



R.W.C.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to Robert D. Richardson, Jr.

This year's recipient of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society's Distinguished Achievement Award is Robert D. Richardson, Jr. He is, as the criteria for the award state, an individual who has "made sustained and important contributions to scholarship that have had a significant impact on the understanding of Ralph Waldo Emerson's life and thought."

Bob is no stranger to Emerson, Concord, and New England. He moved to Concord as a teenager with his parents when his father assumed a pulpit there. After receiving his A.B. (magna cum laude with highest honors in English) from Harvard University in 1956, Bob continued on to earn the Ph.D. degree there in 1961. He spent two years as an instructor at Harvard before moving to the University of Denver, where he taught from 1963 to 1987. After a brief stint at the University of Colorado, Bob returned to New England, teaching at Wesleyan until 1994. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Humanities Center.

Bob's first books were on *Literature and Film* (Indiana, 1969) and *The Rise of Modern Mythology* (Indiana, 1972), but he hit his stride with *Myth and Literature in the American Renaissance* (Indiana, 1978) and *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* (California, 1986). The last two works shed light on Emerson; Bob's *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (California,

1995) has the effect of a solar flare in illuminating the reading patterns, philosophical development, and personal events that turned a minister's son named Ralph into a seminal American writer and thinker named Waldo, all presented in graceful prose. Among the many awards the latter work received were the Francis Parkman Prize and the Washington Irving Award for Literary Excellence. In addition to numerous articles, public and professional presentations, and book chapters, Bob also edited with an introduction Emerson's *Selected Essays, Lectures, and Poems* (Bantam, 1990).

While Bob's scholarly contributions are enormous, his personal contributions are equally valuable. In addition to the work he has done in support of the Emerson Society, he has given freely of his time and wide expertise to colleagues, graduate students, and lay people interested in the Concord circle. Many of us have profited from his readings of our manuscripts, which often mix unwarranted praise with much-needed and appreciated suggestions for revision. Bob's wide range of interests is matched only by his enthusiasm, and he can pitch into a discussion of Schleiermacher with a passion usually reserved solely for college sporting events.

It is with great pleasure that the Emerson Society presents its Distinguished Achievement Award to Bob Richardson.

—Joel Myerson

2001 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 Ronald A. Bosco, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of English, University at Albany-SUNY, Albany, NY 12222.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society
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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 T. Gregory Garvey, Department of English, SUNY-Brockport, Brockport, NY 14420-2968.

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PROSPECTS.



New Dues Reminder Schedule

Beginning with this issue, dues-reminder notices for the next calendar year (in this case, 2002) will be inserted in the Fall issue of *ESP*. Membership will continue to be based on the calendar year. Several of our members were confused by our past practice of including a dues notice in the Spring issue for the year already under way. Life members and members paid through 2002 and beyond should not receive a dues notice. Your membership expires at the end of the year indicated on your mailing label.

Emerson Society Page Available

Jeff Cramer, archivist of the Thoreau Institute, announces that a Ralph Waldo Emerson Society page is available on the Institute's web site at www.walden.org/collections/Emerson/Emersonsociety.htm. The Emerson Society's collections are housed at the Thoreau Institute.

Call for Papers

Proposals are invited for the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society's two sessions at the American Literature Association annual conference in Long Beach, Calif., 30 May-2 June 2002. Please send proposals to Program Chair Sarah Wider, Department of English, Colgate University, 13 Oak Drive, Hamilton, NY 13346, or fax to 315-228-7815 or e-mail to swider@mail.colgate.edu.

Session I: Engendering Transcendentalism. We invite papers on women's role in creating, interpreting, perpetuating, and revising the set of ideas and societal critiques we associate with American Transcendentalism. Especially welcome are discussions of writers/artists/reformers who have received very little consideration in Emerson criticism (e.g., Eliza Lee Follen, Sarah Clarke, Ellen Sturgis Hooper) as well as gendered studies of the better-known Transcendentalists.

Session II: Emerson and the Matter of War. As the millennium opens with old wars continuing, other wars receding (remember the war on poverty?), and new wars showing no signs of real conclusion, we invite papers for the 2002 ALA conference on any aspect of Emerson's commentary on war.

Takanashi Translates Whicher

Professor Yoshio Takanashi has translated Stephen E. Whicher's *Freedom and Fate: An Inner Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* into Japanese. Professor Takanashi, a longtime member and supporter of the Emerson Society, lectured on "Emerson and Neo-Confucianism" in May 2000 on a panel sponsored by the society at the American Literature Association conference in Long Beach, California. He is a professor at Nagano Prefectural College. A copy of the handsome book, published in April 2001 by Nan 'un-do Publishing Co. Ltd. in Tokyo, has been deposited in the Emerson Society Collection at the Henley Library, Thoreau Institute, in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Distinguished Achievement Award Policy

At its annual meeting on 28 May 1998, the Advisory Board of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society established guidelines for the composition of the society's Distinguished Achievement Award Committee: "No later than October, the President will establish a sub-committee consisting of the current President and two others—Board members and/or previous award recipients, at least one of whom shall have been on the sub-committee the previous year, said committee to report to the Advisory Board at least 30 days before the annual meeting."

At this year's Board meeting, on 25 May, these guidelines were reaffirmed, and the *ESP* editors were directed to publish the **Distinguished Achievement Award Policy**:

The Distinguished Achievement Award is presented by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society to individuals who have made sustained and important contributions to scholarship that have had a significant impact on the understanding of Ralph Waldo Emerson's life and thought. Such achievement may be represented in a single work of exceptional quality, or the accumulated impact of a series of works which, for example, explore the Emersonian subject from a single or multiple perspectives. Such studies might be biographical, bibliographical, editorial, or critical.

The award is not limited to American scholars.

While frequently making awards on a yearly basis, the Society may choose to make multiple awards, or no awards, in a given year.

A call for nominations for the award will be made at the Society's annual business meeting at the ALA Conference and in the Society's official publication *Emerson Society Papers*.

The Distinguished Achievement Award Committee will present a nomination for final approval to the Advisory Board at least 30 days before the Board's annual meeting.

Abstracts of Cambridge ALA Papers

The following panels were presented by The Emerson Society
at the twelfth annual conference of the American Literature Association on 25 May in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

SESSION I: Emerson in New England.

Chair, Phyllis Cole (Penn State Delaware County)

Emerson, Rhetoric and Ecstasy

ROGER THOMPSON, *Virginia Military Institute*

Emerson's involvement in rhetorical theory is indicative of his desire to create a distinctly American expression in the arts. While Emerson's claim for a new American literature has been broadly discussed, his conception of a new American rhetoric has received little attention, and the reason is that Emerson's rhetorical theory so sharply differs from rhetorical theory of the time that it seems not to be a theory at all. New England educational culture in the early to mid-nineteenth century was dominated by rhetorical theory derived from Hugh Blair that argued for a clearly systematic and rational rhetoric that complemented the burgeoning sciences and industrialism. Indeed, following in the tradition of Blair, many New England clergy and educators prepared rhetorics that were, at root, technical, reason-centered handbooks. Emerson was educated in Blair and the systematic, belletristic mode of rhetoric, but just as he would eventually renounce imitation of European literature, he would renounce his British rhetorical forbears. In fact, Emerson formulated complex and subtle ideas on how rhetoric should function within the American culture in response to the belletristic paradigm that he felt fell short of the ultimate purpose of rhetoric: the movement of the soul toward divinity.

Emerson's rhetoric is Platonic, reflecting the governing purpose of Plato's rhetoric: the desire to lift an audience to dialogue with the divine. Such a rhetoric breaks from the rationalized system of Blair or even of Samuel Newman, both of whose textbooks were widely used in New England education. Instead, Emerson argues for an ecstatic rhetoric, one that moves from one short, revelatory sentence to the next, without regard to causal relationships between the two. This aphoristic style has been widely discussed, but its significance as the foundation for a new rhetorical theory has been ignored. The style is not simply a new literary expression; it overtly criticizes rhetorical modes that dominated New England educational culture and enacts a new model for rhetoric.

Emerson in New Bedford

ELIZABETH ADDISON, *Western Carolina University*

From 1827 until 1869, Emerson traveled many times to preach or lecture in the busy whaling port of New Bedford. Its leading citizens, the intertwined Rotch and Rodman families, became his hosts and friends. Most of these former Quakers were by then members of the Unitarian Church, where Emerson's bust still stands in the sanctuary with that of William James Potter, a later minister who idolized Emerson. Many were also members of the New Bedford Lyceum. His Lyceum engagements made Emerson a favorite guest of Benjamin Rodman (1794-1876), the nephew of Mary Rotch, Emerson's acknowledged Quaker mentor. Rodman's letters to Emerson reveal an eloquent interchange on subjects from new babies to ice production in the ponds, from landscaping to politics, from Brook Farm to the Gold Rush. After the 1845 Lyceum controversy, when Emerson forced a change in racially discriminatory rules by declining to speak, Rodman wrote lengthy advice about the good that Emerson might have done by speaking. However, as one who in 1840 spent months in jail to protest imprisonment for debt, Rodman understood acts of conscience. In this "Fugitive's Gibraltar," Frederick Douglass was only the most famous

of many former slaves. Much earlier, Mary Rotch's older brother had admired Paul Cuffe, a slave's son who married a Native American, then became a Quaker, a black rights activist, and a ship's captain, one of the wealthiest black men in America. On this multicultural waterfront, too, Emerson would brush shoulders with whaling men from Portugal, Africa, Cape Verde, the Azores, and even cannibals from the Pacific islands. On nearby Nantucket, he met the Quaker cannibals of the whaleship *Essex*. Such experiences surely colored his later realistic phase. But the influence was mutual: as minister, lecturer, writer, and friend, for more than 50 years Emerson just as surely colored this diverse and liberal environment with his truth and moral courage.

Whose Waldo? Emerson's New England Biographers, 1881-1889

ROBERT D. HABICH, *Ball State University*

Studies of Emerson's early biographical representations such as Charles T. Mitchell's *Individualism and Its Discontents* (1997) or T. S. McMillin's *Our Preposterous Use of Literature* (2000) present the biographers themselves as single-minded and consistent in their portrayal of Emerson as an optimistic and benign "Sage of Concord." Even a very fine recent essay like Randall Fuller's in *ESQ* (1999) distinguishes among some of the biographies without reference to the private agendas and publishing contexts that produced them.

My focus is quite different—less on the biographical *product* as evidence of Emerson's cultural appropriation, more on the biographical *process* and its personal, social, and economic dimensions as revealed in unpublished manuscript letters, publisher's records, and financial accounts relevant to Emerson's New England biographers: Holmes, Cabot, and Edward Emerson.

Holmes, for instance, shared little but cordial acquaintance with Emerson. But Houghton Mifflin, hard-pressed for a successful volume to launch its American Men of Letters series, wanted Holmes' name more than his expertise; and Holmes, just retired from Harvard, agreed to write the book only after the publisher agreed to quadruple his annuity payments, to \$4000. Elliot Cabot and Edward and Ellen Emerson formed a remarkable collaboration that produced the Riverside Edition of Emerson's works in 1883-84. But a developing personal rivalry between Cabot, the literary executor, and Edward, the aspiring man of letters, caused the collaborating editors to become competing biographers.

Emerson's early reputation was thus shaped by the economics of publication and the personal agendas of his biographers. Just as important, it reflected a deep concern with the issues of authority and sympathy that the Transcendentalists identified with friendship. For readers, reviewers, and biographers alike, the question was not "who's Emerson?" but "whose Waldo?"—that is, who knew him well enough, and on what evidence, to capture him successfully in print?

SESSION II: Emerson and Science.

Chair, Laura Dassow Walls (Lafayette College)

Approaching Creation: Emerson and Evolution

B. L. PACKER, *UCLA*

Emerson came into contact with three different varieties of evolutionary thought before 1860. During his European tour of 1832-33 he visited the cabinet of natural history in the Jardin des Plantes, where exhibits of ornithological specimens, shells, insects, fishes, and even minerals suggested an "upheaving principle of life" connecting the most disparate species with one another and with the human race. This experience moved him to vow that he would become a "naturalist," a word which to him suggests a hope of recovering the hidden link that gives the perceiving mind its sense of kinship to the natural world. He thought he had found an explanation of this link in 1845, when he read a book entitled *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, published anonymously in London the year before. Its author (Robert Chambers, a Scottish antiquarian and bookseller) had pulled together Laplace's nebular hypothesis concerning the origin of the solar system, the researches of eminent geologists, archaeologists, and natural historians, to come up with a theory of the origin and development of life on earth that stressed its gradual unfolding in accordance with a divinely ordained law of "Development." Emerson, like many of his contemporaries, was intoxicated with the sublime history of the universe offered in *Vestiges*, as well as the way it dispensed with the need for an intrusively anthropomorphic Creator. Emerson was understandably eager to obtain a copy of Darwin's *Origin of Species* when it appeared, perhaps hoping that Darwin could clear up some of the mysteries *Vestiges* had left dark. Yet Emerson's references to *The Origin of Species* are infrequent and noncommittal. Darwin's view of a universe governed by chance and struggle, producing "higher" forms but proceeding toward no goal, might convince the reason but could not please a heart still hungry for the proof of human divinity first suggested in *Nature* (1836): "A man is a god in ruins."

The Transcendancy of Physics: Science and Ethics in the Later Emerson

RONALD A. BOSCO, *University at Albany-SUNY*

After beginning with a treatment of Emerson's "Natural History of the Intellect" lectures at Harvard in 1870 and 1871, this paper considers the ways in which for Emerson ideal science was analogical and poetical, and thus ideal moral philosophy that he drew from science was equally analogical and poetical. Although in his lectures he could be quite harsh—in fact, almost dogmatic—in his censure of figures such as Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon, he acknowledged that the moral power of truly ethical individuals derives entirely from character, sympathy, and piety. The brand of ethics Emerson drew from analogical science answered completely the often quoted lament in "Experience," which numerous scholars credit as Emerson's acknowledgment of his own descent into naturalism and skepticism. In "Experience," where Emerson concedes that "the world I think" is not the world in which he and others live outside his study, ideal doctrines such as self-reliance have been checked by "Illusion, Temperament, Succession, Surface, Surprise, Reality, [and] Subjectiveness"; but in lectures on intellect, philosophy, and even the form of natural religion delivered during the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, Emerson argued that character, sympathy, and sentiment always outranked metaphysical formalism or positivistic science. In his lecture on "Natural Religion," delivered in 1861, he made this point about as forcefully as he could:

Nature and moral laws work in cosmical and secular periods: they can well wait and work slowly. Races are insignificant, ages are a span, to these long eternal powers. They can well afford to drop a race and an age out of the flowing eternity.

We may be sure they will strike. Though we fold our hands, these laws will execute themselves. To be sure, we can ill afford to wait such distant avengers. We are not afraid that justice will not be done, but that we shall not live to see it. The laws are of eternity, but we are shortlived. Our compensation is in our own eternity. By our bodies, we belong to the nineteenth century, but by our sentiment and sympathy, we ... take hold on eternity.

Emerson, Electricity, and the Redemption of Matter

ERIC WILSON, *Wake Forest University*

Traditional readings of Emerson as a transcendentalist neglecting matter for spirit and more recent interpretations of him as a pragmatist ignoring spirit for matter overlook a third hermeneutic possibility: Emerson attempts in his work a synthesis of spirit and matter. This effort on the part of Emerson to redeem matter from the denigrations of Platonism and to recover spirit from the neglect of materialism is largely inspired by the European alchemical tradition. Unlike the Platonist, who sees matter as a mere reflection of spirit, and unlike the materialist, who views spirit as illusion, the alchemical thinker, such as Giordano Bruno or Jacob Boehme, apprehends matter and spirit as mutually interdependent polarities manifesting an ungraspable abyss of being. Studied in Bruno and Boehme, Emerson likewise struggles to understand matter and spirit as interdependent polarities—to perceive matter as a form organizing spirit, to experience spirit as the energy sustaining matter. Yet, Emerson's attempts to understand these connections between discrete forms and the distributed energies are not simply his returns to Renaissance hermeticism; they are also manifestations of his interest in the early nineteenth-century science of electricity. For Emerson, the electrochemistry of Humphry Davy and the electrophysics of Michael Faraday possibly provided palpable evidence for hermetic theories. As these scientists demonstrated, both ponderable and imponderable events are generated and sustained by a ubiquitous galvanic force. In sum, matter is energy; the universe, a field of boundless electricity. Informed by such theories, Emerson inflects hermetic alchemy through the science of galvanism: the abyss of being becomes unbounded electricity; the polarity between matter and spirit turns into the interaction between positive and negative charges. Hence, to redeem matter is to apprehend its invisible currents; to embrace spirit, to sense its sparks even in snow puddles, shining on a bare common.

Response: LAURA DASSOW WALLS, *Lafayette College*

Emerson, as we know, was swift to condemn the "half-sight of science," yet as these papers show, Emerson turned not to religion but to science for the means to address such ultimate questions as theories of creation and the nature of nature. He was enabled to take this bold step by both his skepticism, his necessary first step to affirmation, and by his faith in the universe as a single and legible Creation governed not by divine but by natural law; yet, as our panelists show, this very priority of science and natural law gave rise to deep dilemmas. Professor Packer points to both the importance, and the ultimate insufficiency, of science to Emerson, in answering his questions about our role in God's creation. Professor Bosco offers the surprise of an Emerson willing to embrace the progress of science, no more so than in his final writings, which see mind and body not as dualistic opponents but analogues of each other. And Eric Wilson shows that Emerson's universe was a matrix of lush metaphors, in which he used the resources of physics to embrace mind and matter as generative polarities. Such insights lead us to further questions: How large a role did Emerson play in establishing science at the heart of American culture as the norm of truth?—or in naturalizing questions of morality, ethics, and beauty? How did scientists themselves regard Emerson's assertions on their behalf? And finally, what can Emerson teach us about the relations of literature and science? Clearly, he would remind us that literature without science is sight with one eye blinded.

An Emerson Bibliography, 2000

DAVID M. ROBINSON
Oregon State University

New scholarly works from 2000, including items missed in the 1999 bibliography (ESP 11, ii [2000]:8-10). Readers should also consult the periodic Thoreau bibliographies in the Thoreau Society Bulletin, and the chapter "Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller and Transcendentalism" in the annual American Literary Scholarship (Duke University Press).

Adisasmito-Smith, Steven. "The Self in Translation: British Orientalists, American Transcendentalists, and Sanskrit Scriptures in English." *YCGL* 47 [1999]:167-77. [The impact of Hindu texts on Emerson and Thoreau]

Belasco, Susan. "Harriet Martineau's Black Hero and the American Antislavery Movement." *NCL* 55:157-94. [The impact of Martineau's portrayal of Toussaint L'Ouverture on Transcendentalists and abolitionists]

Benesch, Klaus. "From Franklin to Emerson: Contestations of Professional Authorship in Early National America." *The Construction and Contestation of American Cultures in the Early National Period*. Ed. Udo J. Hebel. C. Winter [1999]. 77-96. [Emerson's view of technology]

Bosco, Ronald A. "Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803-1882: A Brief Biography." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 9-58. [See under Myerson] [Biographical overview]

Bosco, Ronald A. "We Find What We Seek: Emerson and His Biographers." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 269-90. [See under Myerson] [History of Emerson biography]

Castronovo, Russ. "Sexual Purity, White Men, and Slavery: Emerson and the Self-Reliant Body." *Prospects* 25:193-227. [The politics of 1830s concerns about masturbation]

Cayton, Mary Kupiec. "Toward a Democratic Politics of Meaning-Making: The Transcendentalist Controversy and the Rise of Pluralist Discourse in Jacksonian Boston." *Prospects* 25:35-68. [The Transcendentalist Controversy as a political event]

Coleman, Martin A. "Emerson's 'Philosophy of the Street.'" *Trans. C. S. Peirce Soc.* 36:271-83. [Emerson as a philosopher of energy and dynamism]

Collison, Gary. "Emerson and Antislavery." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 179-209. [See under Myerson] [The development of Emerson's commitment to anti-slavery]

Damon-Bach, Lucinda L. "To Be a 'Parlor Soldier': Susan Warner's Answer to Emerson's 'Self-Reliance.'" *Separate Spheres No More: Gender Convergence in American Literature, 1830-1930*. Ed. Monika M. Elbert. Alabama. 29-49. [Warner's fiction as a critique of Emersonian self-reliance]

Duffy, John-Charles. "'A Religion by Revelation': Emerson as Radical Restorationist." *ATQ* 14, 227-50. [Emerson in the context of restorationist religious thinkers]

Friedl, Herwig. "Thinking America: Emerson and Dewey." *Negotiations of America's National Identity*. Ed. Roland Hagenbüchle and Josef Raab. 2 vols. Stauffenberg. II:131-57. [Emerson's influence on Dewey and Nietzsche]

Fuller, Randall. "Emerson in the Gilded Age." *ESQ* 45:97-129. [Conflicting early interpretations of Emerson by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Moncure D. Conway, James E. Cabot, and John Jay Chapman]

Gardner, Joseph H. "Emerson, Coleridge, and a Phantom Quotation." *ANQ* 13, no. 2, 32-35. [Corrects a misattribution of a quotation in *Nature*]

Geldard, Richard G. *God in Concord: Ralph Waldo Emerson's Awakening to the Infinite*. Larson Publications [1999]. [Emerson's conception of God]

Gilbert, Armida. "Emerson in the Context of the Woman's Rights Movement." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 211-49. [See under Myerson] [The development of Emerson's commitment to women's rights]

Gougeon, Len. "'Fortune of the Republic': Emerson, Lincoln, and Transcendental Warfare." *ESQ* 45 [1999]:259-324. [Emerson and the politics of emancipation]

Gravil, Richard. *Romantic Dialogues: Anglo-American Conti-nuities, 1776-1862*. St. Martin's. [Influence of the English Romantics on Emerson and Thoreau]

Habich, Robert D. "Channing Remembers Emerson: Visits to Concord, 1870 and 1877." *NEQ* 73:495-506. [Accounts of Channing's late visits]

Hansen, Olaf. "Foundational Epistemology: Allegorical Interpretation and Providential Design." *Negotiations of America's National Identity*. Ed. Roland Hagenbüchle and Josef Raab. 2 vols. Stauffenberg. I:68-94. [The Transcendentalists and American identity]

Kete, Mary Louise. "Gender Valences of Transcendentalism: The Pursuit of Idealism in Elizabeth Oakes-Smith's 'The Sinless Child.'" *Separate Spheres No More: Gender Convergence in American Literature, 1830-1930*. Ed. Monika M. Elbert. Alabama. 245-60. [Oakes-Smith's critique of Emersonian self-reliance]

Kete, Mary Louise. *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America*. Duke. [Reconsideration of sentimental culture including Emerson]

Lamberth, David C. "Putting 'Experience' to the Test in Theological Reflection." *HTR* 93:67-77. ["Experience" and the pragmatist tradition]

Legler, Gretchen. "'I Am a Transparent Eyeball': The Politics of Vision in American Nature Writing." *Reading Under the Sign of Nature: New Essays in Ecocriticism*. Ed. John Tallmadge and Henry Harrington. Utah. 243-50. [Dillard's revision of Emerson]

McKusick, James C. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*. St. Martin's. [Emerson and Thoreau as environmental writers]

McMillin, T. S. *Our Preposterous Use of Literature: Emerson and the Nature of Reading*. Illinois. [Emerson's misappropriation in American culture]

Mott, Wesley T. "'The Age of the First Person Singular': Emerson and Individualism." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 61-100. [See under Myerson] [Emerson's individualism in historical context]

Mott, Wesley T., ed. *The American Renaissance in New England: Second Series [Dictionary of Literary Biography vol. 223]*. Gale. [Reference volume devoted to Concord authors]

Myerson, Joel. "Emerson's 'Success'—Actually, It Is Not." *ESP* 11, no. 1, 1,8. [The well-known passage is misattributed to Emerson]

Myerson, Joel, ed. *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Oxford. [New essays by several scholars on aspects of Emerson's historical context—each essay is also separately listed here]

Myerson, Joel, ed. *Transcendentalism: A Reader*. Oxford. [Inclusive anthology of Transcendentalist texts]

Orth, Ralph H. "Emerson's Visit to the Tomb of His First Wife." *ESP* 11, no. 2, 3,8. [Emerson's enactment of an established cultural pattern of grieving]

Packer, Barbara. "Dangerous Acquaintances: The Correspondence of Margaret Fuller and James Freeman Clarke." *ELH* 67:801-18. [The friendship of Transcendentalists Fuller and Clarke]

Robinson, David M. "Emerson and Religion." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 151-77. [See under Myerson] [Emerson's religious development]

Robinson, David M. "Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller and Transcendentalism." Pp. 3-27 in *American Literary Scholarship 1998*. Ed. David J. Nordloh. Duke. [Annual review of scholarship in the field of Transcendentalism]

Rossi, William. "Emerson, Nature, and Natural Science." *Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 101-50. [See under Myerson] [Emerson and the tradition of natural theology]

Sánchez-Eppler, Karen. "Then When We Clutch Hardest: On The Death of a Child and the Replication of an Image." *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture*. Ed. Mary Chapman and Glenn Hendler.

California [1999]. 64-85. ["Experience" and the practices of sentimental mourning]

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Reviews

Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson.

WESLEY T. MOTT and ROBERT E. BURKHOLDER, editors.
Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997. 284 pp.
\$59.95 cloth.

In an age of e-mail exchange and instantaneous comment it seems retrograde to sing the praises of delay, and yet, an occasional serendipity arises from the all too inevitable practice of putting something off until there is just a little more time at one's disposal. This long overdue review is now the timely prelude of things to come. Published a good four years ago, *Emersonian Circles* was the first of a recent group of volumes united by a shared form. Essay collections have long been a staple of Emerson criticism, and the present is no exception. In upcoming issues you will be certain to see reviews of *The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, *A Historical Guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson*, and *The Emerson Dilemma: Essays on Emerson and Social Reform*. This volume fittingly presages such collections. As its subtitle announces, these are "essays in honor of Joel Myerson," and aptly so. Almost without exception, you will find Joel Myerson's untiring work behind much in Emerson criticism today.

In bibliographies, in literary history, in the publication of manuscript material, Myerson has laid the vital groundwork for recent studies of Emerson's development as a writer, studies of the vital conversations out of which Emerson's ideas took shape, studies of Emerson's influence upon his contemporaries as well as their influence upon him. As the essays in this volume amply show, old interpretations lose their force in light of new evidence. The shopworn myths of Emerson's distance and of his virtual isolation as an original thinker collapse upon examination as we study yet another example of Emerson's uncanny engagement in the issues of his day and his ongoing dialogue with those who constituted his world. Whether Len Gougeon asking the reader to think about Emerson's biting criticism of Great Britain's "neutrality" during the Civil War, Phyllis Cole enabling us to see what an apparently tossaway phrase from "The American Scholar" might reflect from the real conversations occurring in the Emerson household during 1837, or Gary Collison asking us to see the difference between Emerson's "heresy" in 1838 and Theodore Parker's a mere three years later, these essays enable us to reconsider many of the truisms that have long hampered Emerson studies.

For a writer who celebrated "polarity," it is hardly surprising that dualism had a hand in shaping those truisms. There was the old division between life and work made sacred by New Criticism but at work long before its appear-

ance. There was the dualism that governed Emerson studies from the 1960s, prominent well into the 1980s. Stephen Whicher's persuasive but finally limiting "two-part career" relegated the essays after 1850 to second-class status and made the work before 1836 virtually unreadable. His interpretation also perpetuated the myth of the "isolated" Emerson whose idealism wrought a doomed or damning individualism.

One virtue of these essays is their effective exit out of the old dualisms. Editors Wes Mott and Bob Burkholder open the volume with a series of essays on the old sticking point of biography. What Burkholder has elsewhere described as the relentlessly biographical nature of Emerson criticism, here takes different shape. We are invited to consider aspects of Emerson's life still poorly understood as well as to consider Emerson's lifelong interest in and engagement with the study and writing of biography. Both Frank Shuffelton and Ron Bosco take up the uneasy relationship between history and biography, following those paired concerns throughout Emerson's writing. Shuffelton discusses Emerson's 1850s disillusionment with an earlier model of representational biography, citing the failure of the individual in Daniel Webster's case, the failure of the genre itself in Margaret Fuller's. As Shuffelton notes, Emerson's role in the Fuller *Memoir* made clear to him the inadequacy of the form. What Fuller's example taught Emerson, Shuffelton argues, is that individual lives were not so much exemplars for an age as a force that "brought individuals together into a democratic society" (61).

Bosco in turn takes up the inadequacies Emerson perceived in the available forms of biography. The Plutarchan model had worn thin; the new possibilities forwarded by Cousin and Carlyle were still too dogmatic and failed to deliver the organicism they promised. Examining Emerson's discussion of biography from the 1820s forward, Bosco notes the guiding force Emerson identified with any biographical project. Emerson "merg[ed] biography and history into an ideal discipline" in which the purpose was essentially "the operation of the universal mind in the world of men" (85). Putting to rest any rumors that Emerson's was ever a "great man theory of history," Bosco illustrates how Emerson's theory of biography functioned as a constant source and locus of idealism. With poetry, biography was one of the few hedges against the "anarchy of materialism" (100).

The Emerson represented in these essays is a far cry from the otherworldly thinker so often the albatross of Emerson discussions. Each of the essays in this volume potently illustrates the variety of ways Emerson engaged with his daily world, whether that world was figured abstractly through the audiences he would address in writing and through speech (Al von Frank on *Nature* and Larry Buell on "Fate"), personally through the people Emerson

readily engaged in conversation (Phyllis Cole on Lidian Jackson Emerson, Mary Moody Emerson, and Elizabeth Hoar; Larry Carlson on Bronson Alcott; Dan Shealy on Louisa May Alcott; Helen Deese on Caroline Healey Dall) and publicly (or more appropriately, publishedly) in his active work of revision and reform. Bob Richardson reminds the reader that Emerson devoted a good portion of his time to editorial work, both for others and for himself. Larry Carlson's discussion of Emerson's failed attempt to edit Bronson Alcott's *Psyche* provides an example, in this case illuminating the lived reality behind the paired elements of "truth and tenderness" in Emerson's essay "Friendship." While the difference between editing an unwieldy manuscript and decrying slavery in public lectures may well seem a simple matter of fact, as work continues on Emerson's role as editor and his complicated experiments in effecting societal change, revision and reform may well become synonymous.

In an essay that continues his ongoing project of reexamining Emerson's involvement in antislavery work, Len Gougeon fleshes out the literary implications for Great Britain's so-called neutrality. Discussing the well-respected British authors who disparaged the North, Gougeon delineates a kind of pamphlet war fought in the periodicals, a war in which Emerson was a major player. While Gougeon focuses on the specific events in a kind of play-by-play recreation of the time, Larry Buell offers his own version of contextualization. Reminding his readers that they play unfairly if they blame an author for not reproducing the impossible (the desires of a late-twentieth-century audience), he also takes us to the approach we know well: reading a particular essay by searching Emerson's other writings. As he notes, the full-scale version lies beyond the scope of a single essay, but in the limited space he effectively shows how frayed are the old assumptions about Emerson's privatism. Putting "Fate" back in the context of Emerson's antislavery lectures as well as in the context of other discussions of the "times," Buell reminds his reader that Emerson's ever-persistent concern over vocation invariably brought the individual into active engagement with the world.

As Buell's remarks suggest, Emersonian individualism wreaks havoc with static categories of public and private. The topic of biography offers numerous opportunities for rethinking the nature of those categories. In the essay that opens the volume, Al von Frank cites Jurgen Habermas's work on the emergence of modern bourgeois life and notes its likely appeal to those who study nineteenth-century American culture and its frequent iteration of "separate spheres." Von Frank asks, "To what extent was Emerson's idea of home predicated at any given time on culturally standard notions of privacy? To what extent could the concept of home be related to the public sphere, and with what

results?" (5). His own interest lies in the "new biography," but at the same time he illuminates other old assumptions, breathing new life into the often-quoted directive from the end of *Nature*. In von Frank's discussion "Build therefore your own world" becomes a counter-cultural statement against the public works of Emerson's age. The world in need of construction was distinctly interior, decidedly private. It was in a word "home."

Feminist scholarship has long noted the importance of reconsidering the constructs called "home" in order to see them as a complex and integrated series of engagements with productive work rather than just the oppositional other half of the public sphere. Phyllis Cole's essay takes the concept of home directly into the Emerson household, illustrating how words spoken in public originated in familial conversation. Calling attention to the "other American Scholars" in the Emerson family (for the purposes of 1837 essentially Lidian Emerson, Mary Moody Emerson, and Elizabeth Hoar), she opens up a single phrase in "The American Scholar" so that we understand what was at stake for "men and women conversing." Noting the epistolary conversations that were essential to Emerson's addresses, she also illuminates the conversations in which Emerson was a diffident participant at best. When Lidian organized the dinner in the Emerson home for antislavery workers Angelina and Sarah Grimké, Emerson had little to say. As Cole remarks, "we would not know of the Grimké campaign or the Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society from his writing" (155). However, as she also notes, Emerson's "voiced indignation at the church's stifling of free speech" occurred only a few months later "in his first antislavery speech in November 1837" (155).

Several of the other essays also take us deeply into the highly relational world in which Emerson moved. As Cole notes, one of the languages shared within the Emerson household was a language of grief, a point Dan Shealy's essay takes up in its description of the common ground of loss on which both the Emerson and Alcott households often stood. Carlson offers a persuasive connection between Emerson's difficult role in Alcott's aborted dreams of publication and the key elements Emerson himself wrote into his essay on friendship. The value of such friendships becomes clear in Gary Collison's thought-provoking discussion of the apparently similar, yet vastly different experience shown in the scathing criticism both Emerson and Theodore Parker received for their open voicing of radical views. As Collison shows, the nexus of support available to Emerson in the late 1830s was far different from the world Parker faced a scant three years later. Intersecting with the debate over the nature of public and private, his discussion highlights the tonal differences in Emerson's and Parker's journal entries. Such difference also frames Kent Ljungquist's lively discussion of the sharply contrasting responses to Poe's and Emerson's

1845 Boston appearances. As with Gougeon, Cole, and Collison, Ljungquist selects a particular year and opens that moment into a revealing discussion of audience-speaker relations. Helen Deese takes this dynamic and examines it in the context of one participatory listener. In her discussion of Caroline Healey Dall, she aptly demonstrates how Emerson's implied criticism of Dall in the 1840s gave way to his acceptance of her as a fellow worker in the 1860s. This was no small change; the individual dismissed as an impertinent young woman needed more than her own maturity for Emerson's attitude to turn from dismissal to praise. Reversing the long-unquestioned assumption that Emerson was always more influence than influenced, Deese illustrates the close connection between Emerson's revised position on women's rights and Dall's lectures and writings. Pointing the way to the still slowly begun work of reexamining the writings from the vast period we used to lump into the static category of "late Emerson," Deese's work is timely and points us full circle in this volume. Noting Dall's response to one of Emerson's early lectures, Deese returns the reader to the question of biography. Recording her thoughts on the opening lecture in Emerson's 1835 biography series, Dall cited Emerson as a champion of the home. In her hearing "Emerson argued that 'the true aim of biography ought to be not to trace men in *public* life, but in *domestic*, or the most inadvertent circumstances'" (258).

David Robinson's discussion of Thoreau's pointed response to Emerson's opening question in "Experience" illustrates just how potent such "inadvertent circumstances" can be. Reading "Ktaadn" as part of Thoreau's ongoing conversation with Emerson, he notes how cannily Thoreau's prose engages with the hardest elements in one of Emerson's hardest essays. "Where do we find ourselves," the essay asks, and Thoreau's written account of the Ktaadn attempt settles the question in a place of unexpected revelation. As do Buell and Cole, Robinson demonstrates the power of close reading between related texts. This is intertextuality at its best, demonstrating the responsive nature of the Transcendentalists' varied projects.

Summing up the essays in this volume, Philip Gura's final piece celebrates the "empirical" approach to literary texts. If the opposition between theory and other forms of literary criticism is finally beginning to wear thin, we can welcome the hopeful loss of an old contention. As Gura suggests, the volume models several possibilities for future work. One can meld theory and detailed context to generate a new form (von Frank's call for the "new biography"); one can choose the various routes into the highly relational nature of Emerson's writings. Imagining the future for a moment, I would place my bets on the ongoing work on Emerson's audience, particularly the group Deese calls the second-generation Transcendentalists as well as the women engaged in social reform in the late part of the nineteenth

and early part of the twentieth centuries. Emerson's work as an editor opens new prospects for understanding his commitment to a poetics of change. And finally the unexamined or underexamined Emerson essays await a new generation of Emerson critics. It will be no surprise that this new generation will continue to cite Joel Myerson's work as the point of departure that enabled their own.

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Emerson's Ethics.

GUSTAAF VAN CROMPHOUT, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999. 182 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

The word "ethics," like the word "philosophy," hardly has been the exclusive property of professional philosophers. Nor should it be. It is too valuable to be monopolized by any single academic discipline, even if we can distinguish between the ethics we live by and ethics as a body of philosophical thought that morally justifies a way of life. Emerson's ethics—the ethics he tried to live by and the ethics he articulated in his writings—is not so neatly compartmentalized. The compact volume *Emerson's Ethics*, by Gustaaf Van Cromphout, remains true to this same complex ethical reality.

In reconstructing Emerson's ethics, Van Cromphout provides an organized, if not systematic, account of Emerson in a language that professional philosophers will find familiar. The ethics that Van Cromphout—guided by the work of philosophical critics of modernity such as Charles Taylor, Bernard Williams, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Richard Rorty—attributes to Emerson are broadly concerned with the original Socratic question of "valuation" (how we should live our entire lives) and not just narrow decisionist problems of "obligation." It is a reconstruction from which Emerson scholars with only a passing familiarity with these major philosophical figures also will benefit.

The opening gambit is to recast the young Emerson as a sometimes impatient and sometimes hasty, but already self-reliant thinker. In his undergraduate essays "The Character of Socrates" and "The Present State of Ethical Philosophy" Emerson professed a near-Stoic faith in "nature" as an unproblematic guide for ethical conduct and too little interest in Aristotle and Hume. However, despite these deficiencies, his enthusiasm for Socratic independence of mind, his criticism of the epistemological turn in modern Cartesian philosophy, and his sympathy for "moral sense" theory proved to be valuable assets that he capitalized on in later years. Perhaps the most endearing quality in this snapshot of the young Emerson is his anti-elitism, which Van Cromphout associates with an interest in Kant. Kant, it turns out, be-

comes the primary point of reference, if not a source of systematic unity, in Emerson's subsequent ethical writings.

Emerson, Van Cromphout reminds us, had little patience with "systemgrinders" (75), and there is no attempt here to grind Emerson's sometimes contradictory and often "dialectical" ethical writings (for example, on friendship and love, and on beauty and use) down into one systematic body of thought. Terms such as teleological and deontological are introduced to distinguish various levels of abstraction in Emerson's ethics without using them as straitjackets. For example, there is no attempt to reduce Emerson's views to a single relationship between the right and the good. Emerson was a subtle essayist with an unmatched power to disturb, and Van Cromphout's reconstruction of his ethical writings captures this distinct Emersonian quality. There are loose ends, tensions, and fissures in this portrait of Emerson, but they are more than compensated for by Van Cromphout's wealth of learning and his mastery of the primary texts.

On this foundation, then, Van Cromphout sketches a multi-tiered picture of Emerson's ethics. The "meta-ethical" foundation, he argues, is a set of intuitions about the separability of ethics and religion, the naturalness of human morality ("To be human means to be morally implicated" [35]), and a Kantian understanding of the relationship between ethics and knowledge. Just how Kantian Emerson is at this level of abstraction is debatable. But Van Cromphout lays out a plausible argument that despite being enamoured of Hutchesonian moral sense theory, Emerson shared with Kant a belief in the primacy of practical over theoretical reason. According to Van Cromphout, Emerson believed that "We cannot know what ultimately *is*, but we do know what ultimately *ought to be done*" (49).

This Kantian "morality-based epistemology" supports a second level of ethical theory or "normative ethics" that is also Kantian, but again not purely so. At this level of abstraction, Emerson subscribed to something like "self-realizationism," a moral duty to realize an undefined and ultimately unattainable ideal self. This imperative to strive endlessly for self-realization on its face is more reminiscent of Fichte, Van Cromphout admits, than of Kant. However, understood as a striving for harmony and universality, especially inner harmony measured in terms of reverence for one's own dignity as a moral person, this imperative is patently Kantian (69).

There are other ways in which Emerson's ethics are Kantian, according to Van Cromphout, or at least, "Emerson's ideas often gain focus and clarity when read in the light of theoretical insights or interpretive analogues provided by Kant" (43). This Kantian portrait, however, loses some of its unity when Van Cromphout considers Emerson's ethical concerns for other persons, for "everyday life," and for the empowering capacity of literature. Emerson's interpretation of the central ethical concept of freedom, for

example, involves the Hegelian struggle for social recognition as much as it does a Kantian striving to act on the basis of respect for persons as rational beings. His views on the responsibility of the writer to help us overcome our alienation and put us in "a working mood" resembles Goethe's views on character development or *Bildung*, although Van Cromphout points out Emerson's dissatisfaction with the moral incompleteness of Goethe's thought (80).

Philosophers who have steered clear of Emerson, put off by his metaphysical assumptions about nature and his views about language, will find this reconstruction of Emerson's ethics encouraging, precisely because it is not overburdened with these less palatable elements. One could say that philosophers themselves have performed the same selective interpretation of Kant's ethics in the last twenty years. At the same time, *Emerson's Ethics* equips non-philosophers with a schema for evaluating Emerson alongside other important ethical thinkers such as Kant and Hegel. Less reflexive than Stanley Cavell's readings of Emerson in "Aversive Thinking" and "Emerson's Constitutional Amending," this volume locates Emerson's ethics more directly within a general set of philosophical categories that is extremely useful to anyone, whatever her disciplinary persuasion, who is interested in how we are to live an ethical life under the most trying conditions.

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Concord 2001



"Emerson's Wisdom" in Concord

Almost 200 people packed the Masonic Temple in Monument Square, Concord, on 13 July to hear a special panel discussion on "Emerson's Wisdom." The program was the Emerson Society's contribution to the 2001 Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society. Four Emerson Society members briefly presented Emerson passages whose wisdom resonates in our time as in Emerson's, particularly as the passages embody his concerns with self-culture, education, and intellectual, emotional, and spiritual "provocation." An extended conversation with the audience followed the opening remarks. The panelists (with their topics) were, from left, the Rev. Barry Andrews (Emerson's *Journal* of 1835), Wendell Refior ("Experience"), Sarah Ann Wider (moderator), Richard Piccarreto ("The Over-Soul"), and Laura Dassow Walls (Emerson's Sermon #133, 1831).

Among many Emerson Society members participating in the **Thoreau Society Annual Gathering** were these officers and board members, shown on 14 July in front of the First Parish Church, Concord, with the historic Wright Tavern in the background: Wes Mott, Laura Dassow Walls, Bob Habich, Sarah Ann Wider, Joel Myerson, Ron Bosco, Bob Hudspeth, and Phyllis Cole.



W. T. Mott

Richard J. Schneider