

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



HENRY DAVID  
THOREAU

亨利·戴维·梭罗

JOEL MYERSON 编



上海外语教育出版社  
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**剑桥文学指南**

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## 出版前言

《剑桥文学指南》是上海外语教育出版社从海外引进的一套研究、介绍外国文学的丛书，内容涉及作家、作品、文学流派、文学史等诸多方面。作者均为在该领域有着较深造诣的专家、学者。

《亨利·戴维·梭罗》是该丛书中的一本。

梭罗是美国 19 世纪著名的超验主义思想家、自然哲学家和文学家。早年和爱默生过从甚密，后居住纽约，为《日晷》撰稿，写下不少诗歌和论文，其中包括著名的《马萨诸塞自然史》。28 岁那年，他回到家乡康科德，搬进自己在瓦尔登湖畔建造的一所木屋，开始了远离尘嚣的独居生活，并完成了他最重要的作品《瓦尔登湖》的手稿。梭罗热爱自然，关注自然。在他的作品中，人与自然，人与动物达成了一种和谐融洽的关系。人不仅徜徉在山水之中，不仅是自然的观察者，而且已和自然融为一体，成为自然界的一个有机的组成部分。梭罗在作品中还谴责了物欲横流的社会，对财富的追求表现出巨大的蔑视和鄙视。梭罗的著述甚丰，作品有《康科德及梅里马克河畔一周》、《缅因森林》、《科德角》、《漫步》等。梭罗去世后，他的日记由朋友整理出版，分为《马萨诸塞的早春》、《夏》、《秋》、《冬》四卷。1906 年，14 卷《梭罗日记全集》出

版。同年，还出版了 20 卷本的《梭罗全集》。

本书为研究梭罗思想与作品的论文集，收录了欧美学者对梭罗研究的最新成果，经梭罗研究学会主席 Joel Myerson 教授审定。全书分为“梭罗与康科德”、“梭罗与爱默生”等 13 章，每一章均为相对独立的专题研究。其中既有梭罗生平及创作生涯的回顾，又有对其主要作品的专门论述，且各有侧重。如 Richard J. Schneider 教授在阐述梭罗最重要也是最耳熟能详的作品《瓦尔登湖》时，侧重于分析作者的语言运用技巧；而 Linck C. Johnson 教授在分析相对不为人熟知的《康科德及梅里马克河畔一周》时，则以梭罗的写作动机为切入点，探讨如何将其进行文学归类。本书既包括了梭罗研究的经典课题，如论公民的不服从、梭罗与爱默生比较、瓦尔登湖的象征意义等，又收录了近年来的最新观点，如梭罗作为环境保护主义先驱的地位。总之，本书涵盖了梭罗生平、著作及其影响等诸多方面，是该研究领域内一部集大成的著作。

本书的读者对象为大学外语教师、外国文学研究人员、外国文学专业的研究生、博士生，以及具备了较高英语阅读能力的外国文学爱好者。

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PHILIP F. GURA is Professor of English and Adjunct Professor of American Studies and of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His publications include *The Wisdom of Words: Language, Theology, and Literature in the New England Renaissance*, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660*, and, with Joel Myerson, *Critical Essays on American Transcendentalism*. He is a member of the editorial board of the forthcoming *A History of the Book in America*.

WALTER HARDING is Distinguished University Professor of American Literature Emeritus at the State University of New York, College at Geneseo. For fifty years he was Secretary of the Thoreau Society and editor of its publications. He is the author, among numerous other books, of *The Days of Henry Thoreau*, *A Thoreau Handbook*, and *The Variorum Walden*.



RONALD WESLEY HOAG is Associate Professor of English at East Carolina University. He has published on Thoreau and other American writers in such places as *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, *Studies in the Novel*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Studies in American Fiction*, *Southern Literary Journal*, *Southern Review*, *Georgia Review*, and *Paris Review*. Editor of the Thoreau Society's *Concord Saunterer*, he is currently writing a book on Thoreau.

LINCK C. JOHNSON is Professor of English at Colgate University. He is the author of *Thoreau's Complex Weave: The Writing of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," with the Text of the First Draft*, the "Historical Introduction" to *A Week* in the Princeton edition of *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, and numerous essays and reviews. He is currently writing a book on Emerson and Thoreau in relation to antebellum reform.

JOSEPH J. MOLDENHAUER holds the Mody C. Boatright Regents Professorship in American and English Literature at the University of Texas in Austin. He has published widely on Thoreau, Poe, and other American writers, and has edited *The Maine Woods*, *Early Essays and Miscellanies*, and *Cape Cod* in the Princeton edition of *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*. His edition of Thoreau's Canadian narrative will appear in *Excursions*.

JOEL MYERSON, Carolina Research Professor of American Literature at the University of South Carolina, is President of the Thoreau Society. The editor of the annual *Studies in the American Renaissance*, his most recent books include *Emerson and Thoreau: The Contemporary Reviews* (editor), *Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography*, and *Emerson's Anti-Slavery Writings* (co-editor, with Len Gougeon).

LEONARD N. NEUFELDT is Professor of English and Chair of American Studies at Purdue University. His recent publications include *The Economist: Henry Thoreau and Enterprise*, the fourth volume of the *Journal in The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, and three volumes of poems: *Rasberrying*, *Yarrow*, and *Car Failure North of Nimes*.

ROBERT D. RICHARDSON, JR., is the author of *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*, as well as *Myth and Literature in the American Renaissance* and a forthcoming biography of Emerson. He teaches at Wesleyan University's College of Letters.

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ROBERT SATTELMAYER is Professor of English at Georgia State University. He is the author of *Thoreau's Reading* and General Editor of the Journal in *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*.

RICHARD J. SCHNEIDER is Professor of English at Wartburg College. He is the author of *Henry David Thoreau* in the Twayne United States Authors Series. He is also the editor of the forthcoming *Approaches to Teaching Thoreau's "Walden" and Other Works*.

ELIZABETH HALL WITHERELL is Editor-in-Chief of *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau* and Curator of Manuscripts in the Department of Special Collections at the Davidson Library of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

## INTRODUCTION

It may seem odd to publish a book of essays whose purpose is to provide strategies for reading the works of Henry David Thoreau. After all, judging from the many editions of Thoreau's works in many languages, Henry has done quite well for himself all these years without needing anyone's help. The question, then, is not whether it is necessary to have help in reading Thoreau – millions have done so on their own – but whether, with help, we can read him better. That is the goal of this book: to help readers read Thoreau better.

Thoreau himself gives us cautionary words about the subject in his chapter on "Reading" in *Walden*, where he warns that "It is not all books that are as dull as their readers" (107). "To read well," he states, "that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise." Moreover, "Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written" (100-1).

*The Cambridge Companion to Henry David Thoreau* helps the reader to come to Thoreau's writings "deliberately and reservedly" by suggesting how Thoreau uses language, how his biography informs his writing, how personal and historical influences shaped his career, and how his writings function as literary works.

In the first essay, Walter Harding surveys the development of Thoreau's reputation – from how he was perceived by his contemporaries to the views of more recent academic critics – and in doing so gives the proof to Thoreau's own statement in *Walden* that he had "several more lives to live" (323).

Robert D. Richardson, Jr., sets the background for us by discussing the impact that Concord, Massachusetts, had on Thoreau, who was, of all the famous writers who lived in the town, the only one actually born there. One cannot underestimate the importance of Concord for Thoreau: his masterwork, *Walden*, is set there, and his non-Concord works use the town as a reference point.

Equally important to Thoreau was Concord's leading citizen, Ralph

Waldo Emerson. As editor of the journal the *Dial*, Emerson championed Thoreau, and he was also instrumental in helping him to publish his books. After Thoreau's death in 1862, Emerson published a eulogy of him that has (somewhat negatively) affected our view of Thoreau up to the present. Robert Sattelmeyer shows how the friendship of the two men developed warmly, then splintered, then reformed on a different basis.

Thoreau's "least familiar book," *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, is the subject of Linck C. Johnson's essay, which asks the question, "What kind of book is it?" This question has stumped many readers, who are frustrated with *A Week* because it does not fit neatly into a preexisting literary category. Johnson shows how Thoreau wrote the book and what literary genres it appropriates.

Elizabeth Hall Witherell discusses the small body of poetry that Thoreau left behind – primarily in his Journal, in the *Dial*, and in *A Week* – and how that poetry figured into Thoreau's attempt to develop an "original voice."

Like all published authors, Thoreau wrote for an audience, and Steven Fink helps us to understand it better. Fink defines Thoreau's audience and explains how Thoreau attempted to obtain readers and to influence them; he also shows what Thoreau's expectations of his editors were. These things are important to know, for Thoreau did not write only for himself, but in the context of the marketplace.

Richard J. Schneider takes on the herculean task of helping us to better understand *Walden*. First, he illuminates Thoreau's aims in writing the book. Then, concentrating on Thoreau's skills at organization and his artful use of language, Schneider takes us through the book and suggests strategies for reading it.

Thoreau's longest work – in length of pages and in time spent on it – is his Journal. Leonard N. Neufeldt discusses the general concepts of journals and journal-keeping before taking us on a tour of the "voices" Thoreau employed in his Journal. This is an especially relevant chapter because Thoreau's Journal is now being reedited, and this edition will bring to it a new generation of readers.

Thoreau's two travel books show that his gifts for natural observation were not restricted to Concord. Joseph J. Moldenhauer, in discussing *The Maine Woods*, shows the literary and personal backgrounds to the book, including how Thoreau derived lectures from it, as well as information about its publication. Using a different approach to *Cape Cod*, Philip F. Gura connects this work to Thoreau's other writings, especially *Walden*.

Ronald Wesley Hoag deals with Thoreau's later natural history essays: "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," "Wild Apples," "Huckleberries," "The

Dispersion of Seeds,” “Wild Fruits,” “A Yankee in Canada,” and “The Succession of Forest Trees.” Hoag finds that in all of these, there is more to nature than meets our eye and that Thoreau encourages us to see better, “more naturally,” than we do.

In discussing Thoreau and the natural environment, Lawrence Buell takes on one of the most salient and contemporary thrusts of Thoreau’s writings. Buell shows how Thoreau gradually introduced ecological concerns into his works and how he used nature both as a naturalist and as an artist. Although he concentrates on *Walden*, Buell also gives space to Thoreau’s later field biology and scientific study of nature.

Finally, in his chapter on Thoreau and reform, Len Gougeon deals with some of Thoreau’s most powerful essays – “The Service,” “Paradise (to be) Regained,” “Reform and the Reformers,” “Herald of Freedom,” “Wendell Phillips,” “Resistance to Civil Government,” “Slavery in Massachusetts,” “Life Without Principle,” and “A Plea for Captain John Brown” – as he traces Thoreau’s evolution from a passive to an active role in the events of his time.

Returning again to the “Reading” chapter of *Walden*, we find Thoreau’s interesting definition of literacy: “I confess I do not make any very broad distinction between the illiterateness of my townsman who cannot read at all, and the illiterateness of him who has learned to read only what is for children and feeble intellects” (107). *The Cambridge Companion to Henry David Thoreau* hopes to make its readers more literate by showing the ways in which Thoreau’s writings can be approached. We hope we are successful.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THOREAU'S LIFE

- 1817 July 12: born in Concord, Massachusetts  
1818 Family moves to Chelmsford, Massachusetts  
1821 Family moves to Boston, Massachusetts  
1823 Family returns to Concord, Massachusetts  
1827 Writes "The Seasons," his earliest known work  
1833 Enters Harvard College  
1835 Teaches school in Canton, Massachusetts, between terms  
1837 Graduates from Harvard; begins Journal; teaches a short time in Concord public schools; November 25: first publication, an obituary, appears in a Concord paper  
1838 Opens private school, where he teaches with his brother, John; delivers first lecture at Concord Lyceum; makes first trip to Maine  
1839 Makes trip on Concord and Merrimack rivers with John  
1840 July: publishes his first essay, "Aulus Persius Flaccus," and his first poem, "Sympathy," in the *Dial*  
1841 Moves in with Ralph Waldo Emerson and his family  
1842 January 11: John Thoreau dies  
1843 Helps Emerson edit the *Dial*; contributes to *Boston Miscellany* and *Democratic Review*; moves to Staten Island, New York, to tutor William Emerson's children  
1844 Accidentally sets fire to Concord Woods  
1845 March: begins work on cabin at Walden Pond; July 4: moves into Walden cabin  
1846 Arrested for nonpayment of poll tax; makes trip to Maine woods  
1847 September: leaves Walden cabin; moves into Emerson's house; contributes to *Graham's Magazine*  
1848 January 26: delivers lecture before Concord Lyceum on "The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government" ("Resistance to Civil Government"); returns to family home; contributes to *Union Magazine*

# CHRONOLOGY

- 1849 May 26: publishes *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*; June 14: sister, Helen, dies; publishes "Resistance to Civil Government" in *Aesthetic Papers*; makes first trip to Cape Cod
- 1850 Makes second trip to Cape Cod; makes trip to Canada
- 1852 Contributes to *Sartain's Union Magazine*
- 1853 Makes second trip to Maine Woods; contributes to *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*
- 1854 August 9: publishes *Walden*
- 1855 Visits Cape Cod; contributes to *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*
- 1856 Meets Walt Whitman in Brooklyn
- 1857 Travels to Cape Cod and Maine Woods; meets Captain John Brown
- 1858 Visits the White Mountains and Mount Monadnock; contributes to *Atlantic Monthly*
- 1859 February 3: his father dies
- 1860 Contracts the cold that leads to his fatal illness
- 1861 Visits Minnesota
- 1862 May 6: dies in Concord
- 1863 *Excursions*, edited by his sister Sophia and Ralph Waldo Emerson, is published
- 1864 *The Maine Woods*, edited by Sophia Thoreau and Ellery Channing, is published
- 1865 *Cape Cod*, edited by Sophia Thoreau and Channing, and *Letters to Various Persons*, edited by Emerson, are published
- 1866 *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*, edited by Channing and Sophia Thoreau, is published
- 1873 The first book-length biography, Ellery Channing's *Thoreau: The Poet-Naturalist*, is published
- 1881 *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, edited by H. G. O. Blake, is published
- 1884 *Summer*, edited by Blake, is published; *Walden* is first published in England
- 1888 *Winter*, edited by Blake, is published
- 1889 *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* is first published in England
- 1892 *Autumn*, edited by Blake, is published
- 1894 Eleven-volume Riverside edition, the first collected edition of Thoreau's writings, is published
- 1906 Twenty-volume Walden edition of Thoreau's writings is published, including fourteen volumes of the Journal

## ABBREVIATIONS

CC	<i>Cape Cod</i>
Corr	<i>Correspondence</i>
EEM	<i>Early Essays and Miscellanies</i>
J	<i>Journal</i> (in 1906 <i>Walden</i> edition)
MW	<i>The Maine Woods</i>
PJ	<i>Journal</i> (in the Princeton edition)
RP	<i>Reform Papers</i>
Reading	Sattelmeyer, <i>Thoreau's Reading</i>
W	<i>Walden</i>
Week	<i>A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers</i>

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