

Walden Journal

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Chapter One: Economy

07/12/2021

I just started the first chapter of *Walden* and I have a few first impressions. Firstly, Thoreau is angsty, much more than the average teenager, which is concerning. Secondly, I think he would be very disappointed in modern society, specifically the capitalistic aspects. This is due to the fact that he was harshly judging his peers for making a living off of their ancestral farmland, he thought they were too machine-like. I don't think the idea of a modern nine to five job would resonate well with him. Also, I am currently listening to the Twilight Saga soundtrack while reading, and I just have a gut feeling that if Thoreau lived today, he would roast Twilight, but it would actually be his guilty pleasure.

Thoreau doesn't like slavery! Basic human decency, wow! But actually, good for him, as a white man living in that time period, many probably did not share the same ideology. Possibly a decent amount in the North, but probably not in the South. However, his view on Native Americans confused me. At times he regarded them as intellectual equals, but at other times, he called them 'savages' and white mansplained how to sell baskets.

I thought that Thoreau's thoughts on fashion were still applicable today. He mentioned how fashion trends repeat in a cycle like way, which is still true to this day. I thought that it was very funny when he complained about people living in superfluous houses, but then right after, he goes into talking about building his own house on Walden Pond.

Chapter Two: Where I Lived and What I Lived For

07/15/2021

Henry David Thoreau continues his habit of intensely contradicting himself. He explained that he wished to move to the woods to live life deliberately, but then he goes on to write about themes of society, economy, etc. He seems awfully concerned about other people for a person who is “living deliberately”. However, I sometimes do admire his acute attention to details. It can be mundane when he is describing bland things, but I enjoyed reading his point of view on the nature surrounding him. He described the scenery around him with a lot of imagery.

Another idea of his that I found interesting was the fact that Thoreau was not a fan of the mail and newspapers. As an author, who published multiple printed books, I assumed that he would support other forms of printed text, but he made it very clear that he thought that it was a waste of time and money. He complained about how he thinks that most news is really just gossip, but in the previous chapter, he complained about how materialistic his townspeople are for simply making a living off their land and building houses. So, I do not trust his opinion. Henry David Thoreau definitely had a superiority complex.

Chapter Three: Reading

07/19/2021

If Thoreau was alive today he would be a boomer/ karen. He is so judgemental about everything. This guy has tremendously strong opinions on everything. I understand that

education back then was probably questionable, but instead of simply complaining about it, he could've tried to help the system. As an old white man, he would have had some influence. Also, he thinks his life is so interesting and exciting. He thinks readers will be impressed with his life, but I lowkey just feel bad for him.

Chapter Four: Sounds

07/20/2021

Thoreau is an extremely confusing individual. In the previous chapter of your book, he complained about books, and he mentioned how he did not have time to read any books the previous summer. But, he is an author. I find that to be extremely strange. But again, Thoreau's mind works in ways most will never understand. Thoreau thinks that he is the main character, but in reality he is just the creepy old guy who lives in the woods. Sorry Henry, but you did this to yourself.

Chapter Five: Solitude

07/24/2021

Something that I found interesting was when Thoreau stated, "I believe that men are generally still a little afraid of the dark, though the witches are all hung, and Christianity and candles have been introduced" (Thoreau). I didn't make the connection before, but I just realized that Thoreau was alive relatively close to the Salem Witch Trials. Also, since he lived in Massachusetts, it would have been relevant to him during his lifetime. This also raised a question in me. Throughout the book Thoreau seemed like a very religiously tolerant human, he even would read

holy texts from other religions. I wonder if he actually believed witches were real, or if he was simply mentioning a notable event in Massachusetts history. With Thoreau you never know.

Chapter Six: Visitors

07/25/2021

Henry David Thoreau would definitely be an interesting party host. He contradicted himself once again in this chapter when he talked about how he likes having people over, but then he proceeded to complain about how much of a nuisance the guests are. But, that's not surprising to me as he has contradicted himself for the entire book.

Later on, he also mentioned that sometimes random travelers would go into his house. Firstly, that's very creepy. Secondly, I do not understand how he was okay with that happening. Aside from the fact that strangers would enter his house, Thoreau is a very particular and anti-social person, so that does not really make sense to me. Random thought: if Henry David Thoreau would make a stellar unsub on Criminal Minds. Probably because he gives me sociopathic vibes. Yeah, that's definitely why.

Chapter Seven: The Bean Field

07/25/2021

I don't know if I can handle reading about Thoreau's beans anymore! I am done. He thinks his beans are the most interesting and exciting thing happening but they are not. He plans his entire life around his 7 miles of beans, and thinks that readers will be captivated, but we are not. I didn't even know that you could grow beans in Massachusetts. Also, why beans? I feel like there

are so many more versatile crops one could grow, or ones that would be easier and make him money. Oh, but Thoreau's superiority complex wouldn't be able to handle not having any beans to complain about. And, he is too good for society and superfluous activities, like socializing and trading with people, right.

Chapter Eight: The Village

07/25/2021

As a nature lover, it makes sense that Thoreau enjoyed going on walks in nature. That is one thing we have in common. Walks in the woods are enjoyable and peaceful. He expressed his observation that it was difficult to travel places once it was dark, or if there was a lot of snow, because the roads would get confusing. I don't blame him. I don't even know if you could label the so-called "roads" Thoreau talks about as roads. They were probably just paths with less forage. Nowadays, people do not have to worry about that. We have nice paved roads with bright street lamps. Also, most people travel by car and use a GPS. Thoreau talked about how he thinks that it is important for people to get lost sometimes, so that they can truly end up finding themselves. That was very cliché and basic of Thoreau to say. Also, I thought it was funny how he casually mentioned that he had to go to jail for tax evasion, as if it were something completely normal and relatable to others.

Chapter Eleven: Higher Laws

07/25/2021

I think that it's great that Thoreau doesn't find joy in killing innocent animals for fun, but my gut tells me that if he were good at hunting, that he would enjoy it. Also, I cannot tell if Thoreau likes meat, or if he prefers vegetarian food. I feel like he went back and forth on that topic during this chapter. Oh, and Thoreau's superiority complex comes back! How fun! He thinks that he's better than other people because he doesn't drink and he likes his coffee black. That is exactly the type of person that I assumed he would be.

Chapter Twelve: Brute Neighbors

07/27/2021

For a man who lives in the woods, he is surprisingly fascinated by wild animals. I think that Thoreau should make some more human friends, he seems to be too interested in the animals. Also, he bothers them sometimes. Like what compelled him to kidnap two ants and trap them in a glass? What did he expect for the outcome to be? I feel bad for the animals that had to live near Walden Pond with him.

Chapter Thirteen: House-Warming

07/27/2021

Apparently grapes used to be grown in the Massachusetts/ New England area. Actually maybe they are still grown here today, I wouldn't know due to my non-existent agricultural knowledge. Anyways, Thoreau said that he let a swarm of wasps nest in his house? I genuinely do not understand his mind. How was he not scared of them? Also I feel like generally homeowners don't want pests and bugs in their home.

Why would you complain about how materialistic people are for an entire chapter, and then later confess to your readers that you don't like how your house looks now because of the plaster from the new fireplace? This man's thoughts are exhausting to keep up with.

Henry, I don't think your house is the reason that no one wants to eat hasty pudding with you. No offense but you have the people skills of a piece of cardboard. Furthermore, you live in a lone house in the woods, which is very suspicious. Also, hasty pudding does not sound like real food. If someone invited me over for hasty pudding I would promptly decline, the whole scenario would seem too sketchy for me.

I think Thoreau would have a heart attack if he saw the price of items today, as he was appalled by the price of wood increasing. He would also be the type of person that would complain about the price of gas, but he would refuse to drive anything but a giant truck.

Chapter Sixteen: The Pond in Winter

07/27/2021

Yay! There was finally an image in this chapter. A nice break from Thoreau's words. At times, Thoreau's superiority complex is entertaining, but not in this chapter. He was absolutely flaming this poor man just for just getting ice. We get it, you are no fun and do not like cold drinks, but don't hate on people who are more exciting and adventurous than you. Honestly, he was probably just jealous. Today, Thoreau would judge people for drinking iced coffee in the winter, and he would be a barista's nightmare. He would be the kind of person to order a cappuccino extra dry, and then complain about how there is milk foam in his coffee.

Chapter Seventeen: Spring

07/27/2021

As Thoreau was explaining how the pond would freeze over, I was impressed by how much detail he provided. But also, as a person who lives on a pond in Massachusetts, having knowledge about what the pond is like in the winter would be important. Also, I've noticed that Thoreau makes sure to describe everything in extreme detail. As a reader, I have an extremely vivid picture of everything he writes about. I am surprised he only stayed at his Walden House for only 2 years. Also, he used the word finally when he talked about leaving Walden Pond. That would make readers think that he was happy to leave his cabin, even though he talked about how much he loved it there in previous chapters.

Chapter Eighteen: Conclusion

07/27/2021

Henry David Thoreau is definitely spontaneous, but he definitely does not understand that as a white man he can be. Not everyone has the privilege and means to completely uproot themselves and start a new life in a new place. It would be fine if he was just sharing what he was doing, but he was judging others for not doing the same as him. Also, I noticed that there were many biblical references in this chapter. Overall, *Walden* was certainly a unique book. But, Henry David Thoreau is by far my least favorite narrator from any book, movie, show, etc.

“Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau.”

07/27/2021

Although Henry David Thoreau is not my favorite historical figure, I do agree that his ideas and beliefs were influential. He believed in equal rights regardless of race, and questioned the government's decisions. He inspired people to seek social justice through his books. Thoreau also cared deeply for the environment, which is something that I feel like needs to be more common today.

08/10/2021

I agreed with Bill McKibben when he explained *Walden* as confusing. I also agree that a lot of Thoreau's wisdom is applicable to today, even though Thoreau didn't know how humanity would progress. E.B White visited Concord, Massachusetts in 1939, and although that was not even one hundred years ago, his description of Massachusetts is very different to what it is like today. Massachusetts is pretty populated and technologically advanced, very different to the miles and miles of woods that Thoreau was used to. Robert Crumbs' comic illustrates that perfectly. I think that Thoreau would be happy to hear that people in the future have gotten their theses on his work. Annie Dillard did an excellent job writing like Thoreau, *Living Like Weasels* reminded me of Chapter 12 of *Walden*, Brute Neighbors. Throughout reading *Walden*, I thought that Henry David Thoreau contradicted himself frequently. E.O Wilson acknowledged this as well.

08/10/2021

While living on Walden Pond, Henry David Thoreau made life seem very peaceful and beautiful. Life is very fast paced today, and for many people, including Sue Monk Kidd Thoreau's way of life seems exceptionally appealing. Personally, I think I would go crazy if I lived on my own in the woods, because I'm a social person. I believe that Willia Powers feels the same way as me. I agree with his opinion that it is not realistic to live like Thoreau today.

Vocabulary Appendix (50+ Words)

1. Obtrude: to become noticeable in an unwelcome way
2. Kindred: someone's family and relations
3. Fain: willing under certain circumstances
4. Breadth: the side to side measurement of an object (width)
5. Slew: uncontrollable sliding
6. Tillage: preparing land for farming
7. Superfluously: excessively
8. Whetted: to sharpen the blade of a tool
9. Esculents: an edible plant
10. Magnanimity: to be generous
11. Arduous: requiring a lot of effort
12. Chanticleer: a name for roosters, commonly used in fairy tales
13. Irrascibility: easily angered
14. Tedium: to be tedious
15. Ennui: to feel bored

16. Ascertained: to figure out for certain
17. Procure: to obtain with care
18. Exogenous: developing due to outside factors
19. Integument: tough outer layer
20. Dovecotes: a shelter for domesticated pigeons
21. Encumbrances: a burden
22. Pecuniary: relating to money
23. Divans: a type of sofa
24. Wainscot: wood paneling on the bottom parts of a wall
25. Wigwam: shelter used traditionally by Native Americans
26. Dilettantism: to dabble in multiple activities
27. Husbandry: synonym for farming
28. Hitherto: until now
29. Requiem: a mass for someone who passed away
30. Somnolence: excessive sleepiness
31. Undulations: to move up and down smoothly
32. Dissipation: to spiral
33. Sedulously: accomplished with careful perseverance
34. Pedagogue: strict teacher
35. Sagacity: to be wise
36. Imbibes: to drink alcohol
37. Mirth: amusement showed in laughter
38. Callow: immature and inexperienced

- 39. Coeval: to be the same age
- 40. Assiduously: with great care and perseverance
- 41. Carbuncles: severe blisters typically bacterially infected
- 42. Firkin: small container
- 43. Cumbersome: to be complicated
- 44. Fetters: a chain used for prisoners
- 45. Pygmy: something small
- 46. Hoary: grayish white
- 47. Scintillation: a flash of light
- 48. Tintinnabulum: a bell used to signify a church's connection to the pope
- 49. Alburnum: soft wood
- 50. Indolence: to be lazy
- 51. Esoteric: only understood by a small group of people