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*Walden, a game* as an Eighth Revision of *Walden*

*Walden, a game* is defined as an “exploratory narrative and open world simulation of the life of American philosopher Henry David Thoreau during his experiment in self-reliant living at Walden Pond.” In a sense, this definition could also be applied to the text form of *Walden*; if Thoreau’s words allow you to picture and feel the world he experienced in your mind, then the writing is a simulation of the very situation it’s describing. There is, of course, much more to *Walden* than it just being simply an account of Thoreau’s time at the pond, like a journal to express his thoughts, feelings, observations, and ideologies or a critique of modern society. Although these are much less present in the game, it shouldn’t invalidate the fact that both works have the ability to act as a sort of portal to the peace, simplicity, and mental state that Thoreau achieved at Walden. Taking into consideration this strong parallelism in addition to the similarities in function and intention as well as the transference of certain, specific content between *Walden* the book and *Walden, a game*, *Walden, a game* would be an acceptable eighth revision of *Walden*.

Across all revisions of *Walden*, the principal message to live a simple, deliberate life through connection with nature and free from the conformities and confinement of the commercialism, materialism, and relentlessness of modern, industrial society is largely unvarying. It remains unvarying even when *Walden, a game* is placed as an eighth revision of

*Walden*. From reading the text, one can, at most, gain the knowledge of how Thoreau lived at Walden and what his philosophies were. While this can be inspiring and insightful to some degree, it does not compare to what can be reaped from simulating, even virtually, the conditions and way of thinking that Thoreau experienced at Walden. *Walden* the book certainly can place you in shoes and a headspace that mirrors those of Thoreau during his life from July of 1845 to September of 1847 but reading the words of the text simply do not suffice to gain a true understanding of those conditions and their impact on one's mind and soul. *Walden, a game* as an eighth revision of *Walden* the book would serve as the ultimate culmination of the work, first acting as a summary of Thoreau's points and ideas via the passages and excerpts from the text that are incorporated into the game and second providing the unique opportunity to actually undergo what Thoreau preached the most: simplicity and interconnection with nature in order to heighten and deepen one's perception of their being, life, and the world.

However, it can't be ignored that *Walden, a game* is a video game and *Walden* is a written piece, meaning the two works are widely discrepant in their methods of portraying Thoreau's life at Walden, to whatever extent they do. Despite almost identical functions, with such discrepancy in mechanism between the game and the book, there are bound to be also discrepancies in effect and message that must be accounted for when evaluating *Walden, a game* as an eighth revision of *Walden* the book. Furthermore, with the possibility of certain fallacies in the translation from a written to a digital medium, which is incredibly relevant when attempting to maintain impact and meaning across sources, especially primary and sub-primary ones, it could be argued that *Walden, a game* is lackluster in terms of depicting Thoreau's views compared to a makeup of his actual words which *Walden* the book is. This is discredited by the fact that *Walden, a game* includes quotes from *Walden* the book. For example, and this also

shows the transfer of specific content between the pieces, in *Walden, a game* there are artifactual arrowheads scattered throughout the environment that, when interacted with, initiate the presentation of an excerpt from *Walden* the book describing the current situation in game. Not only does the excerpt come directly from the book, but the presence of the arrowheads at Walden is historically accurate, as confirmed by Thoreau himself. "...but in the course of the summer it appeared by the arrowheads which I turned up in hoeing...", he says. By doing this, *Walden, a game* allows for Thoreau's voice, which is quite pertinent to the theme and message of his writing, to remain. The difference in effect between the game and the book is a consequence exclusively of the separate means of the works. While the book has the effect of giving the reader the knowledge of what it meant to Thoreau to live at Walden, the game has the effect of giving the reader the understanding of what it means to live at Walden and what it meant to Thoreau to live at Walden through firsthand simulation of the lifestyle and ideology he survived by. Although this understanding is a variation between both works in what can be obtained from them, it is congruent with message that Thoreau wished to convey through *Walden* and therefore is a favorable quality in *Walden, a game* as an eighth revision of *Walden*.

Henry David Thoreau had a lot he wanted to say in *Walden*. Across the seven existing revisions of the text, he uses his time at Walden as evidence to expound the ideas of self-reflection, connection with nature, issues with modern society, and living a simple, mindful life. Even though *Walden, a game* isn't a work written by Thoreau himself but instead a digital recreation of Thoreau's life at Walden, it still gets across the same concepts as *Walden* the book by simply being an alternate depiction of *Walden*, but specifically including excerpts and quotes from the book that preserve Thoreau's voice and words. Additionally, *Walden, a game* manages to enhance Thoreau's words and comprehension of the meaning of *Walden* because the nature of

a first-person, narrative, and playable simulation of Thoreau's life at Walden allows for greater immersion and engagement into the world of Walden. Altogether, *Walden, a game* would make for a unique, interesting, and acceptable eighth revision of *Walden*.