

REFLECTIONS OF THOREAU'S MUSIC AND PHILOSOPHY IN
DOMINICK ARGENTO'S *WALDEN POND* (1996)

BY

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Preface

This book aims to explore and interpret the relationship of the music within Thoreau's poetic text *Walden* (1854) with the music composed by Minnesota-based composer Dominick Argento in *Walden Pond, Nocturnes and Barcarolles for Mixed Chorus, Three Violoncellos and Harp* (1996). In addition to contributing to the scholarship and research related to Argento—there is little research on Argento's choral music, and none pertaining to this specific piece—this paper will serve as a model of one type of analysis for the music of Argento, who is known primarily for his lyric operas and choral music.

The objectives of this document are to analyze thoroughly the poetic sounds and devices of Thoreau's otherwise prose text, to analyze the music elements and structure of Argento's musical setting, and to demonstrate the interrelationship of Thoreau's poetic text and Argento's setting of it in each of the five movements of the piece. By recreating the *Stimmung* of the poetic text, Argento captures the aesthetic, religious, and philosophical ideas held by Thoreau.

In the introduction, I provide detailed background information on Thoreau, his book *Walden*, and the American Transcendentalist movement that provided much of the philosophical, spiritual, and natural inspiration for the text. Additionally, I have included biographical information about Argento, as well

his and others' insights into his compositions, specifically his choral music and *Walden Pond*.

I have dedicated a chapter of in-depth analysis to each of the five movements of the work. Each chapter will follow the same organization of methodology. In each chapter, I first analyze thoroughly the poetic text of Thoreau, paying special attention to the "music" that is created through sentence sounds, rhythm, tempo, etc., using Robert Pinsky's *The Sounds of Poetry* (1998) as a principal guide.¹ I then look closely at how Argento honors Thoreau's poetic music in his setting of the text (rhythmic and melodic correlations with the rhythmic and intonational implications of the text). Finally I examine how Argento captures the overall imagery and atmosphere of the text (*Stimmung*) globally through texture, instrumentation, and topics, and locally by identifying specific word-painting examples and leitmotifs.

In this book, I define *leitmotifs* as recurrent referential sonorities and motives that carry extramusical meaning. Like the harmonic leitmotifs of Wagner and Strauss, many of the leitmotifs in *Walden Pond* are chords. Likewise, many of the leitmotifs I have identified occur in the accompanying instruments. I have used Leonard B. Meyer's books *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956) and *Explaining Music* (1973) to guide me in identifying motivic structures. I also discuss

¹ Robert Pinsky is Poet Laureate of the United States and teaches in the graduate writing program at Boston University.

Argento's implementation of musical topics, doing so in Robert Hatten's use of the word.²

It is assumed that the reader has access to a score to refer to while reading this document. All of the quotations of Thoreau's text in chapters 1–5 are set in the musical composition, and the entire text of *Walden Pond* can be found in appendix A. I have also provided a catalog of leitmotifs for easy reference in appendix B. It is my hope that this book will serve as a model for this specific type of analysis and a valuable resource for those who perform *Walden Pond*.

² Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Table of Contents

Figures	x
Appendices	xii
Glossary	xiii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. "The Pond"	17
Chapter 2. "Angling"	31
Chapter 3. "Observing"	44
Chapter 4. "Extolling"	59
Chapter 5. "Walden Revisited"	73
Conclusion	83
Appendix A	89
Appendix B	92
Bibliography	93

Figures

1. Reflection chord	23
2. Reduction of Acceptance sonority	25
3. Use of modal mixture	26
4. Disjunct melody as text-painting	28
5. Flute motive	38
6. Permanence chord	39
7. Hymn; <i>Abide With Me</i>	43
8. BTS motive; <i>Walden Pond</i> , mvmt. 3, mm. 28–31	51
9. BTS motive; <i>Walden Pond</i> , mvmt. 3, mm. 40–42	52
10. Altered Acceptance sonority	53
11. Reworked Reflection chord	54
12. Canonic Entrances	55
13. Anabasis for the word <i>float</i> ; <i>Walden Pond</i> , mvmt. 3, mm. 71–72	56
14. Anabasis for the word <i>float</i> ; <i>Walden Pond</i> , mvmt. 1, mm. 38–39	56
15. Pond's surface	57
16. Love chord and resolution; <i>Walden Pond</i> , mvmt. 4, mm. 3–4	67
17. Love chord and resolution; <i>I Hate and I Love</i> , mvmt. 2, mm. 17–22	67
18. Eternal Divinity Chord	68
19. Reflection chord	69

20. Combined use of Reflection chord and Eternal Divinity Chord	71
21. Modal mixture	79
22. Quote from movement 1	80
23. Reflection chord	80
24. Pond's Surface and Reflection Chord	82

Appendices

A. Text of <i>Walden Pond</i>	88
B. Catalog of leitmotifs	90

Glossary

adnomination. Emphasis of a word root through its use in various parts of speech.

alliteration. The repetition of consonants.

allophone. A written speech sound that includes all of its possible pronunciations.

anabasis. A rhetorical gesture in music depicting physical upward motion or locational height through melodic contour or tessitura.

assonance. The repetition of vowels.

catabasis. A rhetorical gesture in music depicting physical downward motion or locational height through melodic contour or tessitura

dactylic. Description of the meter of a poetic text as having one strong syllable followed by two weak syllables.

hyperbole. Exaggeration for the purpose of dramatic effect.

onomatopoeia. Poetic device where a word sounds like what it means or represents.

personification. Poetic device where personal or human qualities are ascribed to a non-human or inanimate object.

phoneme. A basic, distinctive speech sound.

trochaic. Describes the meter of a poetic text as having one strong syllable followed by a weak syllable.

Introduction

Henry David Thoreau and Walden

On July 12, 1817, Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, to John Thoreau, a skilled pencil maker, and Cynthia Dunbar, who ran a boardinghouse.³ He graduated in 1837 from Harvard University but immediately returned to Concord and began working there. He first worked as a teacher and then as a day laborer; most importantly, he worked for Ralph Waldo Emerson and lived in his house.⁴ In 1845 at the age of twenty-seven, Thoreau borrowed an axe from Emerson and built a log cabin on some land — Walden — which was owned by Emerson.⁵

Thoreau went to Walden in March of that year to see if he could achieve a suitable balance between labor and leisure by living life as simply as possible.⁶ Following in the footsteps of European Romantics, Thoreau moved to Walden to observe and write about nature; however, he also sought to teach a lesson to society about the value of work.⁷ Thoreau did write specifically about his own

³James. Thorpe, *Thoreau's Walden* (Pasadena: The Castle Press, 1977), 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶ Paul F. Boller, *American Transcendentalism, 1830-1860: An Intellectual Inquiry* (New York: Putnam, 1974), 206.

⁷ Robert Sullivan, *The Thoreau You Don't Know* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 123.

motivations for inhabiting Walden: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and to see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover I had not lived.”⁸

Thoreau spent precisely two years, two months, and two days at Walden, although he did make regular trips into town to visit friends.⁹ While he was there, Thoreau wrote most of *A Week* and *Walden*, but he left in 1847 because he “had other lives to live and could spare no more time for that particular life.”¹⁰ Although he had written the majority of *Walden* while living there, Thoreau spent nearly six years continuing to write and edit the book, finally publishing it in Boston in 1854.¹¹ Thoreau died eight years later in May of 1862 from tuberculosis, which he had contracted some twenty-six years earlier in the spring of 1836.

American Transcendentalism

One cannot entirely understand *Walden* without reading it within the context of the contemporary American Transcendentalism movement; as George Hochfield writes, “Like those of all movements in intellectual history, the

⁸ Thorpe, 10.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Boller, 207.

¹¹ Thorpe, 17.

outlines of American Transcendentalism are indistinct."¹² Paul Boller describes American Transcendentalism as a religious, philosophical, and literary movement that promoted free thinking in religion and both Romanticism and individualism in literature.¹³ This ideology began as a movement against traditional, historical Christianity out of the Unitarian Church in New England in the 1830s.¹⁴ Clearly delineating this ideology, Ralph Waldo Emerson suggested that "if a person wished to know what Transcendentalism was about, he should empty his mind of everything coming from tradition and the rest would be Transcendentalism."¹⁵

In the most basic of definitions, American Transcendentalism sought to reconcile science and religion, aimed to bring to the forefront the role of the intellectual in the world, and desired to emphasize both freedom and individuality.¹⁶ Transcendentalists were "relentlessly self-critical, endlessly eager to expand their knowledge, experience, and understanding of life."¹⁷ At the same time, the Transcendentalist aesthetic of art and literature came from organic growth. Artists' and writers' inspiration came from within one's self, and that

¹² George Hochfield, "An Introduction to Transcendentalism," in *American Transcendentalism*, ed. Brian M. Barbour (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1973), 35.

¹³ Boller, xix–xx.

¹⁴ Ibid., xviii–xix.

¹⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹⁶ Hochfield, 51.

¹⁷ Boller, xv.

inspiration manifested itself in a physical form naturally and freely by following his or her own creative spirit.¹⁸

The American Transcendentalists were quite concerned with the “organic metaphor,” which is interpreting reality in terms of analogies to the natural world (that is, plant life and animal life).¹⁹ The ideas of many writers, such as Emerson and Thoreau, include “the divinity of nature, the glory of human aspiration and freedom, the power of intuition as opposed to reason, [and] the creative energy of the poetic imagination.”²⁰ Boller states, “Transcendentalism placed great emphasis on the unity as well as the variety of nature,” and notes that Emerson had called it “all for each and each for all,” meaning that everything is part of the perfection of the whole.²¹

More specifically, the American Transcendentalists envisioned a divine power or energy that creates all that is good and beautiful in the universe,²² but they were often scorned for seeking God in nature, or more importantly, for simply seeking God beyond the church’s walls.²³ For the Transcendentalist, nature keeps understanding and reason in balance and, according to Emerson, serves as a source of resources, an unblemished world of beauty, and inspiration

¹⁸ Ibid., 95.

¹⁹ Hochfield, 41.

²⁰ Ibid., 36.

²¹ Boller, 77–78.

²² Ibid., 67.

²³ Sullivan, 42.

for writing.²⁴ Thoreau wrote that nature is as much a part of the person as the person is a part of nature, and the Transcendentalists realized that although individual, each person is comprised of a series of relations.²⁵

With this in mind, the American Transcendentalists focused on creativity, sociality, and most importantly, individuality—Emerson said, “Nature never rhymes her children, nor makes two men alike.”²⁶ They believed that the individual—not society—was the source of all inspiration, creativity, and originality, and although society may exert a certain amount of influence, it cannot create as the individual can.²⁷ Emerson insisted on “an individual’s self-reliance . . . a reliance on the activation of one’s own soul, an interior awareness of the world’s divinity and the divinity inside one—i.e. you.”²⁸

Thoreau, Transcendentalism, and *Walden*

Of the American Transcendentalist philosophies, Thoreau concerned himself primarily with two in writing *Walden*: nature and the individual. He did not leave behind any manuals on theories, philosophies, or aesthetics,²⁹ but his views

²⁴ Boller, 50.

²⁵ Ibid., 195.

²⁶ Ibid., 190.

²⁷ Ibid., 191.

²⁸ Sullivan, 45.

²⁹ Verena Kerting, *Henry David Thoreau’s Aesthetics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 5.

on such matters were not entirely unknown. Of all the American Transcendentalists, Thoreau most ardently rejected establishment, religion in particular, although he did not consider himself an atheist. He once said that he preferred the sound of cow bells to the sound of church bells.³⁰ He did not believe in personal immortality and wrote that there was “no heaven but that which lies about me.”³¹ For Thoreau, nature was his religion. He did not align himself with traditional Romanticists that viewed nature as a supernatural or imaginative realm; rather, he believed that “truth could only be derived from an empirical contemplation of the actual, phenomenal world.”³² Richard Schneider sums up this philosophy quite well: “For Thoreau, the purpose of life’s journey is to explore this [spiritual] potential, and nature provides the world, the moral landscape, in which to explore it.”³³

Personally, Thoreau wanted to bridge the gap between body and mind, the physical world and the spiritual realm.³⁴ While Emerson viewed nature as a “physical means to a spiritual end,” Thoreau found spirituality *through* nature.³⁵ In fact, Thoreau felt such a deep connection with nature that he achieved an

³⁰ Boller, 29.

³¹ Ibid., 30.

³² Kerting, 1.

³³ Richard J. Schneider, “Walden,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Thoreau*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 100.

³⁴ Kerting, 61.

³⁵ Schneider, 100.

ecstatic state that overwhelmed his consciousness.³⁶ He became unified with nature, and he had become acutely aware—through all of his senses—of everything surrounding him.³⁷ But for Thoreau, senses alone did not grasp or capture full knowledge and understanding of an experience; they merely introduced the phenomenon to the intellect, and together they would form an understanding.³⁸ It was through nature that Thoreau sought to understand not only the world around him, but also to know more thoroughly his own being. In his essay “Resolution at Walden” Sherman Paul writes, “In Walden Pond, [Thoreau] saw the image of his purified self—that pristine, eternal self he hoped to possess.”³⁹

Through *Walden*, Thoreau aimed to give an account of nature based on his experiences, since fixed theory does not suffice with nature constantly changing.⁴⁰ He marketed this book as a travel book (a very popular genre at the time) with himself as the tour guide, but *Walden* is not simply an account of his travels; rather, the writing serves to inspire people to explore and be seekers of truth.⁴¹ A common myth about *Walden* is that it is a text about a hermit, a man who isolates himself from society for two years and spends that time meditating

³⁶ Boller, 195.

³⁷ Kerting, 97.

³⁸ Ibid., 70.

³⁹ Sherman Paul, “Resolution at Walden,” in *Critical Essays on Henry David Thoreau’s Walden*, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), 61.

⁴⁰ Kerting, 61.

⁴¹ Schneider, 93.

in nature. On the contrary, Thoreau is more interested in change than stasis, exploration than observation.⁴² In fact, Thoreau adopted a view of life with mankind as transient and nature as permanent.⁴³

For Thoreau, nature did not need to be idealized in art; to do so would only reflect a shadow of its true beauty and only a mere snapshot—not a video—of the experience.⁴⁴ Kerting expounds upon this idea: “Instead of producing poetry that conveyed merely the shell of an experience and that was mainly determined by his self, Thoreau wished to capture and convey the vividness and characteristics of the objects themselves.”⁴⁵ Nature was already perfect, and he did not believe it needed a poet to make it perfect. Instead, he thought that people needed to learn how to open themselves up to be able to perceive nature.⁴⁶ From a very basic perspective (one that Thoreau himself would likely adopt), *Walden* is a book about purity and innocence as represented by nature and about the need for individuality as human beings.⁴⁷

Thoreau draws his inspiration for *Walden* from nature, which then serves as tropes and metaphors that represent his observations and concepts.⁴⁸ Through

⁴² Ibid., 92.

⁴³ Thorpe, 14.

⁴⁴ Kerting, 96.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 109.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷ Thorpe, 22.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Hall Witherell, "Thoreau as Poet," in *The Cambridge Companion to Thoreau*, ed. Joel Myerson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 57.

his choice of language, he strategically draws the reader toward the self, society, nature, and God—all at the same time.⁴⁹ Thoreau draws upon the images and scenes of the natural world in and around Concord in his writings and poems, and “applies the high standards of his idealism to aspects of the human condition—love, friendship, memory, the transitory nature of life.”⁵⁰ In his essay about the deeper truths of *Walden*, Joseph Boone writes, “One of Thoreau’s overriding purposes in writing *Walden* involves his effort to educate his audience of the difference between the conventional life that merely skims the surface of existence and the fully-experienced life that fathoms its depths.”⁵¹

To emphasize on a global level the process of death and rebirth in the reader’s own journey, Thoreau represents *Walden* chronologically through the cycle of seasons, condensing his roughly two-year stay into one year.⁵² On a local level, the morning and the light of the breaking dawn represent rebirth and human potential for abundant life.⁵³ Although Thoreau did not share many of the Romantic views of nature as supernatural or magical, “in style as well as

⁴⁹ Joseph J. Moldenhauer, “The Extra-Vagant Manuever: Paradox in *Walden*,” in *Critical Essays on Henry David Thoreau’s Walden*, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), 98.

⁵⁰ Witherell, 57.

⁵¹ Joseph Allen. Boone, “Delving and Diving for Truth: Breaking through to Bottom in Thoreau’s *Walden*,” in *Critical Essays on Henry David Thoreau’s Walden*, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), 164.

⁵² Schneider, 97.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 103.

structure, in language as well as idea, then, Thoreau recapitulates the archetypal Romantic theme of rebirth."⁵⁴

Walden displays a constant interchange between prose and poetry; even in Thoreau's poems, there is a constant interchange between the two.⁵⁵ He was also quite passionate about etymology and how words having multiple meanings could lead to deeper truths.⁵⁶ Thoreau's use of puns and the fact that words have multiple meanings, however, sometimes undermine his ability to find certainty in language.⁵⁷ In *Walden*, Thoreau "leavened his message about the economics of everyday life with puns, wordplays, and outright one-liners," as humor was important to him.⁵⁸ In fact, the book is filled with puns, such as the unlucky fisherman, who after a long time realized "he belonged to an ancient sect of Coenobites ('see no bites')."⁵⁹ Besides the number of puns and subtle jokes, Thoreau's writing exhibits clarity of form, fluidity, and a music-like quality. Broderick states in his essay, "Many of Thoreau's paragraphs . . . often begin with deceptively simple, largely monosyllabic utterances which are succeeded by poetic, allusive, metaphorical enrichment before the return."⁶⁰

⁵⁴ John C. Broderick, "The Movement of Thoreau's Prose," in *Critical Essays on Henry David Thoreau's Walden*, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), 84.

⁵⁵ Witherell, 62.

⁵⁶ Sullivan, 170.

⁵⁷ Schneider, 96.

⁵⁸ Sullivan, 167.

⁵⁹ Schneider, 95.

⁶⁰ Broderick, 80.

Dominick Argento

Dominick Argento was born to Sicilian immigrants on October 27, 1927 in York, Pennsylvania. He began his musical studies much later in life than most prodigious musicians at the age of fifteen, when he began formally studying piano and informally studying harmony and orchestration from books he borrowed from the local library.⁶¹ During World War II, Argento entered the U.S. Army through the draft and served as a cryptographer in Northern Africa.⁶² Upon his return to the United States, he enrolled at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland, to begin his collegiate studies in composition, earning his Bachelors of Music and Masters of Music in Composition in 1951 and 1954, respectively. In 1957 he graduated from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, with a PhD in Composition.⁶³

Soon after completing his doctorate at the Eastman School of Music, he applied for and accepted a position on the faculty at the University of Minnesota, where he would spend his entire academic career.⁶⁴ While there, Argento enjoyed great success in both the academic and professional arenas. In 1963, he

⁶¹ The McKnight Foundation, *Dominick Argento* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: The McKnight Foundation, 1998), 36.

⁶² Virginia Saya, "Argento, Dominick," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01222> (accessed December 27, 2011).

⁶³ The McKnight Foundation, 36.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

cofounded the Center Opera Company, now known as the Minnesota Opera, and composed its inaugural opera *Masque of Angels* in that same year.

Argento's work soon gained national recognition; in 1975 he won the Pulitzer Prize for *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*,⁶⁵ a thirty-five-minute collection of eight songs for medium voice and piano based on excerpts from Virginia Woolf's diaries.⁶⁶ Sixteen years later, he received nomination for a Grammy Award for a 1991 recording of his *Te Deum*,⁶⁷ an oratorio for chorus and symphonic orchestra set to the Latin *Te Deum* text and anonymous Middle English lyrics.⁶⁸ In 1997, Argento retired from the University of Minnesota on December 31, and in that same year was appointed Composer Laureate of the Minnesota Orchestra.⁶⁹

Argento and His Music

For Argento, the process of composing a piece, once finished, is like a distant memory. He states that it is practically impossible to describe and recount the events that transpire during his compositional processes. Most of the time, the piece he begins to compose (or the piece he thinks he is composing) and the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Dominick Argento, *Catalogue Raisonné as Memoir* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 82.

⁶⁷ The McKnight Foundation, 37.

⁶⁸ Argento, 133.

⁶⁹ The McKnight Foundation, 37.

finished composition stand in stark contrast to one another.⁷⁰ A long time after finishing a composition, the piece becomes alien to Argento. He usually cannot remember the significance of any particular chord or note.⁷¹

Argento rarely draws his inspiration or compositional techniques from other composers, although he is particularly fond of Romantic composers, specifically Mahler, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, and Puccini.⁷² According to Argento, the process of making musical decisions (e.g. the sequence of pitches, dynamics, rhythmic durations, and placement of dissonance) is essentially arbitrary, as he composes his music based on his own instinct.⁷³ While some elements of Argento's music might be intuitive, his use of established forms, leitmotifs, and recurring musical material inherently suggests conscious musical decision-making.

In the earliest stages of his career, his instincts drove him away from vocal music. In fact, he had a strong aversion to vocal music through his third year at the Peabody Conservatory. After marrying his wife Carolyn Bailey (whom he describes as "a terrific soprano"), he began to experiment with composing solo vocal repertoire, but much time would pass before he began to appreciate group

⁷⁰ Argento, xiv.

⁷¹ Ibid., xv.

⁷² Ibid., 15.

⁷³ Ibid., xvi.

singing. He admits that living in Minnesota, a state with a rich tradition and culture of choral music, helped him greatly.⁷⁴

Stuart Pope of Boosey and Hawkes, one of Argento's publishers, once told him that all of his choral music is, at best, challenging and quite often exceedingly difficult.⁷⁵ Argento attributes this to his free use of tonality and his occasional, albeit brief, employment of atonality. He counters, however, that he always considers the singer and the vocal instrument in general when composing choral music by designing vocal lines and melodic contours that are not awkward to sing, placing reference points within the piece for finding pitches, and avoiding unnecessary demands in regards to vocal stamina and tessitura.⁷⁶

Most important and relevant to this book is Dominick Argento's approach to setting a text to music. He describes setting a piece of vocal music in the original meter of a given text as "the worst thing you can do."⁷⁷ One of the primary reasons that he has chosen to set mostly prose texts (such diaries, letters, pamphlets, etc.) and not very many poems is that he retains absolute control over the meter and the rhythm of the text; that is, he, not the meter of the source text, decides which words are important and should be stressed.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid., 112.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 58.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Walden Pond (1996)

Argento's meticulous attention to text provided the impetus for his choral work *Walden Pond*, a cycle for chorus, three celli, and harp commissioned by the Dale Warland Singers (Dale Warland, conductor) and premiered on October 26, 1996, at the University of Minnesota. With great care and extensive freedom, he selected excerpts (quoted verbatim) from Thoreau's *Walden* to create the precise imagery and ambience he sought to capture in the piece, but this is not the first time he has done so. According to Deborah Ellefson in her dissertation "The Choral Music of Dominick Argento", Argento "prefers to design his own textual structure; of the multi-movement works, *Peter Quince at the Clavier* is the only one that sets a single text in its entirety. All of the others employ excerpts from multiple poems or texts, selected and rearranged by Argento."⁷⁹

In combination with the excerpted texts selected by Argento, his choice of instrumentation also plays a crucial a role in creating the *Stimmung* of the work. The German word for "mood," the term *Stimmung* refers to the general atmosphere, sentiment, or imagery of a musical passage. Virginia Saya writes that the "three cellos and harp support and illustrate the water images in the

⁷⁹ Deborah Ellefson, "The Choral Works of Dominick Argento" (Dissertation, Arizona State University, 1990), 43.

settings of texts compiled by Argento from Thoreau's *Walden*."⁸⁰ Argento goes a step further in specifically noting that the harp mimics the sound of rippling water and the three violoncelli—Argento borrowed the use of multiple solo celli from Rossini's *William Tell* overture, in which Rossini employs them to depict a serene woodland scene—"add a sense of warmth, darkness, and depth."⁸¹

The decision for Argento to set a text about the pond at Walden surely must have been an obvious one. In his memoir, he writes that he has always been fascinated by bodies of waters—lakes, rivers, seas—and that many of his vocal and choral works are set on or near a body of water, even if he does not mention water specifically in the piece's title.⁸² Argento writes specifically about his fascination with water with regard to *Walden Pond*: "*Walden Pond* would be the one work most unabashedly related to this preoccupation [with bodies of water], using it not merely as a circumstance or colorful backdrop, but focusing directly on the body of water itself."⁸³

⁸⁰ Saya.

⁸¹ Argento, 171.

⁸² Ibid., 170.

⁸³ Ibid., 171.

Chapter 1

"The Pond"

The Music in Thoreau's Poetic Text

While not pure poetry in the strict sense, Thoreau's writing is rife with poetic devices, textual "music," and rhetorical gesture. The opening sentence of the movement ("Nothing so fair, so pure lies on the surface") exhibits a litany of sibilant sounds through alliteration of the phonemes [s] and [f]. While the vowels certainly do not form a rhyme, the words *so fair* and the word *surface*, in some way, do have a rhyming quality to them. One sees (or rather, hears) the same effect in his juxtaposition of *monstrous effect* and *making fit* (here, it is with the phonemes [m] and [f]). The second sentence, "It is a clear and deep green well" complements the first sentence with assonance of the vowel [i].

Thoreau employs both assonance and rhyme beginning in the third clause of the second paragraph, with assonance of the vowel [o] in *no*, *float*, *own*, and *stone*, the final two words forming a perfect rhyme. Thoreau also evokes near rhyme in the ultimate paragraph with the words *man's hand*. More prevalent in this paragraph is Thoreau's use of alliteration of the consonant combination *th*, which

produces allophones /θ/ and /ð/ in the words *there*, *the*, *thousand*, *this*, and *bather*.

In addition to the sentence sounds heard throughout the text, Thoreau employs adnomination in such words as *breath* and *breathed* and *deep* and *depth*.

Even more impressive than Thoreau's ability to capture the internal music of spoken text through sentence sounds is his incorporation of word-plays, allegories, metaphors, and other rhetorical gestures that superimpose added meaning to the text. In the first paragraph, Thoreau refers to the pond as a "well." The use of this word evokes an image of a body of water that provides sustenance to those creatures that draw from it. In this instance, given his Transcendentalist ideology, Thoreau most likely is alluding not to just a physical sustenance, but also a spiritual one.

He also refers to the pond as a "perennial spring," which plays on the multiple meanings of spring as both a fount of water and a season of year. Again, the word "spring" connotes life, both as a source of potable water and a season of the year when new life emerges from winter's sleep. Joseph Boone concurs: "If actually a spring, the pond would then be, as a source fed solely from the earth's interior, an origin of pure life."⁸⁴ Ironically, the pond itself is a water-table pond; that is, "Walden has no springs or streams running into or out of it, above or below the surface. Water is added to the pond's volume by seepage, rainfall, and

⁸⁴ Boone, 170.

snowmelt; it is subtracted through seepage, through evaporation, and through uptake by trees and plants.”⁸⁵

Giving even more lifelike qualities to the pond, Thoreau personifies it in two specific instances. He refers to it as “earth’s eye, looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.” If one’s eyes are, as anecdotally considered, the “windows of the soul,” then Thoreau’s personification of the pond surpasses that of mere physical human qualities. Richard Schneider writes, “As a metaphor for the writer’s own artistic eye, the pond’s ‘crystalline purity’ . . . also suggests a moral purity against which the writer or reader can ‘measure the depth of his own nature.’”⁸⁶ In yet another reference to the aliveness of the pond, he refers to the steam or mist rising from the water as its own “breath” floating as clouds high above its surface, the act of breathing being the most rudimentary action of a living being.

The reflective qualities of the pond pervade Thoreau’s writing; in addition to being the “earth’s eye” that the beholder looks into to measure his own character, Thoreau also calls it an unbreakable mirror, a “mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off,” once again recalling the eternal nature of

⁸⁵ "The Walden Woods Project,"

http://www.walden.org/Library/About_Thoreau's_Life_and_Writings:_The_Research_Collection/s/Walden,_the_Place (accessed December 30 2011).

⁸⁶ Schneider, 101–102.

this place. He also describes the magnification and the distortion of things that lie below its surface but that are viewed from above it.

The most subtle, yet perhaps the most profound, allusion that Thoreau creates is that between the Mannerist art of Michelangelo and the pond. Thoreau describes the “alabaster whiteness” of the person bathing in the water and how “as the limbs are magnified and distorted [the water] produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.” This reference to alabaster—a white variety of gypsum used often in the creation of statues, vases, and other sculptural art—draws the first connection to Renaissance artist Michelangelo. The magnification and distortion of limbs, as well as the “monstrous effect,” make clear reference to the Mannerist art movement, in which one sees a distorted view of the human body. It is characterized by the abnormal elongation of limbs, exaggerated muscles and physique, and larger-than-life depictions of human beings (Michelangelo’s “David” stands fourteen feet tall).

Thoreau’s Music in Argento’s Music

Throughout the movement, Argento captures the pacing and flow of Thoreau’s text with great ease. The sibilant sounds of [s] and [f] in the first sentence require time to pronounce, and Argento echoes this with slow rhythms

that contradict the meter (although a clear sense of meter has not yet been established, Argento primarily uses a 2:3 ratio to create a rhythmic deceleration). The assonance of “clear and deep green wells” is exemplified through even, half-measure rhythms. Argento captures the acceleration of short, quick syllables in “into which the beholder” with the fastest rhythms yet (eighth and sixteenth notes), but he respects the deceleration created by the double *n* of “own nature” through a full beat given to *own* and a return to the duple rhythm for *nature*. Logically, he sets the words *earth* (the size of the earth in comparison to the size of the pond), *long*, and *still* as the longest rhythmic durations in the movement.

In several instances, Argento sets the text in a manner that mimics the way one would declaim it aloud. The best examples of this occur with the phrases “high above its surface,” “The water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago,” and “magnified and distorted.” Argento, in a way, has rhythmically measured the length of the vowels and consonants and given them respective rhythmic values. The ebbing and flowing rhythms in the second of those phrases clearly mimic the lapping sounds of the pond against the shore. Only in one instance, for the text “monstrous effect,” is the declamation of the text obscured; the rhythms are suitable for the text, but they pass by so quickly that it is difficult to discern the words.

The Reflection of Thoreau's Text in the Music

The most obvious observation one can make about this movement is its setting as a barcarolle. A folk song sung by gondoliers in the canals of Venice, the barcarolle is set to a slow triple meter, most commonly 6/8. It is fitting, then, that this text be set to a music that would be sung on water, as the unevenness of compound meters mimics the gentle waves rippling through water. The sparse orchestration of a cappella choir, three cellos, and one harp embodies Thoreau's Transcendentalist philosophy of rejecting modernity for simplicity and society for nature.

In addition to capturing the sounds and pacing of Thoreau's text rhythmically, Argento magnifies Thoreau's poetic text and his rhetoric through pitch and harmony. One of the most prominent features of this movement is the use of leitmotifs or referential sonorities. The most pervasive of referential sonorities I have identified as the "Reflection" chord, which first occurs in mm. 1–2 (see Example 1). At the most superficial level, it is simply a C major chord with an added second; upon further study, it is the pitch D reflecting the C and E which are equidistant from that central pitch, like a ripple in the water after tossing in a stone. This conjecture is bolstered by the fact that D remains a

common tone throughout mm. 1–11; with the exception of one chord, the pitch appears in every chord.



Example 1. Reflection chord; *Walden Pond*, movement 1, mm. 1–2.

The Reflection chord occurs in mm. 1–2, mm. 14–15, mm. 21–22 (in the harp), m. 26, m. 42, and m. 62. The chord occurs at three different pitch levels: C, B, and B \flat . In contrast to the initial Reflection chord, the chord that follows in m. 4 at first glance seems anything but “pure.” Read either as an augmented chord with an added $\sharp 2$ or enharmonically respelled as F sharp major with an added $\flat 6$, this chord does not negate the Reflection chord or the text; rather, it evokes a higher “consonance” than a major or minor triad could possibly effect.

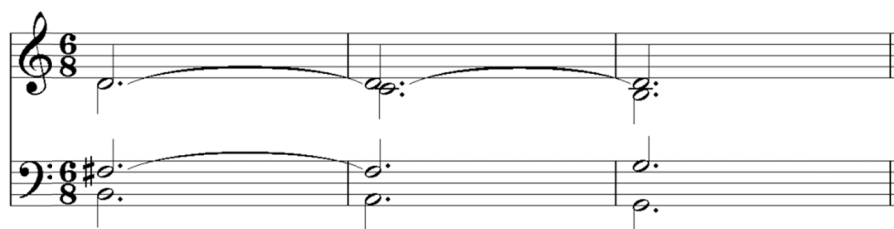
The Reflection chord refers not only to the water itself, but also to what those who look into the water see (e.g. the beholder measuring his own nature). This leitmotif occurs six times in the movement, but it is not until the penultimate instance that it appears literally on the word *reflected*. On the last instance of its use, Argento employs the Reflection chord on the word *Michelangelo*—this is the

first time that it has not been used in reference to the pond or the actual reflection of an image. While it is possible its implementation here serves only a structural purpose, it is possible that Argento is emphasizing the reflection of the human physique in the Mannerist art of Michelangelo. Additionally, one might consider that Thoreau's description of "monstrous effects" and distorted, magnified limbs suggests that the water not only reflects our humanity, but also reveals our inhumanity.

The second significant referential sonority is the chord progression in mm. 8–11 that I have identified as the "Acceptance" sonority (see Example 2). The progression is a move from iii to V4/3 to I by means of a 4-3 suspension, and it provides resolution to major sections of this movement. The Acceptance sonority, too, has a reflective nature in that structurally, it has a feeling of being both the beginning and the end of sections. Argento employs this progression to delineate the form of the movement.

In every instance, the augmented +#2 chord that follows the reflection motive precedes this sonority. The first time, Argento separates the two with several measures of other musical material, but in subsequent iterations, the augmented +#2 directly precedes it. This chord progression, however, is slightly undermined by the repeated 4-3 suspension that occurs beneath it in the harp and cello. Because most of the harmonies and rhythms leading up to this progression are in

a state of flux, this chord progression relaxes the seemingly unmetered rhythms and harmonic tensions with functional tonal harmonies.



Example 2. Reduction of Acceptance sonority;
Walden Pond, movement 1, mm. 8–10.

The 4-3 suspension plays a crucial role in this movement, especially in conjunction with the Acceptance sonority. Argento makes the Acceptance sonority move forward through a 4-3 suspension, while subtly undermining its resolution with a repeating 4-3 suspension that lurks beneath the surface in the cello and harp. As it was used in the Romantic period, Argento employs the 4-3 suspension here to evoke an affect or topic of religiosity or, within this context, spirituality. Romantic composers often used the 4-3 suspension in this manner, as it recalls the typical motion of cadences in Renaissance motets, as well as the plagal “Amen” cadence. Argento reinforces the significance of this musical topic in the fourth movement in m. 47 with a 4-3 suspension set to the word *heaven*. Given the transcendental nature of Thoreau’s writing, it is no surprise that

Argento alludes to a hint of spiritual enlightenment through man's connection with nature.

In addition to evoking an affect of religiosity in this movement, Argento evokes an affect of antiquity in one specific instance. In mm. 50–51, Argento employs flatted scale degrees 6 and 2, which give an aural impression of modal mixture (Phrygian) or a shift in mode (see 3). Additionally, the false relations of $D\flat/D\sharp$ and $G\flat/G\sharp$ hearken back to the Renaissance era. The church modes, long-associated with the music of the early church, create a sense of temporal distance, and the use of modal mixture to evoke antiquity here references the long existence of the pond.



Example 3. Use of modal mixture; *Walden Pond*, movement 1, mm. 49–51.

In addition to these far-reaching referential sonorities, one also hears the subject matter of Thoreau's writing in many specific instances. The unison

voicing and stepwise motion of the choir in mm. 12–13 and mm. 16–22 capture the clarity of the “clear and deep green well,” as well as the purity that one would associate with a natural spring. The slow, even rhythms in both of these passages magnify the long existence of this place, evoking a sense of space and expansiveness. In contrast to the aforementioned passages, Argento creates a disjunct melodic contour through octave displacement from an otherwise stepwise line in m. 29 over the text “the mirror which no stone can crack,” a musical representation of a jagged rock or a cracked surface (see Example 4). It is worth noting that both phrases in mm. 28–33 survive the attempted “crack” with resolutions to triadic harmonies.

With the text “magnified” in mm. 57–59, one sees a tremendous expansion in the dynamic and tessitura of the outer voice (“Wedge technique” as described by Robert Gauldin),⁸⁷ but the “wedge” contorts and contracts itself back to closely-voiced, dissonant harmonies on the word *distorted*. In addition to musically painting the image of magnification seen below the water’s surface, Argento “distorts” the tonality of the movement with this wildly chromatic passage.

⁸⁷ Robert Gauldin, “The Theory and Practice of Chromatic Wedge Progressions in Romantic Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (2004).

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The music is in 8/8 time, marked *mf* (mezzo-forte), and the measure number 30 is indicated. The lyrics for all parts are: "It is a mir-ror which no stone can crack, whose quick-sil ver will nev-er wear off, a". The melody is disjunct, with frequent leaps and rests, creating a fragmented, text-painting effect.

Example 4. Disjunct melody as text-painting;
Walden Pond, movement 1, mm. 28–33.

Furthermore, the listener hears and observes a number of instances in which Argento has employed rhetorical gestures of anabasis and catabasis to paint the text of Thoreau.⁸⁸ In mm. 38–40, Argento describes “to float as clouds” with a gentle leap of a perfect fifth in the soprano line. He also combines the text “high above its surface” with an upward arpeggio of a G-major triad on the word *surface*, mimicking the steam rising from the surface of the pond.

⁸⁸ For more information regarding word-painting and rhetoric, see the following articles: Tim Carter, “Word-Painting,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/30568> (accessed January 7, 2012). and Blake Wilson, et al., “Rhetoric and Music,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43166> (accessed January 7, 2012).

The solo line in mm. 54–56 declaimed by the basses “that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness” is particularly special: it is the first time that the basses have declaimed the text alone, and it is also the first time that Thoreau has mentioned any object actually *in* the water! Argento gives musical life to Thoreau’s depiction with the sopranos sustaining a delicate high D (they imitate the surface of the water) and the basses declaiming the text two octaves lower (they fill the role of the bather in the water).

Summary

The movement as a whole floats along gently along with the undercurrent of the harp and celli, interspersing *a cappella* and through-composed sections throughout the movement. Argento, however, always returns to the Acceptance sonority, first midway through the movement in mm. 44–47 and again at the end in mm. 63–67. He approaches it every time with the augmented +#2 chord and in every instance in this movement, the Reflection chord precedes the augmented +#2 chord.

The Reflection chord serves as a common thread throughout the movement, and as I will demonstrate, throughout the entire composition. Argento employs it to connect various images of the text, making its role less structural than the

Acceptance sonority. At the same time, Argento always approaches the Reflection chord by means of a common tone in at least one voice. With the exception of one instance, this common tone serves as the center axis of the Reflection chord.

Both Thoreau and Argento seek to capture the pureness, the tranquility, and the permanence of Walden Pond. Thoreau achieves this by describing its “crystalline purity” in several instances and specifically referencing its existence (“a thousand years ago”), while Argento succeeds through the creation leitmotifs that continuously recur throughout the movement, providing both structure and continuity.

Chapter 2

“Angling”

The Music in Thoreau’s Poetic Text

Like the first movement of *Walden Pond*, Thoreau has filled the text of this movement with a number of poetic devices. The most apparent device, alliteration, occurs throughout the entire movement. The first paragraph ends with an alliteration of the letter *w* in the phrase “which was strewed with wrecks of the forest.” Although the *w* in *wrecks* sounds like the phoneme [r], it is visually alliterative. A slight alliteration of the consonant combination *ch* exists in the first sentence among the words *perch*, *which*, and *charmed* (“the perch which I seemed to have charmed”).

The second paragraph features alliteration of the sibilant consonant [f], with words such as *forty feet*, *flaxen*, *fishes*, *foxes*, and *from*. One might also hear a distant connection between the words *flaxen* and *foxes*, given they both feature the sounds [f] and [ks], although this connection is a tenuous one, given their separation in the sentence.

The final paragraph offers the most in terms of alliterative characteristics, both visually and sonically. The second clause of the paragraph visually offers repetition of the letter *o* and the combination *on*: “once in a while, we sat together on the pond, he at one end of the boat, and I at the other.” We also hear alliteration of the phoneme [w] in the opening words “once in a while, we sat . . .” The other alliterated sound in this paragraph is the aspirated [h], which we hear in the words *he had*, *his*, *hummed*, *harmonized*, and *harmony*.

Thoreau also employs a couple of instances of adnomination in the movement. The first such instance begins with the word *fishing*, which he later uses in the forms *fishes* and *fisher*. Thoreau uses this poetic technique with the words *harmonized* and *harmony* as well, and while the word is not derived from the same root, one cannot help but draw a connection between the words *hum* and *harmony*.

Thoreau’s text for this movement abounds with Transcendentalist philosophical ideas, ironies, and metaphors. One of his most deeply held ideals, finding spirituality or a connection with a divine creating energy through nature, permeates the entire text, principally through his use of personification. He first personifies the moon, giving it motion as it is “travelling over the ribbed bottom [of the boat].” The owls and the foxes assume roles as both spectators and participants with their serenades to Thoreau and his deaf companion. He even

suggests that he is “communicating” with the fish in the pond through his fishing line, which inherently implies they are communicating back. Perhaps the more appropriate word—although probably less poetic—would be “communing,” as finding communion with nature was his ultimate goal.

Joseph Boone offers several insights into the meaning of fishing—both literal and spiritual—for Thoreau in his essay “Delving and Diving for Truth: Breaking Through to Bottom in Thoreau’s *Walden*.” At the most basic level, fishing is an exercise in meditation, and the fishing line is Thoreau’s tool.⁸⁹ At a deeper level, fishing, the exploration of the depths of the water, serves as an analogy for soul-searching.⁹⁰ Boone takes that concept a step further, suggesting that fishing is a metaphor for life, with the sliding surface [the current] passing by representing time.⁹¹ For Thoreau, fishing is a connection to God through the fishing line, with the other side of the line being both deep and mysterious.⁹²

Thoreau mentions his own “philosophy,” and while he does not delineate exactly what that philosophy encompasses, he does mention that the silence between him and the older man and the psalm tune the man hums “harmonize well enough” with his philosophy. The silence allows Thoreau the opportunity to seek a deeper connection with nature; he accepts the psalm tune because the man

⁸⁹ Boone, 170.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 172.

⁹¹ Ibid., 166.

⁹² Ibid., 170–171.

is humming it—that is, he is not singing any prescribed religious words or texts.

This fits in neatly with the American Transcendentalist rejection of the traditional religious establishment.

Related to these ideas, Thoreau juxtaposes two contrasting ideas in this section of the text: external music versus internal music. The external music is quite obvious, as he describes playing the flute, the creaking bird, the serenading owls and foxes, and the humming old, deaf man. At the same time, an internal music exists, both between Thoreau and nature and between Thoreau and his companion. The external music of the flute creates an internal musical dialogue between Thoreau and the fishes, and the songs of the owls and foxes also achieve the same dialogue with him. His internal “harmony” with the old fisherman is actually a silent discourse, which Thoreau actually prefers to an “intercourse . . . carried on by speech.”

Finally, Thoreau injects a bit of humor and wit into his writing. He speaks of the “mysterious nocturnal fishes” and “some unknown bird.” The irony and humor are threefold here. First, Thoreau’s observation that these fish are nocturnal is quite ironic, since it is the middle of the night and *he* should be the one asleep (as everyone knows, humans are not biologically nocturnal creatures). Second, he mentions that “not too many words passed between” him and the deaf man, which is ironically humorous because they probably said nothing at

all, given that the man could not hear. Third, the mystery that surrounds these nocturnal fishes and the unknown bird directly contradicts the Transcendentalist rejection of European Romantic ideas concerning nature, the woods in particular. It is unclear to me whether Thoreau is mocking the European Romanticists or simply acknowledging there is something mysterious about nature, but in either case, there exists a bit of ironic humor.

Thoreau's Music in Argento's Music

As in the first movement of this piece, Argento magnifies and builds upon the poetic, musical sounds of Thoreau's prose in his setting of the text for this movement. Argento takes great care in observing Thoreau's syntax; for example, he observes the natural caesura at the first comma following the word *flute* through a longer duration of that word followed by a rest. Argento seems to insert his own musical comma in m. 14, but he undermines that potential caesura by repeating the previous melodic and harmonic material verbatim but transposed a major second lower.

Additionally, Argento honors Thoreau's larger syntactical structures, namely paragraphs, through orchestration and tempo changes. Argento demarcates the beginning of the second paragraph at m. 33 by introducing the harp as a solo

accompanimental instrument and increasing the tempo to Quasi allegretto. He also shifts to a more natural, recitative-like declamation of the text. Argento notes the beginning of the third paragraph with a return to accompaniment by the three celli in their typical register and a slower Tempo giusto (eighth note = 88), although he continues the recitative-like setting of the text.

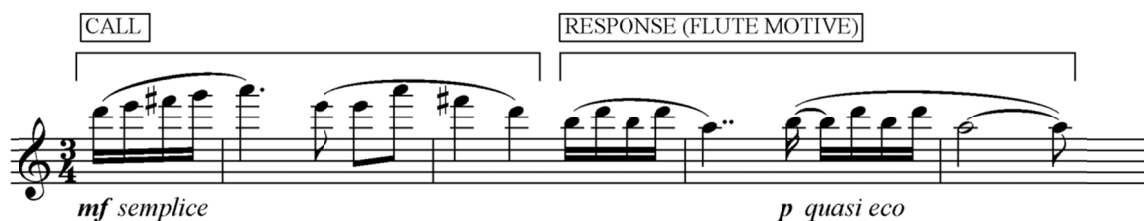
Like Thoreau, Argento draws attention to the *ch* consonant combination in the words *perch* and *charmed*. Argento achieves this in two ways: for the upper three voices, the words occur on the downbeat of m. 18 and m. 19, respectively; he explicitly makes the connection in the bass voice by juxtaposing the two words, omitting the words that the other voices sing between *perch* and *charmed*. Argento also captures the dactylic rhythm of the words *hovering* and *travelling over the* by setting them as triplet figures.

Argento's decisions for text setting evince his keen awareness of the musical sounds at his disposal with the alliteration Thoreau employed. Argento draws attention to the alliteration of the letter *w* with slower rhythmic durations for the text "which was strewed with the wrecks" in mm. 27–29. The slower rhythms also serve the practical purpose of comprehensibility. Conversely, he capably brings alliteration of the letter *f* to the forefront in m. 36, in which he sets "forty feet of" as sixteenth notes. The swift successions of the sibilant sound make Thoreau's alliteration all the more apparent.

The Reflection of Thoreau's Text in the Music

Even more apparent than Argento's musical setting of Thoreau's poetic prose is his depiction of the ideas and imagery that fill the text. Along with a number of rhetorical devices and specific instances of text-painting, Argento establishes two primary leitmotifs that serve as anchors and musical reference points throughout the movement.

The first leitmotif, which I have identified as the "Flute" motive, opens the second movement. Played by a solo cello as string harmonics, the breathy quality of the cello evokes the sound of the woodwind instrument, which Thoreau mentions specifically in the first sentence. Argento fragments the "flute" solo, using the last five pitches as the actual motive; he reinforces this leitmotif through repetition, an echo of the same pitches by a second, solo cello (see Example 5). The Flute motive recurs several times throughout the first twenty-eight measures of the movement, most notably two times while the chorus sustains the word *flute*. Argento saves the motive's next and final reprise for the end of the movement, when it occurs once again with what I call the "Permanence" chord.



Example 5. Flute Motive; *Walden Pond*, movement 2, mm. 1–4.

The Permanence chord, in contrast to the Flute motive, occurs throughout the entire movement in both the chorus and the accompanimental forces. The chord first appears in m. 12 in the chorus and is reinforced by its repetition at a lower pitch level in m. 15. I have labeled this leitmotif as the Permanence chord, because it is suggestive of stasis in three principal ways. First, the chord first appears in connection with the text that refers to sitting in the boat, which is in itself a static action. Second, Argento always sustains the chord for at least four beats in a slow tempo, which suggests inactivity. Third, the pitch collection itself suggests stasis in that it does not have an apparent resolution (see Example 6). The three-note chord is built upon a major third, with an added augmented fourth above the lowest pitch. While tritones in tonal music typically exhibit a tendency for resolution, this tritone exudes a sense of balance, marking the middle of the chromatic scale, much like the center of gravity needed to sit stably in a rowboat. Additionally, the pitch set comes from the whole tone collection, which itself is an immovable and self-reflexive sonority.

S. boat play - ing the flute,

A. boat play - ing the flute,

T. boat play - ing the flute,

B. boat play - ing the flute,

Flute, flute,

Example 6. Permanence chord; *Walden Pond*, movement 2, mm. 12–16.

This leitmotif, as previously stated, occurs throughout the movement. After its first two instances in the chorus (mm. 12 and 15), it returns twice in mm. 55–61, the second time at a pitch level one step lower than the first instance. Here the motive appears in the accompanying celli, while the chorus, by no coincidence, declaims the text “we sat together on the pond, he at one end of the boat, and I at the other . . .” This further bolsters the argument that Argento has associated the motive with the boat and permanence. The Permanence chord returns one final time in the last three measures of the movement in tandem with the Flute motive.

In addition to the two principal leitmotifs of this movement, Argento employs a number of other techniques to paint Thoreau’s text in the music and

capture the *Stimmung* of *Walden*. The opening four measures of the movement (see again Example 5) suggest two types of dialogue, which to both Thoreau himself alludes: Thoreau's dialogue with nature and his "intercourse" with the deaf man. The Flute motive and its echo seem to be a response to the call of the opening phrase, since they occur throughout the movement apart from each other.

Argento creates the majority of his connections with the text through harmony. In addition to the Permanence chord, the listener hears a number of instances where the harmony reflects the action or ambience of the text. The first example of this occurs in m. 20 with the arrival an A major triad. Until this point, the tonality of the movement has been hovering around like the perch, which Thoreau finally "charms": the fish stops flitting about and the music's tonality reaches a stable pitch center. Near the end of the movement in mm. 72–73, Argento paints the "unbroken harmony" with the arrival of a D major triad, the same key as the Flute motive, at the end of the word *harmony*.

Argento also uses harmony to his advantage to evoke a spooky, almost ominous ambience surrounding the "mysterious nocturnal fishes" and "the creaking note of some unknown bird." For the former, he alternates between C# and C_♭, which produces shifts between a major-major seventh chord and a major-minor seventh chord. Additionally, he sets the text in a very low tessitura for all

voices, depicting the fish that lie deep beneath the pond's surface. For the latter, he quickly moves from E-minor, to B \flat minor (a tritone away), and then back to E-minor.

At the same time, Argento recreates the creaking of the unknown bird with a repeated two-pitch motive played by a solo cello.⁹³ Many other examples of Argento's word-painting of the text exist; indeed they are almost too numerous to account for all of them. In mm. 24–25, the composer evokes musical images of “travelling over” with an arch-shaped melodic and dynamic contour in the upper three voices, as well as a stepwise, evenly paced rising line of quarter notes in the tenor voice.

Like Thoreau, Argento gives double-meanings to some of the motives in his work. In mm. 33–39, Argento quite cleverly uses the repeated C-sharps in the harp accompaniment in two different manners simultaneously. First, the repeated pitches sound like the ticking or chiming of a clock while the text references “the hours of midnight.” Second, the C \sharp serves as a tonal center for the passage—the choral phrases also begin and end with that pitch—while the text refers to being “anchored in forty feet of water.”

Finally, Argento effectively captures the silence, the external music, and the internal music Thoreau describes in his poetic text. The composer combines soft,

⁹³ Because this instance of text-painting occurs only in this five-measure section of the movement, I have not labeled it as a significant leitmotif within the work.

unison declamation of the text “for he had grown deaf in his later years” in m. 62, while the accompaniment completely drops out of the texture, musically depicting the silence that enveloped the older man and the silence between him and Thoreau. The accompaniment resumes in m. 63, this time assuming the role of the internal music between Thoreau and the man, and Thoreau and nature. This internal music foreshadows the external music, the humming of a psalm, in mm. 69–76, a literal depiction of the text.

The tenors do not hum a psalm, but they do hum the first half of the hymn tune “Eventide,” which is also known as “Abide with Me” (see Example 7). Composed by a British organist contemporaneously with Thoreau’s composition of *Walden*, “Abide with Me” likely alludes to the evening setting of both this movement and the hymn itself, one abiding with God in nature, and simply the two people abiding together in the boat.

Summary

Again, through the use of two prominent leitmotifs, Argento creates continuity throughout the movement, while using specific instances of text-painting to give new life to Thoreau’s text. The Permanence chord that recurs

periodically throughout the movement and the Flute motive that frames the movement provide structural pillars that define the movement's shape.

A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide; The dark - ness deep - ens; Lord, with me a -

bide: When oth - er help - ers fail, and com - forts

flee, Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me!

Example 7. Hymn; *Abide With Me*, William H. Monk (1823–1889).

Furthermore, Argento is able to magnify some of the deeper philosophical ideas and truths held by Thoreau, such as internal vs. external music, dialogue between men vs. dialogue between man and nature, etc. Harmony serves as his primary tool for identifying these concepts, but he also elucidates the listener by means of musical motives, textures, and instrumentation.

Chapter 3

“Observing”

The Music in Thoreau’s Poetic Text

In the third movement of *Walden Pond*, Thoreau’s text abounds with myriad examples of musical sentence sounds, both alliteration and assonance. The first sentence of the movement features an abundance of sibilant sounds produced by the phoneme [s]: “It is a soothing employment to sit on a stump on a height overlooking the pond, and studying the dimpling circles incessantly inscribed on its surface amid the reflected skies and trees.” Other less obvious instances of alliteration occur throughout the movement’s text as well. Thoreau alliterates the letter *w* in “it is wonderful with what,” the letter *d*, as in “it was difficult to distinguish,” and the nasal consonant *n* in “One November afternoon.”

Even more pervasive than the alliteration is the assonance employed by Thoreau. Nearly every sentence features some form of this poetic device, with the vowel [I] appearing as the most frequently occurring use of assonance. An excellent example of assonance of the vowel [I] is seen in the sentence “It is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is advertised.” Thoreau

employs assonances with vowel combinations as well, such as [a:I] in “I was surprised to find myself . . .” In several instances, such as “incessantly inscribed,” Thoreau combines both assonance and alliteration for a particularly musical effect. These examples are just a few of the instances of alliteration and assonance employed by Thoreau; many more exist in this passage.

One of the most notable features of the music in Thoreau’s poetic text is the tempo and meter of some of the passages. The first half of the opening sentence of the movement, which has a clear dactylic meter, also features a steady increase in tempo. Thoreau creates the rhythmic acceleration by beginning with multisyllabic words that have long vowels and then proceeding to monosyllabic words with short vowels. He emphasizes the poetic accelerando by decreasing the amount of space between the alliterated *s* words. We also hear the same effect in “the dimpling circles incessantly inscribed” and in “their swimming impressed me as a kind of flight.” The final sentence of the second paragraph, “Then the trembling circles seek the shore and all is smooth again” exhibits the opposite feature, deceleration. The sentence’s exclusively trochaic meter, which sounds much slower compared to the dactylic meter of the initial sentence, and the long sounds of *all* and *smooth* retard the tempo of the poetic text.

Thoreau utilizes not only the sounds of alliteration and assonance, but also the sonic imagery of onomatopoeia. While the word *flash* itself has

onomatopoetic characteristics (even though one typically associates a flash with light, not sound), Thoreau bolsters the word's potential for sonic imagery by modifying it with the adjectives *one* and *bright*, which are both short, monosyllabic words that also imitate the instantaneous nature of a flash.

As in the previous two movements, Thoreau's personification of his surroundings, the fish and the pond itself, permeates the text. Instead of depicting a fish simply leaping out of the water, he writes of "a fish [that] describes an arc of three or four feet in the air." The fish in Walden Pond also take part in an exclusively human action: murder. Thoreau describes a pickerel or a shiner capturing an insect for food as "piscine murder," essentially placing the wildlife on the same level as humankind.

Again, Thoreau has given life to Walden Pond through his personification of the body of water. He portrays the lifeline or heartbeat of the pond through the circular ripples in the pond's surface, referring to "the gentle pulsing of its life, the heaving of its breast." He also gives the "trembling circles" the ability to consciously elect to "seek the shore."

Thoreau also creates coherence and poetic music in this passage through the juxtaposition of both similar and opposite words and images. In the second paragraph, he juxtaposes *elaborateness* and *simple*—interestingly, the word *elaborateness* is quite elaborate itself, especially given the number of monosyllabic

words in Thoreau's writing. He also plays on the word *pick* when mentioning the "pickerel or shiner picks an insect," as the action is contained within the subject. He also juxtaposes a sequence of stressed sentence sounds—[I] and [a:I]—between the words "is advertised—this piscine."

From a philosophical standpoint, this passage from *Walden* focuses on dualities: the pond as both a static body of water and a living, breathing entity, and Thoreau's perception of himself as both an observer and a participant in nature. In some respect, one might consider these two examples of dualities one in the same: both a static body of water and an observer of nature are passive and inactive, while a living being and a participant are engaging and active.

Thoreau's difficulty in distinguishing the surface of the water and the sky—the water reflects the image of the sky—exemplifies his own inability to distinguish his role in this environment. Thoreau sees his reflection in the water, yet he speaks as though he is actually *in* the water ("I was surprised to find myself surrounded by myriads of small, bronze-colored perch"). At the same time, he sees the clouds reflected in the water's surface and envisions himself "floating through the air as in a balloon." Thoreau most effectively sums up this ambiguity, this duality, when he compares the fish to birds in the final clause of the last paragraph; for him, it is unclear where the sky ends and the water

begins, whether he is viewing his image in the water or whether he actually is in the pond.

Thoreau's Music in Argento's Music

In combination, all of the aforementioned poetic devices make for a very musical text that lends itself to musical setting. One of the most notable features of Argento's setting is the manner in which he captures the rhythm and meter of the source text in the music. Contrary to his view that "the worst thing you can do in setting text is simply to ape the original meter,"⁹⁴ Argento elects to highlight Thoreau's strikingly dactylic text by setting it in 6/8 in mm. 4–8. This may be because he is setting a prose text, which tends to be more rhythmically free; in this case, an instance of regular meter represents an anomaly that he chose to exploit. He begins with dotted eighth notes, and then moving to even eighth notes; he recreates the acceleration of Thoreau's text by indicating in the score an *accelerando* over those measures.

He also recreates the acceleration of "their swimming impressed me as a kind of flight" in m. 73 through the use of even sixteenth notes in simple quadruple meter. Argento's use of sixteenth notes makes the acceleration of the text more

⁹⁴ The McKnight Foundation, 9.

apparent, since the preceding measures feature considerably longer rhythmic durations. In contrast, he captures the deceleration of “Then the trembling circles seek the shore and all is smooth again” in mm. 55–59 with increasingly longer rhythmic durations and a specified *rallentando* in the penultimate measure of the passage.

In addition to honoring Thoreau’s meters and tempo changes, Argento also depicts his sonic imagery, word-plays, and use of assonance. He recreates the flash of light and sound of “one bright flash” through accented eighth notes, separated by eighth rests; the shortness and accentuation of the notes evokes the sonic image of an instantaneous flash. Argento also takes note of Thoreau’s word play of “pickerel or shiner picks” by placing *pickerel* directly on the second beat of m. 37 and inserting a rest after *shiner* in m. 38, offsetting the word *picks* from the second beat by an eighth note. Finally, he draws the listener’s attention to the assonance of “It is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is advertised” with essentially flat melodic contours in each of the vocal parts in mm. 40–43.

The Reflection of Thoreau's Text in the Music

Through the introduction of a new leitmotif, Argento successfully captures the *Stimmung* and philosophies of Thoreau's text. One leitmotif featured in this movement appears only in a sixteen-measure segment, but Argento does transform this leitmotif later on to give it a new role in creating the ambience of the movement. I have identified and labeled this new motivic unit as "Breaking the Surface," herein referred to as "BTS" (see Example 8). Consisting of a sharply accented, clustered inversion of a four-pitch quartal (Q4) chord, the BTS motive first appears in m. 28, pre-imitating the "one bright flash" of a fish leaping and breaking the water's surface in mm. 29–31. The same motive appears again in m. 32, this time anticipating the "flash" where the fish strikes the surface as gravity returns it to the water.

After describing a "pickerel or shiner" picking an insect from the surface of the water, Argento reprises the BTS motive in mm. 40–42, still an inversion of the Q4 sonority, but this time more widely spaced than the first two instances (see Example 9). The motive sounds on the second beat of each of the measure, while the chorus, with hints of Q4, declaims Thoreau's text that comments on the elaborate advertisement of the fish's simple action. Later in the movement,

Argento will transform the Q4 sonority to realize the *Stimmung* of Thoreau's prose.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal ensemble and harp. The vocal parts are Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The harp part is labeled 'Hp.'. The lyrics are: 'air, _____ and then in one bright flash where it e - mer ges,'. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The harp part includes a dynamic marking of *sfz* (sforzando) and a fermata over a chord in the first measure.

Example 8. BTS motive; *Walden Pond*, movement 3, mm. 28–31.

In addition to the new leitmotif introduced in this movement, Argento reprises the two principal sonorities of the first movement: the Acceptance sonority and the Reflection motive. In both instances, Argento has slightly altered and recontextualized the leitmotif, but the listener's ear can still recognize them and make a connection to their initial introduction. The first of the two sonorities to appear is an altered form of the Acceptance sonority in mm. 19–22.

Example 9 shows the musical score for the BTS motive in *Walden Pond*, movement 3, measures 40–42. The score is in B minor, 8/8 time. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a Harp (Hp.) part. The vocal parts are marked with *(dim.)* and *p*. The harp part is marked with *p*. The lyrics are: "sur - face. It is won - der ful _ with what e - lab - o - rate - ness this sim - ple fact is ad - ver tised _". The score includes a circled 'D' at the beginning of each vocal line and the harp part.

Example 9. BTS motive; *Walden Pond*, movement 3, mm. 40–42.

Here the chorus arrives on a B minor chord, followed by a quartal, outward expansion based on the BTS motive in the harp that yields to G major (see Example 10). In hindsight, one realizes that mm. 8–11 feature the exact same harmonic and melodic material a step higher—a transposition of the Acceptance sonority. These reworkings of the Acceptance sonority do not seem to carry any extramusical meaning; rather, they most likely serve to reinforce the pervasiveness of the major third and the establishment of this sonority as a leitmotif.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are for vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). Each vocal staff has a melodic line with a crescendo from *mp* to *mf*, marked with a circled 'B'. The vocal parts are in 8/8 time and are marked 'a tempo'. The piano accompaniment is on the bottom staff, in 8/8 time, marked 'a tempo'. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with a crescendo from *mp* to *mf*. The piano part includes a 'Transposed BTS' section and a 'Vc.' section. Chord symbols **Bm** and **G** are indicated below the piano part.

Example 10. Altered Acceptance sonority; *Walden Pond*, movement 3, mm. 19–22.

Argento also reworks the Reflection chord from the first movement in mm. 67–68, as Thoreau describes seeing his own image surrounded by perch in the water. The original three-note sonority originally consisted of the pitches C, D, and E, although later in the first movement, Argento presented the leitmotif one half step and one whole step lower. Here, the cellos introduce each pitch separately, this time with a trill on each note, so that by the end of m. 68, the

listener hears the Reflection chord. Example 11 shows a reduction of the cellos' entrances, which form the leitmotif.

Example 11. Reworked Reflection chord; *Walden Pond*, movement 3, mm. 67–68.

On a local level, Argento employs a number of rhetorical gestures and instances of specific text-painting to create an aural image of Thoreau's text. The most notable of these instances, which first occurs in mm. 14–18, employs a texture of canonic entrances at the octave and unison of the melody, beginning with the bass voice and rising up through the soprano voice. Through this contrapuntal texture in an otherwise homorhythmic composition, Argento draws an aural image of the concentric circles that ripple through the water's surface. This set of canonic entrances returns at the very end of the movement (mm. 78–82), this time in the accompanying celli and harp, each instrument entering individually in canon.

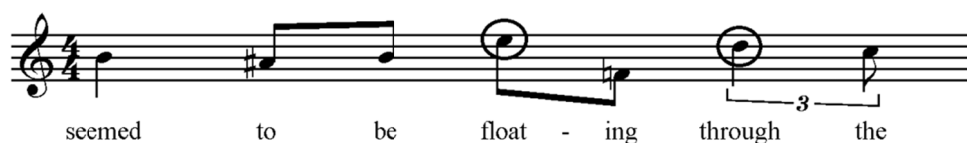
The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The music is in 8/8 time. The lyrics are: "and stud - y the dim - pling cir - cles in - ces - sant - ly in - scribed on its sur - face a - mid the re -". The Soprano part begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Alto part begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Tenor part begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The Bass part begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. The lyrics are: "and stud - y the dim - pling cir - cles in - ces - sant - ly in - scribed on its sur - face a - mid the re -".

Example 12. Canonic entrances; *Walden Pond*, movement 3, mm. 14–18.

Argento's use of anabasis through rising melodic lines that correspond with texts such as "on a height overlooking the pond" (mm. 6–8), "an arc of three or four feet in the air" (mm. 26–28), and "impressed me as a kind of flight or hovering" (mm. 73–74) depicts locational height and upward movement. He recreates the "welling up of its fountain" through the sequential implementation of intervallic leaps of a sixth in mm. 48–51. To convey the calming of the fountain, Argento employs catabasis by converting the upward leap of a sixth to a downward leap of a sixth in mm. 56–58.

One of the most significant rhetorical gestures in this movement occurs in mm. 71–72 with the text "seemed to be floating through the air." Here the soprano and tenor voices leap up to the pitch E on the word *float*, down a major

seventh, and then back up to D. The pitch E and its movement down to D carry special significance, as Argento used a very similar motivic and pitch scheme in the first movement on the text “float as clouds” (movement 1, mm. 38–39; see Examples 13 and 14).



Example 13. Anabasis for the word *float*;
Walden Pond, movement 3, mm. 71–72.



Example 14. Anabasis for the word *float*;
Walden Pond, movement 1, mm. 38–39.

In several specific instances, Argento takes advantage of his musical arsenal to recreate images of the text in or near the moment the chorus declaims it. In mm. 24–25 with the text “it may be that in the distance,” Argento writes intervals of an octave and a seventh within the soprano and alto lines, a musical “distance” between the pitches. Thoreau’s text in m. 33 mentions a fish that “strikes the water”; Argento emphasizes this by placing a phenomenal accent on

the first syllable of the word *water* in the choral parts and the accompanying celli. Additionally, Argento writes a pair of sequential, melodic tritones in the choral parts for the text “piscine murder” in m. 44, evoking a sinister aural image that reinforces Thoreau’s personification of the murderous fishes.

On a global level, Argento recreates the *Stimmung* of Thoreau’s recorded experience principally through orchestration. Throughout the movement, the sliding triads in the accompanying celli serve to represent the surface of the pond; after sliding from one triad to another, the celli remain melodically and harmonically still, depicting the calm surface of Walden Pond. Because it returns at the end of the work, I have identified this as a leitmotif and labeled it “Pond’s Surface” (see Example 15). Argento affirms the meaning of this leitmotif by incorporating a glissando between the words *smooth* and *surface* in the soprano voice in mm. 39–40.



Example 15. Pond’s Surface; *Walden Pond*, movement 3, mm. 2–4.

In mm. 61–73, Argento employs paired voices (soprano and tenor, alto and bass) in combination with alternation between chromatic pitches ($D\flat$ versus $D\sharp$ and $F\flat$ versus $F\sharp$). The accompanying harp plays a descending, melodic Q4 harmony, which Argento derives from the earlier BTS motive. This sparse accompanimental texture, with the paired voices in the chorus and the chromatic alternations, creates a dreamlike atmosphere.

Summary

While effectively evoking the imagery of Thoreau's text at both a local and global level, Argento goes a step further by bringing the duality of Thoreau's experience to the surface in several ways. The dreamlike *Stimmung* that Argento creates through sparse orchestration, paired voices, and chromatic alternations reflects Thoreau's uncertainty of whether he is physically in the water or merely seeing his own reflection. Argento also portrays the dichotomy of Thoreau as observer versus participant in nature through the interchange of accompanimental forces; rarely in this movement do the cello and harp play simultaneously. It is not until the final two measures of the movement that the cello and harp truly come together in the Ripple Effect leitmotif. Perhaps, Argento aims to create resolution not only for the listener, but also for Thoreau.

Chapter 4

“Extolling”

The Music in Thoreau’s Poetic Text

In the text of this fourth movement, sentence sounds (principally, alliteration and assonance) play a smaller role, while Thoreau employs extended metaphors to an even greater degree. Thoreau utilizes alliteration quite sparingly in this passage, doing so in only one instance. One hears alliteration of the phoneme [k] in the text “it had clarified its waters and colored them,” although this example might seem trivial compared to previous examples where alliteration was much more frequent.

Assonance, however, plays a slightly larger role than its consonantal counterpart. Instances of assonance occur primarily in the second paragraph, particularly in the first sentence, which features the vowel [æ] prominently: “Successive nations perchance have drank at, admired, and fathomed it, and passed away . . .” The last part of that same sentence shifts to assonance of the vowel [I]: “And still its water is green and pellucid as ever.” The assonance that

pervades this sentence lends to it a fluidity and smoothness, again depicting the surface of Walden Pond.

Thoreau also plays on the sounds and meanings of words. In two instances, Thoreau inverts the letters of two proximate words. In “Who knows in how many unremembered nations’ literatures . . . ,” he scrambles the letters of the words *who* and *how*. The beginning of the last paragraph begins, “Perhaps on that spring morning . . .” In this case, Thoreau has not only inverted the *sp* consonant cluster, but also he has moved it from the end of one word to the beginning of the other. When he mentions the nations that have “fathomed” the pond, he plays on the dual meaning of the word: to comprehend fully or to measure the depth of something.

Additionally, Thoreau draws connections to seemingly unrelated words through their sounds. In the last paragraph, he writes, “Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden,” and then twice later uses the word *even*. One might surmise that Thoreau intended the reader to hear the word *even* as a combination of “Eve” and “Eden.” The final sentence places the words *Walden* and *world* in close proximity to each other, which connects the two words through similar consonantal sounds (*w* and *ld*).

To a lesser extent, Thoreau employs other poetic devices, including hyperbole and personification, to give life and meaning to his poetic text. He

writes that “Successive nations perchance have drank at, admired, and fathomed it, and passed away” and “Who knows in how many unremembered nations’ literatures this has been the Castalian Fountain?” In both of these instances, Thoreau surely uses the word *nations* in hyperbole to refer generally to people. This hyperbole suggests that people of entire nations have benefitted from this pond, both reinforcing Thoreau’s idea of Walden Pond’s eternal existence and reiterating that it serves as a fount of both life and inspiration.

As in all of the other passages I have examined, Thoreau again gives life and agency to Walden Pond through personification. The pond, according to Thoreau, “had clarified its waters and colored them of the hue they now wear, and obtained a patent of Heaven to be the only Walden Pond in the world.” This sentence carries particular significance, as Thoreau has personified not only the pond, but also the waters in the pond. This suggests that to Thoreau, Walden Pond is more than just the waters contained within it—it is an entity in and of itself.

The greatest poetic device that Thoreau utilizes in this passage is metaphor. The first three phrases, “Sky water. Lake of light. Great crystal on the surface of the earth,” all serve as metaphors for the pond. Again, Thoreau uses metaphor to demonstrate the reflection of the sky in the water. He also alludes again to the dual nature of both the pond itself and his own participation in nature.

To an even greater extent, Thoreau creates two extended metaphors that deal with antiquity and religion through allusions to Greek mythology and the beginnings of Judeo-Christian theology. In the second paragraph, he calls the pond “the Castalian Fountain” and also refers to the “nymphs that presided over it in the Golden Age.” Both of these quotations refer directly to Ancient Greek mythology and thinking. Jeffrey S. Cramer writes that in Ancient Greek mythology, the Castalian Fountain is “a fountain on Mount Parnassus sacred to the Muses and a source of [artistic] inspiration.”⁹⁵

In his annotated edition of *Walden*, Cramer explains that the Ancient Greek and Roman authors divided history from the beginning of the universe to the present into segments or ages, with the Golden Age being an era of sheer perfection. The Greek poet Heriod wrote that after this Golden Age of perfection, the universe entered into and continues to be in an era of progressive decline.⁹⁶ This decline that Heriod writes of harmonizes well with Thoreau’s own philosophies on the state of religion and society during his lifetime.

In the final paragraph, Thoreau mentions the Biblical story of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden, which the Bible dates back to the beginning of the world, and he suggests that perhaps Walden existed at that time. He also writes that the pond “obtained a patent of Heaven to be the only

⁹⁵ Henry D. Thoreau, “Walden,” ed. Jeffery S. Cramer (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2004), 174.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Walden Pond in the world.” This sentence holds multiple implications and possible interpretations in regards to the extended metaphor Thoreau has created. First the use of the word *patent* implies an exclusivity that Walden Pond is the only place that possesses these unique features and characteristics. This implication meshes well with the Transcendentalist philosophies of having a focus on the individual and viewing Nature as unique and asymmetrical in every facet. Second, the phrase establishes a connection among the Garden of Eden, Heaven, and Walden Pond, essentially equating the three locales. Third, the phrase suggests a question, more than it does an answer: is Walden Pond a patent obtained from Heaven, or is it a piece of Heaven on earth?

In combination, Thoreau’s allusion to both Ancient Greece and Judeo-Christian theological roots create two extended metaphors: one that suggests the eternal and permanent existence of the pond and one that equates Walden Pond with spirituality and divinity.

Thoreau’s Music in Argento’s Music

The most prevalent manifestation of Thoreau’s poetic music in the fourth movement of *Walden Pond* is Argento’s setting of the natural rhythms of Thoreau’s text. One hears a number of dactylic feet in the poetic text, and

Argento has keenly set them as triplet figures. For example, Argento sets “how many unremembered nations” in m. 20 according to the natural stress of the words: the dactylic “how many” as a triplet and the trochaic “unremembered nations” as even eighth notes. Argento also captures the dactylic feet in the following sentence by setting them as triplets as well: “And even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain and covered with . . .” Argento wisely heeds his own advice concerning text setting this time by alternating between triplets and duple rhythms in mm. 41–43.

In addition to the rhythm of the text, Argento also accurately sets the alliteration and assonance in Thoreau’s writing. In m. 45 Argento draws the listener’s attention to the alliteration of *clarified* and *colored* by placing the words on beats one and three, which are both strong beats in quadruple meter. As he has done previously to magnify the assonance of Thoreau’s language, Argento recreates the assonance of “Successive nations perchance have drank at, admired, and fathomed it” in mm. 14–15 with a virtually static melodic contour in the bass voice.

Argento also takes advantage of several opportunities for text painting. In m. 16, Argento plays on the adjectival meaning of the word *still*—Thoreau uses it as an adverb—by indicating the voices should sing smoothly and sweetly with the expressive marking *dolce*. The harp accompaniment in mm. 20–26 repeats a

singular rising, scalar line that depicts the welling up of the Castalian Fountain. He also creates an aural image of Adam and Eve being “driven out of Eden” with dramatic rises in tessitura and dynamic in all vocal lines in m. 30. Finally, Argento paints the image of a “gentle spring rain” in mm. 41–43 with an undulating melodic contour in the soprano voice, which mimics the waves created on Walden’s surface by the rain.

The Reflection of Thoreau’s Text in the Music

On a global level, Argento uses harmony and modal mixture with new and old leitmotifs to convey the philosophical message of Thoreau’s poetic prose. The first two measures, whose harmonic material recurs throughout the movement at various pitch levels, feature an arpeggiated polychord comprised of C sharp major and A major. Within the key of C sharp major (I will discuss the significance of this chord/key area later in this section), the polychord creates a split third, a conflict between the E \flat of C sharp minor and the E \sharp of C sharp major. The split third results in modal ambiguity, which previously and currently evokes a feeling of antiquity. These triadic relations also lend a mysterious, magical quality to the *Stimmung* of the movement. As Richard Cohn writes in the abstract for the second chapter of his book, there is an “oft-observed

affiliation of major-third relations with supernatural phenomena in nineteenth-century music,"⁹⁷ which in this piece creates a mysterious atmosphere related to ancient mythology.

The split third also lends an opportunity for Argento's use of the "Love" chord from his 1981 composition *I Hate and I Love* (*Odi et Amo*). Set a half step lower than in his earlier composition, the chord even resolves in the exact same manner, although in a slightly roundabout way (see Examples 16 and 17). While I have been unable to ascribe any particular extramusical significance related to the inclusion of this leitmotif from his earlier work, it is incumbent upon me to make note of it, given its nearly identical resolution here and its clear establishment as a leitmotif in *I Hate and I Love*.

In this movement Argento establishes the root-position C sharp major chord as a leitmotif, which I have labeled as the "Eternal Divinity" chord (see Example 18), given the pervasiveness and combination of the extended metaphors of antiquity and spirituality throughout Thoreau's text, as previously discussed. This leitmotif is marked by its extreme length in comparison to the surrounding rhythmic durations, its compact voicing as a root position triad, and its consonance in comparison to the harmonies that precede it.

⁹⁷ Richard Cohn, "Audacious Euphony: Chromatic Harmony and the Triad's Second Nature," abstract, *Oxford Scholarship Online*, <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199772698.001.0001/acprof-9780199772698-chapter-0002> (accessed June 30, 2012).

A tempo
ff
S. Sky wa - ter.
A. Sky wa - ter.
T. Sky wa - ter.
B. Sky wa - ter.

Example 16. Love chord and resolution; *Walden Pond*, movement 4, mm. 3–4.

Meno mosso che prima
più p
ppp
sotto voce
S. Let us live, my Clo-di - a, and let us love, let us
A. Let us live, my Clo-di - a, and let us love, let us
T. Let us live, my Clo-di - a, and let us love, let us
B. Let us live, my Clo-di - a, and let us love, let us

Example 17. Love chord and resolution;
I Hate and I Love, movement 2, mm. 17–19.

The chord appears four times in the movement, each time at structurally and philosophically important places. The chord appears first in m. 12 at the end of

the first, brief paragraph, which ends with “Great crystal on the surface of the earth.” Argento also ends the movement on the Eternal Divinity chord over the same polychordal arpeggios in the harp that began the movement.

Ⓐ

Larghetto (♩ = ca. 58) **Maestoso** (♩ = ca. 88)

S. Great cry - stal on the sur - face of the earth.

A. Great cry - stal on the sur - face of the earth.

T. Great cry - stal on the sur - face of the earth.

B. Great cry - stal on the sur - face of the earth.

Example 18. Eternal Divinity chord; *Walden Pond*, movement 4, mm. 8–12.

Argento concludes the text of the middle paragraph on an F sharp major chord. At first glance, this does not seem to be the Eternal Divinity chord, but considering that F sharp major is the subdominant of C sharp major, the transposed Eternal Divinity chord creates a large-scale plagal motion. The plagal cadence is commonly associated with religious topics, as it is also known as the

“Amen” cadence in Christian music. The chord’s penultimate appearance occurs in mm. 40–41 at the end of the phrase “Walden Pond was already in existence,” which associates with the leitmotif a feeling of immortality or eternity.

Argento does not create any additional leitmotifs in this movement, but he does reprise the Reflection chord from the first movement. The chord first reappears in mm. 31–35, played softly and distantly by the three solo celli (see Example 19). The chorus then enters in m. 36, repeating the leitmotif with the words “Walden Pond.” Argento’s reintroduction of the Reflection chord not only establishes it as a significant leitmotif, but it also reaffirms the pond’s dual nature as both water and reflector of the sky. Argento also implements the Reflection chord in m. 48 with the chorus singing the same text, “Walden Pond.”

The musical score for Example 19 is in 3/4 time. It features two staves: a Violoncello (Vc.) staff and a Harp (Hp.) staff. The Vc. staff has a circled 'D' above it, indicating a specific chord. The Hp. staff has a melodic line. The Vc. part is marked 'pp lontano' and 'poco rall.' and features a sustained chord. The Hp. part has a melodic line with a 'mf' dynamic and a 'mp' dynamic.

Example 19. Reflection chord; *Walden Pond*, movement 4, mm. 30–35.

In this movement Argento has added significance to the Reflection chord by placing it each time in close proximity to the Eternal Divinity chord. Both times

Argento uses it, the Reflection chord actually progresses and transforms into the Eternal Divinity chord (see Example 20). By combining the two leitmotifs within one larger musical unit, Argento musically establishes a connection between the pond (Reflection chord) and a higher being (Eternal Divinity chord). At the same time, he reinforces the reflective and supernatural nature of the major third with third relations in the accompanying harp. The first measure of Example 20 juxtaposes E major with C major (the original key of the Reflection chord), and the remaining measures juxtapose A major and C# major, the very same harmonic relationship from the opening measures of the movement. All of this reasons well with Thoreau and the Transcendentalists' philosophy of finding God in and through nature.

Summary

By the end of the fourth movement of the work, one can clearly see the musical and philosophical journey that Argento has created. By combining previous musical gestures (modal mixture and the Reflection chord) with a new leitmotif, Argento has not only continued to exemplify and expound upon the Thoreau's Transcendentalist philosophy, but also he has given added significance to the existing musical gestures. While the composer employs the

The musical score for 'Walden Pond' (measures 48-51) is presented in a four-part vocal setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked **Più largo**. The vocal parts sing the lyrics "Wal - den Pond in the world." with dynamics *p sub.*, *dim.*, and *pp accel.*. The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated chords with dynamics *p (senza dim.)*, *p dim.*, and *pp*.

Example 20. Combined use of Reflection chord and Eternal Divinity chord;
Walden Pond, movement 4, mm. 48–51.

polychordal arpeggios to evoke a sense of ancientness, he also uses them to delineate the movement's form. As he did with the Acceptance sonority and the Flute Motive in the first and second movements, respectively, Argento frames this movement with these arpeggios.

Argento bolsters Thoreau's extended metaphors of ancientness and religion through orchestration. For the majority of the movement, the only accompaniment to the chorus is the harp. Many recognize the harp as an

instrument with ancient origins—dating back thousands of years, while also associating the harp with the accompaniment of choice for the angelic choirs of Heaven. Argento calls upon the solo celli sparingly, often using string harmonics that create the effect of a halo, most noticeably on the final pluck of the harp in m. 50.

Chapter 5

“Walden Revisited”

The Music in Thoreau’s Poetic Text

While the music of alliteration and assonance are not as prevalent in Thoreau’s text of this movement, he does employ them, along with a number of other poetic devices that create musical sounds. The final paragraph features alliteration of the consonant cluster *th* and in two instances the phoneme [w]. The first sentence begins by creating poetic music through alliteration with the phoneme [ð]: “And though the woodchoppers have laid bare first this shore and then that . . .” Thoreau also creates a fluid melody with alliteration of [w] in “Why, here is Walden, the same woodland lake . . .” and “where a forest was cut down last winter . . .”

Additionally, Thoreau uses sentences sounds to recreate the imagery he depicts. He aurally creates an image of “thick and lofty pine and oak woods” by juxtaposing consonantal sounds that require a great deal of time and effort to articulate. One best realizes this simply by reading the words aloud to oneself.

Furthermore, Thoreau also employs near-rhyme with words that are relatively close to each other, such as *bowers* and *hour* and *Walden* and *woodland*. While *bowers* and *hour* are a true near-rhyme, he creates the semblance of near-rhyme between *Walden* and *woodland* through the consonants *w*, *d*, and *l* that they share, along with the words' close proximity to each other. Thoreau also creates a similar effect in the clause "the same thought is welling up to its surface that was then." The similar sounds of "same thought" and "surface that" create continuity within the sentence, and although they do not rhyme, their initial consonants do effect a sort of rhyme.

Perhaps the best example of Thoreau's mastery of poetic language occurs in the penultimate clause "I see by its face that it is visited by the same reflection." In addition to the assonance created by the prevalence of the vowel [I], the words "it is" are inverted and contained within the word *visited*. While this might seem coincidental or simply clever at first, Thoreau undoubtedly intended to create a "reflection" of those letters, as the text refers to him looking into the waters and seeing his own reflection.

Along these same lines, Thoreau exploits the double meanings of several words in the text selected for this movement. Within the context of the sentence "grape-vines had . . . formed bowers under which a boat could pass," the bowers refer to a shelter or covering made of tree leaves or vines; however, the word

bower also is a nautical term for an anchor carried at a ship's bower.⁹⁸ Thoreau also writes that he had "spent many an hour floating over its surface as the zephyr willed," with "the zephyr" meaning wind. Given his previous allusions to Greek mythology, it is no wonder that he elected to use this specific word.

In Ancient Greek and Roman mythology, Zephyr was the god of the west wind,⁹⁹ again evoking a sense of antiquity in his description of Walden Pond. Finally, Thoreau again plays on the double meaning of the word *spring* in the sentence "where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up as lustily as ever." He uses the word not only to depict new trees quickly growing, but also to reference spring, the season of rebirth and awakening, which contrasts with his reference to the winter.

Thoreau's text in this movement abounds with deeper meanings and philosophical ideas. For starters, the text itself is a reflection on, a recollection of the time he spent at the pond. In describing the time he spent "floating over its surface," Thoreau most likely intends to convey more than just a literal interpretation of the action. Given his later use of the paradoxical self-description of "dreaming awake," one certainly could surmise that "floating" actually refers to the ecstatic state he experienced while at the pond. He describes his experience as having occurred "so many years ago," but knowing that he published the

⁹⁸ *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "bower," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bower> (accessed January 4, 2012).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, s.v. "zephyr," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zephyr> (accessed January 4, 2012).

book only seven years later, Thoreau exaggerates temporal distance to convey his spiritual and physical distance from Walden Pond.

In the text of this movement, Thoreau effectively and explicitly connects his own emotional being with nature. He writes, “where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up as lustily as ever; the same thought is welling up to its surface that was then; it is the same liquid joy and happiness . . .” Here he employs an extended analogy, where his feelings of joy and happiness are like the “welling up” of a fountain within the pond, which in turn is like the springing up of new trees. Thoreau also explicitly connects the pond with a divine “Maker,” who “rounded this water with his hand, deepened and clarified it with his thought.” Again, the depths of the water serve as a metaphor for the depths of one’s soul. Finally, he employs the ultimate personification of the pond when he speaks directly to Walden Pond, saying, “Walden, is it you?”

Thoreau’s Music in Argento’s Music

Argento’s setting of this text captures Thoreau’s stream of consciousness. The unison choral writing and free rhythms that mimic the natural flow of text declamation effectively portray the passage of Thoreau’s memories from mind to paper. Argento uses longer rhythmic durations for words whose vowels and

consonants require more time to articulate, such as *lofty*; conversely, he writes shorter rhythms for portions of the text with pyrrhic feet or words with short vowels and consonants. A good example occurs in the first two measures on the text “Since I left those shores . . .” Argento writes eighth notes for the first two words, as they require less time to articulate, but lengthens the durations of “left those shores” to honor the longer vowels and the consonant clusters.

Argento again employs text-painting in this movement, primarily through the rhetorical gesture of anabasis. He depicts the height of the trees in his setting of the word *lofty* in m. 20 through a large intervallic leap of a major ninth in all voices. He paints an image of “floating over its surface” with a unison leap of a diminished octave on the word “over” in m. 26. Additionally, Argento portrays the regrowth of trees with ascending, scalar tenor and bass lines in mm. 42–43 on the text “another is springing up.” Generally speaking, his free use of tonality (and atonality) in mm. 25–32 captures the floating, dream-like state of Thoreau while gliding across Walden Pond’s surface in a boat.

The Reflection of Thoreau’s Text in the Music

Most important to the composer in this movement is capturing Thoreau’s own recollection of his time at Walden Pond, which Argento achieves primarily

through the reprise of previous musical gestures and leitmotifs. The use of modal mixture in this movement again creates an association with the past, particularly due to his careful placement of it. Argento employs this technique in the very first measure; with an initial tonicization of C sharp major for the text “Since I left those shores,” the use of the minor subdominant immediately recalls prior uses of modal mixture associated with the past. We briefly hear and see the use of the minor subdominant again in m. 18 as Thoreau remembers when he “first paddled a boat on Walden (see Example 21). Argento also moves from G major to G minor in mm. 39–40 when mentioning his experience “so many years ago.”

In addition to his continuing use of modal mixture to create a connection with the past, Argento reprises musical material from earlier movements, both leitmotifs and in one instance, a direct musical quotation. In mm. 45–49 Argento quotes verbatim the unison vocal line from mm. 16–20 of the first movement in a solo cello line (see Example 22).

The text from the first movement at that point referred to “a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods,” which is fitting, given that Thoreau now writes of his feeling of joy and happiness “welling up to its surface.” This is especially significant, since water does well up from a spring, and the line does ascend in a scalar fashion; also, he creates a “perennial spring” with a return to

the music from the beginning of the piece, like flowers blossoming in spring after dormancy in winter.

B Pochino meno mosso (♩ = ca. 69)
mp cantabile dolce

S. I re - mem - ber when I first pad - dled a boat on

A. I re - mem - ber when I first pad - dled a boat on

T. I re - mem - ber when I first pad - dled a boat on

B. I re - mem - ber when I first pad - dled a boat on

B Pochino meno mosso (♩ = ca. 69)
mp

B \flat E \flat m

Example 21. Modal mixture; *Walden Pond*, movement 5, mm. 17–18.

The most prominent feature of the movement, which summarizes both Thoreau's and Argento's messages, is his extensive use of the Reflection chord in the final twenty-two measures of the piece. He briefly introduces it in m. 43 on

the words “springing up” (referring to the new tree growth after winter), affirming Thoreau’s comparison of the regrown forest to the welling up of the pond (see Example 23).



Example 22. Quote from movement 1; *Walden Pond*, movement 5, mm. 45–49.

E Come prima (♩ = ca. 108)

S. for - est was cut down last win - ter an - oth - er is spring - ing up _____

A. for - est was cut down last win - ter an - oth - er is spring - ing up _____

T. for - est was cut down last win - ter an - oth - er is spring - ing up _____

B. for - est was cut down last win - ter an - oth - er is spring - ing up _____

Example 23. Reflection chord; *Walden Pond*, movement 5, mm. 41–43.

Argento then uses the leitmotif exclusively, at different pitch levels and in minor mode, from mm. 50–58. The chord first appears quite noticeably on the downbeat of m. 50 on the word *Maker*; he follows this with a minor version of the chord. Again, the minor variety of this leitmotif, which up until this point Argento had never employed, recalls the antiquity the listener has come to associate with mixture of minor modes. Most likely Argento is interjecting his own commentary on how long ago the Maker formed Walden Pond. He solidifies the meaning of the Reflection chord leitmotif and its significance by setting it again with the word *reflection* in m. 57 and utilizing it as the final sonority of the piece in m. 58.

The last five measures of the movement end with an unexpected reprise of the Pond's Surface motive, which was last heard in the third movement. In the final two measures of the work, the Pond's Surface motive quietly yields to the Reflection chord; this chord that began the piece now brings it close (see Example 24). Argento emphasizes the significance of the major third one final time in these last five measures. First, the chords of the Pond's Surface motive are now related by chromatic mediant. More importantly, the root pitches of the final three chords are E, D, and C, the three pitches of the Reflection chord.



Example 24. Pond's Surface and Reflection Chord;
Walden Pond, movement 5, mm. 58–62.

Summary

The text of this movement is unlike the text of the other movements, primarily in that serves not as an account of Thoreau's daily activities and observations; rather, it is a recollection of his time at Walden Pond, a reflection on the place that drew him closer to God through nature. Argento recognizes this important aspect in Thoreau's writing, and while he could have filled the movement with text-painting and minute nuances reflecting the text's sentence sounds, he elects to paint the bigger picture instead. As Thoreau summarizes his experience at Walden, Argento also summarizes his own insight into Thoreau's writing through the return of previous musical gestures and leitmotifs. In addition to firmly establishing the Reflection chord as the piece's most important leitmotif, Argento reaffirms the significance of modal mixture as a musical gesture that represents the past—both distant and recent.

Conclusion

Reflecting Thoreau's Poetic Text

Evidenced by the fact that he interpolated brief poems within his book *Walden*, Thoreau is a poet in his own right. Throughout the prose passages of his text, he employs a number of poetic devices that create a music of its own. Thoreau primarily relies upon poetic devices related to the words themselves; alliteration and assonance create continuity of sentence sounds. At times he plays on the spellings and sounds of words, employing both true and near rhyme and inverting letters or containing one word within another proximate word; through this he create tropes or added meaning.

While Thoreau's writing in *Walden* consists principally of prose, at times he employs both rhythm and meter, creating the effect of music in his writing. Most prevalent are strings of dactylic feet that give the text a gentle lilt, much like a barcarolle being sung by a gondolier. On a global scale, Thoreau employs metaphor, hyperbole, and personification to give life to his writing and to the pond itself. He also utilizes allusions to ancient mythology to give the reader a sense of the eternal existence of Walden Pond.

An astute and clever composer, Argento recognized all of these poetic devices used by Thoreau, and he sets the text accordingly. In *Walden Pond*, he recreates Thoreau's prose through free, recitative-like rhythms that reflect the natural declamation of text, but he also honors the rhythms and meters when Thoreau employs them by setting them in congruent rhythms and meters in the music.

Argento respects and gives musical life to the finer poetic nuances of Thoreau's text, often setting alliterative and assonant passages in a manner that magnifies these poetic devices. He does so primarily through relatively flat melodic contours, which allow the listener an opportunity to hear the similarity of the vowel and consonantal sounds. At the level of the individual word, Argento hears the rhythm and details of each individual word—long or short vowels, short consonants or clusters of consonants that require more time to articulate—and he sets them to rhythmic durations that not only reflect the pronunciation of the words, but also makes their meanings clear to the audience.

Furthermore, Argento goes beyond the sentences sounds and poetic devices in *Walden* with many instances of text-painting. He adds meaning to Thoreau's text through structural use of harmony, rhetorical gestures, orchestration, and leitmotifs. Argento often employs large intervallic leaps in the melody to reflect a high physical position; conversely, he writes very low pitches in the vocal

register to depict “mysterious nocturnal fishes” lying beneath the pond’s surface. It is with all of these musical tools that Argento effectively captures and recreates the sentence sounds and music of Thoreau’s poetic text.

Reflecting Thoreau’s Philosophy

In addition to the music of sentence sounds, meters, and rhythms, Thoreau’s metaphors and analogies are also music. In the same way, Argento creates leitmotifs that are musical metaphors representing extramusical ideas. The excerpted texts from *Walden* present three main larger philosophical ideas: the cycle of life, principally the idea of rebirth; the pond as a mirror that reflects the heavens and a deeper understanding of oneself; and the pond and nature as a means of connecting with a higher being.

Argento musically represents the cycle of life, death, and rebirth primarily through the recurrence of musical materials and leitmotifs. The composer rounds off the end of each movement with music that he presented earlier in the movement, usually a leitmotif and music from the beginning of the movement. While the final movement does not begin and end with the same musical material, he does begin with Eternal Divinity chord that ended the previous movement, and he concludes the movement with the Reflection chord. His use of

the Reflection chord as both the first and last sonority of the entire work represents the American Transcendentalist idea about life and rebirth on the largest scale possible.

Throughout his text, Thoreau regularly describes the reflective qualities of the pond. From above, the pond reflects the sky, the heavens, and the beholder himself—sometimes so perfectly that one cannot distinguish the actual object from its reflection—but from within the waters, objects are both magnified and distorted. In the same contrasting manner, one can perceive the idea that as a person digs in search for truth (here, through a fishing line), truth is ascending to the surface like a spirit.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, for Thoreau, the water's reflections are not just mirror images of the scene around him; rather, the air and water always reflect something additional or new. Veronica Kerting sums up a deeper philosophical interpretation of the pond:

The pond became an analogy for the poet's eye. Walden Pond functioned as a mirror that received the images of light reflected by the natural objects and modified them in the medium of its water to reflect them as new, idealized images to the beholder. The pond mediated between heaven and earth, it was part of both, and they seemed to melt into each other in the reflection of its waters.¹⁰¹

Argento captures the importance and prevalence of this philosophical idea through the most prevalent leitmotif in the entire work: the Reflection chord. The chord, which appears in several movements and both begins and ends the piece,

¹⁰⁰ Boone, 169.

¹⁰¹ Kerting, 63–64.

itself is a reflection of a core pitch, with “ripples” of a major second surrounding it. Argento does not leave interpretation of this leitmotif to chance; he intentionally sets it to the words “Walden Pond” and various forms of the word *reflection* to solidify its meaning in the listener’s mind.

Perhaps the most important philosophical idea held by the Transcendentalist Thoreau is his desire and ability to find spirituality in and through nature. Thoreau makes frequent references to floating and seeing the heavens reflected in the water’s surface. As the text of the piece progresses, allusions to the Divine become less vague and more concrete, from the humming of a psalm in the second movement to the “Maker [who] rounded this water with his hand, deepened and clarified it in his thought,” at the end of the final movement.

Argento, through careful implementation of leitmotifs, makes a musical connection between Walden Pond and a creating, divine being. The Reflection chord and the Pond’s Surface motive become musical symbols of the pond itself; as the piece progresses, Argento begins placing these leitmotifs near other leitmotifs (such as the Eternal Divinity chord) and textual references associated with a divine maker.

In *Walden*, Thoreau immediately follows the last line of text used for *Walden Pond* with a poem, which for me, sums up both the poetic music and philosophical ideas of this piece of music:

It is no dream of mine
To ornament a line;
I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven
Than I live to Walden even.
I am its stony shore,
And the breeze that passes o'er;
In the hollow of my hand
Are its water and its sand,
And its deepest resort
Lies high in my thought.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Thoreau, 187.

Appendix A

Text of *Walden Pond*

I. The Pond

Nothing so fair, so pure lies on the surface of the earth. It is a clear and deep green well, half a mile long, a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods.

It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature; it is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off; a mirror which retains no breath that is breathed on it, but sends its own to float on clouds high above its surface, and be reflected on its bosom still.

There are few traces of man's hand to be seen. The water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago. This water is of such crystalline purity that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness, which as the limbs are magnified and distorted, produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.

So pure, so fair.

II. Angling

In warm evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw the perch, which I seem to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewn with wrecks of the forest.

Sometimes, I spend the hours of midnight fishing from a boat anchored in forty feet of water and communicating by a long flaxen line with mysterious nocturnal fishes, serenaded by owls and foxes, and hearing from time to time, the creaking note of some unknown bird close at hand.

There was one older man, an excellent fisher; once in a while we sat together on the pond, he at one end of the boat, and I at the other; but not many words passed between us, for he had grown deaf in his later years, but he occasionally hummed a psalm, which harmonized well enough with my philosophy. Our intercourse was thus altogether one of unbroken harmony, far more pleasing to remember than if it had been carried on by speech.

III. Observing

It is a soothing employment to sit on a stump, on a height overlooking the pond, and studying the dimpling circles incessantly inscribed on its surface amid the reflected skies and trees.

It may be that in the distance a fish describes an arc of three or four feet in the air, and there is one bright flash where it emerges, and another where it strikes the water. Or here and there, a pickerel or shiner picks an insect from this smooth surface; it is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is advertised—this piscine murder will out—reported in circling dimples, in lines of beauty, the constant welling up of its fountain, the gentle pulsing of its life, the heaving of its breast. Then the trembling circles seek the shore and all is smooth again.

One November afternoon, the pond was remarkably smooth, so that it was difficult to distinguish its surface. I was surprised to find myself surrounded by myriads of small, bronze-colored perch. In such transparent water, reflecting the clouds, I seemed to be floating through the air as in a balloon, and their swimming impressed me as a kind of flight or hovering, as if they were birds passing just beneath my level, their fins, like sails, set all around them.

IV. Extolling

Sky water. Lake of light. Great crystal on the surface of the earth. Successive nations perchance have drank at, admired, and fathomed it, and passed away, and still its water is green and pellucid as ever. Who knows in how many unremembered nations' literatures this has been the Castalian Fountain? or what nymphs presided over it in the Golden Age?

Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden Walden Pond was already in existence, and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain and covered with ducks and geese, which had not heard of the fall. Even then it had clarified its waters and colored them of the hue they now wear, and obtained a patent of Heaven to be the only Walden Pond in the world.

V. Walden Revisited

Since I left those shores, the woodchoppers have laid them waste, but I remember, I remember...

I remember when I first paddled a boat on Walden, it was completely surrounded by thick and lofty pine and oak woods, and in some of its coves grape-vines had run over the trees next the water and formed bowers under which a boat could pass. I have spent many an hour floating over its surface as the zephyr willed, in a summer fore-noon, lying on my back across the seats, dreaming awake.

And though the woodchoppers have laid bare first this shore and then that, it struck me again tonight,--Why, here is Walden, the same woodland lake that I

discovered so many years ago; where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up as lustily as ever; the same thought is welling up to its surface that was then; it is the same liquid joy and happiness to itself and its Maker. He rounded this water with his hand, deepened and clarified it in his thought. I see by its face that it is visited by the same reflection; and I can almost say, Walden, is it you?

Appendix B

Catalog of leitmotifs

Acceptance (Movements I, III)



Breaking the Surface (BTS) (Movement III)



Eternal Divinity (Movement IV)



Flute (Movement II)



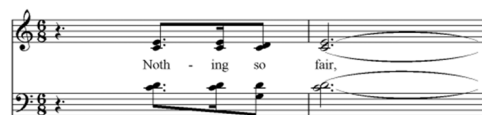
Permanence (Movement II)



Pond's Surface (Movements III and V)



Reflection (Movements I, III, IV, and V)



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