

## Chapter 1: Economy

7/15/24: I like and agree with Thoreau's statement that "the external thoughts about you can greatly influence and shape your life but at the end of the day, it's what you think of yourself that matters" because of the choices that we make daily, yearly, etc. are a reflection of yourself. Therefore you cannot be influenced by others as they do not fully know who you are, making them incapable of representing in your choices. The best person to represent you is you. However, in what situations may our self-perception be inaccurate and require adjustment, or feedback from others? For example, a person views themselves as a great public speaker. However, after speaking in public they receive constructive feedback that challenges their view of their public speaking skills. This feedback gives an opportunity to improve their speaking style and content to become a better public speaker. I would like to point out that for a person who aims to simplify life, I wonder why Thoreau felt the need to go into such detail about the necessities of human life. Furthermore, Thoreau explains that the four necessities of life, food, shelter, clothing, and fuel, can be provided by nature. He suggests that a person is then therefore able to purely live off of nature, hinting that anything else is unnecessary (a luxury). I believe Thoreau is explaining to us about how the pursuit of possessions is a waste of time. I generally agree with this idea, but certain "materialistic" things are now necessary in the modern day and making life better. For example, Thoreau would likely view technology as a luxury and waste of time, however many modern jobs incorporate it as a vital part of the job. Technology also serves as a way to connect with the world and provides entertainment, making us happy. To build his small home, Thoreau only had to pay a total of about \$28.12 which is equivalent to about \$1,162.45 in 2024 (For that same price, you probably cannot even afford to pay the down payment of a home nowadays). Furthermore, it's mind-boggling to think that a full year at the prestigious Harvard University cost only \$30 (~\$1240 in 2024) in 1845; To put it into perspective, \$1240 can't even cover health services at Harvard College as that costs \$1,592.

## Chapter 2: Where I lived, and What I lived for

7/14/24: Thoreau's decision to allow the owners of Hollowell farm to keep the \$10 despite backing out of the deal is something I wouldn't have done; I would very much like my money back. Thoreau's reasoning for this choice is quite well founded; he still feels 'rich' or fulfilled. Thoreau's definition of 'rich' comes from within; The 'richness' or enjoyment of life comes from how you perceive it. I agree with this as this is similar to a lesson my parents have taught me for years: to enjoy life. Rather than having a 'rich' life through owning a bunch of stuff or money, find happiness through even the little things! Furthermore, Thoreau mentions that every person should live the way they want to; to live a life that is worthy of thinking about when you're dying. I agree with his statement as it encourages doing what you love so that you're happy, which is something I strive to do. Additionally, Thoreau declares that our lives should be simplified through his strong dislike for society's obsession with the materialistic and fast-paced lifestyle; He mentions that our fast-paced lifestyle costs us our happiness in life. Thoreau urges us to slow down our lives and to focus on what's at hand rather than what will happen. Having read that, I realized that when I'm in a situation where I don't want to be (i.e. shopping at a mall), I often dwell on what I could be doing rather than enjoying the present moment. This is why I feel unhappy, or dissatisfied. Going forward, I should follow what Thoreau is saying, to enjoy what is there right now, or in other words, engage with the present. This makes sense as either way, you're still stuck in that situation and therefore you might as well enjoy it rather than hate it and be sad. Thoreau criticizes our consumption of the news as irrelevant to ourselves and a waste of time. He notes that the news is often repetitive and like 'gossip' in the way that it doesn't affect our lives. However, I disagree with Thoreau here. Staying up-to-date with the news is vital as certain events documented may be drastically life-changing to everyone. Even the seemingly smallest stories may inspire change in the lives of many. Thoreau's decision to live in the woods of Walden Pond was questionable at first, but after reading Chapter 2, I can somewhat and somehow agree with his choice; He wants to see what he can do in solitude.

### Chapter 3: Reading

7/17/24: Thoreau advocates for frequently practicing reading books because it will develop your skill to comprehend any sort of text, especially those labeled as classics (books from the past). After I finally interpreted what Thoreau was attempting to say, I took a, as what I like to call, a little “mind laugh” as I realized that his idea is exactly why it took me a bit to understand. I don’t read books very often which is why I struggled (and still am struggling) to comprehend the meaning behind what he writes. Therefore I really should be reading more often as it will help in the future as the texts I will be reading get harder to make my life easier (or simpler). Similarly, Thoreau goes on to mention that books should be read “deliberately and reservedly”, suggesting that books are meant to be engaged with. Thoreau’s point made me come up with the following observation: when I read (this book in particular), I sometimes self-consciously just skim the text, reading the words and sentences without attempting to understand what is being said. Whether I do this because I’m not interested in the book, or it’s a natural thing, it isn’t a good thing, and I should work on reforming it. Furthermore, I like to think that Thoreau is attempting to suggest that we choose our books “deliberately” in a way that piques our interests and challenges us; This is so we can learn to understand hard texts and stay focused on them. Perhaps, I will use this idea to pick books to practice reading with in the future. Finally, Thoreau mentions that “written works are humanity’s best artifacts in the world as they are commonly understood, felt, and appreciated by everyone” (given that the texts are translated). I generally agree with his point. I can visualize with him that books teach us history like nothing else as texts can often (and usually reliably) reflect the human experiences, thoughts, and emotions of people. However, I must say that texts cannot always reflect the truth as they can be altered or misunderstood by many. Additionally, text may not represent the correct emotion that the writers go for, as exemplified in modern-day texts. In this chapter, Thoreau stresses the importance of practicing reading interesting yet complex (challenging) texts as they will stimulate the mind for the better; I will attempt to read more often and be selective with my choices. Thanks, Thoreau!

## Chapter 4: Sounds

7/17/24: Thoreau criticizes modern life once more, stating that the modern person lives for the future as they are bound by societal constraints (i.e. time constraints); This is why the average person is dissatisfied or not happy with their life. I can see Thoreau's point as the 'average' job in modern times leads many people to work endlessly until their shifts are up, creating strong hope and happiness for their breaks and days off; I can say in full belief, that a life like this is very boring and unsatisfying. There is a reason why I always look forward to my days off from work, or when we close up for the day, I just want to be doing things that are fun or something that I desire to do. To prevent such a "miserable life", Thoreau encourages us to 'follow our passions and interests and find our own amusement.' I agree with Thoreau, that we should follow what makes us happy. On his idea, that we should "find our amusement", I question if we can participate in a passion that requires others? (i.e. playing a sport) as it challenges his advocacy of solitude and independence, but yet still supports his idea of following our passions. 'Housework was a pleasant pastime' he wrote, woah Thoreau, I strongly disagree with that take; It's such a tedious task (It is an important task, I'll give you that). How can you enjoy taking your furniture out to clean, only to bring everything back inside? To answer this question, and provide a solution to my observation of "modern life", after further analyzing what Thoreau is saying, he advocates for the idea of staying in the present to fully embrace all of its wonder and gifts (so that you feel somewhat satisfied, even if it is only a tiny bit). This is why Thoreau was able to enjoy such a tedious task (I still find it tedious). Furthermore, Thoreau recommends that we stay in the moment through his many observations of the natural world in action. Through actively engaging with his environment, such as listening, he can appreciate and experience life at its best. Having read his commentary on nature, I find it as a lesson that the next time I'm outdoors, I should take a minute to just watch and listen to the regular flow of the wild; to attempt to see what I notice, hear, and how I feel. That way I can be somewhat happy, or at the very least, be somewhat entertained; Engage with your environment.

## Chapter 5: Solitude

7/18/24: Thoreau explains that he felt a brief moment of loneliness which made him question his decision to live in solitude. However, he makes such a deep connection with nature that it heals him (essentially meaning nature became his companion). This idea made me question whether Thoreau has become a madman because of his solitude, or a passionate nature-lover. He answers this, by remarking that the best companion is himself as frequent interactions with others dull our conversations rendering them less meaningful, or beneficial. Thoreau's point does have some validity, as in my experience, after periods away from friends, I have longer and deeper conversations with them than I've had when I was with them more often. However, this isn't always true because it is possible to still have genuine, beneficial, and deep conversations with people you see every day. Through a confusing metaphor about an old settler with who he shares conversations about their love of nature and an old lady who shares fables and ancient stories, he expresses that he loves reflecting on the past periods of humanity when they were simpler (i.e. connected to nature), illustrating his disdain for the new way of life. Additionally, I think Thoreau calls for us to reflect on our past and present lives and the lives of others (i.e. such as ancient stories) to enrich our lives because by looking back, we can learn from past mistakes, appreciate what we have now, and find meaning in the human story. Thoreau finishes this chapter by stating his affinity for nature, citing it as humanity's inherent healer. As a person who isn't a passionate nature lover, I somewhat agree with his view as after frustrating days where you've become angry, sad, or in need of a break, walks sometimes clear my mind. I find myself self-consciously reflecting on things in my life when I walk long distances outside, proving that nature or natural activities are inherent healers, although that isn't scientifically proven. Yet, I find myself in disdain for nature when it's time to cut the lawn in 92-degree weather with high humidity, or when pollen drives me crazy in spring.

## Chapter 6: Visitors

7/20/24: Thoreau starts the chapter by saying he loves society just as much as everyone else, to which I laugh lightly. So far in this book, Thoreau paints the world and society as changing for the worse, making his statement ironically funny. 25-30 people in Thoreau's tiny and simple home? That seems outrageous, especially since Thoreau doesn't seem fond of conversations. On the other hand, I give Thoreau credit for sticking to his "simple life" as he would truly share a "frugal meal" with a guest(s); I think Thoreau's hospitality is "enjoy the company and experience rather than the food" which is what hanging out with others should be, however, I would like to say, some fun would be a plus (I'm hungry as I am writing this). Thoreau's affinity for nature and simple life is exemplified by the Canadian woodchopper who lives his life content, deeply connected to nature, and genuine. However, Thoreau realizes that the woodchopper's perspective and depth of life are limited to his way of life. I think going forward, Thoreau is going to bring up more new lessons that he learned from his experiences as a way to teach us to expand our view of the world. I find it interesting that despite being in the woods, Thoreau still encounters beggars and he notes his disdain for them, noting that they never would find a way to permanently resolve their problems. Thoreau mentions how his contemporaries could not enjoy nature because they were so drained as a result of their work lives. This cites the importance of balancing your work life and life outside of work so that you won't miss out on experiences and be able to enjoy your life. The latter of which is what Thoreau's view on the young girls and boys do when they visit the pond; They're the most content people in society. Thoreau mentions that their contentment with life makes them very relatable to Thoreau and subsequently makes him delighted to see a world that ruins this simple life. This idea just immediately brings up a picture of my sister as young children are the most pure and generally happy people in the world. We should try to replicate and foster that same happiness while developing new traits to truly find joy in the world.

## Chapter 7: The Bean-Field

7/21/24: After reading the first page of this chapter, Thoreau is seemingly going to talk about his obsession with beans which brings two thoughts into my mind: This seems mundane and why is he dedicating a whole chapter to talk about farming beans? It's a little humorous for Thoreau to personify the beans as a person in distress and himself as a hero, slaying the villainous weeds and saving the day. However, this method of fictionalizing a situation can certainly get things done, especially if it's something that you love; using something that you love as motivation to get work done. Thoreau certainly does this, and I too, use this method; for example, I might occasionally incentivize watching YouTube as a reward when I finish an assignment entirely or partially. All that work for a pecuniary profit of about \$360 (In today's money)? That seems outrageous, but then again, Thoreau's lifestyle is simple and doesn't require a lot of or even heavily involved money. Next Thoreau recounts his love of farming as it allows him to embrace and connect with nature. Farming was not a task or a way to make money to Thoreau, it was his eternal entertainment that brought him fulfillment and happiness. It's admirable that Thoreau really embraces nature even as much as annoyingly this theme is brought up by him. At the end of the chapter, Thoreau advocates for farming to return to the old mindset where we farmed with a spiritual mindset; divine powers were involved. The reason is that it will free farmers of materialism and worry for the future. Farmers will be more active in the present rather than in the future as the need to worry about whether crops yield and provide money will cease to exist. I agree with Thoreau's vision of the purpose behind this move as forgoing materialism, or at least minimizing a belief in it, because it would allow people to be fulfilled and content with life.

## Chapter 8: The Village

7/21/24: Thoreau likes a little bit of gossip and staying informed with the news. That wasn't surprising as Thoreau advocated expanding your perspective on the world a couple of chapters ago. Part of expanding on one's view of the world would be subjecting yourself to others' perspectives and experiences which can be found through the news or gossip. Thoreau recounts the disturbing amount of materialistic advertisements he notices in the village. Immediately after reading what Thoreau noticed, an image of the "skip ad" pop-up from YouTube came to my mind. Similarly, in the modern age, the amount of enticing advertisements has rocketed to a point where it's essentially impossible not to see one anywhere, so I would imagine how horrified Thoreau would be to see the world right now. Thoreau mentions that he was able to evade the effects of the ads by focusing on the 'high things' or what he seems to be indirectly referring to as the things each of us value; Thoreau suggests keeping our minds on what we truly want (i.e. morals, interests, etc.). I like his point here as it inspires joy, however, sometimes giving into the ads in moderate doses may be beneficial, for example, you may find a helpful kitchen tool from one! In this chapter, Thoreau makes an interesting realization that to reform one's life, we must see it from a different perspective (see the world differently than before). Among the first things that came to my mind after reading this was that Thoreau's realization is similar to the concept of "thinking outside of the box" as they both challenge the idea of conventional thinking and promote a creative and innovative approach to things. Finally, Thoreau recounts the time when he was arrested for tax evasion, which I found humorous. He cites his reasoning as he would not give money to a government that treats people like animals (i.e. slavery) which I commend him for. Thoreau also advocates that a government should lead by example if it wants to enforce or teach the public things. I like that idea by Thoreau as it suggests a government free of evil, such as corruption.

## Chapter 11: Higher Laws:

7/22/24: Thoreau starts the chapter by describing an experience in which he feels a sudden rush of a primal characteristic: a desire to be wild. Thoreau explains how he has had urges to hunt, comparing his urge to that of nature's predators. It is an unexpected event coming from Thoreau, as he has seemingly been a generally "sane" person so far. Additionally, Thoreau explains that this urge did not occur out of hunger, but rather out of wildness within himself. This recollection of his event does not help the idea that Thoreau is a "sane" person. Thoreau then explains that through hunting experience people will likely reflect on their natural, primitive desires and instincts. This reflection can lead to a deeper understanding of themselves, which may result in developing or expanding on their moral compass or spirituality. I slightly agree with Thoreau here, as I can see how the experience of hunting might foster moral contemplation, particularly around the ethical side of killing animals. However, I disagree with Thoreau's support for the idea that young children should engage in hunting to develop such traits as I believe it is possible to promote a strong moral compass and high spirituality without the need to practice killing. Furthermore, Thoreau tells us that we should control how much we eat and why we eat. He clarifies that unrestrained consumption and eating for indulgence are giving into our primitive mindsets. Such behaviors represent a lack of self-discipline which Thoreau sees as a vital trait in achieving "higher spirituality" or in other words, developing yourself. Once more, I partially agree with Thoreau. A lack of self-discipline (control) can hinder personal growth among other things, however, when it comes to eating for indulgence, I think that it is ok to do it for that intention, but only in moderation as Thoreau suggests; Enjoying delicious food can enhance our lives, however, the key is maintaining balance. As my College Career and Readiness teacher wisely said, 'Moderation is key.'

## Chapter 12: Brute Neighbors

7/23/24: I found the time that a mouse climbed up Thoreau's clothes very disgusting and unpleasant. However, even worse, Thoreau's affection for nature compelled him to feed the mouse, which I am even more disgusted by. If a mouse were to even run near me, let alone crawl up my clothes, I would certainly not have acted like Thoreau; I would probably scream and shake a bit. Once more, Thoreau describes his affinity for nature by telling us about the birds nearby to his cabin, in particular the partridge and her chicks. I appreciate his well-detailed description of the roles and relationships between the mother partridge and her chicks. I like how he illustrates it as it makes a compelling case to enjoy and value nature. Furthermore, Thoreau describes his experiences with the other animals of nature, noting that sitting still in nature for some time might just bring out some of nature's wonders (animals). Thoreau's notion is quite well-founded as if you just look at the ground for just a few seconds, you'll notice all the little ants in the ground. I found it amusing that, after I just mentioned ants, Thoreau describes seeing ants. However, it's not all good as he sees black ants fighting red ants, comparing their spirits to those similar to soldiers in war. As I read Thoreau's account of the "Ant War", an image of black ants wearing military uniforms planning around a table with Ant-man appeared. Thoreau would not likely like how I mentioned Ant-man as that is something of a materialistic life that he despises, which makes me give a light smile. I also find Thoreau's choice to observe three battling ants under a microscope to be a tad cruel or insensitive, but nothing too crazy. A "winged cat"? That's something of interest. Thoreau keeps "the wings" of the cat which I find weird as that idea just doesn't appeal to me. To finish the chapter, Thoreau describes his time observing a loon at Walden Pond. I found Thoreau's observation of the loon's actions and behavior to be yet another attempt to promote exploring and connecting with nature and its wonders.

## Chapter 13: House-Warming

7/23/24: Wasps come into Thoreau's home as winter comes, and Thoreau does not seem bothered by it. On the contrary, I certainly would be bothered by it as a constant memory of being stung by a wasp in the ear eerily comes up when I think of them. Additionally, I like how Thoreau finds it amusing that he is the "host" to the wasps, specifically that he enjoys that the wasps find his home comfortable enough to want to live there. He also adds that the wasps don't bother him because he does not bother them, which just prompts the saying "If you don't bother them, they won't bother you." Thoreau basks in the remaining amount of fall sun which I find ironically funny as I realize how much I take sunlight for granted; I like a clear, sunny day, so when it isn't like that in the winter for a long time, it's no fun! Thoreau has some help building the chimney from a friend, that seems nice. Thoreau also pointed out that he felt pride every time the chimney gradually grew, which just makes Thoreau ever so more "sane" and relatable to me. As expected, Thoreau enjoyed the process of building the chimney. Once more, Thoreau's enjoyment of the present (what he is doing right now) can be seen as a call to do as he does; Stay in the moment and find ways to enjoy it. Thoreau's description of the seemingly ordinary freezing of the ice wants me to see it for myself the next time a pond or lake freezes. Not only did he spark some curiosity in the freezing of lakes and ponds, but he also sparked excitement for the upcoming winter; I like winter because of the snow and because I can ski, I can ice-skate, I can throw "snowballs" (I can't make a good one) at my sister. I also found Thoreau's humor on "Jumping the Blacksmith" funny as it gave me a quick laugh. Thoreau also suggests that every human is connected by fire as every one of them is warmed by it. This is an uplifting reflection by Thoreau as we are united whether we like it or not, through nature or other ways, so we should embrace each other.

## Chapter 16: The Pond in Winter

7/24/24: Thoreau goes to the pond in search of water where Thoreau finds that even in the quietness and lifeless on the surface during winter, underground (or more specifically under the pond) there is still life as the fish (i.e. the pickerel) live under the frozen pond. Interestingly, Thoreau says this as I, myself, never viewed the pond as an active world in the winter. I likely think like that because I do not pay as much attention to nature as much as Thoreau does.

Thoreau's reaction to seeing the pickerel makes me say: "Gee, this guy loves nature" as I once again would have a different reaction than him. Furthermore, he notices that despite the lifeless surface of the winter, people still survive off of nature as fishermen come to fish for the pickerel. Thoreau views ice fishing in a unique perceptive way as I view it more as an activity to burn off the long winter days while the fish caught are more like a cherry on top. Thoreau decides to challenge the belief that Walden Pond is bottomless by identifying the depth of the pond. I see Thoreau's choice to do this activity as a way to kill time while still being connected to nature as there is a clear reason why he's doing it. Thoreau observes people coming to cut the ice from Walden Pond for profit. This event reminded me that it was around this time that people started using ice for drinks in addition to previously using it as refrigeration. This is a cool fact that I learned from a video once. Thoreau's view on the commercialization of ice seemed a bit of a touch for how he perceived himself. Thoreau seemed not to be concerned with the people disrupting the natural frozen pond; he did say that most of the cut-up ice did make its way back to the pond which likely contributed to his "out of touch" behavior. Perhaps, Thoreau saw this activity as a way that nature is still connected to humans as we use its resources to benefit us.

Overall this chapter was mundane and seemingly pointless. I feel as though it did not contribute greatly to Thoreau's points of embracing and cherishing nature and living deliberately and our way.

## Chapter 17: Spring

7/25/24: Thoreau hears the crackling and breaking of the ice in the pond and views it in a satirical way: "Who would think of something so large, thick-skinned, and could be so sensitive?", suggesting that the "big bad ice" is so sensitive as it is broken, or harmed by something so normal (sunlight). This is an enjoyable and memorable perspective by Thoreau here. Later on, Thoreau mentions that he is paying attention to the signs of spring such as the sound of birds chirping. My sign of spring is when my eyes start to itch, and, though more frequent when I was younger, my nose bleeds more often. Thoreau views the changing landscape as if nature was coming back alive again or being created for the first time. This is because vegetation grows back from "death" and animals and insects return. Never in my life have I been introduced to viewing spring this way. I have been accustomed to viewing it as an "itch-eye, nose bleeding" season where it is simply a "filler" season between winter and summer. Thoreau is good with philosophical takes on nature. Thoreau said, "Walden was dead and is alive again." For once, Thoreau's point is easily interpreted in one sentence. In addition, Thoreau explicitly states what he means; Thoreau points out that we should focus on the present and forget the past to fully take advantage of life (i.e. enjoy it). Thoreau then goes on to state that past mistakes (sins, grudges, etc.) should be forgotten. I like his point, but not every mistake should be entirely dismissed. To elaborate, past mistakes are perfect opportunities to learn from; we should look at what caused our shortcomings in the past and fix them to ensure that these mistakes won't happen again. Thoreau closes this chapter by reciting the reawakening of nature and that mankind should form a deep connection to nature. He declares that nature is refreshing and we need it to truly live.

## Chapter 18: Conclusion

7/26/24: Thoreau starts the final chapter by directing us to look from within, to find what we desire, and then to build on it. Thoreau encourages us to follow our dreams, believing that when we do so, fulfillment and joy in one's life follow. I like to think that Thoreau is suggesting that we imagine what we want to be (in other words, our potential), find what we have to do to achieve it, and live our lives accordingly. Additionally, he adds that every one of us should "march to our own beat", or in other words, we should not conform to what's normal or what everyone else is doing, but rather do what each and every one of us desires; He criticizes conformity and promotes individuality. I think Thoreau is saying the world is great because of two things: nature and the uniqueness of people. Furthermore, he suggests that we should be honest, authentic, and unique when we interact with one another. Despite critiquing how humans often interact, he values how we all have different interests. Moreover, Thoreau calls for us to reject the materialistic lifestyle as he views materialism as an obstacle to growth as it removes focus from what truly matters to you. He tells us to embrace what we have rather than focus on what we don't. This is an everlasting life lesson as in a modern world where success and money are at the center, we tend to forget to be happy. Money does not make you rich, rather being rich in life is how you make do with it. Thoreau ends the book by advocating and displaying hope that we will reform our lives. This is a nice touch by Thoreau, as in the beginning, he seemed highly doubtful of mankind in their ability to change, only for him to express optimism in doing so. Although not explored deeply in this chapter, Thoreau seems to urge us to look to nature for inspiration or at least to connect with it as one or another, it will aid in reforming your life. *Walden* is Thoreau's way to urge us to embark on a journey of self-discovery, encouraging us to discover our true passions and purpose, and live our lives authentically, deliberately, and correspondingly to ourselves. He also urges us to embrace nature's qualities as a way to promote personal growth and subsequently, fulfillment in life. *Walden* certainly has opened my mind to viewing the world differently and inspired me to do some reforming in my life.

Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau

7/28/24: *Doing Nothing* - Sue Monk Kidd

I've read *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd in 9th grade, and it never occurred to me that the book ever mentioned Henry David Thoreau. For all this time, I've thought I have never heard of the name Thoreau before, but I did, and I just forgot about it. It's funny to think about since it's like a full circle event; I read *The Secret Life of Bees* (Kidd) and it mentioned Thoreau, I then read *Walden* (Thoreau), and it led back to *The Secret Life of Bees* (Kidd). Anyhow, I digress. Sue Monk Kidd explains how she was able to understand the "loitering" that Thoreau recounted in *Walden*; She simply just focused her mind on attempting to enjoy her "nothing doing retreat" by deterring that idea. She explained that she was successful in deterring the idea of doing a "mindless activity" by continuing to that activity, and eventually, after some time, she found something that sparked an understanding of Thoreau's "loitering." This is exactly proving one of Thoreau's many ideas in *Walden*, specifically that actively engaging with your environment will make you appreciate and enjoy life at its fullest. Had Sue Monk Kidd given into the idea that watching the sunset and water heave was a waste of time, she likely would not have found doing anything enjoyable. Additionally, Sue Monk Kidd's recount of her retreat also proves Thoreau's point that nature is humanity's inherent healer because she cites that "since going on a retreat, her blood pressure has sunk to new lows", illustrating that doing nothing in nature can improve a person's health. Although not written explicitly in *Walden*, I believe that Thoreau suggests spending time in solitude can spark creativity as solitude is a time for deep-reflection. Sue Monk Kidd notes that while she writes this text, her creative mind has been "empty and fallow", proving an indirect idea by Thoreau. Beyond proving Thoreau's ideas to be true, I found that perhaps I should spend some time at a more natural slower pace. If Sue Monk Kidd escaping the fast-pace of the world has helped her, perhaps it would help me.

Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau

7/29/24: *My Walden, My Walmart* - Crispin Sartwell

I found Crispin Sartwell's *My Walden, My Walmart* to be quite heartwarming, funny, and interesting at the same time. He does interestingly allude himself to be the “modern age Thoreau” having compared certain things alike to Thoreau, such as “lacking easy charm and extreme social desperation, but yet still having modern day influences such as having cable. His reasoning for such a title is quite well-founded. As for example, he denounces the social norm of living close to others, having many friends, and frequent engagement with others; this is similar to how Thoreau rejects the social norm of conformity and rather more specifically, materialism. Sartwell's humor throughout the text is great as well, specifically the play on Thoreau's emphasis of being dependent on one's self: “anarchist berry picker.” Crispin Sartwell's description of his conversation(s) with Greg is very relatable as that seems similar to what I see and hear when my dad talks to a “stranger friend” (a “friend” that he doesn't hangout with, rather a person who he sees in a public setting and talks to). I conclude this reflection by saying that if Sartwell was truly the, for a lack of better words, “modernized” Thoreau, I would prefer him over the actual Henry David Thoreau (He's just more relatable and funny).

Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau

7/30/24: *A short history of America* - Robert Crumb

Robert Crumb's short comic strip illustrates highlighted and contrasted themes provided by Thoreau. Thoreau advocated for a human connection to nature throughout *Walden*, and in the strip, over time the plain natural fields became more industrialized as train tracks were added, homes, power lines, roads, and eventually cars. As more “industrial things” are added, the more nature is harmed as it slowly is removed. For example, the once abundant vegetation is gradually removed in each box, eventually being removed entirely by the end of the strip.

Additionally, the comic strip also contrasted Thoreau's point of being in solitude as by the end of the illustration, people have become significantly close to one another as buildings are right next to each other. This also suggests that they interact often given their close proximity which goes against Thoreau's advocacy of having conversations every now and then. Furthermore, we can see that signs or advertisements become more prominent. Thoreau despised signs advertising business as it promoted materialism, which we know he hates so much. I found Crumb's comic strip to be an amazing depiction of the evolution of America's landscape. It is surprising how Thoreau's themes from the 19th century became relevant in the 20th century.