Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism

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Several books published this year will have a lasting impact on the study of Transcendentalism, particularly Albert J. von Frank's *The Trials of Anthony Burns,* a fascinating account of Burns's trial and return to the South and a reassessment of the impact of Emersonian Transcendentalism on the American antislavery movement. Two significant works of biographical recovery also were published, Phyllis Cole's study of Mary Moody Emerson and Joan Goodwin's of Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley. Thomas R. Mitchell has provided a persuasive revision of the received understanding of the Hawthorne-Fuller relationship. Emerson's role as a poet and his place in poetic tradition are reconsidered in new books by Elisa New and Lisa Steinman, fresh alternatives to Harold Bloom's portrait of Emerson as head of a visionary poetic tradition. As the biographies by Cole and Goodwin and the biographically centered studies of von Frank and Mitchell suggest, biography is the ascending literary methodology in our increasingly post-theoretical era, responsive to the pressures of historical orientation in cultural studies and grounded in the exigencies of intellectual experience and creative endeavor.

i The Transcendentalist Movement

a. Transcendentalism and Antislavery Of particular significance to our understanding of the cultural and political legacy of Transcendentalism is Albert J. von Frank's *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston* (Harvard), a rare combination of authoritative scholarship and absorbing narrative. In recounting the trial and imprisonment of the fugitive slave Burns, whose capture and return to Virginia in 1854 electrified Boston and galvanized New England antislavery attitudes, von Frank also demonstrates the transformative power of Emer-

son's idealism, which served as the intellectual grounding for the activists' decision to reject established law and institutions. A generation of antislavery activists responded to "the liberating, progressive quality of Emerson's thought," which enabled "a bolder, more lively engagement with the world, opening up for them a further range of novel and authentic action." Noting the importance of a younger generation of Transcendentalist activists such as Theodore Parker, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Moncure D. Conway, von Frank describes their "desire for a larger sphere of action—what might be called emancipation in general." For them, Emerson was an empowering voice.

The key to Emerson's empowering effect was the very quality that many late-20th-century readers have distrusted in him—his idealism. "Emerson was a force in antislavery because of his idealism, not in spite of it," von Frank argues, calling attention to Emerson's appeal to transcendent moral principle, a "higher law," at a moment when national and regional law weighed against the antislavery movement. "The public has to be taught to suspend its law-abidingness; to recognize an emergent occasion; to see justice where authority sees crime, and vice versa." As von Frank demonstrates, the tension between "law-abidingness" and what Emerson called the moral sentiment exploded dramatically in the Burns episode, permanently altering the nature of the antislavery movement.

b. Biographical Recovery Our understanding of the context of Transcendentalism has been greatly extended by Phyllis Cole's *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism: A Family History* (Oxford) and Joan Goodwin's *The Remarkable Mrs. Ripley: The Life of Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley* (Northeastern). Emerson and Ripley made substantial and largely unacknowledged contributions to the intellectual climate of early-19th-century New England, and Cole and Goodwin challenge us to make a place for Emerson's vigorous, iconoclastic pietism and Ripley's skeptical, scientifically oriented stoicism within a broadened conception of Unitarianism and Transcendentalist culture.

Each woman's story is a family story, one that cannot be told without the explanatory context of both the constraint of family and the commitment to family. Cole's subtitle, "A Family History," is thus of particular significance. Mary Moody Emerson, though she remained unmarried and defiantly independent, nevertheless had a vital role in raising the Emerson brothers after her brother William Emerson's death. As self-appointed repository of family history, family lore, and piety, she com-

municated to her younger kin a rich tradition of New England spirituality. Cole portrays Mary Emerson as a dynamic though sometimes troubled spirit, and she makes telling use of her voluminous and consistently brilliant correspondence to demonstrate her intellectual and emotional vitality. Emerson's itinerant life, centered on her home at Elm Vale, near Waterville, Maine, includes numerous moves and visits of various lengths, suggesting an ongoing struggle to balance the call to privacy and self-reliant autonomy with the duty and desire for relationships and social place. It was a struggle that she never entirely resolved, but the inner tension that it generated is reflected in her remarkable insights into both the spiritual life and the claims of ethical engagement and constructive accomplishment that her letters reveal.

Sarah Alden Bradford married Samuel Ripley, the Unitarian minister in Waltham and son of Ezra Ripley, the longtime minister in Concord and patriarch of the "Old Manse." Her marriage put her in close relationship with the Emerson family throughout her life. Mother of nine children, minister's wife, and partner with her husband in a boarding school for boys maintained in their home, she undertook such formidable domestic commitments with enormous skill, energy, and devotion, meanwhile establishing herself, with little desire for public recognition, as one of the region's best classical scholars and an accomplished student of botany. She specialized in the study of lichens, in part because she could readily obtain new specimens for study from the firewood that was brought into the Ripley home. Of particular note, as Goodwin makes clear, was her candid skepticism about religion, including the moderate Unitarianism that her husband preached.

Cole's and Goodwin's presentations of the lives of women who were close to Ralph Waldo Emerson and part of the Transcendental circle remind us that purely ideological or doctrinal descriptions of Transcendentalism are inadequate. Mary Emerson was often at odds with her nephew on matters of theology and philosophy, always attempting to pull him toward an older piety. Sarah Ripley's sensibility seems distinctly more modern than Emerson's, empirical in outlook and not primarily oriented to theological speculation or religious experience. But clearly both women contributed to the larger dialogue from which the lectures and published works of Emerson and others developed. They shared a profound emotional sympathy with each other and engaged in a significant intellectual correspondence, further confirming the importance of interpersonal relationships as a significant dimension of the Transcen-

dentalists' intellectual culture. No account of Transcendentalism can be complete without a recognition of their presence.

c. Transcendentalism and Cultural History In *Democratic Personality* Nancy Ruttenburg describes how eruptions of "popular voice" in such episodes as the Salem witch trials and the Great Awakening presented new challenges of cultural interpretation and social authority in the emerging nation and made difficult demands on the nature of a democratic literature. The pervasive nature of such "disruptive public speech" in the Great Awakening forced a reassessment of the nature and authority of the individual and created a momentum for the literary valuation of the "common life" as the central literary subject, but it did not solve the troubling question of an individual's capacity to embody the voice of the populace. Cultural commentators such as Edward Tyrrell Channing, Joseph Stevens Buckminster, and William Ellery Channing wrestled with the nature of democratic literature, and Emerson became the "most cogent formulator and theoretician" of what Ruttenburg terms an "aesthetics of innocence," an "agentless poetic utterance whose essential truth could never be falsified by the individual poet's intrusive ego." This was the poetic program of Whitman, an achievement of "a self-identical, indeed Godly, moment in which land, literature, and literatus—nation, poem, and poet—would come into being simultaneously."

In " 'Transcendental Wild Oats' or The Cost of an Idea" (*ATQ* 12: 45–65) Claudia Durst Johnson perceptively describes Louisa May Alcott's satiric account of Fruitlands as the result of "a lacerating struggle between daughter and father" in which Alcott rejected her father's "philosophy, idealism, and earth denial" in favor of her mother's "affirmation of earth, humanism, and pragmatism." Alcott first conceived "Transcendental Wild Oats" as part of a larger account of Bronson Alcott's career, but eventually she subverted her father's phrase "the cost of an idea," turning it from an expression of his sense of martyrdom to a condemnation of his neglect of the needs of his wife and daughters. Gavin Jones's "The Paradise of Aesthetics: Sylvester Judd's *Margaret* and Antebellum American Literature" (*NEQ* 71: 449–72) explains the novel as "an early effort to embody 'transcendental' ideas in a large and complex imaginative structure," noting its organic form, its kinship with Albert Brisbane's Fourierist critique of family structures, and its utopian orientation. *Margaret* is Judd's more affirmative exploration of the ideas that Hawthorne and Melville assailed in *The Blithedale Romance* and *Pierre.* Two essays in

Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures consider Transcendentalism in the context of translation and cultural transmission. In "Translating Transcendentalism in New England: The Genesis of a Literary Discourse" (pp. 81–106) Kurt Mueller-Vollmer stresses "the historicization of literature and of Christianity," a process advanced by James Marsh, as the necessary condition for the emergence of Transcendentalist discourse. He notes George Ripley's ambitious series of translations, *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature,* as a vehicle through which Continental Romanticism could gain broader public acceptance in the United States. In "Transplanting German Idealism to American Culture: F. H. Hedge, W. T. Harris, C. T. Brooks" (pp. 107–24) Cyrus Hamlin sketches the considerable achievements of these three translators and mediators of German idealist texts, using them to suggest that successful cultural transmission depends not only on accurate and artful translation, but on complicated factors of reception "that go beyond the limits of language as such and beyond the control of individual translators." Patrick Labriola ("Germany and the American Transcendentalists: An Intellectual Bridge," *CS* 6: 99–113) adds some details on James E. Cabot's and Charles Stearns Wheeler's contributions to the Transcendentalists' knowledge of German philosophy, arising from their study at German universities. In "Reading Transcendentalist Texts Religiously: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Myth of Secularization," pp. 152–70 in John L. Mahoney, ed., *Seeing into the Life of Things: Essays on Literature and Religious Experience* (Fordham), Kevin Van Anglen offers a well-considered warning against imposing the currently prevalent "myth of secularization" on Transcendentalist texts. Resisting the assumption that religion is "a receding rather than a persisting or emergent cultural force," Van Anglen would instead grant "a greater sensitivity to their complexity and capacity for embodying contradictions in matters of belief and unbelief." He observes that "Emerson was as much engaged in the continuing traditions of New England Protestantism as in pulling that particular temple down around him," and he characterizes Thoreau's "keen interest in Asian religions" as an expression of his deeply ingrained religious sensibility.

John Sullivan Dwight's formative place in the history of classical music criticism is detailed in Mark N. Grant's *Maestros of the Pen: A History of Classical Music Criticism in America* (Northeastern). Grant maintains that the Transcendentalists were "finding 'religion' anew in their worship of the fine arts, particularly music." Dwight found in

Beethoven's music "the transcendentalist ideal of exalting the spirit in sound," articulating his passion in the *Dial,* the *Harbinger,* and, finally, in *Dwight's Journal of Music,* remaining a fixture in the musical life of Boston through most of the 19th century. Dwight's "unique style of perceiving and celebrating the idealistic quality of art music had an incalculable influence on subsequent music criticism in this country." Dwight's critical work is also cited by Nicholas E. Tawa as one of the reasons "Why American Art Music First Arrived in New England," pp. 141–65 in Michael Saffle, ed., *Music and Culture in America, 1861–1918* (Garland), an essay that describes the emergence of five late-19th-century Boston composers, John Knowles Paine, George Whitfield Chadwick, Edward MacDowell, Horatio Parker, and Arthur Foote.

d. Critical Guides As the ocean of commentary on Transcendentalism swells, one needs every aid in staying afloat. That is of course the role of this chapter, but good guidance can also be found in a number of recent review-essays on Transcendentalist criticism. I have noted the informative assessments of Eric Wilson, Joel Myerson, Elizabeth Witherell, and Susan Belasco Smith (*AmLS 1997,* pp. 6, 11, 16, and 21). Several other helpful essays can be added. Of particular importance for its discernment and comprehensive scope is Charles Capper's " 'A Little Beyond': The Problem of the Transcendentalist Movement in American History" (*JAH* 85: 502–39), in which Capper observes that Transcendentalism "has virtually vanished from the historical radar screen." Capper begins his overview of Transcendentalist historiography by noting the important work of second-generation Transcendentalists Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Caroline Healey Dall, whose claims for the movement's significance were revived, but crucially altered, by George Santayana. Santayana did not see Transcendentalism as an element of the "genteel tradition" that he dismissed, but instead he included the Transcendentalists' "systematic subjectivism" in "the on-going stream of modern philosophy." Transcendentalism's cultural importance was further enhanced in the 1920s when V. L. Parrington gave the movement "a democratic progressivist plot." Despite Parrington's positive portrayal and Daniel Aaron's later "progressivist liberal" depiction, midcentury historians divided over the movement's political identity and influence, with the skeptics led by slavery historian Stanley Elkins's condemnation of Transcendentalists as "men without responsibility" whose antinomianism undermined the social institutions

necessary for effective social progress. Capper believes that F. O. Matthiessen's influential case for the Transcendentalists' literary achievement was the most effective counter to this political critique because he used Emerson and Thoreau to reassess American democracy.

While Matthiessen concentrated on Emerson and Thoreau, the modern recovery of the Transcendentalist movement was the work of Perry Miller, who recognized the "religious sensibility" as the "animating center" of the movement and recovered "dozens of important figures who had virtually disappeared in modern scholarship." While recent scholars have effectively delineated the Boston Unitarian context of the movement, Capper argues that Transcendentalism's influence on "the broader national culture" has yet to be explained. To address this question "in light of all the corroding acids applied to them by postliberal and postmodern critiques," Capper argues that "three Tocquevillean paradigms . . . liberal religion, individualist democracy, and national identity" must now be addressed. Richly informative, with an astute description of the present state of Transcendentalist studies among historians, Capper's essay is essential reading.

One might contrast Capper's view of the fading significance of Transcendentalism among historians with Ronald A. Bosco's observation that "Transcendentalism has emerged as a defining movement in American intellectual, literary, and social history from the 1830s to the 1860s," one encouraged by the extensive efforts in textual editing over the past four decades ("The Expanding Textual Circle of New England Transcendentalism," *Text* 11: 343–64). The new Emerson editions have "enhanced Emerson's reputation and contributed to a wholesale refiguring of American Romanticism generally and of Transcendentalism specifically." These editions have also resulted in a greater interest in the Transcendental movement in general, where further textual work helped initiate the recovery of a number of lesser-known Transcendentalists and contributed to "a virtual Margaret Fuller frenzy." Bosco offers insightful consideration of Helen Deese's *Jones Very: The Complete Poems* and Nancy Craig Simmons's *The Selected Letters of Mary Moody Emerson* (see *AmLS 1993,* pp. 4–5), editions that are "widening even further the circle of New England Transcendentalism." T. Gregory Garvey's "Two Faces of Emerson: A Review of Recent Books" (*CollL* 25, i: 261–75) emphasizes the growing chasm between conceptions of the Transcendental Emerson and the reformist Emerson and considers the impact of new books by Michael Lopez (see *AmLS 1996,* pp. 3–4), George Kateb, Len Gougeon

and Joel Myerson, and Robert D. Richardson Jr. (see *AmLS 1995,* pp. 3–5). These works "assume that Emerson is primarily a dialectical rather than a syncretic thinker" and they "emphasize Emerson's engagement with daily life," productive avenues for our contemporary appreciation of his achievement. Mary Loeffelholz (" 'Question of Monuments': Emerson, Dickinson, and American Renaissance Portraiture," *MLQ* 59: 445–69) responds to recent works by John Carlos Rowe and Charlene Avallone (see *AmLS 1997,* pp. 8–9, 21–22) to suggest that any attempt to monumentalize American "renaissance" discourse will falter before the period's dynamic and progressive qualities.

ii Emerson

a. Emerson and Poetic Tradition Elisa New's *The Line's Eye: Poetic Experience, American Sight* (Harvard) is a forceful and original reconsideration of the American poetic tradition that takes a provocatively critical view of both the politically oriented New Americanist criticism and Harold Bloom's influential account of an Emersonian visionary tradition in American poetry. New's founding American poetic voice is not Emerson but Jonathan Edwards, and she presents a spirited and ingenious attempt to rehabilitate an American Calvinist tradition. New emphasizes Edwards's value as an exemplar of a "literature of experience" that is "perceptual rather than conceptual, tending to lyrical rather than narrative or philosophical expression." Her Edwardsean/pragmatist tradition (including Audubon, Thoreau, Dickinson, William James, Marianne Moore, and, crucially, William Carlos Williams) counters the visionary with "a discerning and prudent orthodoxy on the lookout for Revelation" in the more commonplace aspects of experience. Antitheoretical and antispeculative, this tradition returns our focus to aesthetic experience, which New describes as moments of "attentive consent" in which the circumscribed human will participates in experience through a recognition of the stream of events that bear it forward. The poet's chief power is thus "to alter the course of Providence by catching its fastness in an act of attention."

The writers analyzed by New find acceptance, rather than the assertive endeavor of the will, to be a truer and more harmonious response to experience. Attentiveness, humility, and relationship are critical in this version of the creative process, as the poet acts to recognize the myriad affiliations among the elements of the created world. Edwards's God,

"neither static nor rigid," is author of "the created world as a composition—or attraction—of dynamic parts whose excellence renews itself in the infusion of this dynamism into new fields." In New's description, this Edwardsean God resembles a Whiteheadian creative force, and the never-ceasing process of reality and relation, the "ceaseless fabrication of the new," is the poet's focus.

New does not write Emerson out of this tradition, but she takes "Experience" rather than *Nature* or "Self-Reliance" as Emerson's authorizing text. She thus moves from Edwards to Emerson by a different route than Perry Miller's, and she establishes an important link with William James, who also came to share Edwards's conception of grace as "adjustment to the stream of Being." New reads Thoreau not principally as an Emersonian visionary, but as a naturalist inclined to doubt his era's false elevation of human beings in the order of nature (and thus receptive to Darwin) and forced to accept experience's inevitable barriers to absolute knowledge of the natural world.

New offers this reformulation of the American literary history in the face of the "exhaustion" of the political critique of the New Americanist criticism, which tends to reproduce in its own discourse the very excesses that it hopes to expose. "Such criticism sometimes sees its will to comprehensive explanation unflatteringly reproduced in a totalistic romantic rhetoric." She defends the political viability of the Edwardsean tradition of "attentive consent" by observing the tendency among these pragmatists to dissent from the grandiose and destructive exertions of the American national identity: "the national rationalization of power is quite strictly arraigned by our poets." Sure to be controversial, and sure to be influential, *The Line's Eye* is one of our most innovative and thoughtful accounts of American poetry.

In *Masters of Repetition: Poetry, Culture, and Work in Thomson, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Emerson* (St. Martin's) Lisa M. Steinman describes Emerson's struggle for a poetic identity that would accommodate his conflicting desires for hermitlike withdrawal and for a more active public life. Steinman situates Emerson in the English Romantic tradition, taking note of the particular difficulties confronting someone who aspires to a poetic vocation in the United States. "Emerson's first ambitions were poetic," Steinman writes, showing persuasively how Emerson "was unable to easily conceive of poetry as public work" or reconcile it with his religious culture. Steinman reads Emerson's early lectures as not wholly successful attempts to create a vocational and cultural space for the poet;

she finds that Wordsworth served him as the best available model of "a poetry of retirement that could be seen by the reading public as serving a larger purpose." Joel Pace offers another consideration of Wordsworth's influence in " 'Lifted to Genius'? Wordsworth in Emerson's Nurture and *Nature*" (*Symbiosis* 2: 125–40). Pace describes a recently discovered marginal note in Emerson's copy of the third volume of the American edition of the *Poetical Works* (1824) that establishes his concurrence with Wordsworth's account of immortality, a concept that would be especially useful to him during his struggles with health in the middle 1820s. In "The Masks of Proteus: Emerson on the Nature of Poetry and the Poetry of Nature," pp. 104–18 in Dorothy Z. Baker, ed., *Poetics in the Poem: Critical Essays on American Self-Reflexive Poetry* (Peter Lang, 1997) Herwig Friedl calls into question the concept of a "self-reflexive" poem, arguing that "there seems to be no separate and definitive and essential entity called poetry 'about which' a poem might be." Boundaries between "categories like self-reflexive poetry and nature poetry" are blurred, and "poems dealing with nature as shifting and protean metamorphosis will shed light on thinking as poetry." Friedl's close readings of "Art" and "The Snow Storm" illustrate the work of poetry as a form of thought, and they contribute to his portrayal of Emerson as a "post-metaphysical thinker," like Nietzsche and Heidegger, whose work returns us to the "forgotten and buried origins" of Western thought. Eric Murphy Selinger (*What Is It Then Between Us?: Traditions of Love in American Poetry,* Cornell) argues that Emerson revised the personalized response to love in his marriage to Ellen Tucker because of the pain of her loss, and eventually reaffirmed the hierarchy of mind over emotion that he had absorbed from Puritan and Platonic sources. The soul learns "to distinguish the *feeling* of love from the *person* that seems to inspire it." He advocated a love of "perfect union," unattainable except through a kind of mutual commitment to impersonality in which lovers look beyond the personalities of their lovers to a more perfected pattern of virtue. C. P. Seabrook Wilkinson's "Emerson and the 'Eminent Painter' " (*NEQ* 71: 120–26) identifies Washington Allston's "To the Author of 'The Diary of an Ennuyee' " as the "verses written by an eminent painter" mentioned in "Self-Reliance."

b. Intellectual Achievement and Influence Sharon Cameron's "The Way of Life by Abandonment: Emerson's Impersonal" (*CritI* 25: 1–31) is a thoughtful consideration of Emerson's "disillusion with the conven-

tional idea that persons are separate and integral entities." Cameron is critical of Emerson's descriptions of the "impersonal," arguing that "the missing sense of the person" constitutes a "deficiency in Emerson's representation of the impersonal." Cameron believes that a credible depiction of the impersonal arises from "an epiphanic encounter [that] occurs to someone *in particular.*" Emerson's flawed conception arises from a "barbarous idealism" that "sanctions the drama of social injustice by denying its existence" and lacks "the acknowledgment of the legitimacy of material self-interest." Emerson's failure to ground his representations of the impersonal in a religious institution or tradition indicates an "eviscerated religious sense" and separates him from Channing, who, speaking from his "position as a minister," had "authority to create analogies between the human and the divine and to show that they are *only* analogies."

Cameron is an exceptionally penetrating critic, and every Emerson scholar should read this essay. But I have reservations about her dismissal of Emerson's religious importance, for it seems that she overlooks the persuasive power of Emerson's sense of the "impersonal" or universal as an object of aspiration in his depiction of the individual's quest for religious fulfillment. This belief in the soul's reliance on aspiration toward the universal, crucial to his depiction of spiritual experience, is squarely in the Romantic tradition and is grounded in Emerson's vision of human experience. His critique of institutional authority is, it seems to me, one of the foundations of his originality and his continuing appeal.

Cameron's critique of Emerson's sense of the impersonal may ultimately contribute to a long-overdue reassessment of his idealism, a central aspect of his thought that is now suspect among his academic readers. I see some evidence of the beginnings of such a reassessment in recent essays by Herwig Friedl and James Albrecht in *ESQ*'s Emerson/Nietzsche issue (see *AmLS 1997,* pp. 3–5), Robert D. Richardson's exposition of Emerson's place in the tradition of "liberal Platonism" (see *AmLS 1997,* pp. 6–7), Albert J. von Frank's account of the progressive political impact of Emersonian idealism (see above), and Richard Poirier's studies of Emerson's method of perpetual imaginative and linguistic self-invention (see *AmLS 1987,* p. 8, and *AmLS 1992,* p. 6).

New books by Paul Jay and Mark Bauerlein offer insightful assessments of Emerson's place in the current revival of pragmatism. Jay's *Contingency Blues: The Search for Foundations in American Criticism*

(Wisconsin, 1997) explores the "modernist tension . . . between transcendental idealism and the belief that everything is a 'contingent product of human positing.' " This crisis over legitimation "marks *the* contradictory impulse in Emerson" and continues to be a "central concern" of contemporary neopragmatists. Describing recent shifts in Emerson studies in which various "pragmatic" versions of Emerson (Giles Gunn, Poirier, Cornel West) have challenged idealist readings (David Van Leer, Harold Bloom), Jay posits a divided Emerson who himself was one of the first thinkers to wrestle with what Jürgen Habermas has termed the situation of "modernity." Though Emerson continued to ground his own arguments "in a universal power or transcendent principle," his work "anticipates one of the fundamental starting points for what would become pragmatism"—the recognition that all discourse begins in contingency. I learned much from Jay's cogent account of the central epistemological questions in pragmatist discourse. Bauerlein's *The Pragmatic Mind: Explorations in the Psychology of Belief* (Duke, 1997) differentiates between the "new pragmatism" of Richard Rorty and the "old pragmatism" of William James, Peirce, and Dewey, observing that the new pragmatism has yet to offer "a concept of mind," a step that "may in fact be crucial to the vitality of new pragmatic reform." In chapters on Emerson, James, and Peirce, Bauerlein develops "conceptual connections between pragmatic method and pragmatic mind," believing that such analysis may contribute to contemporary pragmatism. Bauerlein argues that Emerson regarded knowledge in dynamic and pragmatic terms as "an enabling but transitional moment, a provisional concession to abstract thinking that translates quickly into positive action." Emersonian pragmatism thus posits the provisional or contingent nature of thought; "transition . . . remains the only abstraction, the only fixture possessing authority in Emerson's thinking." Bauerlein reads the comparatively little-known *The Method of Nature* as a key exposition of Emerson's recognition of "nature as universal semiosis," an overwhelming challenge to intellectual coherence and stability that can be met only with "a thoughtful abandonment of all narrowing conceptions of being and an ecstatic abandonment to nature's excesses." But this is "thoughtful abandonment," the pragmatic necessity of "conscious choice" remaining fundamental to human thinking.

Adrian Bond ("Emerson's 'Transparent Eye-Ball' and James's 'Glass Eye': Practical Transcendence," *Prospects* 23: 39–58) considers the transparent eyeball passage of *Nature* as part of a larger investigation of a

"psychology of sight" undertaken by Emerson and William James, and he links it to the linguistic theories of Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky. Noting that "Emerson tempers his idealism with an empiricist's faith in the physical senses and the information they provide," Bond finds that both Emerson and James see sensation as an integral part of perception, one that interacts with other mental functions such as memory and will. But "in its purest operation, unmediated by categories of perception, sight is unable to 'say' anything about subject or object." This is the condition that Emerson described as transparency and that James investigated as part of the mystical consciousness. In " 'Terrible Simplicity': Emerson's Metaleptic Style" (*Style* 31 [1997]: 58–80) Eric Wilson presents a rhetorical analysis of the transparent eyeball passage, emphasizing Emerson's compressed language and multiple tropes, a "metaleptic" style that enables him to transport readers "from the liminal to the sublime."

In "John Muir, Jeanne Carr, and Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Case-Study of the Varieties of Transcendentalist Influence" (*Journal of Unitarian Universalist History* 25: 1–25) Steven J. Holmes assesses Emerson's influence on John Muir, arguing convincingly that Muir's orientation to Transcendentalism resulted less from "direct intellectual or stylistic influence" than from "particular human relationships" and "poetic images that mediated his experiences of self, nature, and emotion." Holmes describes the crucial influence of a group of Transcendental-minded faculty members at the University of Wisconsin with whom Muir became close in the 1860s, including Jeanne C. Carr, a botanist, a friend of Emerson, and the wife of geology professor Ezra Slocum Carr. Muir developed a close bond with Carr and invested his early studies in the Sierras with an emotional intensity that he expressed through the passionate language for nature that he had learned from her. This bond was in part transferred to Emerson during their 1871 meeting, which Carr helped to arrange. Though their meeting is often seen as a failure, Holmes maintains the contrary: "for most of the final two days of his visit [to Yosemite], Emerson climbed up into Muir's little shack by the waterfall, where the two of them pored over his collection of botanical specimens, rock samples, and drawings while they talked of nature, religion, and Yosemite." This was a formative experience for Muir, building his confidence in his work and connecting him with a sense of his unique vocation as a scientist and public advocate for the wilderness.

Three accounts of late lecture and travel engagements help us understand Emerson's final years more fully. Ronald A. Bosco ("His Lectures

Were Poetry, His Teaching the Music of the Spheres: Annie Adams Fields and Francis Greenwood Peabody on Emerson's 'Natural History of the Intellect' University Lectures at Harvard in 1870" (*HLB* 8, ii [1997]: entire issue) calls for a reassessment of those lectures, presenting two firsthand accounts of their content. Fields's and Peabody's summaries are "our most authoritative account of what Emerson actually said," as distinguished from later versions of *Natural History of Intellect,* edited by James E. Cabot and Edward Waldo Emerson. Bosco believes these accounts cast doubt on the generally accepted view that the lectures were a failure, noting Fields's and Peabody's sympathetic understanding of Emerson's poetic method in the lectures. The lectures had deep roots in Emerson's productive middle period, originating in three earlier lecture series from 1848 to 1866, and they represented one of his strongest intellectual ambitions. Bosco's discerning introductory essay is accompanied by the texts of Fields's and Peabody's accounts, with extensive notes that reconstruct the milieu of the lectures and link particular passages to parallel sources in Emerson's work. Len Gougeon's "Emerson at West Point" (*ESP* 9, i: 1–3, 8) describes Emerson's participation in an evaluation of West Point in 1863. Though his visiting committee offered criticism of the military academy's religious and ethical instruction and low admissions standards, Emerson nevertheless received a positive impression overall, and Gougeon writes that "the rigorous lives of the young cadets there seem to have bolstered his confidence that the good cause [the Civil War] would not be lost." Charles W. Wilson's "Ralph Waldo Emerson at the University of Virginia, 1876" (*Virginia Cavalcade* 47: 86–95) recounts Emerson's lecture appearance in Charlottesville, an effort that he undertook, despite his age and failing intellectual powers, in hopes that it might be a symbol of reconciliation between North and South. Though Emerson's presentation was not wholly successful, largely because of his difficulties in projecting his voice, he was received with interest and respect by many of the students and faculty. Guy Litton has provided new information on the beginnings of Emerson's ministry by editing "Gannett's Address at Emerson's Ordination" (*ESP* 9, ii: 1, 8–9), noting Gannett's references to the difficulties that Emerson might face in replacing the revered Henry Ware Jr. Joel Myerson has edited "Edward Waldo Emerson's Recollections of His Father's Death" (*CS* 6: 163–67), an 1886 letter to James E. Cabot describing Emerson's final illness and passing. Richard Stone's *Unbought Spirit: A John Jay Chapman Reader* (Illinois) includes Chapman's 1897 essay, "Emerson" (pp. 112–71), an

important signpost of the turn-of-the-century revival of interest in Emerson's achievement that emphasizes his role as a critic of America's efforts to realize its democratic ideals. In "The Metaphysics of Presents: Nietzsche's Gift, the Debt to Emerson, Heidegger's Values," pp. 274–91 in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity,* ed. Alan D. Schrift (Routledge, 1997), Gary Shapiro connects Emerson's discussions of the risks of presenting and receiving gifts with Nietzsche's theory of the transformative power of gifts.

c. Emerson's Political Identity In "Emerson and the Woman Question: The Evolution of His Thought" (*NEQ* 71: 570–92) Len Gougeon traces the evolution of Emerson's support for the women's movement, noting parallels between his advocacy of women's rights and his involvement in antislavery: "Both began with a troubled concern, moved to a reserved commitment, and culminated in unambiguous support." Women's rights advocates such as Paulina Wright Davis, Lucy Stone, and Wendell Phillips, who recognized Emerson's increasingly outspoken commitment to antislavery, pressed him to speak publicly in support of women's rights in the 1850s, persuading him to deliver "Woman" at the Second Annual New England Women's Rights Convention in 1855. This has been regarded until now as Emerson's only such address, and it "has always been somewhat problematic for feminist scholars because in it his emphatic support for the principles of women's rights is matched by equally strong reservations about the wisdom of fully exercising those rights." But Emerson's support of women's public activities grew, partly because of his admiration of the contribution of women to antislavery work and the Union war effort. Gougeon reprints a newspaper transcription of an 1869 address, previously presumed never to have been delivered, which shows a "total lack of qualification regarding women's right to full participation in the political process." Gougeon's essay clarifies an important aspect of Emerson's political thinking and should be read alongside the essays by Cole and Bean (below) to provide a more detailed picture of the impact of Transcendentalism on the 19th-century women's rights movement.

In "Mediating Citizenship: Emerson, The Cherokee Removals, and the Rhetoric of Nationalism" (*CentR* 41 [1997]: 461–69) T. Gregory Garvey has contributed a thoughtful consideration of Emerson's letter of protest of the Cherokee removal, placing it in the context of his development of conceptions of homogeneity and national identity. Framing the

question of removal as one of "national honor," Emerson argued that its execution "will make U.S. Americans psychologically, even morally, homeless to the same extent that it makes the Cherokee geographically homeless." Daniel S. Malachuk's "The Republican Philosophy of Emerson's Early Lectures" (*NEQ* 71: 404–28) describes the development of liberal republicanism in the late 18th century, extended by Coleridge through his employment of "Reason" as the "ultimate end" of political systems. Aware of this tradition through both his family background and Harvard training, and keenly interested in Coleridge, Emerson "began to piece together a republican philosophy in his early lectures that would culminate in a progressive, liberal, and democratic ideal of self-reliance." Stephanie Sarver's consideration of "Agrarian Environmental Models in Emerson's 'Farming,'" pp. 155–64 in *Reading the Earth,* emphasizes Emerson's difficulty in categorizing farming as a natural or a social activity. "Emerson attempts to contain the farm within the realm of nature but ultimately cannot extract it from the influences of civilization." This tension indicates Emerson's recognition of the complexity of agriculture, which recent discussions of farming and environmental ethics have confirmed.

iii Thoreau

a. Thoreau's Political Identity Nancy L. Rosenblum's "The Inhibitions of Democracy on Romantic Political Thought: Thoreau's Democratic Individualism," pp. 55–75 in Thomas Pfau and Robert F. Gleckner, eds., *Lessons of Romanticism: A Critical Companion* (Duke), shows how Thoreau's tendency toward a disdainful withdrawal from public life is always inhibited by an underlying commitment to a democratically oriented recognition of the claims of others. Thoreau's operative belief is that "he cannot 'cast his whole influence' without his countrymen's consent, a constraint he accepts as a moral, not just a practical, imperative." This need to interact within a much larger community of others sets Thoreau apart from other Romantics: "Thoreau speaks to his fellow citizens with startling directness. . . . He is unwilling to identify with Shelley's unacknowledged legislator. His acute self-consciousness is alien to prophetic speech." Believing, with George Kateb and Judith Shklar, that "democratic individualism is Thoreau's common ground," Rosenblum reminds us that Thoreau "confronted a host of virulent, systematic ideologies propounding ascriptive inequality." His recognition that de-

mocracy was fragile and under attack helps explain the directness of his address to others. Rosenblum's thought-provoking essay sheds much light on the discussion of the political legacy of Transcendentalism. Shawn St. Jean's "Thoreau's Radical Consistency" (*MR* 39: 341–57) challenges the assumption that Thoreau's political writings are inconsistent in their position on the legitimate use of force. Thoreau advocated "peaceful resistance *first,*" but he upheld the legitimacy of violence in both "Resistance to Civil Government" and "Slavery in Massachusetts," and thus he was able with consistency to praise John Brown. Connecting Thoreau's views with the higher law philosophy advocated by Emerson, Wendell Phillips, and Theodore Parker (see the discussion of von Frank's *The Trials of Anthony Burns,* above), St. Jean contends that for Thoreau "the spirit in which Brown acted, action from principle, mattered more than tactics." Sterling F. Delano describes "Thoreau's Visit to Brook Farm" (*TSB* 221/222: 1–2) in 1843, based on George P. Bradford's account of it in a letter to Emerson. Richard S. Randolph's " 'I am of French Extract': Thoreau's Sympathy with the French" (*CS* 6: 47–62) emphasizes Thoreau's identification with his French ancestry, arguing that it contributed to "a sense of alienation from mainstream culture." In "Thoreau and the Design of Dissent" (*Religion and the Arts* 2: 221–41) Kris Fresonke explores Thoreau's linkage of the pastoral, the argument from design, and the concept of manifest destiny in his developing political stance. Focusing on *Walden* and "Slavery in Massachusetts," Fresonke concludes that "Thoreau will settle for nothing less than complete cognitive overhaul" as the appropriate political response to the slavery crisis. In "The Magic Apostrophe; or, 'Reform and Reformers' Reformed" (*TSB* 221/222: 3) Patrick F. O'Connell suggests a textual correction to an essay in *Reform Papers.*

b. Thoreau and Environmentalism Randall Roorda's illuminating reading of "Ktaadn" (see *AmLS 1997,* pp. 19–20) is the anchoring chapter in his *Dramas of Solitude: Narratives of Retreat in American Nature Writing* (SUNY), in which he proposes that "narratives of retreat" into the solitude of nature are "the central dynamic of the genre." His reading of "Ktaadn" as a "drama of solitude" sets the pattern for detailed considerations of the work of John Muir, Henry C. Van Dyke, and Wendell Berry, in which Kenneth Burke serves as the principal theoretician. Roorda's treatment of "Ktaadn" is among the best we have, and I recommend it highly. Observing that "Thoreau is an enduring presence

in the literature of outdoor adventurers and nature lovers," Frederick C. Lifton in "Henry Thoreau's Cult(ivation) of Nature: American Landscape and American Self in 'Ktaadn' and 'Walking' " (*ATQ* 12: 67–86) argues that Thoreau contributed to "the massive re-imagining of nature and culture that accompanied the rise of modern capitalism." In a perceptive reading of "Ktaadn," Lifton describes the parallels between Thoreau and contemporary hikers and mountaineers whose "seeking physical and psychic hardship" and "pursuing the loss of knowable, rational self-identity through rough contact with sublime nature" constitutes "an implicit critique of an impersonal industrialized culture." "Walking" extends this program of social critique by making the link between the American self and "uncultivated, irrational wilderness" into "a moral imperative." William W. Stowe ("Doing History on Vacation: 'Ktaadn' and *The Country of the Pointed Firs,*" *NEQ* 71: 163–89) reads "Ktaadn" as a "vacation narrative," with generic similarities to Sarah Orne Jewett's novel. While writing a marketable piece "that combined the genres of travel essay, nature sketch, and tale of adventure in a way calculated to appeal to a fairly wide range of newspaper and magazine readers," Thoreau also used the narrative "as if it were also a trip back through time" to comment on material progress.

In *A Word for Nature: Four Pioneering Environmental Advocates, 1845–1913* (No. Car.) Robert L. Dorman includes Thoreau with George Perkins Marsh, John Muir, and John Wesley Powell as four originating figures in a "tradition of environmental advocacy," finding in their works the basis for the movement of later environmental thinkers from anthropocentrism to biocentrism. Dorman attaches particular significance to Thoreau's development of an "ideal of the wilderness," a concept that influenced later writers who found in Thoreau "the credo and the value of solitary nonexploitative experience of the pristine natural world." Dorman presents a discerning portrait of Thoreau as a man struggling with "a long-term crisis of vocation and identity" and as a thinker who both embraced and struggled with the Transcendentalist position that he had absorbed from Emerson. Emphasizing the importance of Thoreau's later scientific studies, Dorman describes the holistic terms through which Thoreau accepted Darwin: "Despite his concern over being narrowed by science, Thoreau had discovered a natural world of on-going Darwinian processes by what was essentially an *ecological* method of scientific investigation, his effort to understand the workings of the Concord landscape as an organic whole." He eventually articulated a

version of the argument for natural rights that provided "a heightened moral status for the natural world" and became the foundation for "the political philosophy of *preservationism* that he largely originated."

Thoreau's influence on the back-to-the-land movement is a key element in Loren C. Owings's *Quest for Walden: A Study of the "Country Book" in American Popular Literature, with an Annotated Bibliography, 1863–1995* (McFarland, 1997). Owings defines the "country book," which emerged as a popular genre in the 1890s, as one that "urges or chronicles a return to pastoral life." *Walden* was central to many of these books because of its message of simple living. Owings discusses such authors as Philip G. Hubert, David Grayson (Ray Stannard Baker), Louis Bromfield, and Helen and Scott Nearing as part of this tradition, and he also includes a highly informative annotated bibliography of 212 such country books. Eric Wilson's "Thoreau, Thales, and the Distribution of Water" (*CS* 6: 27–44) calls attention to Thoreau's interest in water as a fundamental natural substance, noting his reading of Thales in the 1840s, and the reinforcement that Goethe's and Humboldt's theories of unified nature gave to Thales' theory of water's primacy. Thoreau's experience of "a watery epiphany" also informed his attempts to make his poetic expression echo the creative energy of nature's perpetual metamorphoses of water. In "Nature's Extra-vagrants: Frost and Thoreau in the Maine Woods" (*PLL* 33 [1997]: 182–97) Eric Carl Link argues that both Thoreau and Robert Frost can be understood as exemplars of Thoreau's principle of "extra-vagance," "the attempt on the part of the poet to journey beyond conventional boundaries in an attempt to uncover hidden truth." Thoreau enacts this quest in his Maine excursions, each of which Link connects thematically with Frost poems.

Scholars interested in Thoreau's impact on contemporary land-use debates will want to read James C. Garman, Paul A. Russo, Stephen A. Mrozowski, and Michael A. Volmar's " 'This Great Wild Tract': Henry David Thoreau, Native Americans, and the Archaeology of Estabrook Woods" (*Historical Archaeology* 31 [1997]: 59–80), a report on the authors' archaeological investigation of the Estabrook Woods area in Concord during a public dispute over a plan to develop part of this area. Thoreau recorded many visits to the area in his Journal and believed he had identified a Native American agricultural site there as well. The archaeological team concluded, however, that the cornfield was of 18th-century Euro-American origin, although there is some evidence of earlier Native American activity in the area. The authors believe that Thoreau's

association with the area through visits recorded in his Journal became a key factor in the opposition to development plans. In "The Indian in the Museum: Henry David Thoreau, Okah Tubbee, and Aesthetic Manhood" (*ArQ* 54, ii: 25–63) Paul Gilmore argues that Thoreau's encounters with popular museums such as Barnum's American Museum led him to accept a widely held cultural identification of "the Indian as a masculine model" because of a presumed fierce resistance to enslavement and a "characterization of blacks as effeminate" because of their presumed docility. "Thoreau's identification with and celebration of the Indian marks not simply a desire for a simpler, more natural existence," Gilmore writes, "but a desire for a more masculine self." Gilmore connects these cultural attitudes with Okah Tubbee, a museum performer and author who rejected his African American identity and claimed to be a descendant of a Choctaw chief. In "Exploring the Linguistic Wilderness of *The Maine Woods,*" pp. 165–77 in *Reading the Earth,* Ann E. Lundberg reads Thoreau's narratives of his Maine excursions as a search for a reconnection to a primal oral language that both the wilderness and his Indian guides seem to him to embody. Recognizing that his work as an author is akin to that of the loggers in the Maine forests because "it is derivative and potentially inadequate and depends upon the removal of experience from the woods to the page," Thoreau initiates "a challenging dialogue between his own writerly mode of being and the Indian's experiential mode."

Michael P. Branch and Jessica Pierce discuss Thoreau's belief that "human and ecosystemic well-being are mutually interdependent" in " 'Another name for Health': Thoreau and Modern Medicine" (*Literature and Medicine* 15 [1996]: 129–45). They describe *Walden* as "a sort of diagnostic instrument," helpful in revealing "the sickness induced by an increasingly urbanized and industrialized culture." Gordon V. Boudreau recounts Thoreau's excursion into the West in 1861 ("West by Southwest: Thoreau's Minnesota Journey," *CS* 6: 145–60), emphasizing the opportunities it gave him for botanical exploration, and the exposure it gave him to the Sioux, who had ceded much of southern Minnesota to the United States in treaties of 1851 and 1858 and would engage in an uprising in 1862. Steven Carter compares Poe's and Thoreau's description of a reflective tarn in "The Two Tarns: A Note on 'The Fall of the House of Usher' and Chapter II of *Walden*" (*TSB* 223: 1–2), and Victor Carl Friesen discusses "Thoreau and Zane Grey's *The Vanishing Amer-*

ican" (*CS* 6: 169–76), noting their shared sympathy with Native Americans and speculating that Wordsworth might have served them as a common source.

c. Thoreau's Cultural Significance Andrew Delbanco's "Thoreau Faces Death," pp. 33–48 in his *Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now* (Farrar, 1997), is a discerning appreciation of Thoreau's achievement, emphasizing the tension between his commitment to nature and his life as a scholar and writer. "The most cultivated and scholastic of the chief writers of the American Renaissance, Thoreau was ultimately a despiser of culture," Delbanco notes. "The project of his books," one intended to heal this tension, "is to break down the structures that intervene between culture and nature." *The Concord Saunterer* (6: 65–96) prints Thorsten and Rosemary Sjölin's translation of Frans G. Bengtsson's "Henry David Thoreau," the introduction to his 1924 translation of *Walden* into Swedish, the first and only such translation. The article contains several fine original illustrations by the prominent Swedish illustrator Gunnar Brusewitz. Of related importance is Henrik Gustasson and Niklas Schiöler's "True Fugitives: On Tomas Tranströmer and Thoreau" (*TSB* 225: 1, 3–4), which notes the parallels between Thoreau and the prominent Swedish poet. Claude Richard's "Henry David Thoreau: The Hydrodynamics of the Letter," pp. 95–119 in his *American Letters,* trans. Carol Mastrangelo Bove (Penn.), examines the inclusive and exclusive properties of "the referential letter" and Michel Serres's theory of "the omnipotence of fluids." Linda Keslar discusses the prospects of depicting Thoreau's life on film, and she provides parts of her original screenplay in "Thoreau as Leading Man: Bringing Him to the Screen" (*CS* 6: 115–42). Jason Taylor's "Foundations for the Castle: Building the Thoreau Institute" (*CS* 6: 7–12) records the institute's origins, its research and educational goals, and its grand opening in June 1998. For a description of the "Thoreau Institute Grand Opening," with President Bill Clinton's remarks, see *TSB* 224: 1–3.

iv Fuller

a. Fuller and Hawthorne No one is more implicated in the denigration of Margaret Fuller's reputation than Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose disparaging remarks on her marriage, when published by his son Julian in

1884, occasioned a controversy over Fuller's character and importance. That feud is recounted in detail in Thomas R. Mitchell's *Hawthorne's Fuller Mystery* (Mass.), but it is only the prelude to a deeper investigation of the surprisingly profound impact that Fuller made on Hawthorne. This book will surely transform our understanding of the Fuller-Hawthorne friendship, and, as a result, it will shed important new light on Hawthorne's major fiction. Mitchell takes note of Nina Baym's reading of Hawthorne as a critic not of feminism but of male resistance to feminism, whose "tales indict the very masculine prejudices that they dramatize," and he builds a portrait of Hawthorne as struggling with competing desires for dominance and interdependence in his relations with women. This tension is played out in his relationship with his wife, Sophia, as she alternately resisted and adopted the role of submissive "Dove." Noting that Fuller's friendship with Hawthorne developed during his courtship with Sophia and the early years of his marriage, Mitchell argues that "Hawthorne established an intimacy with Fuller that, Sophia excepted, he established with no other woman."

Fuller's visits to Concord in 1842 (when Emerson encountered them in conversation on the grass in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery) and 1844, just after the birth of Una Hawthorne and the publication of Fuller's "The Great Lawsuit," provided the occasions for their deepening regard for each other, a time prefiguring one of Hawthorne's most creative periods. Encountering in Fuller a woman who embodied both female independence and a capacity for close relationships with both male and female friends, Hawthorne imaginatively conceived Fuller as "the embodiment of feminine resistance to the type of personal and cultural male magnetism that Hawthorne employed to reorder and master Sophia's character." Hawthorne also found in Fuller "the seductively attractive and intimidatingly repellent poles of the magnetic force that such a woman could have on others." That figuration resonated in his fiction with enormous power in such characters as Beatrice Rappaccini, Hester Prynne, and Zenobia. "She probably never realized it, but more than anyone or anything, [Fuller] seems responsible for unsettling Hawthorne's fiction, for enabling him to 'paint' with 'blood-warm colors.' " Mitchell's book, original in conception and persuasive in argument, will be essential reading for students of both Fuller and Hawthorne.

b. Fuller's Cultural Significance Joel Myerson's *Margaret Fuller: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1983–1995* (Greenwood) extends the

valuable compilation of Fuller criticism in his two previous volumes (see *AmLS 1977,* p. 5, and *AmLS 1984,* p. 9), this time covering the explosion of interest in Fuller in the 1980s and early 1990s. Myerson's documentation of the increasingly voluminous commentary on Fuller is strong evidence of her growing stature in literary and cultural studies. These bibliographies are the starting place for research on Fuller.

Phyllis Cole offers an illuminating account of "The Nineteenth-Century Women's Rights Movement and the Canonization of Margaret Fuller" (*ESQ* 44: 1–33), describing the early feminist advocacy of Fuller as an example of "women's claim to self-discovery" through such vehicles as Paulina Wright Davis's journal *Una,* Thomas Wentworth Higginson's 1859 *Atlantic Monthly* essay "Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet?", and Caroline Healey Dall's compilation of women's rights lectures from the late 1850s published in her *The College, the Market, and the Court* (1867). Fuller's symbolic importance to the women's rights movement continued after the Civil War, an era marked by the split between the New York-based National Woman Suffrage Association, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and the Boston-based American Woman Suffrage Association, led by Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe, and Ednah Dow Littlehale Cheney. While the New Yorkers "claimed Fuller for her political critique," the Boston group formulated an image of "Fuller as priestess, celebrant of goddesses, and seeker of spiritual transformation." Though Fuller's reputation was "suffering attrition by the 1890s," two events late in the century helped institutionalize her memory: the formation of Margaret Fuller Clubs through the work of Lucinda Chandler and the 1901 dedication of a memorial to Fuller on Fire Island, New York, through the efforts of Lillie Devereux Blake. "If these women 'mythologized' Fuller as much as better known male interpreters," Cole concludes, "they did so in the service of a social agency that perpetuated rather than undermined the spirit of mid-nineteenth-century reform." Cole's valuable essay adds a new dimension to our understanding of the cultural transmission of Transcendentalism. Extending this narrative of Fuller's reception is Judith Mattson Bean's " 'A *Presence* Among Us': Fuller's Place in Nineteenth-Century Oral Culture" (*ESQ* 44: 79–123), an informative description of the transmission of Fuller's message and personality "in a variety of speech events, such as lectures, memorials, and public conversations." Bean notes the power and impact of Fuller's public speaking, arguing that "women also heard in Fuller's eloquence their own potential power to engage in public

intellectual vocations." Five women, Elizabeth Oakes Smith, Caroline Healey Dall, Mary Livermore, Ednah Dow Littlehale Cheney, and Julia Ward Howe, stand out as the most prominent builders of this oral legacy, each offering her audiences a slightly different emphasis on Fuller's achievement and importance. While Smith and Howe presented Fuller as "the exceptional 'woman of genius,' " Dall, Livermore, and Cheney used her to exemplify "the potential of every woman for intellectual and spiritual self-actualization."

In *Domesticity with a Difference: The Nonfiction of Catherine Beecher, Sarah J. Hale, Fanny Fern, and Margaret Fuller* (Miss., 1997) Nicole Tonkovich provides an important new perspective on Fuller by reading her within the context of 19th-century women's discourse on domesticity and gender roles. Tonkovich believes that Fuller's "sort of honorary manhood as a transcendentalist . . . hides her connections to these women [Beecher, Hale, and Fern] . . . and effects a hierarchy of literary value that prefers abstract thought to action and subtlety to polemic." Tonkovich is particularly interested in how these women's discourse on domesticity was encoded by restrictions of literacy and class, and she points out the tension between the theories of domestic life that they advocated and the lives they actually lived as writers and lecturers. Their creation of a female audience, however, had a profound effect on American culture, generating a momentum for change that brought women into male spheres such as education.

Tonkovich is perceptive about the social dynamics of Fuller's "Conversations," exercises in both educational and class attainment, "a confirmation of their [Fuller's participants] upper class identity and their (potential) intellectual abilities." Fuller encouraged and affirmed women by creating an atmosphere "in which women could display their entitlement to each other and in which a differential calculus of entitlement based on oral acuity prevailed."

Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes,* with its observations on the American frontier, Native Americans, and questions of gender, continues to serve as a rich text for social and cultural analysis. In " 'A Commanding View': Vision and the Problem of Nationality in Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*" (*ESQ* 44: 61–77) Anne Baker argues that "Fuller uses dramatic visual moments to stage a sustained critical dialogue with her friend and mentor Emerson," revealing her growing ambivalence about a "collective identity inspired by romantic nationalism." Fuller initially endorsed Emerson's description of an unmediated and comprehensive vision of

the landscape as a response to the West, but the threat of social fragmentation on the frontier, including the oppression of the Indians, forced her instead toward a more historically grounded sense of vision as socially mediated. Fuller's reconsideration of vision and nationality were essential steps in her break from Emerson, and *Summer on the Lakes* stands as an "overture or prologue" to her later work in New York and Italy. In "Margaret Fuller's Visions" (*ESQ* 44: 35–59) Mary-Jo Haronian argues that Goethe's *Theory of Color* helped to teach Fuller that perception "is mediated by received notions of meaning and representations of knowledge," thus undercutting any "claims of objective observation." Her descriptions of her Western experiences in *Summer on the Lakes* reveal the extent of her efforts to break through received opinion and formulate new representations through careful observation and attention to her own process of perception.

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