

EMERSON, WHITMAN, AND EROS

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AS HE CONTEMPLATED THE MATERIALS that he had gathered for his 1884 biography of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes was somewhat baffled by Emerson's relationship with Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau.¹ As his working notes at the Library of Congress and the Houghton Library (Harvard) reveal, the aging Brahmin saw both Whitman and Thoreau as uncouth bohemians who led unacceptably unorthodox lives. Whitman especially was seen by Holmes as crude, sensual, and generally uncivilized. He observes at one point in his notes, "Thoreau a great boy—we all like to build huts when we are boys and make ourselves uncomfortable in every ingenious way." Later, he records, "Thoreau, Whitman. One dispensed with the architect and the cook, the other with the tailor, at last in Zola we reached the scavenger and the slop-pail."² The somewhat surprising connection that Holmes makes here among Thoreau, Whitman, and Emile Zola is explained by the fact that throughout the 1880s Holmes was in the forefront of a struggle being waged by the representatives of the "Genteel Tradition" in American literature. They were defending American letters against the onslaught of the new Realism and Naturalism that had its roots in continental literature, especially the works of the French novelist and critic, Emile Zola.³

Through the biography, Holmes wished to enroll the influential example of Emerson in the cause of gentility but was frustrated by Emerson's connection with Whitman. The fact that *Leaves of Grass* had been "banned in Boston" just two years earlier only served to make the relationship even more unsavory. Indeed, an article (probably planted by a friendly journalist) appearing at that time in the *Boston Daily Globe* defended *Leaves of Grass*, as Jerome Loving reports, by making the very same argument that Emerson had made about nature, namely, "that nothing is ugly or evil when seen in its full context, where all is harmony."⁴ Thoreau, of course, who prided himself on living with nature on the fringes of a civilization that he often criticized, was also seen by Holmes and others as being outside the narrow boundaries of the Genteel Tradition. John Greenleaf Whittier, for example, once referred to *Walden* as a "wicked and heathenish book."⁵ And so the connection of the two with Emerson was a problem. Holmes questions in a typescript of his notes under the heading "Influence of others on E," "What was the meaning of his fancy for Walt Whitman? Of his liking for Thoreau and *others*?" Eventually, Holmes would solve his problem by asserting that the philosophical Emerson

had an influence on others who then put his ideas into practice in ways that he would not necessarily approve. Thus, continuing in his typescript notes, he writes, "Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Zola. Scavenger and slop pail. E's mind acted on a second series of minds and his force was by them converted into definite action."⁶

This is the approach that he eventually took in writing the biography, which succeeded in presenting a sanitized and stilted view of Emerson that tells us much more about Holmes than it reveals about his ostensible subject. In the biography, Holmes acknowledges that Emerson tended to have a very unified and inclusive view of life, from the high to the low, that may have a deleterious effect on those who read him too literally. Emerson, he says, "saw our plain New England life with as honest New England eyes as ever looked at a huckleberry-bush or into a milking-pail." However, notes Holmes, "this noble quality of his had its dangerous side. In one of his exalted moods he would have us 'Give to barrows, trays and pans / Grace and glimmer of romance.'" ⁷ The "danger" that Holmes sees here is that by directing the reader's attention to the low and common physical elements of reality, the elevated and spiritual quality of life is lost. For the most part, according to Holmes, Emerson avoided this danger himself, but Whitman and other lesser minds were not so fortunate. Thus, Holmes goes on in his biography of Emerson to state that in his poems, "Mr. Whitman enumerates all the objects he happens to be looking at as if they were equally suggestive to the poetical mind, furnishing his reader a large assortment on which he may exercise the fullest freedom of selection" (325). This literary promiscuity was offensive to Holmes. To him, it was indicative of the pernicious freedom exercised by the Realistic and Naturalistic "slop pail" writers whose works were often obscenely sensual and, therefore, like Whitman's, both morally and aesthetically unacceptable.⁸

Ironically, the very connection between Emerson and Whitman that Holmes sought to break in his biography was reinforced later in the decade by one of the most stalwart promoters of the new Realism, William Dean Howells. Although Howells was not appreciative of Whitman early in his career while he was under the spell of Boston Brahmins like Holmes, by the late 1880s his views had changed somewhat.⁹ He came to see Whitman as a positive practitioner of the new literary freedom and boldness that the Realists and Naturalists sought to promote. In one of his "Editor's Study" essays, published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (February 1888), Howells reviewed James Elliot Cabot's recently published biography of Emerson.¹⁰ While generally positive in his comments on the work, he does take note of one glaring deficiency. Howells maintains that Emerson possessed an openness to radical innovation. Because of this, "Every new thought challenged him, abolition, Brook Farm, Walt Whitman: he was just to each and, with Emerson, as with all high souls, to be just was to be generous." Cabot, however, (probably because of his Brahmin sensibility) failed to make any note whatsoever of Emerson's "generous" and important relationship with Walt Whitman. For

Howells, this is a glaring omission. Cabot, he points out, “has not touched at all one of the most interesting facts, from a literary point of view, in Emerson’s history. His perception of the great and fruitful elements in Walt Whitman’s work, when the ‘Leaves of Grass’ first appeared, was long suffered to weigh with the public as unqualified praise; but Mr. Whitman has himself finally done justice to Emerson’s exceptions.” Howells goes on to note, “there is no doubt that Emerson felt a keen sympathy with the aesthetic revolt so courageously embodied in its form. His own verse, in a certain beautiful lawlessness, expresses now and again his impatience of smoothness and regularity, his joy in a fractured surface, a broken edge, his exultation in a pace or two outside the traces.” Emerson, he insists, “could foresee the advantages of bringing poetry nearer to the language and the carriage of life, as Mr. Whitman’s work seemed promising to do; and it was characteristic of him that he should not stint his congratulations to the author.”

Howells goes on in the article to compare Whitman with Leo Tolstoi, emphasizing the strong physical element in the former, as well as his sense of rebelliousness. “The American’s frankness is,” says Howells, “on its moral side, the revolt of the physical against the aesthetic; the Russian’s is the cry of the soul for help against the world and the flesh. The American is intolerant of all bonds and bounds and he bursts them with a sort of Titanic rapture [while] the Russian’s devotion to truth is so single that he is apparently unconscious of the existence of limitations” (478-479). Howells is undoubtedly correct in relating Emerson’s admiration to Whitman’s “aesthetic revolt.” In fact, we will go a step further here and suggest that it was not only this, but also the “Titanic rapture,” that is, the spontaneous, sensual, and erotic elements in Whitman’s poetry that attracted Emerson and help to explain his life-long respect for Whitman’s genius. Today, as in Holmes’s and Howells’s time, such an assertion is controversial. For many contemporary scholars, Whitman stands as the literal embodiment of the ideal poet that Emerson describes only abstractly in his classic essay, “The Poet.” This ideal poet, Emerson insists, embraces all of reality, from the highest to the lowest. He “is the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty. He is a sovereign, and stands on the centre. For the world is not painted, or adorned, but from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe.”¹¹ The principle of universal beauty that Emerson describes here must logically extend to the sensual and the sexual. Yet, in the eyes of many critics, while Whitman is the fearless promoter of sexual honesty in literature and life, Emerson is seen as a Brahmin prude who attempted to redeem him from the pitfalls of gross sensuality.

Robert Martin, for example, contends that many readers like himself are “grateful for [Whitman’s] carnality, after the bloodlessness of Thoreau, Emerson, or even Hawthorne.”¹² More recently, Jay Grossman, in an effort to “estrangle” Emerson and Whitman, suggests that their differences on the question of sexuality are profound. Grossman, like many other critics, refers

specifically to Emerson's famous 1860 conversation with Whitman on the Boston Commons to support his argument. During this conversation, as reported variously by Whitman, Emerson suggested that certain sexually explicit lines or poems from the "Enfans d'Adam" (later "Children of Adam") section of *Leaves of Grass* should be cut from the new edition of the work then being prepared for publication by the Boston firm of Thayer and Eldridge. Grossman argues that "Emerson's and Whitman's differences about the sexuality of the 'Enfans d'Adam' cluster might be reimagined not as a mere conflict of 'taste' or 'literary measurements,' but as a defining disagreement sufficient to undo the claims of a supposedly foundational Emersonianism in the first place."¹³ David Reynolds seems to support such a claim in his "Cultural Biography" of Whitman. In a chapter titled, "'Sex is the Root of it All': Eroticism and Gender," Reynolds asserts that during the conversation on the Commons Whitman "got an earful from Ralph Waldo Emerson" on the subject of sex, and that "Emerson used every weapon in his rhetorical arsenal to try to persuade [Whitman] to remove sexual images from his poems."¹⁴ Betsy Erkkila places the dispute in a larger context by pointing out that from 1855 onward "Whitman had been repeatedly vilified in the American press for his obscenity, and New England had been particularly vocal in protesting his base sensuality." She notes, for example, that an article in the *Boston Intelligencer* following the publication of the 1855 edition of *Leaves* insisted that "The author should be kicked from all decent society as below the level of the brute." Erkkila then associates Emerson with this criticism by observing that, "in 1860 Emerson himself had attempted to persuade Whitman to eliminate 'Children of Adam' from *Leaves of Grass*."¹⁵

Some critics, however, have presented a more nuanced discussion of the question of Emerson's attitude towards Whitman's sexual frankness at the time. In discussing that famous conversation, Gay Wilson Allen maintains that Emerson's "main" argument to cut certain poems "was that their inclusion might endanger the financial success of the book," a practical, rather than a moral concern. Jerome Loving makes a similar point when he quotes Whitman's statement in one account that Emerson did not think that "anything in *Leaves* was bad," but he feared that "people would insist on thinking some things bad" (Loving, 241). Justin Kaplan appears to reinforce this interpretation of the famous meeting when he quotes Whitman's statement that "Emerson was not a man to be scared or shocked . . . by the small-fry moralities, the miniature vices." Kaplan maintains that "The objections Emerson raised were in the end neither moral nor aesthetic; they were purely prudential. In practical, commercial terms, meaning the sales and unimpeded circulation of the new book, there was a limit to how far Whitman could exercise the 'free and brave thought' and the 'courage of treatment' Emerson had saluted in his famous letter." He also points out that when Whitman asked Emerson if *Leaves of Grass* would be as good a book with the sexual passages cut out, he replied,

“I did not say as good a book. I said a good book.”¹⁶

In addition, Allen and Loving both point out that Emerson apparently said nothing about the “Calamus” poems, despite their homosexual suggestiveness and that, at the end, neither man was upset by the conversation.¹⁷ In fact, when Whitman replied to Emerson that he was “more settled than ever to adhere to my own theory” and leave the book unchanged, Emerson accepted the reply calmly. “Whereupon,” according to Whitman, “we went and had a good dinner at the American House” (quoted in Allen, 237). Allen also notes that, despite the virulent criticism of Whitman by many Bostonians, Emerson apparently felt no reservations about associating openly with him, even introducing Whitman at the Boston Athenaeum where he presumably secured borrowing privileges for his friend during his stay. Emerson also wanted to take Whitman to the exclusive *Saturday Club*, but, according to Allen, “Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes all insisted that they had no desire to meet the Brooklyn poet, and consequently Emerson did not extend the contemplated invitation” (Allen, 238). Finally, while the New England Brahmins were obviously incapable of appreciating Whitman’s genius, undoubtedly because they were simply overwhelmed by his sexual candor and apparent sensuality, this was apparently not a stumbling block for Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists. As Allen notes, during his stay in Boston in 1860, Whitman’s “Concord friends, Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott, wanted to invite him over to their homes,” but objections by their wives and sisters prevented them from doing so (238). Clearly, for the Transcendentalists, there was a compelling truth and beauty in Whitman’s writings that they could not help but acknowledge and embrace.

For Emerson, as for other Transcendentalists, the body and the senses were essential elements of human nature. It was a goal of all Transcendentalists as well as Romantics to maintain a balanced unity of body and soul. As post-Jungian psychologists like Eric Neumann, and post-Freudian critics like Norman O. Brown, have pointed out, the senses provide an important connecting link with the unconscious. In modern terminology, the unconscious is a psychological energy or power that manifests itself through instincts, sexuality, affection, the active imagination, and dreams. It is frequently described as “feminine.” It is the erotic source of psychic energy that connects us to the natural world. It defies the limitations of time and space, and, for Romantics and Transcendentalists like Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau, it reflects the unifying power of the divine. The conscious, on the other hand, is the domain of the purely rational. It is described as “masculine.” In its function it is logical and pragmatic. It divides reality as perceived through the senses into temporal and spatial units. It is oriented towards the business of everyday life and the immediate issues of survival.¹⁸ This division resembles quite closely the distinction that Emerson makes between “the Reason” (unconscious) and “the Understanding” (conscious), borrowing his terms, as many Romantics and Transcendentalists did, from Kant, via Coleridge.¹⁹ In a letter to his brother Edward in 1834, Emerson offers the following succinct definitions.

“Reason is the highest faculty of the soul—what we mean often by the soul itself; it never *reasons*, never proves, it simply perceives; it is vision.” On the other hand, “the Understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues, near sighted but strong-sighted, dwelling in the present the expedient the customary.”²⁰ Like the power of love, affection, or Eros in the collective unconscious, the Reason is also a source of unity in an otherwise fragmented and alienating world. Sometimes Emerson calls this universal force the “Over-Soul.” Thus, he refers to “that Unity, that Over-Soul, within which every man’s particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart” (CW, 2:160).

Ideally, body and soul form a primal unity, a balanced and dynamic entity. Indeed, it was Carl Jung’s belief that psychological health requires constant interplay between consciousness and the unconscious, a process that he refers to as “the transcendent function.”²¹ Unfortunately, in the overly civilized state, this balance is rare. In an effort to explain this situation, Norman Brown suggests that, ultimately, it is mankind’s desire to deny the fact of death that leads to an unnatural concentration of disembodied “spiritual” consciousness at the expense of the earthly unconscious, the source of instinct that connects us to the *animus mundi*, the world spirit. What mankind has lost sight of, in Brown’s opinion, is the fact that he has a body. In fact, he says, “culture originates in the denial of life and the body.” As a result of this denial, civilized man is out of rapport with the natural environment to which he is connected through his body. This, in turn, cuts one off from the vital wellsprings of libidinal energy in the unconscious and leads, ironically, to a death in life. “This incapacity to die,” notes Brown, “inevitably, throws mankind out of the actuality of living. . . . The war against death takes the form of a preoccupation with the past and the future, and the present tense, the tense of life, is lost—that present which Whitehead says, ‘holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, the whole amplitude of time, which is eternity.’”²²

The concept of living life in the present and through the body plays a large part in Emerson’s philosophy; indeed, it is a major theme for virtually all Transcendentalists and Romantics. In a journal entry in 1832, Emerson indicates his belief in immortality as a present fact. “Don’t tell me to get ready to die,” he scolds; “I know not what shall be. The only preparation I can make is by fulfilling my present duties. This is the everlasting life.”²³ Later, in “Self-Reliance,” he would proclaim that the balanced soul “lives with nature in the present, above time” (CW, 1:67). It is this principle that also underlies Whitman’s later assertion in “Song of Myself” that

There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now,
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now. (3:40-43)

Thoreau expresses this same concept in his assertion that “God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages.”²⁴ This spontaneous sense of existence connects one, through the senses, to the here and the now, and to the life-sustaining processes of nature that are a manifestation of divinity, the Emersonian “Over-Soul.” This soul unifies all in both time and space. As Emerson maintains, “within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One” (*CW*, 2:160). The processes of nature thus have both a spiritual and physical aspect and as such are symbolic manifestations of eternal life. As Whitman observes in “Song of Myself,” “The smallest sprout shows that there is really no death” (6:125). This belief also informs Thoreau’s paean to the spiritual power of nature throughout *Walden*, especially in the “Spring” chapter where the greenness of the new grass and the bright warmth of the sun provide compelling proof of the ceaseless, ongoing life of the present. “There needs no stronger proof of immortality,” Thoreau insists; “All things must live in such a light. O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where was thy victor, then?” (211). In “Brahma,” Emerson insists, “If the red slayer think he slays, / Or if the slain think he is slain, / They know not well the subtle ways / I keep, and pass, and turn again.”²⁵

Culture often acts to repress this natural, spiritual instinct since, as Brown points out, culture is a product of the collective consciousness. The primary aim of culture and civilization is the control, and even repression, of the natural, instinctive unconscious because it sees this creative and dynamic force as a threat. This repression is accomplished largely through sublimation. As Brown notes, “The link between psychoanalysis and the science of human culture is the concept of sublimation. If psychoanalysis is right, virtually the totality of what anthropologists call culture consists of sublimations” (138). Through sublimation the unconscious promptings of the libido are repressed, transformed, and desexualized. As a direct result of this castration by culture, the individual remains unsatisfied and unfulfilled. Consequently, “The festering antagonism between man and culture remains” (Brown, 142), or, as Emerson puts it in his essay “Self-Reliance” (1841), “Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members” (*CW*, 2:29). In this case, “manhood” and “members” may constitute an intentional sexual pun. Emerson realized the importance of the relationship between the natural and spiritual worlds, and that the body was the connecting link between the two. He may have found this notion reflected in a work by one of his favorite Cambridge Platonists, Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688). In *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), Cudworth speaks of an unconscious force which he calls “that vital sympathy, by which our soul is united and tied fast, as it were with a knot, to the body.” For Cudworth, this force “is a thing we have no direct consciousness of, but only its effects.”²⁶ This insight was an important element in Emerson’s personal quest for transcendence. “To believe himself securely as God *in* nature,” Joel Porte observes, “Emerson . . . [had] to learn

to identify less ambiguously with his natural body and accept modalities of its experience as potential sources of transcendence; otherwise, the withdrawal of the divine afflatus would leave him nothing but a wilted vegetable—a dying animal ashamed of its irrepressible urges and inexplicable needs.” He also further notes Emerson’s realization that “the spirit was not *efficient* without the body. Elevation, he found, was simply not possible unless it was rooted in ‘sufficient bottom.’”²⁷

Norman Brown, like Emerson, suggests that the relationship of soul and body is dialectical. Both participate in the normal and proper functioning of the individual psyche, and neither should acquire exclusive dominion. He states that, “The aim of psychoanalysis—still unfulfilled, and still only half conscious—is to return our souls to our bodies, to return ourselves to ourselves, and thus to overcome the human state of self-alienation” (158). Again, this is a major concern for virtually all Romantics, and one is reminded of Whitman’s powerful psycho/sexual/spiritual passage in the fifth movement of “Song of Myself.” Here the union of body and soul is described in terms of a sexual encounter that leads to a dynamic, even ecstatic, experience of unity and transcendence. Addressing “my soul, the other I am,” the speaker relates the following:

I mind how once we lay such a transparent morning,
How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn’d over upon me,
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart,
And reach’d till you felt my beard, and reach’d till you held my feet. (5:85-90)

The result of this spontaneous union of body and soul is union with the world itself and all of humanity. This divine Over-Soul is clearly a manifestation of what both Brown and Neumann call the “collective unconscious,” that is, the unconscious that is common to all mankind. By connecting with this divinity within and through the body and its senses, the individual experiences a sense of divine, transcendent unity. As the speaker continues,

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the argument of earth,
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my sisters and lovers,
And that a kelson of the creation is love. . . . (5:91-95)

Whitman’s expression of this unifying “ecstasy” was anticipated by Emerson’s famous “transparent eyeball” passage in *Nature* (1836). While simply “crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky,” Emerson is suddenly swept away by a feeling of divine rapture. “Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,— all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal being circulate through me; I

am part or particle of God” (CW, 1:10).

Brown indicates the larger aspects of the conflict between conscious and unconscious in man’s relations with the world. One of the primary drives of Eros, or the unconscious, is desire for union with the world, with the natural environment. Thus, Brown observes, “The aim of Eros is union with objects outside the self; . . . the abstract antinomy of Self and Other in love can be overcome if we return to the concrete reality of pleasure and to the fundamental definition of sexuality as the pleasurable activity of the body” (45). Ultimately, individuals are determined naturally to pursue this unity and harmony — which was enjoyed in the infantile state before the conscious came to dominate — even in adulthood. Hence, Brown holds that, symbolically, “childhood remains man’s indestructible goal.” Emerson suggests this same attitude towards the ideal of childhood when he states in his journal in 1834, “Blessed is the child; the Unconscious is ever the act of God himself. Nobody can reflect upon his *unconscious* period or any particular word or act in it, with regret or contempt. Bard or Hero cannot look down upon the word or gesture of a child: it is as great as they” (JMN, 4:309-310). Whitman expresses a similar notion in “Song of Myself” when he says,

I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise,
Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man. . . . (16:330-332)

Thoreau, of course, was in many ways the “great boy” that Holmes describes him as being, happy to be the captain of a huckleberry party when called upon. While this childlike spontaneity was a stumbling block to the Brahmin, it is a joy to the rest of us. According to Brown, this ideal, childlike state must be re-established on a conscious level for the adult:

If psychoanalysis must say that instincts, which at the level of animality are in a harmonious unity, are separated at the level of humanity and set into conflict with each other, and that mankind will not rest content until it is able to abolish these conflicts and restore harmony, but at the higher level of consciousness, then once again it appears that psychoanalysis *completes the romantic movement* and is understood only if interpreted in that light . . . [emphasis mine] [T]he history of mankind consists in a departure from a condition of undifferentiated primal unity with himself and with nature, an intermediate period in which man’s powers are developed through differentiation and antagonism (alienation) with himself and with nature, and a final return to a unity on a higher level or harmony. (85-86)

One of the ways that this higher level of harmony is both achieved and expressed is through the use of language, which by its very nature is sensual, that is, it connects us to the natural world and its processes. The repressive element in culture, however, seeks to sanitize language and to eliminate the bawdy, sensual, and physical element. Thus, Whitman’s language was often considered obscene by Holmes and the rest of the establishment “old guard.” Brown discusses this unfortunate tendency in a passage that puts one in mind

of “newspeak” in Orwell’s *1984*. He points out that, “Some . . . linguistic analysts have had the project of getting rid of the disease in language by reducing language to purely operational terms.” From the psychoanalytic point of view, he asserts, “a purely operational language would be language without a libidinal (erotic) component; and psychoanalysis would suggest that such a project is impossible because language, like man, has an erotic base, and also useless because man cannot be persuaded to operate (work) for operation’s sake.” Ultimately and ideally, all human beings should return to the natural and “essentially playful” aspect of language and in this way move closer to “their proper perfection as an animal species and [recover] the power of sensual speech” (71, 73). This process, of course, was a primary concern of Romantic artists generally. Emerson, for example, admired the rough language of “blacksmiths and teamsters [who] do not trip their speech; it is a shower of bullets.” In contrast, “it is Cambridge men who correct themselves, and begin again at every half sentence . . . and refine too much.” He found and admired the former type of “gutsy” language in Montaigne’s writings, which present “the language of conversation transferred to a book” (*CW*, 4:95). This sensual speech resembles what the mystic Jacob Boehme called Adam’s talk. Brown notes that, “Jacob Boehme, speaks of the language of Adam—different from all languages as we know them—as the only natural language, the only language free from distortion and illusion, the language which man will recover when he recovers paradise. According to Boehme, Adam’s language was an unclouded mirror of the senses, so that he calls this ideal language ‘sensual speech’” (72). Robert Richardson points out that Emerson was a close reader of Boehme and that what he found most attractive in his writings was his tangible account of spiritual experience, a combining of the spirit and the flesh. Boehme’s *Aurora*, which Emerson was reading in the summer of 1835, tells of the writer’s own “awakening to the sunrise of an eternity situated firmly in this world.” Direct and convincing personal experience, says Richardson, “was what Emerson missed . . . at the divinity school” but what he found in Boehme.²⁸ In Boehme’s sense, language is a living thing, imbued with the spirit of the natural world from whence language ultimately derives. “Cut these words,” says Emerson, “and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive” (*CW*, 4:95).

This attitude toward language is ratified in Whitman’s assertion, in “A Song of the Rolling Earth,” that,

Human bodies are words, myriads of words,
(In the best poems re-appears the body, man’s or woman’s, well-shaped, natural, gay,
Every part able, active, receptive, without shame or the need of shame.) (7-9)

Passages such as this are common in Whitman’s corpus and support Harold Aspiz’s assertion that for Whitman, “poetry involves the reciprocal relation between language and the human body.”²⁹ It is through such liberation of language and the senses that Brown feels the “resurrection of the body”

will be accomplished. Indeed, the life of mankind is the life of the body as well as the soul, or, as Emerson puts it, “in nature every body has a soul, but also, every soul has a body” (*JMN*, 8:194). Whitman, as usual, is even more demonstrative:

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.

Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen,
Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.

...

Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean,
Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest.
(“Song of Myself,” 3:52-54, 57-58)

For both Emerson and Whitman, humanity must literally come to its senses, in word and deed. This recognition of sensuality, as suggested above, is expressed in the nature and use of words for both. In journal entries that would eventually appear in various lectures, addresses, and essays, Emerson consistently associates words with objects in nature and insists upon their organic, symbolic, and emotive quality. They came to represent for him the ideal combination of spirit and matter, fact and sentiment, or, in psychological terms, conscious and unconscious elements. He states in an entry dated May 8, 1837, “Years are well spent in the country in country labors, in towns, in the insight into trades & manufacturers, in intimate intercourse with many men & women, in science, in art, to the one end of mastering in all their facts a language by which to illustrate & speak out our emotions & perceptions. . . . My garden is my dictionary” (*JMN*, 5:326). Just months later, in his “American Scholar” address, Emerson would encourage the young graduates of Harvard to look at their immediate surroundings to find the ultimate sources of life:

The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign—is it not? of new vigor, when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; . . . I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. (*CW*, 1:67)

In a journal entry recorded later in 1837, Emerson associates language with the living process and as such divorces it from the arid realm of philological scholarship. For Emerson, true language comes from God: “So lies all the life I have lived as my dictionary from which to extract the word which I want to dress the new perception of this moment. This is the way to learn Grammar. God never meant that we should learn Language by Colleges or Books” (*JMN*, 5:361). Still later, in 1840, in a journal passage that informs his comments on Montaigne, quoted earlier, he contrasts the vitality of the earthy language of the streets with the dusty sobriety of the *North American Review*.

In Emerson's view, language is a living thing, literally and figuratively:

The language of the streets is always strong. What can describe the folly & emptiness of scolding like the word *jawing*? I feel too the force of the double negative, though clean contrary to our grammar rules. And I confess to some pleasure from the stinging rhetoric of a rattling oath in the mouth of truckmen & teamsters. How laconic & brisk it is by the side of a page of the North American Review. Cut these words & they would bleed; they are vascular & alive; they walk & run. (*JMN*, 7:374)

It was natural for Emerson to equate words with experience, with facts, and also with emotions, affections, and flesh, as did Whitman, who relished

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of the promenaders,
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb, the clank of the shod horses on
the granite floor,
The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of snow-balls,
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd mobs. . . .
(“Song of Myself,” 8:155-158)

As an artist who worked exclusively with words, both spoken and written, much of Emerson's emotional and psychological satisfaction was undoubtedly derived from the artistic, creative process. His art was a way of “making the unconscious conscious,” as Brown would say. It was a way of balancing the psyche, of enacting Jung's “transcendent function,” the act of developing a conversation between the conscious and the unconscious. His vision of the natural world as a harmonious and symbolic entity, consisting of matter and spirit, is a reflection of his own internal, psychological balance. Thus, in striving to maintain the unity of the conscious and unconscious through his art, Emerson would return to the natural and “essentially playful” aspect of words in order to emulate the language of Adam and, hence, “recover the power of sensual speech” (Brown, 72). It is this inclination that undoubtedly helps to account for his enthusiasm for Whitman, something that Holmes was incapable of appreciating, or even understanding. It is this kind of redeeming and unconventional exuberance that Emerson hoped to communicate to nineteenth-century America in his lectures. Lecturing itself, he felt, was essentially a new and largely underdeveloped art form that, when done right, reflects the power of the sublime. The following description could just as well be applied to *Leaves of Grass*:

Why should we write dramas, & epics, & sonnets, & novels in two volumes? Why not write as variously as we dress & think? A lecture is a new literature, which leaves aside all tradition, time, place, circumstance, & addresses an assembly as mere human beings,—no more—It has never yet been done well. It is an organ of sublime power, a panharmonicon for variety of note. (*JMN*, 7:224)

The desire to reshape the art of lecturing into an effective piece of sublime artillery which might be fired in the name of sympathy and affection was a continuing concern for Emerson. Like all creative artists, he was very much aware of the difficulties involved in developing a form adequate to the message. As Lawrence Buell points out, for Emerson “literary creation was not simply an amusement, or even a useful instrument, but a sacred act.”³⁰ This “sacred act” is the subject of the following comment by Emerson on his frustrations and past failures, and his determination to continue his campaign nevertheless in an effort to communicate “extacy,” emotional fire, and the erotic and sensual experience of the spirit that would, like Whitman’s poetry, discover “the divine in the house & the barn” and “make the cheek blush.”

These lectures give me little pleasure, I have not done what I hoped when I said, I will try it once more. I have not once transcended the coldest selfpossession. I said I will agitate others, being agitated myself. I dared to hope for extacy & eloquence. A new theatre, a new art, I said, is mine. Let us see if philosophy, if ethics, if chiromancy, if the discovery of the divine in the house & the barn, in all works & all plays cannot make the cheek blush, the lip quiver, & the tear start. (*JMN*, 7:338-339)

Emerson attempted to accomplish this goal in his essays as well. The use of symbols was key to this effort for him, as well as for Whitman.

As Emerson states in *Nature*, “A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world. It is the result or expression of nature, in miniature.” Since all of reality is symbolic—“We are symbols and inhabit symbols”—and since the symbol itself is an ideal combination of matter and spirit—“Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts”—art becomes a way of expressing and enforcing the unity of the conscious and unconscious, head and heart, or, in Emerson’s Transcendental terms, the Understanding and the Reason. Emerson’s organic sense of language is indicative of a unified sensibility that perceives a harmonious relationship between the inner and outer worlds, the me and the not me. As he observes, “Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture.”³¹ This is a concept that Neumann also expresses when he observes that “[t]he psychic world of images is a synthesis of experiences of the inner and outer world, as any symbol will show” (294). The combination of matter and mind, inherent in the symbol, corresponds to and reflects the original, harmonious psychic balance enjoyed by the child in whom the unconscious is not yet repressed and for whom, consequently, as Brown notes, “language is first of all a mode of erotic expression” (70). This harmony, according to Emerson, characterizes “the infancy” of language itself: “As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all Poetry; or, all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols” (*CW*, 1:19). Such a poetic theory requires a high level of sensory participation, testifying once again to the importance of the body in Emerson’s philosophy of composition. As David Porter points

out, “Everywhere in Emerson’s theoretical poetics . . . he insisted on the primacy of the senses. He understood in a crucial way that fidelity to sense was the difference between the formulaic blockage of the poetic imagination and its liberation.”³²

However, as a result of humanity’s psychological development, both ontogenetic and phylogenetic, the conscious begins to dominate and we gradually lose this capacity to respond to and employ symbolic language, the language of Adam. We are, in effect, expelled from the paradise of the unconscious. In short, we grow up, at least most of us do, and our language becomes grammatically and socially “correct.” As Brown explains, language, originally sensual, “succumbs to the domination of the reality-principle, it follows, or perhaps we should say mirrors, the path taken by the human psyche” (70). Emerson expresses his version of this concept in *Nature* using the religious metaphor of the fall and corruption of man: “A man’s power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character, that is, upon his love of truth and his desire to communicate it without loss. The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language” (*CW*, 1:20). In other words, language shifts from the poetic to the dry formularies of the insurance policy or the saccharine clichés of political rhetoric. The intent in both cases is to avoid clarity and truth. It was Emerson’s life-long goal, as it was Whitman’s, to redeem American culture from this corruption, in part by restoring a primal appreciation for the erotic quality of natural language.³³

Emerson recognized, however, that the staid guardians of “the establishment” who dominated the cultural milieu of nineteenth-century America would resist this appeal to the sensual. In an entry dated October 18, 1839, he offers a detailed account of what he hoped to accomplish in his personal crusade to redeem his countrymen. In this “*whim*” passage, he demonstrates clearly the interrelated nature of his concerns with language, emotion, God, time, and optimism, as well as his continuing opposition to the dead, “mechanical philosophy” of the age:

What shall be the substance of my shrift? Adam in the garden, I am to new name all the beasts in the field & all the gods in the Sky. I am to invite men drenched in time to recover themselves & come out of time, & taste their native immortal air. I am to fire with what skill I can the artillery of sympathy & emotion. I am to indicate constantly, though all unworthy, the Ideal and Holy Life, the life within life, — the Forgotten good, the Unknown Cause in which we sprawl & sin. I am to try the magic of sincerity, that luxury permitted only to kings & poets. I am to celebrate the spiritual powers in their infinite contrast to the mechanical powers & the mechanical philosophy of this time. I am to console the brave sufferers under evils whose end they cannot see by appeals to the great optimism self-affirmed in all bosoms. (*JMN*, 7:270-271)

It is this attitude that would help to bring Whitman to a boil as that new Adam. In the passage, Emerson contemplates a new series of lectures where he will heroically engage, once again, his emotional “artillery” in the battle for the minds and hearts of his age. One of the most interesting aspects of Emerson’s

concept of human nature, and one that also connects him closely to Whitman, is his marked propensity to describe man as both male and female, to emphasize the feminine aspect of nature, and, finally, to assert the necessity of merging the qualities of both sexes in every individual. In a journal entry in May 1837, he makes the following comment concerning his concept of humanity's psychological bisexuality:

I behold; I bask in beauty; I await; I wonder; Where is my Godhead now? This is the Male & Female principle in Nature. One man, male & female created he him. Hard as it is to describe God, it is harder to describe the Individual. (*JMN*, 5:337)

This concept is a very ancient one. Edgar Wind, in *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, quotes the Biblical passage (Genesis, 1:27) that Emerson echoes here, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." He then notes that "Philo and Origen inferred from this passage—and their authority ranked high with Renaissance Platonists—that the first and original man was androgynous; that the division into male and female belonged to a lower state of creation; and that, when all created things return to their maker, the unfolded and divided state of man will be re-enclosed in the divine essence."³⁴ Emerson may have been familiar with this concept. Robert Richardson, in noting Emerson's deep interest in Neoplatonism, points out that Emerson "was particularly struck by two Neoplatonic teachings: the idea of the world as emanation and the idea of the ecstatic union of the One. For Plotinus everything emanates, or flows out, from the One, the ultimate power and unity of things" (348). Martin Bickman maintains "Neoplatonism stands only second to the design of biblical history in its influence and centrality both for Emerson in particular and for Romanticism in general."³⁵ Interestingly, at least one early reviewer noted this same quality in Whitman. Writing in the *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), the reviewer states that, while he doubted that Whitman had read either Spinoza or Plato, he was sure that the poet was both a pantheist and a Platonist "in the rough" who obviously believed in the "immanence of all in each."³⁶

In the passage below, from *Love's Body*, Brown points out the element of opposition that the division of the sexes implies. It is this opposition that Emerson and Whitman sought artistically and personally to overcome:

The prototype of all opposition or contrariety is sex. The prototype of the division into two sexes is the separation of earth and sky, Mother Earth and Father Sky, the primal parents. The primal one body that was divided among the brothers was parental and bisexual—the two become one flesh—the parents in coitus; in psychological jargon, the "combined object."³⁷

As noted earlier, Emerson's and Whitman's attempt to establish a new, unified and balanced psyche involves their use of symbols, symbols that would incorporate and unify gender values, and thereby reestablish the primal unity.

Brown states:

To make ourselves a new consciousness, an erotic sense of reality, is to become conscious of symbolism. Symbolism is mind making connections (correspondences) rather than distinctions (separations). Symbolism makes conscious interconnections and unions that were unconscious and repressed. Freud says, symbolism is on the track of a former identity, a lost unity; the lost continent, Atlantis, underneath the sea of life in which we live enisled; or perhaps even our union with the sea (Thalassa); oceanic consciousness; the unity of the whole cosmos as one living creature, as Plato said in the *Timaeus*. (*Love*, 81-82)

Emerson symbolically merges sexuality and art to describe his own artistic goal. Sounding much like Whitman, he declares in his journal, "Away with your prismatic. I want a spermatic book" (*JMN*, 7:547).

Like Whitman, Emerson recognized very clearly the key role played by the senses, the body itself, in maintaining the ideal unity of mankind that he envisioned. In a journal entry in August 1842, he explains, "No matter whether thy work be fine or coarse, planting corn or writing songs, so only it be faithful work, done to thine own eye & approbation, then it shall earn a reward to the senses as well as to the thought. For in nature every body has a soul, & every soul a body." It had become habitual for Emerson, by this time, to describe the dual aspects of the psyche using gender symbolically: "Always there is this Woman as well as this Man in the mind; Affection as well as Intellect." For him, the artist ideally combines these aspects of the psyche both in himself and in his art, and there can be no doubt that he saw himself in exactly this light. In August 1843, under the heading "Man-Woman," he notes, "It is true that when a man writes poetry, he appears to assume the high feminine part of his nature. We clothe the poet therefore in robes & garlands, which are proper to woman. The Muse is feminine. But action is male." Ultimately, Emerson concludes that "The finest people marry the two sexes in their own person. Hermaphrodite is then the symbol of the finished soul. It was agreed that in every act should appear the married pair: the two elements should mix in every act."³⁸ Whitman expresses essentially the same concept when he states,

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,

...

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,

And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,

And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men. (21:422, 426-428)

On a symbolic level, of course, the merging of the masculine and the feminine is equivalent to the balancing of the psyche, conscious (masculine) and unconscious (feminine). This symbolic and literal presence of the psychological qualities of both sexes in one individual is a manifestation of the sense of wholeness that Emerson and many other Romantics and Transcendentalists actively pursued, and which they sought to achieve as artists. Margaret Fuller, for example, proclaims in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* that, while "the

especial genius of woman [is] . . . intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency,” it is also true that “[m]ale and female represent two sides of the great radical dualism.” As a result, “They are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman.”³⁹ This hermaphroditic balance is an ideal that all individuals know initially in childhood. Indeed, this undoubtedly explains why, in Brown’s words, quoted earlier, “childhood remains man’s indestructible goal.” It also offers further explanation as to why the ideal of childhood was so often alluded to by Romantics like Emerson and Whitman. Erich Neumann offers the following explanation:

Man’s original hermaphroditic disposition is still largely conserved in the child. Without the disturbing influences from outside which foster the visible manifestation of sexual differences at an early date, children would just be children; and actively masculine features are in fact as common and effective in girls as are passively feminine ones in boys. It is only cultural influences, whose differentiating tendencies govern the child’s early upbringing, that lead to an identification of the ego with the monosexual tendencies of the personality. (112)

By opening an internal gateway to the compensating power of “Eros,” the unconscious, Emerson and Whitman sought to achieve a dynamic balance between body and soul that enhanced both entities tremendously. As a result, they were able to offer a vision of unity and spontaneous spiritual and physical life to an ailing and fragmented society. Each of them accomplished this goal in his own unique way. Although Oliver Wendell Holmes could never comprehend or appreciate the sexual, sensual, and spiritual dynamic shared by Emerson and Whitman, it is that very life-sustaining force that continues to attract readers to them today. On the other hand, Holmes’s own genteel writings are of interest now only to the literary antiquarian.

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NOTES

- 1 The work, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, was published in the prestigious Houghton, Mifflin “American Men of Letters Series” in December 1884.
- 2 Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *Papers*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., vol. 6.
- 3 Daniel Aaron, “Literary Scenes and Literary Movements.” *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, ed. Emory Elliott (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 734, 735.
- 4 Jerome Loving, *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 414-415, 406.
- 5 Quoted in Van Wyck Brooks, *New England Indian Summer: 1865-1915* (New York: E. F. Dutton, 1940), 57.
- 6 The ts. is located in the Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *Papers* at the Houghton Library, Harvard University (“Memoranda Books on Emerson”); quoted with permission.

7 *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884), 324-325. Holmes's quote is from Emerson's poem "Art," *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1903-1904), 9:277.

8 For a detailed discussion of Holmes's role in the struggle against Realism, see Len Gougeon, "Holmes' *Emerson* and the Conservative Critique of Realism," *South Atlantic Review* 59 (1994), 107-125.

9 Kenneth Lynn, *William Dean Howells: An American Life* (New York: Harcourt, 1985), 100-101. For the full text of Howells' early review of *Leaves of Grass*, see <http://www.whitmanarchive.org/criticism/>.

10 "Editor's Study" (February 1888), 476-482; *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1887).

11 *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson, Joseph Slater, and Douglas Emory Wilson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971-), 3:5. Indicated hereafter as *CW*.

12 *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 92.

13 *Reconstituting the American Renaissance: Emerson, Whitman, and the Politics of Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 5, 81.

14 *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 194.

15 *Whitman the Political Poet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 308-309.

16 *Walt Whitman, A Life* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980), 249.

17 *The Solitary Singer: A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 237, 238. Loving, *op cit.*, 241.

18 In *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), Erich Neumann presents a view of human psychological development in which the conscious mind of the individual stands in a dialectical relationship with the equally important unconscious. Neumann associates civilization, culture, time, and "masculine" rationality with the conscious, while nature, emotion, eternity, and "feminine" sensuality are associated with the unconscious. Neumann considers consciousness itself to be "masculine" and the unconscious to be "feminine," regardless of a person's gender. He states, "one thing, paradoxical though it may seem, can be established at once as a basic law: even in a woman, consciousness has a masculine character. The correlation 'consciousness—light—day' and 'unconsciousness—darkness—night' holds true regardless of sex, and is not altered by the fact that the spirit-instinct polarity is organized on a different basis in men and women. Consciousness, as such, is masculine even in women, just as the unconscious is feminine in men" (42). As shall be noted, this concept was familiar to the Romantics and Transcendentalists alike.

19 See Paul Boller, *American Transcendentalism: 1830-1860, An Intellectual Inquiry* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 44-54.

20 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk and Eleanor M. Tilton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939, 1990-1995), 1:412-413.

21 Jeffrey C. Miller, *The Transcendent Function: Jung's Model of Psychological Growth Through Dialogue with the Unconscious* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 18.

- 22 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (New York: Vintage, 1959), 297, 284.
- 23 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman, Ralph Orth, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-1982), 4:41. Indicated hereafter as *JMN*.
- 24 Thoreau, *Walden* (1854), ed. William Rossi (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 65-66.
- 25 *Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman (New York: Signet, 1965), 471.
- 26 Quoted in Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1960), 89.
- 27 Joel Porte, *Representative Man: Ralph Waldo Emerson in His Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 295.
- 28 Robert Richardson, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 204.
- 29 Harold Aspiz, *Walt Whitman and the Body Beautiful* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), ix.
- 30 Lawrence Buell, *Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 30.
- 31 *CW*, 1:16-17; 3:12; 1:17,18.
- 32 David Porter, *Emerson and Literary Change* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 150.
- 33 Whitman, in the "Letter" to Emerson that served as the Preface to the 1856 edition of *Leaves*, raises the question as to whether American poets "shall celebrate in poems the eternal decency of the amativeness of Nature, the motherhood of all, or whether they shall be the bards of the fashionable delusion of the inherent nastiness of sex, and of the feeble and querulous modesty of deprivation." He, like Emerson, felt the unnaturalness of a situation where poets "cannot publicly, name, with specific words, the things on which all existence, all souls, all realization, all decency, all health, all that is worth being here for, all of woman and of man, all purity, all sweetness, all friendship, all strength, all life, all immortality depend" (*Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*, ed. Michael Moon [New York: Norton, 2002], 645).
- 34 Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance: An Exploration of Philosophical and Mystical Sources of Iconography in Renaissance Art* (New York: Norton, 1958), 212.
- 35 Martin Bickman, *American Romantic Psychology: Emerson, Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, Melville* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1980), 49. Vivian Hopkins makes this same point in "Emerson and Cudworth: Plastic Nature and Transcendental Art," *American Literature* 23 (1951-1952), 80-98.
- 36 Quoted in Allen, *Solitary Singer*, 174-175. Harold Aspiz also observes that "*Leaves of Grass* shares many traits common to the writings of Blake, Novalis, Emerson, and other Western literary mystics, and its resemblances to the utterances of Eastern mystics have been impressively argued" (163).
- 37 Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 23; indicated hereafter as *Love*.

38 *JMN*, 8:193-194, 230, 356, 380.

39 Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), ed. Larry Reynolds (New York: Norton, 1998), 68-69.

