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The Harbinger Reviews Its Transcendental "Friends": Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, and Ralph Waldo Emerson

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When in late 1840 Ralph Waldo Emerson refused George Ripley's request to become a member of Ripley's then nascent Brook Farm community, he made perfectly clear to his fellow transcendentalists what modern students of the movement—and, one feels certain, the transcendentalists themselves—have always known: there never was much unanimity of agreement among the "infidels" who had fallen away in the 1830's from the Unitarian church. This point, of course, had earlier been made—albeit unwittingly—by the outspoken Orestes Brownson, the tough-minded socialist who eventually founded and edited—among other journals—the Boston Quarterly Review (1838-42).

On September 9, 1836, Emerson had published Nature, that essay which drew together and organized for the first time the separate ideas that were then being articulated by such individuals as Ripley and Brownson themselves, as well as by Sampson Reed, Frederic Henry Hedge, and others. Among the "initiated," this was what had been waited for: a coherent and unifying document that clearly explained the different theses of the "new school" which theretofore had been, to the Boston community, mostly obscure.

In the very same month, however, Brownson had published an article on Victor Cousin—the founder of the eclectic school in French philosophy—in the Christian Examiner (XXI, 33-64). The occasion was a review of H. G. Linberg's translation of The History of Philosophy (1832), though Brownson's real purpose was the same as Emerson's had been: to reconcile current religious and philosophical differences among the sensationalists and the spiritualists, or, more precisely, the Unitarians and the transcendentalists. Unlike Emerson, however, Brownson felt characteristically certain that there was only one way to achieve such a reconciliation, and that was to adopt the method of Victor Cousin. "We must be eclectics," Brownson concluded his Linberg review, "excluding no element of humanity, but accepting and melting all into one vast system, which will be a true representative of humanity so far as it is as yet developed."

Thus, ironically, at the very moment that Emerson was publishing a first summarizing and unifying statement, Brownson was writing an article in which he criticized the method of the new German school of
Schelling and Hegel, and singled out Victor Cousin as being the only philosopher whose method could be "scientifically" validated. The effect of the simultaneous publication of these two essays—though probably unrealized at the time by most of the young liberals, and likely not at all intended by Brownson himself—must ultimately have been divisive.

The issue which was to divide the ranks irreconcilably, however, was not to be any between the German and French schools of philosophy. The matter would be less heady and more fundamental. It would have to do with the question of just what the social and economic aims of the Transcendental philosophy were. George Ripley answered the question in one way when he undertook Brook Farm. Emerson obviously answered in a different way when he refused Ripley's invitation to join the community. The extent to which this incident created "two opposing poles in Transcendentalism" is neatly summarized by Perry Miller: "The fellowship of 1836 had been bound together by nothing more than gossamer threads, but with the creation of Brook Farm they all had to face the issue of society versus solitude—and thereafter could never meet, all of them, as compatriots."

If only because Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, and Ralph Waldo Emerson chose not to participate actively in the Brook Farm experiment conducted by their friends, the reviews in *The Harbinger* of works by these individuals are among the most interesting. The *Harbinger* (1845-49) is naturally associated, of course, with Brook Farm, perhaps the best known of American utopian communities of the nineteenth century, for it was there that the magazine was originally conceived by George Ripley. For the first two of the four years of its existence, when the Associationist magazine was published at the Farm, it received the full-time attention of Ripley and his dedicated associates, Charles A. Dana and John S. Dwight, Dana later achieving considerable celebrity as editor of the New York *Sun*, and Dwight later establishing himself as one of the earliest and foremost critics of music in the United States. Due largely to the efforts of these men, *The Harbinger* was soon established as the most important Associative journal in America, as evidenced by the fact that just two years after its inception, the magazine was adopted as the official organ of the American Union of Associationists.

As is obvious to anyone who has read its pages, *The Harbinger* was not primarily intended to be a literary journal. On the contrary, its main

2. One should keep in mind the brief duration of the magazine. That *The Harbinger* survived for a period of less than four years is significant in that figures such as Fuller, Parker, and Emerson were reviewed, typically, only once or twice.
purpose was to disseminate Charles Fourier’s doctrines on industrial
reform as well as diffuse the aims and ideals of Associationists. Accord­
ingly, the majority of the literary reviews in the weekly magazine were
characterized by the dedication with which the reviewers proselytized for
Fourierism and Associationism. Thus, for example, Dana’s review of
The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1845) seems not to have
been prompted so much by an admiration for Shelley’s poetical abilities
as by the fact that George G. Foster, the editor of the edition, had made
the assertion that Shelley’s “system” was identical to that of Fourier,
thereby giving Dana an occasion to discuss The Harbinger’s avowed pa­
tron. Similarly, the fact that The Harbinger devoted one of its longest
and most adulatory reviews to Lydia Maria Child’s Letters From New
York (1845) is not properly appreciated until one remembers that Child
was a good friend of the Brook Farmers, as well as an author who, ac­
cording to Dwight, was “full of a great faith in the principle of Uni­
versal Unity” (I, 42).3

At the same time, however, one hastens to point out that the review­
ers for The Harbinger were men,4 in most cases, with no small endow­
ment of literary ability and talent. George Ripley, who wrote sixty-four
of the approximately 356 literary reviews that appeared in the magazine,
had begun editing his fourteen-volume Specimens of Foreign Standard
Literature in 1838; John Dwight, who contributed sixty-one such re­
views, had been translating German poetry for Ripley’s collection; and
Charles Dana, who provided 120 literary reviews, served his literary ap­
prenticeship on The Harbinger before becoming editor of the New York
Sun. Additionally, such men as William Cullen Bryant’s son-in-law
Parke Godwin, who had been a contributor to William Henry Chan­
ning’s The Present (1843-44) and Albert Brisbane’s The Phalanx (1843–
45) before the inception of The Harbinger,5 Francis G. Shaw, who pro­
vided the magazine with his own copyrighted translations of George
Sand’s Consuelo and The Countess of Rudolstadt, and William Henry
Channing, who, in addition to editing The Present and The Spirit of the
Age (1849-50), wrote a Memoir of W. E. Channing (1848), reviewed
numerous books for The Harbinger. As one might expect, the result of
having such men as these (and others whose background in literary mat­
ters was similarly informed)6 was often penetrating criticism.

In the third number of The Harbinger, George Ripley, then the edi­
tor, announced in a column entitled “Books From Our Friends” that
the Brook Farmers had received several books from friends who were

3. Parenthetical references are to volume and page number of The Harbinger.
4. Despite the generally egalitarian attitude of Associationists, all literary reviews in The Harbinger
were written by men.
5. Brisbane’s The Phalanx and Channing’s The Present were the immediate predecessors of The Har­
binger.
6. In addition to the men cited above, the following individuals reviewed books for The Harbinger:
S. P. Andrews, Walter Channing, James Freeman Clarke, George Foster, E. P. Grant, Everett Ives,
Henry James, Sr., Osborne Macdaniel, and John Orvis.
“continuing nobly in the study and confession of Truth. . . .” Ripley said that the Brook Farmers had long felt a duty to review some of these works, and now the publication of *The Harbinger* afforded them this opportunity. Presumably, Ripley intended to devote a separate column of reviews to works written by friends of the “cause,” for in the third number he stated: “With delight we shall name over some of the beautiful books which have been sent us by our friends, and of which we mean to make a series of reviews” (I, 30). For whatever reasons, Ripley’s idea never formally materialized. This did not prevent the magazine, however, from occasionally reviewing works by individuals whom it certainly would have considered “friends,” among them, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Margaret Fuller (1810-50) was perhaps the most brilliant and erudite of all the American Transcendentalists. She reportedly once told Emerson: “I know all the people worth knowing in America, and I find no intellect comparable to my own.” Of this statement Perry Miller has since remarked that Fuller “was indeed speaking the sober truth.” Not known so much for her creative talent as for her critical ability, Fuller was one of the young geniuses who in the early 1840’s recognized the importance of establishing judicious standards of criticism. To this end she and others contributed a number of important articles to the *Dial* (1840-44), articles which resulted in making that magazine “a landmark in our intellectual history” because it “endeavored to set up catholic standards of ‘poetic’ criticism. . . .”

*Papers on Literature and Art* (1846), the only work of Fuller’s reviewed in *The Harbinger*, reprinted most of her articles from the *Dial*, as well as a composite of a number of her critical notices written for Horace Greeley’s New York *Tribune* during 1844-46. In his review of

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7. Lydia Maria Child (1802-80), the sister of Conver Francis, undoubtedly would have been considered a “friend” by George Ripley and his fellow Brook Farmers, and John Dwight did, in fact, review her *Letters from New York* (Second Series, 1845) and *Fact and Fiction: A Collection of Stories* (1847) for *The Harbinger*. In his review of *Letters*, Dwight readily admitted that his primary interest in this work was the author’s conviction that contemporary society demanded radical change. Of course, Mrs. Child’s faith in Fourier’s doctrines as the means to effect such change interested Dwight more than a little. He was obviously glad to note that the author possessed “a most undaunted faith in the speedy triumph of Truth and Beauty over the wrongs and wretchedness of the Past,” and he was surely no less pleased to encounter a work that embodied such a great faith in the principle and science of universal unity. Accordingly, he praised Mrs. Child: “No one will deny the name of an artist to the author of *Philothea*” (I, 43).

If Dwight’s review of *Letters* was enthusiastic, his review of *Fact and Fiction* was embarrassingly extravagant. Dwight himself admitted his difficulty in discussing this work in qualified terms, for no other collection of stories, he said, delighted *The Harbinger* more than *Fact and Fiction*. He added that he would call “The Children of Mount Ida” (the first story in the volume) the “most exquisite piece of classic fiction we ever read” if he did not know the danger of superlatives! Ironically enough, very few reviews in *The Harbinger* employed so many superlatives: “She [Mrs. Child] is generally acknowledged to be one of the most genial, buoyant, versatile, impetuous, playful, earnest, humane and unpretendingly, informally religious writers of the times,—a sincere, generous, great woman, to whom no conventional sham or folly by any possibility can cleave,—and a poet, in whom the faculty of seeing beauty in everything and sympathizing with it, and recreating it in forms of art, seems never suspended, never blunt or wearied” (IV, 57).


Papers for The Harbinger, John Dwight used the occasion both to continue the discussion initiated in the Dial, and to praise Fuller for laying the foundation for sound literary criticism in America. He began his review by discussing the difficulty of being a critic:

For one who is by nature a critic to be willing to be that, and wear the character actively, sincerely, and courageously, involves a degree of self-sacrifice. For the character is naturally unprepossessing. We are not apt to love it; by its seeming excess of consciousness it separates itself from us; by its coldness it discourages our enthusiasm; by its regard of more than one thing at a time always, it seems never to commit itself, never to abandon itself to anything with that entire devotion which we esteem beautiful. (II, 249)

Despite all this, Fuller, Dwight thought, had accepted the character of critic unquestioningly, and because this was so, she had erected for criticism "a very high and important place, if not one absolutely central in our literature."

Of the many reviews reprinted in Papers, Fuller’s essay on “American Literature” was perhaps the most important. Perry Miller has described it as “one of the boldest and most courageous utterances of the era.” Dwight’s reaction to this essay was enthusiastic, though not as adulatory as Miller’s: “‘American Literature’ tells many plain truths, and deals out liberal justice on all hands.” He agreed with Fuller that both Longfellow and Lowell had been overly praised, though he was not willing to go as far as Fuller in labeling Lowell an inferior poet. Actually, he thought Lowell—who had, it will be remembered, married in 1844 Maria White, herself something of a transcendentalist—to be a true and “noble bard.”

Dwight’s only criticism of Fuller concerned her style. Dwight said that Fuller was a gifted conversationalist but unfortunately, he added, her writings were marked by that hurriedness that characterized her conversation. The result was that the reader often had to weigh her sentences singly, much as one would weigh a mathematical proposition. Furthermore, Dwight said, her grandiloquence suggested that she regarded herself as an Olympian god pontificating to the mundane world below. Nevertheless, it was, paradoxically, this stylistic weakness, Dwight noted, that gave her strength as a critic, for without this preponderance of intellect she would have been unable to survey the entire field of literature and art, a task which she performed remarkably well. Few critics “have surveyed so large a portion of the whole field [as Fuller had in Papers]; perhaps no other American; and few are so able to point inquiring minds to what is best and most significant in literature and art” (II, 249). Indeed, Papers on Literature and Art, Dwight concluded, contained more original and independent thought in it than could be found in collected volumes of America’s most respected reviews.

10. Dwight, as well as his associates on The Harbinger, never showed the slightest appreciation of Poe’s labors in this area.
11. Miller, The American Transcendentalists, p. 188.
Theodore Parker (1810-60) was, like Fuller, a frequent and welcome visitor during the several years that Brook Farm survived. Charles Crowe has noted, for example, that the practical jokes of Parker and his good friend George Ripley were a constant source of amusement to members of the community. Unlike Margaret Fuller, however, Parker ultimately dedicated his prodigious intellectual abilities to almost every major reform movement: for example, he championed women's rights, the abolition of slavery and capital punishment, and rehabilitative programs in penal institutions. It was therefore only natural that The Harbinger devoted a good deal of space to the author of A Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity, for not only were many of Parker's social sympathies identical to those of the Brook Farmers, but several of his most vitriolic and sensational sermons were published during the period of the magazine's existence.

Between February 1846 and January 1848, The Harbinger published five reviews of Parker's sermons, two by Charles Dana and three by George Ripley. Additionally, the paper also noticed the publication in 1848 of the German edition of Parker's most important book, A Discourse on Matters Pertaining to Religion (1842).

That Parker was a good friend of many of the Brook Farmers, and that he was an energetic social reformer, did not prevent the often acidulous Charles Dana from criticizing him in his reviews of The Idea of A Christian Church (1846) and A Sermon of War (1846). However, the main object of Dana's criticism in his review of The Idea of A Christian Church was the Christian Church itself. In terms reminiscent of earlier transcendentalists who had in the 1830's criticized the Unitarian church, Dana said that the Christian Church had failed, among other things, to eliminate social ills such as pauperism and slavery: "Why is it that after eighteen hundred years of Christianity, there is in the most enlightened and Christianized countries, an amount of human misery and degradation, such as no history records?" (II, 158). Espousing Socialism as a solution to social wrongs, Dana stated that there would be no peace or harmony in society until competition in industry was replaced by a "system of brotherly cooperation." Equally perplexing, Dana said, was the fact that the Christian Church, as well as clergymen like Parker, had not taken a sufficiently active role in social reform movements that would elevate the financial status of the laborer. Indirectly praising the Brook Farm community, Dana concluded the review by noting—quite unfairly when one recalls what a tireless preacher Parker was—that it was one thing to identify social evils (which he admitted Parker had done) but quite another thing to work actively for the elimination of those evils.

This same call for action was repeated in Dana's review of *A Sermon of War*. Empty rhetoric, it was stated, would not extirpate social evils. The important question, as Dana saw it, was: How was the idea of social, political, and individual freedom to be made real in the United States? Parker, and men like him, Dana said, had not answered this question. There were many men who sincerely believed in social and individual freedom "but who never so much as think of the path which leads from the conception to the fact. ..." Dana admitted that Parker's sermon had shown that war was an "infernal evil," but he concluded his review by remarking that it was foolish to cry out with indignation against the war with Mexico while remaining quiet about the warfare of competitive labor which so characterized contemporary society.

Although Dana never directly said it in his reviews, there is little doubt that his lack of enthusiasm for Parker's sermons was due to his belief that the minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society had offered no concrete remedies for existing social ills. However, Perry Miller has noted: "It has been the fashion in some quarters to hold against Parker the fact that he could propose no more realistic remedy for social evils than moral regeneration. Considering the ethos of the time, this charge need not be weighed too heavily..." Whether or not it was due to his own ministerial background, one of the things which distinguished George Ripley's three reviews of Parker from those by Dana was precisely this: the former's recognition that Dana's implied charge "need not be weighed too heavily." On the contrary, Ripley recognized the need for an individual who was not afraid to identify the falseness and corruption of society, for as he noted (in rhetoric which must certainly have appealed to the Brook Farmers): "We need the rough ploughshare to break through the stiffened crust of prevailing prejudice and error, before the sower can cast the precious seed into a receptive soil, or the reaper exult in the yellow sheaves of a ripened harvest" (III, 363).

Ripley reviewed three of Parker's sermons for *The Harbinger: A Sermon of the Perishing Classes in Boston* (1846); *A Sermon on Merchants* (1848); *A Sermon of the Dangerous Classes in Society* (1847). Ripley's reviews were noteworthy for two reasons. First, despite the fact that Parker had been ostracized by respectable Boston after he delivered his sensational sermon on *The Transient and Permanent* (1841), and despite the fact that each of the three sermons reviewed by Ripley caused a great commotion in the Boston community, *The Harbinger* editor never compromised his beliefs about the reform minister; he recognized the importance of an individual who was willing to address himself not only to a critique of American society but to a critique of the American businessman as well. As he said in his review of *A Sermon on Merchants*, Parker

was a man who had "no taste for fictions, common places, or awful sounds without sense; his sharp, lancet-like wit is a terror to all pretension; and evident strength of his own convictions arms his words with an authority that cannot be lightly resisted" (IV, 137).

Second, in his reviews of Parker’s sermons on the perishing classes and the merchants, Ripley, employing satire, mounted perhaps his own most vigorous attack (in *The Harbinger*) on the Christian Church. He stated in his review of the perishing classes that instead of being first, contemporary theologians were the last persons on earth to whom an appeal could be made regarding the most vital interests of humanity. Ripley was convinced that Emerson’s admonition eight years earlier in the “Divinity School Address” had not been heeded:

Peering sharply through their [theologians'] spectacles into the letter of the Bible, spending days and nights in the discussion of the meaning of an insignificant phrase in a dead language, wrangling with the fury of prize fighters for some thin subtlety that not one in a hundred can comprehend, and scattering loads of learned dust in the eyes of those who look to them for guidance, they are as cold and torpid in view of the monstrous outrages which everywhere stare them in the face, as if the throbbings of a heart of flesh had given place to turning over the leaves of a mouldy volume. (III, 361-62)

Indeed, it was almost incomprehensible to Ripley that the “snow-white Pharisees,” the “Ponderous doctors of divinity,” the “sleak and studious Scribes,” could remain silent in the midst of the innumerable oppressions and evils which existed in contemporary society. Tongue-in-cheek, Ripley admitted that, strictly speaking, Theodore Parker was no theologian and *A Sermon on Merchants* was no sermon, for Parker repudiated Original Sin, the Devil, and the Trinity, and his sermons lacked a text and violated “Congregational usage.” What, then, Ripley asked, was Parker?

We say, one of the bravest, noblest, most sincere, and most effectual speakers that now hold the public ear, in the pulpit or out of it. He was never able to write anything that has the air of a sermon, any more that [sic] he could find a place in his brain for the dusty dogmas of the church; but he deals in words that are like polished steel, which charm and dazzle while they cut to the bone. His surpassing eloquence is founded on his massive common sense, kindled by the fire of noble passion which always burns in his heart. He is one of the great teachers of the day; his earnestness will always attract earnest men; his knowledge of the world gives him access to the shrewdest heads; he looks directly in to the centre of the subject which he handles; and at his potent touch the cobwebs which have been accumulating for ages disappear. (III, 362)

Here Ripley pinpointed some of the qualities which made Parker one of the most important spokesmen for Transcendentalism in America. Only Emerson (1803-82)—and in the world of action some would argue not even Emerson—had such a direct hand in the shaping of this philosophy which flourished in New England during the decades 1830 and 1840. Ripley and his associates were especially aware of Emerson’s importance, and initially they believed that the success or failure of Brook Farm depended, to some extent, on his participation in their socialis-
tic enterprise. Emerson, of course, refused to join the community,"14 certainly because of his commitment to absolute individualism. He believed that social progress was an illusion; the only fundamental reform was the reform of one's self. In his often quoted journal entry at the time of Ripley's request to join the community, Emerson noted: "I have not yet conquered my own house... Shall I raise the siege of this hen coop [Brook Farm] and march baffled away to a pretended siege of Babylon? It seems to me that to do so were to dodge the problem... and hide my impotency in the thick of a crowd."15

As was noted earlier, Emerson's refusal to join the experiment in communalism brought to the foreground the basic difference between his social philosophy and that of the Brook Farmers. Unlike Emerson, who preached the gospel of self-reliance as an end in itself, the Brook Farmers believed that self-reliance was important only as a means to a higher end, namely, the economic, social, and political betterment of mankind. However frequent and congenial were Emerson's visits to the West Roxbury community, the Brook Farmers never reconciled their philosophical difference with him. Nevertheless, even the writers for The Harbinger could not deny Emerson's intellectual brilliance, though John Dwight was more anxious than any of his colleagues to qualify his praise of the Concord sage. In his review of Poems (1847), Dwight said that he thought Emerson was a true poet, capable of beauty, majesty of thought, and originality, for he celebrated the mystical, exceptional, and transcendental side of life. Dwight added, however, that he could not give much praise to a man whose life had been "one ever-lasting non-committal." The fact was, Dwight said, Emerson did not write for humanity. His verse, like Emerson himself, was cold and distant; his poems "counsel loneliness, and call that true life" (IV, 93).

After Emerson delivered his seventh and final lecture on "Representative Men" at the Boston Lyceum, George G. Foster reviewed them for The Harbinger. Though his discussion was primarily a reiteration of Emerson's comments on Plato, Swedenborg, Montaigne, Napoleon, Shakespeare, and Goethe, it did contain some interesting remarks, not the least of which had to do with Emerson's reputation among his fellow citizens in early 1846:

Gradually the belief with which persons of one deaf ear inoculated others of two long ones, that all his metaphysics tended to nothing and had scarcely a plank between it and the awful deeps of insanity, has exploded, and during this course of lectures, all denomi-

14. Perhaps it should be remembered here that John Dwight tried to enlist Emerson's aid when The Harbinger was just getting underway, but he refused Dwight's request for a contribution or two on the grounds that he could not aid a journal which had chosen a "patron." He also told Dwight that he was saddened by the fact that the "scholars and philosophers" had no "literary organ or voice" which was not "desperately sectarian," and he concluded by telling him that so long as The Harbinger was sectarian, he would "respect it at a distance. If it should become catholic, I shall be found suing for a place in it." See G. W. Cooke, John Sullivan Dwight... A Biography (Boston, 1898), pp. 103-05.
nations and classes of persons, from cooks to clergymen, sat entranced by the music of his voice and the beauty of his thought. He has become the fashion, or rather the fashion has become him. His admirers have gradually become the public. (II, 143)

Thus it really did not matter, Foster added, that there might be "chaff in his [Emerson's] brain; [or] that his system be only parily true, or that he has no system . . . ." For what was certain, Foster said, was that "a man stands behind his words, and that he is never idle in his speech, but sincere and strong."

It was because of the nature of Emerson's remarks on Swedenborg in the "Representative Men" lectures that Charles Dana had the occasion to review Professor Bush's Reply to Ralph Waldo Emerson on Swedenborg (1846) in the 4 April 1846 number of *The Harbinger*. Dana said that Bush's defense of certain of Swedenborg's doctrines from the assaults of Emerson was adequate so far as it went. However, "we desired to see the primary errors of Emerson’s speculative thinking called into court and convicted." As it was, Bush had failed to settle important matters pertaining to Swedenborg's religious philosophy, and consequently, these matters were left to "wander homeless in the misty unrealities which Mr. Emerson and his school teach as transcendental philosophy." Nevertheless, Dana did add that Bush's unsuccessfulness in seizing the point behind Emerson’s expressions was not entirely his fault: "He might perhaps as well have grasped at the Aurora Borealis as to have attempted with the uninitiated understanding to apprehend the nimble ideas of that gentleman’s beautiful and poetic rhetoric" (II, 268).

There is little doubt, of course, that these reviews of Fuller, Parker, and Emerson were inspired to some extent by the fact that there were substantive ideological differences between them and the Brook Farmers. The simple fact is—and it was an important one to the members of the West Roxbury community—that these three important individuals had refused to be regularly involved with or committed to Brook Farm. Men like Ripley, Dwight, and Dana were not able to forget this. At the same time, one must be nevertheless impressed by the overall accuracy of *The Harbinger*'s criticism of these individuals, thus suggesting a very important point about the editors of this journal, as well as, indeed, much of the literary criticism in the magazine itself: friends or not, ideological considerations or not, the high-mindedness and intellectual honesty of men like Ripley, Dwight, and Dana typically lead to judicious criticism and a lively and vigorous discussion of ideas.

There is yet one other point that needs to be made about these reviews, though perhaps it is already obvious because of the substance of the reviews themselves. That point, of course, is that too many partially informed students continue to identify Transcendentalism almost exclusively with Emerson and Thoreau; we forget that the ideas advocated in *The Harbinger* constitute as much, if not more, a part of a definition of
Transcendentalism as do the ideas espoused by those two famous residents of Concord, Massachusetts. Reviews such as *The Harbinger’s* on Fuller, Parker, and Emerson remind us of this fact, while they provide us with a fuller understanding of Transcendentalism as it developed on native soil.

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