

## The Dark Side of Walden

*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation*  
(Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*)

*Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way*  
(Roger Waters, *Time*)

“I do not propose to write an ode to dejection”—Henry David Thoreau claimed on the first page of his *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1). His aim was to convince his fellow citizens to change their way of life—from the despair of capitalist system, to self-government. Roger Waters, leader and lyricist of Pink Floyd, decided that his band’s masterpiece *The Dark Side of the Moon* would be devoted to the anti-life pressures<sup>1</sup> of contemporary man. His ideas resemble to a great extent those presented by Thoreau in his major work. The aim of this article is to trace the possible influence of Thoreau’s work on the mind and lyrics of Roger Waters.<sup>2</sup>

Waters claimed, as Thoreau had done before him, that the contemporary world with its economic and political system is not sympathetic to human needs. Human values seemed to be forgotten and replaced with semi-values ensuring the maximum effectiveness of an individual. Individual values were coming from the outside and not from the inside; therefore, the alienation of human beings was becoming more and more complex. In his lyrics, Waters diagnosed the symptoms of this state of human nature and showed its possible influence on human beings. However, as opposed to Thoreau, Waters did not suggest any complex method for healing the human soul.

This difference might result from the difference in mediums both writers used. Waters’ lyrics were limited in their complexity by the demands of the musical record. Thoreau’s prose faced no such limits. The American author was therefore able to develop his ideas freely without many constraints. This difference is however less important than the meaning of their works.

Both chose to discuss the same problems that contemporary man has to face. First, they saw that the need of material goods is a critical factor in human life.

Human beings desperately seek ways of gaining goods, which, in their eyes, prove their worthiness. This leads them to obsessively rush towards careers and money, without time to reflect upon what they become and what they lose in such efforts. Men measure themselves by their positions and wealth, instead of their humanity.

The contemporary world, according to Thoreau and Waters, forces individuals to act according to the demands of the competitive environment, to fight for their place in the world in any way they can. This can lead to increased frustration and violence for human beings. Such conditions, as Waters suggests, might evolve into madness, the only way to deal with pressures of the world. Thoreau seems to have more faith in human beings than Waters, since his prescription embraces meditation and self-knowledge which leads to total independence from external demands.

### **Money**

During his lifetime, Henry David Thoreau faced the rise of American capitalism. The first half of the nineteenth century was the age of technical progress and economical change. Both factors influenced changes in American society, which were closely watched by American transcendentalists, in particular by Thoreau. These observations led him to believe that the society he lived in was losing its fundamentals, due to the increased interest in material goods and artificial needs.

In *Walden's* chapter entitled "Economy," Thoreau pictures his fellow Americans as people struggling to fulfill their increasing material needs in whatever way they can. At the same time, they forget who they really are. In his opinion, people no longer think or make decisions for themselves. Instead they are governed by society with its system of material rewards and punishments. Society defines acceptable ways of human development and does not allow anyone to change from the paths that it had chosen for its members.

Thoreau saw such human conditions as devastating for an individual's integrity. Increasing needs meant that people found themselves in a constant rush for money, in hopes of happiness. Moral values and self development were not desired anymore. "I think," he wrote in "Life Without Principle," "that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business" (349). Any money-making activities were morally sanctified. Leisure became condemned because it was unable to produce any material goods. "If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he

is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed and industrious and enterprising citizen” (349). Work, according to Thoreau, has no value as a source for the development of the human soul.

The “gold rush” produces good citizens, but it does not allow people to become good men. Thoreau believed that a man did not have to work hard in order to lead a happy life. He praised a life of simplicity, limited only to fulfilling basic needs. The rest of one’s time could be devoted to understanding the nature of human life.

In the opening song of *The Dark Side of the Moon* Roger Waters made a similar observation to that made by Thoreau in *Walden*. In the second stanza of “Breathe” he wrote:

Run, rabbit run.  
Dig that hole, forget the sun,  
And when at last the work is done  
Don’t sit down it’s time to dig another one. (104)

Human life is, according to Waters, constant work. When a task is finished, man is expected to instantly undertake another one. Such a life is of course deprived of higher values. Finished work is their substitute.

Phil Rose interprets “Breathe” as a mother’s lesson given to a child, a new member of the society. In the first stanza the mother encourages the young man to live. “Breathe, breathe in the air” (104)—she cries at him. In the stanza analyzed above, “rather than stressing the value of emotions and human relationships, the mother (representing the dominant voice of industrial ideology) displays her misguided sentiments by impelling her child to hurriedly work non-stop instead of striving for the truly enriching things that the sun has to offer in life” (Rose 18).<sup>3</sup>

The second chorus of the song completes this diagnosis with a pessimistic statement:

For long you live and high you fly  
But only if you ride the tide  
And balanced on the biggest wave  
You race towards an early grave. (104)

Here the life of an individual is portrayed as a lifelong effort to always be on the top, not to lose one’s grip of the waves of life. A human being must be in the

possession of Machiavellian *virtue* in order to successfully exist in the contemporary world, to overcome the strong waves of fate. Without *virtue*, man is condemned to fail.

The success of a human life is measured by the wealth an individual has gained throughout his or her life. In “Money,” Waters reflects on the importance of money for human happiness and its consequences. Money is necessary to live in contemporary world: “Money, get away/ Get a good job with good pay and you’re okay” (110). But at the same time money is dangerous, because the more money one has the more they want:

Money, it’s a hit  
Don’t give me that do goody good bullshit.  
I’m in the high-fidelity first class traveling set  
And I think I need a Lear jet. (110)

The last two lines are important here. There is no boundary for a person’s desire for money. These lines might also be read as a picture of a well-to-do musician, whose success enabled him to obtain more and more goods. This, however, results in the estrangement from his fans and other people leading modest lives. First class is not separation enough from them; a private jet would satisfy this wish.

Both Thoreau and Waters are convinced that money and the social demands associated with it may cause serious harm to an individual. If their life becomes a continuous journey in search of coins, they will lose certain aspects of their humanity. Their life will be deprived of self-development and self-consciousness. Socially derived values will make them machines or additions to the machines, a part of the system.

### Home

Henry David Thoreau, much like Rogers Waters, perceived home as a place where an individual can regain harmony, a place where a man, separated from other human beings, can direct all his powers towards finding the humanity which is lost in the outside world. In “Breathe—Reprise” Waters pictures home as a shelter for a human being:

Home, home again.  
I like to be here when I can.  
When I come home cold and tired  
It’s good to warm my bones beside the fire. (108)

Home is a place where one can forget about tiredness and devote oneself to relaxation and comforting warmth. Home seems to assure the quietness needed to regain strength and balance. “Waters seems to be suggesting,” wrote Phil Rose, “that a balance is necessary between production/ambition and idleness; this is suggested in the second line when the character says he can’t always be at home” (24). Constant haste is confronted with idle laziness, which allows one to recuperate after “digging another hole.”<sup>4</sup>

Thoreau sees home (or a house, as he names it) in a similar way, but his analysis of the problem is more economic in its nature, than Waters’ observations. As Thoreau points out, modern men have excessive demands about houses they want to build or buy. All of these needs are associated with the assumption that a house must be a visualization of one’s status in society. Modern man, according to Thoreau, forgot that the basic function of a house was to give him a shelter from the atmospheric conditions, as well as to be a place of rest. “In the savage state,” he wrote, “every family owns a shelter as good as the best, and sufficient for its coarser and simpler wants” (“Walden” 20).

In modern times the “shelter” has become a luxurious symbol of individual wealth. This, however, causes man to become a slave to his own house. All his work is dedicated to paying his mortgage. To make things worse, he is not even able to choose his neighbors. Thoreau contrasts such a situation with the houses of North American Indians. His ideal—the wigwam—is easy to construct and deconstruct, as well as cheap. It gives a person shelter and the ability to choose his neighborhood. Thoreau built his own house following his assumption that it should be a shelter rather than a symbol of social status. His house was simple and inexpensive, warm and sufficient for the work of the mind.<sup>5</sup>

For Thoreau, a house was, as I mentioned before, a place of retreat from the haste of the world, a shelter from the external noise. A house was a place of meditation, uniting a man’s personality. For that purpose, a certain dose of loneliness was essential. However, Thoreau—as he is commonly pictured—was not a hermit. He often visited his town, to listen to news and gossip (“Walden” 112). He was also keen on having visitors. “I had,” wrote Thoreau, “three chairs in my house: one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors came in larger and unexpected numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up. It is surprising how many great men and women a small house will contain” (94). Thoreau’s guests were recruited from the best of New England’s poets and philosophers with whom he was able to share his views of life, society and politics.

Waters and Thoreau were convinced of the importance of a shelter for human physical and, what is more important, mental wellness. Waters, however, ends his praise of home with such distorting verses:

Far away across the field  
The toiling of the iron bell  
Calls the faithful to their knees  
To hear the softly spoken magic spells. (108)

The tolling of the iron bell appears here as a symbol of death, which is the subject of human anxieties. The way to grow accustomed to that fear is religion, but it is never successful. Even the vision of resurrection is not sufficient to soothe human beings. As Phil Rose suggests, Waters explains the need for religion and the obedience of the faithful to its demands as caused by the fear of death. “Softly spoken magic spells” work as reassurances for people and give them the courage to live. Religion is like magic, said Waters, because its effect is not rational but is based on superstition (24-25). The fear of death is present even at home, which was supposed to be a shelter from the external world. The sound of the bell brings individuals back to social reality.

### Time

Fear of death is well pictured in the instrumental track “The Great Gig in the Sky.” It is illustrated by the emotional vocal performance of guest singer Claire Torry. Her voice, full of expression, pictures such fears much better than any words. “The Great Gig in the Sky” was performed live before it was recorded as a part of *The Dark Side of the Moon*. It was initially entitled “The Mortality Sequence” and enriched with quotations from the Bible and the works of the moralist Malcolm Muggeridge.<sup>6</sup> Finally, it was decided that the vocals and music would be the best transcript of that basic human anxiety. Rick Wright said that Torry’s performance “send shivers down my spine... No words, just her wailing—but it’s got something in it that’s very seductive.”<sup>7</sup>

“The Great Gig in the Sky” brings back the fears mentioned earlier in the song “Time.” Waters’ attention is preoccupied with the quality of human life that is limited by the passing time. Waters is afraid that this time is not used properly by most men, and that at the end of the way they might only regret that they had not lived properly. They tried to satisfy social demands instead of living their life.

The first stanza of “Time” shows this way of thinking clearly:  
Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day

## *The Dark Side of Walden*

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You fritter and waste the hours in an offhand way.  
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town  
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way. (106)

Waters presents human life as an everyday routine depriving an individual of the happiness of life. Man's time is programmed by society that expects him to follow the same patterns everyday. An individual is unable to stand on their own feet and live according to their needs; they are waiting for some guidance on how to properly use their own life.

Young people are not aware of the fact that they are wasting their lives, and that it will be too late to change it. They flow happily through the days without any reflection on their meaning. They think that there is still a lot of life ahead of them, but the truth is different. The time has gone and they missed its beginning.<sup>8</sup> They are prepared for the roles they are supposed to play in the society but in fact they are not prepared for anything. This situation is expressed in the third stanza of the song:

And you run and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking  
Racing around to come up behind you again.  
The sun is the same in a relative way but you're older,  
Shorter of breath and one day closer to death. (106)

Individual life is pictured as a chase for the sun, which symbolizes the imaginary goal of everyone's life. People are trying to fulfill it, but they never will. They just lose a part of life, before realizing that fact, but by then it is usually too late.

The last stanza of that song summarizes ideas previously mentioned in the song:

Every year is getting shorter never seem to find the time.  
Plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines  
Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way  
The time is gone, the song is over,  
Thought I'd something more to say. (106)

Waters pictures human discontent or despair originating from unrealized plans and possibilities. The second verse of the stanza seems to have an ironical context. As Phil Rose wrote, "the implied relationship set up between unrealized plans and the 'half page of scribbled lines' [this song] seems to betray Waters' doubts as to the value of what he has written" (23).<sup>9</sup> It also symbolizes his doubt

about the haste with which most important things in life are done, especially when not much time is left.

The most important observation is presented in the stanza's third verse. The method of dealing with the human condition in contemporary society is "hanging on in quiet desperation," which means repressing anxieties, doubts and pretending that "everything is okay." But this strategy only covers real problems causing even more frustration. Thoreau had used the same phrase to indicate the negative aspects of social existence:

The mass of men lead lives in quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things. ("Walden" 5).

According to Thoreau, such is the state of the human kind as result of social life. People decided to live together and to adopt a similar or even the same way of life. And now most of them are convinced that there is no way of changing it.

Thoreau believes, however, that changing the present state of humanity is possible. The only way to do it is to become a self-conscious man. "It is never too late," he claims, "to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof" ("Walden" 5). Thoreau expects everyone to undertake an effort to become a real man, free from social and political demands, guided by the inner light called *self-reliance* by Ralph Waldo Emerson (257-282). According to both Emerson and Thoreau, a real man must be a non-conformist, able to decide for himself. He might be aware of social expectations, but his way of living is up to his conscious choice. An individual living his own life might be fully satisfied and able to confront all the frustrations and to overcome them.

According to Thoreau, time does not hurt self-conscious individuals, because they only deal with the real facts of life. Their goals, aims, successes and failures are their own, not enforced on them by the society or any external forces. But most of people do not lead their own lives, and Waters' observations mentioned before apply to them.

The poor condition of humankind might result in serious individual and social consequences. Waters and Thoreau would agree that violence and madness are the most important ones. The latter, however, might at the same time be a way of saving human beings from the brutality of external world, and allowing them to face it with less anxiety.



## Violence

While recording their masterpiece, Roger Waters decided to interview a group of people and ask them questions about certain aspects of life.<sup>10</sup> One of the questions was: “When was the last time you were violent?” and it was immediately followed by another one: “Were you in the right?” One of the most interesting answers was given by the band’s roadie Roger “The Hat” Manifold, who remembered very well the last time he had been violent:

Oh yeah. The last time that I thumped someone was only the other day, as a matter of fact. I was driving along the road towards Northwood Hill where my brother lives, and this cat in front of me was driving his car and all of sudden he stopped and opened his door, and from where I was in my truck, I could see that he never looked in his mirror—he just opened his door, which caused me to swerve on the other side of the road, very narrowly missing an oncoming motorcar. So I pulled in, and like gentleman I went up to him and said, “Now look man—like, *that ain’t cool*. Right, the thing to do man, if you’re gonna stop your car, you stop, you look in the mirror, and if there’s nothing about you open your door. But you never done that, and like, it nearly cost me my life”. Well, the guy was very rude... In fact, his last words to me were, he called me a “long-haired git.” So, I felt compelled. Well, seeing as he was that rude, I had... retribution was close at hand. (qtd. in Harris 131)

When asked by Roger Waters if he had been right, Manifold said: “Definitely, yeah, definitely. ‘Cos the thing is, man, when you’re driving on the road, I mean, they’re gonna kill you. So like, if you give them quick short, sharp, shock, they don’t do it again. Dig it? I mean, he got off lightly, ‘cos I could’ve given him a thrashing—I only hit him once!” (qtd. in Harris 131). Manifold’s honest replies to Waters’ question touched the problem very common in contemporary society—violence caused by overpopulation of urban areas combined with the constant haste of humanity. A similar problem was well portrayed in Joel Schumacher’s movie *Falling Down*, where the traffic jam that the main character faced, became a sore point and a source of serious violent acts on “his way home.”

The problem of violence is central to the song “Us & Them.”<sup>11</sup> According to Waters, violence divides people into two categories: “us” and “them.” This division is the source, as well as the outcome, of conflict and it is impossible to avoid it. But it has a cultural rather than natural origin. In first stanza Waters says:

Us, and them  
And after all we’re only ordinary men.  
Me, and you  
God only knows it’s not what we would choose to do. (112)

We are all basically the same, Waters claims, but social roles place us on opposite sides. This situation is clearly seen in the case of war and the army, which are bitterly commented on in the second stanza:

Forward he cried from the rear  
and the front rank died.  
And the general sat and the lines on the map  
moved from side to side. (112)

War creates two types of divisions. The first one is between us and our enemy. The other one is between high ranking officers—here referred to as “general”—and ordinary soldiers who are always victims of war. Generals sit comfortably in the tents moving “toy soldiers” on the map, at the same time sending living soldiers to death.<sup>12</sup> This cleavage is also a symbol of social structure where a few rich exploit the rest of the world’s population. But even the aforementioned divisions are not distinct: “Black and blue/ And who knows which is which and who is who” (112). Waters is convinced that it is not the uniform that defines a human being. On both sides of the conflict there are people who do not want to fight. It was decided for them by others—generals or politicians. For politicians, or high commanders, human beings can be moved as chess pieces on a board. That allows them to see the conflict in black and white.<sup>13</sup> In fact people on both sides are the same.

The belief in the universality and unity of human beings is also present in Thoreau’s writings. He wrote in “Walden,”

One afternoon near the end of the first summer, when I went to the village to get a shoe from the cobbler’s, I was seized and put into jail, because, as I have elsewhere related, I did not pay tax to, or recognize the authority of, the state which buys and sells men, women, and children, like cattle at the door of its senate-house. I had gone down to the woods for other purposes. But, wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions, and, if the can, constrain him to belong to forcibly to belong to their desperate odd-fellow society. (115)

Here Thoreau is referring to an incident that happened to him when he refused to pay the poll-tax in protest against the war in Mexico and the institution of slavery.

In “Resistance to Civil Government,” more widely known as “Civil Disobedience,” Thoreau notices the lamentable situation of soldiers who have to go to a war which is by no means theirs. It is a war played by government and by people who are interested in getting money from it. Government expects people to serve it

with their bodies, to be machines in the line of duty. Thoreau opposes to such an objectification of human beings. For him, a man is a moral individual, able to decide for himself and to act on his own behalf. Any violation of that is, according to Thoreau, unjustified.

The question therefore becomes what to do with a state that forces individuals to break the moral law and to act as “agents of injustice”? Disobedience is Thoreau’s answer. He writes,

If the injustice has a spring or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn. (“Resistance...” 233)

Being a human is the most important value that Thoreau cherishes. In his moral hierarchy he ranks it above being a good citizen. Moral law is higher than any other. Moral law is a permanent part of humanity and should not be subordinated to the transient values of political and social systems.

The belief in the value of moral law came from Thoreau’s ideas on the universality of all human beings. This idea was adopted from the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who named it the over-soul, a realm to which all human beings belong (see “The Over-Soul” 383-400). That is why Thoreau criticized the ideas that divide people and put them into conflict. Therefore, he was opposed to any act of violence resulting from such artificial divisions.

The attitude to violence and its influence on individuals is shared by Thoreau and Waters. However, they differ in the way they respond to such anti-life pressures. Waters would see its consequence and remedy in madness and first of all in the simple adoption of a more humane way of life. Thoreau’s response was exercises in self-consciousness and self-government.

### **Madness**

The anti-life pressure described above might lead an individual, especially a fragile one, into a state of madness. This condition would be a sickness and a cure in one. Waters developed his ideas about madness in the two final songs of *The Dark Side of the Moon*: “Brain Damage” and “Eclipse.” The first one is, to some extent, inspired by the story of Pink Floyd’s first lead singer and guitarist Syd Barret, whose fragile state of sanity was lost in a fight against the pressures of record labels and drugs.

The first stanza of this song paints an idyllic picture of a lunatic overwhelmed by the happiness of the past:

The lunatic is on the grass.  
The lunatic is on the grass.  
Remembering games and daisy chains and laughs.  
Got to keep the loonies on the path. (114)<sup>14</sup>

Here Waters refers to his childhood years and the late sixties which brought about the hippie revolt in the United Kingdom. The lunatic is lying on the grass remembering happy days of joy when no pressures were forced on him. At the same time this person may be read as a hippie under the influence of drugs sinking into the happy unconscious state of intoxication. Thanks to this, they can distance themselves from anything unpleasant and causing disruption. Waters shows the need to control such people and to direct them into a socially accepted path. This leads us to the third vision included in the picture above—a lunatic as a symbol of a social protester, an eccentric not accepting the social rules and living according to his own rules. In social opinion such a “character” is seen as dangerous, in fact mad, and should be corrected to follow the “standards.”

An equally important image is presented in the second stanza, where Waters deals with people accepting the rules of contemporary civilization:

The lunatic is the hall.  
The lunatics are in my hall.  
The paper holds their folded faces to the floor  
And every day the paper boy brings more. (114)

As Phil Rose noticed, the key words in the stanza are “folded faces,” which he interpreted as “two-faced” (116). Success of the “two-faced” is limited by the fact that everyday new “rabbits”<sup>15</sup> are appearing in the newspapers. It is worth noticing that a newspaper is for “rabbits” the only source of self-assurance. Without presence in papers they do not exist.

The pressure to achieve success at all costs is, as it was mentioned before, dangerous to fragile minds. Popularity and the pressure to gain even more of it might lead one to the state of insanity: “dam breaks open many years too soon/ . . . your head explodes with dark forebodings too/ I’ll see you on the dark side of the moon” (114). These words directly refer to Syd Barrett’s biography.

In “Eclipse,” Waters sums up his story in the form of a litany, where he deals with all the aspects of life and dreams that we have, which the dark forces in our

nature might prevent us from reaching. The good life is always endangered by the destructive forces within us: “And everything under the sun is in tune/ But the sun is eclipsed by the moon” (116). The song ends with a pessimistic quotation from one of the aforementioned interviews: “The is no dark side of the moon really./ Matter of fact it’s all dark” (116).

### **Independence**

Gaining self-knowledge is Thoreau’s answer to anti-life pressures. Thanks to it a person will be able to create his unified identity and discover the meaning of life. This idea was essential to his decision to move to a self-built house at Walden Pond. In the chapter “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” Thoreau explains:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my nest excursion. (“Walden” 61)

According to Thoreau, real life should be a quest to find one’s own nature, which is possible through insight into nature. A journey into the world of nature is necessary to break free from the restrictive bounds of society and to develop self-assurance, a condition of the good life. Instead of exchanging nature into dollars, as most of contemporary men would do, Thoreau preferred to integrate with nature. His excursion into the forest might be seen as a discovery of the natural wildness needed for self-realization and inner freedom.<sup>16</sup> Nature can teach men how to live independently and fully.

Brian Walker’s work shows certain practices Thoreau recommended to wash away the anti-life pressures which threaten men’s liberty. Two out of the six methods seem to be valuable for contemporary men: “Households accounting methods, centered on autonomy, can establish an equilibrium between work and leisure” and “Replacement practices can be developed to encourage individual flourishing while offsetting both economic dependency and social relations of exploitations” (850). The first experiment leverages Thoreau’s idea of economical simplicity. An individual should discover his real needs and work only to satisfy

them. Artificial and luxurious needs forced on him by society should be rejected. Only such an individual would know that not much work is needed to live in good conditions and that the time saved might be left for leisure and self-development. The latter practice is connected with self-knowledge. Thoreau advocated that people should not be afraid of themselves, and that instead of trusting society they should discover their own truth. This can be done without leaving the capitalist society. Walking is a good example of a practice that allows us to withdraw from active life and to think about the main facts of life. That is the remedy for anti-life pressure that might lead people to a real life.

Henry David Thoreau and Roger Waters both discussed dilemmas central to defining man in contemporary society. Although their works are separated by more than one hundred years, they reached a similar conclusion about the human condition and the forces acting against human development. In this context, the question of Thoreau's works being or not being a direct inspiration for Waters' lyrics is less important. They both decided to look at the condition of the society and tried to find a better, more humane way of existence for an individual.

Thoreau's books are still read, and Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* is one of a few progressive rock albums which might still be heard on mainstream radios. Both works proved to be inspirational for following generations to analyze the conditions of their societies. The problems of capitalist society pictured by Thoreau and Waters have not changed. No matter how far technological progress leads any society, basic human aims are always the same—freedom and happiness.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> 'Anti-life pressures' — term used by Rogers Waters to describe negative forces influencing human actions in contemporary society.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Waters did not explicitly admit to having used Thoreau's work as his source of inspiration. At least I have not found any interview with a direct confirmation of such inspiration. However, Wiesław Weiss claims that the term *quiet desperation* which appears in *Time* is taken from *Walden* (see Weiss 107).

<sup>3</sup> For full analysis of "Breathe" see Rose 18-19.

<sup>4</sup> These verses may also be seen as the reflection on the fate of rock musician, who spends most of his time traveling from one concert hall to another and dreaming about save shelter where he can finally rest.

<sup>5</sup> Detailed information on the way Thoreau built his house can be found in "Walden" 18-37.

<sup>6</sup> More about the origins of "The Great Gig in the Sky," see Weiss 108.

<sup>7</sup> 'The Pringle Show', broadcast Montreal Radio, December 1978, qtd. in Schaffner 179.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., "Tired of lying in the sunshine staying home to watch the rain./ You are young and life is long and there is time to kill today./ And then one day you find ten years have got behind you. /No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun" (Waters 106).

<sup>9</sup> *The Dark Side of the Moon* was the first Pink Floyd concept album and fear presented in “Time” might as well be a representation of his doubt about lyrical quality of all songs.

<sup>10</sup> Waters explained his idea: “I thought it was a terrific idea. . . I wrote all the questions down on a set of cards, and they were in sequence. A *ton* of people did it. Each person would read the top card and answer it, — with no one else in the room—and than take a card off, and do the next one. . . .The idea was to stimulate people to speak in ways that would provide essential colour for the record” (qtd. in Harris 127).

<sup>11</sup> “Us & Them” previously known as “The Violent Sequence” was composed 1969. The band planned to use it in soundtrack for Michelangelo Antonioni’s movie *Zabriskie Point*, but it was not accepted by the Italian director.

<sup>12</sup> War has always been a serious trauma for Roger Waters since he lost his father during the Second World War. The last Pink Floyd album *The Final Cut—A Postwar Dream by Rogers Waters* was his anti-war opus magnum.

<sup>13</sup> See Phil Rose’s analysis of such an analogy in his *Which One’s Pink?...* (29-30).

<sup>14</sup> The quoted stanza brings back Roger Waters’ memories from the childhood he, as well as Syd Barrett, spent in Cambridge. See also his lyrics to “Grantchester Meadow” from the album *Ummagumma* for similar image of careless youth (see Waters 48).

<sup>15</sup> Term ‘rabbits’ was first used by Waters in “Breathe,” to describe ‘rat-race’ participants.

<sup>16</sup> For detailed information about that issue see the chapter devoted to Thoreau in Nash (84-95). The idea of relation of freedom and wildness was expressed by Thoreau in “Walking” (225-255).

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