

Librería
Bonilla y Asociados
desde 1950



Título: Cambridge Companion To Henry David Thoreau

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Precio: \$507.50

Editorial:

Año: 1999

Tema:

Edición: 1ª

Sinopsis

ISBN: 9780521445948

The Cambridge Companion to Henry David Thoreau is intended as an accessible guide to reading and understanding the works of Thoreau. Presenting essays by a distinguished array of contributors, the Companion is a valuable resource for historical and contextual material, whether on early writings like *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, on the monumental *Walden*, or on his assorted journals and later books. It also serves in some ways as a biographical guide, offering new insights into his turbulent publishing career, and his brief but extraordinarily original life. In short, the Companion helps the reader come to Thoreau's writings, as he would say, '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