reasons. First, historically, as the editor states, it is impor-
tant to understand the historical antecedents to discussions
today in sign theory. Morris has propagated a major branch of
semiotic study, whose branches intermingle with a Peircean branch
and could well provide understanding in some areas (see below),
but they are still separate from Peirce's semiotic.

Second, while sometimes problematic, Morris's semiotic
bifurcations (e.g., given and givenness) provides particular
insight into the context of the field of sign action. He uses
given and givenness, for example, to delineate between specific
aspects of the environmental context which are of importance to
the individual as one finds meaning in the surroundings. The
givenness might be equated to the details of Peirce's ground or
Mead's aesthetic image (part of the perception stage of the act).
Givenness is what is perceived from sense data of the surround-
ings before the non-essential sense data are discarded in Mead's
manipulation stage. Aspects of givenness may be the greatest
strength of the book.

Third, it is interesting to juxtapose some of Morris's ideas
with current ideas to broaden our comprehension of the human
mind. For example, Morris's discussion of unconsciousness, as
defined psychoanalytically (43-4) is very similar to a recent
publication which uses a Peircean semiotic to discuss psychoanal-
ysis and the diagnosis of pathologies (Semiotic Perspectives on
Clinical Theory and Practice, ed. B. Litowitz and P. Epstein,

While there are many who may revere Morris, Dewey's words
loom large cautioning anyone who reads Morris. Peirce is by far
and away the better shadow to follow, but Morris provides a
significant historical context. This book needs to be a part of
any comprehensive semiotic library, but it should be read in the
greater context of comprehensive semiotic meaning.

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NEW ESSAYS ON WALDEN, ed. Robert F Sayre. New York: Cambridge
UP, 1992. 177.

This volume adds to a fine series "The American Novel" under
the general editorship of Emory Elliott. The series is designed
to "provide students of American literature with introductory
critical guides to the great works of American literature." Student reading Walden for the first time or professors refresh-
ing themselves before they teach this great work for the umteenth
time will find this volume very useful. The book contains five
short, accessible essays with attractive range and variety.

Robert Sayre's Introduction begins with an insightful gener-
al biographical sketch stressing Thoreau's several decades of
wrestling with the problem of vocation--armed with a Harvard col-
lege degree he declined several forms of gainful employment, yet
he was aware that he could not support himself as a lecturer and writer like his mentor Emerson. Still he could do the latter, he decided, if he could cut expenses and simplify his life—hence his experiment in living deliberately at Walden. Sayre also stresses Thoreau's life-long devotion to his Journal as a form of private therapy, a vehicle of self-examination and an amiable conversation with an ideal reader—himself. Sayre's composition-al history of Walden is very well done. Not counting the final printer's copy, Walden went through seven different versions making it the complex (more on this point shortly) and many layered book it is:

Thus in Walden social criticism, autobiography, moral philosophy, and natural history are all integrated, making a book with many different facets and themes but which most readers find brilliantly unified. (9)

Lawrence Buell's "Henry Thoreau Enters the American Canon" is the tale of how readers and publishers anointed a classic and placed Walden into the American canon. Put another way, how did Thoreau escape his turn-of-century status as a second rate author? How did he join the ranks of the literary all-stars of the first magnitude?

My essay differs from most contributions to collections of criticisms on this author or that work in saying little about Thoreau's writing itself but concentrating instead on how Thoreau was "packaged" by the two establishments I have mentioned. (24)

Buell identifies the two marketing spin-doctors as publisher George Mifflin of Hougton Mifflin and Atlantic editor and Harvard English professor Bliss Perry. Their take on Thoreau is a familiar, though now dated, picture:

Thus Thoreau would first have become known to many American readers growing up in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the author of comparatively descriptive/scientific, nonmystical and nonpugna-cious essays, and through Emerson's representation of him as "the bachelor of thought and nature. (34)

Gradually, as Buell, explains the other facets of Thoreau (and Walden): naturalist, ecologist, misanthrope, gentle anarchist, subversive radical, mystic and word-smith extraordinaire emerged. This point nicely anticipates Peck's contention (see below) regarding the complexity, cross-currents and "dense intertextual-ity" (74) of Thoreau's work and message.

Anne LaBastille's "'Fishing in the Sky'" is a practicing woodswoman and professionally trained ecologist's readable and enjoyable account of her fascination with Thoreau. She begins with her initial reaction—a reaction not very distant from many students. "As a college student in my twenties, confronted for the first time with reading Walden, I found it drudgery and
shirked assignments. I never finished the book in class" (53). Some ten years later when LaBastille began her solitary stay in the woods in a cabin she built on the shores of a remote lake in the Adirondacks (see Woodswoman [E. P. Dutton, 1978] for a wonderful read)—she tried Walden again. "I dutifully read a chapter each night, searching for clues and tips. But the book rambled so much, touched on such a variety of subjects, that I usually fell asleep midway." Too much philosophy and natural history got in the way.

Ten years later in her forties she tried again, this time by listening to a books-on-tape version of Walden on long, solitary drives between Upstate New York to Florida.

Whereas reading the book had always been hard work for me, the experience of hearing it was a revelation. Beautifully read, unabridged, with inflections, pauses, lilting tones, and expressive quotations, Walden suddenly flowed and flowered. (56)

The rest of LaBastille's piece is a comparison of her "solitary" and "wilderness" experience with Thoreau's. She even emulated Thoreau to the point of keeping a detailed tally of costs for her cabin "Thoreau II" and living expenses for a year. She concludes her essay with comments on Thoreau's treatment of women and an assessment of his writings as ecology.

Daniel Peck's "The Crosscurrents of Walden's Pastoral" confronts, head-on, the prickly nettle Walden is. "Professional literary critics have begun to acknowledge what students have always known: Walden is a very difficult and elusive book that continually challenges, even subverts the process of reading it (73)." Peck seeks to account for the problematic nature of Walden by examining it as a pastoral. By that term, he means, in part, that Walden is a nostalgic, selective recasting of experience. He shows that Thoreau's retelling of his two years, two months, and two days at the shores of Walden Pond is a highly selective recollection. Thoreau brackets many personal (his brother's death), social (happenings in Concord) and historical (national crises) events in this consciously stylized reconstruction of his life. "Pastoral," for Peck, contains the key to Thoreau's represented consciousness of self, society, and even nature:

Pastoral is a form defined by the forces it contains, and by the tensions it exhibits; its very existence is predicated on the worlds (of civilization, urbanity; or technology) against which it positions itself. (76).

Peck discloses Thoreau's pastoralism in a nice comparison in which he "reads" two middle landscape paintings by George Inness. In both paintings—and Walden—Peck sees a strategy of containment, which "does its work less through direct mediation of particular elements than through an overarching composition. It achieves its effects indirectly through . . .[a] pervasive mode of adjacency or deflection (80)."
Peck broadens his point to an account of the nature of all discourse. Thus *Walden* is not fiction while Thoreau's *Journal* fact:

> It would be a mistake to conclude, however, that the *Journal* gives the true account of the Walden years and that *Walden* gives an artful version. Both accounts are "versions" and, indeed, the *Journal*’s account is expressed in its own, distinctive form of the (meditative) art. (88)

Peck's point is developed at length in his well-regarded *Thoreau's Morning Work: Memory and Perception in A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS, the JOURNAL, and WALDEN* (Yale UP, 1990). For readers of *SAAP Newsletter* familiar with William James's account of the pluriverses of experience, Peck's Thoreau amounts to an uncanny anticipation the Jamesian metaphysics of *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

The volume concludes with Michael Fisher's "*Walden* and the Politics of Contemporary Literary Theory." Fisher's essay is as much about Richard Rorty and Stanley Cavell as Thoreau and *Walden*. Fisher begins, "Richard Rorty seems to me right when he describes the central problem of contemporary theory as 'the problem of how to overcome authority without claiming authority (95)'." As he proceeds the issue is refined to a question of discovering how *Walden* preempts attempts to undermine Thoreau's sweeping social criticisms and to relativize his universal claims as contemporary deconstructionists are wont. Fisher's suggestion is that Thoreau employed paradox after paradox: what is most personal is most universal, what is most subjective is most objective, what is most local is most catholic. In short, what Thoreau discovered about himself, he also discovered about ever person. Accordingly *Walden*'s persistent exhortation is "know thyself,"

Self-knowledge is Thoreau's categorical imperative or, to borrow a metaphor from the chapter on economy, his bottom line. . . his problem is that, whereas nothing prevents self-scrutiny, nothing guarantees it either. He cannot force his readers to examine themselves and it is difficult to say what he can do above and beyond exhorting them. (104)

And so, though he disclaims any authority, Thoreau paradoxically certifies the strong opinions he freely proffers about a well-lived life, a healthy society and a wholesome nature.

These *New Essays on Walden* are valuable, accessible, provocative and useful. Sayer and his contributors are to be congratulated; it is an excellent scholarly and pedagogical resource.

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