

WALDEN AND THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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Introduction

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The possible influence of John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress on Henry David Thoreau's Walden has not been fully explored. When the two works are compared, a surprising number of similarities can be found. Although the suggestion of a connection between Pilgrim's Progress and Walden may seem incongruous in view of Thoreau's expressed attitude toward religion in his life and works, a consideration of the possibility of the work's influence can be partially based on two factors: the popularity of Pilgrim's Progress in nineteenth-century New England, and a reevaluation of Thoreau's relationship to his Puritan forebears. The introduction will discuss these factors. The remainder of the report will focus on the similarities in themes, in symbols, and in the use of language which can be found between the two works.

The connection between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress has been discussed by a few scholars. Walter Harding suggests that Pilgrim's Progress provides one of the four levels on which Walden can be read. As a work on nature, Walden resembles Gilbert White's Natural History of Selborne, as a work on the essentials of life it resembles Robinson Crusoe, and in its biting satire it resembles Gulliver's Travels. "As earnest as John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, it [Walden] is a guide book to the higher life.

On this level it is Transcendentalism in its purest form -- a plea that would we but obey that light within us we could attain a fulfillment, a happiness, and a success such as man has never known" (334). William J. Wolf writes, "We accept Pilgrim's Progress as Walden's classic prototype" (93). Egbert S. Oliver points to definite parallels between the works in themes and characters. D. Gordon Rohman, commenting on the role of the narrator in Walden, writes that "In the role of the Good Steward, Thoreau hoped to put upon his life the stamp of a Pilgrim's Progress, [Week, p. 72] a divine errand in which he was the man sent on heavenly business 'to improve the nick of time'" (73).

A tentative connection between Pilgrim's Progress and Thoreau's first work, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, 1849, was noted by Sherman Paul: "There are perhaps suggestive parallels with Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, which Thoreau thought 'the best sermon ever preached' from the New Testament" (202).

In A Week the connection between Thoreau and Pilgrim's Progress is most clearly defined, for it offers direct allusions to Pilgrim's Progress, as well as Thoreau's expressed admiration for the work. In the "Sunday" chapter he writes:

The New Testament is an invaluable book, though I confess to having been slightly prejudiced against it in my very early days by the church and the

Sabbath-school, so that it seemed, before I read it, to be the yellowest book in the catalogue. Yet I early escaped from their meshes. It was hard to get the commentaries out of one's head and taste its true flavor. I think that Pilgrim's Progress (sic) is the best sermon which has been preached from this text; almost all other sermons that I have heard, or heard of, have been but poor imitations of this (72).

In "Monday" Thoreau refers directly to one of the mountain ranges in Pilgrim's Progress:

So many streams, so many meadows and woods and quiet dwellings of men had lain concealed between us and those Delectable Mountains; -- from yonder hill on the road to Tyngsborough you may get a good view of them (169-170).

In the "Tuesday" chapter Thoreau seems to place himself in the role of Christian:

I had come over the hills on foot and alone in serene summer days, plucking the raspberries by the wayside, and occasionally buying a loaf of bread at a farmer's house, with a knapsack on my back which held a few traveler's books and a change of clothing, and a staff in my hand It seemed a road for the pilgrim to enter upon who would climb to the gates of heaven (189-190).

Thoreau's lifelong familiarity with Pilgrim's Progress can be inferred from the presence of an allusion in the posthumous "Life Without Principle" to the "muck-rake" of Pilgrim's Progress. Thoreau writes, "And have all the precepts in all the Bibles taught men only this? And is the last and most admirable invention of the human race only an improved muck-rake?" (718).

Thoreau had good reason to assume that his allusions to Pilgrim's Progress in A Week would be recognized by his first readers, although the audience's familiarity with Pilgrim's Progress may be difficult to imagine today. In addition to the King James Version of the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress was the most widely read book in nineteenth-century America. The two works could often be found together, even in the homes of those who owned few books. Albert C. Baugh writes:

For nearly two hundred years The Pilgrim's Progress shared with the Bible the distinction of being the most widely read book in English-speaking countries, and it has been translated into innumerable foreign languages. Its allegory is so transparent, its characters so lifelike, and its adventures so much like those of romance that it held its own with other works of fiction even after the birth of the novel, to which it was one of the important forerunners. Characters like Mr.

Worldly Wiseman and scenes like Vanity Fair have become a part of the literary heritage with which the memories of millions of people have been stored (439-440).

Two other well-known writers and contemporaries of Thoreau testify to the popularity of Pilgrim's Progress in nineteenth-century America. English historian Thomas Babington Macaulay states in his essay on Bunyan:

Bunyan has told us, with very pardonable vanity, that in New England his dream was the daily subject of the conversation of thousands, and was thought worthy to appear in the most superb binding (31).

Nathaniel Hawthorne brought the Pilgrim up-to-date in his successful parody "The Celestial Railroad," a short story about pilgrims riding the train rather than hiking along Christian's path to Paradise. David E. Smith writes that Hawthorne's "story takes its cue from earlier American adaptations of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and relies for its success upon the reader's familiarity with the original work" (60).

Although Thoreau may have used Pilgrim's Progress solely because it was familiar to his audience, the regard for it expressed in A Week lends credence to the likelihood that the Puritan work which had influenced so many Americans was also meaningful to him.

The Puritan influence on American Transcendentalism has been recognized by various scholars. F. O. Matthiessen writes that "we can see the basis for the description of transcendentalism as 'romanticism in a Puritan setting'" (104). R.W.B. Lewis writes, "It is not surprising that transcendentalism was Puritanism turned upside down, as a number of critics have pointed out; historically, it could hardly have been anything else" (23).

The Puritan influence on Thoreau has been discussed by a number of scholars. Wolf says that Thoreau's charge against his contemporaries was that "they were taking their ease in Zion, having lost their revolutionary thrust and having been paid off by the exploiters of the people and the comfortable advocates of materialism" (39). Sherman Paul states that "like a Puritan of old, bred in a faith that faced realities, Thoreau did not respect the 'snivelling sympathies' that had made religion in his day 'a singular combination of a prayer-meeting and a picnic'" (382). Matthiessen writes that "despite his sustained indifference to any theology," Thoreau "wanted what he called 'a Puritan toughness'" (116). Matthiessen explains that Thoreau felt a kinship with the explorers and historians of early New England and that he spoke favorably of John Brown as a typical Puritan.

Thoreau's support of John Brown is a key to our understanding of his relationship to the Puritans, according

to Oliver, who explains that Thoreau's response to the Harper's Ferry raid reflects a strong Puritan influence. "The attack upon a state based on injustice is clearly in keeping with the Puritan tradition, and the language Thoreau uses is the language familiar to Bunyan: 'it has interrupted me and every man on his onward and upward path...'" (84). Wesley Theodore Mott's conclusions are essentially the same as those presented by Oliver. He calls both Emerson and Thoreau heirs to the tradition of New England Puritanism, stating that they "in their most revolutionary pronouncements recapture authentic Puritan concerns. Both value Nature as an emanation of God; but both insist that Nature must be overcome in order to permit the influx of the Spirit" (7916A).

It is important to recognize the influence of the Puritan tradition on Thoreau's writing as we turn to the question of a Puritan influence on Walden. What can be seen as an absence of references to the Puritans and to Pilgrim's Progress in Walden may actually be an indication of Thoreau's assumptions of widespread reader recognition.

A study of Thoreau's use of sources in Walden leads to the realization that he frequently omitted references to works of which his audience would be knowledgeable. For instance, in "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," Thoreau writes that men "have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to 'glorify God and enjoy him

forever '" (101). The words Thoreau enclosed in quotation marks come from the New England Primer's Shorter Catechism, a work well known in Thoreau's New England. Thoreau even more frequently uses sources without providing any indication that he is doing so. Willard H. Bonner and Mary Alice Budge came to this conclusion concerning Thoreau's use of Robinson Crusoe:

When Thoreau mentions his habit of always improving the nick of time and notching 'it on [his] stick, too,' he assumes the reader understands and does not need the tail end of the Journal entry for February 22, 1821 from which the remark was taken: 'as Robinson Crusoe on his stick' (16).

Thoreau's assumptions of audience recognition cover much of his Biblical material, and as a consequence scholars are still trying to compile a complete list of Biblical uses in Walden.

The uses of the Bible in Walden and Pilgrim's Progress present us with significant interconnections. Bunyan's extensive use of the Bible in Pilgrim's Progress is obvious. Indeed, before a reader finishes the first paragraph he has already encountered three allusions to the Bible, all carefully glossed by Bunyan: "I saw a Man cloathed with Raggs, [Isaiah 64:6] standing in a certain place, with his face from his own House, a Book in his hand, and a great

burden upon his Back [Psalms 38:4].... He brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, 'what shall I do?' [Acts 16:30-31]" (8).

The extensive use of the Bible in Walden has only recently attracted scholarly interest. In 1957, J. Lyndon Shanley found fifty examples of "learning" in the final version of Walden. Larry D. Long, in his 1974 doctoral thesis "Walden and the Bible: A Study In Influence and Composition," found 272 uses of the Bible (his appendix included over one-third more of the Biblical materials than is found by conflating previous listings), in more than a dozen different forms. In an article published after the completion of his dissertation, Long presents evidence demonstrating that Thoreau's use of the Bible is conscious and deliberate. He concludes that Thoreau relied on his audience's awareness of the Bible and exploited the Scriptures to "define and support his themes" (309).

As has already been noted, Thoreau regarded Pilgrim's Progress as a commentary and a sermon on the New Testament. Thoreau's linking of the New Testament with Pilgrim's Progress presents the possibility that some, if not many, of the Biblical uses in Walden could have originated in Pilgrim's Progress. Long briefly discusses the possibility that some of the Biblical material in Walden could have come from secondary sources. He cites an allusion in Walden to Solomon, which he says is

just one example of Thoreau's borrowing biblical material from another author, in this instance, Evelyn. Although this suggests that other, unidentified sources may stand between Walden and some of the biblical uses, it does nothing to destroy their function in Thoreau's text nor to imply that he did not realize their original source (326).

This preliminary discussion of evidence indicating a connection between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress would not be complete without a recognition of the real differences between the works and authors. Thoreau was a nineteenth-century Transcendentalist and Romantic, not a seventeenth-century Puritan. Thoreau's concern for change of society through change of the individual in this life contrasts significantly with Bunyan's primary concern for individual evangelical conversion and the afterlife, although reform of the individual in society is a prevailing theme in both works. Nature is important thematically and symbolically in Walden, but is incidental in Pilgrim's Progress. Lastly, Thoreau's regard for the classics and Eastern scriptures is a significant point of difference with the Biblically-centered Bunyan. This position can be clearly seen in "Reading" where Thoreau equates the Bible with the classics, the Vedas and Zendavestas, and with Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare. "By such a pile we may hope to scale heaven at

last," Thoreau writes (104). Despite their differences, "scaling heaven at last" was the goal of each author.

The remainder of this report will focus on the similarities which can be found between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress. One chapter will be devoted to the discussion of each of three areas: themes, symbols, and uses of language.

Chapter 1 Themes and Ideas

In "A Plea for Captain John Brown," Thoreau gives us a clear view of the qualities which he admired in the Puritans. He praises them for being "men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful: not making many compromises, nor seeking after available candidates" (685). After suggesting that the addition of a chaplain would have made Brown and his men "a perfect Cromwellian troop," Thoreau calls Brown "a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles -- that was what distinguished him. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life" (686). Thoreau's characterization of the Puritans in many ways parallels the life of the Christian warrior presented in Pilgrim's Progress. In fact Bunyan, who fought in Cromwell's army and spent many years in prison for speaking his mind, may be a perfect example of the Puritan Thoreau admired.

It should therefore be no surprise that thematic similarities can be found between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress, especially in the areas of morals, ethics, and individual virtues. Significant agreement can be found in what each work praises and in what each work condemns. Both works insist on the existence and superiority of the spiritual life and teach the necessity of a search for truth which requires personal risk, courage, and integrity. Conversely, both works condemn whatever hinders spiritual

growth, particularly materialism, cowardice, self-deception, and hypocrisy.

Three prominent themes pertinent to both works will be discussed in this chapter: the condemnation of materialism, or the emphasis on things and possessions, the preeminence of the spiritual life, and the search for truth, or the insistence on the importance of principles. These themes are important separately, but they also interrelate and often appear together. Materialism is condemned because it denies the existence and superiority of the spiritual life, and because it hinders the search for truth which is also a search for the spiritual life. The comparison of each author's treatment of these themes will begin with a discussion of *Pilgrim's Progress*, followed by an analysis of Thoreau's use of the themes in "Economy."

Bunyan's attitude toward materialism, the first theme to be discussed, must be understood in the context of the Puritan belief that the Word of God was the only legitimate source of spiritual enlightenment. Bunyan would have seen little value in the stress on the material, and specifically on nature, and the spiritual lessons drawn from nature which were so meaningful to Thoreau. Bunyan and Thoreau are in agreement, however, in their condemnation of materialism.

Bunyan condemns materialism, or concern with the "things of this world," because it interferes with the

demands of the spiritual life. Christian explains that he is on pilgrimage alone because "Why, my wife was afraid of losing this world..." (30). Obstinate's response to Christian's invitation is "What!... and leave our Friends, and our Comforts behind us!" (11).

Another example of Bunyan's treatment of this theme can be found when Mr. Worldly Wiseman tempts Christian to choose materialism over the discipline of the spiritual life. Mr. Worldly Wiseman promises Christian comfort from his burden and cheap accommodations for his family in the village of Morality, where he can "live by honest neighbors, in credit and good fashion" (19). Christian's acceptance of this advice almost kills him.

Bunyan uses the account of Demus at the hill Lucre to teach once again the disastrous effect which materialism, and particularly the love of money, has on people's spiritual lives. When the pilgrims reach Lucre's silver mine, Bunyan writes that some "turned aside to see; but going too near the brim of the pit, the ground, being deceitful under them, broke, and they were slain; some also had been maimed there, and could not to their dying day be their own men again" (106).

In "Economy," Thoreau's treatment of the first theme of materialism parallels the lessons of Pilgrim's Progress as he castigates those who are preoccupied with obtaining physical comforts and with getting and spending money. Like

Bunyan, he allows for no compromise between God and money and backs up his position with allusions to well-known New Testament passages (Matthew 6:20-21, 16:23, Luke 12:20). Thoreau condemns those who set their hearts on money, and those who lay up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal as living "a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before" (5). This allusion is to the rich man whom God called a "fool" because he concerned himself with building bigger barns to store his produce. Like the pilgrims that were slain in Demus' silver mine, he also loses his soul.

The second theme to be discussed, the existence and superiority of the spiritual life, is the main theme of Pilgrim's Progress. The genre of the work and even the most cursory reading attest to the centrality of this theme. The existence of a spiritual reality legitimizes Christian's pilgrimage, and its superiority to other lifestyles sustains him in spite of difficulties. The allegory is meant to provide encouragement to those wishing to live a successful Christian life, a life beset with difficulties and struggles that can be overcome with God's help.

In "Economy" Thoreau approaches this theme of the existence and superiority of the spiritual life through the material or the practical. The spiritual life is disguised in the opening pages of "Economy" by what seems to be an

emphasis on practical, "this world" solutions for "the mass of men who live lives of quiet desperation" because they do not have the time or energy to develop their spiritual lives. "I would fain say something.... about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not," writes Thoreau (4). However important practical solutions may be, they are not ends in themselves, and certainly not the only thing Thoreau has in mind for his desperate readers.

Thoreau's central solution in "Economy" and throughout Walden is spelled out in the familiar refrain "Simplicity, Simplicity, Simplicity!" This involves the spirit at least as much as it involves the body. Simplicity requires a renunciation of materialism and a Puritan reform which Thoreau preaches with conviction and possibly an allusion to Bunyan's House Beautiful: "Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation" (38). Simplicity requires of its practitioners an allegiance to such virtues as self-discipline, faith, courage, and dedication to truth.

The third theme to be considered is the search for truth, represented in Pilgrim's Progress by Christian's pilgrimage to the Celestial City. The pilgrimage is

arduous, requiring courage and integrity because of the ever-present temptation to self-deception and the challenge of hypocrites. "We buy the Truth," Christian and Faithful gravely tell the men of Vanity Fair (90).

As the pilgrimage itself represents the search, so the straight and narrow path represents truth. Mr. By-ends and his companions challenge Christian's and Hopeful's faithfulness to the true way through their actions and words. "I shall never desert my old Principles, since they are harmless and profitable," declares By-ends (100). The verbal challenge to Christian and Hopeful is presented in the form of a formal question:

Suppose a man; a Minister, or a Tradesman, &c. should have an advantage lie before him to get the good blessings of this life. Yet so, as that he can by no means come by them, except, in appearance at least, he becomes extraordinary Zealous in some points of Religion that he meddled not with before, may he not use this means to attain his end, and yet be a right honest man?

(103)

Mr. By-ends and his friends take for granted that the answer to this question will justify their hypocrisy, but Christian's answer to them is scathing and leaves no room for a compromise of principles.

Bunyan's plot completes the lesson which is to be drawn from the debate with By-ends. After ending their conversation, Christian and Hopeful pass the Hill Lucre. Shortly thereafter Mr. By-ends and company also reach it, turn off the path, and disappear into the silver mine. Mr. By-ends' old principles did not prove to be harmless in the end.

The search for truth in "Economy" can be recognized in Thoreau's insistence on simplicity which requires that "our lives must be stripped." It is a call for truth in every aspect of life:

I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes.... We don garment after garment, as if we grew like exogenous plants by addition without. Our outside and often thin and fanciful clothes are our epidermis, or false skin, which partakes not of our life, and may be stripped off here and there without fatal injury... (23-24).

Truth, what is "inside," is the theme of this passage, although, like Bunyan's presenting the example of materialistic Mr. By-ends, Thoreau uses materialism to illustrate what is false. "It is desirable that a man be clad so simply that he can lay his hands on himself in the dark," he writes (24). Motives and principles are Thoreau's chief concerns.

An important level of this theme of the search for truth is the inevitability of conflict between the individual who seeks truth and society which denies truth. Mr. By-ends and his friends not only represent those who lack principles, they also represent the values of society which are in conflict with the values held by Christian and Hopeful. By-ends criticizes them because they "are so rigid, and love so much their own notions..." (101).

On his travels Christian encounters numerous representatives of society who attempt to mislead, manipulate, argue, bully, or frighten him into abandoning his search for truth. Frequently the argument against Christian is the same appeal to tradition which Thoreau so often rails against in Walden. "Hear me, I am older than thou!" says Mr. Worldly Wiseman (18). Shame uses a similar ploy on Faithful, who says "He objected also, that but few of the Mighty, Rich, or Wise were ever of my opinion; nor any of them neither, before they were persuaded to be Fools, and to be of a voluntary fondness, to venture the loss of all for nobody else knows what" (72). When Christian questions Formalist and Hypocrisy about the legality of their tumbling over the wall, they answer that "they had custom for; and could produce, if need were, Testimony that would witness it, for more than a thousand years" (40). Formalist and Hypocrisy belittle Christian's adherence to the true path, a challenge which he can only overcome by

believing in the validity of his own experience.

The inevitability of conflict between society and the individual is an aspect of the theme of the search for truth which is clearly developed in "Economy." Thoreau teaches that the enlightened individual must love truth and have integrity and courage to be able to trust his own insights and stand against the judgments of the crowd. "The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad," he asserts (10). He uses as an example his own experience with a tayloress who refuses to make a garment for him because "They do not make them so now." He muses on the meaning of "they" which is referenced with "an authority as impersonal as the Fates" (25).

The appeal to authority, age, and tradition keeps people from thinking for themselves, from searching for truth. "No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof," Thoreau writes in the beginning of "Economy" (8). Toward the end of "Economy" Thoreau underscores again the need for vigilance in the pursuit of truth: "I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead" (71). This may be an allusion to Luke 14:26, which states that those who follow Jesus must hate "father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters..." This passage is glossed by

Bunyan as Christian leaves his family and neighbors in order to find the Wicket Gate. Thematically the message is the same in both Pilgrim's Progress and Walden: the individual must not allow society's objections to interfere with his or her search for truth.

Having compared Bunyan's treatment of the three major themes in Pilgrim's Progress with Thoreau's treatment of the themes in "Economy," we now turn to several other chapters in Walden that further demonstrate thematic similarities between the two works. "The Bean-Field" is representative of Thoreau's nature chapters and shows well Thoreau's use of correspondences between nature and the spiritual world. "Higher Laws" and "Spring" are concerned almost solely with the existence and superiority of the spiritual life, and "Conclusion" offers a recapitulation of the three themes along with their relationships to each other.

The condemnation of materialism is introduced in "Bean-Field" by a declaration that the choice of the material over the spiritual is the cause of men's problems. Asserting that "husbandry was once a sacred art" (182), Thoreau observes that now farming:

is pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us, our object being to have large farms and large crops merely... By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or means

of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives (165).

The preoccupation with production distracts men from the spiritual realities of life, and even deters them from developing friendships. "Most men I do not meet at all, for they seem not to have time; they are busy about their beans," writes Thoreau (165).

The introduction of the existence and superiority of the spiritual life theme in "The Bean-field" is typical of its introduction in other chapters. As in "Economy," Thoreau begins with the material, recognizes the legitimacy of farm work, then moves into a lesson on the superiority of the spiritual life. "Labor of the hands," Thoreau says, "has a constant and imperishable moral, and to the scholar it yields a classic result" (157). Moldenhauer points out that this drawing of morals from everyday experience is one characteristic of Transcendental thinking with "its emphasis upon the perception of a spiritual reality behind the surfaces of things" (75). In some respects the moral correspondences between nature and the spiritual world found throughout Walden are allegorical and resemble Bunyan's use of allegory. For example, in "The Bean-Field" Thoreau uses an extended metaphor on farming to write his own version of the Parable of the Sower:

I will not plant beans and corn with so much

industry another summer, but such seeds, if the seed is not lost, as sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence, and the like, and see if they will not grow in this soil, even with less toil and manurance, and sustain me, for surely it has not been exhausted for these crops" (163-164).

The theme of the search for truth is principally developed in "Bean-Field" as a conflict between the individual and society, the secondary level discussed earlier in the comparison of Pilgrim's Progress and "Economy." Thoreau the individual, alone in his field, is able to see the difference between his own understanding of truth and the hypocrisy and self-deception in society. He hears "popguns" as the militia practices in the village and sometimes has "a vague sense all the day of some sort of itching and disease in the horizon, as if some eruption would break out there soon, either scarlatina or canker-rash..."(160). Thoreau's search for better farming methods is criticized by other farmers because it is new and different. Thoreau uses this as an object lesson, a representative example of those who blindly follow the practices of the past. "Commonly men will only be brave as their fathers were brave, or timid," he writes (164). He encourages his readers to break from the constraints of the past, as Christian did in Pilgrim's Progress. "Try new adventures," Thoreau admonishes his readers. "Why concern

ourselves so much about our beans for seed, and not be concerned at all about a new generation of men?" (164).

As we turn to "Higher Laws," the next chapter of Walden to be considered, we soon become aware that this chapter is similar to Pilgrim's Progress in its insistence on the centrality of the spiritual life. The theme of the existence and superiority of the spiritual vision dominates to such an extent that the condemnation of materialism and the search for truth are not treated separately here, although they are present in the chapter. In "Higher Laws" Thoreau moves from the world of nature to the world of the spirit more abruptly than in previous chapters and his stance toward the material is harsher. For example, Thoreau calls the woods a "vegetable wilderness" as he moves from the temporal to the spiritual in his answer to the question of whether fathers should allow their sons to hunt and fish: "make them hunters, though sportsmen only at first, if possible, mighty hunters at last, so that they shall not find game large enough for them in this or any vegetable wilderness -- hunters as well as fishers of men" (212). In other words, although nature is an excellent starting point, there are higher laws to be sought by the spiritually enlightened adult.

The predominance of discussions on self-discipline and self-denial distinguishes "Higher Laws" from the other chapters in Walden, but connects it thematically with

Pilgrim's Progress. Much like his Puritan forebears, Thoreau insists on the importance of purifying one's life. For example, he recommends abstinence from certain foods and from sex in order to be completely separated from the dissipating and distracting comforts of life.

J.B. Pickard suggests that "Higher Laws" reveals a Puritan influence because in this chapter "Thoreau seems to move toward a withdrawal from nature and a distrust of the senses" (7). What Pickard sees as withdrawal and distrust may be an attempt by Thoreau to speak as directly as possible of the spiritual life. "The true harvest of my daily life," writes Thoreau, "is somewhat as intangible as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little stardust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched" (216-217). If, like Christian, a person is to be a spiritual hunter or fisher, if he or she can reject materialism, stand courageously against the crowd, and search for an ideal as indefinable as truth, then self-discipline and self-denial become essential virtues. From this perspective, Thoreau's emphasis on purity, temperance, and chastity comes into focus and we can understand why he insists that they must be continuously, even rigidly practiced.

Although the emphasis in "Higher Laws" is on a Puritan self-discipline and self-denial, we must not lose sight of

the fact that for both Thoreau and Bunyan, the discipline of the spiritual life, even though difficult, is an affirmative one. After defeating Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, Christian sings along his way, and so does Thoreau. To the individual who follows his genius and conforms his life to higher principles, Thoreau says "All nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself" (216).

The fourth chapter to be considered in Walden is "Spring," in which affirmation of virtue and colossal blessing and congratulation give balance to the perspective of "Higher Laws." It is spring and Thoreau has no reason to rail against materialism or cowardice or hypocrisy.

As in the chapters leading to and following after "Higher Laws," the moral correspondences which can be drawn and lessons which can be learned from nature dominate "Spring." The sand which flows from the thaw of the railroad cut reminds Thoreau of creation and teaches him that we have "not a fossil earth, but a living earth" (309). Spring is synonymous with the spiritual life, representing birth, reform, awakening, and resurrection. "Walden was dead and is alive again" (311).

A spring day is a "truce to vice. While such a sun holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return," writes Thoreau in a paraphrase of an Isaac Watts hymn. This Biblical and liturgical language affirms the virtues which

Thoreau associates with awakened spirituality: forgiveness, cleansing, innocence, and holiness. The neighbor who yesterday was known as a "thief, a drunkard, or a sensualist" is reborn in spring and "Even he has entered into the joy of his Lord" (315).

The conflict between society and the individual which was so prevalent in other chapters is hardly mentioned in "Spring." If society's members do not respond to the awakened individual, it is "because they do not obey the hint which God gives them, nor accept the pardon which he freely offers to all" (315). Thus the three major themes which have been discussed separately and at length in other chapters are merged in "Spring" into a joyous and hopeful affirmation of the spiritual life. "Spring" parallels the joy of Christian's entry into the Celestial City.

In "Conclusion," the last chapter to be discussed, the key themes of Walden are recapitulated and their importance and interrelationships are reexamined. Materialism is again condemned while other-worldly values like poverty and simplicity are praised. "Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage," writes Thoreau. "Do not trouble yourself much to get new things, whether clothes or friends.... Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul" (328-329).

In "Conclusion," the second theme is developed by an emphasis on the inner and individual nature of the spiritual

life, and with it the virtues of courage and integrity are stressed. This parallels Christian's experience of the spiritual life. Although he has companions on his journey, his decision to go on the pilgrimage is his own and he alone must overcome the difficulties and battle the enemies which challenge him. "Explore thyself," Thoreau tells his readers in an extended metaphor, for

it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone (321).

In "Conclusion" Thoreau combines his rejection of materialism with the third theme, the search for truth. "Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth," he writes. "I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board" (330-331).

The conflict between the individual and society, which is a secondary level of the theme of the search for truth, underlies much of "Conclusion." "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer," writes Thoreau (326). His concern with the harm inherent in tradition and conformity as well as his

faith in the ultimate triumph of the spiritual individual can be seen in the concluding story about the "strong and beautiful bug" that overcomes the "many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society" and gnaws its way out of "society's most trivial and handselled furniture" (333).

In many ways Christian's journey in Pilgrim's Progress parallels that of the strong and beautiful bug described in "Conclusion." Christian is not given as an example to the readers because he is distinguished by any extraordinary gifts. What makes Christian strong and beautiful is his singleness of purpose and his faithfulness to his search for the spiritual life. The joy which Christian experiences at the end of his search is an invitation and a promise of success to all those who wish to follow in Christian's footsteps. In both works the message of hope and joy is essentially the same: the individual who resists the snares of materialism, cultivates virtue, submits to the discipline of the spiritual life, and dedicates his or her life to the search for truth will triumph.

Chapter 2 Symbolism

This chapter will compare various symbols and symbolic activities common to Walden and Pilgrim's Progress which indicate that Thoreau may have taken advantage of the familiarity and authority of some of the more prominent symbols in Pilgrim's Progress and reshaped them, as he reshaped his Biblical uses, to define and support his themes.

The first major symbol to be compared is the main character in each work. The primary symbolic roles Christian and Thoreau the narrator play are those of hero and adventurer. As heroes, Christian and Thoreau the narrator teach, encourage, and inspire. As adventurers they blaze the trail for others and invite them into the spiritual life by making it look exciting and desirable. Both Bunyan and Thoreau use the hero to advocate lifestyles which are not easily understood or accepted by the readers. The themes which are identified in Chapter One of this report are illustrated and made accessible by the hero. The hero shows that it is possible to reject materialism, embrace the spiritual life, and search for truth.

An example of Bunyan's use of Christian's conversations and experiences for instructing and encouraging his readers can be found in discussions of the theme of the search for truth in Chapter One of this report. Christian's debate is a successful refutation of By-ends' false claims while the

correctness of his refusal to leave the way and enter the silver mine is contrasted to the fate of By-ends' company. Furthermore, Bunyan means for his readers to see themselves in Christian's experiences. Christian's trials and tribulations are general enough to represent those of most readers, and his success is their success.

Like Bunyan, Thoreau also uses his main character to teach, encourage, and inspire. His entire experience in the woods is recorded, he tells the readers, because it can benefit them. Throughout Walden we read such words as "I learned this, at least, by my experiment..." (206). Faced with John Field's predicament, Thoreau writes, "I tried to help him with my experience..." (205). Thoreau also means for his readers to identify with his narrator and find encouragement from the narrator's successes. "If I seem to boast more than is becoming, my excuse is that I brag for humanity rather than for myself," he writes in "Economy" (49).

Another link between Christian and Thoreau the narrator can be found in each author's identification of his hero with the Puritan doctrine of election. References to election occur throughout Pilgrim's Progress as Bunyan distinguishes between the characters "chosen" for salvation and those who think they are going to the Celestial City, but will never reach it. For example, Christian points out

to Formalist and Hypocrisy that they do not possess the signs of election which he has in his garments, his roll, and the mark on his forehead. These signs comfort Christian because they assure him that he will eventually reach his goal.

In "Solitude," Thoreau's allusion to election associates his hero with Christian:

Sometimes, when I compare myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they, beyond any deserts that I am conscious of; as if I had a warrant and surety at their hands which my fellows have not, and were especially guided and guarded (131).

In "Baker Farm" Thoreau writes "I used to wonder at the halo of light around my shadow, and would fain fancy myself one of the elect" (202). This symbolism which identifies Thoreau the narrator with the "elect" and with Christian would have had a strong effect on Walden's first audience (and probably helps to explain why Thoreau's critics charged that he was sacrilegious). It gave authority and legitimacy to Thoreau's search for the spiritual life and implied that his search would be successful.

The spiritual hero as adventurer is a powerful symbol in Pilgrim's Progress. Bunyan's Christian is outfitted like a knight with the "full armour of God" (Ephesians 6:11) and he is on a quest replete with danger, excitement, and

uncertainty. Such virtues as courage, integrity, purity, and faith are desirable because only through them will Christian and the reader be able to succeed in the spiritual world and achieve the Celestial City.

Thoreau also portrays his narrator as a hero on a spiritual quest. In "Higher Laws" we find the disciplines and rigors of the spiritual life presented as challenging, yet worth the effort in the end. The heroic virtues of purity, chastity, and temperance are extolled and practiced vigilantly by the narrator. Through the choice of the word "truce," Thoreau invites his readers to share the excitement of the kind of spiritual warfare Christian engaged in. "Our whole life is startlingly moral, there is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice," he writes (218). Throughout Walden Thoreau promises that a life of excitement is waiting for those with enough courage to "adventure on life," to accept the challenge to seek an unseen, unknown reality.

The journey is the second major symbol to be discussed. The journey per se, along with burdens carried and places visited, will comprise the remainder of this chapter. The journey which the heroes embark upon is a spiritual quest rich in symbolic activities which, when compared, yield a surprising number of correspondences and similarities.

Both Thoreau and Bunyan take advantage of the many meanings and aspects of a journey to illustrate various

themes and ideas. Some of the themes which Christian's journey represents, such as conviction of sin and reward in an afterlife, are not shared by Thoreau. The journeys of the two heroes do nevertheless encompass the broad themes already identified as the condemnation of materialism, the superiority of the spiritual life, and the search for truth.

The spiritual journey is presented in Pilgrim's Progress as corresponding to and part of the natural course of a lifetime with its various stages from birth to death. Christian's journey begins with his flight from the City of Destruction and his entrance at the Wicket Gate, which represents the "new birth" that begins with conviction of sin and repentance. The stages of growth to maturity are a series of trials and temptations representative of the struggle of commitment to the Christian life and growth in faith. Christian experiences physical death when he crosses the river, but this is a new beginning of life, eternal life in the Celestial City.

In Walden Thoreau the narrator undergoes a symbolic journey which resembles the "journey of life" in some aspects, but also closely resembles and relies for interpretation on the symbolism of the spiritual journey found in the Bible, other literary works, and perhaps specifically in Pilgrim's Progress.

The spiritual journey in both Pilgrim's Progress and Walden begins with the action of the hero abandoning his old

life for the new. Christian flees the City of Destruction crying "Life, Life, Eternal Life (10). Thoreau writes that he left Concord for Walden Pond because he "wished to live," ... "to front only the essential facts of life,"... to "suck out all the marrow of life..." (90-91). Christian's flight illustrates Christ's message that his followers must abandon all to follow him. Thoreau's symbolic departure from Concord in order to find life corresponds closely to Christian's dramatic action and is shaped to support his theme of opposition to materialism and tradition. A possible allusion to Christian can be found at the end of "Visitors" when Thoreau calls "honest pilgrims" those who "came out to the woods for freedom's sake, and really left the village behind..." (154).

The bulk of Walden, like Pilgrim's Progress, is concerned with the stages in the spiritual journey which pertain to growth and maturity. Both authors use the journey to show the reader the "way" to separation from materialism and recognition of the superiority of the spiritual life. Thoreau speaks in "Economy" of solving "some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically" (15). The search for practical solutions is a part of the search for truth theme and also requires rejection of materialism. When these problems are solved, specifically, when one obtains economic freedom, then he can

wholeheartedly seek truth and the spiritual life. As Thoreau pursues this goal at Walden Pond, so Christian continues on his way after defeating his foes and overcoming obstacles. Just as Christian reaches heaven at the end of his journey, so Thoreau also reaches, in "Spring" and "Conclusion," the spiritual life and the truth that he has been seeking.

The way or path one takes in the spiritual journey is used by both Thoreau and Bunyan to symbolize the theme of the search for truth. The path symbol found in numerous Biblical passages such as "Thou wilt shew me the path of life" (Psalms 16:11) is easily incorporated by Bunyan into the allegory of Christian's journey. Brian Nellist points out that for Bunyan the road itself symbolizes Christ who said "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and "no man cometh to the Father but by me" (151).

In Pilgrim's Progress Christian finds, loses, strays from, and is steadfast to his way. As long as he stays on the path, he "progresses" on the King's Highway, the Way of Righteousness. When he gets off the path, Christian encounters disaster. All these experiences illustrate aspects of the search for truth and the spiritual life.

In Walden the symbolism of finding one's way and being steadfast to it works particularly well to illustrate the aspect of the search for truth which stresses the need for personal integrity and courage. As was noted in Chapter

One, Thoreau wrote in "Economy:" "I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead" (71). This is closely followed by an ironic use of the path symbol to explain why he is not philanthropic:

Probably I should not consciously and deliberately forsake my particular calling to do the good which society demands of me, to save the universe from annihilation; and I believe that a like but infinitely greater steadfastness elsewhere is all that now preserves it.... What good I do, must be aside from my main path, and for the most part wholly unintended (73).

In "Sounds" he writes "Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then" (118).

Of equal importance to being steadfast in the way is the symbol of leaving the path or taking the wrong way. Both authors use this symbol to illustrate the harm and, specifically, the despair which is suffered by those who follow falsehood. Two powerful symbols which teach the consequences of leaving the path in Pilgrim's Progress are the Slough of Despond and Doubting Castle. Both of these symbols will be discussed in relation to their possible use by Thoreau in Walden.

Bunyan's slough is a sticky bog which Christian and

Pliable fall into because they are "heedless." Bunyan writes that "Here therefore they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; And Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink into the Mire" (14). The slough, Help explains to Christian, represents "conviction for sin... fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions...." "It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad." Help continues, "his Laborers also, have by the direction of His Majesties Surveyors, been for above this sixteen hundred years employ'd about this patch of ground" (15-16).

Those who stumble into Bunyan's slough suffer mental afflictions -- doubts, fears, and despair. In the first pages of Walden, Thoreau declares that "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation" (8). Thoreau differs from Bunyan by blaming materialism and adherence to tradition rather than conviction of sin as the cause of the despair, but his use of the slough symbol is a likely allusion to Bunyan's sixteen-hundred-year-old bog. Writes Thoreau: "It is evident what mean and sneaking lives many of you live... trying to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient slough..."(6).

In "Baker Farm" Thoreau again uses the slough to symbolize the desperation which results from putting one's faith in a false economy, the inevitable result of seeking materialism rather than truth and the spiritual life. "I

did not use tea, nor coffee, nor butter, nor milk, nor fresh meat, and so did not have to work to get them," writes Thoreau (205). Oliver cites this passage as a clear allusion to Pilgrim's Progress:

Going fishing Thoreau encountered the bog-trotter Irishman John Field and his family, bogged down in life in a perpetual slough of despond, lost in a lost world. Thoreau gives them the message, the direction of Evangel. He points out for them the wicket gate which might lead them toward the saving light. They look wistfully but hopelessly and remain stuck in the bog of their own distress. But Thoreau himself is a Pilgrim going on his way, unwilling to be detained by a slothful neighbor" (83).

Giant Despair's ill treatment of Christian and Hopeful in the dungeon of Doubting Castle once more illustrates the doleful consequences of leaving the way of Christ. Only after many days of torture at the Giant's hands does Christian remember that his key Promise will enable their escape. The Giant Despair symbol illustrates quite pointedly the mental and emotional nature of the suffering which abandonment of the way brings. Renewed faith and hope restores the pilgrims to their way.

The further point that the prison of despair is self-

imposed can be clearly seen in the man in the iron cage emblem which Christian is shown in the House of the Interpreter. The man describes himself as "a Man of Despair, and am shut up in it, as in this Iron Cage. I cannot get out; O, now I cannot" (34). If the man could find faith, he would be free.

Thoreau also uses the prison or the state of imprisonment to symbolize the desperate condition he sees his contemporaries languishing in because they have taken the wrong way of materialism or have stumbled into the ruts of tradition. "Look at the teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night; does any divinity stir within him?" asks Thoreau. The teamster drives for Squire Make-a-stir and has no time to cultivate his spiritual life. He is the "slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself....What a man thinks of himself, that is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate" (7). Tradition also imprisons people because it discourages the search for truth and this leads to desperation. Writes Thoreau: "it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left" (8). Thoreau wishes his readers to realize that they, like Christian, also have the power to escape the drudgery of their lives.

The burden or the encumbrance is another important symbol common to Pilgrim's Progress and Walden. While

Thoreau makes extended use of the burden symbol to teach his opposition to materialism, Bunyan uses the burden to represent both sin and guilt and the despair or distress brought on by sin and guilt. This burden Christian carries in the first stages of his journey is one of the best-known symbols of Pilgrim's Progress.

I saw a Man cloathed with Raggs, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own House, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his Back... he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, 'what shall I do?'... I your dear friend am in myself undone, by reason of a burden that lieth hard upon me (8).

In "Economy" we find Thoreau using the burden symbol in a manner which resembles Bunyan both in detail and tone:

How many a poor immortal soul have I met well nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stable never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing, pasture, and wood-lot! (5)

Later in the chapter the symbolism is repeated: "I look upon England to-day as an old gentleman who is travelling with a great deal of baggage, trumpery which has accumulated from long housekeeping, which he has not the courage to burn; great trunk, little trunk, bandbox and bundle" (66).

Closely following the English traveller, as if to draw once more the parallel between the burdens his readers carry and that of Bunyan's Christian, Thoreau writes:

When I have met an immigrant tottering under a bundle which contained his all -- looking like an enormous wen which had grown out of the nape of his neck -- I have pitied him, not because that was his all, but because he had all that to carry (67).

Thoreau's burden symbol corresponds to Bunyan's familiar symbol, yet differs from it in meaning and application. Bunyan's hero carries the burden and is troubled by it and seeking relief from it. His contemporaries do not recognize its existence or realize that they too carry burdens. Thoreau's hero is unencumbered. It is Thoreau's readers who carry the burdens. They resemble Christian's neighbors and family because they do not recognize their burdens or seek relief from them. Thoreau's choice of the burden symbol works well to illustrate his theme of opposition to materialism. He skillfully makes it part of the journey of life symbolism -- those who are burdened are "creeping down the road of life" -- while he warns of the real danger risked by those whose progress on the spiritual journey has been slowed down or even stopped by their material possessions:

If you are a seer, whenever you meet a man you will see all that he owns, ay, and much that he pretends to disown, behind him, even to his kitchen furniture and all the trumpery which he saves and will not burn, and he will appear to be harnessed to it and making what headway he can" (66).

Christian cries out with despair and distress because of the great burden on his back. Thoreau's contemporaries suffer quiet desperation because they do not recognize the source of their pain, nor do they seek a remedy.

When Christian reaches the cross, his burden falls from his shoulders, rolls down the hill and is buried in the Sepulchre. Thoreau writes: "Pray, for what do we move ever but to get rid of our furniture, or exuviae; at last to go from this world to another newly furnished, and leave this to be buried?" (66).

In Walden the unencumbered hero symbolizes faith and new life because he no longer relies on material possessions to help him in his journey. The antidote to the desperate life is faith. Thoreau links his narrator with the unencumbered Christian in a complex allusion to the Biblical Israelites and to Abraham, the father of faith:

The very simplicity and nakedness of man's life in the primitive ages imply this advantage, at least, that they left him still 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 (37).

Throughout Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan associates Christian's journey with that of the Israelites who also journeyed through the wilderness of this world. J. Paul Hunter states that the "parallel between the plight of the modern Puritans and ancient Israelites had been established early in the seventeenth century, and Puritan writers exploited this conviction in formulating their metaphors along the particular outlines of the Old Testament account" (109). The answer of Christian and Faithful to the men of Vanity Fair that "they were Pilgrims and Strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own Countrey, which was the Heavenly Jerusalem" (90) reflects this tradition. Thoreau may well have depended on his readers' knowledge of this tradition and their recognition of his allusion to Christian's journey to show his readers their need to abandon their encumbrances and embrace a life of faith.

At the end of "Higher Laws" John Farmer's thought is described as a burden. "Why do you stay here and live this mean molling life, when a glorious existence is possible for you?" a voice said to him. "But how to come out of this condition and actually migrate thither?" (222). The

unencumbered hero points toward the light and leads the way.

The final symbol which will be discussed in this chapter is the village or town, which appears often in Walden and also in Pilgrim's Progress. Bunyan's Vanity Fair sequence and Thoreau's chapter "The Village" both use the town as a symbol of society's evils, and particularly the evil of materialism. The journey through the village by both Thoreau the narrator and Christian underscores the message that the spiritual journey is imposed upon and part of the journey of life. The village represents the world in which the spiritual travelers must live. Both authors use the village symbol to teach the inevitability of conflict between the spiritual individual seeking truth and those who have embraced the false values of the world.

Thoreau's use of the village symbol is less complex than his use of some of Bunyan's other symbols because correspondences can be drawn not only from his use of the symbol, but from his use of Bunyan's themes and satirical tone. Additionally, a striking number of similarities between the actions of the heroes can be drawn when the two passages are compared.

In Vanity Fair the pilgrims see wares being sold: "such Merchandise as Houses, Lands, Trades, ... Wives, Husbands, Children, Masters, Servants, Lives, Blood, Bodies, Souls, ... and what not" (88). These are laid out in rows and streets.

"Here are the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold" (88). Christian and Faithful attract attention because they show no interest in buying anything, rather they "put their fingers in their ears, and cry, Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and look upwards, signifying that their Trade and Traffic were in Heaven" (90). Because of this response, they are mocked, taunted, smitten, and jailed.

As Thoreau enters the village, he sees that the houses are arranged:

in lanes and fronting one another, so that every traveller had to run the gauntlet, and every man, woman, and child might get a lick at him.... Signs were hung out on all sides to allure him; some to catch him by the appetite, as the tavern and victualling cellar; some by the fancy, as the dry goods store and the jeweller's; and others by the hair or the feet or the skirts, as the barber, the shoemaker, or the tailor (168).

Thoreau tells us that he "escaped wonderfully from these dangers" by "proceeding at once boldly and without deliberation to the goal" and by "keeping my thought on high things, like Orpheus, who 'loudly singing the praises of the gods to his lyre, drowned the voices of the Sirens, and kept out of danger'" (169).

Thoreau is also "seized and put into jail" because he did not pay a tax to, or recognize the authority of, the state which buys and sells men, women, and children, like cattle at the door of its senate-house... But, wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions, and, if they can, constrain him to belong to their desperate odd-fellow society (171).

This comparison of passages shows parallels in action (the heroes are singled out, criticized, and jailed) and in descriptions (the market, the catalogues of what is for sale). Additionally, the mocking tone which Thoreau adopts resembles Bunyan's satire. Bunyan is critical of a society which favors the rich and is intolerant of his religious sect, a society at whose hands he has personally suffered. Thoreau is critical of a society which worships materialism and tolerates slavery.

In addition to teaching the condemnation of materialism theme, both authors use the experiences of their heroes in the village to show the superiority of the spiritual life, and the conflict with society which results from the search for truth. Faithful's defense of truth and assertion of the superiority of the spiritual life not only correspond to Thoreau's defense in "The Village," but even more directly correspond to his expressed opinions in "Conclusion." In

Pilgrim's Progress we read: "Then Faithful began to answer, That he had only set himself against that which had set it self against him that is higher than the highest" (93). Envy testifies that "He neither regardeth Prince nor People, Law nor Custom... in particular, I heard him once my self affirm, That Christianity, and the Customs of our Town of Vanity, were Diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled" (93). Thoreau writes in "Conclusion" that "A saner man would have found himself often enough 'in formal opposition' to what are deemed 'the most sacred laws of society,' through obedience to yet more sacred laws..." (322-323).

Bunyan and his fellow Puritans must have endured criticism for their austere clothing and this experience becomes part of Bunyan's teaching on the incompatibility of the spiritual vision with the worldly vision. When Christian and Faithful arrive in the village, the first thing that is noticed is their clothing:

They were cloathed with such kind of Raiment, as was diverse from the Raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair, made a great gazing upon them: Some said they were Fools, some they were Bedlams, and some they were Outlandish men (90).

Thoreau writes of a similar reaction when he asks his tailoress to make him a garment: "I find it difficult to get

made what I want, simply because she cannot believe that I mean what I say, that I am so rash" (25). The tailoress' response is typical of those in society who cannot see the spiritual reality, of those who are not searching for truth. In "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," Thoreau describes what the village looks like when seen through the eyes of a spiritual traveler:

If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the 'Mill-dam' go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a courthouse, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them (96).

Thoreau may be expecting his readers to recognize in this town a nineteenth-century rendition of Vanity Fair.

Chapter 3 Aspects of Language and Rhetorical Devices

Throughout his life Thoreau felt a kinship with such Puritans as Bradford, Josselyn, and Wood, the first explorers and historians of New England. He admired these men, not only because of their independent qualities, but also because of the plainness and honesty which came through in their writing. Matthiessen writes that Thoreau admired Bradford's prose for the depth of feeling expressed in language that "does not spring from those who gaze upon nature from the gentlemanly vista of a countryseat, but 'from the peasant's horn windows'" (116).

Bunyan, the itinerant tinker and preacher jailed in Bedford, certainly wrote from the earthy perspective that Thoreau admired in the New England authors. S.J. Newman calls Pilgrim's Progress an "obviously home-made artifact" (226).

Although Thoreau may have admired the prose style of Pilgrim's Progress, its influence on the style of Walden is difficult to determine. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to discuss the similarities as far as they go. The prose of the two writers will be compared in regard to three main aspects of language: plain style, homely illustrations, and techniques of persuasion.

The style used by Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress fits well under the plain style category. The word choice and sentence structures are simple. There are no foreign words,

and no references to other authors or works outside of the Biblical uses. Few rhetorical flourishes can be found, although Bunyan does successfully use some figures of speech which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Walden does not fit readily as does Pilgrim's Progress into the plain style category. Thoreau's use of long sentences with numerous subordinate clauses and his reliance on classical allusions complicate his prose, as does his use of French, Greek and Latin words and scientific and poetic diction. Nevertheless, we can find throughout the work an attempt by Thoreau to present his themes in clear and simple language, and occasionally to imitate the speech patterns of common people. A resemblance to the style used by Bunyan can be seen when the beginning lines of Walden and Pilgrim's Progress are compared. Thoreau writes:

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only (3).

Bunyan writes:

As I walk'd through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Denn; and I laid me down in that place to sleep: And as

I slept I dreamed a Dream (8).

In both passages the narrative is straightforward with frequent use of commas, and the word choice is simple. Both passages include an allusion to the Bible. "The labor of my hands" in Walden's introduction is cited by Long as an allusion to four Biblical passages (325). The "wilderness of this world" is an allusion by Bunyan to the Biblical Israelites. Thoreau's use of Biblical language reflects the language used and recognized by the common people and certainly connects the language of Walden with that of Pilgrim's Progress.

An example of Thoreau's imitation of the speech patterns of his New England neighbors can be found in "Solitude." Thoreau writes that "Men frequently say to me, 'I should think you would feel lonesome down there, and want to be nearer to folks, rainy and snowy days and nights especially.'" Thoreau answers by pointing to "yonder star" (133). He then answers another townsman that in regard to living alone "he liked it passably well" (133). Thoreau's analysis of the French-Canadian woodchopper in "Visitors" is filled with colloquialisms which Thoreau relishes.

The use of homely illustrations by Bunyan and Thoreau is the second aspect of language which will be compared. Most of the symbols common to Walden and Pilgrim's Progress discussed in Chapter Two fit in the "homely" category and the words describing journeys, pathways, meadows, bogs, and

prisons are words in common use. In addition, Thoreau uses the down-to-earth language of farming, fishing, and carpentry throughout Walden.

Both Thoreau and Bunyan frequently associate these illustrations, symbols, and symbolic activities with well-known Biblical passages, and at the same time add regional touches. Bunyan's technique of turning the sloughs, castles, and market towns of England into Biblically-based moral lessons is similar to Thoreau's technique of using Biblical allusions in descriptions of pastoral New England scenes. In "The Bean-Field" Thoreau draws an extended comparison between his New England farmer-hero and the Parable of the Sower. In "Sounds" Thoreau writes that the Fitchburg Railroad carries "chairs enough to seat all the weary and heavy laden..." (115), a possible allusion to both the Bible and Bunyan's burden symbol. A few pages further into the chapter Thoreau's uses the colloquial word "hark" to tie a Biblical allusion to a description of a familiar train sighting: "And hark! here comes the cattle-train bearing the cattle of a thousand hills..." (121).

The third major similarity in language use is persuasion techniques. Since each author advocated a lifestyle which would likely be resisted by many readers, persuasion was very important. Whether or not Thoreau imitated Bunyan's proven methods, similarities between the

two authors can be seen in their use of dialogue, punning, and the employment of some figures of speech.

Dialogue is an important instrument of persuasion in both works, and often takes on the form of debate which contrasts the writer's sound position with the unsound opposing view. Dialogue and debate are central for Bunyan, who as a preacher in a dissenting sect, spent his life battling with words. "Dialogue accounts for most of both parts of The Pilgrim's Progress in terms of sheer bulk," writes David Seed (69). The contrast between right and wrong thinking is dramatized throughout the work in dialogues. Seed points out that at the beginning of the journey, Christian can only overcome the arguments of his neighbors and family by putting his fingers in his ears and fleeing them. He learns the danger of not being able to distinguish between good and bad advice when he allows Mr. Worldly Wiseman to turn him out of the way. As he advances along the way, Christian becomes proficient in debate and is able to see the fallacies in the arguments of such characters as By-ends, Ignorance, and Atheist. He is able also to instruct other pilgrims. He warns Faithful that for Talkative "Religion hath no place in his heart, or house, or conversation; all he hath lieth in his tongue, and his Religion is to make a noise therewith" (78). Faithful, not completely convinced by Christian, goes off and has a conversation with Talkative which affirms to him and the

reader the truth of Christian's assessment. Throughout Pilgrim's Progress Christian encounters characters who show their true colors through their conversation.

Moldenhauer's observations of Thoreau's use of dialogue and debate in Walden would apply as well to Pilgrim's Progress. He writes:

Thoreau creates individual characters who express attitudes to be refuted by the narrator, and who serve as foils for his wit. These are stylized figures, briefly but deftly sketched, who heckle or complain or interrogate (78).

For example, in "Economy" Thoreau writes:

There is a certain class of unbelievers who sometimes ask me such questions as, if I think that I can live on vegetable food alone; and to strike at the root of the matter at once, -- for the root is faith,-- I am accustomed to answer such, that I can live on board nails. If they cannot understand that, they cannot understand much that I have to say" (64-65).

Possibly alluding to the Rich Young Ruler, Thoreau writes, "One young man of my acquaintance, who has inherited some acres, told me that he thought he should live as I did, if he had the means (71). In "The Bean-Field," Thoreau hears criticism of his farming methods:

"Beans so late! peas so late!" "Does he live there?" asks the black bonnet of the gray coat; and the hard-featured farmer reins up his grateful dobbin to inquire what you are doing where he sees no manure in the furrow, and recommends a little chip dirt, or any little waste stuff, or it may be ashes or plaster (157).

In Pilgrim's Progress, the bad characters act as foils to Christian and serve the purpose of what Moldenhauer calls "the hostile fictional audience" in Walden.

Punning is another technique of persuasion common to Thoreau and Bunyan. Although Bunyan does not use punning as extensively as does Thoreau, his use of a pun on the word "professor" bears resemblances to a pun by Thoreau, and each author's use of the pun underscores a similar point.

Bunyan uses the pun to teach his readers that being a professor of Christ requires actions as well as words. The character Talkative calls himself a "professor," and this name becomes part of the pun. Faithful instructs Talkative that holiness comes "not by talk only, as an Hypocrite or Talkative person may do: but by a practical Subjection in Faith, and Love, to the power of the word" (83). The final pun on the word and its personification in the character Talkative is drawn as Faithful delivers his judgment: "your conversation gives this your Mouth-profession the lye.... so you are a shame to all Professors" (84).

In "Economy" Thoreau uses the sense of the word "professor" adopted by Bunyan, playing it against the modern use. "There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers," writes Thoreau. "Yet it is admirable to profess because it was once admirable to live" (14). Later in the chapter Thoreau writes that if he had a son he would not "send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where anything is professed and practised but the art of life.... Even the poor student studies and is taught only political economy, while that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy is not even sincerely professed in our colleges" (51-52). In the next paragraph Thoreau assesses the telegraph much as Faithful assessed Talkative: "As if the main object were to talk fast and not to talk sensibly" (52).

One of the figures of speech common to Walden and Pilgrim's Progress is the paradox. Paradox is employed extensively by Thoreau and Bunyan, and may be the closest stylistic connection which can be drawn between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress.

"The dominant stylistic feature of Walden is paradox -- paradox in such quantity and of such significance that we are reminded of the works of Donne, Sir Thomas Browne, and other English metaphysical writers," states Moldenhauer (74). Paradox can also be found extensively in the plot and

characters of Pilgrim's Progress. For example, Worldly Wiseman is a fool, Ignorance is a conceited know-all, and Vain Confidence points out the way to Christian, then falls into a pit. Although these paradoxes are situational rather than verbal, they originate from Biblical paradoxes which are generally glossed for the reader.

Paradox is employed by both Thoreau and Bunyan much as the dialogue is used, as a contrast between sound and unsound points of view. The paradox goes a step farther than the contrast of debate, however. Its inherent shock value may have been what appealed most to each writer.

Moldenhauer, calling Walden "a severely dialectical work," says that Thoreau uses the paradox as the primary method of getting his readers out of their old ways of thinking and preparing them to hear his new perspective: "Habitually aware of the 'common sense,' the dulled perception that the desperate life produces, he could turn the world of his audience upside-down by rhetorical means" (76).

Pilgrim's Progress can certainly be described as a severely dialectical work, and Bunyan's goal of persuading his readers to embrace Puritan Christianity necessitated a radical change of their values and outlook. Brian Nellist argues that Bunyan's purpose in Pilgrim's Progress is to teach the "positive valuation of uncertainty," a purpose to which the paradox lends itself well:

We watch with pleasure a man like ourselves trying to adjust to puzzles they set him. But our detached delight in such alien marvels tends to turn to discomfiture when we discover that the apparently foreign is only another way of seeing the familiar (140).

Nellist also points out that Christian's journey out of the world paradoxically leads him back to the City of Destruction, which he now sees as Vanity Fair. He must learn to live in the world and at the same time be detached from it. This teaching, based on a New Testament paradox, is an old truth which might have been passed over by Bunyan's readers if he had not presented it in a new way.

Many of the paradoxes in Walden, as in Pilgrim's Progress, are restated Biblical paradoxes. Moldenhauer's list of Thoreau's principal paradoxes reads like a synopsis of New Testament paradoxes: "Thoreau declares that his listener's goods are evils, his freedom slavery, and his life a death." Through language Thoreau affirms the values of Transcendentalism which "the audience would deprecate as valueless. In these paradoxes, the beautiful is contained in the ugly, the truly precious in the seemingly trivial, and the springs of life in the apparently dead" (81-82).

A characteristic example of paradox based on the Bible can be found in each author's use of Matthew 16:26, which

asks, "For what is a man profited, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" In Pilgrim's Progress Bunyan directly quotes this Biblical paradox as Evangelist reprimands Christian for being led astray by Worldly Wiseman: "besides the King of glory hath told thee, that he that will save his life shall lose it" (23). In a situational paradox based on this passage, Faithful's death is turned into life when he is whisked off to the Celestial City after suffering martyrdom in Vanity Fair.

An example of Thoreau's use of this Biblical paradox can be found in "Economy," a chapter much concerned with inverted values. In a comment on merchants, Thoreau writes that "probably not even the other three succeed in saving their souls, but are perchance bankrupt in a worse sense than they who fail honestly" (33). Another example of this paradox can be found in "The Village" where Thoreau writes "Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations" (171). In "The Ponds" Thoreau writes "Give me the poverty that enjoys true wealth" (196).

In addition to paradox, other figures of speech common to Thoreau and Bunyan are irony, hyperbole, and understatement. Found primarily in satire, these figures of speech serve a similar purpose as debate and paradox by providing the means to contrast sound and unsound values and

points of view. Brean S. Hammond writes that many of Bunyan's characters are treated satirically because "showing what is wrong with being a Worldly-Wiseman depends on showing convincingly what it is to be one" (122). Hammond identifies the trial at Vanity Fair as an example of sophisticated satire and discusses Bunyan's skillful use of irony, hyperbole, and understatement. She calls Bunyan's depiction of the Judges' "gentleness" "a masterly irony"(121). She points to the execution of Faithful as a good example of hyperbole:

and first they Scourged him, then they Buffeted him, then they Lanced his flesh with Knives; after that they Stoned him with Stones, then prickt him with their Swords, and last of all they burned him to Ashes at the stake (97).

Understatement follows immediately with the words "Thus came Faithful to his end," and with Faithful's rescue by "a Chariot and a couple of Horses" (97). Hammond comments that this "entire passage in fact strikes a serio-comic balance out of satiric indignation" (122).

In a similar way Thoreau criticizes his neighbors' lifestyles by describing them in details which set them up for ridicule. In "Economy," Thoreau uses hyperbole in a short but powerful sketch of the auction of a deacon's effects:

Conclusion

Thoreau's Literary Notebook (1840-1845) provides a synopsis of many of the connections which have been drawn between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress in this report. The three pages Thoreau devoted to Pilgrim's Progress indicate an interest in Bunyan's themes, symbols, and writing style, as Thoreau seems to have jotted down significant parts and passages while reading through the work. These notes show an interest in the whole of the work, from the Slough of Despond near the beginning of Part One, to a quotation on Christiana's company entering the Land of Beulah near the end of Part Two.

Thoreau's awareness of Bunyan's main themes can be inferred from the presence of a quotation on Christian's encounter with Demas at the Hill Lucre, which is an exposition of the condemnation of materialism noted in Chapter One of this report, and the brief note: "Talkative's fine Discourse," which is used by Bunyan to contrast truth and error. The existence and superiority of the spiritual life theme which permeates Pilgrim's Progress is highlighted by Thoreau's quotations on Immanuel's Land, the notes on humility from Part Two of Pilgrim's Progress, and his last long quotation on the Land of Beulah.

Many of the principal symbols discussed in this report can also be found in Thoreau's Notebook. He calls the Slough of Despond "a single and true allegory -- briefly

told" (355). The portion of the Notebook devoted to Mr. Fearing may also indicate Thoreau's interest in the Slough of Despond symbol because the total passage discusses Mr. Fearing's tendency toward despair and his long struggle in the Slough. The spiritual hero as adventurer can be found in Thoreau's observation that "Christian has no armour for his back" (355). The symbolism of the spiritual journey can be found in a passage Thoreau quotes from Christian's visit to the House Beautiful. Here Christian is shown the Delectable Mountains and catches a glimpse of "Immanuel's Land" which was "nearer the desired haven than the place where at present he was..." (355). Further evidence of Thoreau's awareness of the path symbol can be found in a quotation from the beginning of a chapter in Part One of Pilgrim's Progress: "Now as Christian went on his way, he came to a little ascent which, was cast up on purpose that pilgrims' might see before them" (355). "By-Path Meadow" which leads to Giant Despair's realm, a principal symbol of the woes suffered by leaving the way, is simply noted by Thoreau without comment.

Thoreau's awareness of Bunyan's style seems to be indicated by the brief annotations found in the Notebook. Thoreau labels the Slough of Despond "a simple and true allegory," and shows an awareness, and perhaps even an admiration of Bunyan's brevity. Thoreau calls the Christiana

scene "a beautiful account of the land of Beulah"(356) and the four-line copy of one of Bunyan's internal poems may be a link with Thoreau's own use of internal poems in Walden.

The years 1840-1845 which the Notebook spans are significant because it was in 1845 that Thoreau began constructing the cabin at Walden Pond and in July of that year that he began living there. During his two years at Walden Pond, Thoreau worked extensively on The Week, a work which, as noted in the introduction of this report, shows the direct influence of Pilgrim's Progress.

The variety of studies on influences on Thoreau's thought and writing bear witness to his eclecticism and multitudinous use of sources. It is hoped that this report's consideration of the evidence linking Walden and Pilgrim's Progress will further the discussion of Bunyan's influence on Walden. Whether or not a direct influence can be established, striking similarities do exist between Walden and Pilgrim's Progress, similarities which point to Thoreau's awareness of Bunyan's work and its likely resonance in the background of Walden.

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WALDEN AND THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the similarities in themes, symbolism, and uses of language which link Pilgrim's Progress to Walden. The introduction discusses the popularity of Pilgrim's Progress on nineteenth-century New England, the influence of the Puritans on Thoreau's thought, and Thoreau's extensive use of the Bible in Walden. The thematic similarities discussed are the condemnation of materialism, the existence and superiority of the spiritual life, and the search for truth. The major symbols compared are the use of the hero, the journey, and various symbolic aspects of the journey such as being faithful to or leaving the true path, the burdens carried and places visited. Similarities in use of language are found in each author's employment of plain style, homely illustrations, and various techniques of persuasion which include debate, punning, and figures of speech.