

individual and relating them to the general knowledge of the California gold rush.

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*Fanny Wright: Rebel in America.* By Celia Morris Eckhardt. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984. Pp. xii, 337. Illustrations, notes, index. \$22.50.)

Frances Wright was a celebrity in the United States in the 1820s and 1830s. Author of a flattering book on the country, written when the Scotchwoman was only twenty-six years old, Fanny revisited America in 1824 when her friend the Marquis de Lafayette arrived for his triumphal tour. Inspired by his example, incensed by the injustice of slavery, and influenced by Robert Owen's community in New Harmony, she founded a plantation in Tennessee called Nashoba, an experimental community intended to show how slaves working for their freedom could be emancipated without financial loss to their owners. When the world learned that Nashoba's leaders favored miscegenation and permitted sexual unions between unmarried adults, Wright responded to outraged public opinion by launching a lecture tour to defend her views of equality and freedom. With Robert Dale Owen she edited a newspaper that championed freethought, women's rights, and the rights of working people and that condemned the influence of churches and the power of banks. Her political views, shocking enough in themselves at the time, were greeted with even greater vituperation because they came from a woman who dared to speak before mixed audiences.

Celia Morris Eckhardt examines the life of Fanny Wright from a feminist perspective, stressing the limitations and strains placed on an intelligent and energetic woman who fought for a juster world. She has painstakingly searched out Wright's correspondence and her diligent study of it adds to knowledge of Wright's personal life. Responsibly refusing to go beyond the evidence, she questions the currently fashionable assumption that Lafayette and Wright were lovers.

While presenting an engrossing portrait of a lively figure, Eckhardt's book lacks a sure sense of the historical context of her heroine's life. She accepts far too uncritically Frances Trollope's jaundiced views as accurate descriptions of American society. The book could have done more to analyze Wright's ideas, seeking their origins and perhaps comparing them to those of other radicals (surely "radical" is a more accurate designation than "liberal," which Eckhardt more commonly employs). A better understanding of the eighteenth century republican ideology be-

hind her view of the world, with its fears of luxury, monied interests, and aristocracy, would have helped to explain Wright's support for Martin Van Buren in 1836, a fact which Eckhardt found bewildering.

Eckhardt has brought to light some interesting facts about Wright's marriage to William Phiquepal d'Arusmont; however, her sympathies with Wright are so pronounced that she has short-changed the relationship between wife and husband. The 1939 biography by A. J. G. Perkins and Theresa Wolfson, which quotes long passages from Wright's and d'Arusmont's letters and offers different interpretations of some of Wright's actions, can still be read with profit.

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*U.S. 40 Today: Thirty Years of Landscape Change in America.*  
By Thomas R. Vale and Geraldine R. Vale. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983. Pp. xii, 198. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. Clothbound, \$27.50; paperbound, \$14.95.)

In the 1870s George Perkins Marsh, outspoken conservationist of his time, issued a warning to his fellow Americans that "we are losing our ability to see." His admonition came about because he believed that humankind was causing rapid deterioration of the environment and that people needed to become more conscious of their surroundings.

Today, Americans are certainly in need of similar exhortation. Their modern, fast-paced, mobile lifestyle has placed them increasingly in a less direct relationship to the landscape. In 1950 historian George R. Stewart helped to alleviate this situation when his *U.S. 40: Cross Section of the United States of America* was published. In this magnificent book Stewart showed that travel and landscape appreciation could go hand in hand. As he journeyed across America on U.S. 40, he stopped at intervals to take photographs that would reveal the personality of the route and its highway. He did not seek the unique landscape elements but, rather, the common, everyday features that provided for regional diversity as one traveled across the country. Along with his photographs Stewart provided descriptive details, including his own subjective comments. Needless to say, the book was very successful and has been required reading in geography, history, sociology, and other courses.

Surprisingly, there have been few attempts to relate the traveler with the landscape in the manner of Stewart's excellent