

Thoreau's Political Double Trios : Civil Disobedience and His Utopia

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ABSTRACT

Henry D. Thoreau (1817~1862) gradually comes to tread on the course of politics when the war with Mexico broke out in 1846. Had not the Mexican War come along, Thoreau might never have uttered anything which assumed later great political significance and became one of the most radical of any American figure in the political spectrum.

This paper is to take an insight to Thoreau's long-overlooked political thoughts, composed of double trios on civil disobedience and utopian politics. In the "Civil Disobedience" trio, Thoreau shows a triple-stage fight against American slavery from passive " non resistance", then, moderate "peaceable revolution" to extreme "violent disobedience" at last. Meanwhile, at every stage of "Civil Disobedience" trio Thoreau presents his utopian design from isolated "Simple Life" in Walden inspired by Confucius's Da-Ton World, then, a proposed Rule of Expediency in which a state would permit his people aloof from his government, "not meddling with it, nor embraced by it if fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow men." And this political utopia was completely gone once he learned abolitionist John Brown was hung in 1859. And what left in Thoreau's mind was sole revenge and a violent disobedience.

With a comparative analysis on Thoreau's political double trios on political ideas and

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ideals, we can tell a very example of how a literature man perceived politics on conscience and moral ground and struggled to the least compromise to the realist politics demanded.

Key words: Walden, civil disobedience, utopia, Simple Life, non resistance, peaceable revolution, rule of expediency

