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Henry David Thoreau's *Journal* or the Aesthetics of Spacing

François Specq

Henry David Thoreau kept a singular sort of journal. Far from keeping an intimate diary devoted to analyzing the twists and turns of individual personality, the author of *Walden* considered it his sole purpose, it seems, to explore the nature of the area surrounding Concord, Massachusetts. Maintained with admirable energy and steadfastness during 25 years of adult life – from 1837 to 1861 – his *Journal* actually possesses an uncommon dimension far exceeding its geographical and thematic limits. The interrogation of the same place patiently undertaken day after day, the resulting density, the methodical mining of reality, clearly prove that Thoreau's object is not the knowledge of nature as such, but an ontological and existential confrontation with the world.[1]

The line of force of Thoreau's *Journal* (1837 to 1861) is not its documentary character; rather, each of its elements is the irrepressible uprising of an inherent force. Whether the content describes plants, birds and landscapes or involves epistemological or even political reflections, this force is the locus of everything which, rejecting the preconceived determinants and conventional ties of man with the world – struggling, battling against the inevitable backfire of old habits of thought, intent on revealing the unspoken – bears the entire destiny of the free individual.

Thoreau's approach is highly metaphysical, not by what it states – for it never goes beyond realities – but by the very nature of its commitment. The metaphysical character of his *Journal* is not an intention but a fact. The reader in a hurry will perhaps see in the *Journal* only an interminable litany of plant names or descriptions. That is to confuse, among other simplifications, the gesture and the meaning of the gesture. The word or the sentence, in Thoreau's *Journal* does not *designate* – does not

[1] An earlier version of this essay appeared as chapter 5 of my *Transcendence*.

constitute the real in *signs*. If they show something, it is not only what one thinks one recognizes. Words here are above all in a formidable hand-to-hand struggle with things, with the time it takes to appropriate them – a time supremely nestled in Thoreau's sometimes "dry" text – with their mysterious familiarity. It is not Concord that Thoreau describes; the *Journal* could almost be captioned, "this is not Concord." Thoreau, like Cézanne painting Mont Sainte-Victoire over and over throughout his life, explores the complexity of the links and the processes by which, in and through man, the visible is elaborated. In other words, the place only *takes the place* of an unlocatable confrontation with the world: hence its universality. Thoreau's response, however, takes a significantly different form, and it is this response that I would like to address here.

The Spacing of the World

Of course, overturning common systems, values and hierarchies, as required in this confrontation, demands a considerable effort, the abandonment of all relations of mere convenience. Yet it is nothing compared to the moment when these masks are torn from reality, and the emperor stands revealed without clothing:

> In the true natural order the order or system is not insisted on. Each is first, and each last. That which presents itself to us this moment occupies the whole of the present and rests on the very topmost sphere, under the zenith. The species and individuals of all the natural kingdoms ask our attention and admiration in a round robin. We make straight lines, putting a captain at their head and a lieutenant at their tails, with sergeants and corporals all along the line and a flourish of trumpets near the beginning, insisting on a particular uniformity where Nature has made curves to which belongs their own sphere-music. It is indispensable for us to square her circles, and we offer our rewards to him who will do it. (*J* XIV:119-20, 13 October 1860)[2]

Ah, this joyous ring of petitioners! Each one stands up and demands the complete attention of a poet quite disconcerted at having thus opened the sack of winds. Now here he is, entirely exposed to this reality

[2] The Journal is referred to as *J*, followed by volume number in Roman numerals; the years quoted in this article are not yet covered by the ongoing Princeton edition.

crowding around and calling his name from the four corners of the horizon. Or rather from all around the circumference of the world. This liberation of beings signals the coming of uniqueness, the preeminence of individuals over the system. Yet the farewell to systems and definitions, to every kind of organized procedure, does not end up in an anarchy which would be the swift ruin of all this life. The poet's faith, his madness even, is that the things vying for his admiration form a circle around him. The circle is the image of a strict equality of position, that is, of status, among things. It is the opposite of a field of orderly lines that keep everything in its place by military rank. Against the hierarchy, and against anarchy, democracy. So one set of conventions has not just been removed in order to establish another one.

Let us look again at the poet's objects. They do not line up behind him, but make a circle around him. Or rather, they make a circle. To be exact, the poet is not the compass point tracing the world (that is the privilege of God, whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere), but stands outside the circle of things – the logical consequence of his prime task, relinquishing the world. Man and the world are then nothing more than two spheres meeting on one almost dimensionless point – what appears to be the "most extreme point of the sphere," so to speak, in a magnificent image affirming this tension of the real toward man, who responds with a forward movement of his whole being, all his involvement. One is reminded of "The Creation of Adam" in the Sistine Chapel. When God created man, having completed the world, was it not simply to claim "attention and admiration" from this being who was already there – God has no history – and was just dozing? To see, in a sense, is to be created anew. And created in the image of what we see.

But what do we actually see? This world, in which each being is at once first and last, is in reality too dense to be seen. Where to begin, where finish, now that there is no order any more? It would be too good if the moment alone could define the form of the gaze. The present, Thoreau tells us, is that which presents itself to us at a given moment – as long as we understand that what presents itself must be grasped lest it remain a dead letter – seized and made to say what it is, to reveal what is hidden in it. The poet's vocation then is to bring to light what escapes our perception owing to the too great compactness of the world. Not to unveil essences, but to unfold or space out these appearances that cover each other, all of them claiming exclusive attention, all of them promis-

ing a joy that is imperiled by their own undertow. To see is, then, this subtle drifting in the mixed waters of the instant and of history, of place and of space: "The tree which looked comparatively lifeless, cold, and merely parti-colored, seen in a more favorable light as you are floating away from it, may affect you wonderfully as a warm, glowing drapery" (*J* XIV:107-08, 9 October 1860). Not designing new hierarchies, but getting into the heart of the tension between what is before you and what resists being perceived. Thoreau defined his relation to the world by contrast with two antithetical yet related figures, the "gardener" and the "scientist":

> We are not wont to see our dooryard as a part of the earth's surface. The gardener does not perceive that some ridge or mound in his garden or lawn is related to yonder hill or the still more distant mountain in the horizon, is, perchance, a humble spur of the last. We are wont to look on the earth still as a sort of chaos, formless and lumpish. (*J* XI:272, 1 November 1858)

It does not matter to the "gardener," the man engaged in practical action, that the world is too massive ("formless and lumpish") to be appropriated by the gaze, to be inhabitable, so long as things all appear in good order – an undifferentiated order that screens what he does not want to see, what is too simple to see as he sees it. He uses measured words, laid out according to their usefulness, which cast these objects far from their share of the light. He is one of those who make "straight lines": hedges and enclosures frame the furrows he is digging. The army of words, like the army of things, has to toe his line. As for the analytical words of the scientist, they are just as measured, his language just as "guarded":

> After all, the truest description, and that by which another living man can most readily recognize a flower, is the unmeasured and eloquent one which the sight of it inspires. . . . Which are the truest, the sublime conceptions of Hebrew poets and *seers*, or the guarded statements of modern geologists, which we must modify or unlearn so fast? (*J* XIV:117, 13 October 1860)

True description is "the unmeasured and eloquent one which the sight of [the object] inspires." It is probably no mere coincidence if this idea of an "unmeasured" yet vivid, vibrant description coincides with the complete disappearance, after 1850, of versified poetry in Thoreau's work. Living out the poetic *condition* also means abandoning a "poetic" *form* that is too rhythmical and – precisely – too measured. Thoreau

wasn't trying to compete with music. The only rhythm which counts is the deployment of a reality in which the object suddenly occupies the extreme point of the sphere – like a unique protuberance breaking the indeterminacy of time and sight. And, if "appearances are deceptive," it is never because they mask the being of things – a mythical and "objective" being-in-itself, but because they enfold their temporality or their historicity.[3]

The world, fundamentally, is indeed *like* a text, but it is too dense, too compact: the writer's task is to put some space into it, some room to move about, to get free of the labyrinth of reality and its folds and creases – the "maze of phenomena" in which "only the rich and such as are troubled with ennui are implicated" (*J* XI:273, 1 November 1858) – let us recall here that "implicated" literally means "caught or entangled within folds." Unspoken, the world is "formless, lumpish" chaos, uninhabitable.[4] The gardener lives only on its edges, even if his words seek to persuade us that he occupies the center. To speak is to aerate the texture of the world – thus is healed a bruised language, suspected of missing things. "Let us make distinctions," declares Thoreau (*J* XIV:278, 28 November 1860). The poet's purpose is not, as a certain idealistic poetry would have it, to gather the scattered fragments of reality together, but quite the contrary, to explode its too great compactness – which also is its mutism. The world doesn't speak to whoever wants to hear it, not even to the one who knows how to hear it, but to the one who is determined to snatch from it a few words sealed in a compact order. To be a poet, to work at the summit of indiscipline, is not to unmask the visible (that is just the most immediate operation, the simplest: having rid discourse of sclerosis, and activity of order, and to find one-

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[3] "Truly, appearances are deceptive," Thoreau declares of a "pine wood" that actually contains many more oaks than pines on closer examination (*J* XIV:156, 20 October 1860). Making himself the witness of a becoming, seeing the world as if he were reading a history book, he sees through well-ordered appearances. Such are the "practical" implications of a metaphysical rule.

[4] "We are wont to look on earth still as a sort of chaos, formless and lumpish" (*J* XI:273, 1 November 1858). The gardener does not say the world, but designates it, his imparting of form amounts to erecting two contradictory wholes, the exterior of his territory appearing as the other, the formless. The poet, refusing these partitions (the whole, integrity, occupy a central place in Thoreau's thought), by his attention and admiration, gives form and life to that which is. The poet is a traitor who, relieving the gardener of guard duty, ventures into the forbidden space. While the gardener has given up on this too compact world, from which he seeks to protect himself by confining it to the "formless," the poet remains unreconciled.

self in a position of openness, of availability), but rather to face the visible, at the greatest intensity of vision, in order to make it inhabitable. The day is formless, massive, lumpish – a block whose indeterminacy our gaze diminishes. The day, the world, are a plenitude which has nothing to do with me. Not because there is a meaning that is dormant, hidden in it, which the right incantations will awaken and bring to light. It is rather because, by being too visible – as though overexposed – it may no longer be seen. To see, to feel, is to try to put distance between things, not a fixed, angular, distance, as in common perception, but room to sense the breathing of things, to behold the heartbeat of being.

The poetic word makes room for silence – which does not mean absence of expression: the writer who, from his retreat, interprets a score already written, gives life to a voice other than his own. But, via the discontinuity of his *Journal*, Thoreau, like a musician, becomes the interpreter of a characteristically human structure – for it incorporates silence, pauses, imaginary voids which temporarily relax the grip of the world. Assuming the role of poet, Thoreau has chosen to confront a world saturated with being, so very full that he has to loosen its strong embrace. To read the world is to investigate the signs of an uncertain language, to unfold and unscramble its signs folded upon themselves, ever dreaming of a direct and total reading of "the book of Nature" – not to arrange the signs neatly, but, seizing them, to feel the roughness of their too emotionless geology.

Going Through Language

Thus, if the world at first is also, for the poet, formless, it is because the given, the *a priori*, has been not sanctioned but placed outside our scope – the poet is always just the gardener laid bare. To read, recognize a form, unfold the signs of the visible which must constantly be redefined and of a history which must be constructed – of a future to imagine[5] – is a way of reconciling oneself with a world in disgrace, and constantly menaced with destruction: violence arises where the word is missing. And if I don't know how to seize things, how to make them mine, then a violent act, cutting to the quick, will subjugate them. To assure the dissemination of language into the compactness of the world, and to

[5] This is the counterpart, in the realm of action, of the thrust of Thoreau's aesthetics.

take hold of realities – gently yet with determination and commitment – are two perfectly equivalent operations. It is disengagement which fosters violence. Once the hierarchies and the conventions are abolished, man and the world stand as equal to equal. Hence engagement, hence this amorous dance with things, which remains impossible so long as hedges and screens crop up, so long as we are not freed from the labyrinth of the real. Dancing between two infinities, free at the risk of his fallible vision, moving toward things rather than constraining them to come to him, the poet belongs to a world which he feels as an infinity of propositions of being, which are his to seize:

> Unconsidered expressions of our delight which any natural object draws from us are something complete and final in themselves, since all nature is to be regarded as it concerns man. (*J* XIV:117, 13 October 1860)[6]

"Since all nature is to be regarded as it concerns man": clearly, for Thoreau, it is never a question of dehumanizing the world and sending man back to his brutish sleep. To insert space in the world is thus to prevent nature, which never fails to take back the slightest bit of lost ground, from attracting man into her wild bosom – opening him up to a violence of which she would be the first victim. No one is closer, in fact, to the state of nature than this crude and poorly formed, indeed lumpish, creature, the gardener, whose surface culture (in every sense of the term) seems his genius. About man's so-called culture, Thoreau waxes ironic:

> What sort of cultivation, or civilization and improvement, is ours to boast of, if it turns out that, as in this instance, unhandselled nature is worth more even by our modes of valuation than our improvements are, – if we leave the land poorer than we found it? (*J* XIV:229, 10 November 1860)

For the poet, facing the world is indissolubly linked to the question of language and knowledge. One of Thoreau's deepest intuitions is to have realized that man could hope to be really present in the world only by holding himself at the balance point between knowledge and ignorance. Throughout the 1850s, the years of his burning desire to see without

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[6] When Thoreau, as a moralist, attacks the greed of his contemporaries, and of men in general, he is attacking greed for all things that pay back, that fetch a return. Joy does not fetch anything except itself, and the one who experiences it is rich in absolute value. It is not by chance that we find in Thoreau's *Journal* on the same day a reflection on the absolute value (immeasurable) of joy, and considerations on the fluctuations (measurable) of the value of gold.

constraint, Thoreau recorded in his *Journal* a number of reflections on the necessity of learning the name and at the same time forgetting it, of knowing and not knowing:

> How hard one must work in order to acquire his language, – words – words by which to express himself! I have known a particular rush, for instance, for at least twenty years, but have ever been prevented from describing some [of] its peculiarities, because I did not know its name nor any one in the neighborhood who could tell me it. With the knowledge of the name comes a more distinct recognition and knowledge of the thing. That shore is now more describable, and poetic even. My knowledge was cramped and confined before, and grew rusty because not used, – for it could not be used. My knowledge now becomes communicable and grows by communication. I can now learn what others know about the same thing. (*J* XI:137, 29 August 1858)

> How much of beauty – of color, as well as form – on which our eyes daily rest goes unperceived by us! No one but a botanist is likely to distinguish nicely the different shades of green with which the open surface of the earth is clothed, – not even a landscape-painter if he does not know the species of sedges and grasses which paint it. With respect to the color of grass, most of those even who attend peculiarly to the aspects of Nature only observe that it is more or less dark or light, green or brown, or velvety, fresh or parched, etc. But if you are studying grasses you look for another and different beauty, and you find it, in the wonderful variety of color, etc., presented by the various species. (*J* XIV:3, 1 August 1860)

For Thoreau, knowing the name of a thing – knowing the name *and* the thing – was at once necessary and dangerous. We can see only what we have first learned to recognize, but then we run a great risk of substituting what we know for what we perceive. So learning must be only a step, a beginning that is certainly necessary but that also has limits which must be respected. Again and again, Thoreau affirms that we will see only when we have forgotten what we know, when the masks of ignorance have fallen away, when we lose sight of all that imposes itself in place of things, all that leads the gaze astray, sends it in the wrong direction. "We have such a habit of looking away that we see not what is around us" (*J* XIII:141, 12 February 1860). I am dispossessed of things by their name; so I must give up the name in order to recover the world:

> It is only when we forget all our learning that we begin to know. I do not get nearer by a hair's breadth to any natural object so long as I presume that I have an introduction to it from some learned man. To conceive of it with

> a total apprehension I must for the thousandth time approach it as something totally strange. If you would make acquaintance with the ferns you must forget your botany. You must get rid of what is commonly called knowledge of them. Not a single scientific term or distinction is the least to the purpose, for you would fain perceive something, and you must approach the object totally unprejudiced. You must be aware that no thing is what you have taken it to be. In what book is this world and its beauty described? Who has plotted the steps toward the discovery of beauty? You have got to be in a different state from common. Your greatest success will be simply to perceive that such things are [. . .] (*J* XII:371, 4 October 1859)

> We are as often injured as benefited by our systems, for, to speak the truth, no human system is a true one, and a name is at most a mere convenience and carries no information with it. As soon as I begin to be aware of the life of any creature, I at once forget its name. To know the names of creatures is only a convenience to us at first, but so soon as we have learned to distinguish them, the sooner we forget their names, the better, so far as any true appreciation of them is concerned. (*J* XIII:155, 18 February 1860)

> Whatever aid is to be derived from the use of a scientific term, we can never begin to see anything as it is so long as we remember the scientific term which always our ignorance has imposed on it. Natural objects and phenomena are in this sense forever wild and unnamed by us. (*J* XIII:141, 12 February 1860)

Thoreau describes a fertile forgetting which consecrates the inexhaustible ebb and flow of presence. Presence – things just as they are ("anything as it is") – necessarily escapes the grip of language, keeping man in a wilderness forever unexplored. As Thoreau famously declared, "The frontiers are not east or west, north or south, but wherever a man *fronts* a fact, though that fact be his neighbor, there is an unsettled wilderness between him and Canada, between him and the setting sun, or, farther still, between him and *it*" (*A Week* 304). Wilderness is the inexhaustible. So the border is thus not in space but in time: "Natural objects and phenomena are in this sense forever wild and unnamed by us" (*J* XIII:141, 12 February 1860). The world of presence is unnamed: language is not the instrument of saying; it only allows us to dissipate vagueness by instituting differences. Before Thoreau dismisses terminology, his eye must have assimilated these differences, or rather, it must have assimilated their principle, in order to see them without the paltry help of words. This proposal, in its modesty, denies all romantic pretension: not believing in language as it exists any more than in its glorious reform, infinitely distrusting it, he deprives it – relieves it? – of

its mission to say the world. At most its mission is to greet presence with a gesture devoid of all bitterness, to bow wisely before the forever unnamed, unnamable, heart of things – their "effluence."[7] Saying the name is recognizing the life of things – and acknowledging thus our belonging to the world. For these things, once the shaking rattles of words are forsaken, are literally what touches me – what involves me. And no more than words can say what I am, can shatter the signal of my name, no more can this relationship which links me to things be said. Saying the name is acknowledging the life of things: it is an act of acknowledgment which signals my presence to and in them, their presence to and for me. He who designates something disengages himself from it. The poet does not designate, but signs the document of a common presence, the deed of what Paul Claudel, in a famous play on words, called *co-naissance* (a knowing which is a co-birth, see his *Art poétique*), emphasizing thus the reciprocal engendering of the person and things, and drawing attention to a creation which is always a starting point, the possibility of a beginning ("forever wild and unnamed"), movement of and toward this unknown which will always precede us (Specq 1999). The poet is eager, but may never be able, to register being, to transcribe being as process – like a tightrope walker, testing his movement while completely exposed, lacking the support of a secure and confident tread, defying with each step the chasm that awaits. The poet's act of seeing presumes his constantly vertiginous acceptance of the void. This acceptance is purchased at a great price, at the end of a struggle taken up again and again, where the affirmation of the vow of poverty barely carries the day against the dream of a richer language. The richness of language is actually an obstacle, presenting the temptation to play with it, to take pleasure in cultivating it for its own sake, when the real challenge is to be ever nearer to the world. It seems that in the latter years of Thoreau's *Journal* a profound struggle goes on between the security of words and the promise of the world, a prolonged confrontation in which language becomes situated and the poet affirmed by his spoken word, even as he claims that, anyhow, he does not believe all that much in words.

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[7] "The ultimate expression or fruit of any created thing is a fine effluence which only the most ingenious worshipper perceives at a reverent distance from its surface even. The cause and the effect are equally evanescent and intangible, and the former must be investigated in the same spirit and with the same reverence with which the latter is perceived" (*J* XII:23, 7 March 1859).

Language advances openly, ahead of rejected definitions. Can we believe that this would be the case on every page? Lovers of spectacle would have it so. But this puritan wants nothing to do with spectacle. Being, not entertaining, is his task, whether he explicitly undertook it or not. He is entirely devoted to interrogation, to plunging into the supreme fiction[8] of total abandon, guided only by his own marks – as if the surveyor had decided all of a sudden to survey without triangulating from established points, and drew a pure space confounded with his drawing of it. The territory would coincide, then, exactly with the map, with the gesture of the surveyor; it would be the sum of his gestures. Hence Thoreau's vision of a pyramid resting on its point – speech, having dismissed words, arises from a point without dimension, clinging to the mobile and variable support offered by experience:

> We touch our subject but by a point which has no breadth, but the pyramid of our experience, or our interest in it, rests on us by a broader or narrower base. That is, man is all in all, Nature nothing, but as she draws him out and reflects him. (*J* IX:121, 18 October 1856)

Poetic speech, like an inverted pyramid, operates in the forgetting of the word and advances toward the bright flash of presence, of a common presence. Some morose minds, realists, will claim that a pyramid cannot stand on its point, failing to see how it is collectively stabilized by the community of readers – or by the solitary madman dancing with the wind so as to hang on to the stays.

"Man is all in all, Nature nothing"

To the idea that the *Journal* "says" nature for itself, all meaning for man set aside,[9] must be opposed the existential intensity evident on every page of the *Journal* (however arid certain readers may sometimes find it)

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[8] Wallace Stevens's expression for the poet's accomplishment. See "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" (*Complete Poems* 380-408).

[9] In *Writing Nature*, Sharon Cameron, who opened new avenues of thought on the *Journal* with her complex analysis, emphasizes the *Journal*'s techniques for marginalizing human content, Thoreau supposedly being intent on recording "phenomena [that] are dissociated from human significance" (75) and are bound in self-referentiality. Thoreau, Cameron states, sought "to see nature contrastively not against the background of human concerns, but rather against aspects of itself" (66).

– Thoreau's emphasis on his joy in the spectacle of the world, and the many passages wherein he underlines the fact that things have meaning only in relation to man. Analyzing Thoreau's *Journal* in formalist terms, as Sharon Cameron does, amounts to losing sight of Thoreau's connecting of aesthetic to ethical concerns. It is indeed in relation to man that the world must be thought, but this relationship must itself be thought on other grounds than the usual: we must not confuse working to lose sight of oneself in what one sees, and working to "represent" a nature unrelated to man. Thoreau works to achieve a mode of seeing that cannot be misled by criteria of convenience or psychologism. His work has nothing to do with the rules of action, but with the ontological situation of man. In other words, it is essential not to confuse Thoreau's relinquishment of the conventional, one-dimensional relationship of man to the world, with the abandonment of any relationship or the subordination of man to nature considered in itself – which can certainly turn out to be a useful, necessary or productive exercise, but could in no case bring closure, or serve as a goal. Thoreau is not a sage who would withdraw from the world, but a man determined to reside fully in it, having procured the spiritual means to do so.[10]

Thus the *Journal*'s purpose is not so much "writing nature" in and for itself than to conceive and embody the poetic condition in all its complexity, omitting neither uncertainties nor ambiguities. For the same reason, one cannot subscribe to Daniel Peck's analysis of the *Journal*'s final years: "In 1851, Thoreau was approaching the final decade of his life, and this decade was given to the most intense search for nature's meanings ever undertaken by an American writer. The Journal is a record of that search" (Peck xix).[11] On the contrary, it would appear that Thoreau at that point renounced any search for meaning in nature (if that ever was his primary purpose), recognizing rather that it is our task

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[10] I concur here with Michel Granger, who emphasizes that Thoreau's "relationship to nature, paradoxically, becomes the privileged point from which to reflect upon the meaning of the human condition" ("Le détour par le non-humain" 233). Contrary to Cameron's non-humanist reading of Thoreau, I believe it is essential to insist upon the profound humanism of his thinking.

[11] It is interesting to note that H. Daniel Peck does not italicize "Journal". Although he regards Thoreau's Journal "not merely as a workshop of ideas, but as a *work*, an integral body of writing that Thoreau himself understood in this way" (*Thoreau's Morning Work* x), this typographical option – apparently motivated by the fact that it is not a work which was published in Thoreau's lifetime –, along with his repeated use of the word "document" to refer to the Journal, tend to limit the significance of this introductory statement.

to live in the world, simply but truly, and that the essential question is that of the meaning of our life. Exercising his vision unceasingly in pursuit of singularity (old habits are hard to shake), the poet sculpts the formlessness of the day, unceasingly inaugurates time,[12] pursuing a work which delves into grief as much as joy, but by accepting it, makes sense of death. As Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, "Be it life or death, we crave only reality" (98).

[12] Whereas H. Daniel Peck describes the *Journal* as focusing on a process of spatialization, and analyzes "the pure spatial vision toward which the mature Journal of the 1850s points" (*Thoreau's Morning Work* 156-157), in so far as the latter "gathers phenomena which together form its picture of the world" (68), the primary dimension of this work seems to me to be temporality (Specq 2003).

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