tranquil security of religious trust, guidance, and comfort in all social duties, and the clear hope in the world to come" (594). For these seers, Parker stood as a great heroic figure, someone who resisted clerical authority, paid the price, but remained unbowed. For the sixth edition of Phases of Faith (1860), Francis Newman added an appendix in which he called Parker "the most eminent moral theologian whom the first half of the nineteenth century produced in the United States." Parker, he wrote, combined a daring theology with an unshakable commitment to social justice: "When the churches were too besotted, to uphold the curse of slavery, because they found it justified in the Bible; when the Statesmen, the Press, the Lawyers, and the Trading Community threw their weight to the same fatal side; Parker stood up to preach the higher law of God against false religion, false statesmanship, crooked law and cruel avarice" (203).

In January 1853, Parker published in the Westminster "History and Ideas of the Mormons," in which, appropriately enough for one who had endured theological persecution, he argues for tolerance. In due time, the Mormons will "renounce the miserable absurdities of their theology, discard the doctrine of polygamy, respect woman as the equal of man, abandon their hierarchical form of government, and become a great sect that loves God and man" (230). The essay, which may be read as an anticipation of William James's Varieties of Religious Experience, concluded that "For our own part we are glad to see any sign of fresh religious life in America, or in Christendom, and we welcome this sect to the company of the Methodists and Anabaptists, the Protestants and the Catholics, and wish them all God speed. The freaks of religious childhood do not surprise us; and we expect a baby to cry before it talks, to creep before it runs" (230).

In July 1848, as Emerson was preparing to return to the United States, the Westminster, prompted by the publication of Griswold's Praise Writers of America, published an extensive, penetrating article on the coming of age of American literature. Adopting an inclusive understanding of literature as encompassing both belles-lettres forms and the newspaper and periodical press, the author, identified only as "R. L.", praises contemporary writing for both its energy and social engagement. "And when we reflect what great things this current literature is doing and has done, how noble a warfare it wages with error, fanaticism, sordid neglect, and inhumanity... who shall deny that everything that tends to the fostering, training, strengthening, and purifying of this mighty engine, is of the highest national concernment?" (536). The acute R. L. saw the importance of journalism as the training ground for those writers who seek to articulate the national life. However, he understood that an American literary tradition had already arisen; to define that tradition he looked to philosophy, especially as embodied in New England Transcendentalism, where "Mr. Emerson stands for us as the representative." Emerson's radical individualism, which is premised on "the notion of isolation and personal independence," asserts that it is desirable for "each man to be for himself the centre of things." This leads at times to "a certain hyperbole of speech, a straining after effect, a dissatisfaction with every doctrine or effect that cannot be wrenched into a paradox." Still, Emerson's "Transcendental Philosophy" offers readers the most "striking indications of a peculiar national spirit and turn of mind; germs, perhaps, of that nationality which Mr. Griswold so aspires after" (338, 339).

In "English Religion: Its Origin and Present Types," published in January 1854, James Martineau credited Emerson with occupying the central place in contemporary religious thought. Emerson is the leading exemplar of a new spirit in religion: an aspiration for a conception of the divine as "a living and energizing Spirit, quickening the very heart of to-day." Martineau claims that "The expression of this tendency has passed into the literature of our own language" and that Emerson affords "the purest and most unmixed example." The "earlier writings of Carlyle" had served as "the real gospel of this sentiment" (88). Here we see the powerful presence of Carlyle in America being absorbed by Emerson, whose work in turn inspires Martineau and others in Britain, and then, through the Westminster, returns to America.

No Westminster contributor wrote more extensively about the United States during this period than James Martineau's sister Harriet, who was at once the quarterly's most passionate defender of American democracy and its most outspoken critic of slavery. James and Harriet would have a bitter falling out as a result of James's vindictive review, "Mesmeric Atheism," in the Prospective Review of May 1851, of Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, which had been jointly written by Harriet and her friend Henry George Atkinson and published by Chapman earlier that year. A lifelong enmity between brother and sister developed, one that, ironically, would have positive consequences for Chapman's Westminster. In 1854 Harriet loaned Chapman enough money to keep the Westminster from falling into the hands of her brother, who wanted to merge it into the Prospective Review, a Unitarian publication. Never profitable, the Westminster would have ceased to exist.

When Harriet Martineau arrived in the United States in 1834 for a two-year stay, she was already a famous writer. The doors of the prominent and powerful were opened to her. However, since her antislavery views were well known, she traveled with the constant threat of mob attack, as we learn from her two American travel books, Society in America (1837) and Retrospect of Western Travel (1838), and her Autobiography (1877). During a visit to Lexington, Kentucky, just as she was planning to endorse Henry Clay's colonization plans, she received a forceful letter from Maria Weston Chapman, a young Boston woman and colleague of William Lloyd Garrison, who insisted that immediate abolition was the only moral course of action. Chapman's letter had its effect; when Martineau visited Boston, Chapman, a founder of the Boston Female Antislavery Society, so skillfully arranged for her to speak at an antislavery rally that Martineau was moved to declare herself a Garrisonian. Chapman and Martineau became lifelong friends and collaborators. In a severe repudiation of her brother James for the vindictive review mentioned earlier, Harriet selected Chapman to serve as her literary executor (Hassett 377).

During her visit to the United States, Martineau began a close friendship with Emerson, whom she visited in Concord. She credited his brother Charles with
standing up to a mob that had threatened her in Cambridge. Her enormous respect for those Americans who risked their lives in the antislavery cause is reflected in "The Martyr Age in the United States," written after her return to England. Published in the Westminster in December 1848, the essay deserves to be considered, along with Thoreau's "Plea for John Brown," one of the most powerful of antislavery essays, the more influential because it came so early in the struggle. It was based in large part on the reports of the Boston Female Antislavery Society, which Chapman, who attended Parker's church, had compiled and sent to Martineau. Chapman would continue to send Martineau political news from America and to contribute significantly to the powerful antislavery journalism that Martineau published over the next quarter of a century, right through the Civil War. Especially through her columns in the Daily News, Martineau worked to prevent England from recognizing the Confederacy, a potentially fatal blow to the Union (Logan 43).

In "A Plea for John Brown," Thoreau characterized his subject as "a man of rare common-sense and directness of speech, as of action; a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles." The soon-to-be-martyred Brown had already become "an Angel of Light" (Thoreau 135, 157). Transcendentalism and abolitionism were here inseparably joined. Similarly, back in 1838 Martineau had depicted the American abolitionists as men and women of such rare courage and faith that they were willing to sacrifice their lives for free others, as had Elijah P. Lovejoy in Alton, Illinois. "There is a remarkable set of people now living and vigorously acting in the world, with a consonance of will and understanding which has perhaps never before been witnessed among so large a number of individuals of such diversified powers, habits, opinions, taste, and circumstances," Martineau wrote. "The weakest of them who drops into the grave worn out, and the youngest that lies murdered on his native republican soil, has enjoyed a richer harvest of time, a larger gift out of eternity, than the octogenarian self-seeker." Described as "martyrs who stretch out their strong arms to bring down heaven upon our earth," they are the "spiritual potentes of our age" ("Martyr" 59). Two American publishers, Weeks, Jordan in Boston and S. W. Benedict in New York, brought the essay out in pamphlet form.

In her Autobiography Martineau wrote critically of the reluctance of many members of the Transcendentalist community in the 1830s to join the antislavery struggle. (It would not be until August 1844, in the Concord address mentioned earlier, that Emerson spoke out on slavery.) Of Margaret Fuller she charged that "the difference between us was that while she was living and moving in an ideal world, talking in private and discoursing in public about the most fanciful and shallow conceits which the transcendentalists of Boston took for philosophy, she looked down upon persons who acted instead of talking finely." At the time that Fuller and "her adult pupils sat...fancying themselves the elect of the earth in intellect and refinement, the liberties of the republic were running out as fast as they could go" (137). Martineau did praise the "noble last period of [Fuller's] life" as a correspondent in Italy (139).

John Stuart Mill, who had merged his own London Review with the Westminster in 1836, learned of the agitation for women's rights in the United States from reading a story in the New York Tribune for Europe published on October 29, 1850. In a letter to Harriet Taylor written in October/November 1850, Mill, who seems not to be aware of the work of Margaret Fuller or the 1848 "Declaration of Sentiments," reports on conventions in Ohio and Massachusetts for women's rights: "I never remember any public meetings or agitation comparable to it in the proportion which good bears to nonsense—while as to tone it is almost like ourselves speaking—outspoken like America, not frightened and sensible like England—not the least iota of compromise." Mill told Taylor that "we have a good chance of living to see something decisive really accomplished on that of all practical of subjects the most important—to see that will really be looking down from Pisgah on the promised land" (Hayek 166-67).

In a Westminster article, "Enfranchisement of Women," a collaboration between Mill and Taylor, the co-authors begin, "Most of our readers probably will learn from these pages for the first time, that there has arisen in the United States, and in the most civilized and enlightened portion of them, an organized agitation on a new question," which is "the enfranchisement of women; their admission, in law and in fact, to equality in all rights, political, civil, and social, with the male citizens of the community" (289). They predict that in the United States the claims of women to full equality will not be denied since the Declaration of Independence holds that all persons are created equal. This great essay grew out of a vision shared by progressives from both sides of the Atlantic.

While nothing came of Chapman's plan for a new Dial, he did the next best thing in taking over the Westminster, the first issue under his leadership coming out in January 1852. Others associated with the Westminster included George Combe, John Stuart Mill, J. A. Fox, James Anthony Froude, George Henry Lewes, Harriet Martineau, and Henry Morley. As Diana Postlewaite has written, many of those drawn to Chapman's Westminster

were fascinated by the unknowable, the intuitive, the transcendent. They did not consider the material and the spiritual irredeemably alienated. Although none were orthodox believers (and all were in varying degrees, denounced as spiritually subversive by their critics), every member of the circle believed, ardently and unwaveringly, in a via media. For them, to explore the mechanisms of the human brain and the progressive development of the natural world was not to deny man's moral or spiritual nature. (xii)

Significantly, W. J. Fox was the author of the lead article of Chapman's Westminster, as he had been of the quarterly's first issue. Now, in "Representative Reform," he goes out of his way to praise America. Occasioned by the publication of François Guizot's Representative Government in Europe, Fox takes the Frenchman to task for his failure to discuss the United States as part of his treatment of democracy: "As an offshoot of England in their origin, they might have claimed some place in his plan.... They possess the only thoroughly representative government upon the face of the earth. To call ours a representative government, except in a secondary and remote sense, is a misnomer." Guizot might well have replied that if he wanted to
discuss America, he would have done so, but for Fox that is beside the point, so
determined is he to draw from Britain’s radical democratic tradition. The way to do
so is to learn from America, which in realizing its democratic potential is being true
to its British roots: “Even the ballot-box was part of the cargo of the Mayflower. At
least we know that it existed in England before it was used in America…. They have
not invented. They have done better than invent; they have developed that concep-
tion which worked out all the freedom possessed by their forefathers.” (6).

Fox uses the United States to challenge England to live up to the promise of its
own democratic heritage: “America exhibits what will be the future of England
should the feudalism which still remains ever become absorbed by the representa-
tive principle” (7). In that sense, Fox and those who had rallied to the Westminster’s
cause—patrons and writers, its community of readers, which included successful
entrepreneurs, religious radicals, phrenologists, spiritualists, Unitarian reformers,
freethinkers, and other progressives—looked back to the days of the English Civil
War and in particular to the ethos of the Cromwellian revolution. Here they found,
as one scholar has written, the “aspirations of the middle classes for ‘free expression,’
‘self-assertion,’ and freedom from the authority of a willful and tyrannical monar-
chy.” For them, “individual liberty became inseparable from the nationalist ethos.
The incipient liberal nationalism of Milton and, later, Locke found its way through
the French philosophes to North America, where it raised its head in the form of
attacks on authoritarianism, censorship, and the strangling of free trade” (Brennan
52). America stands as the repository and the embodiment of those democratic
principles that had been suppressed during the Restoration. How well and in what
ways, Chapman and Eliot’s Westminster came to ask, are American writers articulat-
ing those principles? And is America itself living up to its ideals?

Chapman’s first number included a long “Retrospective Survey of American
Literature,” which defined American nationality as a spiritual and intellectual tra-
dition with its sources in American Puritanism. The essay, written by Griswold, with
several pages by Eliot, sought a way of connecting the two countries:

The history of American literature begins in the good old days of the Dudleys, the
Cottons, Nortons, and Mathers, or earlier still, in those of John Milton, who has
been claimed as the “most American author that ever lived.” And with justice. For
what had that stern and sublime intelligence in common with kingly domination,
or with hierarchical despotism . . . ? And are not his immortal books on State and
Church politics the very fixed and undying expression of the American ideas
on these subjects? (289)

The Westminster again deployed Milton to strengthen its adversarial position in
British society.

The following issue, for April 1852, contained an extensive article focused on
American literature, which spoke of the United States as a culture where free per-
sonal growth is encouraged, which prizes justice over precedent, and where women
are courageously fighting to assume a constructive role in society. Although again
Griswold is the primary author, it appears that George Eliot added a section on
Margaret Fuller, whom she treats as the very embodiment of New England
Transcendentalism, defined here as “a movement on the part of different minds, as
spontaneous and independent in each as it was simultaneous in all—a movement
flowing from the undying vernal impulse in nature. It was essentially an intellectu-
ral, moral, and spiritual regeneration—a renewing of the whole man.” It is within this
American atmosphere—so conducive to personal growth and development—that
Margaret Fuller could come into her own and speak out so boldly for women’s
rights (Eliot 665–66). In subsequent passages, attributed by the Wellesley Index to
Griswold, the Westminster praises Theodore Parker as a practical reformer in the
best tradition of American democracy:

When his sermon is especially “Of Poverty,” it is not a homily on contentment
such as would befit an English incumbent, but he asks “Why are the poor in
poverty?” and lays down his counsels calculated so much to comfort them in
their poverty, as to redeem them from it. Invariably he concludes with the
question, “What can we do to make things better?” He is evidently doing great
and good work. He is in the right sphere . . . and is conscious of it. Emerson is the
poet—the maker; Parker is the prophet—the out speaker. (Griswold 675)

George Eliot contributed some of the most compelling discussions of American
literature. In January 1856 she wrote of “a volume called Walden; or Life in the
Woods—published last year, but quite interesting enough to make worth while for
us to break our rule by a retrospective notice—we have a bit of pure American
life (not the ‘go a-head’ species but its opposite pole) animated by that energetic,
yet calm spirit of innovation, that practical as well as theoretic independence of
formulae, which is peculiar to some of the finer American minds.” Here, then, is
the theme of openness and freedom that continued to draw the Westminster to the
United States. As Eliot remarks, “People—very wise in their own eyes—who would
have every man’s life ordered according to a particular pattern, and who are intoler-
ant of every existence the utility of which is not palpable to them, may pooh-pooh
Mr. Thoreau and this episode in his history, as unpractical and dreamy. Instead of
contesting their opinion ourselves, we will let Mr. Thoreau speak for himself. There
is plenty of sturdy sense mingled with his unworldliness” (302). Thoreau makes his
appearance in the Westminster in two lengthy extracts: the first on “living deliber-
ately, to front only the essential facts of life” and the second on hoeing beans.
Eliot finds similar themes expressed with great power and poignancy in Whitman’s
Leaves of Grass, discussed in April 1856. Rather than argue with the critics, she offers
two extracts, both now well-known: The first begins “A child said, What is the grass?”
and the second begins, “I think I could turn and live with animals” (650).

I have mentioned the Westminster’s discussion of writings by American
Transcendentalists, but also noteworthy are its wide-ranging discussions of major
writers such as Stowe and Hawthorne. Remarkably, the quarterly also found space
for appreciative, penetrating discussions of writers whom we have forgotten,
including the Transcendentalist James Handasyd Perkins. In January 1852 it spoke
of Perkins’s “mission as a Spiritual Pioneer—contributing, in various capacities,
his intellectual and moral energies to the social education of a free and vigorous people, and to the organization of institutions befitting that destiny.” (Griswold, “Contemporary” 309).

Even in the face of America’s failure to eliminate slavery, Harriet Martineau remained a strong supporter and advocate. There is no better reflection of just how bright and sparkling the image of America remained in the Westminster than her lead essay of April 1854. The immediate occasion was an analysis of various documents from the English census of 1851, which she paired with a discussion of the Abstract of the Seventh Census of the United States of 1852. Her reading of these reports moved her to add “our testimony of respect and gratitude to our brethren over the Atlantic, for what they are doing in Education. They are exhibiting to us the glorious spectacle of a thoroughly national education,—no State central machine for grinding out loyalty and religion from the mass, of a special kind and in fixed quantities; but something like a real training of mind and heart, for free use... We alas! have little to say that is creditable under this head, and not very much that is immediately hopeful.” Still, she warned that if the “gangrene” of slavery “be not extirpated, the whole body must become corrupt” (“Results” 352, 354).

However, as the decade wore on and slavery remained firmly entrenched in the South, even Martineau raised hard questions about the prospects for the great democratic experiment. Writing on “The Manifest Destiny of the American Union” in July 1857, she asked why it was that in defending slavery the South had resisted the North at every turn. One could only conclude that “the South has a will, and the North has not.” And yet, even under the shadow of “so black a thunder-cloud,” Martineau refused to surrender. Calling for a “radical reconstitution” of the Union, she expressed her “trust” that the Abolitionists will not abate a jot of that strong will which renders them the real antagonists of the South; that they will press on the more strenuously as the critical moment discloses itself and that, by upholding in the sight of all men the democratic principles which first gave them a country, they may justify that instinct of the highest minds in the Old World which has recognized them, amidst the depressions and obscurities of a quarter of a century of adversity, as the ten righteous men who should save the city. (76)

If any group is to save the Union, Martineau argues, it will be the men and women acting from the highest moral purpose; the abolitionists—but she might just as easily have said the Transcendentalists, who, since her time in Boston in the 1830s, had now come around. Among them are to be found some of the “ten righteous men” who will save the nation. Martineau refers to Channing, Emerson, Stowe, and all of those who have defied the Fugitive Slave Law. But they are not alone. In this time of crisis, she reminds Americans of the links binding them to the “highest minds of the Old World.”

It is doubtful that back in 1840, Milnes, writing on Emerson’s Transcendentalist philosophy, envisaged such a time of trial. Now Martineau reminds her readers that the “chain” has indeed been “well-soldered together,” to use Milnes’s words. That the most American of British quarterlies, the Westminster, now under the proprietorship of John Chapman, brought these words back across the Atlantic served to affirm all that bound together Transcendentalists on both sides of the water. That link, Martineau affirms, could not be broken. Her essay offered the sternest of challenges to the ten righteous men to “save their city.” That is how true friends help one another.

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CHAPTER 37

GLOBAL TRANSCENDENTALISM

LAURA DASSOW WALLS

As "globalization" both undermines and reinforces national boundaries, American studies have responded by reframing American literature in a global context. This movement is proceeding under various rubrics—postcolonial, transatlantic, hemispheric, transpacific—all of which offer a wider perspective on American literature, from which, as Paul Giles has recently said, it can be seen "as no longer bound to the inner workings of any particular country or imagined organic community but instead as interwoven systematically with traversals between national territory and intercontinental space" (63). Transcendentalism has often been at the center of these discussions, thanks to its foundational role in defining and inculcating a distinctively "American" ideology. Wai Chee Dimock, for instance, deploys Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller to demonstrate how American literature is not "a discrete entity" but "a crisscrossing set of pathways, open-ended and ever multiplying, weaving in and out of other geographies, other languages and cultures" (5). More contentiously, John Carlos Rowe lays the Transcendentalists’ rhetoric of "transcendental expansion, internalization (and thus appropriation), and psychic progress and development" at the feet of the vile politics of Jacksonian America (81), while Paul Giles sees in Emerson’s essay “Circles” an image of a decentered, all-embracing imperial imaginary, now called globalization but once, not so long ago, called “Americanization.” This image of America as a self-fulfilling, all-expansive circle reveals, on closer examination, “traces of innumerable savage, intractable conflicts.” As Giles wryly concludes, “The cradle of American literature, if one might be forgiven a Thoreauvian pun, is discord rather than Concord” (65).

The emergent discourse of globalization, then, reopens Transcendentalism as a problem—perhaps even the problem—at the heart of modernity. Globalization