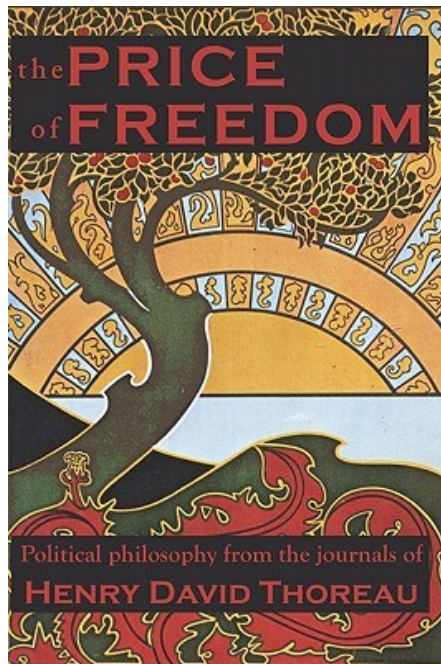




The Price of Freedom: Political Philosophy from Thoreau's Journals

Henry David Thoreau , David M. Gross (editor)

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Excerpts from Thoreau's journals concerning civil disobedience, conscience, law, government, slavery, war, and economics. These passages are what Thoreau considered to be "the price of freedom" - his attempts to mine the richest vein of observations about human conscience and political philosophy, and to present what he found free from all censorship.

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David Gross says

The Price of Freedom presents excerpts from the journals of Henry David Thoreau in which he writes about law, government, man in society, war, economics, duty, and conscience.

Thoreau had to be somewhat cautious when speaking or publishing, but in his journal he felt free to entertain thoughts that have been described as “blasphemous, revolutionary, or, at best, politically incautious” and therefore were never published during his lifetime

These show Thoreau to be uncompromising in his disgust with the government, with church authority, with the news media, and with slavery and those who would accommodate it.

They also show a Thoreau who defended wilderness against “improvement,” who was as curious about economics as he was about trees and turtles, who wrestled with arguments for animal rights, and who went from thinking of soldiers as almost mythological heroes to thinking of them as “powder monkeys” who had mortgaged their consciences to no good end.

Thoreau’s abolitionism was more radical than most—indeed, the mental slavery he opposed has yet to be abolished, and the battle over whether our souls shall be slave states or free soil is a civil war that continues to be fought.

Thoreau sided with freedom. The passages in this volume are part of what he considered “the price of freedom”—his attempts to mine the richest vein of observations about human and political life, and to preserve what he found free from all censorship.
