

Rev.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Reading in Place: The Situation of a Couplet by Emerson

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Emerson's verse hardly gets more inconspicuous than a certain isolated couplet jotted down in Journal O in early June, 1846, but never published during its author's lifetime:

To transmute crime to wisdom, & to stem
The vice of Japhet by the thought of Shem.
(JMN 9:384)

Japhet (or Japheth) and Shem are the two older sons of Noah. They, along with the third son, Ham, repopulated the earth following the Flood. They and their immediate descendants are listed in the tenth and eleventh chapters of Genesis and, over the ensuing millennia, in the allegorical anthropology of pre-scientific accounts, were held to have fathered the various races, ethnicities, and nations of the postdiluvian world. As given in Genesis, the genealogy indicates that Japhet was ancestral to the Indo-European peoples, including the Greeks, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, and Celts as well as the populations of Media, Persia, and the Indian subcontinent: that is to say, to the Aryans. Shem was the progenitor of the Semites, including the Jews and Arabs, while Ham (unnamed in Emerson's couplet and inferentially the object of Japhet's "crime" and "vice") gave rise to the dark peoples of Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and Canaan, constituting the so-called Hamitic race. The rough edges of this geography got worn down over time, arriving eventually at the famous simplification that identified three brothers with three continents: Japheth with Europe, Shem with Asia, and Ham with Africa.

Proslavery theorists in Emerson's day routinely looked to Noah's family drama as an allegory (or veritable history) of the introduction into the world of race and slavery—and as positing God's authority for both. They supposed that the crime of Ham in looking on the nakedness of his father and the ensuing curse pronounced by Noah on Ham's son, Canaan ("Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" [Gen. 9:25]), provided a sufficient moral defense for black chattel slavery. This biblical rationaliza-

tion became, by the nineteenth century, "a stock weapon in the arsenal of slavery's apologists."¹

In his couplet, Emerson adopts the personnel of a narrative culturally owned in 1846 by slavery's supporters, but sees Ham not as criminal but as victim. The transgressor is Japhet, or "Europe," including Europe's offspring, America. Shem is the Oriental or Judaic redeemer who "stems" or puts a stop to his brother's criminality and, in a related but distinct action, turns the transgression to account as wisdom. The unusual sequence of crime and wisdom, absent from the punitive Old Testament narrative, makes good sense in terms of Emerson's thought, where the physical typically gets sublimed into a spiritual version serviceable to character and intellect. At the lowest and least interesting level of interpretation, Emerson suggests that the immorality of slavery will give way to the "moral sense" as Christ and Christianity expound it.

A more complex supplement to this reading emerges, however, when we consider the couplet's manuscript context. Readers of the *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* and the *Topical Notebooks* are frequently rewarded by a sense of the relatedness of particular passages to other passages nearby, and so it is in this instance. We know only by its position in Journal O that Emerson wrote the couplet in early June 1846. We know from other sources that this was also when he wrote the "Ode, Inscribed to W. H. Channing"—in response to the outbreak of the Mexican War, the Boston funeral of the abolitionist martyr Charles Turner Torrey, and the dramatic disunion resolution offered by Channing to the annual antislavery convention, also in Boston, all these events occurring in the last three weeks of May.²

On the MS page immediately before the page on which the couplet occurs, Emerson wrote a passage on the Russian aggression against Poland that would serve as the source for the concluding lines of the "Ode":

Nature is always the gainer, & reckons surely on our sympathy. The Russians eat up the Poles. What then? when the last Polander is gone, the Russians

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ESP welcomes notes and short articles (up to about 8 double-spaced, typed pages) on Emerson-related topics. Manuscripts are blind refereed. On matters of style, consult previous issues. We also solicit news about Emerson-related community, school, and other projects; 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 of Emersonian scholars. Send manuscripts to the editor, Jennifer Gurley, English Department, LeMoyne College, 1419 Salt Springs Road, Syracuse, New York, 13214 or gurleyja@lemoyne.edu (email submissions are much preferred).

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Leslie Eckel, English Department, Suffolk University, 41 Temple St., Boston, MA 02114-4280.

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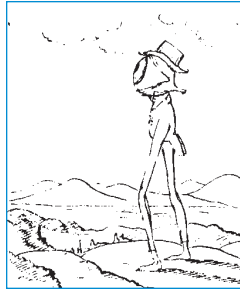
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PROSPECTS.



Greetings from the President

I first encountered the Emerson Society at the 2003 ALA conference. As a new assistant professor at New Mexico Tech, I was delighted to have a paper accepted for one of the Society's panels that year, but that was a small pleasure compared to meeting the wonderful members, so many of whom have become good friends and collaborators. I knew immediately that I'd found a home, and I am honored and grateful to serve now as president of the organization that has provided so much to me personally and professionally.

I look forward to shared conversations and projects with you on all things Emerson, including our panels at ALA and the Thoreau Annual Gathering, as well as our anticipated conference in Heidelberg. I'm curious whether there might be interest in a "Concord West" gathering in New Mexico. Though Emerson never traveled here, his legacy certainly did by very direct means. Books from his son's library were donated to the public library in the small town that is home to New Mexico Tech. Edward's wife, Annie, arranged the donation with Mary Miller Engel, a close friend of Emerson's children and a relative of Lidian Jackson Emerson. Mary was in Socorro, New Mexico, because her husband was a geology professor at New Mexico School of Mines, which later became New Mexico Tech. Also, the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, in Santa Fe, was co-founded by Mary Cabot Wheelwright, the niece of Emerson's friend James Elliot Cabot. Mary traveled to New Mexico in 1917, and established the museum with Navajo medicine man Hastiin Klah in 1937.

East and west, we are now linked via our new website, developed by Amy Earhart and back online at emerson.tamu.edu, and our Facebook page managed by Leslie Eckel. Many thanks to them both and to Joel Myerson, the creator of the original RWES website, and to Bob Habich, Todd Richardson, Jennifer Gurley, and others who provided guidance and feedback for the new site.

—Susan Dunston

Emerson Now Fully Wired

Don't forget to search for and "like" the Emerson Society's Facebook page, managed by Leslie Eckel (leckel@suffolk.edu) and Bonnie Carr O'Neill (bco20@msstate.edu), and to visit the new Emerson Society website, created and managed by Amy Earhart (Texas A&M University), at emerson.tamu.edu.

Emerson Sightings/Citings

Bob Hudspeth writes: "Who says Texans don't have culture? We even quote Emerson on the sports pages!" Bob sends this link to an article in which a University of Texas professor of English assesses Mack Brown's cryptic December 13, 2013, tweet of a Ralph Waldo Emerson quotation: tinyurl.com/qa6rcoj.

Al von Frank forwards this link to an article in *The New Republic* (newrepublic.com/article/115694/rudyard-kiplings-poems-reviewed-christopher-benfey) that credits Emerson with inspiring Rudyard Kipling's "systematic...adoption" of a "complicated mix of poetry and prose" in *The Jungle Book* and elsewhere.

David Dowling directs us to this NPR interview in which world-renowned recording artist Kenna, who is discussed in Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, describes how "Self-Reliance" influenced his recent album: hereandnow.wbur.org/2014/01/07/kenna-going-mainstream.

Emerson Society Panels at ALA

The Society presents two panels annually at the American Literature Association meeting, to be held this year from May 22 to 25 in Washington, D.C. Visit americanliterature.org for more information.

Emerson's Later Career

Chair: David Dowling, University of Iowa

"Feudalism, Individualism, and Authority in Later Emerson," Robert Yusef Rabiee, University of Southern California; Graduate Student Paper Award Winner

"'Character' and the Example of Mary Moody Emerson," Phyllis Cole, Penn State Brandywine

"Emerson's Memory and the Use of Metonymy," Sean Ross Mehan, Washington College

Emerson and the Business World

Chair: Todd Richardson, University of Texas of the Permian Basin

"Emerson and the Transcendentalism of Industry," Michael Lorence, Innermost House, Independent Scholar

"Hierophany at the Heart of Place," Ed Krafchow, Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate, Independent Scholar

"Transcendentalism in a Technological Age," J. Scott Briggs, Ziff-Davis Publishing, Independent Scholar

Thoreau Society Annual Gathering

The theme of this year's gathering in Concord July 10–13 is "Thoreau's Creative Genius: Connecting the Arts, Sciences, and Higher Law." The Emerson Society will host a social hour following its panel. Visit thoreausociety.org for information and full schedule.

Emerson's Eclectic Creativity

Chair: Roger Thompson, SUNY at Stony Brook

"Between Tradition and Novelty: Emerson's Progressive Religion," Nicholas Aaron Friesner, Brown University

"Emerson and the Environment," Michael Popejoy, Purdue University

"Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Gorham Palfrey, and the Influence of Free Soil," James Finley, University of New Hampshire

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Prospects

(Continued from page 3)

Call for Proposals for *Approaches to Teaching Emerson's Essays and Other Works*

This new volume under consideration by the MLA seeks articles that address a range of pedagogical strategies for teaching this canonical figure in American literature with broader significance in world literature and the study of the essay. These strategies might include specific approaches to individual essays both familiar and forgotten; explorations of the uses of Emerson's other works in the classroom, including poetry, sermons, journals, and lectures, both in relation to the essays, and for their own sake; discussions of biographical, critical, and theoretical materials, as well as local and global cultural contexts effective in teaching Emerson's works; innovative methods and media for presenting the challenging but engaging provocations of Emerson's writing, its fluid style, its range of thinking across traditional disciplines, and its inheritance of transhistorical and transnational ideas.

To participate in the MLA's survey of Emerson scholars in support of this project, please complete the survey available at surveymonkey.com/s/mlasurvey_emerson.

If you would like to propose an original essay for this volume, please submit an abstract of approximately 500 words in which you describe your approach or topic and explain its potential benefit for students and instructors alike. Also submit a brief curriculum vitae. The focus of the proposed essay should be pedagogical. Note that if you plan to quote from student writing in your essay, you must obtain written permission from your students to do so. Proposed essays should be approximately 2,000–5,000 words and should not be previously published. Abstracts and CVs should be sent to the volume editors by email **no later than May 30, 2014**. Please use "Approaches to Emerson" in the subject line and send to both Mark Long (mlong@keene.edu) and Sean Meehan (smeehan2@washcoll.edu). We welcome queries, comments, or supplemental materials such as course descriptions, syllabi, assignments, and bibliographies as attachments. Thank you for helping in the development of this project.

New Work on Emerson and Confucius

Yoshio Takanashi, Professor of English and American Literature and Culture at Nagano Prefectural College, Japan, has just published *Emerson and Neo-Confucianism: Crossing Paths over the Pacific* with Palgrave Macmillan (foreword by Lawrence Buell). About the book: Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in *Nature*, "The moral law lies at the centre of nature and radiates to the circumference." The great Chinese synthesizer of Neo-Confucian philosophy Zhu Xi expressed a similar idea in the twelfth century: "In the realm of Heaven and Earth it is this moral principle alone that flows everywhere." Though living in different ages and cultures, these two thinkers have an uncanny overlap in their work. A comparative investigation of Emerson's Transcendentalist thought and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism, this book shows how both thinkers traced human morality to the same source in the ultimately moral nature of the universe and developed theories of the interrelation of universal law and the human mind.

"Return of the Text" Conference

From September 26 to 28, 2013, nearly 200 scholars from 12 nations and 25 states visited beautiful Upstate New York for "The Return of the Text: A Conference on the Cultural Value of Close Reading" (<http://lemoyne.edu/tabid/3128/default.aspx>). The multidisciplinary event hosted by the Le Moyne College Religion and Literature Forum is the brainchild of Rev. Patrick Samway, S.J., born in 1978 with a program featuring Rev. Walter J. Ong, S.J. The Forum focuses biennially on a topic of interest to those in the fields of literature and religious studies, providing an occasion to discuss issues of mutual concern.

This year's conference, which featured Emersonians and offered a sustainable business model, was a collaborative effort among humanities departments and centers across Central New York, including the Central New York Humanities Corridor (funded by the Mellon Foundation), Hamilton College, the McDevitt Center for Creativity and Innovation at Le Moyne College, and Syracuse University's Departments of Religion, English, and History.

Mitchell Breitwieser (U.C. Berkeley) and Branka Arsic (Columbia University) gave mutually provocative keynote talks on Thoreau's vitalism, and Emerson Society members Peter Balaam, Prentiss Clarke, Thomas Constantinesco, David Greenham, Heikki Kovalainen, and Joseph Urbas delivered wonderful papers on the relation of close reading to cultural and religious work. An anthology of selected essays is under way.

The conference also unveiled a new business model for hosting academic events: one that supports local businesses. Director Jennifer Gurley worked closely with the Syracuse Visitors Bureau and the Crowne Plaza Hotel to create conference meals and receptions that featured local products. To learn more about how to make this model work at your own institution, contact Jennifer at gurleyja@lemoyne.edu.

Be on the lookout for announcements about a September 2015 Forum, tentatively titled "Sacred Literature, Secular Religion."

Corrections:

The Fall 2013 issue of *ESP* features an incorrect abstract for a talk delivered by Mark Russell Gallagher (UCLA) at the 2013 ALA Annual Meeting. Here is the correct abstract:

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Classical Friendship

We may think of Ralph Waldo Emerson as a renaissance man simply because he helped bring about a kind of Renaissance in New England culture. At the same time, one could argue that Emerson is a Renaissance man in another way—by virtue of his being in the same humanist tradition that, in a very general sense, defines the Renaissance—as someone whose work is strongly influenced by classical texts. What is common to both these ways of understanding Emerson is his idea of friendship. When we look at Emerson's essay on "Friendship" we see how closely his ideas are modeled after those found in, for example, Plutarch's *Moralia* and Cicero's *De Amicitia*; and it is through his personal friendships that a flowering of New England blooms in the first place. We will consider how these classical ideals of friendship, particularly those of Stoic philosophers, influence Emerson and how they shape the literary careers of his friends Thomas Carlyle, Bronson Alcott, and Margaret Fuller.

Bob Habich notes that he incorrectly referred to Daniel Robert Koch as David Robert Koch on p.16 of the Fall 2013 issue of *ESP*.

Reading in Place

(Continued from page 1)

are men, are ourselves, & the Pole is forgotten in our identification with Russian parties. A philosopher is no philosopher unless he takes lively part with the thief who picks his pocket and with the bully that insults or strikes him. (JMN 9:383)

This is a difficult passage, whether in the original prose or in the versified form that Emerson employed as the coda to his poem. It seems to ask us to do what the antislavery orators certainly never proposed: i.e., to identify with the triumphant criminal even as we forget the victim. There is an interesting perversity in this moral logic, bordering close on shock, so wide is it of where we are conventionally told our duty lies. In this sense it may seem to work as some of the “hard sayings” of Jesus work. It helps, then, to turn the page in Journal O and find Russian criminality re-evoked as the vice of Japhet. Criminal, cop, and victim all are brothers, all are one, and nobody is left over. Nobody falls outside the possibility of identification, as is emphatically *not* the case in the proslavery construction of the story, which wants only to secure the removal of the victim (without calling him victim) from the category of the human. Some of the animus of Emerson’s position in the “Ode” may be directed at the counter-tendency of the abolitionist effectively to deny the humanity of the sinner/slaveholder, who, like the Russian bully, is clearly engaged in (very unattractive) human behavior. Still, can we look on the exit of the “last Polander” with equanimity, as Emerson suggests? Such a question discovers our anxiety, but asking it also discovers that he is never quite gone, that the victim survives as trace in the ongoing occasion for thinking in terms of “thief” and “bully.” If we can bring ourselves to “take lively part” with the criminal, still we do so in light of the agonistically acquired instruction about who he is and what part he plays in the family drama.

Further contextual issues sharpen our sense of the couplet’s range of meaning. Probably in 1859 Emerson wrote out a slightly revised version as an epigraph to his versebook *Orientalist*, which he used in translating medieval Islamic (mainly Sufi) poetry.³ Here it reads:

Go transmute crime to wisdom, learn to stem
The vice of Japhet by the thought of Shem.

Obviously the alteration consists of Emerson’s swapping out the infinitive in favor of an imperative form of the verbs. The bare naming of an action, a point of fascination in 1846, becomes, by 1859, a personalized injunction to perform it—with, it would seem, an implication that the effort to translate the classic Sufi poets (that is, to broadcast the “thought of Shem”) constitutes such a performance. In a

sense, then, or from Emerson’s perspective, the “astonished Muse finds thousands at her side” in the John Brown year when the “vice of Japhet” is invaded and rebuked. The “thought of Shem” would again be Emerson’s contribution, as it had been at first, in 1846. Interestingly, the earlier plausible interpretation that found in “the thought of Shem” a metonymy for the Judeo-Christian speculation now seems like a broader, more cosmopolitan allusion to the moral genius of the ancient mid-East. On MS page 1 of *Orientalist* the revised couplet is physically subordinated to another epigraph, the phrase “Ex orient lux,” suggesting that even a short poem can vary its meaning depending on the light we are given to read it in.

Notes

1. Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 8. See also David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), which argues, *inter alia*, that there is no racial consciousness—and hence no racial intent—in the original story.
2. See Carl F. Strauch, “The Background and Meaning of the ‘Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing.’” *Emerson Society Quarterly* 42 (2nd Quarter 1966): 4-14; Len Gougeon, “The Anti-Slavery Background of Emerson’s ‘Ode Inscribed to W. H. Channing.’” *Studies in the American Renaissance: 1985*. Ed. Joel Myerson. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985): 63-77; *The Poetry Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Ed. Ralph H. Orth et al. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986): 881; and CW 9:143-53.
3. The dating is not quite secure. *Orientalist* was Emerson’s main repository for his translations from Hafiz and other Sufi poets, though it also includes drafts of his own poem “Brahma,” published in the first issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* in November 1857. Other portions of the notebook bear on the essay “Persian Poetry” in the April 1858 issue of the *Atlantic*. Nevertheless, the notebook’s editor, Ronald A. Bosco, alludes to a statement by Edward Waldo Emerson offering a conjectural date of 1859, based on the fact that, beginning on MS p. 2, his father included notes on Max Müller’s *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, first published in that year. It is evident that *Orientalist*, like certain other notebooks, was not inscribed in perfect front-to-back order. See *The Topical Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 2 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 39, and Bosco’s note to the front cover verso of the notebook.

Reviews

Thoreauvian Modernities: Transatlantic Conversations on an American Icon.

EDS. FRANÇOIS SPECQ, LAURA DASSOW WALLS, AND MICHEL GRANGER. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2013. xiv + 314 pp. \$69.95 cloth. \$24.95 paper.

The modernity of Henry David Thoreau has rarely been in question. In today's popular consciousness, he is associated with the international (indeed, transatlantic) assertion of civil disobedience and also recognized as a founding father of the environmental movement. The continuing importance of the first of these is staged daily by the Occupy movements and the Anonymous action groups; the vitality of the second may yet be the most important legacy of American letters. This collection of essays, which examines "the continuing relevance of [Thoreau's] writings for our time" (1), would, then, always have been timely. That said, Thoreau's importance isn't limited to these arguably unforeseen impacts on the world. He is also at the heart of America's literary canon and as such likely to be present wherever English literature is studied. But crucially, as the authors of this volume, drawn from both sides of the Atlantic, tell their readers time and again, his value is not merely historical or formal, and certainly not regional, it is pressingly "present." Locating Thoreau in this present, though, is by no means a given for any of the contributors to *Thoreauvian Modernities*—the plural title of which is an index of the complexities with which the volume engages. The way in, as Dassow Walls asserts in the introduction, is to have at least two modernities in mind—Thoreau's and ours—and thus a mobile proliferation of time spaces from mid-nineteenth-century Concord to the wider contemporary transatlantic world.

Dassow Walls's opening essay identifies this kinesis in Thoreau's regionally and temporally specific work. Indeed, Dassow Walls constructs a complex theoretical idiom with which to adumbrate her thesis comprising "mobility," "planarity," "vascularity," and "transjectivity." And while there isn't space in her essay to fully express the work these terms could do, Dassow Walls still manages to transport Thoreau beyond his regional limits by offering a close comparative reading of "Walking" and "Cape Cod," in which the first figures a celebration of the nation and the second a destabilizing alterity. With respect to her larger theory, I look forward to seeing what it delivers in a more generous context. Granger's essay sees Thoreau's modernity emerging through revolt—that is, as a rejection of the modernity of his time. Thoreau's work, as a kind of jeremiad against the day, is in and against its moment, but also for a future. The next three essays by Rossi, Robinson and Conrad advance this theme and complete the first of the book's three sections: "Antimodern Thoreau." For Robinson, "modernity [...] was the problem" (69) and Thoreau's writings were an attempt to escape it, to return to the past (70), and to shame its

degeneracy into a vital change. Through these essays, Thoreau's modernity emerges as negatively defined through a rigorous opposition, and Conrad shows this beautifully through an extended close reading of the first line of a passage in Volume 12 of Thoreau's *Journals*: "Road. That old Carlisle one."

In the book's second section, "Thoreau and Philosophy," the explicit connection to modernity fades slightly as the essays focus more on the way Thoreau fits with various philosophical movements. Urbas provides overwhelming evidence for the ontological turn in nineteenth-century American thought and thus locates Thoreau in that moment. For Monfort, myth is part of Thoreau's romanticism, connecting him to Wordsworth and Carlyle. Myth is construed pragmatically; it is what survives to provide a possibility of vigor and has the potential to re-enchant the modern. In his essay, Maul includes Thoreau in a Rawlsian dialogue between liberalism and communitarianism, and finds him a useful balancing point.

Dieter Schulz kicks off the long last section of the book, "Thoreau, Language, and The Wild," by suggesting that Thoreau offers a hermeneutical (in the tradition of Gadamer) corrective to Baconian method because he is always "interested," in Gadamer's sense of the term, in what he empirically observes. This leads into several essays (Case, Jonik, and Specq) which further examine Thoreau's observational practice in his journals and his "Kalendar," which together suggest that modern science has much to learn from, as well as to teach, the humanities. This dissolution of the two cultures is perhaps the crucial theme to emerge as the volume proceeds. The book ends by taking us into the wild, in which Thoreau provides a space for Coupland's generation X seekers (Dowling), a critical take on romantic anthropomorphism (Pughe), and, finally, an effort to realize the alterity of the wilderness in language (Imbert).

As such the themes of this collection are cheerfully unexpected. This is not *just* the "modern" Thoreau of the environment or political action. It is a Thoreau of modernities across time and space: a timely untimely Thoreau. At the volume's close, we are left provoked once more by a Thoreau whose writing can change the way we see our modernity just as he had hoped to change the way people saw his own modern moment.

David Greenham
University of the West of England

Atlantic Citizens: Nineteenth-Century American Writers at Work in the World.

LESLIE ELIZABETH ECKEL. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013. viii + 240 pp. \$112.00 cloth.

This review was commissioned by ESP's editor, Jennifer Gurley.

So successfully have "transatlantic" and "global" perspectives dominated American literary discourse for the past decade that they risk becoming the latest critical shibboleths. Leslie Elizabeth Eckel's elegant new book, *Atlantic Citizens*, is welcome evidence that transatlantic American literary scholarship can still

surprise. In chapters dealing with six remarkably different writers (Longfellow, Fuller, Douglass, Emerson, Greenwood, and Whitman, with an afterword focusing on Paule Marshall and Adam Gopnik), Eckel proposes that the “cultural value of [their] non-literary pursuits—journalism, education, advocacy, and editorial work”—enabled each writer to move “beyond national borders, both physically and imaginatively.” Reading “more familiar ‘national’ texts” against “these extraliterary texts expose[s] authors in active revolt against the narrow-minded literary nationalism of the ‘Young America’ movement and in vocal protest against the nationalised cruelty of race-based slavery” (4).

Eckel does not present homogenous profiles of Americans critiquing in lockstep either the United States or Europe. Instead, she argues that “[i]n each case, intellectual engagement with Europe provided these writers with a crucial set of skills that they used to distinguish their writing from that of their American contemporaries and to cast a critically distant eye on the antebellum project of nation-building through literature” (5). This is no reductive or ideologically driven study. Each chapter has a unique trajectory and spirit, and each writer emerges with complex and distinct aesthetic, professional, moral, or political aims and achievements.

Nearly excluded from the canon for more than a half century as imitative, moralistic, and sentimental, Longfellow is enjoying a resurgence of critical interest. Eckel contributes to this welcome trend, arguing that he was “more of an innovator than an imitator.” His didacticism and privileging of emotion, she argues, were part of his admirable, persistent effort “to provide a cosmopolitan education for his readers” (20)—popular and academic—a campaign that was “radical” at Harvard (28). Among Transcendentalists, Fuller had the most “explicitly political agenda” (47). Her “global imagination” embraced European intellectual and emotional openness and revolution (60). Paradoxically, Fuller’s engagement with Rome made her more patriotic, clarifying her sense of what was special about the U.S.—at least as an ideal. Denied the rights of citizenship in the country that had kept him in slavery, Douglass found strong support in Britain and Ireland. His international experience was crucial to his sense of “self-ownership” and provided a platform for his biting attacks on American expansion, exceptionalism, and hypocrisy (81, 90). Yet Douglass declined to take “egalitarian exile in Europe” (91). Even as he sought “cosmopolitan intervention” to redeem the U.S., his evolving “professional identity” on both sides of the Atlantic contributed to his “willingness to work with, as well as within” the U.S. (94, 97).

A generation of cultural critics has dismissed Emerson for naively pursuing “universal” truths that inevitably are conditioned, they argue, by social and historical context. Eckel, who is theoretically sophisticated, accepts Emerson on his own terms. She admires his concept of “a certain ‘expansiveness’ of mind”—his celebration, for example, of Dante’s “‘universality’” (101, 102). And she usefully complicates matters by describing Em-

erson as “more cosmopolitan than patriot” but also inescapably a “perpetually current” American icon who eventually had “renewed faith in the *universal* significance of American nation-building” (99, 103; italics added). Though in *English Traits* Emerson sharply diagnosed Britain’s materialism and social inequities as symptoms of cultural decline, he did not, Eckel argues, claim the mantle of national supremacy for the U.S. Moving beyond Fuller’s sense of nationhood, Emerson “claimed world citizenship” (103). In all matters, Eckel asserts, “individual conscience” and self-reliance “remain[ed] non-negotiable for Emerson throughout his career” (113).

Particularly revealing is the chapter on “Grace Greenwood” (Sara Jane Clarke Lippincott), editor for *Godey’s Lady’s Book* and the *National Era*, novelist, travel writer, and author of juvenile literature whose writing Hawthorne likened to prostitution, but whom Eckel more charitably describes as being in the vanguard of a new form of “antebellum literary achievement” at which women excelled (134). Greenwood’s career was transatlantic, but unlike other writers in *Atlantic Citizens*, especially Fuller, her motive was profit and entertainment, and not politics. She was patriotic and dealt in national stereotypes; her work was thus “actually *anti*-transatlantic in spirit” (139). Commercially motivated even in her children’s literature, Greenwood is less admirable than Eckel’s other subjects, yet she is credited with helping “inaugurat[e] a new hybrid form of literary professionalism” (151). But perhaps the master of self-promotion was Whitman, whose “‘Americanism’ grew out of transatlantic exchange,” most directly through William Michael Rossetti’s “collaboration” with Whitman on the 1868 London edition of his *Poems* (154). (Many British critics who recognized Whitman’s “American” qualities, however, didn’t particularly like his work; they were happy to throw it in the face of Americans and chide them for failing to recognize one of their own [163].) Unlike Emerson, according to Eckel, Whitman made no claims to “universal meanings,” and unlike Fuller or Douglass he had no agenda for “social change” (155). Whitman announced his American and modern qualities (and equated the two), but he largely created his persona as America’s “founding literary father” through international channels (171).

Each chapter of *Atlantic Citizens* is deeply grounded in criticism, history, biography, and close textual analysis. Leslie Eckel’s prose is largely jargon free and sparkles with shrewd insights and delightful wit. Her book is a bold declaration that transatlantic literary study is as vital as ever.

Wesley T. Mott
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Reviews

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The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Volume X: Uncollected Prose Writings: Addresses, Essays, and Reviews. ED. RONALD A. BOSCO, JOEL MYERSON, AND GLEN M. JOHNSON. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013. cxxiii + 970 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

The publication of *Uncollected Prose Writings*, the tenth and final volume of the Emerson *Collected Works* edition, concludes an editorial project of some four decades. For an assessment of the achievement of the edition as a whole, I recommend Robert N. Hudspeth's lucid essay in *Nineteenth Century Prose* (40.2 [Fall 2013]: 1-104). Publication of this volume also completes the vast scholarly undertaking, shared among many scholars in the last half-century, of making Emerson's work available in well-edited and fully annotated editions: the *Letters*, the *Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle*, the magnificent *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks* (the Bible, Tao, and Gita of Emerson studies), the *Early Lectures*, the *Poetry Notebooks*, the *Complete Sermons*, the *Topical Notebooks*, the *Antislavery Writings*, and the *Later Lectures*.

The editors of this concluding *Collected Works* volume faced particularly complex editorial questions arising from Emerson's waning capacity for purposeful intellectual effort in the 1870s, and his resulting collaboration with James E. Cabot and Ellen Emerson to bring several late works to publication. Nancy Craig Simmons called these issues to attention in her consideration of Cabot's role as Emerson's literary executor (*Studies in the American Renaissance*, 1983, 335-389), and in editing the *Later Lectures*, Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson provided a sense of the intellectually rich but textually ensnared state of Emerson's heavily used, revised, and repeatedly reassembled lecture manuscripts, the source of much of the material that was fashioned into his last books. In his "Historical Introduction" to *Letters and Social Aims* (1875), Bosco made clear the fact that after late 1875, works published under Emerson's name "were collaborations between Cabot and Ellen [Emerson] over which an increasingly passive Emerson watched" (CW 8:xxxiii). These essays, along with others assembled after Emerson's death, constituted the books we know as *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, *Miscellanies*, and *Natural History of Intellect and Other Papers*, volumes 10-12 of Emerson's *Complete Works* in Cabot's Riverside and Edward Waldo Emerson's Centenary Editions.

The editors of *Uncollected Prose Writings* thus faced the challenging tasks of verifying Emerson's authorship of the works attributed to him in these editions and of locating and establishing the texts of every prose work Emerson had published but not collected in the course of his prolific career. As Myerson explains in his "Textual Introduction," the prose volumes thus far published in the *Collected Works* edition were works "that

Emerson had himself conceived of and published during his lifetime," or in the case of *Letters and Social Aims*, "a collaboration with others willingly entered into" (cvi). Bosco and Myerson compile persuasive evidence that this was not the case with most of the final three Riverside and Centenary volumes. That material is therefore excluded from the *Collected Works* edition. Cabot's assistance to Emerson and his family was both welcome and appropriate, they explain, and relieved Emerson from enormous stress and frustration. Cabot's loyalty to both Emerson the individual, and to his growing reputation, is unquestionable, and it seems to me that Cabot must also have felt an obligation to make the enormous archive of unpublished lecture material available to the public, even if that required, in the later stages, combinations of materials from different sources in the tangled trove of Emerson's manuscripts. But even granted Cabot's loyalty and sense of duty, one cannot overlook the shadow of Houghton Mifflin behind these proceedings, ever ready to offer a new volume or edition of Emerson to the book-buying public.

We will continue to have the familiar Centenary edition on the library shelves and at rwe.org, so nothing is utterly lost in Bosco and Myerson's editorial judgment. But much is gained. The works included in *Uncollected Prose Writings* and the volume's exemplary introductory essays offer clarity about the nature of Emerson's later texts, and provide a firm definition of the boundaries of his active intellectual career. That career is further illumined by the 110 pieces collected in the volume, ranging in date from 1822 to 1875. Emerson's *Dial* contributions are perhaps the most important group, reminding us of the powerful impact of this sometimes discounted journal, which widened Emerson's receptivity and strengthened his influence, and also brought Margaret Fuller into intellectual maturity. Hudspeth rightly singles out the 1866 essay "Character" (447-64) as an apt and moving summation of Emerson's values; surely it is one of Emerson's strongest later works. Also notable is the 1862 essay "American Civilization" (394-410) presented here in a restored form, a politically aware articulation of Emerson's ethically grounded theory of citizenship, written at the most crucial of historical moments. The editors have gathered the reference material for this meticulously annotated edition in user-friendly text-by-text sections, inviting a process of browsing and discovery that will benefit readers for many generations. Bravo and a hearty thanks to Bosco, Myerson, and Johnson, and a salute to all the Emerson editors who have helped us better understand the great American Scholar.

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Oregon State University

The Annotated Emerson. Edited by David Mikics.

FOREWORD BY PHILLIP LOPATE. Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012.
xxvii + 541 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

This attractive volume brings together selections of Emerson's most important writings with insightful commentary by editor David Mikics in an oversized and illustrated format. With the exception of Stephen Whicher's *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson* and the Norton Critical Edition, there has been no other edition of this kind devoted to the works of Emerson. This is a surprising fact given the allusiveness and subtleties of Emerson's expression. Without the apparatus of literary history, one may struggle to understand such a writer whose style demands that the reader be, at the very least, well-versed in the classics and the Bible. And considering the many other contextual challenges that Emerson's writings pose, one may think that such a book is long overdue. Indeed, *The Annotated Emerson* proves itself useful in this regard.

David Mikics promises that this edition is "designed for both the neophyte reader of Emerson and the experienced scholar" (19). This is not an easy task because, on the one hand, a good annotated volume ought to be accessible enough to engage the general reader while, on the other hand, it needs to offer something more than a gloss to engage the expert. A good edition of this type will allow the beginner an opportunity to encounter Emerson's writings with greater clarity and understanding and lead the professional reader to make some new and perhaps surprising discoveries.

While much of this book's contents are to be expected, Mikics has made a few interesting choices. The greatest hits are all here: "Nature," "The American Scholar," "The Divinity School Address," the essentials of *Essays: First Series* ("History," "Self-Reliance," "Circles"), *Essays: Second Series* ("The Poet," "Experience," "Politics," "Nominalist and Realist," "New England Reformers"), and *The Conduct of Life* ("Fate," "Power," and "Illusions."). There are two chapters from *Representative Men* ("Montaigne" and "Shakespeare") and two from the oft-neglected *English Traits* ("First Visit to England" and "Stonehenge"). Emerson's sketches of Margaret Fuller and Henry Thoreau are here as well, as is his piece on John Brown. Probably the most unique selection for this edition is Emerson's letter to Martin Van Buren on the subject of Indian removal. In addition to these prose works, *The Annotated Emerson* contains several of Emerson's important poems, including "Merlin" and his translations of Persian poets.

One of the ways that *The Annotated Emerson* accomplishes its task is by citing numerous passages from Emerson's journals—for who better to annotate the works of Emerson than the man himself? Author Phillip Lopate defends this "undisguised Emerson" in his foreword, arguing that, "In his journals we see how gradually, hesitantly, incrementally his belief system accrued over decades, how much he took from other writers... how often he subjected his hunches to testing and self-

questioning, and how much he was at the mercy of the intrusions and bonuses of daily life" (x). Both Mikics and Lopate acquaint the reader with this more "vulnerable" Emerson, each by offering a brief chronicle of his life punctuated with key journal entries. Likewise, the journals entries themselves also serve as independent features of the book, and are helpful in revealing the essence of Emerson's ideas.

The Annotated Emerson also, of course, does its required work of glossing terms which may be unfamiliar, ambiguous, or in need of clarification. In *Nature*, for example, we are reminded what it means to be an "alembic" and who this "Turgot" is. We are relieved of the cumbersome duty that is the dictionary or Internet search but there is more value to the editor's annotations than just that: the glosses are especially helpful in attending to the etymologies of the terms Emerson uses as he plays with the meanings of words. Mikics makes clear that he understands and appreciates Emerson's grasp of the primal power of language.

The necessary largeness of this volume is matched by the depth of the knowledge provided in its annotations, which display Mikics's nimble analytical skills. Never imposing, the editor chooses just the right moments to interject his own thoughts, as when he makes certain to note the turns in "Experience" or to call attention to what is *not* so apparent in "Illusions." He also makes strong connections between the texts. For example, he presents "New England Reformers" in a way that reveals its intertextuality with "Self-Reliance," "Experience," and "Circles," and he relates the motif of the "circular power returning unto itself" in "The American Scholar" to lines in "Uriel." Throughout the book, Mikics gathers and compares insights from such major Emersonians as Richard Poirier, Stanley Cavell, Harold Bloom, Barbara Packer, and Lawrence Buell. Equally enlightening (and humbling) are the many notes that demonstrate both Emerson's indebtedness to other minds and Mikics's own commitment to assiduous source study.

In the end, this way of reading Emerson is itself a kind of criticism. It argues, by way of the scholarship which Mikics brings to these works, that Emerson's writing is dense and that to read Emerson requires more than just an awareness of that fact. It requires that the reader ascend to the spires of his form. To this end, *The Annotated Emerson* is like a ladder, inviting us to climb.

Mark Gallagher

University of California, Los Angeles

My Emerson

A column devoted to our readers' personal reflections on Emerson

RUTH MARTIN

Northwestern University

Our guest lecturer paused a moment while reciting some famous lines from “Self-Reliance”: “The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature.” Over lunch he told me why. “It struck me there might be students in the room whose dinner wasn’t sure.” My interlocutor was Dan Malachuk, Associate Professor of English at Western Illinois University and co-editor with Alan M. Levine of *A Political Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (2011). The class was “An American Inheritance: Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Baldwin,” funded by the Emerson Society’s 2012 Community Project Award, and the participants were alumni of the Odyssey Project, a program offering free, college-level humanities courses to low-income adults. Our students spanned fifty years in age and the gamut of Chicago’s north, west, and south sides, many leaving at home or bringing to class children and grandchildren. For those struggling on the margins, childcare—like transportation, housing, employment, medical care, and yes, dinner—is never sure. Dan was right. Did that mean then that Emerson was wrong?

I’d discovered the Odyssey Project five years earlier when, newly graduated from the University of Chicago, I wondered whether my humanities education was an obstacle or an entry to conversation with the larger world. I despaired that I had become someone who could talk only to people who had read the same books I had. Plato and Woolf, Augustine and Conrad, *Exodus* and *Quixote* had shepherded me through the problems of my own adolescence. But did these books have anything to say to the problems of life on the southside of Chicago—to poverty, bad schools, housing, racism, depression?

The Odyssey Project emphatically replied *yes*. An extension of the Clemente Course in the Humanities founded by Earl Shorris in 1995, Odyssey is rooted in Shorris’s commitment to the philosophy of UChicago’s president Robert Maynard Hutchins who’d proclaimed that “the best education for the best is the best education for all.” Shore followed that the study of the humanities by the poor is “in itself a redistribution of wealth.” First-year Odyssey students take courses in literature, philosophy, American history, art history, and critical writing. Depending on the instructor, they read Alice Walker, Franz Fanon, Eugene Genovese, Roland Barthes, bell hooks, and they always read Sophocles, Plato, and Jefferson. The classes I attend as an Odyssey tutor

aren’t much different from those I took as a college student. Faculty from the University of Chicago, DePaul, and Northwestern lead students slowly through difficult texts and encourage them to imagine the worlds that the texts envision.

Odyssey students don’t need help imagining those worlds. Adults with children of their own and/or elderly parents to care for intimately comprehend the tragedies in *King Lear*. Students who have stood on the picket line and protested City Hall ask informed and authentic questions about the Haymarket Riot and Socrates’ trial. Race, class, and gender aren’t imported into the classroom through social theory, but emerge organically as students bring a lifetime of experience to bear on great books.

Taking courses along with Odyssey students has changed my relationship to my own education. In college, Plato’s cave allegory resonated with me because of its description of the ascent—the individual’s slow acquisition of knowledge through stages of painful confusion. My Odyssey classmates, more keenly concerned with community life, noted the *descent*, whereby the enlightened one, by pity or necessity, returns to the darkness of the cave wherein society channel-surfs the shadows. I learned from these students that to withdraw from the world to care for oneself is not an end goal, but only the first stage of preparation for returning to the world and competently doing the labor that marks a human life. In short, the Odyssey Project has shown me how to enter political life.

James Baldwin (whom I read for the first time in an Odyssey classroom) knew this dynamic well. He enacted it in his push-pull with public life, his need to unlock his experience as a black American by, for a time, escaping it. But if he left America to escape its dangerous imprisonment—“in Paris, I began to see the sky for what seemed to be the first time”—he wrote as a means to return to it. One “terrible day, the day to which his entire sojourn has been tending,” the expatriate realizes “that if he has been preparing himself for anything in Europe, he has been preparing himself—for America” (“The Discovery of What It Means to Be an American”). Baldwin found himself becoming prepared, in fact, to name what was for him white America’s most unforgiveable crime: “[T]his is the crime of which I accuse my country and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know

it... [I]t is not permissible that the authors of devastation should also be innocent. It is the innocence which constitutes the crime" ("My Dungeon Shook: A Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of Emancipation").

It is the recurring motif of innocence in Baldwin's oeuvre that first inspired me to read Baldwin and Emerson—who rarely are treated together—side-by-side. For even though innocence is not one of Emerson's central themes, it is one of his most powerful cultural legacies. Other little-noted resemblances between Baldwin and Emerson abound: both were preachers who left the church; both are best known for their essays (or secular sermons?); and both faced their century's most acute moral and political crises. Yet both also insisted that the individual's primary responsibility is to "become" or "achieve" oneself. Baldwin calls this achievement "experience"; Emerson calls it "innocence."

Particularly poignant in this regard is Emerson's nostalgic (and problematic) sigh for that "nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner." He continues in "Self-Reliance": "Ah, that [one] could pass again into [that] neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges, and having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbriable, unaffrighted innocence, must always be formidable."

Baldwin wants us to wonder who makes the boys' dinner. In his essayistic masterpiece, "Notes of a Native Son," he writes of his ambivalence, shared by his siblings, at his father's illness and death: "The children felt, quite simply, relief that he would not be coming home anymore. My mother's observation that it was he, after all, who had kept them alive all these years meant nothing because the problems of keeping children alive are not real for children." Childhood was Baldwin's trope not for

independence, but for ignorance of life's costs to others: "Europeans refer to Americans as children in the same way that American Negroes refer to them as children, and for the same reason: they mean Americans have so little experience—experience referring not to *what* happens, but to *whom*—that they have no key to the experience of others" ("The New Lost Generation").

Reading Baldwin made me return to Emerson in a new light. As for many, Emerson was the hero of my adolescence. But I had also inherited my generation's ambivalence about the Sage of Concord that is exemplified by Santayana's description of his "cheery, childlike soul, impervious to the evidence of evil." The Odyssey Project had proven to me that great books could make contact with the painful incongruities of modern American life. Could Emerson? Or was honoring Emerson an entrenchment against experience? "Innocence" seemed exactly the right grounds on which to test my Emerson, and either to defend or outgrow him.

With our Emerson Society funding, a fellow tutor and I brought together nineteen Odyssey alumni over the course of six Saturdays in the summer of 2012. We read Emerson's "Address to Citizens of Concord" and "Man, the Reformer" alongside Baldwin's "Everybody's Favorite Protest Novel" and "In Search of a Majority" to ask questions that mattered to them, and to us: What work falls to ourselves alone, and what must we do as a community, politically? What is the role of *thinking* in a democracy? How do you "achieve" an identity? The cave allegory played out in our conversations

again and again as we discussed how to free ourselves from society's constraints and how—and whether—we should return.

I was and was not surprised to find our students set on fire by "Self-Reliance." They recognized the question, "are



Odyssey Project alumni and friends participate in An American Inheritance: Essays of James Baldwin and Ralph Waldo Emerson, a Community Service project sponsored by the Emerson Society.

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My Emerson

(Continued from page 11)

they my poor?" Those responsible for raising children and caring for parents nodded in assent to "I shun father and mother and wife and brother, when my genius calls." The daily chores of adult life, "the evidence of evil," confirmed for them Emerson's desire and call to follow "whim" and withdraw from the world awhile.

His call to "pass again" into the neutrality of childhood, then, might be better taken as a call not to revert, but to *turn again* to the matters and perspective of youth. Philosophy,

after all, begins in wonder, childhood's definitive trait. Odyssey's pedagogical space offers "world enough and time" to wonder in adulthood, but only on occasion: when we can, we escape to that place. But then we return home, revived and prepared to love again the others who call for our attentions. Baldwin called this continual struggle "a lover's war." Luis, one of our seminar students, put it even more simply: "Thought fraternizes."

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"Mary's Remains"

A Request from the Editors of *The Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson*

Noelle Baker and Sandy Petrulionis, editors of *The Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson*, solicit information about a Mary Emerson manuscript that they are also editing. Filed with Ralph Waldo Emerson's Journals and Notebooks (MS Am 1280H [160]) is a bound volume with marbled board covers containing a decorative handwritten title, "Mary's Remains," below which is an ink drawing of an ornate fence with two gates. In one of these gates stands a figure wearing a hat and holding what appears to be a large cane or stick. "Vol 2" has been written on the top and bottom of the spine of the front cover, indicating that, presumably, there was a preceding volume that is no longer extant. Inside the front end cover are written "Roxbury," "Mary," "Mary's [Writings]," several elaborate fractions ("1/2," "1/3") and additional sketches, and, importantly, what we believe to be a date of "1782." This surface also contains daubs of orange sealing wax, indicating that another manuscript page, or perhaps a photograph, had been affixed here.

Most of the notebook pages are blank, and many have been excised, but the first several pages contain poems that our research has not yet determined to be original or from commonplacing, a practice reflected throughout Emerson's *Almanacks*. Their themes amplify topics also addressed in the *Almanacks*. Many pages include online and other alterations, which are in darker ink and likely written at a later time. Some of these revisions also display a different hand from that of the poems themselves. Based on our knowledge of

Emerson's chirography, we think some revisions may reflect her more youthful hand; others are perhaps the script of one of the Emerson brothers. The penmanship of the title on the cover is more practiced and elegant than that of the poems; both it and the cover's drawings remind us of similar features in Waldo Emerson's journals.

The editors of *JMN* refer to this item simply as "a notebook of Mary Moody Emerson" (1: 411 n8). We have discussed it with other Emerson scholars, but for them and for us, many questions remain, including the most important one of authorship: Is this Mary Moody Emerson's hand on these pages, and did this notebook belong to her? Unfortunately, the earliest comparable handwriting for her dates from 1793, when she was 19 years old, and it is quite different from the hand that penned the poems on these pages, some of which seems the product of a person who is learning to write cursive. We have spent considerable time inspecting the watermarks on the notebook's pages, but this research has not yet confirmed "1782" as an accurate date. If it is correct, is "1782" the date on which this blank notebook was presented to a very young (age 8) Emerson, or is it perhaps the date on which she first wrote in its pages?

We would be grateful for any light others might shed on these and other questions about "Mary's Remains," which we find an intriguing, if mysterious, example of the extent to which the Emerson family collaborated on and treasured a rich literary manuscript culture.