2007

John Muir : Ralph Waldo Emerson's ideal transcendental nature writer

Julie C. Meloni
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Meloni, Julie C., "John Muir : Ralph Waldo Emerson's ideal transcendental nature writer" (2007). *Master's Theses*. 3427.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.w9h5-ngsd>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/3427

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

JOHN MUIR: RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S IDEAL
TRANSCENDENTAL NATURE WRITER

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English and Comparative Literature

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Julie C. Meloni

August 2007

UMI Number: 1448866

Copyright 2007 by
Meloni, Julie C.

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 1448866

Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2007

Julie C. Meloni

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Engell", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. John Engell

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert Cullen", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Robert Cullen

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "A. Noelle Brada-Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. A. Noelle Brada-Williams

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Pamela C. Stuber", written over a horizontal line.

ABSTRACT

JOHN MUIR: RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S IDEAL TRANSCENDENTAL NATURE WRITER

by Julie C. Meloni

Ralph Waldo Emerson envisioned his ideal transcendental nature writer as able to detach himself from the systems and structures of an artificial life and acknowledge and revel in the divinity of the natural world. Emerson believed he had found such a person in Henry David Thoreau, but Thoreau's untimely death and lack of ambition ultimately disappointed Emerson. In the latter stage of his life, Emerson found his man: John Muir. Close readings of Muir's private journals and letters, as well as his published works, show the influence of New England Transcendentalism on Muir's environmental philosophy; this thesis discusses this influence and delineates areas of agreement and disagreement between Muir, Emerson, and Thoreau. This thesis shows it is possible to read Muir as a literary equal of Emerson and Thoreau and describes how, despite their philosophical differences, Muir answered Emerson's call for a devout transcendental nature writer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Karen English for the conversation that sparked my inquiry into the topic of my thesis. The support of both Dr. English and Dr. John Engell has been invaluable, and I am tremendously grateful to both of them.

Additionally, I would like to thank those who offered suggestions and moral support throughout this project: Dr. Noelle Brada-Williams, Dr. Bonnie Cox, Dr. Robert Cullen, Linda Ford, Dawn Nelson, Rebecca Sherman, James and Karen Trout, and Mary Williams.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Explanation of Abbreviations	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter I: The Young John Muir	6
Chapter II : Encountering Emerson	15
Chapter III: Kindred Spirits	32
Further Lines of Inquiry	54
Works Cited	57

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following is a list of abbreviations used to shorten the parenthetical documentation of works by John Muir, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau:

Author	Title of Work	Abbreviation
Muir	<u>John of the Mountains</u>	<u>JM</u>
Muir	<u>Our National Parks</u>	<u>ONP</u>
Muir	<u>The Story of My Boyhood and Youth</u>	<u>SBY</u>
Muir	<u>A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf</u>	<u>TMW</u>
Muir	<u>The Yosemite</u>	<u>Y</u>
Emerson	<u>The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson</u>	<u>JRWE</u>
Emerson	<u>Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson</u>	<u>LRWE</u>
Emerson	<u>Nature</u>	<u>N</u>
Thoreau	<u>Walden</u>	<u>W</u>
Thoreau	<u>Wild Fruits</u>	<u>WF</u>
Thoreau	<u>The Writings of Henry David Thoreau</u>	<u>WHDT</u>

INTRODUCTION

When John Muir left the University of Wisconsin in favor of what he would later call the "University of the Wilderness," he was determined to discover all that nature had to offer, from the unexplored wilderness of the United States to South America and the West Indies (SBY 142). Although Muir failed to make it to the latter destinations during his initial journey into the wilderness, circumstances led him to the majestic Yosemite region of California. By the late 1860s and his arrival in California, Muir had already read some of the major works by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau; their philosophies, as well as Muir's formal education in the natural sciences, shaped the foundation of his own philosophy toward nature. However, Muir did not set out on his journey intending to become a philosophical or literary heir to either Emerson or Thoreau; his goal was simply to experience the natural world. But as Muir sketched and described the flora and fauna he discovered along the trail, he filled his journals with prose as oriented toward nature and as transcendental as that of Thoreau.

Like Thoreau, while he stayed close to nature, Muir became more sensitive to his surroundings; an understanding of their surroundings led both men toward a better understanding of themselves. Writing about Thoreau's sense of place, Peter Blakemore cites Muir as a similar example of a man who "found ways to create [his] identity in response to the land," noting that Muir "discovered that one might feel a sense of calm and sustained rightness of inhabitation [...] even in the wild mountains"; for both Thoreau and Muir, "the more naturally diverse and complex a landscape, the more that

place presented itself as a desirable subject for attention" (122). Muir relished the opportunity to study wild landscapes, not only in California but also in Alaska, to which he traveled many times to gather evidence for his theories of glacial action. While Muir's studies of the land were more scientific than they were poetic, they were, according to John Tallmadge, "scientific investigations [...] carried out in a spirit of worship," answering Emerson's call for a devout transcendental naturalist "by establishing his own relation with [nature] and then writing about it, exactly as Thoreau had done a generation before" (7).

Transcendentalist writers conceive of nature as inspiration and as a metaphor for the divine. In Nature, Emerson assigns a spiritual value to all symbols of nature that appear in language, as "[n]ature is the vehicle of thought" (17). With nature as inspiration and words available to convey the inspired thought, the poet has at his disposal all the tools necessary to produce what Walt Whitman calls "a written path between reality and [readers'] souls" (621). Emerson envisioned his ideal naturalist writer as one who is "a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object for personal relations, and see it in the light of thought" (N 44). Only when such a man is fully detached from the systems and structures of an artificial life can he carry out his work, acknowledging and reveling in the divinity of the natural world as he does so. At one time, Emerson believed he had found his quintessential naturalist in Thoreau, but Thoreau's untimely death and perceived lack of ambition to be anything more than "the captain of a huckleberry party" would ultimately disappoint Emerson ("Thoreau" 480). Only in the latter stages of his life did Emerson believe he had found the transcendentalist

nature writer to heed his call; in his naturalist and environmental essays, Muir fits Emerson's description of a "faithful thinker," one who "kindle[s] science with the fire of the holiest affectations," and who believes in the spiritual value of the wilderness (N 44).

Since literary scholars began to study Muir's work in the late 1950s, the majority of their criticism has focused on his nature essays and the ideas he lent to the modern environmental movement, and not on his transcendentalism. Only recently have critics begun to place Muir firmly within the lineage of the Transcendentalists; while not a contemporary of Emerson or Thoreau, he was decidedly part of the next generation. Certainly Emerson and Thoreau influenced Muir, but scholars have largely ignored the precise timeline when discussing a direct Emersonian or Thoreauvian influence on Muir's spiritual beliefs and environmental philosophy. For instance, Muir's three major autobiographical works cover the period from his childhood in the 1840s through 1868, his first year in California: The Story of My Boyhood and Youth, A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf, and My First Summer in the Sierra. However, Muir did not begin to work on these books until he was in his fifties; A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf was published posthumously in 1916, while the other two were published in 1911. The text and illustrations of these books were culled from journals kept during their respective periods, but even those journals were heavily edited by Muir, well after the original entries were made. In his biography, The Young John Muir, Stephen Holmes reminds scholars to remain skeptical of Muir's written portrayal of his feelings and his seeming adherence to philosophical principles; Muir's original journals no longer exist, just his own edited versions. Thus, Holmes insists, stories such as Muir's first entry into Yosemite,

"including a dramatic, ecstatic 'conversion' and total reorientation of his life—must be understood not as his immediate, intuitive responses to Yosemite but rather as the self-conscious results of his later literary and philosophical development" (6). Similarly, when readers note what appear to be quotations or paraphrasing from Emerson or Thoreau, we must not assume the connection comes from the original event, but upon reflection.

To understand Muir's emotional and philosophical growth, and to pinpoint times of direct influence by Emerson and Thoreau, one must examine Muir's letters—many of which became his first published essays. Although he struggled with authoring articles and books, for reasons which will be discussed later in this thesis, Muir had a fondness for letter-writing and the personal connection he could make via the post. On a more practical level, scholars have dated original letters from which one can make a direct connection between, say, Muir's reading of Thoreau and a Thoreauvian set of descriptions of his surroundings. For instance, a letter dated May 29, 1870, finds Muir musing on the similarities of the woods he found in "Canada West" and those described in Thoreau's The Maine Woods. Thus, we have specific evidence of the first time Muir read The Maine Woods: May of 1870 while sitting in Yosemite, thinking about a journey he had taken several years before (Badè 118).

Through close readings of Muir's journals, essays, letters, and full-length works, with particular attention paid to the timeline of direct influence, I will show the influence of New England Transcendentalism on the environmental philosophy of John Muir. I will delineate areas of agreement and disagreement between Muir and both Emerson and

Thoreau, ultimately achieving a two-fold goal: first, showing it is possible to read Muir as a literary equal of Emerson and Thoreau, and second, discerning how Muir differed philosophically from Emerson yet still answered the call, to Emerson's satisfaction and during his lifetime, for a devout transcendental naturalist.

As such, the following study discusses first Muir's childhood religious and educational experiences; this background information provides context for the areas in which Muir disagrees with Emerson. Critics often refer to these philosophical differences as Muir's "transcendental heresy," or the beliefs which disallow some critics from labeling Muir as a direct disciple of Emerson (Smith 136). Next, I discuss the literary and personal relationship between Emerson and Muir; a significant portion of this chapter focuses on similarities and differences between Emersonian ideas in Nature and Muir's interpretation of these ideas in his own writing. The final chapter examines the relationship between the writings of Muir and those of Thoreau, showing how Muir synthesized the philosophies and language of both Emerson and Thoreau into his own, and became the American scholar Emerson spoke about decades earlier—an ideal transcendental nature writer whose own brand of radical Transcendentalism still runs wild in the work of modern environmentalists and authors.

CHAPTER I:
THE YOUNG JOHN MUIR

Buoyed by the core elements of Transcendentalism found in the works of Emerson and Thoreau, Muir made a lifelong attempt to reconcile his Calvinist upbringing, Emersonian thought, and the wild landscape he called home. Muir, like his Concord compatriots, believed in the reflection of spiritual truths in nature and in a parallel between these spiritual truths and the material objects with which we share the earth. Repeatedly throughout his letters and essays, Muir describes elements in nature through language associated with the divine. For instance, in Travels in Alaska he considers the great mountains and glaciers as "terrestrial manifestations of God" (42), and in his journals he inventories the life around him, noting the "rocks and sublime canyons, and waters and winds, and all life structures—animals and ouzels, meadows and groves, and all the silver stars—are words of God" (JM 153-4). In yet another example of the strong connection Muir saw between God and nature, he recalls in My First Summer in the Sierra how "[t]he radiance in some places is so great as to be fairly dazzling, keen lance rays of every color flashing, sparkling in glorious abundance, joining the plants in their fine, brave beauty-work,—every crystal, every flower a window opening into heaven, a mirror reflecting the Creator" (243). These are but a few examples; one needs only to open any collection of Muir's writing to find words reflecting the divinity of nature.

Biographers and literary critics have documented and discussed how a childhood spent under the guidance of a religious zealot affected Muir's personal relationship with God and organized religion. Michael Branch summarizes Muir's life in rural Wisconsin as nothing but "labor twelve to fifteen hours per day, 363 days per year," and says Muir was "chastened by his father for his frivolous interest in any book besides the Good Book" (100). One wonders if Muir's affinity for all living creatures was born from his father's treatment of his son as a workhorse. In The Story of My Boyhood and Youth, Muir recollects one of many instances of parental mistreatment—this time, digging a well almost ended his life:

I had to sit cramped in a space about three feet in diameter, and wearily chip, chip, with heavy hammer and chisels from early morning until dark, day after day, for weeks and months. [...] One morning, after the dreary bore was about eighty feet deep, my life was all but lost in deadly choke-damp,—carbonic acid gas that had settled at the bottom during the night. When, after a day or two, I had recovered from the shock, father lowered me again to my work. (111-112)

In his chapter on Muir in Wilderness and the American Mind, Roderick Nash describes Muir's childhood as filled with "several formidable obstacles" to overcome, not the least of which was "a father whose Calvinistic conception of Christianity brooked no religion of nature" (123). In fact, Daniel Muir felt his son's scientific studies and exploration of the natural world were sinful, as they rejected the Calvinist ideas that man was entirely dependent on God and that all mental and physical tasks should be acts of piety.

Given the cruelty Muir suffered at the hands of his father in the name of Christianity, readers often find it difficult to believe Muir remained so oriented toward God throughout his life; indeed, his prose is replete with religious imagery. Although Daniel Muir did nothing to instill the true values of Christianity into his children, John ran from his father's hand and religious zeal and from his father's God, but not from the idea of God. Muir ran from the Emersonian "bad preacher," one who brings a "vulgar tone" so that "the worshipper [is] defrauded and disconsolate," causing him to "shrink as soon as the prayers begin, which do not uplift, but smite and offend us" ("Divinity School Address" 85). Such a preacher speaks of evil and leads through fear; Muir became "discontent with what he perceived to be the human-centered and book-centered character of revealed religion," and set out to worship in his own way (Gatta 15). Through his wilderness experiences, observations of the natural world, and familiarity with a wide array of American and European philosophy, Muir developed his personal theology as a reaction to his father's dogmatic Calvinism. Instead of following in his father's footsteps and framing his existence as one of potential good struggling against the inevitability of evil deeds, Muir chose to see God's light in the mountains and to worship in the cathedral of nature. In a letter to his brother, written on a "Balmy Sabbath Morning in Yosemite" in April 1870, Muir summarizes his flight from the so-called men of God to the waiting arms of divine nature:

I have no patience at all for the man who complacently wipes his pious lips and waves me away from a simple rite which commemorates the love and sacrifice of Christ, telling me, "Go out from us for you are not of us"

[...] I was baptised three times this morning. 1st (according to the old way of dividing the sermon), in balmy sunshine that penetrated to my very soul, warming all the faculties of spirit, as well as the joints and marrow of the body; 2nd, in the mysterious rays of beauty that emanate from plant corollas; and 3rd, in the spray of the lower Yosemite Falls. My 1st baptism was by immersion, the 2nd by pouring, and the 3rd by sprinkling. Consequently all Baptists are my brethering [sic], and all will allow that I've "got religion." (Badè 116)

Clearly, Muir prefers his choice of minister.

Muir refused to turn away from God just because his father presented a twisted example of a devout believer. Similarly, Muir refused to let his father's disapproval of literature keep him from developing a wide appreciation of poetry and prose, both classical and contemporary. Muir persevered, first by sneaking books into his house and reading by candlelight and then by striking a deal with his father that afforded him time to read in the morning before daily chores. While his father believed young John was rising early to study the Bible, in fact he would wake up shortly after midnight to devour natural histories by John James Audubon, Scottish lyrics by Robert Burns, and the work of British Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (SBY 119). While it is unlikely—or at least undocumented—that Muir read any Emerson or Thoreau while still living under his father's roof, he was well-versed at the time in several English Romantics who influenced both Emerson and Thoreau.

Indeed, like Emerson and others in the New England intellectual community, Muir was especially drawn to the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose "poetry explores the fragile beauty of the natural world at the dawn of a new industrial era," just as Thoreau calls for preservation of the wilderness in the face of railway construction and Muir criticizes the logging of Yosemite in his popular essays half a century later (McKusick 36). Emerson quotes Coleridge's Aids to Reflection in the "Language" section of Nature when he says that "Every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul"; Muir certainly acknowledges this idea as he performs his scientific observations with exuberance and reverence (23). Although it is unclear exactly when Muir first read Coleridge, his copies of Coleridge's works, including the 1866 edition of The Poetical and Dramatic Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, are filled with annotations that "provide clear evidence of Muir's indebtedness to Coleridge's poetic language and imagery" and "show he was engaged for most of his adult life in a careful close reading and critical response to the work of the Romantic poets" (McKusick 38).

Muir worked to develop a Romantic sense of self, one which "heralded the ego, the expanding consciousness, [and] the union of self and Light" (Simonson 230). Muir's journal-keeping, much like Thoreau's, was in line with the Romantic notion of reflection during a moment of tranquility. H. Daniel Peck notes that for both men, the "very process of keeping a journal validated nature's 'right to be' by reenacting the moment of encounter between human perception and nature's emergence" (40). Reflecting upon journal entries written during time spent in the natural world, both Thoreau and Muir were able to recreate for the reader the sense of being fully immersed in nature;

recreating "the birth of Nature in the mind" lifted the moment "above temporality" (Chai 340).

As he oriented himself within the natural world, Muir began walking down a path toward becoming the man that Emerson described in "Character": a man who "stands to all beholders like a transparent object betwixt them and the sun" and becomes "the medium of the highest influence to all who are not on the same level [...] the conscience of the society to which they belong" (275). Being in nature and writing of nature, Muir realized early on that he must erase himself from the equation if his words were to be of any value to others. But Muir would not know of these words by Emerson until his time at the University of Wisconsin in the early 1860s. There, under the influence of Dr. Ezra Carr and his wife Jeanne, Muir read Emerson's Nature and "The American Scholar," and began his study of Thoreau with A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers and Walden (Branch 101). It was at this time that Muir's spiritual birth truly began.

Carr led Muir in the formal study of chemistry and geology. Informally, Carr "embodied both religious and scientific values in a person with whom Muir could be in a respectful, affective, and collegial relationship" (Holmes 105). Of most importance, the Carrs—from Vermont—introduced Muir to the work of the New England Transcendentalists and supported Muir in the development of his character, self, and soul. The Carrs would eventually move to California shortly after Muir, in 1869. However, they remained in Oakland, with Dr. Carr teaching at Berkeley, while Muir spent his time in Yosemite. Muir considered Jeanne Carr his "spiritual mother" (Badè 189), and it was in a letter to her in 1866 that Muir wrote one of his earliest statements regarding his

personal reconciliation with God through the study of nature: "[T]he page of Nature is so replete with divine truth [...] I take more intense delight from reading the power and goodness of God from 'the things which are made' than from the Bible. The two books harmonize beautifully, and contain enough of divine truth for the study of all eternity" (Badè 83).

But we must not confuse, as some critics have, the "pages of Nature" written by God with Nature, written by Emerson; Muir often refers to the natural world as pages written upon by God, or as a canvas painted on by God, and in fact long before he read anything by Emerson, Muir "felt powerfully drawn to pursue a godliness beyond his own ken" (Gatta 11). Muir's insistence of the divinity of nature remained constant throughout his life, and this principle can be seen in the letters he wrote before becoming fully versed in Emersonian philosophy. In fact, while he ran from the "bad preacher" embodied by his father, into a wilderness his father believed was nothing but a den of iniquity, Muir became more intensely focused on godliness than his father could ever have imagined, or in fact ever understood. After spending his first winter in Yosemite, Muir wrote that "God's glory is over all His works, written upon every field and sky, but here it is in larger letters—magnificent capitals" (JM 47). Thus, Muir sauntered through the Sierra strong in his faith and with an understanding that all he saw and experienced was to remind him of the presence of God: the sun produces "spirit-beams" in which one is baptized, and while immersed in the wilderness "you blend with the landscape, and become part and parcel of nature" (TMW 212). Muir's language here is a conscious echo

of the Emersonian "transparent eye-ball" through which "I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God" (N 10).

The God Muir found in the wilderness "is a god of love who pours spirit and life into the world with prodigious energy, eager that all creatures should flourish and grow" (Tallmadge 77). Muir believed that since we have nothing to fear from this God, we have nothing to fear from nature. In that humans and the plants, animals, and landscapes of the natural world are born from the same creator, Muir adamantly believed we should not fear the wilderness, but should feel a moral duty to protect and save it. John Tallmadge describes Muir's interpretation of God as "no Calvinist curmudgeon, treating the human race as a child to be whipped daily" (72). In fact, there is no concept of evil or sin in Muir's religion, with the exception of any failure on our part to secure and preserve the sanctity of nature. Muir's personification of elements of nature—"Winds are speaking the language of the flowers" and "Flowers are born every hour" (JM 49) are but two of hundreds of entries of this type in his journals—shows his acceptance of nature as man's equal and his ability to follow Emerson's dictum and "see the miraculous in the common" (N 44). In nature, Muir discovered a God "manifested in the marvel of creatures vitally connected to one another in ecological harmony" (Gatta 17). In an early essay, "A Geologist's Winter Walk," Muir exclaimed: "How wholly infused with God is this one big word of love that we call the world!" (595).

While Emerson experienced the world as a "transparent eye-ball," Muir's brand of Transcendentalism required direct physical immersion in nature; Emerson's abstractions would not satisfy him, and Thoreau did not wander nearly far enough for Muir's taste.

During his immersion in the natural world, Muir discovered that man has no privileged role in the wilderness. John Tallmadge points out that in Genesis there are two creation stories: one that emphasizes humans as overlords (Genesis 1:28) and one in which humans are stewards (Genesis 2:15), and Muir focuses on the latter while Emerson would have us act according to the former (75). Muir assigned inviolable rights to every living bit of flora and fauna in the wilderness, and refused to believe these living beings were put on earth to serve man; he wrote in "Wild Wool" that "I have never yet happened upon a trace of evidence that seemed to show that any one animal was ever made for another as much as it was made for itself" (602-3). The belief of man's equal, and not superior, role in the natural world is a point of contention between Emerson and Muir, and it is in this line of thinking that the roots of Muir's "transcendental heresy" begin to take hold.

CHAPTER II: ENCOUNTERING EMERSON

Michael Branch's research indicates that Muir read at least Nature and "The American Scholar" by the mid-1860s, and enough textual evidence exists in letters between Emerson and Muir to support an educated guess that Muir had also read Emerson's "Self-Reliance" before their 1871 meeting. Indeed, since Muir's journal entries from 1869-1872 are filled with the vernacular of the Transcendentalists, it is difficult to imagine Muir did not read everything available by Emerson and Thoreau (Branch 101). Indeed, unless Muir read an individual publication of "The American Scholar" from 1837, then he probably read it as part of Nature; Addresses, and Lectures (1849) or Miscellanies; Embracing Nature, Addresses, and Lectures (1856) under the tutelage of Ezra and Jeannie Carr at the University of Wisconsin. If either is the case, then Muir would also have been aware of "The Divinity School Address," "The Transcendentalist," and "The Young American." Similarly, if he read "Self-Reliance" it would have been part of Essays: First Series (1841 or 1847), which also contained such essays as "Circles," "The Over-Soul," and "Spiritual Laws." Following the same line of thinking, the Carr library likely contained Essays: Second Series (1844), in which Muir would have read essays such as "Character" and "The Poet."

Unfortunately, we have little direct evidence of just which works Muir read, or when. Although it is likely Muir read all the books available in the Carr library, and the Carrs likely owned everything available by Emerson and Thoreau, we simply have no

proof of the extent to which Muir was familiar with the Transcendentalists before his meeting with Emerson. This fact (or lack of facts) requires the critic to step carefully through the timeline created by Muir's letters, essays, and subsequent revised journals and full-length works. While echoes of Emerson and Thoreau are unmistakable in the books Muir published later in his life, he edited the content of his journals between the time of the original entries and publication; therefore the use of these entries as the basis for his books and journal revisions complicates attempts to discern a direct influence. Consider, for instance, these inspired words: "[y]ou bathe in these spirit-beams, turning round and round, as if warming at a camp-fire. Presently you lose consciousness of your own separate existence: you blend with the landscape, and become part and parcel of nature" (TMW 212). They appear in A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf—a book written in the last years of Muir's life but set during the late 1860s—and thus, despite the clear Emersonian phrasing, we cannot assume Emerson's influence at the time of the event, only at the time the page went to the typesetter.

Fortunately, careful reading of those items which did not undergo heavy revision—such as Muir's letters—reflect a more accurate view of Muir's philosophical growth and reaction to the texts he read. For instance, Muir uses the term "mob" only once in his journals and letters—in his introductory missive to Emerson. "Mob" is a word Emerson uses twice in "Self-Reliance," and Muir purposefully borrows this word as well as phrases specifically crafted to reflect his appreciation of Emerson, to persuade him to stay more than a few days in Yosemite: "Do not thus drift away with the mob while the spirits of these rocks & waters hail you after long waiting as their kinsman &

persuade you to closer communion" (LRWE 154). Even with assistance from the Carrs to procure a meeting with Emerson, Muir needed to make himself known to the master; his brief letter leaves no divine stone unmentioned, as he implores Emerson "to worship with Nature in the high temples of the great Sierra Crown beyond our holy Yosemite," and references the spirit twice more before closing his letter with "I am yours in Nature" (LRWE 155). At a gathering in Yosemite Valley on the day after he received the letter from Muir, Emerson was so moved by the display that he demanded the author of the letter show himself. Muir stepped forth, and so began a period of mutual admiration, communication, and respect—but not absolute agreement.

Muir's career as a conservationist and writer would not begin until several years into his friendship with Emerson, and by Emerson's death in 1882 Muir had published only short pieces in publications such as Overland Monthly, Harper's Weekly, and the New York Tribune; none of these works contained the powerful voice of a budding transcendentalist. Why, then, was Emerson so taken with the gruff Scotsman who lived in an isolated cabin at the base of Yosemite Falls, who was not as educated or well-read as his Concord friends? What would cause Emerson to put Muir on his list of "My Men," a list of men, living and dead, "whom he esteemed as approaching his ideal of the complete universal man" (McAleer 85)? Finally, what did Emerson see in Muir to cause him to return to an 1866 journal entry and add Muir to a list titled "Young America" (JRWE 19)?

Muir's observations of nature were discussed by the greatest scientific minds of the day—Louis Agassiz, Asa Gray, and Joseph Leconte, among others; Emerson was

familiar with the work of them all, and thought Muir would be next in line to come to Harvard and influence young minds. But Muir would have nothing of it, and was perplexed by Emerson's insistence that he "bring to an early close [his] absolute contacts with any yet unvisited glaciers or volcanoes" (Badè 135). Years later, Muir's editor and friend, Robert Underwood Johnson, asked Muir if it were true that Emerson pushed for a professorship at Harvard and that Agassiz declared Muir "the only living man who understood glacial action in the formation of scenery," to which Muir replied in the affirmative but insisted "you must surely know that I never for a moment thought of leaving God's big show for a mere profship, call who may" (Badè 321).

In meeting Muir, Emerson discovered a man spilling over with the qualities of a devout transcendental naturalist, and just the man to become the "sayer" and the "namer," as Emerson had written decades earlier:

We know that the secret of the world is profound, but who or what shall be our interpreter, we know not. A mountain ramble, a new style of face, a new person, may put the key into our hands. [...] It is the truest word ever spoken and the phrase will be the fittest, most musical, and the unerring voice of the world for that time. ("The Poet" 225)

Perhaps Emerson believed Muir was the last hope for continuing the lineage of the Transcendentalists. At the very least, Emerson found in Muir the raw, wild outdoorsman Thoreau failed to become, and Emerson could never be.

In an essay concerning the original strategy for the creation of Nature, Barry Wood mentions that Emerson "stressed those facts of nature revealed only to one bent on acute observation," noting Emerson's comment that:

If life were long enough among my thousand & one works should be a book of Nature....It should contain the Natural history of the woods around my shifting camp for every month in the year. It should tie their astronomy, botany, physiology, metereology, picturesque, & poetry together. No bird, no bug, no bud should be forgotten on his day & hour.
(qtd in Wood 391)

But the text of Nature that Emerson published in 1836 could not be further from a natural history of Concord, nor in it does the author sound like a man who has spent hours watching ants battle (as Thoreau did) or chasing an avalanche (as Muir did). Although Nature did become a sort of philosophical guidebook for both Thoreau and Muir, neither man fell entirely into lockstep with Emerson's views on nature and its use for mankind. For instance, while Muir agreed with Emerson regarding nature as a "vehicle" of thought, their opinions diverged regarding the path their thoughts should take (N 17).

But contrary to the beliefs of some scholars, Emerson and Muir did not hold entirely diametrically opposed points of view. Rather, their fundamental beliefs were quite similar: nature is precious, nature must be fully experienced, nature is self-sufficient, nature is an expression of spirit. But when their points of view diverge, such as in the consideration of nature as a commodity meant to serve man, the differences seem unmanageable until the reader realizes their overall goal is still the same: to

conceive of nature as inspiration and as a metaphor for the divine. Emerson could experience nature in a generalized and symbolic manner, without traipsing through the meadows or sauntering down a path at river's edge. Muir could not; he needed to experience nature through his physical senses, and exhorted to others to do the same. One cannot make a value judgment in this instance, as both men would fully immerse themselves in the manner of their choosing; neither man gave a half-hearted effort at maintaining his relationship with the natural world.

For example, Muir agreed with Emerson's statement that "a nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty" (N 12). When nature is used as a commodity to serve man, it must in some way be depleted; but when nature fulfills the needs of man through its beauty, then "the sky, the mountain, the tree, the animal, give us a delight in and for themselves" and nature and man can continue to exist as equal parts of a cohesive unit, which Muir favored (N 12). For Muir as for Emerson, "the simple perception of natural forms is a delight," and the beauty of nature has redemptive powers for those who will immerse themselves in it (N 13). In an 1872 letter, Muir used the beauty and redemptive power of nature—and language echoing Emerson's own—in an attempt to entice Emerson back to the Sierras:

Think of the soul lavings & bathings you will get. Think of the glow of your afterlife. [...] How blessed 'twill be after all your hard toils to rest hushed and soothed on those plain spirit shores. I do not beckon you here because mountains are more glorious than plains, but because they are less glorious, because they are simple and absorbable. (LRWE 202)

Although Emerson never returned to California to walk with him and sleep under the stars, Muir did not eschew his mentor's thoughts on beauty. As Emerson writes in Nature: "To the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone" (13). In A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf, Muir's language echoes Emerson's thoughts on the restorative value of nature, as he recollects the effects he felt of the San Joaquin Valley's Twenty Hill Hollow:

If you are traveling for health, play truant to doctors and friends, fill your pocket with biscuits, and hide in the hills of the Hollow, lave in its waters, tan in its golds, bask in its flower-shine, and your baptisms will make you a new creature indeed. Or, choked in the sediments of society, so tired of the world, here will your hard doubts disappear, your carnal incrustations melt off, and your soul breathe deep and free in God's shoreless atmosphere of beauty and love. (210-1)

Muir turns Emerson's phrase "choked in the sediments of society" into his own "body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company." The Emersonian outcome of an experience in nature is that "nature is medicinal and restores their tone" while for Muir the experience will cause "your hard doubts [to] disappear, your carnal incrustations [to] melt off, and your soul [to] breathe deep and free."

Muir also agreed with Emerson's second aspect of beauty, namely, that "the presence of [...] the spiritual element is essential to its perfection" (N 15). In numerous letters and journal entries throughout his life, Muir attributes the grandeur of nature to God, and often describes his first glimpses of a new locale in spiritual terms; looking

upon a landscape for the first time is like a baptism in the font of nature, as is every new morning he experiences in the wilderness. Whereas Emerson describes nature as having outstretched arms, willing to embrace man should his thoughts be virtuous and of equal greatness (N 16), Muir considers man and nature as descendents from the same divine force, each containing elements of the other:

Such a [terrestrial] being is man, who has flowed down through other forms of being and absorbed and assimilated portions of them into himself, thus becoming a microcosm most richly Divine because most richly terrestrial, just as a river becomes rich by flowing on and on through varied climes and rocks [...] (JM 138)

Muir and Emerson agree that the beauty of nature is representative of its divine source, but whereas Emerson limits the experience of nature's beauty to a reward for the virtuous, Muir does not. For Muir, divinity lies within all who are willing to stop and reflect on the mundane from a new point of view—or recollect the first moment we saw a beautiful landscape; we will never achieve the conscious unity of mind and spirit unless "we behold a new heaven and earth and are born again, as if we had gone on a pilgrimage to some far-off holy land and had become new creatures with bodies inverted" (JM 304). Muir considers man and nature to be intertwined, both part of the "great unit of creation," and each the caretaker of the other (TMW 138-9).

Emerson's final aspect of the beauty of nature delineates it as "an object of the intellect," in which it "re-forms itself in the mind, and not for barren contemplation, but for new creation" (N 16). Muir's body of work is a prime example of "new creation"—

dissatisfied with simply sitting in quiet contemplation of the beauty of nature, he set out to classify plants, discover new landscapes, theorize on the volcanic and glacial creation of the mountains and valleys, and work toward the conservation of the same. For instance, Muir used raw materials from his journals to recreate moments in his later works; in My First Summer in the Sierra, Muir uses a journal description to recreate images of the Nevada and Vernal Falls and the various flora and fauna he encounters nearby, then later reflects: "But of this there is no end, and life, when one thinks of it, is so short. Never mind, one day in the midst of these divine glories is well worth living and toiling and starving for" (263). Muir does not advocate simply basking in the glow of nature and being satisfied with "barren contemplation" of its beauty; his life and work are examples of living as one within nature and extracting inspiration and power from it.

Muir fervently believed that man was but one part of an interdependent network within the natural world; man and nature are inseparable, and man is never superior to nature. The inability of man to extract himself from nature in order to claim a superior position anticipates the environmental ethic for which Muir would become famous. The question of the use and equality of nature in relation to man would also be the greatest disagreement between Emerson and Muir.

While both men agree that nature is self-sufficient, Emerson writes in the "Commodity" section of Nature that "[a]ll the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man" and "the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man" (N 11). But Muir would have us believe that Nature exists only for Nature's sake, and humankind's ability to use the natural world for its own benefit makes us fortunate,

but not the ruler of all we survey. Emerson places man above Nature, while for Muir man and Nature exist symbiotically; Emerson often attributes godhood or godly qualities to Nature, but Muir considers Nature part of man's concrete reality, containing representations of the spirit which must be conserved, protected, and respected as equals with man. For Emerson, "the world is emblematic" (N 21). However, Muir considers Nature to be synonymous with God rather than reflective; all "things" in nature—rocks, beasts, men—"are sparks of the Divine Soul variously clothed upon with flesh, leaves, or that harder tissue called rock, water" (JM 138).

Muir's consideration of nature as man's equal rather than subservient to man differs from Emerson's notion that nature is among other things a commodity meant to sustain man: "Beasts, fire, water, stones and corn serve him," says Emerson, "[n]ature, in its ministry to man, is not only the material, but is also the process and the result" (N 11). Although Emerson classifies commodity as a "low" use of nature, and as a "mercenary benefit [...] which has respect to a farther good," it still warrants a classification of its own (N 12). Showing that decades after Emerson's death Muir still disagreed with the transcendentalist, Muir takes direct aim at Emerson's notion that "Beasts, fire, water, stones and corn serve [man]," when he asks in A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf, then "Why does water drown its lord? Why do so many minerals poison him? Why are so many plants and fishes deadly enemies? Why is the lord of creation subjected to the same laws of life as his subjects?" and goes on to represent nature and man as equal parts of a whole:

Now, it never seems to occur to these farseeing teachers [who believe the world was made especially for man] that Nature's object in making animals and plants might possibly be first of all the happiness of each one of them, not the creation of all for the happiness of one. Why should man value himself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation?

(138-9)

Muir recognized that man and nature are intertwined, and that changes wrought in nature by man will harm both, just as natural changes will affect the people and structures that have intruded upon the wilderness. Remarking on the original purity of nature, Muir notes that "[o]ne may walk these woods from year to year without even snuffing a tainted smell. Pollution, defilement, squalor are words that never would have been created had man lived conformably to Nature" (JM 222). "Conformably to Nature" could be defined as either in parallel with or subservient to Nature; Muir describes man as doing neither, instead asserting that man's perceived domination over nature has defiled it. He continues in his journal to say:

[o]ne would never think of removing a single dead limb or log from these woods were the thing not suggested by man foresters [. . .] In contemplating some lovely grove, I have wondered how if this dead stump or white mast were removed, would it be bettered. But I never could see room for even such paltry improvement. [...] And so, when we walk the aisle-like defiles of the woods over ridges, through meadows, and still,

cool glens, we find each in perfect beauty, as if God had everywhere done
His best in putting it in order that very day. (JM 222)

Muir's belief in the intertwined divinity of nature and man drove him toward the conservation of nature; if the wilderness is to remain the location in which man can discover spiritual truths, it must be treated with respect and protected, else it will disappear—and along with it Emerson's precious "vehicle of thought." Aldo Leopold, the twentieth-century conservationist and founder of the Wilderness Society, was greatly influenced by Muir and his insistence that nature was not a commodity created solely for human use; in the foreword to A Sand County Almanac, Leopold echoes Muir and the connection between man and nature when he writes, "we abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect" (viii). Muir and Leopold, not Emerson, were the philosophical fathers of the conservation and environmental movement.

In his passage on the beauty of nature, Emerson says the "love of beauty is Taste [and] the creation of beauty is Art," and summarizes the creative process of the artist: "The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, the architect, seek each to concentrate this radiance of the world on one point, and each in his several work to satisfy the love of beauty which stimulates him to produce" (N 17). Muir would not agree with Emerson that "[t]he world thus exists to the soul to satisfy the desire of beauty" as, again, this statement places nature in a position subservient to man (N 17). Given Muir's frequent admission that, regardless of the natural beauty he described for his audience, it was "impossible to write the dimmest picture of plant grandeur so redundant, unfathomable,"

one can imagine Muir would take issue with Emerson's notion that the poet must use nature to express the beautiful and create art (TMW 90). Whereas Emerson contends Nature is a reflection of the Spirit, "the herald of inward and eternal beauty," Muir would argue that even the simplest grass is a manifestation of God and "beautiful beyond the reach of language" (TMW 102).

In an 1872 letter to Emerson, Muir expressed his difficulty with producing language to describe nature for those who are unable or unwilling to immerse themselves in it, as "[n]o amount of engraving on language or wood will ever make a single soul to know these mountains. As well try to warm the naked & frost bitten by lectures on caloric, or painted fires. One day's exposure will do more than cartloads of books" (LRWE 204). Muir would not agree with any statement in Nature more than the following: "when we try to define and describe [God in nature], both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages" (37).

In the "Language" section of Nature, Emerson makes a statement with which both Muir and Thoreau would disagree: "All the facts in natural history taken by themselves, have no value, but are barren, like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life" (19). Again placing Nature in a position secondary to man, Emerson contends that Nature, because it exists only to serve man, is thus defined and assigned value by man. Such a belief would negate the need to conserve and preserve Nature for any reason besides further commoditization; Muir would have us protect the "terrestrial manifestations of God" found in Nature because these natural elements are God—not reflections or interpreters of God. In the "Discipline" section of Nature, Emerson returns

to the idea that "a thing is good only so far as it serves," but Muir never wavers in his belief that a "thing" is valuable simply because it exists as does man (26). However, Muir would heartily agree with Emerson that "A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world" (N 27). Muir found universal truths in every plant and animal he meticulously studied, precisely because of his belief that Nature was not an intermediary between man and God, but was a physical manifestation of God.

Emerson proposes his quintessential definition of Nature in the "Spirit" section of his essay: "It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us" (37). Muir would agree with this statement as well as others throughout this section—perhaps agreement comes so readily because in this section more than in any other, Emerson describes a process through which Muir has already passed. Muir felt the only places in which he could faithfully worship were those he frequently refers to as "mountain temples," where the rays of the sun and the spray of the falls baptized him every day. Muir's method of worship appears to follow Emerson's notion that "[t]he happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship" (N 37). Despite taking a divergent path toward the truth, Muir was still able to "see the miraculous in the common" required of Emerson's "faithful thinker" (N 44).

Throughout his career, Muir struggled to find his literary voice, which would eventually sound far more like Thoreau than Emerson, but most vexing to him was the

task of turning "dead bone heaps" of words into representations of Nature (Badè 189). Unlike Emerson, who said "[w]e are thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of particular meanings," Muir found it difficult to express to an audience all that his natural world has to offer (N 21). Muir contends that "Most of the words of the English language are made of mud, for muddy purposes," and cannot come close to rendering a picture or feeling for a reader who has not stepped into the natural world he describes (Badè 198). Thus, his task as Emerson's "sayer" and "namer" of things is even more difficult as he battles to describe all he has experienced in his mountain temples:

But to get all this into words is a hopeless task. The leanest sketch of each feature would need a whole chapter. Nor would any amount of space, however industriously scribbled, be of much avail. To defrauded town toilers, parks in magazine articles are like pictures of bread to the hungry. I can write only hints to incite good wanderers to come to the feast. (ONP 79)

But Muir's perception of the failure of language did not keep him from making strides toward becoming Emerson's ideal naturalist. For what Muir lacked in pure poetic ability he more than made up for by remaining "devout [in his] attention to truth" in an attempt to "see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world" (N 39). But, like Thoreau, Muir was intent on discovering the details as well; although Emerson said "there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness," Muir would contend that it is only through such detail and precision that the truth can be found—less dreaming, and more science, than Emerson called for (N 39). While Emerson believes

that such scientific study "reduce[s] the most diverse to one form," Muir uses the "order and superposition of the strata" to show the multitudinous manifestations of God on Earth (N 40).

The fundamental philosophical differences between Emerson and Muir did not impede their mutual admiration; Emerson said Muir was "more wonderful than Thoreau" while Muir considered Emerson "the Sequoia of the human race" (Swett 120). Muir, like Thoreau, constantly used Emerson's work to shape his own personal philosophy and response to nature. Their divergent views may be attributed simply to the global changes over the decades between the original publication of Nature (1836) and when Muir was likely to have read it (the early 1860s). Thus, Muir's philosophical differences with Emerson should not be considered heretical responses to transcendentalism; instead, we should attribute these differences to experimental extensions to the thoughts of men who—in comparison to Muir—did not have the same depth and breadth of experience of living within nature or watching the destruction of the wilderness through urban expansion and industrialization. For instance, as much as Muir admired the life and writings of Thoreau, he "could not suppress a chuckle at a man who could 'see forests in orchards and patches of huckleberry brush' or whose outpost at Walden was a 'mere saunter' from Concord" (Nash 127).

Despite never coming east during Emerson's lifetime, Muir did not disappoint Emerson. Unlike Thoreau, of whom Emerson said, "I cannot help counting it a fault in him that he had no ambition," Muir's ambitions, contributions, and expansion of the core values of transcendentalism were clear ("Thoreau" 480). When Emerson added Muir's

name to his list of "My Men," a list that included Thomas Carlyle, Louis Agassiz, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Thoreau, among others, he welcomed into the fold someone as transcendental as those soulmates of the sage of Concord. Differ though they did, Emerson did not waver from the statement he made shortly after meeting Muir, that indeed "Muir is more wonderful than Thoreau" (Swett 120). To an extent, Muir was, like Emerson, "a transparent eyeball, open, passive to the wonders of nature surrounding him," but unlike Emerson, Muir never believed that the purpose of nature was for the good of man but instead simply reveled in the glory of nature and its creator (Smith 66). While Emerson spoke of the spiritual insight and moral growth one could experience by recollecting images of nature, Muir wrote fervently about his immersion in the physical realm, the sensuality of nature touched by God himself, and consecrated by glorious baptisms in the falls throughout Yosemite Valley. It would be thus Muir who would lead seekers into the wilderness, not Emerson.

CHAPTER III: KINDRED SPIRITS

During the final decade of Emerson's life—1872 to 1882—Muir published over one hundred short articles and essays. Although Emerson would not have been privy to all of Muir's published work, as much was printed in regional or specialized publications such as San Francisco's Daily Evening Bulletin or The Overland Monthly, he had the opportunity to read the numerous pieces in widely-circulated publications such as Harper's New Monthly Magazine, the New York Daily Tribune, and Scribner's Monthly. In the 1870s alone, Muir produced more pieces for the popular press than Thoreau did during his lifetime. Muir's essays were just as scientific—if not more so—than the words hidden away in the unedited and as-yet-unpublished journals kept by Thoreau, and Emerson knew the contents of these journals. So, given Emerson's categorization of the scientific study of the natural world as "Understanding," a lesser form of knowledge than "Reason," one wonders how, then, he could proclaim Muir to be "more wonderful than Thoreau" when both men wrote similarly about nature.

In A Wider View of the Universe, a critical study of the life and work of Thoreau, Robert McGregor claims that "Thoreau's legacy to the environmental movement was built on a misunderstanding," specifically discussing various responses to Thoreau's works by the naturalist writers who came after him, such as John Burroughs and John Muir (204). To make his point, McGregor mentions that Burroughs revered the concept behind Walden but "denigrated the long journals full of raw nature observations," while

Muir scoffed at the idea that Thoreau could have learned anything about wildness "in the little streams and woods of Concord" (205). It was only after years of study, culminating in a decade when he pored over every word in the twenty volumes of The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, that Muir fully understood Thoreau's complex view of the spirit found in nature and its place in the greater ecological system. What Muir, and others of his and later generations, found by reading Thoreau's complete works was neither the most precise of all scientists nor a man as philosophical as Emerson, but one who combined his abilities in both intellectual spheres to create an environmentalist ethic. But Thoreau's contemporaries had an incomplete record of his work, as it remained largely unfinished and unedited at the time of his death. Additionally, those closest to him—including Emerson—had such a different outlook on nature, its use, and our responsibilities toward it that without Thoreau there to fill in the gaps, finish his philosophical and natural studies, and revise his work to articulate his points of view, those responsible for his legacy had no artist available to mold Thoreau's raw material.

Thus, Thoreau's work was not widely circulated during his lifetime; in fact, one of the defining moments of his literary career was the failure of A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers to sell at all, let alone enough for Thoreau to break even on the endeavor. When Thoreau's work was discussed by his contemporaries, the reviewers emphasized his relationship with Emerson—not the content or quality of the work in print. In discussing Thoreau's contemporary reputation, Gary Scharnhorst notes that he was "regarded as a pale imitation of Emerson, a moon in a decidedly elliptical orbit around his friend and patron," and, as such, his lectures and essays "were often judged on

an Emersonian template" (6). It is difficult to fault those who reviewed Thoreau's work in this manner, as during this time Thoreau was primarily interested in answering Emerson's call for a unique American scholar and poet. Unfortunately for Thoreau, the guidelines were not clear for what this unique American voice was supposed to say; in a vain attempt to hit the mark, Thoreau "gathered several arrows into his quiver and shot them off more or less at random" (McGregor 51). Thoreau struggled to find his own voice and to fit his knowledge of philosophy, spirituality, and the natural world into a transcendental mold. Doing so proved difficult for him, as his views on nature were quite different than Emerson's; they shared a belief in one of the purposes of nature being an abundant source of literary inspiration, but from that point their views diverged.

Early in his career, Thoreau held on to the Emersonian notion that the natural world is subordinate to man and that the value of nature lies in what it can provide for us, especially spiritual insight. Although Emerson considers the natural world a sort of illusion through which man may catch a glimpse of the infinite, little room exists in his work to value the specific details in nature—something both Thoreau and Muir took very seriously. Thoreau, like Muir, placed great value in the earthly wonder of the elements of nature; he believed that not only could man use nature as a conduit to the infinite, as Emerson would have us do, but we could also learn from the natural world and enhance our lives without transcendence. Thoreau insists in Walden: "We are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us" (66). Whereas Emerson would look "upon a river in a meditative hour" and so through Reason we are "reminded of the flux of all things,"

Thoreau adamantly believed that a spiritual life could be found by studying nature in detail for its own sake, and in creating different sensory relationships with nature (N 18). For Thoreau, nature is not merely a symbol. And because nature is not merely a symbol, the value of an object depends on the quality of man's perception; Thoreau wrote in his journal that "[y]ou will not see these splendors, whether you stand on the hilltop or in the hollow, unless you are prepared to see them" (WHDT 16:278). One might also add that the perceiver cannot fully appreciate natural phenomena unless he truly knows, as a scientist does, what he is experiencing.

In Walden, Thoreau mentions the need for physical communion with the natural world:

We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thunder-cloud, and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander. (212)

Such immersion in the natural world was foreign to Emerson, but Thoreau experienced such a wild place on Ktaadn, which he climbed in 1847—after his time at Walden Pond but before finishing his work on the Walden manuscript. Thoreau's Ktaadn experience confirmed for him the difficulty of understanding the power of the wilderness without direct immersion into it, as well as the idea that the physical multiplicity and complexity

of nature in no way depended on its usefulness for man. In the "Ktaadn" section of The Maine Woods, Thoreau writes:

It is difficult to conceive of a region uninhabited by man. We habitually presume his presence and influence everywhere. And yet we have not seen pure Nature, unless we have seen her thus vast and drear and inhuman, though in the middle of cities. Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful. [...] It was the fresh and natural surface of the planet Earth, as if it was made for ever and ever, —to be the dwelling of man, we say, —so Nature made it, and man may use it if he can. (645)

The two passages above clearly challenge the Emersonian system Thoreau originally intended to follow. In the "Language" section of Nature, Emerson writes of the "ray of relation" that connects all objects but is created by man, the "analogist"; man creates a value for nature, after interpreting what it has to offer (16). But Thoreau understands that Nature exists outside of man's interpretation and that we have no innate power over it. Thus, while natural facts are still a gateway to spiritual truths, Thoreau focuses on these facts for their intrinsic value. In accepting the widely acknowledged idea that the chapters in Walden mimic a figural ascent toward divine correspondence, much like Emerson does with the progressive use of the spirit in sections of Nature, we can see the concrete structure Thoreau borrowed from Emerson. However, while Emersonian correspondence reflects a vertical model and, therefore, hierarchy, Thoreauvian correspondence follows a cyclical model that acknowledges and welcomes all of nature

and man on equal footing—the beginnings of an ecocentric approach to nature that John Muir would eventually come to understand and embrace.

Thoreau died just as he was coming into his own as a naturalist and an author. Having gained some prominence and confidence with the relative success of Walden, Thoreau prepared several essays which would eventually appear posthumously in widely-circulated publications such as the Atlantic Monthly. These richly detailed essays, including "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," and "Wild Apples," received some of the most positive reviews of any of his work to date; for example, the New York Times hailed "Walking" for its "scintillating crystal of philosophy" (qtd in Scharnhorst 15). But Thoreau was still in Emerson's shadow even in death; the brief contemporary resurgence of interest in Thoreau's work can be directly attributed to Emerson's eulogy to Thoreau—it was published in the Atlantic Monthly, with a circulation of at least fifty thousand readers. Such attention focused the public on Thoreau's work more than ever before, and this attention stayed at such a relatively high level that his body was eventually moved from the New Burying Ground in Concord to Author's Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Gary Scharnhorst wisely notes that this move was the first in a sequence of events in which not only Thoreau's corpse but also his corpus would be disinterred (15).

Muir first became familiar with Thoreau's work during this posthumous revival; it is likely that he began to read Thoreau at the same time he first read Emerson, during his days at the University of Wisconsin in the early 1860s. The Carrs would have had copies of the Thoreau essays published posthumously in 1862, a time when Muir had grown very close to the Carrs, and Muir would have read anything and everything they handed

to him. Although we do not have direct evidence linking Muir to any specific Thoreau texts prior to 1870, when he wrote "I was reading Thoreau's Maine Woods a short time ago" in a letter to Jeanne Carr (Badè 119), I believe he was familiar with Walden before he left Wisconsin in 1865 and certainly before he ordered a new copy sent to him in Yosemite in 1872 (Hutchinson 1). Given the frequent and well-documented correspondence between Muir and Jeanne Carr, and their mutual admiration of the Concord writers, if Muir had read Walden outside of the Carr personal library he certainly would have noted this event just as he did every time he read something that resonated with his soul. But one cannot find such an indication in his letters or even in Muir's journals from 1869 onward, and very few letters from 1865 to 1869 have been saved. In any case, what is certain is that the Thoreauvian influence on Muir was, much like Thoreau's influence on his contemporaries, initially stifled by Emerson's presence. After Muir understood the basic tenets of Transcendentalism and worked through Emerson's idea of Nature and its uses for man, he went out into the wilderness and put his own modified versions of these philosophies to the test. Following years in Yosemite and Emerson's death, Muir turned not to Emerson's lectures and essays for literary guidance, but back to Thoreau's Walden, The Maine Woods, and essays such as "Walking," "Autumnal Tints," and "Wild Apples."

Once reacquainted with these works, Muir began to integrate Thoreau's ideas and language with his own. Open any collection of Muir's letters and essays from the latter portion of his life and you will find the echoes of Thoreau's subjects and style outnumbering those of Emerson's. But Muir was careful not to appear a rote imitator of

Thoreau; although unaware of Thoreau's early difficulties in attempting to imitate Emerson and the negative critical responses that followed, Muir would not have been surprised at such an outcome. Muir was acutely aware of the possibility of sounding like an imitator rather than an integrator and creator; at times, he would paraphrase Thoreau in his journals but modify or remove the sentences before publication, specifically so that his words would not appear as mere copies of Thoreau's. For instance, take Thoreau's famous lines from "Walking": "The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World" (WHDT 5:224). Muir wrote the following in his journal for July 11, 1890: "In God's wildness lies the hope of the world—the great fresh unblighted, unredeemed wilderness" (JM 317). Muir used entries from his journal at this time to complete his manuscript for Travels in Alaska, but this very Thoreauvian quotation went unused, apparently never intended for publication. Muir's private paraphrasings of Thoreau were indications of just how well he had integrated Thoreauvian ideas with his own; he was then able to use his appreciation and knowledge of all things "Thoreau" to spur him on to complete his own literary works. Richard Fleck notes that Muir's deep appreciation of Thoreau's literary work, and understanding of how it enhanced his own thoughts on natural history, ecology, and conservation, "gave him the inspiration to express his own unique feelings, thoughts and observations coming from experience of which Thoreau could have never even dreamed" (63). Thoreau, due to his "lack of ambition" or untimely death, never "engineer[ed] for all America" as Emerson wanted ("Thoreau" 480). Muir, however, fought for the preservation and conservation of land and was instrumental in the

creation of national parks; the voice he used was strong in part because of the support he felt from Thoreau's works.

Thoreau and Muir each culled text from their field notes and journals for use in their essays; both men filled their notebooks with a wealth of scientific information and personal responses to the land. To say that Thoreau's Journal provides readers with a great deal of scientific information is, of course, an understatement, as it contains over two million words detailing the natural world. Within the space of two pages selected at random from Thoreau's journal, the reader will learn the exact location of a certain tree species, where to find a particular flowering plant, and an analogy between the body and mind of humans and vegetables:

May 18. [...] Arbor-vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), the only species of *Thuja* in the New World. Lake St. John in Canada its northern limit; abounds between 48° 50' and 45°. The posts last thirty-five or forty years, and the rails sixty, or three or four times as long as those of any other species.

[...]

May 19. Found the *Arum triphyllum* and the nodding trillium, or wake-robin, in Conant's Swamp. An ash also in bloom there, and the sassafras quite striking. Also the fringed polygala by Conantum wood.

[...]

May 20. Tuesday. There is, no doubt, a perfect analogy between the life of the human being and that of the vegetable, both of the body and the mind. [...] I am concerned first to come to my *Growth*, intellectually and

morally (and physically, of course, as a means to this, for the body is the symbol of the soul), and then to bear my *Fruit*, do my *Work*, *propagate* my kind, not only physically but *morally*, not only in body but in mind.

(WHDT 8:200-202)

Such entries are constant, for Thoreau recorded every detail of his immersion in nature so that he might fully comprehend the interworkings among species and always stand ready should one of his facts "flower into a truth."

The reader encounters the same sort of scientific and philosophical entries in Muir's journals, with descriptions of the Yosemite landscape and its inhabitants sharing space with Muir's thoughts on nature and spirituality. In the following excerpt, Muir captures the vagaries of the seasons:

April 10. Spring, genial, gushing, balmy, in all the sky and in every sound and song. Falls in glory that excelleth. Caverns and arched openings in the falling column. At the base of the upper falls I saw and heard things of unwritable grandeur. Plant life is rapidly maturing.

April 12. Snow this morning is drifting in frozen dust in the high winds. Ten inches at noon. All summer distinctions of flowering and flowerless plants are leveled. All are equally polypetalous. Complete, unmitigated winter has returned, although not less than twenty plants are in flower. Brier rose is in leaf, also wild cherry. Willows are in flower [...]

April 13. Spring again. Frogs in a deep gurgling chorus.

(JM 49)

Though Thoreau and Muir endlessly detail nature in their rough journal entries, in their essays the presentations of facts often differ stylistically—especially in Muir's early work. In Thoreau's essays, such as in the following excerpt from "Autumnal Tints," he first introduces the natural object and describes his initial reactions to it just as we are reading about it for the first time:

The Purple Grass (*Eragrostis pectinacea*) is now in the height of its beauty. [...] On going to and examining it, I found it to be a kind of grass in bloom, hardly a foot high, with but few green blades, and a fine spreading panicle of purple flowers, a shallow, purplish mist trembling around me. [...] I was the more surprised and charmed because grass is commonly of a sober and humble color. (WHDT 5:252)

Contrast Thoreau's style with the following excerpts from Muir's early essay, "Hetch Hetchy Valley," written in 1873 and which begins with an impersonal statement informing the reader of the location of the valley: "Hetch Hetchy is one of a magnificent brotherhood of Yosemite Valleys, distant from Yosemite Valley, so-called, eighteen or twenty miles in a northwesterly direction, but by the only trail the distance is not less than forty miles." If Muir were to continue in the same vein as Thoreau, he would describe the valley in detail, mimicking his first encounter with its grandeur. But such is not the case. In the first several paragraphs of his essay, Muir simply describes how he got to the valley: "[o]n reaching the top of Indian Cañon I bore off to the left, crossed Yosemite Creek about a mile back of the falls, and slanted up the side of El Capitan Mountain towards the gap, through which the mono trail passes." When the narrative finally

reaches its destination, Muir drops completely out of the picture and instead describes the scene in detail as if from a distance:

This valley is situated on the main Tuolumne River, just as Yosemite is on the Merced. It is about three miles in length, with a width varying from an eighth to half a mile; most of its surface is level as a lake, and lies at an elevation of 3800 feet above the sea. [...] The surface of Hetch Hetchy is diversified with groves and meadows in the same manner as Yosemite, and the trees are identical in species. The dryer and warmer portions have fine groves of the black oak (*Quercus sonomensis*) with a few sugar pines (*P. lambertiana*). The Sabine pine (*P. sabiniana*) which grows on the north side of the valley in sun-beaten rocks, is not found in Yosemite.

This type of description continues on for a few hundred words, at which point Muir reappears in the narrative, concluding: "in returning to Yosemite, I left the valley by the trail." This essay lacks the personal connection in Thoreau's essays like "Autumnal Tints," as well as the connection with the land and interaction with the reader in Muir's 1908 essay, "The Hetchy Hetchy Valley"—written after he had devoured Thoreau's complete works:

Imagine yourself in Hetch Hetchy on a sunny day in June, standing waist-deep in grass and flowers (as I have oftentimes stood), while the great pines sway dreamily with scarce perceptible motion. [...] Now observe the fineness and marvelous distinctness of the various sun-illuminated fabrics into which the water is woven; they sift and float from form to

form down the face of that grand gray rock in so leisurely and unconfused a manner that you can examine their texture, and patterns and tones of color as you would a piece of embroidery held in the hand. (213)

Although their raw journal entries were similar in content but different in style and purpose, Muir's essays over his lifetime reflect a significant and progressive Thoreauvian influence both in style and in purpose. However, providing a complete account of the similarities between Thoreau and Muir would be a book-length project with topics ranging from their synthesis of the ideas of the Romantics and the Transcendentalists, to their love of geology, botany, and other natural studies, to their commitment to preservation and conservation. Rather than embark on such a project, in the remainder of this chapter I will briefly discuss three major areas of similarity between Thoreau and Muir: a penchant for scientific precision in their natural studies, an appreciation of wildness, and a desire to create a conservationist ethic among the population.

For Emerson, the importance of natural objects lies in their reflection of spiritual truths; he believed close, detailed study of natural objects supports our Understanding and not our Reason, as objects are merely symbolic and thus have little intrinsic value. Thoreau and Muir both disagree with this idea and see absolute value in studying the natural world with scientific precision. In his essay "The Natural History of Massachusetts," Thoreau discusses how the "true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization; he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men," thus his "will be a deeper and finer experience" for "let us not underrate the value of a fact; it

will one day flower into a truth" (WHDT 5:131). In this series of quotations, Thoreau takes aim at Emerson's contention that nature is full only of symbols; Thoreau asks, who are we to assume that a greater communion with nature cannot be found by intense scientific study?

In A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Thoreau clearly challenges Emerson by asking "is not Nature, rightly read, that of which she is commonly taken to be the symbol merely?" (WHDT 1:408). Robert McGregor describes Thoreau's methods for studying nature as an attack from a variety of angles: on all his walks around Concord he carefully observed the variety and complexity of the flora and fauna before him, and he gathered extensive technical knowledge by reading the works of John James Audubon, William Bartram, Charles Darwin, Asa Grey, Linneaus, and Alexander Wilson, among others (202). Thus, while Thoreau initially tried to follow Emerson's ideas and eschew his own scientific tendencies, he continued to study science and nature in great detail. Such inquiries would lead him toward an understanding that blended Emersonian ideas with his own; he studied nature in detail because this was the only way he could "appropriate it for didactic or aesthetic uses" (Buell 125). Muir was similarly well-versed in the study of science, having received three years of formal training in geology and botany at the University of Wisconsin. As previously shown through the examples of their raw journal entries and subsequent polished essays, both Thoreau and Muir overcame Emerson's concern that writers focused on natural or scientific detail would "freeze their subject under the wintry light of the understanding" (N 44).

Representations of wildness accompany the numerous natural details found in the journals and essays of both Thoreau and Muir. In her essay, "Thoreau's Concept of the Wild," Rosalie Baum says that for Thoreau the concept of wildness parallels Emerson's concept of Nature: "[a reality] which is constantly changing, that which is a succession of present moments, that which makes it possible for man to transcend himself" (44).

Although the wildness encountered by Muir day after day for years, in both Yosemite and Alaska, far surpassed the little "oases of wildness in the desert of our civilization" found in Concord, Thoreau still used the wild for his benefit (WF 168). By looking closely at the Concord landscape, Thoreau found Indian arrowheads, wild apple trees, and animals in the deep woods that remained untouched by present-day inhabitants of the area (Nash 87). Even in these scraps of wildness, Thoreau embraced the "raw material of life" to save himself from becoming weak and dull—for as he says in "Walking," "[d]ullness is but another name for tameness" (WHDT 5:231). In the opening lines of "Walking," Thoreau reminds the reader that man comes from and belongs within nature, and nature's apotheosis is the wild; by the end of the essay Thoreau's point is clear: "Life consists with Wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him" (WHDT 5:226).

Thoreau's encounter with the harsh wildness of Maine reminded him "how exceedingly new this country still is," so new that he questioned how one could possibly think that civilized folk had even begun to explore what the American landscape has to offer (WHDT 3:90). When he describes mid-nineteenth century America as a country "virtually unmapped and unexplored," in which "waves the virgin forest of the New

World," he urges us to explore it, to commune with the bear, the deer, and the moose, and to stare down the grim wildness and find comfort within it in order to reap its benefits (WHDT 3:92). However, after initially experiencing the wild, Thoreau believed that the optimal living situation would be one in which man maintained a place in both worlds—much like his crops:

in all dells and pond-holes in the woods and pastures and swamps grows a rich and various crop only unreaped by man. Mine was, as it were, the connecting link between wild and cultivated fields; as some states are civilized, and others half-civilized, and others savage or barbarous, so my field was, though not in a bad sense, a half-cultivated field. They were beans cheerfully returning to their wild and primitive state that I cultivated, and my hoe played the Rans des Vaches for them. (W 106)

To achieve balance and extract the best of both the cultivated and uncultivated worlds, one must face the wildness, renounce any ideas of superiority over the land, and accept that man is "part and parcel of Nature" (WHDT 5:205). Thoreau recognizes that wildness is something to value and protect, for "in Wildness is the preservation of the World" (WHDT 5:224).

When Muir arrived in San Francisco in 1868, he asked for direction "to any place that is wild" (Y 4). For Muir, Thoreau's "half-cultivated field" was not sufficiently wild; he was a man who set off into the Sierras with only a few scraps of bread and some tea leaves, who chased avalanches and rushed out to see the remains of earthquakes moments after rocks crashed to the ground. Wildness proved the greatest "conductor of divinity,"

according to Muir, because it was least affected by man (JM 118). In the wild, Muir found freedom; in the city he often found himself needing to escape the "moiling, squirming, fog-breathing public" and the artificial structures built to confine them all (Badè 199). Muir never abandoned his desire to protect the wilderness, despite the schism this caused in the burgeoning conservation and preservation movement of the late nineteenth century. In 1901, Muir opened the first chapter of Our National Parks with the following sentiment:

The tendency nowadays to wander in wildernesses is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. (1)

Muir reminded his reader not to be content with mere "wild beauty," for it was still too close to civilization for the individual to reap the full benefits of the wild:

Like Thoreau [the sane and the free] see forests in orchards and patches of huckleberry brush, and oceans in ponds and drops of dew. Few in these hot, dim, strenuous times are quite sane or free; choked with care like clocks full of dust, laboriously doing so much good and making so much money;—or so little,—they are no longer good for themselves. (ONP 2-3)

Having immersed himself in the particular wildness of Yosemite for so many years, Muir knew that transcendence could be found in the wild if only we allowed ourselves the opportunity to commune with it.

Clearly, Thoreau and Muir differ in their belief regarding the type of land that is sufficiently wild. But the fact remains that each man produced a significant response to the land—however they defined wildness. In his essay "Nature Writing as a Subversive Activity," Thomas Lyon writes that "transforming aesthetic experience of place is very often the origin of nature writing" (12). As seen in previous examples in this chapter, both Thoreau and Muir succeeded, through their individual styles, in conveying the aesthetics and value of a locale—or even just a wild moment—through their intense personal knowledge of a specific place. Don Scheese writes that "until Thoreau, there had been no one who made it a vocation to write in behalf of the inhabitation and exploration of a wild place" (139-140). The phrase "in behalf of" provides the key to Scheese's statement, as it conveys an important distinction between Thoreau's consistent practice of responding to a specific sacred locale and that of, say, William Bartram. This excerpt from Bartram's Travels could just as easily have been written by Thoreau or Muir, for it reflects the naturalist's scientific gaze: "Here are several species of squirrels, (*sciurus*) peculiar to the lower countries, or maritime parts of Carolina and the Floridas, and some of them are very beautiful creatures" (283). The difference between this particular Bartram excerpt and the essays by Thoreau or Muir is that this statement introduces only a scientific catalog, in prose form, of the various black and grey squirrels of the area in question—it does not move the reader to run out and commune with wild nature, nor does it call on man to preserve the land or value the squirrel for its own sake. Writing "in behalf of" the land—be it Concord or Yosemite—Thoreau and Muir create a

sacred and "wild" place, in which the human inhabitant or visitor becomes champion and conservator.

To protect and conserve the land requires effort from more than its original inhabitants—strangers must be recruited into the movement. This need poses a bit of a problem for both Thoreau and Muir, who valued the distance between the wild and civilization and thus between themselves and the rest of the population. Michael Branch notes that while Thoreau measures the distance between wildness and civilization laterally through the distance between Walden Pond and Concord, Muir measures the distance vertically "by emphasizing the superiority of mountain wilderness over the dusty, degraded, mercantile life of the lowlands" (145). Not only does Muir emphasize the superiority of the mountains over the lowlands, he cannot hide his disdain for the "condensed sticks of filth" who make up the bulk of his audience—people who dwell in the cities and head out for a touch of nature on the weekends, if that (JM 191).

But these "condensed sticks of filth" were just the people Muir had to win over to his side in order to save the land from excessive grazing, mining, logging, and—in the case of Hetch Hetchy Valley—flooding, all marketed as benefitting only man. Because Thoreau's essays containing sustained ideas of conservation and preservation went virtually unnoticed during his lifetime or were printed only after his death, he did not have to fight the urge, as Muir did, to chastise those very readers he tried to bring into the fold. The essays from the final years of Thoreau's life show his intent to provide a message of preservation and conservation within the framework of philosophical nature writing; for example, in "Autumnal Tints" Thoreau describes the beauty of the New

England forests in autumn and begs readers to open their eyes and discover the complexities of their natural surroundings. The problem, according to Thoreau, is for the masses to see the beauty inherent in nature rather than settling for the pleasant images they see in what they already know:

Objects are concealed from our view, not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them [. . .] We do not realize how far and widely, or how near and narrowly, we are to look. The greater part of the phenomena of Nature are for this reason concealed from us all our lives. The gardener sees only the gardener's garden. (WHDT 5:285)

If the gardener sees only his garden, why should he be moved to protect the natural elements outside the land he has already tamed? Essays such as "Wild Apples" and "Walking" show the value of wildness—land outside of our control—to just such short-sighted individuals. Thoreau implores the reader to look beyond his basic concerns and notice that an incredible amount of knowledge still remains untouched.

Nearly all of Muir's later essays are in the same vein as Thoreau's preservation-oriented prose, although Muir does not lack for direct attacks on people he feels have already spoiled the natural world or who are headed in the same direction. His 1901 book, Our National Parks, collects essays previously published in the Atlantic Monthly. In the preface, Muir says he wrote the essays

to show forth the beauty, grandeur, and all-embracing usefulness of our wild mountain forest reservations and parks, with a view to inciting the

people to come and enjoy them, and get them into their hearts, that so at length their preservation and right use might be made sure.

Muir acknowledges the wild parks and reservations of the American West, from the Black Hills Reserve of South Dakota to the reserves in the Rocky Mountains, focusing the bulk of the book on Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks. Muir focuses on the unique elements of the landscape, including positive attributes we should celebrate and preserve as well as the resources found within which men attempt to exploit. Positive attributes include the sublime landscape Muir describes in "The Yellowstone National Park"; talking about the pools and geysers unique to this landscape, he says that no matter how "orderly your excursions or aimless, again and again amid the calmest, stillest scenery you will be brought to a standstill hushed and awe-stricken before phenomena wholly new to you" (ONP 41).

Building toward a message of preservation, Muir opens the final chapter of Our National Parks by reminding the reader that "The forests of America, however slighted by man, must have been a great delight to God; for they were the best he ever planted" (331). Muir appeals to the readers' religious sense as well as a sense of national pride: "Every other civilized nation in the world has been compelled to care for its forests, and so must we if waste and destruction are not to go on to the bitter end, leaving America as barren as Palestine or Spain" (ONP 337). Muir takes Thoreau's general message for preservation of the natural world and translates it into a specific call to action: "Save what is left of the forests!" (ONP 336).

If Thoreau's life had not been cut short, who is to say how the environmental movement would have developed? As he emerged from Emerson's shadow, Thoreau's nature writing celebrated his own path toward divine correspondence and urged others to do the same—not only for their sake but also for the sake of the natural world. Like Thoreau, Muir began with an Emersonian framework, but unlike Thoreau he immediately challenged the master and attempted to develop his own natural path to transcendence. That Thoreau and Muir eventually followed the same path is not a surprise, but the question remains why Emerson considered Muir "more wonderful than Thoreau" when, as shown throughout this chapter, the two men were so similar. Inherent in the phrase "more wonderful than Thoreau" is the notion that Emerson believed Thoreau to be, at least, minimally wonderful.

In the decade between Thoreau's death and his introduction to Muir, perhaps Emerson took the opportunity to reflect on the messages in Thoreau's posthumous publications. If he did, he would have seen the foundation for the same sort of "heretical transcendentalism" that he found refreshing in Muir. Perhaps Emerson saw that Muir had the opportunity and ambition—and just the right amount of arrogance—to carry out his plans for the preservation of the natural world and the peaceful coexistence between civilization and the wild, while Thoreau died before carrying out any conservationist plans he might have had. Perhaps in his brief encounter with Muir, Emerson saw a man who embodied what Theodore Roosevelt later described as "what few nature-lovers are—a man able to influence contemporary thought and action on the subjects to which he had devoted his life" (qtd in Phillipon 109).

FURTHER LINES OF INQUIRY

Despite his position as "the most vocal upholder of transcendentalist-style nature worship among his contemporaries," little critical attention has been paid to Muir, relative to constant critical attention to Emerson and Thoreau (Buell 189). Perhaps another statement by Lawrence Buell will clarify why Thoreau is required reading but Muir is not: "Muir's stylistic derivativeness belies the originality of his turn of mind" (193). Thus, the next logical line of inquiry for someone interested in refiguring John Muir as a crucial part of late nineteenth-century American literature would be to focus on those elements unique to Muir: his religious background, his highly personal methods of inquiry into subjects ranging from Romantic literature to scientific discoveries, and his two very different voices, personal and political, just to name a few.

Although Muir scholarship continues at a steady pace, that pace is but a slow trickle. Articles have been written following several of the lines of inquiry previously listed, but often these articles are not sharply focused or only pose questions for discussion rather than coming to any conclusion. For instance, Muir was well-versed in the British Romantic poets before ever reading a word of Emerson. Given the influence of these same poets on Emerson, one might want to investigate to what extent this knowledge helped Muir understand Emerson. For example, did Muir's knowledge of Coleridge allow him to understand Emerson's Nature to a greater extent than someone without the same fundamental literary knowledge? To date, less than ten peer-reviewed pages have been published on this topic.

It would also be interesting to discuss "The Young American" while bearing in mind the list of "Young America" Emerson kept in his journal from 1866. This list contains such names as William Bull Right, George E. Tufts, Edward Smith King, and Tecumseh Steece—one could produce a mildly intriguing page or two about each individual, but their legacies have not endured as Muir's has, and certainly not to the extent that one could point to any of them as having helped America advance "into a new and more excellent social state than history has recorded" ("The Young American" 244). How did Muir fit the description of the "Young American" such that Emerson would return to his notebook more than five years after making his original list, to add Muir's name?

Yet another intriguing area for discussion comes from three lines in a brief letter from Muir to Jeanne Carr, from October 1872: "Emerson has sent me a profound little book styled 'the Growth of the Mind,' by Reed. Do you know it? It is full of the fountain truth" (Gisel 198). What was the "truth" Muir found in Reed's text, and how did it differ from the "truth" Muir found in Emerson's Nature or in his Prose Works, the latter of which Emerson had already sent to Muir? Or, as with Muir's previous knowledge of Coleridge, did understanding Reed provide a stronger foundation through which to study and extend Emerson's transcendental philosophy?

Although Muir said in 1872 that "[b]ook-making frightens me, because it demands so much artificialness and retrograding," he eventually found "the chemistry that may press [the mountain fires] unimpaired into bookseller's bricks" (Badè 198). To find the right chemical components, Muir read voraciously—and annotated texts with

similar fervor. Through the generosity of his family, Muir's personal library is nearly intact and available to browse at the University of the Pacific. In those volumes one can find Muir's annotations in all twenty volumes of The Writings of Henry David Thoreau, but also his annotations of older, single volumes of A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, The Maine Woods, and Walden. An analysis of the differences between the two sets of annotations could be key to determining how Muir grew more Thoreauvian than Emersonian while he was attempting to find the literary voice which eventually spoke loud and clear to the twentieth-century environmentalists and readers who followed.

WORKS CITED

- Badè, William Frederic. The Life and Letters of John Muir. 1924. Rpt. in John Muir: His Life and Letters and Other Writings. Seattle: Mountaineers, 1996.
- Bartram, William. Travels and Other Writings. New York: Library of America, 1996.
- Baum, Rosalie Murphy. "Thoreau's Concept of the Wild." The Concord Saunterer 17.3 (December 1984): 39-44.
- Blakemore, Peter. "Reading Home." Thoreau's Sense of Place. Ed. Richard J. Schneider. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2000. 115-32.
- Branch, Michael. "Telling Nature's Story: John Muir and the Decentering of the Romantic Self." John Muir in Historical Perspective. Ed. Sally M. Miller. New York: Peter Lang, 1999. 99-122.
- Buell, Lawrence. The Environmental Imagination. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1995.
- Chai, Leon. The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Character." The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Alfred Kazan. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1987. 271-85.
- . "The Divinity School Address." The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Alfred R. Ferguson. Vol. I. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971. 71-93.
- . The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Ronald A. Bosco and Glen M. Johnson. Vol. XVI. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1982. 16 vols.
- . The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Ralph L. Rusk. Vol. 6. New York: Columbia UP, 1939. 10 vols.
- . Nature. The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Alfred R. Ferguson. Vol. I. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971. 3-45.
- . "The Poet." The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Alfred Kazan. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1987. 221-42.

- . "Thoreau." The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Edward W. Emerson. Vol. X. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903. 451-85.
- . "The Young American." The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Alfred R. Ferguson. Vol. I. Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971. 222-44.
- Fleck, Richard F. "John Muir's Homage to Henry David Thoreau." The Pacific Historian 29:2-3 (Summer 1985): 55-64.
- Gatta, John. "Godliness Writ Large in John Muir's Sierra." Religion & Literature 35:2-3 (Summer-Autumn 2003): 11-28.
- Gisel, Bonnie. Kindred and Related Spirits: The Letters of John Muir and Jeanne C. Carr. Salt Lake City: U of Utah P, 2001.
- Holmes, Steven J. The Young John Muir. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1999.
- Hutchinson, Stan. "Some Writings and Words of John Muir Compared with Writings of Henry David Thoreau." The John Muir Newsletter 10:1 (Winter 2000): 1-4.
- Lyon, Thomas J. "Nature Writing as a Subversive Activity." North Dakota Quarterly 59.2 (Spring 1991): 6-16.
- McAleer, John. Ralph Waldo Emerson: Days of Encounter. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984.
- McGregor, Robert Kuhn. A Wider View of the Universe. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1997.
- McKusick, James. "From Coleridge to John Muir: The Romantic Origins of Romanticism." The Wordsworth Circle 26.1 (Winter 1995): 36-40.
- Muir, John. "A Geologist's Winter Walk." 1873. Nature Writings. New York: Library of America, 1997. 592-97.
- . "Hetch Hetchy Valley." Boston Weekly Transcript 25 Mar 1873: 2.
- . "The Hetch Hetchy Valley." Sierra Club Bulletin 6.4 (January 1908): 212-22.
- . John of the Mountains: The Unpublished Journals of John Muir. 1938. Ed. Linnie Marsh Wolfe. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1979.
- . My First Summer in the Sierra. 1911. Nature Writings. New York: Library of America, 1997. 147-310.

- . Our National Parks. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901.
- . The Story of My Boyhood and Youth. 1913. Nature Writings. New York: Library of America, 1997. 1-142.
- . A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf. 1916. Boston: Houghton, 1998.
- . Travels in Alaska. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915.
- . "Wild Wool." 1875. Nature Writings. New York: Library of America, 1997. 598-606.
- . The Yosemite. New York: Century, 1912.
- Nash, Roderick Frazier. Wilderness and the American Mind. 4th ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2001.
- Peck, H. Daniel. "Better Mythology: Perception and Emergence in Thoreau's Journal." North Dakota Quarterly 59.2 (Spring 1991): 33-44.
- Philippon, Daniel J. Conserving Words. Athens: U of Georgia P, 2004.
- Scharnhorst, Gary. Henry David Thoreau: A Case Study in Canonization. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993.
- Scheese, Don. "Thoreau's Journal: The Creation of a Sacred Place." Mapping American Culture. Ed. Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1992. 139-51.
- Simonson, Harold P. "The Tempered Romanticism of John Muir." Western American Literature 13 (1978): 227-41.
- Smith, Herbert. John Muir. New York: Twayne, 1965.
- Swett, John. "John Muir." The Century Magazine 46:1 (May 1893): 120-23.
- Tallmadge, John. "John Muir and the Poetics of Natural Conversion." North Dakota Quarterly 59:2 (Spring 1991): 62-79.
- Thoreau, Henry David. The Maine Woods. 1864. A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers; Walden, or, Life in the Woods; The Maine Woods; Cape Cod. New York: Library of America, 1985. 589-876.

- . Walden. 1854. Walden and Resistance to Civil Government. 2nd ed. Ed. William Rossi. New York: Norton, 1992. 1-223.
- . Wild Fruits. Ed. Bradley P. Dean. New York: Norton, 2001.
- . The Writings of Henry David Thoreau. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1906. 20 vols.
- Whitman, Walt. "Preface to Leaves of Grass, 1855." Leaves of Grass and Other Writings. Ed. Michael Moon. New York: Norton, 2002. 616-36.
- Wood, Barry. "The Growth of the Soul: Coleridge's Dialectical Method and the Strategy of Emerson's Nature." PMLA 91.3 (May 1976): 385-97.