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## Transcendentalism In Henry David Thoreau's Autobiography

The Autobiography *Walden*, written by Henry David Thoreau shows the impact Transcendentalism had on Thoreau's outlook on life. In the book *Walden*, Thoreau uses long informal sentences, many rhetorical strategies throughout his writing and is partially expressing his feelings on Transcendentalism and the main three key aspects of Imagery, Nature and emotion.

On Independence Day July 4th 1845 Thoreau moved into a simple little cabin that was still not fully completed however he was grateful he still had a cabin that protected him from rain and leaks. Thoreau emphasizes the importance he has for Nature, which is partially noticeable in the chapter "From where I Lived, and What I lived for" Thoreau quotes "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." The central idea was that All Transcendentalists believed personal experience is how one learned. Literally, people learned everything the hard way. Thoreau demonstrated this clearly in his own experiment of living in the woods for two years. Notice how he did not even hesitate to ask someone who had tried it but yet to learn on his own. Thoreau's opinion was there is no other place for him to discover his true identity within other than living and devoting to Nature and Transcendentalism.

Secondly an important theme of Transcendentalists shown in *Walden* was emotion towards simplify and self-individuality. In the chapter "Solitude," Thoreau establishes his argument by using the rhetorical appeal of Pathos. He expresses his emotions by citing "I have found that no extraction of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another." Thoreau is saying even with one's physical company one can still feel lonely if does not feel real companionship with each other. You see Thoreau is able to be alone physically without feeling mentally alone, he refers it to more self-communion. In addition he quotes "However mean your life is meet it and live it. It looks poorest when you are richest". This relates to transcendentalism key aspect of emotion as Thoreau is saying however bad our life may seem we should be grateful for nature around us and the gift of life. Money does not buy happiness nor is it the necessity of the soul. Instead of living life materistically we should live it individually and with conformity.

Lastly Thoreau's figurative language use of Imagery is able to create a mental image that illustrates what he is actually experiencing in the story. For example he quotes "as the sun arose, I saw it (the pond) throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by

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degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle” . In this sentence Thoreau uses imagery to describe fog slowly rising from the surface of the pond. Likewise he quotes “every winter the liquid and trembling surface of the pond, which was so sensitive to every breath, and reflected every light and shadow, becomes solid to the depth of a foot or a foot and a half so that it will support the heaviest teams and perchance the snow covers it to an equal depth, and it is not to be distinguished from any level field.” He is now describing the pond and how he observes how the ice changes its structure through the seasons. By describing his whereabouts with such accuracy, it becomes more real and easier to connect with. When the picture he describes is so clear, his point that nature is a driving force of life also becomes clearer. Thoreau’s central idea is “Despite being physically alone in the woods”, Thoreau isn’t lonely when he sees the beautiful life of the environment around him.

In conclusion Henry David Thoreau left a legacy of his masterwork Walden. It has been shown that Thoreau's own experiment he was able to figure himself out as an individual in addition with finding his rhythm as a creative writer. In all truth Thoreau favored simplify and nature. He doesn't think we should be so quick to modernize everything, when we still have to learn to slow down and understand ourselves. He believes the mind is all we need to figure out the great mysteries of life, we are born with the knowledge in our mind. Equally important Thoreau's central idea is to recommend to others that they should live simpler lives for them to be happier. A simpler life away from material needs exemplifies the idea of peace. Nature itself is peace.

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