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Gerhardt, Christine. **A place for humility: Whitman, Dickinson, and the natural world.** Iowa, 2014. 268p bibl index afp ISBN 9781609382711 pbk, \$47.50; ISBN 9781609382919 ebook, \$75.00

Argued here is that in the mid-19th-century US—thanks to the influence of popular environmental writing, natural history essays, and increasingly visible proto-ecological sciences (notably botany, geology, and geography)—people's attitudes toward nature began to shift from an emphasis on exploitation to a concern with conservation. Gerhardt (American studies, Univ. of Bamberg, Germany) discusses Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman in the context of these green developments, showing how the poets were affected by the culture's shifting views and analyzing their nature-related poems on four geographic scales or levels: micro, local, regional, and global. Gerhardt concludes that Dickinson and Whitman, in spite of their apparently disparate poetic subjects and styles, share a reverence for nature and express in many of their poems an "environmental humility," a perspective that avoids both anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. *A Place for Humility* impressively extends and, in certain respects, supersedes the critical commentary of two comparable, earlier studies: Agnieszka Salska's *Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson: Poetry of the Central Consciousness* (1985) and M. Jimmie Killingsworth's *Walt Whitman and the Earth: A Study in Ecopoetics* (2004). Gerhardt's study is at once an exemplary contribution to the field of ecocriticism and a truly groundbreaking comparison of two of America's greatest poets. **Summing Up:** Essential

--D. D. Kummings, University of Wisconsin--Parkside

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