

welcome to lecture number 13.
um the interesting thing about this
lecture well
lots of interesting things but we've
moved way forward now
we're going to be within 200 years of
the present
so it's taken us a long time to get here
we're out of the early modern period
after after a little stay there
but i think what you'll see now as we
get to truly environmental
and truly modern environmental thinking
is how much it's been informed by the
tradition that we've now
looked at so we have almost two waves of
modern environmental thinking coming
one will be thoreau and his era and we
get to throw today
finally and that's really 150 years ago
walden was published in 1854
and then we have another jump to a
little over 50 years ago
which is rachel carson's silent spring
she is modern environmental thinking
sorry i'm as you know outside recording
this and a little bug flew by
so these are interesting um and we'll
look at how they're different these two
waves of modern environmental thinking
but i think what you'll see again and
again is
how what we've done has informed that
and i'm going to make that explicit not
this lecture but when we go into real
detail and throw in the next lecture
but to give you an example thoreau just
sort of casually mentions at one point
that he's modest and he actually uses
milton's metaphor for it which is a tree
if you remember milton's soul to
creation saw human beings like trees
that have roots that reaches deep into

the ground
as we do reach above the ground into the
sky
and you know that's how we saw human
beings we're we're part earthy half
earthy connected to the ground a half
reaching up to the heavens the road
picks that up too
and if you just picked up throw and read
it you might say well that's kind of
interesting
but now you know having gone through
everything that we've done
that's a big deal that's that's
challenging
2000 plus quite plus years of western
thinking
challenging it on a very important
register environmentally which is this
whole physical metaphysical thing
so they're going to be a lot of things
like that that we see in thoreau that
i think you know if you just picked him
up and maybe even in another class and
in another class we could have
well started environmental thinking with
the row
that would have been a logical thing to
do but i wanted to give you
i hesitate to call a deeper
understanding but a broader more
informed understanding
of modern environmentalism so now that
you
you're fortified with that and you have
it we'll be using the work that we've
done as
a touchstone in order to better
understand modern
uh environmental thinking so let's jump
right in
here we are notice we're way up here
and not only have we moved up you know

4 400 years in in thinking
but we've also moved way over and we are
ready to jump the atlantic which we'll
be doing today into north america but
we're going to spend a little more time
in england starting with william blake
so let's see blake here
and jump right here
oh and i can't believe that i just
pushed the wrong button sorry
i really want to be here and
now we'll see mr blake up here so let's
jump forward yeah are you glad to be
done with all the classical medieval
and stuff that we've done i'm
curious i mean again i just explained
why it was useful
but you may be happy to be finished with
it i don't know
if you if you are that's okay because we
are indeed finished with it
we're going to have modern language
throughout here things are going to be a
lot simpler
so
blake is writing at the turn of the 19th
century
and he writes a number of um
[Music]
anti-pastoral poems and the chimney
sweeper is one of them
this go way back by the way the first
chimney sweeper song was in 1635 in the
era we just
came from but blake does his own version
in 1789
and what this is about and why it's it's
interesting to look at
in particular is that
this is an era where london's population
has
truly exploded we saw you know exploding
the beginning of this explosion of the

big in the early modern period
but now we're reaching this point which
is the year 1800 we're 11 years away
from
where i mentioned in the past where
london will become
the second city in the history of the
west to have a population of a million
the first being virgil's room
so as that population is getting really
intensely packed in there
people are beginning to see the problems
with
urbanization and technological modernity
now we're also at a point in time where
the so-called industrial revolution
is taking off the jump that we've just
made has taken us into that era
and people are going to be confused by
it
and in some cases critical of it and and
blake will find a particular reason here
to be critical of it
just slip out of the picture here for a
moment
um he's like
in this poem it's like one of edward
pertinski's photograph so
it's pastoral anti-pastor in a sense but
he's not
looking away to the countryside and how
wonderful it is and you know going on
down telling us how great it is and we
we saw that right with catherine
phillips
as things are starting to heat up but it
changed environmentally
but here blake is doing just the
opposite he's looking squarely at a
problem environmental issue and and
you know environmental issues are issues
with the environment they affect plants
they affect animals they can

you know affect even you know the features of the environment we do things like mountaintop removal to extract coal but they also have huge cultural fallout and what Blake is going to talk about here is an example and this is child labor um in this case you know Blake is squarely in a modern tradition and we're going to be seeing more and more of this we certainly see it with Rachel Carson you don't see it with Thoreau Thoreau is still looking away from the problem and we'll talk about that but there are people and William Blake obviously a very famous poet is one of these folks what's interesting you know if you remember Bertin's photograph you know he again and again is looking to us as the source of the problem and and by us I mean the people who are doing the things that cause the bringing it about so what I mean by that is if you had watched the whole film manufactured landscapes which hopefully you have by now you may know that Murtinsky spends a lot of time in places like China and Bangladesh and you might assume that that's the subject of his work China and Bangladesh but it's actually not because what he wants to focus on is how we in the west and I'm really thinking of like the United States and other you know what we call developed countries how our love of stuff and things has brought about the environmental crisis that we're in you can go see it in places like China where all

this stuff is being made you can go to
bangladesh where you can see all the
stuff has been thrown
back and is getting recycled or just
lying there as trash but it's not really
about china or bangladesh in this sense
it's about
us the consumers of all this stuff and
it's drawing attention
to an aspect of that consumption and
that consumerist juggernaut that we just
don't
see so what blake wants to do is
also draw attention to something that we
don't see which are these children
who are cleaning
chimneys so my father sold me while yet
my tongue could scarcely cry
weep weep weep weep
so your chimneys i sweep
and in soot i sleep so
i guess the operative word and that
little chunk there
is your chimneys and i sweep
he wants to this child is drawing
attention to
you know the fact that he's doing this
not for himself but for
us so do you understand what's going on
here
um when people started burning coal and
this goes back to the early modern
period principally like in the 16th
century
suddenly fire places and chimneys began
to appear
all over europe and stoves as well
before that
older homes peasant homes especially as
in england as they were across most of
the world and especially
you may know this from like japan or
something a fireplace was just a place

on the floor where you had a fire and if you had a home that had the gables open at the top smoke would rise up and go out the you know ends of the house and that was that people didn't really bother the weren't too concerned about the smoke it didn't really bother them that much once we started burning coal however this no longer became possible because the smoke was just so incredibly noxious so throughout the 16th century across england chimneys start appearing everywhere and by this period everybody has a chimney these chimneys because they're building up with with creosote and other things have to be cleaned out in especially larger chimneys it's a question of how you do this effectively and get them clean the way that was being done here the blake is critiquing is the children you know had ropes tied upon and small children were talking about like five years old why would you use a five-year-old child to do an adult's work well an adult couldn't fit down one of these chimneys so you would lower you know a five-year-old down a chimney with a brush even if the child panicked and just was madly flailing about that would still clean the chimney so an absolutely horrible horrible practice there are no child labor laws in effect at this point in time it's deadly because the creosote and other substances that come from the coal

smoke
come from smoke creosote mainly from
wood smoke but there are other things
that come from coal smoke
um they were in many cases carcinogenic
so these children were dying of cancer
in their
you know like late teens in early
adulthood so
absolutely horrible and it's a function
of
this kind of new problem because there
were no fireplaces and there were no
chimneys before we got into the burning
of fossil fuels
so blake is drawing attention to that
and drawing attention to it in such an
apt way as
our problem the one that we created um
blake wrote two chimney sweepers poems
by the way i just thought i'd show them
to you
he illustrated these himself and
actually there are versions
um still around i've looked at them
where blake actually did the water
coloring of them
too so very very beautiful works
and the irony is that they described
something that was
horrific
so jumping now to michael so this is a
poem by wordsworth in the year 1800
michael is a pastoral poem
and i thought i'd give you an example of
a more modern pastoral since we've
looked at so many you know older
instances of it
how do you know it's a pastoral poem
well because words are tubs subtitles it
a pastoral bone
um it's firmly in the the tradition of
virgil's first eclog

it's about a loss of a place in this
case a family farm
and you know like with other pastoral it
directs our attention to an endangered
environment and the reason for that
is to bring about something like an
environmental consciousness
and it names the reason for its loss and
we've had that
throughout so the reason you know why
the place is being lost is a conspicuous
feature of most of these
poems and and other forms of literature
so virgil's first egg log
why is the this all happening mello boss
is leaving
the whole thing about you know why he
didn't offer
honor to his patron in rome is the
reason why
virgil explores that in some detail and
of course
say the description of kukum is about
you know why
these women this homosocial group has to
leave their place
so um this being talked about here
the reason but we've we've seen these
two and we've talked about how they were
different the
um virgil's first decalogue and amelia
landrieu's description of kokum
but we have a third instance here of why
during why it's leaving
um but to do this wordsworth and it is
as a pastoral poem
he describes it as a perfect locus
of venus so you know the idea of locus
aminos did not die out in the
in the classical period it keeps coming
back again in the back again
and the notion that we once lived a
perfect relationship with the planet we

as a species
that's alive and well here in a pastoral
way
and the country life described there is
you know without problems in itself so
in that little hidden valley where the
poem takes place
everything is hunky-dory everything is
perfect
um there is a danger coming from without
and in the way you see the danger
from without and virgil's first
declogue in the description of cookum
but this danger is different
we've we've seen from the very beginning
with pastoral
that that urban life is seen as a danger
that the city is a danger
it's not always you know focused on or
made fully explicit
but the very fact that this urban form
is being generated about a wonderful
pastoral life if you look carefully in
the poems
often just because they're the inverse
of it you find
urban life being critiqued and seen as a
danger what i mean by that is if you see
a
poem that talks again and again about
how wonderful things are in the
countryside because there's
you know no pollution and there's no
crime
and things like that what is that really
about
that's talking about critiquing a city
where there's a lot of pollution and
and perceived a lot of crime too so even
though it's not
mentioned it's kind of always there one
way or another and
as i've noted back even with classical

pastoral

if you if you read pastoral in that sense you can read a lot about the cities that are that are being critiqued even though they're never mentioned

but here something is more than just cities although

again you know there are quite a few of them london being huge and also new emerging cities like manchester which are

you know centers of industrialization at the time

but we also see capitalist modernity here

and what i mean by that is the idea that you know

wealth is what it's all about and let me get out of the screen here

and it's reached as far as the you know very remote countryside that we see here and farming life is no longer economically viable

this is another one of those things that you might have attributed to a later period what i mean by that is you know the loss of family farms in the united states

became a real issue of great concern in the 1960s and 70s and into the 80s as large mega agribusiness took over and consolidated all those farms you might have thought then that that was pretty recent in the you know last few decades but the fact is

here it's being talked about too and not that

farms are being consolidated by you know industrial agriculture

but the the fact that there's a pull away

from rural life to these new urban areas

so in places like manchester were
springing up you needed a workforce
where did you get the workforce
that had to be pulled away from the
countryside
people were sometimes happy to do that
because they were
you know perceived more opportunities
and you can make more money in the city
but they're also it's also the case and
this poem explores it that there might
be other
situations that bring that about
michael is a loco descriptive poem
in the tradition of cooper's hill so i
mentioned
when we we had cooper's hill that um
wordsworth was was well aware of the
poem and and liked it
and was influenced by it and you can see
the influence of the local descriptive
tradition
here and it's certainly being
you know picked up by wordsworth i won't
go through it here
but you know remember paradise lost
milton's description of hell
and of of um eden you couldn't
visit those places so we had to describe
them in detail so if you closed your
eyes you could imagine you were there
if you do the same here you know you
imagine if you need to turn you
imagine you know you turn away from the
public place some cities and all
you know you're seeing and follow your
steps up
up the tumultuous brook and you go on
and on here
so um read this because
and imagine that you're there and that's
what wordsworth
wants to do he wants to transport you

there
you will never go there because this is
an imagined pastoral place
but he wants to allow you to
imaginatively go there
he does want us to walk right into this
environment
that's something that writers have been
working on for
you know working this out for almost a
couple hundred years now
but with wordsworth it's really
full-blown there
local descriptive literature is going to
be a cornerstone of environmental
writing from here on out
you know and if he does this job well
and wordsworth is pretty good
at doing what he does you know you'll
not only be encouraged to
to read that description and but feel as
if you've walked right in there that you
can feel the place and and in turn
you care about the place and that's
important because
you know you'll you'll see what happens
to it here
and of course what what does happen is
that
you know the this family farm gets
destroyed because
the um the the sun of the the very
pastoral couple who live there
in their perfect farming life gets
pulled away to the city
to to um take care of a debt from a
relative and then once gets to the city
it gets taken into the
you know by the charms of the city and
never comes back
without him to be there farming life is
over
this is then sort of a metaphor of what

is happening
throughout england at the time and what
happened
with the beginning of you know
throughout modern technological
modernity
is that there'll be a pull away from
cities from
from these rural areas and they will be
abandoned
that's wordsworth's fear and that's
what's what's playing out here
another poem written
right around the same time slightly
later here is
shelley's mont blanc
to give you a little background here
we've shifted
away from talking about an inhabited
place to
a very uninhabited place which is mont
blanc
which is the highest mountain in europe
we we tend today you know we think about
high mountains we think about
you know the himalayas and mount everest
or maybe k2 or something but
in this period especially when people
thought of a high mountain when european
people on the west did in
england where shelley lives mont blanc
is the one that they thought of this is
um
mont blanc blanc means white of course
this is the white mountain why it is
is it the white mountain it's the one
covered in snow all the time
so this becomes the iconic
representation not just of a
mountain but of what is increasingly
becoming interesting to people which is
wilderness
as i note here we'll see it with blake

and wordsworth
although we don't look at their poems
that do it although there are plenty of
examples
but here with shelley we see this
fetishization
of wilderness wilderness etymologically
derives from the same word as wild
and what is a wilderness it is a wild
place it is a wildness
remember milton is attributed with
bringing into english this this meaning
of the word nature as it is separate and
apart from human beings
well this is the most nature of nature
in that senses wilderness and nature
will often be
synonymous in this period and from this
period on right we say the same you know
why do you want to go to yosemite
to visit wilderness or to get closer to
nature
in that sense you're imagining nature
especially in the same way
this mountain wasn't even climbed until
so it is you know if you if you want to
give an example of you know the most
wild
of the wilderness places in europe
mount blanc is it which is why shelley
takes it up as a subject
i get out of the picture um
prior to wordsworth and shelley and
blake
people in the 18th century which we
really didn't have time to focus on
one of the the great frustrations of
this course it's just not that long so i
have to be really kind of selective and
leaving things out
i would have liked to have included some
writing from the 18th century
that talked about the difference between

the sublime the emergence of the sublime
is an idea
and um there are a couple of people the
philosopher
emmanuel kant and gunny burke who really
theorized it but
all you have to know about the sublime
is
people began talking about how there
were things and mont blanc would be an
example
that you were drawn to because they were
just so immense
and and and extraordinary
god would be another one here in this
thinking but at the same
time if you know you actually got to
mont blanc even though you'd be drawn to
it
you'd be repelled from it too because
it's this very
scary frightening place that of all the
places that you would likely visit
this place the place itself could kill
you i mean you could freeze there you
could
fall you can do you know it's a scary
thing
so it's this odd thing that you're
repelled you're pulled to it
like the notion of god but also just the
sheer enormity of
and power of god you're repulsed at the
same time so you're kind of
caught in the middle and shelley writes
what becomes sort of an iconic
description of that here you know about
you know
why he wrote the poem it was composed
under the immediate impression of the
deep and powerful feelings excited by
the objects
which it attempts to describe you know

as an
undisciplined overflowing of the soul
so you know the notion here
is that you know this untamable
wilderness to use his words as this
incredible
um impact on his soul
you know the deepest part of him that
that's
going to increasingly be the idea
um of how we respond to wilderness
it's important to note because we're
we're close enough now a couple hundred
years where these ideas haven't died out
yet they they may be dying out
now and we can talk about that but
for the most part people feel this
feeling
today people who go to yosemite
feel this feeling you know that's this
is this is what it does it just elicits
this in you
now the fascinating thing to think about
is this has not always been the case
you know this is 200 years ago 400 years
ago
people saw mountains and we have people
like john evelyn as a writer at the time
who actually talks about
crossing the alps to get to italy and
he's utterly petrified by it his
experience of it is not
sublime his experience is not seeing you
know intense glory and wonder in it
some writers did you know you can see it
even in the early renaissance and i've
argued
with petrarch for example but for the
most part people didn't the average
person on the streets all these places
is dangerous and all
it's only because of the history of
thinking that we've been exploring that

you get to an end point
like this and i say endpoint because
it's it's still where we are
that people begin to
see this wilderness and all even with
all its frighteningness and power
and it's still something
that that is not only appealing but but
reacts on your
your soul and that's pretty
extraordinary and so so really what i'm
saying here is
here we have it full blown in 1816
the modern idea of wilderness and how
human beings react to it
which is pretty extraordinary because we
you might think that this is innate that
like every human being
would go to see something like this
beautiful mountain and have that
um same reaction that shelly has and
that you may have
but it's actually been constructed
culturally over
over the centuries
let's get out what's also fascinating
here
is how this is seen the ravine here he's
talking about
is described in
you know almost religious turn
uh um terms here that's
new and what we have
why that's important is you remember
with christianity which becomes the
predominant religion you know for a
thousand years in the west
more there was deep
suspicion for a long time of the world
the world was seen as a place of
temptation maybe
you know the playground of evil of satan
but

you know here you have something
different the choi is
looking out at this place with the same
kind of sublime
admiration slash fear that that people
had
when thinking of god and he's beginning
to think of it
like a place of worship like a temple
so it couldn't be more different than
the traditional view you know
thrown out the door is the idea that
this is a bad thing this is a good thing
this is
this is a really good thing this is
maybe the most
good place you can find on the planet
and
you know that's surprising right you
know you'd expect
most people at the time to think well
the most holy of all places
yeah probably inside a church you know
maybe even the part of the church is
holiest
well increasingly you're going to have
people take up this view by the end of
the
this century in america john muir will
come right out and say
that you know yosemite for example um
the
heki um river becomes a reservoir there
is actually like a temple it is nothing
short of a temple it's one of the
holiest places on the planet
um that's a great thing from an
environmental point of view because it
really
gets us caring about these places in an
extraordinary way and
we see this the the beginning of it here
and

again i have to think of it as a really
good thing
as an environmentalist
yeah the romantic poets transformed
nature in this sense um it's not
something to be
feared in this view i mean feared in the
sense of you know the sublime
encounter with it but it's something to
be you know
almost worshiped and certainly you don't
you don't destroy what you worship and
with john muir that's the very thing
that he argues when he when he talks
about
that river being something um beautiful
and and lake area there um he's doing it
because people wanted to dam it up to
get a water supply which they did to go
to
san francisco and it's still there and
it's still used for that reason
to to mure that was just unthinkable
that people would do that that that
temple
that holy place should be left as being
sacred
well have we come a long way in the
course
right because at the beginning the holy
sacred place
was the cedar forest in the epic of
gilgamesh
and just like the people who wanted to
dam up
you know part of yosemite to get water
in gilgamesh what you had was
gilgamesh who wanted those resources too
but in his case the cedar forest
and and went ahead and did it because
there was no protector
because he could defeat the protector of
place here

um kind of a spoiler we're going to get
to rachel carson
you know new protectors of place are the
environmentalists
and of course in the 21st century we've
fully inherited this view of wilderness
not as something bad not as something to
be exploited
well let's put it some people have a
view of wilderness so
the parts of alaska that you know are
sitting on top of a lot of
oil some people look at them and just
see you know those resources
the oil but many americans i think and i
hope
are are influenced by this thinking and
and see wilderness as something precious
maybe even sort of holy
so let me get out of this shot um this
is
two years after mont blanc 1818 um
caspar david friedrich
the wanderer among the sea of fog so
this is a visual representation
of what we just talked about
so this is well first a normative
european at the time which is a european
pretty wealthy white guy looking out at
a view like mont blanc
and this is this you know this is a
visual representation of the sublime
experience of it all so why is this guy
going there well presumably he's climbed
up this
incredibly dangerous thing to just look
at that
and just to experience the the awe the
the holiness of that on the other hand
that looks awfully dangerous to me it
looks like he could fall at any moment
but the experience was worth the danger
of it so that's

that's the sublime experience now a couple things are clear one the subject matter is wilderness europeans you know especially this you know sort of emerging movement really are fascinated by wilderness on the other hand you never really get the human presence out of there so we'll see the human presence oh sorry that was not supposed to happen we'll see the human presence uh diminished throughout the this century but here he's a very large you know presence here and also notice if you actually you know crisscross the sight lines here um it's clear he's at the center of all this so um almost uh attention well there is a tension there between on the one hand a fascinating in the wilderness but an acknowledgement of the human presence and we'll see thoreau direct address that so this is mont blanc early in the 19th century this is a painting of it um yeah white mountain um this is it today ironically what we're seeing here in terms of wilderness and climate change was is in part what we're seeing here is a glacier and that glacier is now melting and i'm not sure when this photo was taken and it's over 10 years ago and i'm sure it's melted even more since then so um yeah and this is for example what english had the closest thing they

had to something like bump block which
is their fairfield horseshoe
this just happens to be when it has snow
and it generally doesn't have snow
but but comparison is i think like a
third of the height of mont blanc so
you can see why even though they're sort
of wilderness in england at the time
um and you you know the people would be
drawn to something like mont blanc
because it sort of epitomizes it
um this month fairfield hoshu
incidentally
is in the lake district and it's right
near the little town of grashmere which
is where wordsworth
lived so wordsworth had um of course
shelley's want to write small block but
wordsworth
in particular had something kind of like
mont blanc and that's probably why he
moved near it
but on the other hand i can tell you
having having climbed
the fairfield horseshoe as impressive as
it may look
yeah you can you can do that as a
non-technical climb in like maybe 12
hour i think it took like 12 hours to do
it
and you know it's it's actually what
they call an england of ramble
um and a rambo is just when you you
walk and it's not you don't have to
scramble up it using your hands and all
you can just walk the whole thing so
it's uh
it's not like true wilderness which is
why people
were were drawn to things like mont
blanc
ah here we go we're with thoreau
an auspicious moment here right because

if you
visualize the course layout from the
prezi
we've now jumped the atlantic we we made
a little jump
over you know the english channel into
england now we're making a big one
and we've also moved forward in time
we're at 1854.
ethero's experience at walden pond takes
place earlier
in the late 1840s but the book itself
becomes published in 1854.
so another question are you enjoying
walden
depends on how you've decided to do the
readings before or after or maybe some
combination
but um curious what you think of
walden whether you enjoy it or not
i don't want to put if you haven't read
it
i don't want to make expectations that
are that are too high
but you know it's
the portion that we read the beginning
of it is one of those things that could
could change your life maybe i know that
sounds corny
and it's probably not going to happen so
again don't get set up for it
but thoreau is really stopping to think
about
life and he's doing it in a very
thoughtful
and very environmental way and
we'll talk about that as we go but it's
it's a pretty remarkable book i have to
tell you
i read walden in my early teens for the
first time
and and i was just you know maybe it's
the age i read it i was you know so

story-eyed and all but i was just sort
of dumb struck and
and overwhelmed by it i don't i don't
know that you'll feel that way i
probably put it on the syllabus in part
because i was hoping you might
but it's um it's a milestone book
for us and in the history of western
environmental thinking that we're
charting
just a really important work to take up
so technically you would not call thro
thorough a romantic poet
and romantic poets generally um or
that that moniker describes the movement
in england at the time so
blake has seen as an early romantic poet
wordsworth is certainly one as
is showing but thoreau
now that we're on the other side of the
atlantic is part of what's generally
called the american trends and dental
movement
this was founded by his friend and
mentor
ralph waldo emerson so
it shares a lot in common and it's not
like the two didn't cross-pollinate it's
not like americans
of the american uh transcendental
movement
didn't know about romanticism um in
england or elsewhere and romanism by the
way
with writers that we don't take up like
holderland in
germany um is alive and well too so
reminiscence was kind of
throughout europe but especially in
england and and germany i think
um these folks were influenced
and now we're talking about american
transcendentals not only by

continental romanticism but but german philosophy
at the time so um people like schopenhauer would have been an influence
on them eastern religion and this is an important thing since we're going to wind up taking a look at buddhism um eastern religion has had an impact on europe yeah for a thousand years really
so you may not we may not talk a lot about it like
uh or we haven't in like the medieval period chaucer's period but there is an encounter with the east and it is trickling over
and i noted sort of in passing and the 17th century you know a little mini fad going around europe around england especially was the hindu diet which meant vegetarian diet and that was you know influential and that was coming
from there so people are well aware of it and milton references and all too and the encounter with the east but with thoreau and the transcendental movement you have a more sustained encounter thoreau is reading the texts thoreau is aware of features of buddhism for example that we're going to talk about
and and that's important because there had been a little bit of influence you know eastern influence on the west but but now it's
it's pronounced and it's going to have an impact in shaping modern environmentalism
mysticism too so i just wanted to like to let you know that it's not just

what we're in what we're seeing in this period is not just the western tradition that we've been charting all along there's this other you know and it would be seen with the capital o as other um tradition that is now impacting the west and and and for good i would argue in that the kind of things that thoreau is taking from his study of west of eastern thinking you informs what he's doing at walden pond and and from our point of view is important informs his environmentalism so we talked about you know mont blanc being seen almost like a temple um to throw you know wilderness is going to be like a religion you know um so you don't um have because we've included well you may have this actually but anyhow on the back cover of walden it's described as you know for naturalist essayist early environmentalist henry david thoreau nature was a religion so like wordsworth thoreau actually wanted to experience nature further so wordsworth moved out to the lake district in england kind of the closest wilderness he could get and thoreau moves to well he doesn't move very far and we'll talk about that he moves a mile outside of the little town where he lived which is concord massachusetts to a lake where you know no one was living at the time

but why he does this he wants to be
closer to nature and
and and he feels that this makes him
sort of closer to god
so this is again
a thoroughly modern idea we saw its
emergence at the beginning of the
century but now by mid-century someone
like thoreau
is developing it further and more
completely
you do have to know however and this
would um
we could look to pastoral as an
influence here we'll talk about the
influence of pastor ontario more
explicitly in the next lecture
but it's a highly romanticized view
of of nature of wilderness of
walden pond so
thoreau i mean throwing wordsworth are
somewhat different and you have
pastoral writing now happening from the
pasture
you know happening from out there and
you might assume then that the realities
of life
would creep in to those descriptions um
if pastoral were written by
you know a rural farmer and all um like
remember we saw that actual shepherd in
um
shakespeare's actually like it and
shakespeare puts him there to tell you
about
the life out in the country and the fact
that it's not very
very nice but with wordsworth and
and of course with thoreau we're looking
at here
he's going to buy into the the pastoral
view that it's very nice and the
description of it is going to be that

it's
life's great there you know you'll put
down um
you should i would i imagine you would
put down walden
you know and say wow that was that seems
like life was pretty cool there i mean
you may
you may see his shortcomings and you may
have the very shortcomings that we saw
in um and as you like it like
touchstone's character saying
yeah it was nice and all but yeah
there's not a lot of people there
not a lot of interesting restaurants and
all you you may think that but
you still kind of have to to buy into
thoreau describing it as a pretty nice
place
um but keep in mind that this is
culturally constructed right 200 years
before thorough that wouldn't have been
the view
so on as you like it all kind of views
were
existed regarding the environment so the
one that ultimately
kind of won out from an environmental
perspective is the one that throws
is helping in a big way to develop here
a little bit on thoreau
um thoreau first is born into a
relatively wealthy background he
attended harvard as an undergraduate
and um i can tell you he's not very far
from it in fact
having gotten my phd at harvard i used
to ride my bike out to walden pond
from cambridge from the boston area and
from the harvard campus to walden pond
it's
22 miles i know because when you bike
things you tend to you tend to look at

every mile
so um not an avid bicycle race or
anything like that but
i was able to bike out to walden pond
and then back to the harvard campus
in a pretty comfortable three hours so
it's like a
44 mile bike ride and spending you just
done 10 or 15 minutes actually at walden
pond sometimes i spend longer don't
don't don't worry but for the most part
i um
you know used to like it as a a nice
trip there and back so
thorough wealthy and well-educated
yeah something to to keep in mind
is to to frame that is that
thoreau is you know making a big deal of
the fact that he's living this modest
lifestyle that he's not spending a lot
of money
he counts every every penny literally
and you might assume that that's just
the way that
a person would uh feel and think if they
lived a life like this but
one thing that's important to note is
thoreau is a wealthy guy
doing this you know there are plenty of
people at the time plenty
working class people at the time we'll
see here
many having you know newly come to the
us from from other places
ireland was a big place where people
were emigrating from um
these people live the life that thoreau
is championing here and thoreau this is
this huge
lifestyle change but it's not for a lot
of people
and thoreau doesn't really acknowledge
that any kind of passing we'll see

directly he does but
you need to kind of frame that out that
this is a wealthy person's
project and and that
the life that he is so proud of living
is one that a lot of people have to live
out of necessity
so thoreau actually notes this but
doesn't make anything of it
that you know the house that he builds
and part he cuts trees down to build the
house and we'll see a picture of it
directly
um but part of it you know came from a
shanty that he
he purchased from this guy named um
james cullen so you know why he did this
he would
need things needed things like the
windows and hinges and
things like that you wouldn't have
gotten from just cutting down trees
but you know james collins is an irish
laborer
and he lived in this little shanny like
the rose cabin with his family of three
with his wife and and baby
and and thoreau notes that he passed him
um as throws going into walden into
uh build his house he passes collins
coming out
and everything that they had you know
their bed
their coffee mill you know their
chickens everything
they were carrying with them so there
were plenty of people
who lived the lifestyle that taro was
advocating here
not out of a choice but out of necessity
at the time
thoreau doesn't quite acknowledge that
but we we need to bracket him off and

you know the fact that he was from a
wealthy background and he has a harvard
education
he should have been a clue to that but
if you look for other
clues in here like this encounter with
james collins
you know it just reminds us of who
thoreau
is and and that's important to be aware
of
um so you know
he's you know telling us how wonderful
this life is this pastoral life is and
he totally believes it i
think um and he is living so
you know we saw kind of the same thing
with depends hurst and you know johnson
was doing it for robert sydney saying
what a wonderfully modest little home he
had in the country
well that was a pretty big little modest
home
thoreau is actually living it right i
mean you know we'll see his cabin it's
tiny
it's like the size of a garden shed but
you know
the one thing to to note about this
though he's free of
economic motivation so it's not that he
you know has to live that way presumably
for james
collins and his family they had no
choice they had to live that way
this is kind of a lark for thoreau and
he doesn't
do it for long i mean he does it for a
couple years which is long but not it's
not like a lifetime
and it's not like he has to face the
reality of this kind of living
so a while back a student in this course

aptly noted that that walden then
is kind of a how-to manual you know you
so you go to to bookstores or you go
online
and you'll see all sorts of books that
tell you how to how to become wealthy
and they'll tell you like how like
you know learn how to to flip real
estate and you'll become wealthy and
what these are are for people who don't
have a lot of money it's a how-to manual
to to get a lot of money and live that
kind of lifestyle
um but you know this is just the
opposite
is a how-to manual not for you know poor
people wanting to get rich but for a
rich person wanting to live like he was
poor and he describes how to do it and
he
you know it's it's not for people like
james collins he would probably not have
found this book very interesting
it's for people like thoreau and and
presumably that may be you too and that
we're
you know we're those of us in the
developed world
middle class people all have things
pretty nice
and you know we wouldn't have to live
like thoreau lives unless we chose it
um we won't really spend a whole lot of
time in this class but
in the uh companion class of this
english 23 of course we'll look at the
modern minimalist movement which
you know thoreau can be seen as sort of
the great great grandparent of it all
where people are doing just the same but
even so it's a choice it's not
necessarily the people are doing it some
people are i think some people

you know especially real estate being
what it is in all you might decide to
move to a micro apartment in a city
because you know a traditional apartment
especially in parts of my state
california can be pretty expensive
but anyhow this is kind of a how-to
manual

for how to get poor

so the project lasts just two years

and even so you know um

he won't he it's so having been there i

can tell you biking it it's

it's a mile to get to concord from

walden pond and concord is a is a small
town but

it is throws town that would have had
everything you needed there like stores
and all there's like a nice restaurant
there as i recall

um and of course it's rose home is there
so he would have gone in to see his
parents and all he definitely goes home
every sunday for dinner

and you know it's it's not like he's way
out there

in in wilderness so people have called
throw on this as sort of a cop out so
like wait

what this is not wilderness okay mont
blanc i can arg you can't buy the
argument that that's wilderness that
place looks pretty

desolate and scary and i don't see
anybody living on the top of that you
know glacier

but this is not wilderness and
furthermore

thoreau you know he says this is my life
here

well it's not really his life right i
mean

yes it was two years of his life but he

decides to give that
up and go back in and you know
um take part in you know live
the cushy middle-class life that that he
inherited
so and that's a cop-out as well
in many people's minds so you have to
you have to bracket off the row if
you're not going to do that
if you don't do that if you don't
bracket them off you know you just focus
on this you're going to say well i don't
you know why am i listening to this guy
this guy you know it's not wilderness at
all
fair enough sure enough i mean it's
perfectly fine to feel that way about
him but there's still
important things in thoreau and we're
gonna we're gonna look at those in in
detail
um another important thing to note about
thoreau and i couldn't
you know i wouldn't feel right giving
you a lecture and
giving you a throw to read if i didn't
mention it that he is
an early protester of slavery
and you may have encountered another
work by
thoreau which is the essay on civil
disobedience
notice that publication date of 1849
this is published right you know
thoreau's doing his his walden
experiment at the end of the 1840s
and in fact it actually um this incident
we'll see
shows up in walden too but
thoreau and this is a really milestone
article and an important one
because he helped develop the rationale
for the modern

passive resistive movement and this would be read by and influential on people like tolstoy you may not know tolstoy is as sort of a um a protester um but he was very much concerned about the emancipation of the surf so the kind of slavery going on if you don't know in um in russia in like 19th century and peasants were ultimately freed and tolstoy um writes about this and you know it shows up in his novels but he's he's very act very politically active and concerned about freeing everyone um gandhi of course the middle of the 20th century you know freeing india from colonial british rule and of course martin luther king jr but all those three have in common however is that they are you know revolutionaries but they are not suggesting violent overthrow of the government you know gandhi could have suggested that right there are so many you know indian people compared to their you know british controllers rulers that they they could have probably you know waged a physical war but these people having read thoreau and and socrates and others they concluded that the best way was a passive resistance to power and of course martin luther king may be the you know in the u.s most well known for

it he did not call for a violent
overthrow of the government
he called for passive resistance so
let's let's
talk a little bit about that and and you
can see it by way of throws example here
so what thoreau suggests
uh well okay i'll read the thing here so
i was seized and put into jail because
as i have
elsewhere related so by the way this is
page 111
of our edition of walden so he actually
mentions in walden
this experience that he relates in civil
disobedience so
kind of a little trivia thing that he's
talking about the essay civil
disobedience and what brought it about
in here
as i have elsewhere related in the essay
civil disobedience
i did not pay attacks to or recognize
the authority of
the state which buys and sells men women
and children
like cattle so what he's saying
here is and this is central to his
view of passive resistance yeah
he could have become active in in you
know the underground railroad or
something in some way trying to stop
um slavery but he doesn't take that
approach
he says i am not going to support
a government which does that i'm not
going to directly support them by paying
tax to that government
so that government if i give them my
money they're going to use it to
you know cr to continue this practice of
slavery
i am going to withdraw support from this

enterprise

well what one person does make a difference probably

not at all but if this became a movement and look at gandhi when it becomes a movement and enough people do it and they withdraw

their support and they they say i'm just no longer going to do this

i am just going to stop support then that can have profound

implications and that can that can bring about a revolution

you know as you know it seems sort of like counter-intuitive like if you're gonna you know

if you're gandhian you want to kick the british out you're gonna have to like physically kick them out

but no gandhi had this other way this passive way of doing it it's not active fighting but passively resisting and not

not taking part in in the government and it worked for gandhi and arguably the civil rights movement

the gains that it that it made in the 1960s and 70s

which by the way are not not nearly enough and we still need to be making them today

of course but the gains that were made did in part come from

um you know the passive resistance approach

so thoreau even if he had not you know done this you know walled an experiment and lived out in the

wilderness we may well still know him but

but for what he his role in in in formulating

passive resistance and directly and i

think in the united states is
so important and directly in terms of of
slavery of that that enterprise i think
he would be
remembered and um and seen as an
important milestone
um
so here's the argument um in detail you
know he stopped paying his taxes for six
years
and they finally caught up with him when
um he was
um in 18 in the end of the 1840s
and threw him in jail but for one night
so this is another sort of classical
throws thing and if you find thoreau
sort of copying out left and right this
would be another example
oh yeah i'm throwing i didn't pay my
taxes and i you know was thrown into
jail and i suffered because of it
uh you know gandhi was in jail too
gandhi did hunger strikes in
jail gandhi was in jail a lot longer
than than
one night so throws you know big
big jail story experience it was one
night
so important yeah but on the other hand
yeah but you know in fairness to
to his thinking however you know if
everyone withdrew
in the united states at his time you
know everyone or just a big chunk of
people withdrew the support for slavery
it would die that was the argument
behind it
it you know it was simplistic right this
was in 1849 we know that
you know 15 years and then later the
country is embroiled in the middle of
the civil war
it it it didn't didn't end so nicely i

mean and
act passive resistance did not you know
you know take today there
it was in fact very violent resistance
active resistance
but you know toro's argument you can you
can see why
it it could work and has worked in in
other contexts and
and of course gandhi's and and martin
luther king
jr are are good examples of of where
real
gains can be made through the approach
so i mentioned this because there is a
tie in a dovetail with his
his um walden experiment
if everybody did what thoreau did if
everyone
moved out to the countryside like this
and
more importantly and we'll talk about
this
if everyone eschewed consumerism
we would end it so from an environmental
point of view
um the consumer you know consumerism is
a huge problems i
i know in english 23. i never tired of
saying it
for example the average american buys
64 items of clothing a year and that's
major items of clothing that's not
consumed
including incidentals like socks and
underwear 64 items of clothing a year
in part this is because of the recent
last few decades trend to fast fashion
but but that's that's crazy right so
you can see why movements like
minimalism
you know to counter that and people
coming up with you know different ways

of having wardrobes that have very few items
you can see why this is important and
you can see why if everyone
did it you know the whole project
of fast fashion and all would come
crumbling to an
end very quickly you know because we
we support that we support consumerism
every time we go by
you know these things every time we buy
one of those 64 items of clothing
we're supporting that project and that's
that's a huge problem and just give it
as an example because you could see
you know if everyone did what thoreau
did
you know i'm not saying by moving out to
wilderness i'm not talking about that
part of the project
but you know he has this wonderful
two-word imperative we're going to look
at
simplify simplify if everyone took that
seriously and simplified your life and
didn't have a car and
you know didn't buy a lot of stuff and
and you know
lived in a much smaller house like
thoreau lives in you know
we could we could grind climate change
in the climate crisis
yeah not to do it away with it but we we
would
radically radically slow it down
and just to to to go back to the other
observation regard
running thoreau um this is a project for
rich people this is a project not for
people
you know who don't have but for people
who have
what i mean by that is as you know i i

mentioned
in um english 23 you know
two-thirds of the the co2 that are in
the atmosphere the principal gas causing
the climate crisis were put there by
the developed world we are the problem
rich people you know comparatively rich
people
in terms of the world or the problem if
we all did what thoreau
did you know coming from a wealthy you
know position
decided to radically rethink the way we
live
and radically reduce you know our
our footprint on the planet it would
have incredible
profound you know implications for the
climate crisis and it really
is what we're doing rather than the you
know the rest of the world
who in some cases have very little
almost negligible
impact on the climate crisis so in that
sense
you know even though thoreau is kind of
a cop-out because he's this you know
wealthy person deciding to live this
simpler lifestyle
well if the planets wealthy
people decided to live far simpler
lifestyles
it would have profound implications and
it is a form
you know if you think of it in terms of
thoreau's way of thinking
of passive resistance of resisting the
project
so you know i guess we could go you know
burn down you know fast fashion stores
or something
that would be active resistance but you
know no one's suggesting that and of

course
thoreau has another way of going about
it yeah just
stop buying it they'll go away just like
that
so it's interesting to think about the
two together
yeah um
so do you agree with this um i have a
poll here and see if i can pull that
down sorry
do you agree with the road consumerism
should be combated by reducing our
purchases
um this is sometimes referred to
as you know um fighting with your wallet
or
voting with your wallet more more
commonly
um just curious what you think because
if you think about it
english 23 we take this up in detail
it's something you can actually do
you can actually do it today and and the
interesting thing is
it's not something you have to do today
it's something you
have to not do today which is to make a
purchase
which now that we have online purchases
are so easy but you could you know
you could make a change by by not doing
something today
that's what thoreau is arguing that's
what thoreau did
for six years he made a change by by not
doing something paying taxes
of course the other thing which is kind
of a theme that we've seen throughout
the term
and he also communicated that to others
and
communicating it by way of you know like

the
essay on civil disobedience
so just to show you what walden pond
actually was uh
walter pond as i mentioned 20 miles
outside of boston it's still
relatively rural you know i wouldn't
call it wilderness by any stretch of
the imagination but it is it is pretty
rural
and this is what the pond looks like
today
um here uh what you can't see by the way
well first off this is a rail line that
goes through
there was there in thoreau's day so thoreau
actually
talks about the sound of the train and
bothers him because his cabin actually
would have been right here in the actual
location but you can't see in this
picture if this were a larger photograph
here
that i think there are seven parking
lots
at walden pond and it's actually kind of
like a um
like uh um a focal point for
for pilgrims environmentalists who come
there every year
and over a million people come there
every year in fact
you can see here this is sort of the um
the edge of the pond there's actually a
um
like an eco fence surrounding that so
you can't get too close
and they're pretty well laid out of
maintained paths
that they'd like you to stay on because
people would literally trample this area
that there's so many of them
to put it in perspective by the way it's

approximately the size of the ucsb campus the whole walden pond itself so that's pretty big so what i mean by that is this pond here is about as big as the campus area-wise and that's not including like isla vista and all that's just the main campus so pretty large but not you know like in terms of mont blanc or something sorry i shouldn't have been in the shot this whole time um this is view actually i think that is if you were right here looking at the lake this is what you would see so um yeah it's it's not it's it's not wilderness like montblanc it's not big like mont blanc but it is you know thoreau the closest wilderness you could find yeah it's it's worth noting i'll just go back for a second that you know even the trees here and all you might say well that's that's wilderness that's been there a long time but but it's not and even wasn't in thoreau's day and he talks about that later in the book what i mean is that whole area had been deforested at some point earlier and there had been true old-growth forests which were you know what was there before europeans came native americans might have harvested you know some trees and all but they never did any kind of clear cutting and all europeans however did and they did that pretty much right away so believe it or not the first law against indiscriminate tree harvesting

in the united states is comes up in
massachusetts in
the state where walden pond is but
actually in the 1620s before it's even a
state
so thoreau talks about this like it's
like an old-growth
forest but it's really not this is sort
of new
smaller trees that have grown which make
it in a certain kind of way more
inviting too
and i showed you the rail line going
through there it's it's not
it's not wildernessy at all you know and
many people would you know sit in the
train
which by the way it still exists today
as a commuter rail if you wanted to take
the quick way to get out of
boston or the camp out of cambridge
you'd hop on the um
commuter rail quick i say rather than a
bicycle
and you know people enjoy looking out at
walden pond as they pass and all so
yeah yeah don't buy into his
descriptions that's wilderness it's
it's really not so we're going to spend
next time
with thoreau and we're going to talk
about him in detail
regarding hold on this should be
centered a little better
there you go we're going to talk about
him in detail regarding the tradition
that we've looked at so
the things that we mentioned you know
like local descriptive tradition
we're going to see him fleshing out
attacks on consumerism
his relationship to pastoral and thoreau
himself

as as sort of the new genus loki for
modernity um all this is a reference to
what we've had before
and and in a way i mean you know thoreau
people people sometimes talk about him
like he's this milestone thinker he's
you know there was nothing like thorough
before he just popped out of a vacuum
yeah yeah no thoreau is not coming out
of a vacuum
throw is coming out of this tradition
it's not to diminish what he did i mean
there's original thinking there and all
but
there is an incredible synthesis of what
had already been around which you now
know about
and you know he's in that context too so
the fascination with wilderness and
seeing it like as a temple and all
this was going on on the other side of
the of the atlantic ocean with people
uh like shelly and others so it's not
that that he's
alone here it's not that he's truly
original
but he's still an important person for
no
other reason that he synthesized it all
together
and hit on so many things that really
still resonate today one thing was kind
of a spoiler i'll
mention now thoreau was
in in some sense kind of ahead of his
time um and
at least if you if you um look at book
sales because he he couldn't give this
book away i mean in fact i think he had
100 copies printed and he wasn't able to
give
most of them away but he becomes
incredibly and

he is read after that and and many many people
as i've noted have read him after it but
it's really like the 1960s with the
so-called back to the land movement and
all
where thoreau explodes um interest and
throw explodes and people actually try
to emulate him there was actually a book
i remember when i was a teenager i saw
in a bookstore
it was a book on it's like a blueprint
on how to build thoreau's cabin i mean
physically told you how to build it and
while some people were doing things like
that other people were of course moving
out to communes in in
in quote wilderness areas if if um i
don't think
there were two wilderness but it he was
enormously influential
on the next wave of environmentalism
which is basically rachel carson's error
from the 1960s onward so
kind of ahead of his time on the other
hand
pulling together a lot that was well
before his time
so but we'll deal with him in more
detail next time
so take care