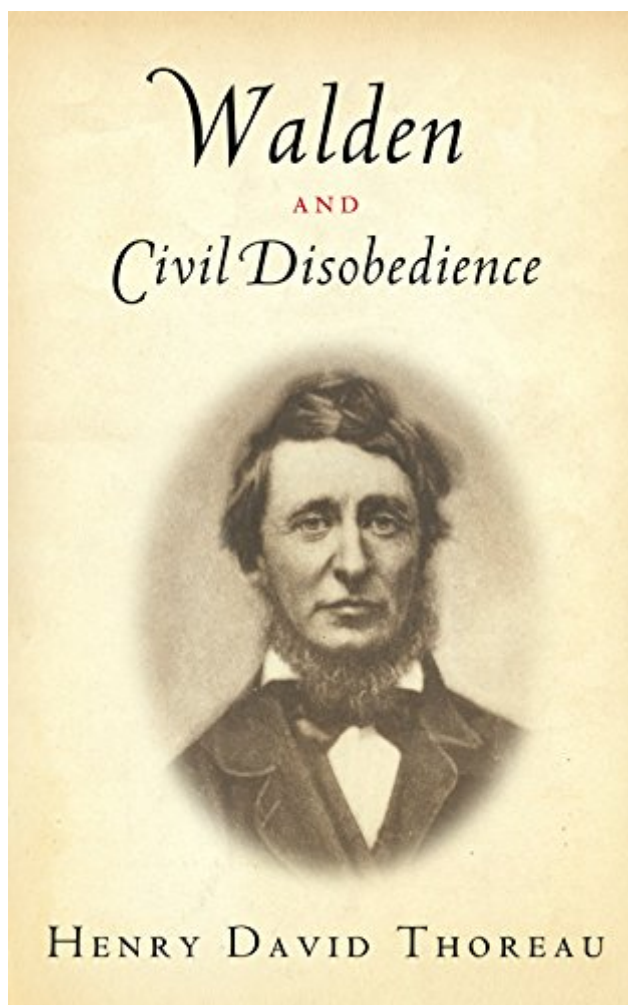


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Walden And Civil Disobedience (Illustrated)



Synopsis

This volume contains Henry David Thoreau's most popular and enduring works, "Walden" and "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience." For Henry David Thoreau, there was no separation between public politics and personal principle. "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" is his famous account of the night he spent in jail for refusing to pay taxes to a government that supported slavery and waged war. His impassioned stand for justice later inspired Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and many other peaceful revolutionaries. The Kindle e-book is FREE when you buy the paperback. (Applies to American Renaissance Books edition only.)

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Customer Reviews

This collection has Henry David Thoreau's two most famous works: Walden and "Civil Disobedience." Both are immortal literary works that should be read by all; anyone who does not have them would do well to get them here. Walden is one of the great classics of American letters. It

has been somewhat unfortunately tainted by its reputation as the "treehugger's Bible," but this misses the point. Thoreau obviously loved nature and was one of the nation's first environmentalists - indeed, modern day environmentalism can be traced directly to him -, but the core of the book is not a simple stating of nature's virtues. Thoreau lays down nothing less than a philosophy of life. Like "Civil Disobedience," *Walden* preaches the virtues of individual liberty and the importance of Man over State. Thoreau raises some staggeringly deep existential questions: If a man does not depend on the State but still resides within its boundaries, need he pledge allegiance? Need he pay taxes? Thoreau tells us how to get the most out of life by living simply. Indeed, much like Rousseau, he seemed to basically believe that the true essence and spirit of man resides in the state of nature. He assures us that, if all lived as simply as he did at Walden, there would be very little theft, crime, violence, envy, or jealousy. He urges us all to live our own lives as we see fit, neither depending on or heeding others, and to avoid merely becoming another mindless drone in conformist society.

"Resistance to Civil Government" - or "Civil Disobedience," as it became known - is an essential part of American literature, culture, and history. Even more remarkably, it is undeniable proof that great literature can have a real effect on the world even long after it is written and ignored. The essay is world famous as the founding text of civil disobedience, i.e., non-violent protest, and its effect on such luminaries as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King was profound, thus sealing its immortality. This alone makes it essential for all. However, it is easy to forget that the essay is a masterpiece in itself. Essentially Thoreau's highly individual expression of his mentor Emerson's self-reliance doctrine applied to government, it has a wealth of depth and nuance despite its brevity. The words are few but the implications endless; it has enough food for proverbial thought to last a lifetime. The gist is very clear, but the implications have spoken very differently to many different people. The work's nature - and Thoreau's generally - is such that it and he are championed by everyone from neocons to libertarians to liberals, and the truly notable thing is that all are justified. This underscores the importance of reading the essay for ourselves. Its main query is "What does the individual owe the state?," the answer being a resounding "Nothing." Thoreau takes the maxim that the government that governs least governs best to its logical conclusion by wishing for one that governs not at all - a brave wish very few have seriously dared to make or even conceive. He makes a highly principled stand for individual rights and autonomy, arguing very persuasively that people should be able to go about their business without interference. This of course sounds very much like current libertarians, and their position has indeed hardly ever been better argued. Many related and implied issues - protests against taxation, conscription, etc. - also seem to support them. However, it is important to remember that the essay's crux and most famous section - Thoreau's

account of a night spent in jail for refusing to pay a poll tax because he did not want to support war or slavery - was and is immensely liberal. Few issues can be more central to current liberalism than an anti-war stance, and slavery was the era's great liberal cause. All this must be kept firmly in mind amid the many attempts to reduce Thoreau to a current party platform. He was at once too simple and too complex for this and would not have suffered himself to be thus reduced; nor does the essay justify it. Integral as all this is, the work's core point is arguably a new self-reliance argument above and beyond immediate practical considerations. Thoreau certainly had a practical, political streak, especially compared to relative idealists like Emerson, but he thought individuality more sacred than anything. He articulated this more fully elsewhere, but it is very present here. His work is thus in many ways the best kind of self-help material - and, unlike the mass of current self-help tripe littering bookshelves, is intellectually and even aesthetically pleasing. Thoreau was the most thoroughly local writer that can be imagined, but his willingness to look deep inside himself for the eternal truths present in all people has made him an inspiration to millions and millions of people from across the political spectrum and indeed the world. This essay is a major part of his legacy and thus one of the very few works that literally everyone should read. Few can be the same afterward, and it will change many lives; it is nothing less than one of the most important documents ever written, and its value simply cannot be exaggerated. This collection is an excellent primer for those new to Thoreau, and those who have not already done so should open their minds to him immediately - and once done, they will never be closed again.

I bought this book after much searching for it in local bookshops. This volume, when it arrived, was beautiful to look at. Bound in a classic and impressive cover, it has 2 photos of Thoreau for fans of his works (such as me). But, it is his words which give one pause. Which make the idea of living in the woods, completely self-sufficiently, not as far-fetched as it may first seem. I enjoy this book each time I read it. It's a classic, full of great quotes for those who ruminate on the nature of man, and the beauty of living simply.

I needed this book to write a research paper on, and as I'm sure everybody knows, there are so many editions of this great American literary work. After looking around on Amazon, I opted for this edition. I liked the look of the cover and was glad that it came with "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience." I was even willing to pay the slightly higher price for this edition than that of any other on Amazon. However, about two weeks after I submitted my purchase and paid, I received something I did not order. To be sure, it WAS Walden - it even included "Civil Disobedience" - but the cover was not the same as

advertised. My name and shipping address appeared on the receipt, but it said the order was placed by a different individual who will remain nameless. Also, the order number on the receipt did not jive with the one I got in the email. I contacted the seller of this edition I ordered, and within five minutes had a reply asking for my shipping address to check if there was a mix-up. I replied, and it's been two weeks - I have not heard back. I'm giving the review three stars because my beef is not with the book itself. The book is awesome, filled with great wisdom. I'll quote from the book itself "While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them." Applied to my current situation, amen to Mr. Thoreau.

I got this book with much excitement. I expected Thoreau to write about discovering who he is in life and how society has found itself withering away from nature with all the advances in humanity. Instead though, I found a book that quite literally is a journal of what he pretty much did there in the woods. In all honesty, this book should have been called "What I did in the woods" because for the most part, that is what this book entails. He talks about his daily ventures around the lake and whatnot. This may sound exciting and all, but anyone who has picked up this book probably has gone out and at least attempted to enjoy nature. I don't need someone else to write about something that I try to do on a regular basis. There are some good moments in the book, like when he talks about meeting an individual who just works and works and for what? Moments like those was what I expected because it showed problems we Americans face every day. I did not expect however him talking about how deep Walden pond is or what the rabbits were doing around his cabin. Really Thoreau? What amazing revelation people find out of him talking of that stuff is beyond me. Don't get me wrong this is a good book but I believe really overrated. Some of these reviews are hilarious though talking about how "deep" the book is. I can just as easily write about going out for a walk anyday and be glad if someone called that "deep." People writing those reviews makes me wonder when was the last time they went out for a nice walk in the woods.

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