Art and Science: Where Do You Draw the Line?

A Thoreauvian Interdisciplinary Study

Or

Wayne & Dave’s Excellent Summer Vacation
What to Expect Today:

- Henry David Thoreau and the institute
- The curricular workshop
- Our publication (the model in theory)
- Movie “The Shape of Things”
- The model in practice
- Student work
- Questions and comments
Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

- Literary genius?
- First hippie?
- Wilderness recluse?
- Jailbird?
- Abolitionist?
- First Concordian “kook”?
- New England adventurer?
CURRICULUM VITAE

Henry David Thoreau
Main Street, Concord Massachusetts

Experience: Schoolmaster, private tutor, land surveyor, gardener, farmer, house painter, carpenter, mason, day-laborer, pencil-maker, glass-paper maker, writer, poet, naturalist

Goal: To find employment that will make use of any of my many practical skills, allowing me the freedom to pursue my interest in the outdoors, writing and teaching.

Special accomplishments: Established a private school for advanced students with brother, John (1883-1841); Designed successful pencil for Thoreau Pencil Factory, family business (1843). Built and lived in a cabin beside Walden Pond in Concord for two years (1845-1847)

Education: Concord Academy, Harvard College (1837)
Henry David Thoreau
Curriculum Vitae (Continued)

Languages: Some fluency in Greek, Latin, Italian, German


Memberships: The Hedge Club, Concord Lyceum

References: Mr. Ralph Emerson, Mr. Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne
The Thoreau Society

Our Mission

- To stimulate interest in and foster education about the life, works and philosophy of Henry David Thoreau and his place in his world and ours
- To coordinate research on Thoreau’s life and writings
- To act as a repository for Thoreauviana and material relevant to Thoreau

The oldest and largest organization devoted to an American author

“Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?”

Walden
The Thoreau Institute
44 Baker Farm
Lincoln, MA  01773-3004

- Center for research and education focused on Henry David Thoreau, his literary achievements and philosophy, and his influence on environmental and social movements

- Provides opportunities for life-long learning about Thoreau’s life and work

- Collaboration between the Walden woods project, its parent organization, the Isis fund and the Thoreau society
Institute was founded by recording artist Don Henley in 1990

In eight years raised $18 million for purchase of 100 acres of land in Thoreau’s woods

Purchased Higginson Estate in 1994

Built Thoreau Research Center and Library in 1996

The Higginson Estate

Home to the Thoreau Institute
The Research Center

- Houses the library, reading room and media center
- Houses the most important Thoreau collections in the world:
  - (3) collections of Raymond Adams, Roland Robbins and Walter Harding
  - Scott and Helen Nearing Collection
  - Thoreau Society Archives

Includes books, manuscripts, artifacts, field notes, photographs, maps, surveys, audio and videotapes, slides and scrapbooks
Media Center

Dave talks with Bradley P. Dean, Editor of Wild Fruits

Library

HDT silently lectures
Wayne’s “Place”

The Courtyard
“Saunters”
Reading the Forested Landscape, a walking tour with ecologist Tom Wessels

Walden Pond walking tour with Tom Harris, Director of the Thoreau Society

The view from Henry’s house
“Types and Sites”

Observation and Identification in Nature with Chris Leahy, Director of Mass Audubon Society’s Center for Biological Conservation

Surveying concord with Jayne Gordon

Jail site: Henry’s overnight for civil disobedience
R.W. Emerson’s grandfather, Ezra Ripley witnessed the North Bridge battle from this home. Later it was rented to Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau, not only wrote in this same home but ice skated here on the Concord River
“Why Concord?”

Concord Museum’s historical and literary exhibit

- Reasons for Revolution
- Emerson’s living room
- Thoreau’s walking stick

Lunch and lecture on the Concord River

Critical analysis of “Walking” and the concept of “wildness” with Thoreau Scholar Ron Hoag
“Nature shapes history”

Natural and cultural history interconnections led by environmental historian Brian Donahue

Excursion on Minute Man National Park’s Battle Road Interpretive Trail

The view Miriam’s Corner and the newly renovated stone wall
Monuments
“big” and “small”
Sleepy Hollow Cemetery

Civil War monument and Henry’s grave

“The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening.” -Walking
The Model in Practice

Environmental Science

The following are some of the works of Burlington Environmental Science students under the direction of C. David Luther.
A Table of Contents

The inventory of what is to be found in the report

- Purpose/Introduction
- Procedure followed
- Materials
- Journal pages
- Illustrations
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
A Purpose

The narrative statement of what the students intend to show

“In this lab, herbaceous plants native to New England, specifically the Burlington area, were collected and drawn according to Thoreau’s methods and descriptions.”

…Environmental Science Student

“All is perfectly distinct to an observant eye, and yet could easily pass unnoticed by most…”

…H.D. Thoreau
**Data Pages (New England Aster)**

**BOTANICAL JOURNAL**

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"... both ice crystals and leaves were the creatures of one law."
-Henry David Thoreau

Directions: As you observe your field sample, write a paragraph as H.D. Thoreau would have for each of the characteristics listed below. Feel free to use, add to, and share the wordpool.

**Habitat:** pond, brook, pasture, cultivated, meadow, topography, broadleaf, pine or mixed forest, succession, soil type, etc.

Fallon found the New England Aster in a yard near a mixed forest with good soil.

**Climate:** Season, date, time, weather, temp, wind speed, wind direction, etc.

The season is fall and the New England Aster seemed to be blooming well. Fallon picked some in the afternoon when the weather was warm and sunny. The wind was not as big as usual because it was probably less than 9 mph.

What do you see? (Leaf type, design, shape, arrangement, size, color, texture, buds, flowers, fruits, seeds, dispersal mechanism, insects, birds, animals and their evidence, etc.)

The plant has a long stem and puffy flower. The leaves are slender near the bottom of the plant and they grow smaller as they go. The plant is erect and slightly bushy and is very tall. The seeds of the aster are good fall and winter food for songbirds.
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**BOTANICAL JOURNAL (Continued)**

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"... we're still far from the time when people will understand the curious relations between one fragment of nature and another, which all the same explain each other and enhance each other."
-Vincent Van Gogh

What did "Henry" say? From your selected or optional readings and required readings ("Faith in a Seed" and "Wild Fruits"), select at least two quotes which offer insight into your personal observations.

"Early in November many gardeners and aster lovers, which have been heavy, for a while, are richly and delightfully down, they seem just as new plants of falling or being blown away, before they are in the least weather-beaten."

What else have you learned from this fragment of nature?

This fragment of nature shows that I find little flowers can be beautiful even in its stage of being blown around. The purple and yellow flower added life to the other weeds. It stands out not only because of its color and structure, but because of its height and size.
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**Fallon House**

Student Name: [Name]

Date Page: [Page]

[Date]

[Signature]
Representational

Semi-Abstract
Abstract

“... Star like multi-petaled flowerheads ... Where they fill spangled fields ... Even botanists find it requires patience to distinguish the many species.”

-Kerri Sousa
Data Pages (Deadly Nightshade)

**BOTANICAL JOURNAL**

...both ice crystals and leaves were the creatures of one law.

-Henry David Thoreau

Directions: As you observe your field sample, write a paragraph as H.D. Thoreau would have for each of the characteristics listed below. Feel free to use, add to, and share the wordpool.

**Habitat**
Good, brook, pasture, cultivated, wooded, topography, landscape, pine or mixed wood, succession, and type, etc.

The deadly nightshade was found in late September on the edge of a mixed forest. They were found among many other weeds common to the fall months of New England.

**Climate**
Season, date, time, weather, temp, wind, direction, etc.

The deadly nightshade was found in late September. The wind speed was 15mph and the temperature was in the mid to high 60's.

What do you see? (leaf type, design, shape, arrangement, size, color, texture, buds, flowers, fruit, seeds, dispersal mechanism, insects, birds, animals, and their evidence, etc.)

Deadly nightshade has small red berries. The leaves are small and the flowers are pink. The stems are thin and the leaves are oval. The berries are red and orange.

-Chet

**BOTANICAL JOURNAL (Continued)**

...we're still far from the time when people will understand the curious relations between one fragment of nature and another, which all the same explain each other and enhance each other.

-Vincent VanGogh

What did "Henry" say? From your selected or optional readings and required readings ("Faith in a Seed" and "Wild Fruits"), select at least two quotes which offer insight into your personal observations.

"The Lord is a wine of color!...They hang more gracefully over the rice's brim than any pearls in a lady's ear. Yet they are considered poisonous!"

-Anonymous

What else have you learned from this fragment of nature?

This fragment of nature shows that bad things, in this case poisonous, can be so beautiful. Something so beautiful can be so bad for you.

-Chet
Representational

Semi-Abstract
“... This plant is actually considered poisonous, yet it is beautiful as well... With small red berries, the younger they are the more orange they are... Found on a warm day in late September.”

-Debra O’Brien
Representational
Pokeweed

Abstract
Dayflower
Abstract
Wood Sorrel

Abstract
Chicory
A Conclusion

“In this lab, we performed the same activities that Henry David Thoreau accomplished over 100 years ago in the woods and lands of New England. Thoreau was a very influential man and his works along with Ralph Waldo Emerson’s are emulated everyday by botanists and environmentalists. In this project, we acted like botanists because we discovered, classified and then drew the plants in many different ways.

We also answered questions and found quotes from Thoreau’s books Wild Fruits and Faith in a Seed. These books offered great insight as to what Thoreau was thinking as he found and classified these plants. The way Thoreau described these plants showed his love for them and nature. His vivid descriptions to describe the plants were amazing and made us think differently about the plants we were studying.”

-Fallon Hauser, Shara Hegde, Katy Driscoll
Another Conclusion

“In this lab, herbaceous plants native to New England, specifically the Burlington area, were collected and drawn according to Thoreau’s methods and descriptions. A botanical journal was then filled out for each of the 36 plants collected in this lab. This journal asked and answered questions about the habitat, climate and description of each plant. Furthermore, in some samples, quotes from Thoreau himself were applied to the specific plant.

A semi-abstract and abstract drawing was completed for at least one plant. In this creative aspect of the lab, one could truly appreciate the beauty and complexity of a plant’s structure. The helixes, spirals, branches, meanders, spheres, and hexagons that make up a plant’s appearance can be found within the 36 classifications in this lab. Also the fact that things come in threes and fives has proven true once again in this lab.”

-Danielle Blanc, Amy Lavoie, Diane Lozier, Kerry Sousa
Bibliographies

- **Books**
- **Periodicals**
- **Video presentations**
- **Web sites**
- **Interviews**
The Model in Practice
Ninth Grade Design

The following are some of the works of Burlington Design students under the direction of Wayne D. Little.
Each Design student had to work outside and do a series of observational drawings which included:

- An overall landscape
- An observation of a single tree from within that overall view
- A detail from that tree
- Personal observations
“The thing that I most liked about being outside was getting to be out in the fresh air. Also it was fun drawing all the trees.”
"When we went outside I felt calm while drawing and I thought it was relaxing."

-Mike Gallo
“The thing I liked about this assignment was the challenge of making a smaller and larger picture of one object.”

-Lucas Hammond
“I observed the proper way to shade while our class went outside.”

-Stephanie Meyer
“Drawing outside I felt related and my mind was open. I think if everyone took the time to look at nature the world would be less stressful.”

-Richie Schafus
“I enjoyed working outside because it gave me a good point of view which allowed me to notice the true qualities of nature.”

- Donald Morgan
Realism

“I had fun going outside to draw nature; the challenge of drawing small details on leaves and trees results in enjoyment for me.”

-Laura Young
Special Thanks to:

Jayne Gordon, Helen Bowdoin and our friends from the Institute

Bill Brown and Joan Tuttle, Burlington Media Services

Our Students whose talent and effort made this possible