Thoreau expounds that in addition to building external bonds, one needs to allocate time for solitude and connection with their self. He creates a thoughtful analogy, stating that “individuals, like nations, must have suitable broad and natural boundaries, even a considerable neutral ground between them”. Thoreau makes this comparison to prove that maintaining privacy is essential to promoting peace and avoiding distress and conflict. He observes that with freedom from disturbance and interference due to external sources, one has the ability to achieve utter composure and contentment. Thoreau elaborates on this point, additionally asserting that “you want room for your thoughts to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port”. He illustrates an extended metaphor to evaluate the mental benefit of withdrawing from the daily interactions of society. Thoreau reasons that once one isolates their self and experiences total seclusion, they have the fullest capacity to encounter clear, uninterrupted thoughts. He maintains that one can experience complete cognizance and realization through undisturbed solitude.

In the beginning of his argument, Thoreau emphasizes that simplicity should govern relationships with other members of society. He discloses that in his cabin, “[he] had three chairs in [his] house; one for solitude, two for friendship, and three for society.” Thoreau presents his affairs in a syntactical triad to emphasize the quantitative harmony that should be maintained with respect to a man’s relationships. By utilizing the chairs symbolically, Thoreau communicates the ideal nature of man’s societal relationships: concrete, substantial, but most importantly, in a small quantity. He then transitions to criticize those who do not manage their lives modestly. When comparing their living space to his own, Thoreau disparagingly remarks that many of their houses “are so vast and magnificent that the latter seem to be only vermin which infest them... a ridiculous mouse, which soon again slinks into some hole in the pavement.” Thoreau utilizes the analogous comparison to vermin not only to attack the moral character of said men, but also to emphasize the unnecessity of such a grand scale of materialism. However, the antithetical comparison of “vast and magnificent” house with the “vermin that infest them” ironically is not meant to point out the absurdity of the situation, but rather to establish a correlation between the two concepts of owner and property. According to Thoreau, the most virtuous man lives humbly according to the dictate of simplicity, so conversely, it also is true that the most corrupt man lives extravagantly under the hypnotic charm of heterodoxy.