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Confucianism in Nineteenth Century America: The *Dao* of Henry David Thoreau, and the Transmutation of Confucian Thought into Transcendentalism.

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Introduction:

2017 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862). Soon after his death, one hundred and fifty-six-years ago, Thoreau gained the distinction of being one of the most celebrated, and paradoxically, misunderstood and misread authors in the American pantheon of literature. Unfortunately, these latter attributes continue to plague his current evaluation amongst both scholars and cultural critics. To misunderstand or misconstrue Thoreau is not typically the result of lazy scholarship or malicious intent, but rather, the logical results of dealing with a thinker whose ideas were not only revolutionary in his own time, but persist to be in the present. The complexity of reading Thoreau stems in part from the complexity of the man himself, in addition, to the diverse intellectual traditions on which he drew for the formation of his own brand of intellectual, spiritual, and philosophical thought. Much scholarship has been devoted to tracing some of these diverse intellectual traditions that exerted influence upon his writings and thoughts, in order to establish a more accurate portrait of the man and the intent of his writings. For example, these included the likes of Plato, Kant, Cato, and even the Hindu text (Vinay). However, not all intellectual traditions and their influences have been given equal weight or consideration by scholarship on Thoreau, and in some instances, some have been completely ignored or dismissed as inconsequential. In particular, the significant influence of Chinese philosophy on Thoreau's writings and thoughts, and more specifically Confucianism, have been grossly understated, or labeled as 'inconsequential' by traditional scholarship.

One of the first works that dealt exclusively with the presence of Confucius quotes and or influences in Thoreau's writings was *The Orient in American Transcendentalist* (1933), by Arthur Christy. Despite being amongst the first to investigate the presence of Confucian sayings and maxims in Thoreau's writings, Christy asserted that there is "nothing essentially Confucian in Thoreau's temperament," and that "no Confucius would have gone to Walden" (275-321). Building on the foundations laid by Christy was Lyman V. Cady in his 1961 publication, *Thoreau's Quotations from the Confucian Books in Walden*. Cady was the first to theorize that the vast majority of the Confucian quotations that appear in Thoreau's 1854 publication *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* were drawn from a translation of Jean-Pierre Guillaume Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius: les quatre livres de philosophie morale et politique de la Chine* (Paris,

1841). Once again, despite adding significantly to our understanding as to the origin of many of the Confucian quotes in *Walden*, Cady still acquiesced to the metanarrative of Christy, which in essence stated: that despite the presence of Confucian quotes in Thoreau's works, the actual "influence of the Confucian literature on Thoreau… is essentially negligible" (Cady 31). This narrative would go unchallenged in the field of Thoreau scholarship for almost thirty years.

Finally, in 1989, Hongbo Tan's PhD dissertation, *Emerson, Thoreau, and the Four Books: Transcendentalism and the Neo-Confucian Classics in Historical Context*, finally set out to challenge the metanarrative of Christy's foundational work. By the presentation of an overwhelming body of textual evidence, Tan convincingly supported a hypothesis that both Thoreau, and his mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), had engaged with Confucianism much earlier than thought, and that this early exposure had been absolutely foundational in both men's thinking and writing (Tan 125-126). Following Cady's origin hypothesis of the Confucian text, Tan all but proved that many of the Confucius quotes in Thoreau's *Walden* were indeed drawn from a translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius*, which Thoreau himself translated from French to English. According to Tan, this translation likely took place sometime around 1843, long before the publication or the composure of Thoreau's most famous works. Following the fashion of Emerson, Thoreau placed the excerpts of this translation in a commonplace book, a notebook in which extracts from other works are copied for personal use, which now resides in the New York Public Library (Tan 198-199). With the assumption of this date of 1843 being correct for Thoreau's translation of Pauthier, the earlier conclusions of both Christy and Cady were held to the light of revaluation.

Despite publishing the sections of Thoreau's commonplace book which contain the Confucian translations for the first time in his dissertation, and giving references as to where these quotes might be found in Thoreau's writings, Hongbo Tan did not provide a comparative analysis of how each of these quotes were implemented in Thoreau's writings. Nor did he give an assertive analysis of how these select quotes might have had a larger effect on the structure or themes present in Thoreau's work, and or a convincing answer as to why Thoreau, and or more generally, the Transcendentalist movement looked towards the Confucian classics for inspiration. Tan addressed some of these shortcomings in his paper's epilogue:

> But to what degree did Confucius and the Four Books help Thoreau "solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically" (Walden, p, 15)? did the Four books help guide Thoreau in Walden? were Hoei and Tian precursors of the Thoreau in Walden? did the Mencian ideal government affect Thoreau's political thinking and the formation of the arguments in "Civil Disobedience"? These are among the questions that need to be investigated. (Tan 229)

The current state of scholarship regarding the influence of the Confucian classics upon Thoreau's work, unfortunately, has not progressed much past these groundbreaking research of Christy, Cady, or the arguments of Tan, nor have they sought to address any of their shortcomings. For example, Mathew A. Foust's 2017 publication, *Confucianism and American Philosophy*, when dealing with the subject of possible influence of Confucianism on Thoreau's seminal 1849 publication, *Civil Disobedience*, does little more than summarize the existing findings of Tan, without adding additional historical context and or biographical information that might nuance the original argument. Additionally, while Laura Dassow Walls', otherwise impressive and thorough, 2017 biography, *Henry David Thoreau A life*, does call Thoreau's "oriental" readings "absolutely foundational" to his transformation as a writer and thinker, it fails to explain how that is so, with its two pages, out of five-hundred, devoted to the significance of "oriental" thought on both Emerson and Thoreau (Wall 145-46). As can be summarized from this overview, the inequalities when addressing the influences of Eastern thought on American literature and or philosophy in general have yet to be fully explored and or addressed.

The present study will further expand upon the work of Hongbo Tan, albeit with two significant theoretical frameworks in mind. The first is that of post-colonial criticism, as it will be argued that the writings of Thoreau, and by association, the Transcendentalist movement, represent a second wave of 'national' literature in American history. This might seem instinctively counterintuitive, until one realizes that the United States represents one of the first post-colonial societies in the world, and as such, any study of its 'national' literature must keep this framework in mind to a certain extent (Ashcroft et al. 15). To this end, it will be argued that Confucianism provided a significant intellectual foil, by which the hegemony of British and Colonial thought could be turned on its head, as it provided a key ingredient to the soup of

"national identity" literature that both Thoreau and Emerson were trying to cultivate at the height of the Industrial Revolution (Brown x-xi). In that historical context, it will also be demonstrated how Confucianism additionally provided a foil, especially for Thoreau, against certain notions of "modernity," and the growing Imperial aspirations, of the then, burgeoning global power of the United States.

Additionally, we must not ignore the 'intent' of Thoreau, and consequently, the biographical details that prove essential to his writing. We take the stance that Thoreau's writings are of a highly autobiographical and personal nature, and as such, any investigation into his writings should be in tandem with his biography (Walls xviii). This hybrid between text and biographical criticism serves as our second framework. As will be demonstrated, Thoreau's implementation of Confucius themes in his writings are as much about rhetoric, as they are about illustrating major themes and events from his life.

The structure of the paper will be as such: First, a historical and theoretical overview of the times in which Thoreau and the Transcendentalist movement was embedded; Second, an investigation into how Thoreau became exposed to the Confucian classics, and why the Transcendentalist, especially Emerson, found it such a compelling narrative for adoption into their own philosophy; Third, starting with Thoreau's first breakout publication, *Civil Disobedience*, we will begin our investigation into Thoreau's use of Confucian classics in his writings, before proceeding to a complete investigation of all Confucian quotes and or possible influences that are to be found in *Walden*; Finally, we will present our closing remarks, criticisms, and thoughts concerning avenues for future research.

Historical and Theoretical Context:

The American interest in the Confucian tradition can be traced to the very intellectual foundations of the country itself. Disseminated through the intellectual milieu of the European Enlightenment: the writings of Voltaire (1694-1778), Louis Le Comte (1655-1728), Denis Diderot (1713-1784), Quesnay (1694-1774), in France, and Christian Wolf (1679-1754) and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) in Germany presented a vision of China, and that of Confucian doctrine, as the" ideal" state, and the "ideal" political philosophy (Yi Sŭng-hwan 25-30). This vision of Confucius, as ultimate political theorist, was itself a partial intellectual

Chimera, born of the meeting between European Jesuits, such as Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), and their Chinese interlocutors amongst the Qing literati (Meynard 26-27). For these Enlightenment period political dissidents, the "Confucius" of the Jesuits served the dual function of political mask and political antidote for the oppressive power that church and or crown had exerted over the spirit of the individual for well over a thousand years. The "political," and "humanist" Confucius that Voltaire, and other Enlightenment thinkers, emphasized in Europe was taken *prima facie* when it was exported to the shores of the soon to be United States of America.

Like their European counterparts, Benjamin Franklin(1706-1790), Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), and John Adams (1735-1826), all found in the Confucius of Voltaire, and the European intelligentsia, political axioms that could be adopted into the fledging new republic (Weir 47). Perhaps of the three, Franklin was the most enamored, to the point of printing passages from the *Great Learning* (大学) in the March 1738 edition of his *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Weir 19). These passages, taken from the work of Ricci and Philippe Couplet (1623–1693), as found in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive Scientia sinensis latine exposita* (1687), would serve, as it did in Europe, as the basis for much of the knowledge concerning Confucius thought in the Americas until the early 19th century (Weir 21).

The interest these men, and their European counterparts, shared in Confucius can be conceptualized as "Orientalism," or to use Edward Said's words, the use of the East to help "define Europe (or the west) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (Said 1-2). In that vein, Franklin's use of *Great Learning* in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* is very much an early attempt to define America, or the conception of what America could be, through the display of the "other," as represented in Confucian philosophy. As Benedict Anderson has vigorously argued, the novel and or the newspaper is the "technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation" (Anderson 25). Like Franklin in the 18th century, the later American generation of Emerson and Thoreau would also use this coupling of "orientalism" and print technology in their re-imagining of the United States, its spirit of social revolution and or its potential, in the middle of the 19th century. In addition, as the Enlightenment theory of the American Revolution solidified into civic and social realities, they would also employ Confucianism as a political mask and political antidote for the perceived social, political, and religious ills of their times, as had Voltaire before.

However, given the power of Said's dialectic, it would be easy to conflate this early American "Orientalism" of the 18th through the mid-19th century, which is marked, by exploration and authentic scholarly interest, as well as the more commonly known elements of fantasy and disparagements, with that "Orientalism" of European and Western domination. In the American context, the later type, and its connotation of Western Imperialism, can be said to have started roughly following the "opening" of Japan under Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) in 1853 (Weir 3). In context of early to mid-19th century, the time when Thoreau and Emerson were most active, this "Orientalism" as Western domination and discursive "power," in a very Foucauldian sense of the term, over the East was completely absent, as America was de-facto, not yet, an Imperial power. Rather, following the declaration of independence in 1776, it was a loosely assorted confederation of post-colonial territories, desperately searching for a voice and an identity in a sea of far more powerful empires. In this sense, it far more similar to the "Orientalism" of Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, yet still, a unique enough phenomenon that it cannot be said to be a direct continuation of it, for unlike Europe, it was implemented to construct an entirely new "identity," rather than just informing a pre-existing one. Therefore, the "Orientalism" of Thoreau and Emerson, which is in essence the basis for the Transcendentalist movement, can be more readily defined as an "invented tradition," resulting from "the products rather than the preconditions of contact between Asians (and Asian ideas) and Europeans (and Western ideas.)" (Burke & Prochaska 43). In these terms, we can view the proceeding usage of Confucian thought in both Thoreau and Emerson's work as a *syncretism*, the merger of distinct cultural formations into a new cultural singularity (Ashcroft et al. 15). As the first significant and native intellectual movement, that singularity, as embodied in the Transcendentalist movement, would profoundly shape and define the very essence of American "identity" (Brown 322).

Emerson, *The Dial*, and the Rejection of the Continent:

> There is no remedy for musty self-conceited English life made up of fictions, hating ideas,--like Orientalism. That astonishes and disconcerts English decorum. For once there is thunder he never heard, light he never saw, and power which trifles with time and space. (Emerson, *Journals*, VIII, 36; as quoted in Christy 261)

That Emerson saw the various Eastern religious and philosophical text as more than mere "Orientalist" tropes is no more evident than in the above journal entry. Rather, Emerson viewed the East as the missing element of human knowledge, and a powerful rebuke to Continental doctrines about the nature of humankind's relation to themselves and the "divine." While his intellectual debt to the *Vedas*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Upanishads* is widely acknowledged (Yu 28), his relationship to the comparable corpus of Confucian text, as embodied in the *Four Classics* (四大奇書), is far more contentious. This is no doubt because of his disparaging remarks concerning China, and Confucian philosophy in his youth, as in the following journal entry from 1824:

> No, they worship crockery Gods which in Europe & America our babies are wise enough to put in baby houses; the summit of their philosophy & science is how to make tea. Indeed, the light of Confucius goes out in translation into the language of Shakespere & Bacon. (*JMN*, II, 378)[1]

These vitriolic diatribes of youth, imitating the sentiments of contemporaneous European views concerning Chinese society and religion, have led subsequent commentators to dismiss the influence of Confucian thought upon Emerson quite out of hand. For example, Frederic Ives Carpenter, in his 1930 work, *Emerson and Asia*, states the following:

> He never actually incorporated their thought into his own writing, but merely quoted the sayings of Confucius, Mencius, and the rest, externally, as illustrations of his ideas. He always shied away from the merely practical quality of the Confucian precepts, feeling a lack of religious enthusiasm in them. (Carpenter 234-235)

However, the view that Emerson maintained a static view of Confucianism from his early twenties, and that he felt "a lack of religious enthusiasm in them," is not supported by either his subsequent writings and or journal entries. Rather, Emerson's view of Confucianism evolved and grew with his intellectual growth, and his own confrontation with spiritual and personal crisis. So that by late in life, his view of Confucius and Chinese philosophy had undergone a complete

[1] *JMN= The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*.

roundabout, such as in the following speech given to a Chinese delegation that was visiting Boston in 1860:

> Confucius has not yet gathered all his fame. When Socrates heard that the oracle declared that he was the wisest of men, he said, it must mean that other men held that they were wise, but that he knew that he knew nothing. Confucius had already affirmed this of himself: and what we call the GOLDEN RULE of Jesus, Confucius had uttered in the same terms five hundred years before. His morals, though addressed to a state of society unlike ours, we read with profit to-day. (*The Complete Works*, XI, Miscellanies)

Most importantly, in March of 1836, coinciding with the composer of *Nature*, the foundational text of the Transcendentalist movement (Brown 273), Emerson checked out Joshua Marshman's 1809 publication, *The Works of Confucius*, from the Boston Athenaeum, extracting twenty-seven quotes from this work in his notebooks (*JMN*, V, 122; *JMN*, VI, 389-392).[2] The range of the page numbers from these quotes range from 36-647, indicating that Emerson probably read the entirety of the work. Marshman's translation of the Lunyu (論語), or the *Analects*, also contains commentaries by the prominent Neo-Confucianist Zhu Xi (朱熹; 1130 – 1200). Moreover, while it is true that the content of some of these quotes do not directly foreshadow the philosophical tone of *Nature*, the commentaries by Zhu Xi, in contrast, present striking similarities to some sections of the essay (Ross).

By 1837, around the time of Emerson's and Thoreau's first meeting (Smith 2), Emerson was already formulating the deistic basis of the Transcendentalist philosophy with rhetorical usage of these Confucian quotes, as in the following extract from the 1837 lecture, *Religion*, attest:

> Whilst we contemplate this law it appears to us alone real: all things else seem contingent and shadowy, and human life from its connexion with this law derives a wonderful splendor.

[2] See Appendix A for full rendering.

> "A man's life,' (says the Chinese Confucius) "is properly connected with virtue. The life of the evil man is preserved by mere good fortune." "Coarse rise," he continues, "for food, water for drink, and the bended arm for a pillow; happiness may be enjoyed even in these. Without virtue, riches and honor seem to me like the passing cloud."
>
> And this is the perpetual game of virtue, to measure its own nobleness by its scornful superiority to the personal and animal pleasures.
>
> Again Confucius writes of one of his heroes. "A wise and good man was Hooi: a piece of bamboo was his dish; a cocoanut his cup; and his dwelling was a miserable shed. Men could not sustain the sight of his wretchedness, but Hooi did not change the serenity of his mind. A wise and good man was Hooi."
>
> The same contrast between the mortal body with its circumstances and the immortal principle makes the great charm of the Indian Vedas. (*Early Lectures*, II, 88)

The above clearly dispels the claims by Carpenter and others that Emerson felt "a lack of religious enthusiasm in" the Confucian text or that he "admired Confucius, but did not feel the same toward Chinese religion" as he did towards that of the Hindu (Jackson 55). For here, he uses both the Hindu and the Confucius text to subvert the Judo-Christian conception of "original sin," on one hand, and Humean Skepticism on the other, in keeping with his main thesis throughout the lecture. These are important antecedents in how Thoreau would use the Confucian text in his own work, and there can be little doubt that it was through Emerson's influence that a young Thoreau was introduced to the Confucian classics, and Oriental writings in general (Christy 187). Furthermore, Emerson's exposure to Confucian thought antecedes, and even corresponds to every one of his major intellectual breakthroughs, such as his essay *Nature*. Therefore, it is hard to find agreement with past commentators that he drew only words, but not ideas, from his reading of these texts.

In 1838, a year after his first encounter with Emerson, a twenty-one year old Thoreau noted the following in his journal:

> How thrilling a noble sentiment in the oldest books --in Homer The Zendavesta--or Confucius!--It is a strain of music wafted down to us on the breeze of time, through the aisles of innumerable ages. By its very nobleness it is made near and audible to us. (*Writings,* I, 52)

Here begins Thoreau's serious obsession with the Orient, and in particular, an obsession with the works of Confucius. By 1839, Thoreau had noted six quotations from the Confucius classics into his commonplace book from William Gowan's 1835 publication, *The Phoenix: A Collection of Old and Rare Fragments*, itself, a partial English translation of the *Confucius Sinarum* (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 383).

By 1843, when Thoreau was employed by Emerson as editor of *The Dial*, the main publication of the Transcendentalist movement, he compiled an additional selection of quotes and passages from Marshman's *The Works of Confucius,* in addition to David Collie's 1828 publication, *The Chinese Classical Work Commonly Called The Four Books*. The work of Collie, which also contained commentaries by Zhu Xi and other Neo-Confucianist thinkers, in particular had a profound effect on Thoreau, as this was his first introduction to the works of Mencius (孟子). He noted his elation of this discovery in the October 1843 edition of *The Dial*, under the "Ethnical Scriptures" section, and in his notebook as follows:

> [Preliminary Note. Since we printed a few sections from Dr. Marsman's translation of the sentences of Confucius, we have received a copy of "the Chinese Classical Work, commonly called the Four Books, translated and illustrated with notes by the late Rev. David Collie, Principle of the Anglo-Chinese College, Malacca. Printed at the Mission Press." This translation, which seems to have been undertaken and performed as an exercise in learning the language, is the most valuable contribution we have yet seen from the Chinese literature. That part of the work, which is new, is the Memoirs of Mencius in two books, the Shang Mung and Hea Mung, which is the production of Mung Tsze (or Mencius) who flourished about a hundred years after Confucius. The subjoined extracts are chiefly taken from these books.] (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 147, 385)

Additionally, sometime around 1843, Thoreau made a partial translation of Jean-Pierre Guillaume Pauthier's 1841 publication, *Confucius et Mencius: les quatre livres de philosophie morale et politique de la Chine*, which he placed in an additional common place book that now resides in the Berg Collection of New York Public Library (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 385). As of yet, Hongbo Tan's PhD dissertation is the only article that has a readily available version of this document, and as such, when we present it we quote it as (Thoreau & Tan x) throughout this essay. In conglomerate, these works would serve as his base of knowledge concerning the Confucius philosophy, and the source of many of the Confucius quotes strewn throughout both his notebooks and published works.

***Resistance to Civil Government*:**

Perhaps no other of Thoreau's writings has had such profound influence on both American and World history as that of *Resistance to Civil Government*, more commonly referenced today as *Civil Disobedience*. Crystalized after Thoreau spent a night in jail in 1846, for his refusal to pay a polling tax, it was first formulated as a lecture before being formatted for print in 1849, on behest of Elizabeth Peabody (1804-1894), the translator for one of the first English language versions of the Buddhist *Lotus Sutra* (Weir 74; *Reform Papers* 313-314).

In *Resistance to Civil Government*, Thoreau articulates one of his most profound intellectual legacies, when he argued that the "Rule of Law," as enshrined in the United States Constitution, should and can be subverted by an individual if the "Rule of Law" requires that the individual subvert his or her sense of "morality." In Thoreau's own historical context, *Resistance to Civil Government* was written as a personal justification for his refusal to pay taxes to the American government in order to support the Mexican–American War, and in a broader context, the continued practice of American slavery, and its legal protection in the United States Constitution. For Thoreau, participation or acquiescence to an unjust government was to be culpable in those governments' acts of injustice, while non-participation was the ultimate weapon that the individual could employ against the immense power of the State. This articulation, of resistance through non-participation in civic affairs, would go on to inform the non-violent protest movements of both Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Lewis and Bicknell 17). However, this resistance through non-participation, was not articulated entirely

by Thoreau himself, but was also informed by his readings of the Confucian classics, especially the works of Mencius as found in the *Mengzi* (孟子).

In his assertion that "there was nothing essentially Confucian in Thoreau's temperament," Christy makes the claim that "Thoreau was a practical exponent of, civil disobedience, whereas Emerson, Confucius, and Mencius all agreed on conformity" (Christy 195). However, this is as much a misrepresentation of Thoreau, as it is the philosophy of Confucius and or Mencius. For example, take into consideration the following journal entry from 1843:

> Mencius said, Pih E's eye would not look on bad color, nor would his ear listen to bad sound. Unless a prince were of his stamp, he would not serve him, and unless people were of his own stamp, he would not employ them. In times of good government, he went into office, and in times of confusion and bad government, he retired. Where disorderly government prevailed, or where disorderly people lived, he could not bear to dwell. He thought that to live with low men was as bad as to sit in the mud with his court robes and cap. In the time of Chou, he dwelt on the banks of the North Ka, watching till the empire should be brought to peace and order. Hence, when the fame of Pih E is heard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the weak determined. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 150-151)

The above story of Bo Yi (伯夷), here rendered as Pih E, as found in the Mengzi (孟子) that Thoreau extracted into his journal from Collie's version of *The Four Books*, does not tell of a man who agrees on "conformity," but rather of protest through the act of self-imposed "bucolic retirement" (Schneider 55). In fact, starting with the exile lore of Qu Yuan (屈原, c. 340–278 BC), both Chinese history and philosophy is replete with stories of learned men who choose to renounce participation or subservience to an unjust government, including Confucius himself (Riegel 13-22). Not surprisingly, many of the quotes that Thoreau implemented or extracted from his Confucian readings, especially those from the *Mengzi*, draw upon these themes of the learned man who disobeys an unjust government through a passive retreat from it. It is in journal entries like the above, that we begin to see the seeds of Thoreau's "civil disobedience," that would come to full blossom three years later.

Much of Thoreau's philosophical contention, and departure point, in *Resistance to Civil Government* is the English philosopher William Paley's (1743 – 1805) own "Duty of Submission to Civil Government," which Thoreau quotes as stating:

> "it is the will of God that the established government be obeyed," and that "every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quality of the danger and grievance on the one hand, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other" (*Reform Papers* 68)

For Thoreau, this tactical and utilitarian approach to injustice is paramount to cowardice when he counters it as follows:

> But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well as an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him through I drown myself. This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people. (*Reform Papers* 68)

This notion of self-sacrifice for justice, here advocated by Thoreau, is in alignment with the Confucian depiction of the *Junzi (*君子), or "superior man," as Thoreau would have read in the various translations of the Confucian classics. For example, take the following passage from *The Doctrine of the Mean,* as found in Collie's version of *The Four Books*:

> Hence, the superior man, in accordance with others, does not descend to anything low, or improper. How unbending his valor! He stands in the middle, and leans not to either side. How firm the valor of the superior man! When a nation treads in the right path he changes not what he held fast previous to his promotion to office. How undaunted his valor! When a nation departs from the right path, he changes not his course, even till death. (Collie, *Chung Yung,* 6)

This selfless devotion to justice, as embodied by the Confucian *Junzi*, even impressed the otherwise critical Collie, who elaborated upon the above passage in the footnotes as follows:

> If we may give full credit to the ancient records of China, on this point, no county under heaven can boast of more independent, upright and magnanimous statesmen, than China has produced at various periods of her history.
>
> The Translator has now in his possession a document laid before the Taou Kwang, the present Emperor, in 1822 by two Officers of Government, complaining of certain abuses, which manifest a spirit of fearless independence, and a firm determination to do their duty without regard to consequences. At the close, they boldy inform his majesty, that if he should subject them to the axe or the boiling caldron they are not afraid. The Emperor, however, declared, that they had shewed themselves great and faithful ministers, and imbued with the spirit of the celebrated statesmen of antiquity. (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 6)

Unlike Christy's Confucius, the one presented to Thoreau, via Collie, was one of uncompromising "virtue," and anything but an uncritical "conformist." We can well imagine that this "spirit of fearless independence," as exemplified by image of the Confucian *Junzi*, was one of many reasons that Thoreau, ever trying to embody the spirit of America's revolution, found the philosophy appealing, especially in comparison to that of the English Paley. That he weaved that image throughout the subtext of *Resistance to Civil Government*, to create a powerful intellectual foil against the norms of continental philosophy and his own country, is alluded to throughout the body of the text. For example, Thoreau's statement, and rejection of Paley's social utility model, that "The mass of men serve the State thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies" (*Reform Papers* 66), is likely drawn from the following quote from the *Analects*, via Collie (Collie, *Shang Lun*, 5), as found in Thoreau's notebook:

> Confucius said, The superior man is not a machine which is fit for one thing only. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 152)

Additionally, when Thoreau reasserts the power of the individual over the majority by stating that "any man more right than his neighbors, constitutes a majority of one already" (*Reform Papers* 74), it is likely to also have been extrapolated from the following quote from the *Analects*, via his translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius*:

> Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors. (Thoreau & Tan, 205)

Thoreau even embraces the Confucian concept of self-imposed bucolic retirement, as found in the story of Bo Yi, when he states:

> If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, ask me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do any thing resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished. (*Reform Papers* 77)

We also find another parallel in Collies translation with Thoreau's idea of protest through an eremitic non-participation in the state, as in the following passage from the *Analects*:

> (Confucius said) Keu Pih Yuh was a man of superior virtue. When the Province was governed by right principles, he held an office: when it was not, he resigned and dwelt in secret. (Collie, *Hea Lun*, 73)

Unlike modern anarchist groups, anti-federalist, and libertarian movements, which have co-opted Thoreau for their own political ends,[3] Thoreau himself was not a champion of "no-government," but like Confucius, a reforming of government through the individual example of the *Junzi*. He states this towards the beginning of the essay as follows:

> But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it. (*Reform Papers*, 64)

However, despite these numerous parallels between Confucianism and the philosophy that Thoreau is extolling for dealing with an unjust government in *Resistance to Civil Government*, he only directly quotes Confucius once, via his translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 207), in the essay as follows:

[3] For an in-depth analysis of this misconstrued conception of Thoreau, please see John C. Broderick's *Thoreau's Proposal for Legislation* (1955).

> A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said,--"If a State is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a State is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame." No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State, than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case. (*Reform Papers* 78)

Mathew A. Foust, in his 2017 publication, *Confucianism and American Philosophy*, believes the above quote shows a fundamental disagreement with Thoreau's philosophy and Confucius when he states: "Thoreau rejects what he regards as Confucius 's notion that proper moral valuation of the fortunes of a citizen is contingent on the principles of reason by which his state is governed" (43). While a compelling interpretation, it is most certainly wrong. To understand Thoreau's intent with this Confucius quote we must read it in its full context, as Thoreau most likely did, in this variant of it from the *Analects*, as found in Collie's *Four Books*:

> Confucius says, he who believes firmly, delights in study and holds fast even till death; finishes his duty well. A county on the brink of danger, enter not—a county thrown into disorder, dwell not in it. When the empire is under the government of reason, go into office, when it loses reason, retire.
>
> If a province be governed by reason, poverty and meanness are a disgrace—if it not, riches and honor are disgraceful. (Collie, *Shang Lun*, 35)

Given the full context of the quote, it becomes clear that there is zero disagreement between Thoreau and Confucius, for what Confucius is arguing here, much like Thoreau, is that in a well-governed government a person can obtain "riches and honor" without sacrificing their "virtue" or straying from the *Dao* (道), "way" and or "road." In contrast, in a morally corrupt government, those same pursuits would lead to a person sacrificing both their "virtue" and their

commitment to the *Dao*. It is incredibly unlikely that such an astute reader as Thoreau was not consciously aware of this double meaning when he implemented it into the text of *Resistance to Civil Government*. While this was likely the intent of Thoreau when implementing this quote into the text, it is also probable that his sometimes ambiguous language, and tendency to jump from one isolated thought to next in his writing, has resulted in this categorization of disunion between the two philosophers by latter commentators.

Finally, we have this reference to a "Chinese philosopher" at the end of the essay:

> "The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire." (*Reform Papers* 326)

However, the above is a textual variant that does not appear in the original 1849 printing, but rather in the posthumous printing of 1866 (*Reform Papers* 320.) As Thoreau made many different changes to his writings, sometimes up until the time of printing, it is highly probable that this sentence was omitted only by chance in the first printing, and Thoreau had intended its inclusion from the beginning. Another possibility is that it was added by one of Thoreau's close associates, like Emerson or Peabody (*Reform Papers* 319), who recognized the overtly Confucian tone in the essay, and so desired to give the reader more exact coordinates for the genesis of Thoreau's ideas throughout the essay. We would personally hypothesis that Thoreau intended its inclusion in the 1849 printing, but pressure from the editors forced its initial removal (Lewis and Bicknell 14). Whatever the true cause for its exclusion in the 1849 printing, it is, in all probability, an allusion to the following quote from Mencius, once again, via his translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius*:

> Mencius said—Men have a constant way of speaking [without very well understating it]. All say the empire, the kingdom, the family. The basis of the empire exists in the Kingdom; the basis of the Kingdom exists in the family; the basis of the family exists in the person. (Thoreau & Tan 216)

Even if we present the 1849 version, with the exclusion of the allusion to the "Chinese philosopher," it is difficult to see how Thoreau did not draw the below passage from the above quote by Mencius:

> The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. (*Reform Papers* 89)

In Conclusion, the Confucian text, especially the concept of the ideal *Junzi*, helped Thoreau in the formation of his antithesis to William Paley's "Duty of Submission to Civil Government." The concepts of "individual responsibility;" and that "each official individually bore the burden of implementing ultimate values," were drawn from the exile lore of Qu Yuan that were deeply imbedded in the *Mengzi* and the Neo-Confucian text of Zhu Xi (Schneider 50, 69). As Thoreau was typically reading a variant of Zhu Xi's arrangements of the *Four Books*, as in Collie, it was this concept of "individual responsibility" in civic life, and that the individual is the "root" of the state (Yao 74), which Thoreau latched onto in both his reading and implementation of the Confucian text throughout *Resistance to Civil Government*. Furthermore, Thoreau transformed the Confucian notion of the scholar-official's bucolic retirement, such as the eremitic response to an unjust government, into a powerful, and democratic, political remonstrance for his own times. This Confucian concept of eremitic response to an unjust government, in particular, serves as a central facet in the thesis of *Walden*, as we shall now see.

***Walden; or, Life in the Woods*:**

> A word which may be translated into every dialect, and suggest a truth to every mind, is the most perfect work of human art; and as it may be breathed and taken on our lips, and, as it were, become the product of our physical organs, as its senses is of our intellectual it is the nearest to life itself. It is the simplest

> and purest channel by which a revelation may be transmitted from age to age. How it subsists itself whole and undiminished till the intelligent reader is born to decipher it! There are the tracks of Zoroaster, of Confucius and Moses, indelible in the sands of remotest times. (*The Journal*, I, 111)

Written shortly after Thoreau arrived at Walden Pond in 1845, this journal entry is a powerful rebuke to Christy's claim that "No Confucian would ever have gone to Walden," as it illustrates that Thoreau was indeed reading and contemplating Confucian philosophy during his time at Walden Pond, as he had been prior to his eremitic retreat for almost seven years. The reverence in which Thoreau held Confucius thought is palpable, with him placing Confucius, along with Moses and Zoroaster, amongst the "indelible" "sands of remotest times." In many ways, this passage foreshadows the Confucian tone that *Walden* would take upon its completion nine years later. It also illustrates Thoreau's philosophy of writing; that another's words could become the "product of our physical organs," and thereby be used to convey one's most intimate sentiments. This theory of writing, extracted from Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744-1803) 1772 publication, *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, via his mentor Emerson (Brown 331),[4] is important to keep in mind as we turn to the text of *Walden* itself, and Thoreau's use of Confucian text to construct a new American "identity."

While many of the below quotes and paraphrasing of Confucian text have been identified in *Walden* by past scholarship, none has presented them in their entirety, and or in the context of their function within the text itself. Nor have they investigated the possibility that their use might be in keeping with the overall tone of Confucian philosophy, as Thoreau was exposed to in his various readings of the *Four Books*. To our knowledge, the last scholar who attempted to examine how Thoreau implemented these Confucian quotes and paraphrasing's in the textual context of *Walden* was Cady in 1961. Cady's conclusion, that Thoreau used "Confucian

[4] In his *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, Herder says, "language becomes a natural organ of the understanding, a sense of the human soul…" Furthermore, Herder's praise of "Eastern languages," throughout the essay, such as when he says, "Let one open any available Eastern dictionary and one will see the impetus of the desire to achieve self-expression!" probably further informed Emerson and Thoreau's own particular interest and use of Eastern text and Confucianism. https://www.marxists.org/archive/herder/1772/origins-language.htm

materials in a non-Confucian way," remains the standard narrative in Thoreauvian scholarship at present (Cady 31). Therefore, in the following section we will examine all the Confucian text in *Walden* that have henceforth been known, in addition to our own discoveries, in an attempt to bring this narrative under critical scrutiny.

In the following sections, we present each quote and our analysis chronologically, rather than thematically, as this is how any reader of *Walden* will come upon these quotes themselves. We try to locate each of these quotes by chapter *heading*, as presented by Thoreau, for ease of comparison and location. We also give footnotes, where appropriate, where the direct uses in *Walden* can be found in James Legge or others, for further cross-reference and textual differences. With these caveats in mind, we now proceed to the text itself.

True Knowledge:

In many ways, *Walden* reads as a personal manifesto, in which Thoreau rejects the authority of American civic institutions, and the society they engender. For Thoreau, an ardent abolitionist, the authority of a state, which condones slavery, seeks to negate the moral authority of the individual, and in doing so destroys our personal connection with the "divine." To reestablish, and argue for, the superior moral authority of the individual over that of the state and or society, Thoreau appeals throughout *Walden* to the great literary and religious traditions of the world, including Confucianism. Following the tenants of biblical studies, and the then popular science of hermeneutics, Thoreau seeks to derive a universal "truth," and these texts were to be his "proofs." Thoreau employs Confucianism throughout *Walden* in this fashion, as in this first appearance of a Confucian quote in the chapter *Economy*:

> So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre. All change is a miracle to contemplate; but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant. Confucius said, "To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge." When one man has

> reduced a fact of the imagination to be a fact to his understanding, I foresee that all men will at length establish their lives on that basis. (*Walden* 7)

Here, Thoreau employs this strange variant translation from the *Analects*,[5] via Pauthier's translation in *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 205), to lend credence to his rejection of the social norms of 19th century American society, and the authority that underpins it, and to support his main argument of the superior authority of the "individual," as in keeping with the ideal Confucian *Junzi*, or "superior man." This rhetorical usage, and appeal to the traditions of world religious text, such as Confucius, gives Thoreau the intellectual foil by which he seeks to undermine the societal, religious, and civic norms of 19th American society. Cady himself, seems to find nothing in the way this quote functions in the text that would seem "un-Confucius," judging from his own analysis (Cady 24), and we would concur. However, *Walden* is not just a political and or philosophical treatise, but also a simile for the major events in Thoreau's life, as we shall now see.

A Hound, a Bay Horse, and a Turtledove:

The experience of loss, and nostalgia for that loss, permeates *Walden*. Many commentators, including Emerson himself, have read that loss into the following passage from the chapter *Economy* (Jones 61):

> I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travelers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves. (*Walden* 10)

Indeed, Thoreau had experienced great personal loss by the time he had retreated to Walden, such as the death of his brother John in 1842 (Walls 124-127). In fact, most of Thoreau's time spent at Walden was the composition of his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers,* which was to serve as a eulogy of sorts to the memory of John (Thoreau and Hovde xviii). However, this passage is more likely a reference to a sort of loss within

[5] James Legge, *The Analects*, bk. II, chap. xvii (The Chinese Classics, I, 151).

himself, especially when we consider that it was adapted from the following passage from Mencius:[6]

> Mencius says, benevolence is man's heart, and justice is man's path. To lose the way, and no longer walk therien—to let one's heart go, and not know how to seek it, how lamentable! If a man lose his fowls, or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts, and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart. (Collie, *Hea Mung*, 149)

Cady did not notice this paraphrasing in his original analysis, but this hypothesis of its origin is supported, in addition to making Thoreau's exact meaning clearer, when we look at the above passage as it was found in the context of his journal:

> THE SCHOLAR
>
> Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar's abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.
>
> Benevolence is man's heart, and justice is man's path. If a man lose his fowls or his dogs, he knows how to seek them. There are those who lose their hearts and know not how to seek them. The duty of the student is no other than to seek his lost heart. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 148)

The Confucian concept of the *Junzi*, here, obviously had a great influence on Thoreau, as evidenced by the above journal entry, and Thoreau's simile in the form of the "lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove," which can now be taken as his personal search for "benevolence" and "justice" in an unjust world and society. For Thoreau, American society had caused the loss of "benevolence" and "justice" within the individual, and to regain it was not a simple matter of

[6] Legge, *Mencius*, bk. VI, pt. I, chap. xi (http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius/mencius45.html).

just reading the great philosophical and religious traditions of the world, but also live them. As he states earlier in *Walden*:

> To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically. (*Walden* 9)

Here again, Thoreau is mirroring concepts of the *Junzi* during his "experiment" at *Walden*. It is highly probable, like the Hindu Brahman that Thoreau certainly had serious infatuation with; he saw elements in the Confucian concept of the *Junzi* that he sought to emulate during his time at Walden Pond. That there were parallels between the teachings of the *Junzi* and Brahman only certified Thoreau's belief that these religious works spoke to a greater universal "truth" concerning the "correct" path to self-cultivation. As he states in this journal entry from 1850:

> I do not prefer one religion or philosophy to another- I have no sympathy with the bigotry & ignorance which make transient & partial & puerile distinctions between one man's faith or form of faith & another's—as christian & heathen—I prey to be delivered from narrowness partiality exaggeration—bigotry. To the philosopher all sects all nations are alike. I like Brahma—Hara Buddha—the Great spirit as well as God. (*Journal*, III, 62)

It is this form of syncretism, as championed here by Thoreau, and which formulates the basis for most of post-colonial literature, that makes extracting the Confucian elements from his work so difficult. It also most likely why past commentators, such as Christy and Cady, have been so quick to dismiss the influence of Confucianism on Thoreau in favor of that of the Hindu, not realizing that he himself viewed all these traditions with equal weight and consideration. Furthermore, his choosing of elements of similarity in his selections from these ancient text makes the task of parsing out the Confucian elements that much more difficult, for like the hermeneutic scholars before, he was searching for a universal "truth" that united, rather than separated these diverse philosophical and religious traditions.

Furthermore, it is quite likely that Thoreau's disappoint and frustration with society, in addition to the loss of his brother, resulted in a sort of spiritual-loss, which he exhibits in his paraphrasing of the Mencius quote. In that context, Thoreau's domestic-exile at Walden Pond can be taken as a desire to transcend the mundane and or evils of the world and society, in a fashion that is strikingly similar to the *Li Sao* (離騷) of Qu Yuan, who there, seeks to regain unity with the divine by escaping the unjust world of men. As the poems of Qu Yuan, and *Sao* poetry, were interspersed throughout the works of Confucius, this connection is not entirely surprising (Hawkes 8-9). In fact, this hypothesis finds incredible validation in the following journal entry from 1851:

> I lose my friends of course as much by my own ill treatment & ill valuing of them (prophaning of them cheapening of them) as by their cheaping of themselves –till at last when I am prepared to them justice I am permitted to deal only with the memories of themselves—their ideals still surviving in me—no longer with their actual selves—
>
> We exclude ourselves— As the child said of the stream in which he bathed head or foot V Confucius. (The *Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, III, 178)

This a reference to a quote from Mencius, that is present in Thoreau's translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* as follows:

> Mencius said: Can one converse and speak the language of reason with cruel and inhuman princes. Dangers the most menacing are for them motives of tranquility, calamities the most disastrous are for them subject of profit; they rejoice at that which causes their ruin. If one could converse and speak the language of reason with inhuman and cruel princes, would there be so great a number of kingdoms which perish, and families which fail?
>
> There was young child who sang, saying;
>
> "The water of the river Thsang-lang is it pure,
>
> I can wash there the fillets which bind my head;

> The water of the river Tsang-lang is it troubled,'
>
> I can wash there my feet." (Thoreau & Tan 216)

Most surprisingly, the song of the "child," as found here and in Thoreau's other journal, originates in the Yu Fu (漁父), which is traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan (Hawkes 91). Therefore, it is safe to assume that these themes of seeking unity with the divine by the rejection of an unjust society are probably why Thoreau found Confucianism so appealing in the first place, in addition to those of domestic exile, the way of the *Junzi*, and the mystical journey, as all found in the Confucian text. It is these thematic elements, along with the philosophy, that Thoreau took and interspersed throughout *Walden*, and is likely why past commentators, with their pre-conceived notions of the Confucian tradition, have overlooked these striking connections.

Renew Thyself:

That Thoreau did not just see Confucianism as powerful intellectual foil, but also as a manual for spiritual renewal and personal cultivation is no more evident than the following example from the chapter *What I Lived For*:

> I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of king Tching-thang to this effect: 'Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again.' I can understand that. (*Walden* 58)

This quote is extracted from *The Great Learning*,[7] via Thoreau's translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 201). However, it is highly probable that Thoreau first read this quote in the English translation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in Gowan's *The Phoenix*:

[7] Legge, *The Great Learning* (The Chinese Classics I, 36I)

> king Tam used to bathe and wash himself. He says that these excellent words were there engraved: "Wash thyself; renew thyself continually; renew thyself every day; renew thyself from day to day;" and that it was to intimate to the king, that if a prince who governs others has contracted vices and impurities, he ought to labour to cleanse himself therefrom, and to reduce his heart into its first state of purity. (*Phenix* 45)

The "king Tching-thang" and "King Tam" in both instances is of course an archaic Romanization of Cheng Tang (成湯, 1675 – 1646 BC), the first king of the Shang dynasty. Cady rightly points that this antidote is a reference to the conception of the Mandate of Heaven (天命), and was used in the Confucian context to illustrate the need for constant self-surveillance of one's moral character in order not to lose the "divine" right to rule. However, Cady is completely wrong that when he states that Thoreau was unaware of this context, as the above version of it in *The Phoenix* obviously gives (Cady 25). Furthermore, the added commentary, as found in *The Phoenix*, sheds light on Thoreau's comment that he "can understand that," and indicates his sojourn at Walden is as much about a spiritual and moral renewal for himself, as it is a retreat from an unjust society. Once again, that Thoreau was using Confucianism as a spiritual and ideological guide, would seem to have gone unnoticed by the vast majority of past commentators, and will become even more evident as we continue our investigation.

A Messenger:

That the desire for the perfection of the self, as exemplified by the Confucian *Junzi*, is interspersed throughout *Walden*, is no more exemplified than when Thoreau says in the chapter *What I Lived For*: "To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour" he continues "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" (Walden, 59). The concept, that the "self" can achieve perfection and harmony with the *Dao* through self-cultivation, as taught by the Neo-Confucian

tradition, would appear not to be lost on Thoreau, for he employs the following quote to illustrate exactly such a point later on in the same chapter:

> What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! 'Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger! (*Walden* 62)

Thoreau employs this quote to criticize his fellow citizens' obsession with the trivialities of world affairs at the cost of their own personal cultivation. By removing himself from world affairs, Thoreau seeks to give his fellow Concord citizens another example of a man who too seeks to "diminish the number of his faults." The quotation is taken from the *Analects*,[8] and Confucius is Romanized as Khoung-tseu, via Thoreau's translation of the passage from Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 210). Once again, both Christie and Cady misconstrue Thoreau's understanding and use of the Confucian text, since they assumed that the Confucian tradition was completely absent of themes of exile, or bucolic retirement, as a means of cultivating the *Dao*, or that Thoreau never "read mystical divinity" into them (Cady, 26; Christie,195-196).

The Power of Solitude:

That Thoreau not only "read mystical divinity" into his Confucian readings, but actually understood the imbedded mysticism of Zou Yan (鄒衍, 305–240 BC), the theoretical founder of the concept of Yin and Yang (陰陽), that was present in the Confucian tradition is no more evident than in the following quote from the chapter *Solitude*:

[8] Legge, *The Analects*, bk. XIV, chap. xxvI (The Chinese Classics 1, 285).

> For the most part we allow only outlying and transient circumstances to make our occasions. They are, in fact, the cause of our distraction. *Nearest* to all things is that power which fashions their being. *Next* to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. *Next* to us is not the workmen whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to talk, but the workman whose work we are.
>
> "How vast and profound is the influence of the subtile powers of Heaven and of Earth!"
>
> "We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them: we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them: identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them."
>
> "They cause that in all the universe men purify and sanctify their hearts, and clothe themselves in their holiday garments to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtile intelligences. They are everywhere, above us, on our left, on our right: they environ us on all sides."
>
> We are the subjects of an experiment which is not a little interesting to me. Can we not do without the society of our gossips a little while under these circumstances,--have our own thoughts to cheer us? Confucius says truly, "Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors." (*Walden* 87)

Thoreau has taken these passages from the *Doctrine of the Mean*[9] and the *Analects*,[10] as translated from his translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 203, 205). However, the passage from the *Doctrine of the Mean* also appears in his other notebook, under the title heading "Virtue," as this following variant from Collie's *Four Books*:

> Confucius exclaimed, How vast the influence of the Kwei Shin (spirits or gods). If you look for them, you cannot see them; if you listen, you cannot hear them; they embody all things, and are what things cannot be separated

[9] Legge, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, chap. xvi, I, 2, and 3 (The Chinese Classics, I, 397).
[10] Legge, *The Analects*, bk. IV, chap. xxv (The Chinese Classics, I, I72).

> from. When they cause mankind to fast, purify, and dress themselves, everything appears full of them. They seem to be once above, and on the right, and on the left. The ode says, The descent of the gods cannot be comprehended; with what reverence should we conduct ourselves! Indeed that which is least, is clearly displayed. They cannot be concealed. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 152-153)

It is obvious from this version that Thoreau's earlier statement that "*Nearest* to all things is that power which fashions their being" is a reference to the "Kwei Shin." In the footnotes of Collies translation, the Neo-Confucius commentaries, and Collie himself, explain the concept of "Kwei Shin" as such:

> Ching Tsze says, that the Kwei Shin are the kung yung (literally meritoriuous work) of heaven and earth and the traces of creating and renovating, or rather of production and destruction.
>
> All the operations of the universe are produced by the ethereal parts of the Yin and Yang, and the place where the ethereal parts reside is called the kwei Shin (i.e. gods.)
>
> The springing and growing of trees is Shin. The falling of leaves, the decay and down fall of trees is Kwei. (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 12)

And Collie says:

> I have sometimes been inclined to think that their Taou and their Kwei Shin, are but different names for the same thing. If they mean anything by what they say on this subject, it seems to be, that the Kwei Shin is some extremely fine, subtle spirit, employed by heaven and earth great creators, as the substratum of all things, and the secondary cause of all the phenomenon of nature: perhaps gravitation, or the electric fluid. (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 12)

That Thoreau not only understood this conception of "Yin and Yang," as the source of all things through opposing forces manifested in the actions of the "Kwei Shin" in nature, but that he also implemented these concepts into his own naturalism and concept of deism is evident from the following quote later in *Solitude*:

> The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature,--of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter,--such health, such cheer, they afford forever! and

> such sympathy have they ever with our race, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the woods shed their leaves and put on mourning in the midsummer, if any man should ever for a just cause grieve. Shall I not have intelligence with this earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself? (*Walden* 90)

Here, Thoreau's advocacy for quite solitude and observation of the dichotomies in the natural world, as he does throughout this chapter, aligns with Zhu Xi's own concepts of searching out principles (ch'iung li) and abiding in reverence (chu ching) in the formulation and cultivation of the *Dao* (De Bary 14). This connection with the concept of Yin and Yang, also serves to explain Thoreau's multiple references to decay, death, and growth throughout *Walden* (Teele, et al. 276-277). Thoreau would even appear to understand this concept of dichotomy, as embodied in the concept of Yin and Yang, to not only apply to the natural world, but him-self as well, when he says:

> 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. (*Walden* 88)

Given this evidence, it would appear that Thoreau was very much aware of the mysticism in Confucianism, and that in his coupling of these two Confucian quotes, he is trying to inspire others to cultivate "virtue" through the quite observation of the dichotomies present in "Nature" and themselves, much in vain of the Confucian *Junzi* who leads by example. Even Cady admits, concerning the second quote from the *Analects,* "Confucius was saying was that the man of moral excellence and vigor of character will find himself emulated by others" (Cady, 27). How Thoreau's intent here is different from that of Cady's interpretation, and or out of step with Confucian practice, is hard to argue, much less justify.

Civil Disobedience, Part II:

As in *Resistance to Civil Government,* Thoreau returns to the Confucian concepts of "individual responsibility" in civic life and the eremitic response to an unjust government throughout *Walden*. This is no more prevalent than the chapter *The Village*, where Thoreau returns to his night in jail as follows:

> One afternoon, near the end of the first summer, when I was went to the village to get a shoe from the cobbler's, I was seized and put into jail, because, as I have elsewhere related, I 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. I had gone down to the woods for other purposes. 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. It is true, I might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run "amok" against society; but I preferred that society should run "amok" against me, it being the desperate party. (*Walden* 111)

Thoreau's comments that he would prefer that "that society should run "amok" him, rather than him against it, is once again, drawn from the Confucian concept of the learned man who disobeys an unjust government through a passive retreat from it. As in *Resistance to Civil Government,* Thoreau argues in *Walden* for a government that leads by benevolent example, rather than force. To drive home this point, he employs the following quote from the *Analects:*[11]

> "You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishments? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass; the grass, when the wind passes over it bends." (*Walden* 112)

Here, the Mencian theory of humane government (仁政), and the Confucian concept of individual's burden to uphold "virtue," is prismed through Thoreau's own conception that the individual man and or women that participates in an unjust society, is he or herself, complicit in the injustice acts of that society (Yao 72). Once again, drawing on the exile lore of Qu Yuan and Confucius, Thoreau chooses the domestic exile of a prison cell, rather than sacrifice his "virtue" by following the rules or dictates of an unjust government. Cady does not seem to have found any fault with Thoreau's use of the above quote (Cady 28).

[11] Legge, *The Analects,* bk. XII, chap. xix (The Chinese Classics, I, 258-259)

Higher Laws:

In the chapter *Higher Laws*, Thoreau creates a simile between the appetites of men and the hunger of nations, and the need for both to live life's of frugality and restraint from worldly pleasures in order to reach spiritual rectitude, as he says there:

> The gross feeder is a man in the larva state; and there are whole nations in that condition, nations without fancy or imagination, whose vast abdomens betray them. (*Walden* 139)

Once again, coming back to the Confucian concept of the individual's responsibility to set an example for society, Thoreau's extoling of restraint is an attempt at edifying the entire county by example, and not just a diatribe on the virtues of humble food. He also employs two Confucian quotes in this section to these ends, the first of which is as follows:

> "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Thseng-tseu, "one looks, and one does not see; one listens, and one does not hear; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food." He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton; he who does not cannot be otherwise. A puritan may go to his brown-bread crust with as gross an appetite as ever an alderman to his turtle. Not that food which entereth into the mouth defileth a man, but the appetite with it is eaten. (*Walden* 141)

While the employment of this quote from Zengzi (曾子, 505–435BC), here Romanized as Thseng-tseu, as found in the *The Great Learning*,[12] is used here to illustrate Thoreau's larger theme of a need for spiritual awareness in the individual, it is not employed, as Cady argues, "based on little more than a coincidence of the language of the sense" (28). While Thoreau drew the above quote from his translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 202), he most certainly was aware of the same kind of sentiments in Collies translation. For example, in the Collie's *Four Books*, the quote is rendered in the *Chung Yung* as "All Man eat, but few know the true flavor of things," (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 4). More interestingly, in the introduction of to *Chung Yung* it states the following:

[12] Legge, *The Great Learning*, chap. vii, sec. 2 (The Chinese Classics, I, 368).

> Tsze Sze has delivered the sense of what he had learned, in order, First, to establish the doctrine that the Taou originated in heaven, and is unchangeable, that it exist in ourselves, and may not be departed from. Secondly, to shew the importance of preserving, nourishing and narrowly examining it, and lastly to show the extent of the renovating virtue of the holy sages. For, he who wishes to learn this Taou, must turn around and seek it in himself, and having obtained, he must put away all the selfishness of external temptation and fill up the measure of virtue which he originally and naturally possesses. (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 3)

This conception that the *Dao*, as supreme reason, which can be cultivated in ourselves, would seem to have informed Thoreau's own conception of Transcendentalism as an act of self-reflection and cultivation when he says, "We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion as our higher nature slumbers" (*Walden* 142). For Thoreau, that "higher nature," is inevitability bound with a lower animalistic passions that can only be suppressed though self-cultivation, much in the same fashion as the Confucian rituals. Thoreau expands on this concept further in *Higher Laws* with the following quote from Mencius:[13]

> The other day I picked up the lower jaw of a hog, with white and sound teeth and tusk, which suggested that there was an animal health and vigor distinct from the spiritual. This creature succeeded by other means than temperance and purity. "That in which men differ from brute beasts," says Mencius, "is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men preserve it carefully." (*Walden* 142)

Both Cady and Christie argued that Thoreau used this quote to stress "the kinship of man and animal," and not in the original context, in which "Mencius's emphasis is on that 'little' which divides man from beast, his moral capacity, which can with cultivation become so great as to lift man to the pinnacle of the 'sage'" (Cady 29). However, as we have already demonstrated above, this "Mencius emphasis," on humanities "moral capacity" to transcend his baser instincts is far closer to Thoreau's original intent, with its employment here in *Higher Laws*, than either

[13] Legge, *Mencius*, bk. IV, pt. II, chap. xix (The Chinese Classics, II, 325)

Cady and or Christy's reading would permit. Furthermore, Thoreau continues directly from this Mencius quote to state the following:

> Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open. By turns our purity inspires and our impurity casts us down. He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established. (*Walden* 142)

The phrase that "He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him" is more than enough to dispel any notion that Thoreau is taking here about a "kinship of man and animal." Rather, it is obvious that he is talking about establishing the *Dao*, and or his closely related conception of it, within himself in order to attain a higher spiritual unity. He says as much when he claims the following:

> I know of many systems of religion esteemed heathenish whose precepts fill the reader with shame, and provoke him to new endeavors, through it be the performance of rites merely. (*Walden* 145)

That these "rites" might be a reference to those of the Confucian doctrine, is a tantalizing hypothesis, which will find further evidence as we move onto the next Chapter in *Walden*.

Con-fut-see:

In their evaluation of how Thoreau engaged with the Confucian text, all past commentators have chosen to ignore the following passage from the chapter *Brute Neighbors*:

> Hermit alone. Let me see; where was I? Methinks I was nearly in this frame of mind; the world lay about at this angle. Shall I go to heaven or a-fishing? If I should soon bring this meditation to an end, would another so sweet occasion be likely to offer? I was near being resolved into the essence of things as ever I was in my life. I fear my thoughts will not come back to me. If it would do any good, I would whistle for them. When they make us an offer, is it wise to say, We will think of it? My thoughts have left no track, and I cannot find the path again. What was it that I was thinking of? It was a very hazy day. I will just try

> these three sentences of Con-fut-see; they may fetch that state about again. (*Walden* 145)

In this stream of consciousness dialogue between the "*Poet*" and the "*Hermit,*" with the "*Hermit*" being representative of Thoreau himself, we see Thoreau's own admission in the text that he read the Confucian text for spiritual guidance when he says, "I will just try these three sentences of Con-fut-see; they may fetch that state about again." "Con-fut-see," here, is a rendering of Kong Fuzi (孔夫子), which he read in the version of the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in Gowan's *The Phoenix* (*The Phoenix*, 2). This passage in particular indicates that the reference to "rites" in the previous chapter is, at least partially, in regards to that of Confucian rites, as Thoreau would have read about them in his various versions of the Confucian classics.

The "Taou" is the "Tao" is the "Dao":

The Transcendentalist movement was adamant in its rejection of the Christian doctrine of "original sin," and much of the dialectical power of the Transcendentalist movement, and its appeal, rested in its assertion that human kinds redemption and union with a higher power laid with the internal cultivation of the "divine" in the individual through the observation of the natural world. Throughout *Walden*, Thoreau, like Emerson, sought to release the asphyxiating grip of organized religious doctrine over the individual's religious experience, by confirming the right of the individual to define and construct it. Thoreau's belief in the indelible goodness of humankind, and human's ability to cultivate the "divine" in themselves, was certainly informed by his reading of Mencius, as the following passage and quote from the *Mengzi*,[14] as found in the chapter *Spring* attest:

> Why the jailer does not leave open his prison doors,--why the judge does not dismiss his case,--why the preacher does not dismiss his congregation! It is because they do not obey the hint which God gives them, nor accept the pardon which he freely offers to all.

[14] Legge, *Mencius*, bk. VI, pt. I, chap. viii (The Chinese Classics, II, 408).

> "A return to goodness produced each day in the tranquil and beneficent breath of the morning, causes that, in respect to the love of virtue and the hatred of vice, one approaches a little the primitive nature of man, as the sprouts of the forest which has been felled. In like manner the evil which one does in the interval of a day prevents the germs of virtue which began to spring up again from developing themselves and destroys them. "After the germs of virtue have thus been prevented many times from developing themselves, then the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice longer to preserve them, then the nature of man does not differ much from that of the brute. Men see-ing the nature of this man like that of the brute, think that he has never possessed the innate faculty of reason. Are those the true and natural sentiments of man?" (*Walden* 203-204)

Once again, Thoreau drew this quote from his translation of Pauthier's *Confucius et Mencius* (Thoreau & Tan 218), and uses it here to dispel the mistrust that contemporaneous western society, and its civic institutions, have concerning the innate goodness of humans. Obviously, Thoreau also draws from this quote a self-affirmation for his own brand of naturalism as a means of self-cultivation and communion with the "divine." Nevertheless, Cady still contends, despite the thematic similarities between much of *Walden* and Mencius philosophy, that he still "cannot conclude" that Thoreau "was thinking of Mencius when he wrote the above sentiments" or any Confucius thought in general (Cady, 30). Cady's position becomes increasingly difficult to defend when one considers the following passages from David Collie's *Four Books*:

> Heaven, earth and all things are substantially the same with me. If my heart be correct, the heart of heaven and earth will be correct, and if my Ke (spirits) act regulary and according to nature, so will the ke of heaven and earth. (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 1)

and:

> Heaven by the Yin and Yang and the five elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth formed all things. By Ke they are formed into regular forms; then

> heaven confers upon them Le. This principle, before it is conferred by heaven, is called le, after is its conferred, it is dominated Sing, (nature). To act agreeably to Sing is called Taou (path of duty). The superior man walks in it,--the worthless man leaves it. But, though departed from, a man may by his own efforts return to it again, and thus gain the primitive perfection of his nature.
>
> The five elements, are water, fire, wood, metal and earth. The Yin and Yang are the male female principles, which according to Chinese philosophy pervade all nature. Thus, heaven it seems employed these two principles, and the elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth to form all things, i.e. Heaven is the primary cause in creation; the Ying and Yang are the instrumental cause, and the live elements are the materials employed. (Collie, *Chung Yung*, 1-2)

Here, Zhu Xi's conception of *gewu* (the investigation of things) and *guanwu* (observing things) as the means to investigate *li* (pattern, patterning), so as to bring about self-cultivation (Thompson), align almost perfectly with Thoreau's own conception of rectitude, when he says earlier:

> In a pleasant spring morning all men's sins are forgiven. Such a day is a truce to vice. While such a sun holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return. Through our own recovered innocence we discern the innocence of our neighbors.—*Walden*, 203

This harmony with and study of nature as a means of perfecting the self and reaching a divine state has led many past commentators to draw comparisons with Thoreau's ideas and that of Taoism. Both Gary Simon in, *Taoist Paralles In Thoreau*, and Kichung Kim in, *On Chuang Tzu and Thoreau* (Teele, et al.), and even Cady himself (31-32), have speculated that Thoreau conception of "nature" had almost precise parallels with the conception of "Tao" in Taoist philosophy. For example, Kim says of this affinity the following:

> This life in nature Thoreau longed for and tried to live is precisely the mode of life the Taoist strove after, a life completely in tune with the rhythms of nature; to the Taoist, therefore, the highest achievement in his life lay in "the

> identification of himself with the whole of nature, i.e., the universe. (Teele, et al. 278)

Given the presentation of the "Tao", and the Yin and Yang in Collies translation of the *Four Books*, we can safely conclude that Thoreau was indeed aware of the conception of the *Dao*, and implemented his knowledge of it into his own deistic conception of the universe and naturalistic tendencies. This is directly proven by an entire section in his journal with the title heading "The Taou," in which he has recorded no less than eight passages on the subject.[15] For example:

> The Taou.
>
> Sincerity is the Taou or way of heaven. To aim at is the way of man.
>
> Mencius said, To be benevolent is man. When man and benevolence are united, they are called *Taou*. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 148-149)

Nonetheless, it was through the great syncretism of the Neo-Confucianist Zhu Xi, another great harmonizer of diverse religious traditions, like Thoreau, which he learned of both concepts, rather than through any direct knowledge of Taoism itself.

The Philosopher Said:

Bill Ashcroft, in *Cutting the Ground*, argues that even though American literature was accepted as a distinct cultural enterprise after the American Revolution, it did so under the context of an "offshoot" of a British intellectual tradition that claimed "final authority in questions of taste and value." (Ashcroft et al. 15). Like Emerson before, Thoreau sought to forge a new and distinct intellectual and textual discourse separate from this paternal link between British and American culture on one hand, and his own society on another. In that effort, Confucianism played both a covert and overt role, as we have illustrated above. In *Walden's Conclusion*, we find its last covert usage as follows:

> Some are dinning in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men.

[15] See Appendix B, 57-58, for a full rendering.

> But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can? Let every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made. (*Walden* 210)

This phrase that a "A living dog is better than a dead lion" would appear to be reference to the following quote from the *Analects*,[16] and appears in Thoreau's commonplace book that holds the translation of Pauthier's as follows:

> The ornaments of education are as the natural parts; the natural parts as the ornaments of education. The skins of the tiger & the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned. Tseu-Koung. (Thoreau and Tan 208)

It also appears in one of Thoreau's journal entries, from May 6, 1851, in a similar, albeit different, context as follows:

> Undoubtedly all men are not equally fit subjects for civilization and because the majority like dogs & sheep are tame by inherited dispositions, is no reason why the others should have their natures broken that they may be reduced to the same level—Men are in the main alike, but they were made several in order that might be various—If a low use is to be served one man will do nearly or quite as well as another, if a high one individual excellence is to be regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away—but no other man can serve that use which the author of this illustration did.
>
> Confucius Says
>
> "The skins of the tiger & the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned"

[16] Legge, *The Analects*, bk. XII, chap. ix (The Chinese Classics, I, 255).

> But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers anymore than it is to make sheep ferocious. It is evident then that tanning skins for shoes and the like is not the best use to which they can be put. (*Journal*, 3, 217)

In the context of *Walden*, Thoreau is using this quote from Confucius as a foil to British cultural hegemony that derived its legitimacy from greater age and tradition. He does so by arguing that the unique and modern character of the United States, even if a cultural outsider, is still able to define its own intellectual authority separate from considerations of the past glories of European and or British history and or intellectual tradition. In contrast, the passage in his notebook is employed as a rhetorical tool for his support of the intellectual authority of the individual, here taking on the guise of the cultural outsider, against that of the intellectual authority of the state, its institutions, and or society. In both cases, all past commentators have overlooked this important rhetorical use of Confucius thought in both *Walden* and in Thoreau's notebooks.

Finally, the thematic invocation of the authority of the state being reduced to that of the individual, via, the Mencian view of government as employed in *Civil Disobedience*, is evoked once again at *Walden's* end with this last direct Confucian quote:

> "The philosopher said: 'From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject and vulgar one cannot take away his thoughts." Do not seek so anxiously to be developed, to subject yourself to many influences to be played on; it is all dissipation. Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly light. (*Walden* 212)

Once again, as in his earlier journal entry, the intellectual authority of the individual is supported through the rhetorical usage of this quote from the *Analects*,[17] as found in Thoreau's translation of Pauthier (Thoreau & Tan 208). This very American conception of the primacy of the individual, or "self-reliance", in civic and religious life is conceptualized as having originated with Emerson and Thoreau (Brown 373). However, as we have seen over the course of this investigation, it would appear, to also, owe a great deal to the concept of the Confucian *Junzi*,

[17] "The Master said, One can seize the general in charge of the three army divisions, but one cannot seize the heart's intent of a peasant." (Eno, Analects 9.25).

and the Mencian conception of government, as projected through these giants of American intellectual history.

Conclusion:

> A Legacy Of Creative Protest
>
> The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
>
> During my early college days I read Thoreau's essays on civil disobedience for the first time. Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I re-read the work several times. I became convinced then that non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. No other person has been more eloquent or passionate in getting this idea across than Henry David Thoreau. As a result of his writing and personal witness we are the heirs of a legacy of creative protest. It goes without saying that the teachings of Thoreau are alive today, indeed are more alive than ever before. Whether expressed in a sit in-at lunch counters, a freedom ride in Mississippi, a peaceful protest in Albany, Georgia, a busboycott in Montgomery, Alabama, it is an outgrowth of Thoreau's insistence that evil must be resisted and no moral man can patiently adjust to injustice.
>
> September 7, 1962 (*The Massachusetts Review*, I, 43)
> (http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/massachusetts-review-legacy-creative-protest)

Just as the Civil rights movement was an "outgrowth of Thoreau's insistence that evil must be resisted," so too was Thoreau's moral and spiritual awaking an outgrowth of the Confucian *Junzi*, reformatted, reinterpreted, and re-imaged, like so many times before and throughout history. As in Richard Dawkins meme theory, Confucian concepts of "self-cultivation," of "virtue," of "humaneness" and rectitude, as well as the social role of the individual in civic life have replicated, mutated, and transformed in a variety of different host for well over two-thousand-five hundred years. In some instances, this "Confucian" meme has been the tool of despots for

their claim to legitimacy and or as a straw man marked for ritual sacrifice. In others, it served as a guide to knowledge of the "self," the "divine," the world, and or a powerful foil to perceived wrongs. In these diverse contexts, the meme takes on an Élan vital, which is then transmuted by the respective individual into "knowledge," that basis of all power in any society. For Voltaire and the Founding Fathers, it was the "knowledge" of how to construct a better government and society. For Emerson and Thoreau, it was the "knowledge" of how to construct a better person, which in turn, could construct a better society and government through a closer alignment with the "divine." In addition, to a powerful tool in the construction of a truly native American voice. However, both felt a spiritual and moral affinity with the Confucian works, and saw to implement them in their respective revolutions, be they public or private.

Thoreau in particular saw a better way to govern the "self" through Confucius and Mencius, and a better way to reach the summits of human experience through the commentaries of Zhu Xi and the Confucian concept of the *Dao*. In addition, he took the powerful narratives of humane government, and bucolic retirement in the face of injustice, and transformed them into a voice of "civil disobedience," which continues to echo down to our present. While Confucius was the base, Thoreau was the artist that shaped and transmuted the Sages narrative into his own temporal and social conditions. Thoreau stated this best himself in 1851:

> Like some other preachers, I have added my texts—derived from the Chinese and Hindoo scriptures—long after my discourse was written (*The Journal*, II, 192)

From our overview, we can safely conclude that Thoreau most certainly "derived" a considerable amount of his text from the Confucian *Four Books*. But like Confucianism itself, Thoreau's works, and that of the Transcendentalist, are all master plays in the great art of syncretism and synthesis. Therefore, it would be folly to claim primacy of one of these philosophies and or religions over such an eclectic mind as that of Thoreau's. No, our attempt here is not to establish dominance of one tradition over another, but rather, to shed a light on the neglected shadows of his mind, and to move the study of American culture, literature, and the "experiment" itself away from its Western and or Euro-centric focus. For what is America, if not a dream, conjured up from the four corners of the globe?

Lastly, given the immense influence of Emerson and Thoreau on intellectual life both in and outside of America, is it not possible that these Confucius concepts have crept into those most unexpected of places? Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whiteman, Charles Darwin, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Mohandas Gandhi, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to name a few, were all influenced by Emerson and Thoreau's writings, is it possible then, that Confucius philosophy, as prismed through their writings, played a part in the formation of these other men's thoughts as well (Brown 271-322, 345, 394)? For example, was William James conception of the "stream of consciousness" influenced by Emerson's *Nature*, as presented in the following passage:

> Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour and is not reminded of the flux of all things? (*Nature* 26-27)

And is not possible that this in turn was influenced by the below passage from the *Analects*, as found in the commentaries from Zhu Xi in Marshman's *The Works of Confucius*:

> Chee being upon a river says, In this manner does the river perpetually flow! It stays not day or night!
>
> Comment.
>
> This sentence represent the continual changes which occur in the natural course of things: they pass away and return again in constant succession; not a moment intervenes between the past and the succeeding. Thus is it with real virtue; the idea is easy to be apprehended: nothing more fitly describes the natural operation of a virtuous than the flowing of a river. (*Marshman* 623)

These are but a small selection, amongst the endless avenues, that await future investigation into America's conception and use of the "Orient."

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Appendix A:

In the following Appendix's, I offer a rendering of most known Confucian quotes that are present in both Emerson's and Thoreau's journals. I have completed this task for three reasons: First, to lend further proof to my argument; Second, to provide these quotes in a readily available manner for future research in this area; Lastly, to give a sense of depth and breadth concerning both Emerson's and Thoreau's Confucian readings and knowledge. **Appendix A** contains all known Confucian quotes from Joshua Marshman's *The Works of Confucius* in Emerson's journals. **Appendix B** contains all known Confucian quotes in Thoreau's journals from around 1843. I also give the textual source of the following quotes where known.

The following are all known quotes and passages that Emerson took from Joshua Marshman's *The Works of Confucius* in 1836:

Selections from Confucius.

Have no friend unlike yourself. [p. 36]

Chee says, If, in the morning, I hear about the right way, & in the evening die, I can be happy. [p. 226]

A man's life is properly connected with virtue. The life of the evil man is preserved by mere good fortune. [p. 384]

Coarse rice for food, water to drink, & the bended arm for a pillow; happiness may be enjoyed even in these. Without virtue, riches & honor seem to me like (the) a passing cloud. [p. 456]

A wise & good man was Hooi. A piece of bamboo was his dish, a cocoa-nut his cup, his dwelling was a miserable shed. Men could not sustain the sight of his wretchedness but Hooi did not change the serenity of his mind. A wise & good man was Hooi. [p. 367]

Chee says, In the middle, the exact point consist [of] rectitude; to arrive at this is the great object of men; few long remain here. [p. 406]

Chee-koong said, Were they discontented? The sage replied, They sought & attained complete virtue---how then could they be discontented? [pp. 452-453]

The honorable man is serene & enlarged in mind. The low man is always anxiously fearing. [. 507]

He thoroughly loved learning; he was not causelessly moved to anger; he did not repeat a transgression. [p. 344]

Chee says, Yaou is the man who in torn clothes or common apparel sits with those dressed in furred robes without feeling shame. [p. 639]

To worship at a temple not your own is mere flattery. [p. 135]

Chee says, Grieve not that men know not you; grieve that you are ignorant of men. [p. 68]

Chee Yaou inquired respecting filial piety. Chee says The filial piety of the present day is esteemed merely ability to nourish a parent. This care is extended to a dog or a horse. Every domestic animal can obtain food. (Without) Beside veneration, what is the difference? [p. 94]

How can a man (be) remain concealed! How can a man remain concealed! [p. 103]

Chee is now able to quote the See; Tell him the past & he knows what is to come. [p. 66]

Koong Chee is a man who through earnestness in seeking knowledge forgets his food, &, in his joy for having found it, loses all sense of his toil; who thus occupied is unconscious that he has almost arrived at old age. [p. 464]

Chee says of Gnan-I; I saw him continually advance, but I never saw him stop in the path of knowledge. [p. 629]

Chee entered the great temple. Frequently enquiring about things, one said, Who says that the son of the Chou man understands propriety? In the great temple he is constantly asking questions: Chee heard & replied, “This is propriety.” [p. 448]

Chee was in the Chhi country three months hearing Sun's music & knew not the taste of his meat. He said I had no idea of music arriving at this degree of perfection. [p. 448]

Mung chee fwan was not a boaster. His troop flying, he placed himself in the rear to repel the pursuing enemy. Yet when entering the gate of the city, he, beating his horse, said; It was not my management which placed me in the rear: my horse did not move forwards. [p. 377]

In forming a mountain, w(h)ere I to stop when one basket of earth is lacking, I actually stop, & in the same manner were I to add to the level ground through but one basket of earth daily, I really go forward. [p. 626]

Choy-ee slept in the afternoon: Chee says Rotten wood is unfit for carving; a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful colour. To Ee what advice can I give? [p. 286]

A man's transgression partakes of the nature of his company. [p. 224]

Having knowledge, to apply it; not having knowledge to confess your ignorance: this is real knowledge. [p. 115]

Chee says, To sit in silence & recal past ideas, to study & feel no satiety, to instruct men without weariness; --- have I this ability within me? [p. 418] (*JMN*, VI, 389-392)

The general of a large army may be overcome, but you cannot overcome the determined mind even of a peasant. [p. 637]

The flower of the Thong-ti moving, bends itself from side to side: and does not my heart thus tend towards you? But far distant is your abode. [p. 647] (*JMN*, V, 122)

The following are Emerson's selections from William Gowan's *The Phoenix: A Collection of Old and Rare Fragments*, itself, a partial English translation of Philippe Couplet's 1687 publication *Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive Scientia sinensis latine exposita*:

" A soldier of the kingdom of Ci lost his buckler; & having a long time sought after it in vain, he at last comforts himself upon the loss he had sustained with this reflection: 'A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp will find it; he will use it.'" Confucius (*JMN*, VI, 338)

"The wise man never hastens, neither in his studies nor his words; he is sometimes as it were, mute; but when it concerns him to act & practice virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all." Confucius

"The truly wise man speaks little; he is little eloquent. I see not that eloquence can be of very great use to him." Confucius

"Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great speeches, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence ought to be a language unknown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks; but what language does it use to preach to men that there is a sovereign principle (which makes them to act & move.) from which all things depend; sovereign principle which makes them act & move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature; it makes it produce. The silence is eloquent." Confucius. (*JMN*, VI, 387)

Appendix B:

The following are all known quotes and passages from Joshua Marshman's *The Works of Confucius* that appear in Thoreau's journal from 1843 (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 382):

Sayings of Confucius.

Chee says, if in the morning I hear about the right way, and in the evening die, I can be happy.

A man's life is properly connected with virtue. The life of the evil man is preserved by mere good fortune.

Coarse rice for food, water to drink, and the bended arm for a pillow—happiness may be enjoyed even in these. Without virtue, riches and honor seem to me like a passing cloud.

A wise and good man was Hooi. A piece of bamboo was his dish, a cocoa-nut his cup, his dwelling a miserable shed. Men could not sustain the sight of his wretchedness; but Hooi did not change the serenity of his mind. A wise and good man was Hooi.

Chee-koong said, Were they discontented? The sage replies, They sought and attained complete virtue;--how then could they be discontented?

Chee says, Yaou is the man who, in torn clothes or common apparel, sits with those dressed in furred robes without feeling shame.

To worship at a temple not your own is mere flattery.

Chee says, grieve that men know not you; grieve that you are ignorant of men.

How can a man remain concealed! How can a man remain concealed!

Have no friend unlike yourself.

Chee-Yaou enquired respecting filial piety. Chee says, the filial piety of the present day is esteemed merely ability to nourish a parent. This care is extended to a dog or a horse. Every domestic animal can obtain food. Beside veneration, what is the difference?

Chee entered the great temple, frequently enquiring about things. One said, who says that the son of the Chou man understands propriety? In great temple he is constantly asking questions. Chee heard and replied—"This is propriety."

Choy-ee slept in the afternoon. Chee says, rotten wood is unfit for carving: a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful color. To Ee what advice can I give?

A man's transgression partakes of the nature of his company.

Having knowledge, to apply it; not having knowledge, to confess your ignorance; this is real knowledge.

Chee says, to sit in silence and recall past ideas, to study and feel no anxiety, to instruct men without weariness;--have I this ability within me?

In forming a mountain, were I to stop when one basket of earth is lacking, I actually stop; and in the same manner were I to add to the level ground through but one basket of earth daily, I really go forward. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 140-141)

The following are all known selections from William Gowan's *The Phoenix: A Collection of Old and Rare Fragments*, itself, a partial English translation of Philippe Couplet's 1687 publication *Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive Scientia sinensis latine exposita,* that appear in Thoreau's Journal from 1843(*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 382):

A soldier of the kingdom of Ci lost his buckler; and having sought after it a long time in vain, he comforted himself with this reflection; 'A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp will find it; he will use it.'

The wise man never hastens, neither in his studies nor his words; he is sometimes, as it were, mute; but when it concerns him to act and practice virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all.

The truly wise man speaks little, he is little eloquent. I see not that eloquence can be of very great use to him.

Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great speeches, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unkown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks; but what language does it use to preach to men? That there is a sovereign principle from which all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them to act and move. Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature; it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 141-142)

The following are all known selections from David Collie's 1828 publication, *The Chinese Classical Work Commonly Called The Four Books*, that appear in Thoreau's Journal from 1843(*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 385):

> [Preliminary Note. Since we printed a few sections from Dr. Marsman's translation of the sentences of Confucius, we have received a copy of "the Chinese Classical Work, commonly called the Four Books, translated and illustrated with notes by the late Rev. David Collie, Principle of the Anglo-Chinese College, Malacca. Printed at the Mission Press." This translation, which seems to have been undertaken and performed as an exercise in learning the language, is the most valuable contribution we have yet seen from the

Chinese literature. That part of the work, which is new, is the Memoirs of Mencius in two books, the Shang Mung and Hea Mung, which is the production of Mung Tsze (or Mencius) who flourished about a hundred years after Confucius. The subjoined extracts are chiefly taken from these books.]

ALL things are contained complete in ourselves. There is no greater joy than to turn round on ourselves and become perfect.

The human figure and color possess a divine nature, but it is only the sage who can fulfil what his figure promises.

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

Wherever the superior man passes, renovation takes place. The divine spirit which he cherishes above and below, flows on equal in extent and influence with heaven and earth.

Tsze Kung says, The errors of the superior man are like the eclipses of the sun and moon. His errors all men see, and his reformation all men look for.

Mencius says, There is not anything but is decreed; accord with and keep to what is right. Hence he, who understands the decrees, will not stand under a falling wall. He, who dies in performing his duty to the utmost of his power, accords with the decrees of heaven. But he who dies for his crimes, accords not with the divine decree.

There is a proper rule by which we should seek, and whether we obtain what we seek or not, depends on the divine decree.

Put men to death by the principles which have for their object the preservation of life, and they will not grumble

THE SCHOLAR .

Teen, son of the king of Tse, asked what the business of the scholar consists in? Mencius replied, In elevating his mind and inclination. What do you mean by elevating the mind? It

consists merely in being benevolent and just. Where is the scholar'd abode? In benevolence. Where is his road? Justice. To dwell in benevolence, and walk in justice, is the whole business of a great man.

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

He who employs his whole mind, will know his nature. He who knows his nature, knows heaven.

It were better to be without books than to believe all that they record.

THE TAOU.

Sincerity is the *Taou* or the way of heaven. To aim at it is the way of man.

From inherent sincerity to have perfect intelligence, is to be a sage by nature; to attain sincerity by means of intelligence, is to be such by study. Where there is sincerity, there must be intelligence. Where intelligence is, it must lead to sincerity.

He who offends heaven, has none to whom he can pray.

Mencius said, To be benevolent is man. When man and benevolence are united, they are called *Taou*.

To be full of sincerity, is called beauty. To be so full of sincerity that it shines forth in the external conduct, is called greatness. When this greatness renovates others, it is called sageness. Holiness or sageness which is above comprehension, is called divine.

Perfection (or sincerity) is the way of heaven, and to wish for perfection is the duty of a man. It has never been the case that he who possessed genuine virtue in the highest degree, could not influence others, nor has it ever been the case that he who was not in the highest degree sincere could influence others.

There is a divine nobility and a human nobility. Benevolence, justice, fidelity, and truth, and to delight in virtue without weariness, constitute divine nobility. To be a prince, a prime

minister, or a great officer of state constitute human nobility. The ancients adorned divine nobility, and human nobility followed it.

The men of the present day cultivate divine nobility in order that they may obtain human nobility; and when they once get human nobility, they throw away divine nobility. This is the height of delusion, and must end in the loss of both.

OF REFORM.

Taou is not far removed from man. If men suppose that it lies in something remote, then what they think of is not Taou. The ode says, "Cut hatchet handles." This means of doing it, is not remote; you have only to take hold of one handle, and use it to cut another. Yet if you look aslant at it, it will appear distant. Hence the superior man employs man, (that is, what is in man,) to reform man.

When Tsze Loo heard anything that he had not yet fully practiced, he was afraid of hearing anything else.

The governor of Yih asked respecting government. Confucius replied, Make glad those who are near, and those who are at distance will come.

The failing of man is that they neglect their own field, and dress that of others, They require much of others, but little of themselves.

WAR.

Mencius said, From this time and ever after I know the heavy consequences of killing a man's parents. If you kill a man's elder brother, he will kill your elder brother. Hence although you do not yourself kill them, you do nearly the same thing.

When man says, I know well how to draw up an army, I am skilled in fighting, he is a great criminal.

POLITICS.

Ke Kang asked Confucius respecting government. Confucius replied, Government is rectitude.

Ke Kang was harassed by robbers, and consulted Confucius on the subject. Confucius said, If you, sir, were not covetous, the people would not rob, even though you should hire them to do it.

Mencius said, Pih E's eye would not look on bad color, nor would his ear listen to bad sound. Unless a prince were of his stamp, he would not serve him, and unless people were of his own stamp, he would not employ them. In times of good government, he went into office, and in times of confusion and bad government, he retired. Where disorderly government prevailed, or where disorderly people lived, he could not bear to dwell. He thought that to live with low men was as bad as to sit in the mud with his court robes and cap. In the time of Chou, he dwelt on the banks of the North Ka, watching till the empire should be brought to peace and order. Hence, when the fame of Pih E is heard of, the stupid become intelligent, and the weak determined.

E Yin said, What of serving a prince not of one's own stamp! What of ruling a people which are not to your mind! In times of good government he went into office, and so did he in times of disorder. He said, heaven has given life to this people, and sent those who are first enlightened to enlighten those who are last, and has sent those who are first aroused to arouse those who are last. I am one of heaven's people who am first aroused. I will take these doctrines and arouse this people. He thought that if there was a single man or woman in the Empire, who was not benefited by the doctrines of Yaou and Shun, that he was guilty of pushing them into a ditch. He took the heavy responsibility of the Empire on himself.

Lew Hea Hooi was not ashamed of serving a dirty Prince, nor did he refuse an inferior office. He did not conceal the virtuous, and acted according to his principles. Although he lost his place, he grumbled not. In poverty he repined not. He lived in harmony with men of little worth, and could not bear to abandon them. He said, "You are you, and I am I; although you sit by my side with your body naked, how can you defile me?" Hence when the fame of Lew Hea Hooi is heard of, the mean man becomes liberal, and the miserly becomes generous.

VIRTUE.

Chung Kung asked, What is perfect virtue? Confucius said, What you do not wish others to do to you, do not to them.

Sze Ma Neu asked, What constitutes perfect virtue? Confucius replied; It is to find it difficult to speak. “To find it difficult to speak! Is that perfect virtue?” Confucius rejoined, What is difficult to practice, must it not be difficult to speak?

Confucius says, Virtue runs swifter than the royal postillions carry despatches.

The She King says, “Heaven created all men having their duties and the means or rule of performing them. It is the natural and constant disposition of men to love beautiful virtue.” Confucius says, that he who wrote this ode knew right principles.

Confucius exclaimed, Is virtue far off? I only wish for virtue, and virtue comes.

Confucius said, I have not seen any one who loves virtue as we love beauty.

Confucius says, The superior man is not a machine which is fit for one thing only.

Tze Kung asked, Who is a superior man? Confucius replied, He who first practices his words, and then speaks accordingly.

The principles of great men illuminate the whole universe above and below. The principles of the superior man commence with the duties of common men and women, but in their highest extent they illuminate the universe.

Confucius said, Yew, permit me to tell you what is knowledge. What you are acquainted with, consider that you know it; what you do not understand, consider that you do not know it; this is knowledge.

Confucius exclaimed, How vast the influence of the Kwei Shin (spirits or gods). If you look for them, you cannot see them; if you listen, you cannot hear them; they embody all things, and are what things cannot be separated from. When they cause mankind to fast, purify, and dress themselves, everything appears full of them. They seem to be once above, and on the right, and on the left. The ode says, The descent of the gods cannot be comprehended; with what reverence should we conduct ourselves! Indeed that which is least, is clearly displayed. They cannot be concealed. (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 147-153)

The following are all known selections from Jean-Pierre Guillaume Pauthier's 1841 publication, *Confucius et Mencius: les quatre livres de philosophie morale et politique de la Chine*, which are to be found in a common place book that now resides in the Berg Collection of New York Public Library (*Early Essays and Miscellanies* 385). Hongbo Tan's PhD dissertation is the only article that has a readily available version of this document, and as such, we present it below as found there:

(Ta Hio, La Grande Etude)

Characters engraven on the bathing tub of the King Tching-thang said:Renew thyself completely each day; do it anew, again anew, and always anew. Thseng-tseu

Although the family of Tcheou had possessed for a long time a royal principality, It obtained from heaven (in the person of Wen-wang) a new investiture.

How the virtue of Wen-wang was vaste and profound! How he knew how to join splender to the greatest solicitude for the accomplishment of his different destinies! Book of verses.

The soul not being mistress of herself, one looks, and one does not see; one listens and one does not hear, one eats, and one does not know the savor of food. Thseng-tseu

Conduct yourself suitably toward the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct & to direct a nation of men. Thseng-tseu in spirit of C.

(Tchoung-Young/ Ou L'invariabilite Dans le Milieu)

Of all men there is no one who does not drink and eat, but very few among them know how to distinguish savors. C.

The man who is out of the way of duty casts himself into a thousand rash enterprises to seek what he ought not to obtain. Tseu-sse reporting *the spirit* of C.

The archer may be, in one respect, compared to the wise man; if he misses the mark at which he aims, he enters into himself to seek the cause of it. C.

How the faculties of the subtile powers of Heaven & of earth are vaste and profound! One seeks to perceive them, and one does not see them; one seeks to apprehend them, and one does not apprehend them; identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them.

They cause that, in all the universe, men purify & sanctify their hearts, clothe themselves in their holiday clothes to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtile intelligence! They are everywhere above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides! C.

He who does not know how to recognize in man the mandate of heaven, has not yet arrived at perfection. Tseu-sse C in spirit

The perfect is the commencement and the end of all beings. Tseu-sse reporting C.'s spirit

That one who is in this high condition of perfect holiness does not show himself, and yet like the earth, he reveals himself by his benefits; he does not move, and yet like the heavens, he produces numerous transformations, he does not act, and yet, like space & time, he arrives at the perfection of his work." Tseu-sse giving spirit of C.

The conduct of the wise man is without savor as water.

The wise man knows things distant, that is to say, the world, empires, & men, by the things which touch him, by his own person.

Virtue is light as the finest down. Book of verses.

The actions, the secret operations of the supreme heaven have neither sound nor odor. Book of Verses.

(The Lun-yu)

Do not contract friendship with those who do not resemble you. C.

Do not contract bonds of friendship with persons inferior to yourself morally, et pour les connaissances. C.

To know that one knows what one knows, and to know that one does not know what one does not know: behold true science. C.

If in the morning you have heard the voice of celestial reason, in the evening you will be able to die. C.

The doctrine of our master (C.) consistent only in having soundness (droiture, rectitude) of heart, and in loving his neighbor as himself.

Tseu-Koung put a question in these terms; Is there a word in the language which one could limit himself to practice alone even to the end of existence? The Philosopher said; there is the word *chou*, of which the sense is; That which we do not desire should be done to us, we must not do to others. C.

Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors. C.

The philosopher said that Tseu-tsien (one of his disciples) was a man of a superior virtue. If the Kingdom of Lou possessed no man superior, where could this one have taken his eminent virtue? C.

Tseu-lou had heard (in the teachings of his master [C.]) some moral maxim which he had not yet practiced; he feared to hear more like it. C.

The Philosopher said; Alas! I have not yet seen a man who has been able to perceive his faults, and who has blamed himself for them interiorly. C.

The Philosopher said; O how wise was Hoei; he had a vase of bamboo to take his nourishment, a cup to drink, and he dwelt in the humble nook of a narrow and abandoned street; another man than he would not have been able to support his privations and his sufferings. That did not change however the serenity of Hoei; O how he was wise, Hoei! C.

When Tseu-yeou was governor of the city of Wou, the Philosopher said to him; Have you men of merit? He answered; we have Tan-tai, surnamed Mie-ming, who in travelling does not take a cross road, and who, except when public affairs are (transacted), has never set foot in the dwelling of Yen (Tse-yeou). C.

The Philosopher said to nourish one's self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich & honored by iniquitous means, is for me as the floating cloud which passes. C.

The Philosopher being very sick, Tseu-lou begged him to permit his disciples to address for him their prayers to the spirits and genii. The Philosopher said, Is that proper? Tseu-lou answered with respect: It is suitable. It is said in the book entitled Loui; "Address your prayers to the spirits and genii above & below. (of heaven & earth)" The Philosopher said the prayer of Khieou (himself) is permanent.

If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are a subject of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame.

As soon as a child is born it is necessary to respect its faculties; the knowledge which will come to it in course does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrives at the age of forty or fifty years without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect.

From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject or vulgar one cannot take away his thought.

If there is any one who clothed in the humblest and coarsest dress could seat himself without blushing by the side of those who wear the most precious clothes, and the finest furs, it is Yeou!

Without envy to injure and without ambitious desires, For what simple & virtuous action is not one fit? Book of Verses.

The ornaments of education are as the natural parts; the natural parts as the ornaments of education. The skins of the tiger & the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned. Tseu-koung.

The superior man perfects or develops the good qualities of other men; he does not perfect nor develop their bad tendencies; the vulgar man is the opposite of him.

You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishment? Love virtue & the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends.

In antiquity those who devoted themselves to study did it for themselves; now, those who devote themselves to study do it for others(to appear learned in the eyes of others.) C.

Kieou-pe-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu made the messenger be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the Philosopher said: What a worthy messenger! what a worthy messenger!

Not to resist being deceived by men, not to fortify oneself against their want of faith when yet one has foreseen it, is not that to be wise?

Tseu-lou, Thseng-sie, Yan-yeou, Kong-si-hoa, were seated by the side of the Philosopher.

The philosopher said: Make no account of my age more than if I were only a day older than you. Living apart and isolated, then you say: We are not known. If any one know you, then what would you do?

Tseu-lou replied with a brisk but respectful air: Suppose a kingdom of a thousand war-chariots, hard pressed between other great kingdoms, add even, by numerous armies, and that withal it suffers want and famine; let *Yeou*(*T'seu-lou*) be appointed to its administration, in less than three years I could accomplish that the people of this kingdom should recover a manly courage, and know their condition. The Philosopher smiled at these words.

And you, *Khieou*, what do you think?

The disciple replied respectively: Suppose a province of sixty or seventy *li* in extent, or even of fifty or sixty *li*, and that *Khieou* were appointed to its administration, in less than three years I could accomplish that the people should have sufficient. As to the rites and to music, I would entrust the teaching of them to a superior man.

And you, *Tchi*, what do you think?

The disciple replied respectively: I will not say that I can do these things; I desire to study. When the ceremonies of the temple of ancestors are performed, and the great public assemblies take place, clothed in my robe of azure and other vestments proper for such a place and such ceremonies, I could wish to take part in them in the quality of a humble functionary.

And you *Tian*, what do you think?

The disciple did nothing but draw some rare sounds from his guitar; but these sounds prolonging themselves, he laid it aside, and rising, replied respectfully: My opinion differs entirely from those of my three fellow disciples.—The Philosopher said: What prevents you from expressing it? Each one here can speak his thought. The disciple said: Spring time being no more, my robe of spring laid aside, but covered with the bonnet of manhood, accompanied by five or six men, and six or seven young people, I should love to go and bathe in the waters of the –Y-, to go and take the fresh air in those woody places where they offer sacrifices to heaven to obtain rain, to modulate some airs, and then return to my abode.

The Philosopher applauding these words by a sign of satisfaction said: I am of(the opinion of) *Tian*.

The three disciples departed, but *Thseng-sie* remained yet some time. *Thseng-sie* said: What ought one to think of the words of these three disciples? The Philospher said: Each one of them has expressed his opinion; that is all,--He added: Master, why did you smile at the words of *Yeou*?

The Philosopher said: One ought to administer a kingdom according to the established laws nd customs; the words of *Yeou* were not modest; this is the reason I smiled.But *Khieou* himself, did not he also express the desire to administer a state? How should we see that in a province of sixty or seventy *li*, or even fifty or sixty *li* in extent? That is not a kingdom.And *Tchi*, was it not of the affairs of a kingdom that he meant to speak? Those ceremonies of the temple of ancestors, those public assemblies, are they not the privilege of the grandest of all the orders? And *Tchi* could he take part in them in the quality of a humble functionary? Who then could perform the great function?

For the most part I too am of the opinion of Tian (Thoreau’s own comment)

T’seu-lou demanded what was the superior man. The Philosopher replied: He exerts himself constantly to improve himself in order to draw to himself respect. –Is that all he does?—He improves constantly himself in order to procure for others response and the tranquility.—Is that all that he does?—He improves constantly himself in order to render happy all people. *Yao* and *Chun* themselves did thus.

Youan-jang (an ancient friend of the Philosopher) more aged than he, was seated on the road with his legs crossed. The Philosopher said to him: Being a child, not to have had fraternal deference; in mature age, to have done nothing praiseworthy; arrived at old age, not to die; it is to be a good-for-nothing wretch. [a worthless fellow—vaurien] And he struck his leg with his sticks (to make him get up).

The superior man demands nothing but himself; the common man and without merit demands everything of others

I have almost seen the day when the historian of the empire left blancs in his narratives [where he was not sure of the facts]

The superior man does not occupy himself but with the right way; he does not occupy himself with eating and drinking. If you cultivate the earth, hunger is often found in the midst of you, if you study, happiness is found in the very bosom of study. The superior man is not troubled because he does not obtain the right way; he is not troubled because of poverty.

The superior man cannot be known and appreciated suitably in little things, because he is capable of undertaking great ones. The common man, on the contrary, not being capable of undertaking great things, can be known and appreciated in little ones.

Have precepts [enseignemens] for all the world, without distinction of classes or ranks.

They say that Lieou-hia-hoei and Chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with reason & justice; while their acts were in harmony with the sentiments of men.

What follows is from Mencius (Thoreau’s note)

(Mencius)

Another man had a thought; I, I have divined it, and given it its measure. Book of Verses

Mencius [extra space] about a century after C.

Wen-kong, prince of *Teng*, put another question in these terms: The men of *Thsi* are on the point of surrounding with walls the state of Sie; I experience great fear at it. What ought I to do in this case?

Mencius replied with respect: Formerly *Tai-wang* inhabited the land of *Pin*; the barbarians of the north, named *Joung*, troubled him without ceasing by their incursions; he quitted this residence and betook himself to the foot of mount *Khi*, where he fixed himself; it is not from choice and deliberate purpose that he did thus, it is because he could not do otherwise.

If any one practices constantly virtue, in the course of generations there will be found always among his sons and grandsons a man who will be elevated to royalty. The superior man who wishes to found a dynasty, with the intention of transmitting the sovereign authority to his descendants, acts so that his enterprise can be continued. If this superior man accomplishes his work, then heaven has pronounced. Prince, what is this kingdom of *Thsi* to you? Exert yourself to practice virtue [which opens the road to royalty] and confine yourself to that. [Mencius]

The ancient emperor *Yu* heard pronounce words of wisdom & virtue, he bowed in sighs of veneration for receiving them.

Lieou-hia-hoei said What you do belongs to you, and what I do belongs to me. If ever you should be arms naked and body naked to my side, how could you soil me? Mencius does not quite approve of this (Thoreau's comment).

It is said—It is not necessary to place the limits of a people in frontiers wholly material, nor the strength of a kingdom in the obstacles which mountains and water-courses present to the enemy, nor the imposing majesty of the empire in a great military equipage. That one who has attained to govern according to the principles of humanity & justice, will find an immeasurable support in the heart of the people.

Yang-ho informed himself of a moment when *Khoung-tseu* was absent from his house, and he chose this moment to go and carry to *Khong-tseu* a little salt here. *Khoung-tseu* on his

side, informed himself of a moment when *Yang-ho* was absent from his house to go and thank him for it. In this case *Yang-ho* was the first to make advances; how could *Khong-tseu* have avoided going to visit him?

Mencius said—Men have a constant way of speaking [without very well understating it]. All say the empire, the kingdom, the family. The basis of the empire exists in the Kingdom; the basis of the Kingdom exists in the family; the basis of the family exists in the person.

Mencius said: Can one converse and speak the language of reason with cruel and inhuman princes. Dangers the most menacing are for them motives of tranquility, calamities the most disastrous are for them subject of profit; they rejoice at that which causes their ruin. If one could converse and speak the language of reason with inhuman and cruel princes, would there be so great a number of kingdoms which perish, and families which fail?

There was young child who sang, saying;

"The water of the river Thsang-lang is it pure,

I can wash there the fillets which bind my head;

The water of the river Tsang-lang is it troubled,'

I can wash there my feet."

Khoung-tseu said; My little children, hearken to these words; If the water is pure, he will wash there the fillets which bind his head; if is is troubled, then he will wash there his feet; it is itself which will decide it.

Men certainly despise themselves before other men despise them. Families certainly destroy themselves before men destroy them. Kingdoms certainly attack themselves, before men attack them.

The Tai-kia says; "one can preserve himself from the calamities sent by heaven; one cannot support those which he has brought upon himself." These words say exactly what I wished to express.

If you listen attentively to the words of a man; if you consider the pupil of his eyes, how can he conceal himself from you?

That in which men differ from brute beasts is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men preserve it carefully.

That which operates or produces effects without apparent action, is heaven; that which happens without one's causing it to come, is destiny.

To contract ties of friendship with any one, is to contract friendship with his virtue. There ought not to be any other motive in friendship. But men wish that he should contract friendship with their vice (Thoreau's comment).

The effects of a return to goodness, (produced) each day (in) the tranquil and beneficent breath of the morning, cause that in respect to the love of virtue and the hatred of vice, one approaches a little the primitive nature of man [as the sprouts of the forest which has been cut]. In like circumstances, the evil which one does in the interval of a day prevents the germs of virtue which began to spring up again from developing themselves and destroys them.

After having thus prevented many times the germs of virtue which began to spring up again from the developing themselves, then the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice to preserve them. As soon as the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice longer to preserve them, then the nature of man does not differ that of the brute. Men seeing the nature of this man like that of the brute think that he never possessed the innate faculty of reason. Are those the true and natural sentiments of man?

If one loses a fowl or dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again! The duties of practical philosophy consists only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all.

Koung-tou-tseu put a question in these terms: All men resemble another. Some are however great men, others little men, how so?

Mencius said: If one follows the inspirations of the great parts of himself, he is a great man; if one follows the inclinations of the little parts of himself, he is a little man.

Each man possess nobleness in himself; only he does not think to seek it in himself. What men regard as nobleness, is not true and nobleness. Those whom *Tchao-meng* [first minister of the king *Thsi*] has made noble, *Tchao-meng* can make mean.

If one gives an entire and absolute faith to [the historical] books, then he is not in so advantageous a condition as if he was without them. I, in the Chapter of the *Chou*-king entitled *Wou-tching*, take only two or three articles and no more.

The most honest of all the village are the pest of virtue. C.

If you wish to find fault with them, you will not know where to take them; if you wish to attack them in one place, you will not succeed. They share in the degenerate manners and the corruption of their age. That which dwells in their heart resembles rectitude and sincerity; what they practice resembles acts of temperance and integrity. As all the population of their village boast of them without ceasing, they think themselves perfect men, and they cannot enter into the way of *Yao* and *Chun*. That is why *Khoung-tseu* regarded them as the pest of virtue. Mencius

It is said, ‘Some work with their intellect, others work with their hands. Those who work with their intellect govern men; those who work with their hands are governed by men. Those who are governed by men nourish men; those who govern men are nourished by men.’ That is the universal law of the world. (Thoreau & Tan 201-219)