, Emerson, and Nathaniel Hawthorne who Thoreau took

several walks with (Huth, Nature and the American 95,96), but his application of walking set him apart from each of these men. Probably no man of his time was so completely committed to walking as Thoreau was.

One thing that is quite impressive about Thoreau's walking experience is the influence that it has had since his time. This influence is readily measurable in terms of subsequent walkers duplicating his walks or attempting to practice walking in a particular way which Thoreau defined or exemplified. Chapter five of David Pepi's book Thoreau's Method: A Handbook for Nature Study illustrates the popular interest in Thoreau's walking method. Pepi devotes the entire chapter to a guide to walking based on Thoreau's own walking methodology. Despite Pepi's enthusiasm for Thoreau, he is not always faithful to Thoreau's walking method. For example, he cautions against taking shortcuts through planted fields, though Thoreau had little reservation about doing this. Still, Pepi's book is representative of efforts writers have made to study and advocate Thoreau's walking methods.

Even more common than walking guides influenced by Thoreau are the many published accounts of walkers' attempts to replicate actual walking trips which Thoreau took. Typical is Caroline Bates article, "Walking in Thoreau's Footsteps on Cape Cod," in which she recounts one of Thoreau's own Cape Cod trips and depicts the conditions of the Cape today which a walker, following Thoreau's original course, would face (142,143). A similar article by Joseph Thorndike, "Thoreau Walks the Cape," does much the same (71-75). One pedestrian writer describes what a trip to Maine in 1948 had to offer similar to Thoreau's own trip to the same area years before. Characteristic is this sample observation:

In the ninety-one years since Thoreau made the trip, the millions of acres of scattered lakes in the northwest corner of the state have changed less than most parts of America. Unbroken by roads and towns, with perhaps less than a dozen permanent residents, the woods are today as they were . . . one hundred years ago. There is no need to grope for the past. It exists before your eyes as part of the unchanging present of the mountains, lakes and streams that Thoreau crossed and remembered. (Wylie, "Thoreau Trails" 105)

Walkers like Wylie and the naturalist, Edwin Way Teale, seem to pride themselves on their ability to duplicate a Thoreau walk under modern conditions. Teale's boastful account of Concord sauntering seems especially well suited to a Thoreauvian hiker:

"I can easily walk," Thoreau wrote in his Journal, "ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do." Even today, by choosing his route carefully, a walker could come pretty close to doing the same. The "No Trespassing" signs, it is true, have increased; the number of sumptuous country estates has grown; the Motor Age has opened up new sections of the countryside to Gasoline Gypsies; Flint's Pond is now a source of water-supply for Concord and Lincoln; golf courses have their greens and fairways where Thoreau roamed across open fields. But, in the main, so little changed is Walden and its surroundings that on my first visit, I found my way around without difficulty by means of a map in the front of one of the volumes of H. G. O. Blake's selections from Thoreau's Journal, a map that had been made in the year 1852. (199)

Yet another evidence of Thoreau's influence on American walkers is the way authors writing about walking use Thoreau and his sauntering experience as a reference point. Thus one writer, describing a particular part of the epic hike of Edward Garvey who walked the 2,205 miles of the Appalachian Trail, makes this reference: "Garvey took his time the rest of the way, maintaining that 'like Thoreau, I felt rich in sunny summer days, and I spent them lavishly'" (Thompson 95). Another author, Donald Peattie, celebrates that "America, land of the motor car, land of the rubber tire, is going off wheels and learning to walk. Of

this I sing." In his article, "The Joy of Walking," Peattie shares the personal rewards he derives from walking. Philosophizing, he claims that the time spent walking is well invested. "For after all, time is not money; time is an opportunity to live before you die. So a man who walks, and lives and sees and thinks as he walks, has lengthened his life." He follows with this appropriate reference to Thoreau:

It was Thoreau, himself one of the most inveterate of walkers, who insisted that if you took the train from Concord to Fitchburg, and he took shanks' mare, he would arrive first. For, he reasoned, you would have to stop and work till you had earned the price of a ticket. While you were doing that he would be in Scotland afore ye. And have seen enough sights and had enough encounters to write another immortal chapter. (7)

A similar reference to Thoreau as a walker appears in an article, "The Walker." The anonymous author describes "a stroller who gets his pleasure from what he hears and sees on his stroll," and then speculates: "Yet isn't this stroller with his dilettante legs a distant relation of the saunterer, the perfect and rare walker, only one or two specimens of which Thoreau had ever seen? Of the true transcendental walker, the crusader Henry was perhaps the sole example" (19). As with these previous examples, those Americans dedicated to walking find it natural to refer to Thoreau and his experience. John Davis, no exception to this, begins a point by referring to Thoreau's view that "walking is priceless." He concludes that "this is even more true now than in Thoreau's day," and he proceeds to advocate the type of non-materialistic recreation which Thoreau-style walking provides (Walking! 35).

One way, then, in which Thoreau has influenced American walkers is by inspiring future generations to participate in the sauntering

experience. Ann Zwinger, in a delightful article, "The Quintessential Wanderer," defines this aspect of Thoreau's contribution: "Wandering is a solitary practice, yet those of us who are wanderers can never walk alone. We walk with those who have gone before, and found their sanity where we find ours: in the dew-frosted thistle or the dragonfly's patrol, in the coiled fern frond, or the summer rose." She adds that Thoreau's walking experience "reaches out to entice us to wander. He could have given us no greater gift" (2).

Thoreau has also inspired American saunterers by the quality and nature of his walking experience which has set a standard by which subsequent saunterers have measured their walking experience. John Finley, a prolific and prominent American walker, designed a medal to give to walkers which bore the inscription "'a la Sainte Terre,'--to the Holy Land." He writes, "I am indebted for this legend to Thoreau," and goes on to describe the quality of the walking experience which Thoreau exemplified and which his medal commemorates:

A real pilgrim is no idler or vagabond or aimless vagrant; he is a destined person, a walker, a "hiker," a wanderer or even a "saunterer" with a goal, but with an ever-changing prospect. There should ever be a Carcassonne in one's itinerary, even if we never get beyond Narbonne or Perpignan, a Sainte Terre in our purpose, even if we perish before reaching it, as did the soldiers whose graves I saw in Palestine at the foot of the last hill on their crusader way to the Holy City which they never saw but helped to recover. (4)

Finley, after quoting Thoreau that "each man's Holy Land lies in so different a direction that it is difficult to say whither his path will lead," adds,

When I award the "a la Sainte Terre" medal I translate the legend freely as meaning "to our better selves"--the "better" meaning both physical and spiritual health, which is reached by most people most certainly by keeping their feet on what that

beloved philosopher of the out of doors, Liberty Bailey, has called "the holy earth." ("Long Highroad Beckons to the Walker" 4)

Just as Thoreau's walking experience continues to influence those who commit themselves to the sauntering life today, so it also challenges Thoreauvians to examine it as carefully as they can in order to better understand Thoreau's own life, his beliefs, and his writings. In their own ways, Thoreau scholars must follow Alcott's advice and take a walk with Thoreau. Only then can they understand why it was that he could not "preserve [his] health and spirits" unless he walked for four or more hours every day, "sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements" ("Walking" Writings 5:207). Only then can they appreciate how walking was, for Thoreau, "the enterprise and adventure of the day" (Writings 5:209). This study has been dedicated to illuminating the truths of these statements.

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