

Script: Thoreau or BOREau: Hypocrite or Visionary

Adnan

Nick

Lindsey

Erica

Timed Read Through: 9 min 45 sec

Intro:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzkuJGwniWM>

Adnan: Good evening ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to today's episode of the Dr. Phil show, "Thoreau or BOREau: Hypocrite or Visionary?"

Please put your hands together for Dr. Phil!

|| Intro music plays ||

|| Applause Sign ||

|| DP walks in with 5 swagger ||

|| 2 non-mains sit off to the side to clap, hold up applause card ||

|| HDT sits off to the side reading ||

DP: In this episode, we will meet with a man infamous in high school classrooms across America for his book, *Walden*. Based on his two-year stay in the woods, this book has 18 chapters filled with transcendental ideologies, vivid depictions of nature, and ramblings about society. Many have complained about Walden's frequent self-contradictions and excessive judgment, while others praise his deliberate lifestyle, timeless ideas, and unique writing style. Later today, we'll invite two guests who have firsthand experience with this controversial author.

But first, let's meet the man himself. Please welcome to the stage, Henry David Thoreau.

|| Enter HDT, with 0 swagger ||

|| 2 sides sit ||

DP: Can I call you Henry? Is that okay?

HDT: I'd prefer my full name...

DP: Okay Henry, sounds good. We're gonna start by talking about your book, *Walden*.

Now, many have complained that your book is too critical of the general population. Your critics describe *Walden* as "obnoxious" and "offensive". Even your good friend and mentor Ralph

Waldo Emerson said *Walden* made him feel “nervous and wretched”. Now Henry, what do you have to say to those accusations?

HDT: I wrote the book because countless individuals were inquiring as to why I lived in the woods. My intentions were never to make others feel bad about themselves. My book was purely an adventure through my thoughts and nature. I did not write to control how everyone lives, but to share the experiences that worked for me while living at Walden.

DP: Now, that seems to be where your readers disagree. In your third chapter, “reading” you claimed that, and I quote “Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written”. You called readers of what you deemed “easy” or translated books, “underbred and low-lived and illiterate”. You’re calling your own readers illiterate solely because they can’t read classics in every language, how can you expect that from everyone?

HDT: I stand by what I said. The best investment of your time is to read the classics. They are potent and filled with the wisdom of the greatest minds of the previous ages. When you are reading them, if you want to extract the true meaning from the text, the best way, dare I say the only way to do that, is to read it in its written language. Consider how the Bible, the most widely read book in the world, is layered with 2000 years of translation. Words that exist in the original Hebrew have no direct translation in English. In English, we have one word for love. We love our family, we love the sunrise, but we also love the taste of woodchuck. See? Those are not all the same thing. When you make generalizations through translation you lose important meaning.

DP: The thing is, Henry, you have to understand that not everyone aspires to be a scholar. People can read for pleasure, and that’s okay. Are you saying that people who read translated copies of the classics are somehow doing something wrong?

HDT: [boldly] I can’t say I disagree with that. I ask you, is not doing something correctly to the best of your ability the same as doing something wrong?

DP: If the choice was to read a classic, translated in English, or not read it at all, which is better to do?

HDT: I have to admit, it would be to read it in English.

DP: Well! When we come back, we’ll bring in our two witnesses. But first, a message from our sponsors.

|| Commercial guys come on, in infomercial voice ||

Commercial guy 1: Are YOU hungry? Nearsighted? Stupid? Get our lead-covered beans now!

Commercial guy 2: Now with an exclusive deal for unlimited access to Henry's playlist. Listen all day long to the sound it makes when you hoe beans!

[Mining Sound Effect \(minecraft\)](#)

Commercial guy 1: Call 1-800-DIEARLY to get 0.1% off today!

|| Thoreau looks disapproving ||

|| Commercial guys change costumes, go back to seats ||

DP: Welcome back everyone! Earlier today we discussed Henry's high expectations for the public. Now, let's hear from two very significant characters brought up in his book, *Walden*. First, a French Canadian lumberjack, Alex Therien.

Lumberjack: Thank you Dr. Phil, first, I'd like to address the issue of Henry's slander on my name. Henry publicly called me "stout" and "sluggish", other words for fat and lazy. Furthermore, Henry called me stupid and quote "as ignorant as a child" just because I enjoy living my life the way it is. Can't a person be content with their own world and beliefs? Must I not be proud of what I have?

HDT: I apologize if my words have made you feel that way, but you forget all the compliments that I have paid you. I admire your simplicity and your attitude which is always positive. I even complimented your craftsmanship, skill in your trade, as well as your endurance, both mental and physical. In many ways, I look up to the way you live.

Lumberjack: Sure, Henry. You paid me plenty of compliments, but the words you said still hurt me. I don't think you can so easily balance hate with compliments.

DP: Now it is true, Henry, you can't talk bad about people and expect a few compliments to neutralize it. Thank you for your time Alex... Now, let's see what a personal friend of Henry's has to say: please welcome Mr. Woodchuck!

|| Applause signs ||

Woodchuck: David Henry Thoreau,

|| HDT interjects ||

HDT: Henry-

(a couple times)

Woodchuck (with force): DAVID, you have personally victimized me, my family, and my entire species. What kind of person sees a guy just taking a walk, feels a "strange thrill of savage delight," and tries to devour him raw?! Not to mention, you love your enlightenment and pretentious literature, yet so aspire to our "savageness." Pick a side, man! I've never heard of this Homer guy in my life, so am I inferior to you? You can't simultaneously look down on us and try to copy us. I live way more deliberately than you, yet I'm not out here moralizing.

HDT: While living at Walden, I attempted to revere both my spiritual and savage sides. One cannot expect a man as sophisticated as me to live entirely philosophically. As you would say today, I needed an outlet. Craving woodchuck meat was not so much about wanting to satisfy physical hunger, but rather a philosophical hunger. I was hungry for the wildness that you represented. As a man, I have a duty to philosophy and a duty to my natural instincts. To deny either would be to deny myself of experience.

I'm also really attracted to woodchucks. I can't help it. Your species fascinates me. You draw me in. Mouthwatering

Woodchuck: David, you're almost as egotistic as you are creepy.

DP: Henry you have a problem... you need to understand that.

HDT: I may have a problem, but society nowadays has more. Everybody has their own problems; did you even read my book? Mr. Woodchuck and Alex here kill trees. Dr. Phil, you make a living bashing on people. What's even the point of this show?

Woodchuck: You do have a point-

DP: Moving forward from this, I do want to look at some of your more positive ideas...

Firstly, viewers requested we talk about your take on modern environmental conservation. Nowadays it is hard to find an unpopulated or untouched landscape. What are your thoughts on how the world has changed over the past hundred and sixty years?

HDT: Well, I don't even know where to start... Your air is toxic, your water polluted, your forests dwindling, and your temperatures rising. Society needs to figure out solutions to all of these or bigger problems will surface. During my stay at Walden pond, I was able to live without disrupting the environment. Why can't people do that today?

DP: Thank you Henry, another viewer of ours wanted to touch on your definition of success and occupational dissatisfaction.

HDT: In a sense, the problems faced by people today are the same as the problems faced by myself and others during the 1800s. Men have become slaves to their work, and they have no time to be anything but a machine. It is so easy to follow the mainstream, but doing so is dangerous. In the mainstream you will believe that you have to work a 9-5, you will believe that you need the fanciest clothes or the newest car. You will believe that the best path is the one that brings you the most money and status. But that is not how it is! Simplify, simplify I say! Do not make your life any more complicated than it needs to be. Sacrificing yourself 5 days a week to live for 2 is not necessary. In my eyes, if "the day and night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more

starry, more immortal, – that is your success.” If you live deliberately, if you do not let a single day go by without bettering yourself, you will have a meaningful life.

DP: Beautiful ideas Henry, but don't you see that those are near impossible to implement today? People cannot simply leave their job to go live in the woods. You yourself wouldn't have been able to if it weren't for your friend Emerson. How can you expect that of the modern person?

HDT: I guess you have a point, Dr. Phil. What I expressed in Walden were ideals, but I cannot expect all idealizations to be realistic.

DP: Thank you for your time and a nice sample of your relentless ramblings, Henry.

HDT: It'll be nice to get back to my pond.

||Concluding remarks from advertisers||

|| Fight between DP and HDT || ?

Adnan: In this episode we learn that philosophy is not one size fits all. Each person is unique, and therefore should live according to what works best for them. As Thoreau said, live to the beat of your own drum. While Thoreau found purpose while living alone at Walden pond, and reading classic literature, others may find satisfaction in starting a family, their careers, or in active community service.

Erica: Additionally, it's not right to rush to dismiss the ideas of others. One should be open-minded to help and suggestions, to discover their truth. When taken in the correct context, Thoreau's guiding words can help us to challenge our own beliefs and introduce a new perspective. Lastly, if you take nothing else from this episode, respect your woodchucks.

Adnan: ||Point to audience|| If you have a story that you'd like to bring on the show, go to the Dr. Phil website www.drphil.com. Don't forget to tune in to tomorrow's program 3. Have a great night folks!

||Quick wave and leave, applause cards||

Possible Characters:

- Thoreau: Lindsey
- Dr. Phil: Nick



- Woodchuck
- Canadian woodchopper - Alek Therien, stout but sluggish, appeared to know nothing either as wise as shakespeare or as ignorant as a child poetic consciousness or of stupidity
- John Field
- Aunt
- Mother

Character Notes:

- Thoreau:
 - retains his mannerisms, is annoyed, displeased with his surroundings
 - Brings up modern statistics as a rebuttal
- Dr. Phil:
 - there to confront, not to understand (Thoreau can call him out on this later)
 - No respect, interrupts
 - Mocking

Props:

- Mustache
- Woodchuck ears + sunglasses
- Axe
- Applause cards
- Dr. Phil name card
- Theme music

- 4 chairs
- Speakers?