

Banha University - Faculty of Arts
English Department
Third Year Students

American Literature (19 Century)

Lecture 4

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Walden Economy

By

Henry David Thoreau

Themes



The Value of
Simplicity .



The Importance
of Self-Reliance .



The Natural
World .



Work and
Pleasure .

The theme of Simplicity

- Simplicity is more than a mode of style for Thoreau.
- In his economy chapter , Thoreau asserts that a feeling of dissatisfaction with one's possessions can be resolved in two way:
 - 1 / one may acquire more .
 - 2 / reduce one's desire.
- Thoreau finds his mates taking the first road ,specifying their energies to buy the latest fashions. But Thoreau prefers to take the second road of reducing (minimizing) his consumer activity.
- Thoreau patches his clothes instead of buying new ones, and dispense with any accessories he finds unnecessary. For Thoreau any thing more than what is useful is an extravagant and disadvantage.
- He argues that the simplification of one's lifestyle doesn't hinder or prevent pleasures but facilities them.
- Another irony is in his literary style , while summarized is far from simple . it contains witticisms and double meaning.
- Despite its minimalist message, Walden is an elevated text that should have been much more accessible to educated city habitant than to the uneducated country habitant.

Self-Reliance

- self -reliance is economic and social in Walden pound . The principle of independence is more valuable than neediness. So Thoreau live on the contentment of his solitude. He simply refuses to need human society.
- He is almost obsessed with the idea that he can support himself . He was working to produce a profit. Thoreau is a giver rather than a taker in the economic game of life.
- The economizing that allows Thoreau to live on Walden pound also allows him to feel one with nature.

The Natural World

- By choosing to live at Walden Pond and doing so in a self-sufficient way as possible, Thoreau immersed himself in what he describes as the 'tonic of wildness'. His condensed record of his experiences makes up this work and it is necessarily primarily concerned with what he sees in nature. This ranges from the sounds of the birds he hears, to the escapades of squirrels, and to the effects that the changing seasons bring about.
- [?]The descriptions of the water in the pond, for example, not only give great detail to his perceptions, but also demonstrate how much he immersed himself in this life.

Work and Pleasure

- Thoreau pointedly shows that although it is necessary for him to work in order to keep his beans growing well, for instance, he also stresses that we should not be slaves to our jobs. By example, he demonstrates that if one works sufficiently and refrains from supposed luxuries (such as tea and coffee), it is possible to live a freer life than one that is dominated by work.
- His writing shows us that it is possible to enjoy life if only we could broaden our horizons as he did. By living within his means, and because he is not swayed by capitalism, he also highlights how one can take time to observe what is happening around us with pleasure.