



R.W.E.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to Wesley T. Mott

On 28 May 1999, at the tenth annual meeting of the Society, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society presented its Distinguished Achievement Award to Wesley T. Mott. This award recognizes Professor Mott's extraordinary devotion to the Society, both as the principal force behind its founding in December 1989 and for his service as the Society's Secretary and Treasurer for the past ten years, and his substantial contributions to the study of Emerson through his teaching and scholarship.

Wesley T. Mott received his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1974. He served as a humanities and business project director and editor, and as a lecturer in English, at the University of Wisconsin at Madison from 1978 to 1987, and since 1987 he has taught courses and directed independent studies in the full range of American literature and writing in the professions at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where he was promoted to Full Professor in 1994. Currently putting the final touches on an updated *Dictionary of Literary Biography: The American Renaissance in New England*, of which he is the editor, Professor Mott published "*The Strains of Eloquence*": *Emerson and His*

Sermons, the first major treatment of Emerson as a preacher, in 1989, *The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 4 (ed., 1992), *Biographical Dictionary of Transcendentalism* (ed., 1996), *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism* (ed., 1996), and *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson* (co-ed., 1997). He has also published numerous articles on subjects drawn from the American Renaissance and Concord's Transcendentalist circle, including pieces on, of course, Emerson as well as Father Taylor, Thoreau, and Hawthorne.

Professor Mott's service as the Society's Secretary and Treasurer will end on 1 January 2000, when he becomes the Society's President-Elect; appropriately, he will serve as President during a term that includes the bicentennial of Waldo's birth in 2003. With this Distinguished Achievement Award, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society warmly acknowledges Wesley T. Mott for his many contributions to the Society, for his making Emerson's writings and thought accessible to a generation of students from many disciplinary walks, and for his unfailing generosity as a scholar and critic to his colleagues in Emerson studies.

—Ronald A. Bosco

1999 EMERSON SOCIETY PATRONS

Emerson Society members have responded generously to the appeal by Past President Ronald A. Bosco to join at new levels of membership. All donations above the \$10 annual regular membership go to support the "Emerson in 2003" Bicentennial celebration now being organized. Dues categories are Life (\$500), Sustaining (\$50), Contributing (\$25), and Regular (\$10). Please send check payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) to Wesley T. Mott, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of Humanities & Arts, WPI, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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For future issues of *Emerson Society Papers* we solicit information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news (promotions, transfers, retirements, deaths, etc.) of Emersonian scholars. We will also consider notes and short articles (about 4 to 5 double-spaced typewritten pages, or less) on subjects of interest to our membership. MLA stylesheet is preferred. Send manuscripts to the editor, Douglas Emory Wilson, 1404 Christine Ave., Anniston, AL 36207-3924.

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Sarah Ann Wider, Department of English, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY 13346.

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PROSPECTS.



Myerson Announces Bibliography Supplement

The University of Pittsburgh Press will be publishing a supplement to Joel Myerson's *Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Descriptive Bibliography* in time for the bicentennial in 2003. Please send any corrections or additions to Joel at the English Department, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208 or myerson-joel@sc.edu.

Emerson CD/Screen Saver in the Works

A CD and Screen Saver is being developed, in cooperation with the Emerson Society, by Scott Beyers. Beyers, who produced an acclaimed, comparable CD/Screen Saver for the Thoreau Society, invites Emerson Society members to submit favorite Emerson quotations for possible inclusion in the program. Send one or two quotations, with source and date, to Scott at P. O. Box 120442, St. Paul, MN 55112-0018, or via email to sbeyers@bigsite.net.

WPI Extends Support of the Emerson Society

Dr. John F. Carney III, Provost of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, has announced a three-year extension to WPI's longstanding support of the Emerson Society. The WPI award underwrites partial publication costs of *ESP* and the managing editor's travel to the annual meeting. WPI has been the Society's administrative home since its inception in 1989, and we send warmest thanks to Jack Carney for this renewed support.

Emerson Society Listserv Now Online

Thanks to the efforts of Advisory Board member Bob Hudspeth, of the University of Redlands, Emerson Society members now have a Listserv. To subscribe, simply email emerson@field.uor.edu and follow the easy directions.

Call for ALA Papers

Papers are invited for the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society's two sessions at the American Literature Association Conference in Long Beach, Calif., 25-28 May 2000. Send either your full 15- to 20-minute paper or a one- to two-page prospectus by 7 Jan. 2000 to Phyllis Cole, English Dept., Penn State Delaware County, 25 Yearsley Mill Rd., Media, PA 19063. E-mail pbc2@psu.edu, or fax 610-892-1357.

Session One: Asia in Emerson, Emerson in Asia. All perspectives on Emerson in relation to Asian culture are welcome: especially the influence of Hindu, Islamic, and other Asian traditions on his poetry and prose; the interpretation of his work in relation to western Orientalism or western devotion to Asian thought; perspectives on teaching his Asian voice in America or his American voice in Asia.

Session Two: The Reception of Emerson. For a writer who styled himself an endless seeker with no Past, Emerson trails a long and multi-storied past of audience response behind both his writings and his life. Papers are invited that explore the effect of cumulative interpretation: how the history of commentary continues to shape present criticism; how the lesser known aspects of audience response suggest new directions for study.

1999 Annual Meeting

President David Robinson presided over the 1999 annual meeting of the Emerson Society in Baltimore, Maryland, on 29 May. Wes Mott was elected President-Elect; Ron Bosco was elected Secretary/Treasurer; and Greg Garvey and Gustaaf Van Cromphout were elected to the Advisory Board. Joel Myerson and Ron Bosco reported on plans for the "Emerson in 2003" bicentennial. Other programming ideas were discussed. According to Wes Mott's Treasurer's Report, at the end of 1998 the Society's savings account had a balance of \$8,459.78, part of which is earmarked for "Emerson in 2003," as are two CDs with a total balance of \$10,846.64. Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for 1998 may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Professor Mott, Dept. of Humanities & Arts, WPI, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

Abstracts of Baltimore ALA Papers

The following panels were presented by The Emerson Society
at the tenth annual conference of the American Literature Association on 28 May in Baltimore, Maryland.

SESSION I: *Emerson and His Correspondence.* Chair, Linck C. Johnson (Colgate Univ.)

“‘that Muse—so loved—so wild’ Mary Moody Emerson’s Letters on the Poetic Calling”

JAMES ARMSTRONG
Northwestern University

It has been by now well established that Mary Moody Emerson is largely responsible for Emerson’s early exposure to Romantic thought, and that much of what he later comes to espouse is a version of her own beliefs as expressed in her letters to him between the years of his Harvard matriculation and his marriage to Ellen Tucker. What is perhaps less often emphasized is how this affected Emerson’s sense of poetic vocation—a sense which was always divided against itself imperiled by a theory of the imagination then prevalent among the Unitarian intelligentsia of his youth and by his own desperate need to find acceptance in that very rational and masculine world. Despite Emerson’s youthful fantasies of literary success and despite occasional bursts of confidence during which he still believed in his own creative abilities, in his twenties Emerson began to see himself as a failed poet. The person he complained to was his Aunt, and his complaints were usually calculated to elicit her support—caustic, hectoring, obscure, but always essential to him. Throughout his late adolescence and early adulthood, Aunt Mary’s letters kept alive their shared vision of Emerson as a “son of genius and poetry,” a devotee of the muse. She avidly read his poems and his “Wide Worlds,” and offered her opinions—which constituted a spirited rebuke of the neo-Baconian aesthetic which was being taught to students at Harvard. If we compare Aunt Mary’s thoughts on poetry and the “imagination” with those of the more public intellectuals of her day—with Frisbie, Hedge, Andrews Norton, and their ilk—she seems to belong to an age then in full force on the continent, whereas the Unitarian divines seem to us redolent of the Eighteenth Century, conservative thinkers attempting to prop up the fragments of the Age of Reason against the storms of change.

“Conversing with Authority: The Question of Emerson’s Letters”

SARAH ANN WIDER
Colgate University

Emerson praised the letter for its potent “plainealing.” It gave voice to “pure intellect”; it provided genius with the opportunity to practise its “unpredictable” expression. That potential, however, rarely appeared in prose. Governed by the myriad rules of the advice-giving books called “letter-writers,” correspondents labored under the rules of conventional response. The letter’s power of speaking for the moment was too often silenced by the generic expectations and mundane limitations associated with its production. There were bills to be paid, travel arrangements to be made, publishing problems to be resolved. To transform letters back into a moment truly conversant with authority, Emerson praised one approach but followed another. There were correspondents like Mary Moody Emerson, Caroline Sturgis, Elizabeth Hoar, and Margaret Fuller for whom “self-rule” was the only rule. Emerson, however, rarely included his epistolary prose in that class. The speaker in Emerson’s letters is often a comic figure who catches himself in the midst of his own limitations and immedi-

ately cuts himself down to size. Putting the comic to its most authoritative use, Emerson shaped its power to disrupt false equations between part and whole, particular individual and intoxicating genius. The self-deflating moments of Emerson’s letters stand as distinct reminders to his correspondents. Pure intellect speaks only in moments that invariably end.

“Apologies and Silences in Emerson’s Letters”

WILLIAM MERRILL DECKER
Oklahoma State University

Apologies are a common feature of the epistolary genre and provide valuable clues to what correspondents expect from a letter exchange. When a prolific and philosophically minded correspondent like Emerson establishes a distinct pattern of apology for late and unwritten letters, the exchange itself becomes a trope for the possibilities of human relationship and the language that mediates it. Emerson’s apologies reflect a keen sense of the disparity between language and the presence that words aspire to convey; they illuminate an ideality that practitioners commonly invest in the genre as well as a dissatisfaction correspondents typically feel with the letter exchange. Such ideality is given theoretical treatment in the *First Series* essay “Friendship,” which at once exalts the human bond and the letter exchange that constitutes that bond’s single sacrament. For brief periods in a few correspondences (those with Mary Moody Emerson, Carlyle, Fuller, and especially Caroline Sturgis), Emerson wrote with some confidence that he was achieving the prophetic possibilities of the epistolary genre. For the most part, however, his letters present themselves as the flawed substitutes for the perfected utterance whose opportunity has been missed. As Emerson’s activity as a letter writer declines, he increasingly fashions a discourse that would enlist the silence of the lapsed correspondence as telepathically and affirmatively meaningful. For the aging Emerson, the silence of a dwindling exchange is an epistolarily active one that, given the abiding trust of the partners in the correspondence, may have as much chance of meaningfulness as the poor letters he purports to offer for those he cannot write.

SESSION II: *Emerson and His Correspondents.* Chair, Douglas Emory Wilson (Collected Works of RWE), for Len Gougeon

“The Brothers Emerson”

RONALD A. BOSCO
University of Albany, SUNY

JOEL MYERSON
University of South Carolina

This presentation consisted of two parts: a biographical overview of the relationship between Ralph Waldo Emerson and his brothers Charles Chauncy (1808-1836), Edward Bliss (1805-1834), and William (1801-1868) Emerson, and a description of our editorial work on the three brothers’ unpublished correspondence with Waldo. Consistent with his argument in “Quotation and Originality,” the relationship between Waldo and his brothers demonstrates that all genius, all originality, is collaborative; and in Waldo’s own case, it enlarged a

sphere of intellectual and domestic influence that included Lidian and Mary Moody Emerson, among others. Waldo’s genius and originality, we believe, are best understood not as spontaneous qualities emerging from a solitary character or angle of vision, but as qualities that emerge out of a series of complex familial relationships in which he drew upon the intellectual energy, personal wisdom, and humanity of his brothers and others as means to realize and sustain his own. Charles’, Edward’s, and William’s extensive correspondence with Waldo and among themselves admirably supports our belief. We are presently editing their correspondence, along with Charles’ letters to Elizabeth Hoar and the brothers’ occasional letters to their mother Ruth Haskins Emerson, aunt Mary, and step-grandfather Ezra Ripley, in two formats: an electronic edition of the complete correspondence—some 1,253 letters in all—and a one-volume letterpress edition of selected correspondence which we are fashioning as a life-and-letters biography. Both editions are under contract to Oxford University Press and are scheduled to appear in 2003.

“Ralph Waldo Emerson and His Correspondents: Mary Moody Emerson”

NANCY CRAIG SIMMONS
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Although in my edition, the *Selected Letters of Mary Moody Emerson*, I tried not to privilege her famous nephew, their correspondence was special in many ways. Mary called Waldo her “dear and valued Correspondent,” and—given the fact that Mary corresponded with more than fifty people—a disproportionate number of her surviving letters (over 170 of the 900 that I located) are to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thus, I was surprised to discover that only 26 holograph letters sent by Waldo to Mary survive; that another 28 survive in copies (mostly in Waldo’s Journal); and that of these 54 letters, more than half come from a single decade, the 1820s. Still, these 230 letters enable us to sketch the contours of their correspondence.

This paper looks at their correspondence in terms of longevity (from perhaps 1812 through 1862), intensity (especially in the 1820s), reciprocity (each valued the other’s letters and responded in kind), and effects and influences. Comments about Mary’s letters made by Emerson later focus on style, shared language, and religious tradition. Their correspondence indicates how Mary guided his development as a writer, first stimulating his thought and later providing a model for the liberated and liberating style that charmed his audiences.

Mary Emerson’s role as Waldo’s correspondent was complex: she stimulated his imagination, nurtured a hunger for ideas and exploration, challenged and sustained him. She provided a model of “genius” whose source was “within” and whose style was organic, liberal, and joyful. Through their epistolary “conversation,” he discovered the electricity that comes from contact with a powerful mind.

“Theodore Parker”

GARY L. COLLISON
Pennsylvania State University–York

Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson corresponded mostly about *The Dial* and Parker’s reform-minded *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* (1847–1850). Their limited correspondence nevertheless provides a window into Emerson’s enormous presence in the landscape of mid-nineteenth century idealism and into the dynamics of the Transcendentalist circle as individual careers and interests evolved. The distance between the two men is particularly visible in Parker’s letters pleading with Emerson to accept a limited role as senior editor and to contribute regularly to the *Quarterly*. The brief but powerful editorial address that Parker managed to pry out of Emerson for the opening number proved to be Emerson’s only contribution.

“Margaret Fuller”

SUSAN BELASCO
University of Tulsa

Fuller’s relationship with Emerson as a friend and as a correspondent began in Concord on 2 July 1836 and ended with her death on 19 July 1850. Of the over 5,000 extant letters of Emerson’s, 186 were sent to Fuller; of the over 1,100 extant letters of Fuller’s, 80 were addressed to Emerson. This paper explores a crucial time in the lives of both Emerson and Fuller—the summer and fall of 1844—and suggests that a study of their correspondence reveals the shifting positions they occupied in the debate over the role of the scholar in society. While Emerson was preoccupied with the publication of *Essays, Second Series*, Fuller was completing *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and preparing for her new position as literary editor of the *New York Tribune*. Emerson seemed engrossed in developing American culture and taste, while Fuller was moving closer toward the social causes that would become her central concerns in the *Tribune*. But their letters and publications reflect increasingly complicated and different interests. Responding to pressure from friends, Emerson delivered “Emancipation in the British West Indies” and became gradually more interested in antislavery. Ironically, Fuller began her career at the *Tribune* by publishing articles on literature and culture. On 20 December 1844, Fuller published a review of Ole Bull’s New York performance of “Niagara.” On the same page of the *Tribune*, in the next column, was a public letter of Emerson’s, protesting the *Tribune*’s coverage of Samuel Hoar’s expulsion from South Carolina. By the end of 1844, the most intense period of letter-writing was over between Fuller and Emerson, but in terms of responding to one another, Emerson and Fuller had moved on to another, more public form.

Review

The Emerson Effect: Individualism and Submission in America.

BY CHRISTOPHER NEWFIELD. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. 278pp. \$45 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

In a daring exposition of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s liberalism, Christopher Newfield introduces us to a new dance—the Emerson Three-Step. Contending that “Emerson’s celebration of democratic freedom has for too long obscured the important ways in which his sense of balance rendered both freedom and democracy to large doses of submission to preestablished and unequal conditions,” Newfield not only takes on the tradition of Emerson criticism but politicizes Emerson’s philosophy in unsettling ways. According to Newfield, “Emerson moves from radical self-determination,” through “mutual determination in relation to one’s peers,” to a third step “in which determination comes from a law transcending one’s being and to which one ‘submits childlike’” (23). This third step Newfield calls “the authoritarian moment in the liberal imagination” in which “submission to the right law makes equality irrelevant.” Looking for personal freedom, equality, and agency in Emerson’s thought, Newfield instead finds what he calls “corporate individualism” in which democracy and individuality are subsumed by a collective or corporate agency that the individual obeys. Self-reliance, thus, is really a three-part process that brings the individual not to personal autonomy but to a collective submission to an unappealable spiritual law.

What Newfield does is to re-read Emersonian unity as corporatism and to politicize the religious implications of being “part or parcel of God.” Where Emerson found human agency or genuineness to reside in giving oneself up to the voice of God within and declaring oneself

(Continued on page 8)

An Emerson Bibliography, 1998

DAVID M. ROBINSON
Oregon State University

*New editions and critical studies from 1998, including items missed in the 1997 bibliography (ESP 9, ii [1998]:10-12).
Readers should also consult the periodic Thoreau bibliographies in the Thoreau Society Bulletin.*

Baker, Anne. "'A Commanding View': Vision and the Problem of Nationality in Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*." *ESQ* 44:61-77. [*Summer* as a text in which Fuller tests and revises her Emersonianism.]

Bauerlein, Mark. *The Pragmatic Mind: Explorations in the Psychology of Belief*. Duke [1997]. [Includes Emerson in an exposition of the epistemology of pragmatism.]

Bean, Judith Mattson. "'A Presence Among Us': Fuller's Place in Nineteenth-Century Oral Culture." *ESQ* 44:79-123. [The importance of Fuller in nineteenth-century women's oratory.]

Bond, Adrian. "Emerson's 'Transparent Eye-Ball' and James's 'Glass Eye': Practical Transcendence." *Prospects* 23:39-58. [Emerson and James explore the nature of vision and transparency.]

Bosco, Ronald A. "The Expanding Textual Circle of New England Transcendentalism." *Text* 11:343-64. [The contribution of modern editions to Transcendentalist studies, with assessments of Deese's edition of Very's poems and Simmons's edition of Mary Moody Emerson's letters.]

Cameron, Sharon. "The Way of Life by Abandonment: Emerson's Impersonal." *Critl* 25:1-31. [Emerson's flawed articulation of the experience of the "impersonal."]

Capper, Charles. "'A Little Beyond': The Problem of the Transcendentalist Movement in American History." *JAH* 85:502-39. [Comprehensive overview of the criticism and historiography of the Transcendentalist movement.]

Cole, Phyllis. *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism: A Family History*. Oxford. [Biography of Emerson's accomplished and influential aunt.]

Cole, Phyllis. "The Nineteenth-Century Women's Rights Movement and the Canonization of Margaret Fuller." *ESQ* 44:1-33. [Fuller's significance to the women's rights movement in the nineteenth century.]

Friedl, Herwig. "The Masks of Proteus: Emerson on the Nature of Poetry and the Poetry of Nature." *Poetics in the Poem: Critical Essays on American Self-Reflexive Poetry*. Ed. Dorothy Z. Baker. Lang [1997]. Pp. 104-18. [The difficulties of distinguishing "self-reflexive" poetry.]

Garvey, T. Gregory. "Mediating Citizenship: Emerson, The Cherokee Removals, and the Rhetoric of Nationalism." *Centennial R* 41 [1997]:461-69. [Emerson's use of nationalism to protest the Cherokee Removals.]

Garvey, T. Gregory. "Two Faces of Emerson: A Review of Recent Books." *CollL* 25:261-75. [Assessment of current work in Emerson studies.]

Goodwin, Joan. *The Remarkable Mrs. Ripley: The Life of Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley*. Northeastern. [Biography of an important intellectual with close ties to the Transcendentalists.]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson and the Woman Question: The Evolution of His Thought." *NEQ* 71: 570-92. [The development of Emerson's support of women's rights.]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson at West Point." *ESP* 9, i:1-3,8. [Emerson's experience as part of an evaluation of West Point.]

Grant, Mark N. *Maestros of the Pen: A History of Classical Music Criticism in America*. Northeastern. [Discusses John Sullivan Dwight as a music critic.]

Hamlin, Cyrus. "Transplanting German Idealism to American Culture: F. H. Hedge, W. T. Harris, C. T. Brooks." *Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures: New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*. Ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer and Michael Imscher. Stanford. Pp. 107-24. [Hedge, Harris and Brooks as translators of German literature and philosophy.]

Haronian, Mary-Jo. "Margaret Fuller's Visions." *ESQ* 44:35-59. [Fuller assesses Goethe's theory of color.]

Holmes, Steven J. "John Muir, Jeanne Carr, and Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Case-Study of the Varieties of Transcendentalist Influence." *JUWH* 25:1-25. [Emerson's influence on Muir, with particular attention to their 1871 Yosemite meeting.]

Jay, Paul. *Contingency Blues: The Search for Foundations in American Criticism*. Wisconsin [1997]. [Includes Emerson in a pragmatist tradition which has attempted to respond to the contingent nature of knowledge.]

Johnson, Claudia Durst. "'Transcendental Wild Oats' or The Cost of an Idea." *ATQ* 12:45-65. [Louisa May Alcott's story as a critique of her father's work and ideology.]

Jones, Gavin. "The Paradise of Aesthetics: Sylvester Judd's *Margaret* and Antebellum American Literature." *NEQ* 71:449-72. [*Margaret* as a Transcendentalist novel.]

Labriola, Patrick. "Germany and the American Transcendentalists: An Intellectual Bridge." *CS* 6:99-113. [German influences on Transcendentalism.]

Litton, Guy. "Gannett's Address at Emerson's Ordination." *ESP* 9, ii: 1, 8-9. [The text of Gannett's Address.]

Loeffelholz, Mary. "'Question of Monuments': Emerson, Dickinson and American Renaissance Portraiture." *MLQ* 59:445-69. [Portraiture and the problems of defining the American Renaissance.]

Madsen, Deborah L. *American Exceptionalism*. Mississippi. [Includes Emerson in a survey of the ideology of American exceptionalism.]

Malachuk, Daniel S. "The Republican Philosophy of Emerson's Early Lectures." *NEQ* 71:404-28. [The shaping influence of republican ideology in Emerson's early career.]

Mitchell, Thomas R. *Hawthorne's Fuller Mystery*. Massachusetts. [The previously unrecognized intensity of Hawthorne's relationship with Fuller, and the strong impact that she had on his fiction.]

Mueller-Vollmer, Kurt. "Translating Transcendentalism in New England: The Genesis of a Literary Discourse." *Translating Literatures, Translating Cultures: New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*. Ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer and Michael Imscher. Stanford. Pp. 81-106. [The importance of translations in the origins of Transcendentalism.]

Myerson, Joel. "Edward Waldo Emerson's Recollections of His Father's Death." *CS* 6:163-67. [Edward Emerson's letter on his father's death to James Cabot.]

Myerson, Joel. *Margaret Fuller: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1983-1995*. Greenwood. [Extends Myerson's previous bibliographies of Fuller criticism, documenting the extensive critical work on Fuller in the 1980s and early 1990s.]

New, Elisa. *The Line's Eye: Poetic Experience, American Sight*. Harvard. [A reconstruction of the American poetic tradition emphasizing "attentive consent" as a fundamental poetic value.]

Ruttenburg, Nancy. *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*. Stanford. [The effect of outbreaks of "popular voice" in shaping early American culture.]

Sarver, Stephanie. "Agrarian Environmental Models in Emerson's 'Farming.'" *Reading the Earth: New Directions in the Study of Literature and Environment*. Ed. Michael P. Branch, et al. Idaho. Pp. 155-64. [An environmental perspective on Emerson's conception of agriculture.]

Selinger, Eric Murphy. *What Is It Then Between Us: Traditions of Love in American Poetry*. Cornell. [American poets' treatment of love.]

Shapiro, Gary. "The Metaphysics of Presents: Nietzsche's Gift, the Debt to Emerson, Heidegger's Values." *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*. Ed. Alan D. Schrift. Routledge [1997]. Pp. 274-91. [The concept of the gift in Emerson and Nietzsche.]

Steinman, Lisa M. *Masters of Repetition: Poetry, Culture, and Work in Thomson, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Emerson*. St. Martin's. [Emerson's struggle for identity in an American culture that made no place for poets.]

Tawa, Nicholas E. "Why American Art Music First Arrived in New England." *Music and Culture in America, 1861-1918*. Ed. Michael Saffle. Garland. Pp. 141-65. [Information on John Sullivan Dwight as a music critic.]

Tonkovich, Nicole. *Domesticity with a Difference: The Nonfiction of Catherine Beecher, Sarah J. Hale, Fanny Fern, and Margaret Fuller*. Mississippi [1997]. [Fuller placed in the context of nineteenth-century women writers on domesticity.]

Van Anglen, Kevin. "Reading Transcendentalist Texts Religiously: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Myth of Secularization." *Seeing Into the Life of Things: Essays on Literature and Religious Experience*. Ed. John L. Mahoney. Fordham. Pp. 152-70. [The religious dimensions of Transcendentalist texts must not be dismissed.]

Von Frank, Albert J. *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston*. Harvard. [The reaction of the New England antislavery movement, including the Transcendentalists, to the trial of escaped slave Burns.]

Wilkinson, C. P. Seabrook. "Emerson and the 'Eminent Painter.'" *NEQ* 71:120-26. [Identifies Washington Allston as the "eminent painter" in "Self-Reliance."]

Wilson, Charles W. "Ralph Waldo Emerson at the University of Virginia, 1876." *Virginia Cavalcade* 47:86-95. [Purposes and effects of Emerson's late lecture visit.]

Wilson, Eric. "'Terrible Simplicity': Emerson's Metaleptic Style." *Style* 31 [1997]:58-80. [The "transparent eyeball" passage as an example of the nature and effect of Emerson's extreme linguistic compression.]



Emerson "Re-Formed" in Concord T. Gregory Garvey chaired this summer's Emerson Society panel—"Re-Forming Emerson"—in Concord on 9 July during the Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society. According to Len Gougeon, "There is a longstanding view among many Emerson scholars that the Bard of Concord, while frequently philosophizing about reform, rarely participated in the reform movements of his time. Recent scholarship, however, has brought forth a strikingly different vision of Emerson as an engaged and active reformer." Furthering this view were the pictured panelists: clockwise, from front, Elizabeth Addison, Joseph M. Thomas, T. Gregory Garvey, and Len Gougeon—all under the benignly stern eye of Emerson's step-grandfather, the Rev. Ezra Ripley, in the First Parish Church in Concord.

Review

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free of the restrictive institutions of the day, Newfield argues that Emerson actually ceded individual "sovereignty to some higher or more automatic power." While Emerson celebrates the person who, like Jesus, reifies the god within, Newfield is troubled by that individual's submission to a higher power and the hierarchical patterns of inequality that such a paradigm suggests for other venues. Indeed, when he discusses Emerson's language theory, he claims that "the moment of freedom is constituted by the moment of submission to superior, active power" and warns that "the potential for slavery... arises when our voice is owned by another." The problem, Newfield argues, is not only that Emerson inevitably rounded out his liberal dance with a last step toward authoritarianism but that he was blind to "mechanisms of bondage and control" when he turned his attention from spirituality to capitalism, male friendship, and race relations. Troubling as well to Newfield is that modern America follows Emerson's lead in blindly celebrating a freedom fraught with inequality and submission to authority: this is the Emerson Effect.

Newfield's extension of the meaning of metaphysical unity to corporatism in more human realms is intriguing and at times enlightening, as when he argues that Emerson and other postbellum, white middle-class thinkers considered "equality" not to mean social equality or equality of agency for the recently freed blacks but a laissez-faire, market-place equality of opportunity. Thus he illuminates our own difficulties in conceiving and exercising real racial equality. But I think that Newfield also manipulates evidence and language in disturbing ways. A case in point is Newfield's discussion of male friendship and sodomy. While he demonstrates that the nineteenth century labeled activities of political mobbism and social irresponsibility as "sodomy," expanding our late twentieth-century sense of the word, to illustrate a fear of the mob rather than of same-sex friendships, Newfield manipulates his evidence to argue for Emerson's homoerotic democracy. He uses the transparent eyeball passage ("the currents of

the Universal Being circulate through me") in conjunction with discussions of sexual sodomy, onanism, and fluidity to argue that Emerson "actively desires an identity that derives from the violation of personal boundaries rather than from their maintenance" and uses the sexually charged word "couples" to describe male friendship. Trying to make a case for "queer sexuality... where men eroticize equality," Newfield has stretched the evidence of the Emerson texts too far, I think, to fit his own agenda.

Newfield likewise manipulates language and the Emerson texts in his section on "Familial Democracy and Its Limits." Here he argues that during "the period in which Emerson is most preoccupied with the blessings of home life... he worries the most about housekeeping being overrun with diversity." Not only is the term "diversity," with its current political connotations, unfair for describing the variety of peoples and activities of the home, but the better word for the context of the sentence is "disorder." While it was most likely difficult for a thinker like Emerson to work in an environment in which his thoughts were susceptible to interruption (as indeed it is for most of us who write at home), that does not necessarily mean, as Newfield implies, that he "shun[ned] domestic difference." The skewed, charged language of this domestic example and the questionable associations of the previous one occur enough in *The Emerson Effect* to make the reader wary of his argument.

Perhaps Newfield expects too much of Emerson in asking for an absolute meaning of self-reliance, or perhaps Emerson is not large enough to blame for the Emerson Effect—a middle-class culture that is built on submissive individualism and inclusion in rather than freedom from the "corporation." Nonetheless, Newfield provides a provocative reading of American individualism that asks us to re-visit our Emerson and the cant about "equality," "democracy," and "self-reliance" we too mindlessly reiterate. By exposing American liberalism for what it is—laden with inequalities and systems of power—Newfield paves the way for a revaluation not only of Emerson but of American civil liberties.

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A NEW LETTER: EMERSON DECLINES AN INVITATION

Another new letter from Emerson has recently surfaced, and appears in transcription and (partial) facsimile in autograph dealer Joseph M. Maddalena's *Profiles in History*¹. The existence of this letter was predicted with great accuracy by Eleanor M. Tilton in volume IX of *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*;² she guessed that Emerson must have written to Miss Weston on "February 14? 1865," but the date was actually 15 February.

Item #39 in the catalogue is described as "Autograph Letter Signed, Three pages, Octavo, Concord, Massachusetts, February 15 [no year]. Written to 'Miss Weston'. Emerson pens (in full):

'Dear Miss Weston,

I am grieved to say, that, after much counting & choosing of days, Mrs. Emerson & I have been unable to find an open one for the tempting visit which you offer us to your house. On my return from the West, I find the next fortnight nearly filled with lectures, unwarily promised. I hoped that Mr. & Madame Langel would stay here longer than you now say, & have not doubted that I should meet them again. Neither now do I despair; but will not venture to name a day. Mrs. Emerson sends to you & to them kindest regards, to which I join mine, & am

Yours gratefully
R.W. Emerson'

Separation at vertical fold; otherwise, in fine condition. (#22102) \$495.00." The facsimile is of the final page, from "than you now say" to the end, and includes the name of the recipient, "Miss Weston," in the bottom left corner of the page.

The woman addressed is clearly Anne Warren Weston, who, as Tilton notes, invited the Emersons to dine in Weymouth on Sunday, 19 February [1865], with Auguste Laugel [not "Langel"] and his wife. Tilton notes that Emerson's lecture schedule would have made accepting the invitation inconvenient, and that Emerson "would have had to answer the letter; Lidian Emerson had known the Westons in her girlhood."

Notes

1. *Profiles in History*, catalog 29 (Spring 1999), edited by Kevin J. Hasely, pp. 19-20. Mr. Maddalena's business address is 345 N. Maple Drive, Suite 202, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. For details of another Emerson letter first appearing in *Profiles in History*, see Joel J. Brattin's "Emerson's Memory Loss, and the Writing of His Will," *Emerson Society Papers*, 5, i (Spring 1994): 4.

2. Volume IX, treating 1860-1869, was published by Columbia University Press in 1994. Subsequent references to Tilton are to the commentary on p. 171 of this volume.

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