

Even in an "anthropocene," there are always forces on the scene other than those initiated by human bodies and their actions and efforts. How to discern, how to name, and how best to ride, decant, or resist these nonhuman currents --those are no easy tasks. My lecture examines how Henry Thoreau pursues this project under the rubric of a susceptibility to "natural influences." As Thoreau writes up his encounters with influences in his journals, a peculiar kind of efficacy or causality comes to the fore: a power to induce effects quietly, without fanfare, and often at the very margin of cognitive or sensuous detection.