



*R.W.E.*

Volume 16, Number 2

Fall 2005

## EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

### Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to David M. Robinson

At its annual meeting on 27 May in Boston, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society voted to confer its Distinguished Achievement Award upon David M. Robinson. The presentation of a certificate and the Emerson Society Medal took place on 8 July following Professor Robinson's major address "Natural History and Natural Life: Thoreau's Intellectual and Emotional Crisis" at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Massachusetts.

An esteemed member of the Emerson Society's awards committee declared David Robinson "one of the very few scholars on whom the whole modern Emerson enterprise is built." A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, he received the M.T.S. from the Harvard Divinity School and the M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. His dissertation director was the late Merton M. Sealts Jr., who also received the society's Distinguished Achievement Award, in 1995. Dr. Robinson is Oregon Professor of English and Distinguished Professor of American Literature, and Director of the Center for Humanities, at Oregon State University.

Professor Robinson's *Emerson and the Conduct of Life* (1993) is widely considered the best book on the pragmatic strain in Emerson's thought. His first book, *Apostle of Culture: Emerson as Preacher and Lecturer* (1982), was a groundbreaking study of the theological and intellectual underpinnings of Emerson's early career. In this book—as well as in dozens of articles and in the introductory historical essay to the four-volume *Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson*—Professor Robinson firmly

established the Unitarian foreground of Emersonian Transcendentalism. His *The Unitarians and the Universalists* (1985) is a standard biographical reference work, and his collections *William Ellery Channing* (1985), *The Spiritual Emerson* (2003), and *The Political Emerson* (2004) have made important writings of American religious liberalism available to a wider audience.

Besides these major scholarly projects, Professor Robinson has written the annual bibliographical essay "Emerson, Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller" for *American Literary Scholarship* since 1988, and since 1991 he has compiled the official annual bibliography for *Emerson Society Papers*. Valued as a generous colleague across the profession, he is a frequent presenter at scholarly conferences, contributor to reference works and festschrifts, and past president of the Emerson Society. His lectures, like his books and essays, are admired for a grace and a clarity that render even complex issues of intellectual history and theological controversy accessible.

A leading Emerson scholar for the past quarter century, Professor Robinson recently turned his attention to Henry Thoreau—with equally impressive results. *Natural Life: Thoreau's Worldly Transcendentalism* (2004) has been hailed by Bradley P. Dean, editor of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, as one of the best books ever written about Thoreau. The Emerson Society proudly shares David Robinson with our Thoreauvian friends even as we honor him with our highest award.

—Wesley T. Mott



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Emerson Society members continue generously to join at various "patron" levels of membership. All donations above the \$10 annual regular membership go to support special programs of the Society. 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 Robert D. Habich, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0460.

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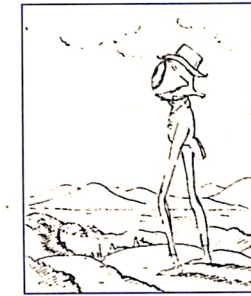
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## PROSPECTS.

### Calls for Papers

Emerson Society sessions at the American Literature Association's annual conference in San Francisco, on 25–28 May 2006, are listed below. Conference information will be available at [www.americanliterature.org](http://www.americanliterature.org). Send 300-word abstracts to Joe Thomas at [jthomas@caldwell.edu](mailto:jthomas@caldwell.edu) by 15 December. Panel chairs will be announced.

#### SESSION I: Emerson and Europe: *English Traits* at 150

This panel takes the sesquicentennial of the 1856 volume *English Traits* as the occasion to examine the role of this book within Emerson's thought or authorship, or his relations with England, or Emersonian trans-Atlantic / cross-cultural issues more generally.

#### SESSION II: Emerson and Later 19th-Century Writers

Emerson, and various constructions of Emerson, constituted a powerful presence for writers in a wide range of genres and disciplines in the later 19th century, whether as a beacon, antagonist, Oedipal figure, or otherwise unavoidable cultural fact. For this panel the Society requests papers addressing responses to the Emersonian inheritance in the later 19th-century, roughly 1880-1915.

Please note that the Emerson Society's new Graduate Student Paper Award may provide up to \$500 to support travel to ALA to present an accepted student paper; see the separate announcement on page 9.

The Emerson Society will also offer a panel at the annual Thoreau Gathering, to be held in Concord in early July. This year's conference theme is "Mountains, Seashores, and Moonlight: Thoreau's Exploration of Wildness." In concert with this theme, the Emerson Society solicits 300-word abstracts by 15 November 2005, for papers exploring some aspect of "Emerson and Wildness." Send abstracts to Joe Thomas, [jthomas@caldwell.edu](mailto:jthomas@caldwell.edu).

### Emerson 2004 Bibliography

This Fall issue of *ESP* was produced earlier than usual because of your editor's approaching mid-year sabbatical. As a result, David M. Robinson's annual Emerson bibliography (the 2004 installment) will appear in the Spring issue.

### Michael Anagnos, Helen Keller, and Emerson

Joel Brattin sends this: In her article "What Helen Keller Saw: The Making of a Writer" in the 16 & 23 June 2003 issue of *The New Yorker*, Cynthia Ozick notes that Michael Anagnos, the director of the Perkins Institute who originally sent Keller's teacher Annie Sullivan to Keller in Alabama, found young Helen "a miracle child—a young goddess." Anagnos described her as "the queen of precocious and brilliant children, Emersonian in temper, most exquisitely organized, with intellectual sight of unsurpassed sharpness and infinite reach, a true daughter of Mnemosyne" (190). Later, when Keller was eleven, Anagnos changed his views, denouncing her as "a living lie" (193).

### Rare Artifacts on Sale

Four Emerson Society bicentennial T-shirts remain in stock. They are blue tie-dye, with "RWE in 2003" on the front, "The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society" on the back, and "R.W.E." on the left sleeve. Each is \$10, postage included. Because of the limited number (3 XL, 1 Medium), please email [wmott@wpi.edu](mailto:wmott@wpi.edu) to order.

### Emerson and P. G. Wodehouse

Joel Brattin writes: The Spring 2003 issue of *Plum Lines*, the quarterly journal of The Wodehouse Society, includes a poem about Wodehouse that touches on Emerson. The poem, "I'm Breaking Up Because You Won't," treats a romantic split between the speaker, Leopold, and Jane. Leopold feels they are incompatible because Jane has a misplaced sense of humor: She laughs at Hegel, Wagner, and Sartre, as well as *Nanook of the North*, but fails to appreciate the wonders of P. G. [affectionately known as "Plum"] Wodehouse's comic prose. She also, evidently, finds Emerson funny:

If Ralph Emerson's yucks you insisted  
Could never be quite over-sold  
Together we might have persisted,  
But you added that Plum left you cold.

The author of this 45-line poem is David Landman, and the poem appears on p. 19 of *Plum Lines*, vol. 24, no. 1.

### Emerson Sightings/Citings

Bartender Gwen Butler won notoriety when she received a \$3 million tip and lost it all in an unsuccessful restaurant venture. According to Monica Collins ("Redemption Is Served," *Boston Globe Magazine*, 22 May 2005, p. 18), the experience left Butler with nothing but "maxed-out credit cards, broken friendships, deep depression, agoraphobia, and a high regard for Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose essays got her through the bleak period. 'Emerson saved my life,' she says. 'He's so totally Plato.'" Thanks to Sandy Mott for the article.

Roger Thompson sends the following: RWE is highlighted in an article, "Banking on Earthquakes," in the July 2005 *Geo Times*. Lisa Rossbacher quotes Emerson in the article in order to support her claim that "everything is connected" in geology. In particular, the following Emerson quotation is blown up and centered on the page in an inset accompanying the article: "We learn geology the morning after the earthquake, on ghastly diagrams of cloven mountains, upheaved plains, and the dry bed of the sea."

### Pückler in America: Speakers Sought

The German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C., in cooperation with the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park in Bad Muskau, Germany, is currently preparing an interdisciplinary, international conference on the North American perception and reception of Fürst Pückler's literary and landscape works. We are still looking for qualified scholars who would be interested in contributing and could talk about Pückler's reception by Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott, and Edgar Allan Poe, among others.

The landscape gardens designed by Pückler and his gardeners which surround his estates in Bad Muskau and Branitz in Lusatia were visited by American landscape architects such as Charles Eliot and Thomas Sears at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. German-born landscape architects who later practiced in America such as Adolph Strauch and George Kessler were influenced by Pückler's works. The conference is scheduled to take place on 22–25 June in Bad Muskau, Germany, and will be followed by a tour to Pückler's parks in Branitz and Berlin.

Scholars who are interested should contact Sonja Dümpelmann at [duempelmann@ghi-dc.org](mailto:duempelmann@ghi-dc.org).

### EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society  
Published at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

[www.emersonsociety.org](http://www.emersonsociety.org)

Editor: Wesley T. Mott

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*Emerson Society Papers* is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are \$10 a year (students \$5). Send checks for membership (calendar year) and back issues (\$5 each) to Robert D. Habich, Department of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0460.

*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 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, Wesley T. Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280, or email [wmott@wpi.edu](mailto:wmott@wpi.edu).

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Jennifer Gurley, Department of English, Le Moyne College, 1419 Salt Springs Road, Syracuse, NY 13214-1399.

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# Abstracts of Boston ALA Papers

The following panels were presented by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society  
at the sixteenth annual conference of the American Literature Association on 27 May 2005 in Boston, Massachusetts.

## SESSION I: Reconsidering *The Conduct of Life* Chair, Joseph M. Thomas (Caldwell College)

### "There is Always a Best Way of Doing Everything": Power, Wealth, and Force in *The Conduct of Life*

JOHN M. BULEY, JR., *Managing Director, JPMorgan Chase*

*The Conduct of Life* is a transitional Emerson work often overshadowed by his earlier writings. It is transitional in that it marks the culmination of Emerson's consideration of the primacy of action with thought in the conduct of human affairs. *The Conduct of Life* marks the first true consideration of the effect of the transformation of the Industrial Revolution on American society. Finally, it provides a partial though explicit answer to the question implicit in Emerson's prior works: "How shall I live?"

*The Conduct of Life* is one of Emerson's most relevant works, integrating considerations of thought with action, movement with stasis, wealth and poverty, and power and impotence. Written at mid-century during a time of tremendous social, demographic, and technological change, it is as relevant now as when originally published because of the many similarities between our times and the 1850s. Once considered a departure from Emerson's earlier works, *The Conduct of Life* is the fulfillment of ideas in his earlier work, the natural outgrowth of his core principles combined with social and economic change during the pre-Civil War decade.

This paper considers the impact of transition and movement presented by Emerson with particular emphasis on the role of change and the twin impacts of technology and societal change brought about by rapid introduction of new implements of farming, communication, and manufacturing. The key themes of power, force, wealth, and movement are integrated into a truly cohesive work that resonates with our times.

### Silence, Truth-Telling, and Realism in Emerson's "Worship"

ELIZABETH ADDISON, *Western Carolina University*

The "Worship" chapter of Emerson's last unified book of essays, *The Conduct of Life*, is a powerful statement of faith based on inward experience and natural law, a faith or principle that is both the source of and the result of personal power, to be exerted against sentimental religious notions and real social ills such as slavery.

The essay is framed by contrasting perspectives on realism. Focusing on the source of creativity—specifically, how we come to the words we say or write—Emerson transforms the grittiness of unpleasant facts into the solidity of stones, an unshakeable foundation for action. Two forms of spiritual power are at issue: creative power in words, which comes from silence, and moral power, which comes from speaking and acting truly. Both real and realistic, such spiritual power operates by mathematical and scientific laws.

Silence is the medium by which one comes to true words; Emerson characteristically associates it with instinct, with truth, with spiritual reality. Spiritual falsehood is associated with too many words: "How a man's truth comes to mind, long after we have forgotten all his words! How it comes to us in silent hours, that truth is our only armor in all passages of life and death." Worship is that silent

hour that shows us the "unity, intimacy, and sincerity" of the very atoms, the laws of natural science, because the moral law works by cause and effect as much as do gravity and chemistry.

The law works irrespective of creed, and "what comes out, that was put in." Emerson saw this exchange as an exact one, a "tie of fate." The only good that can come to us is what belongs to us. Action therefore is the way to be truly religious. "You must do your work, before you shall be released." Emerson's own work, speaking and writing, was possible for him only through this close connection between truth and work:

There is a principle which is the basis of things, which all speech aims to say, and all action to evolve, a simple, quiet, undescribed, undescrivable presence, dwelling very peacefully in us, our rightful lord: we are not to do, but to let do; not to work, but to be worked upon.

Power comes from consenting to be influenced by this principle within, the source of creative power.

Emerson captures the identity of spiritual and real in the paradoxes "necessitated freedom" and "voluntary obedience." Human freedom is necessitated in that it works by necessary, unalterable laws. It is freedom because it moves in a direction inexorably determined by our own action, our own truth or falsehood. To be true, we re-make our religion out of the materials of our world and do the best we can with them. In volunteering to obey these necessary laws rather than flout them, in being obedient to our work, we connect with the "fatal strength" of nature and reinforce ourselves. Furthermore, we do, "with knowledge, what the stones do by structure."

### Emerson's *Conduct of Life*: A Retrospect and Celebration

PHYLLIS COLE, *Penn State—Delaware County Campus*

This paper offers personal memory of work on *The Conduct of Life* as a context for recognizing both the achievement of its new critical edition and the rise in critical estimation of a crucial text from Emerson's last major phase. I first worked on *The Conduct of Life* more than thirty years ago in Joel Porte's graduate seminar at Harvard. As I contextualized it within Emerson's experience of the 1850s, my materials were old editions of the primary text and journals and—for the lectures from which the book evolved—manuscripts at Houghton Library. Even more, this text was recognized primarily for providing the second term, one of acquiescence and decline, in Stephen Whicher's formulation "Freedom and Fate." This was not the Emerson who mattered.

Since the 1970s seismic shifts have occurred critically, as David Robinson and others hailed the 1860 essay collection as Emerson's definitive statement of a pre-Jamesian pragmatism, and Michael Lopez and others recognized in it a pre-Nietzschean philosophy of power.

Meanwhile an editing revolution has also transformed Emerson studies, so the 2003 edition of *The Conduct of Life* not only represents the latest volume in the *Collected Works*, but also draws on the editions of journals, letters, and lectures that have collectively more than doubled the number of Emerson's words available to us.

Therefore I reread this newly accessible work with pleasure. Douglas Wilson's text is based upon Emerson's latest authentic revision of his essays, in some cases showing actual reversal in his point. Joseph Slater's notes are reflective mini-essays on this same

process of evolving perspective and its intellectual sources. And Barbara Packer's historical introduction assesses *The Conduct of Life* as Emerson's "ongoing project" from the lectures of 1850 to publication in 1860, especially tracking its relation to national antislavery politics. The critical edition superbly meets the needs of a new generation assessing Emerson's achievement.

### Joseph Slater and *The Conduct of Life*

BARBARA PACKER, *UCLA*

Now that *The Conduct of Life* has been published by Harvard University Press, readers can enjoy Joseph Slater's arresting "Notes" to Emerson's text, distinguished as much by their wit and affection as by their range of learning. Professor Slater also wrote the "Historical Introduction" and "Notes" to *Essays: First Series* (1979) and *Essays: Second Series* (1983). But every scholar who works on the later Emerson must be especially grateful for Prof. Slater's 1964 edition of *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle*. Generations of Emerson scholars have acquired a reputation for deep learning by following the hints contained in its footnotes. Even more influential for Emerson scholarship was Prof. Slater's 94-page "Introduction" to the correspondence, which deduced from the transatlantic flow and ebb of letters the complicated story of a friendship marked by seasons of delight, real mutual usefulness, and sudden eruptions of insult and anger. In its wit, balance, and novelistic insight into motives the "Introduction" remains a guide for anyone who seeks to extract patterns of meaning from primary sources.

## SESSION II: Emersonian Dilemmas: Individual and Community

Chair, Elizabeth Addison (*Western Carolina University*)

### From Emerson to Dewey: Rethinking Individualism and Community

JAMES M. ALBRECHT, *Pacific Lutheran University*

John Dewey's model of democratic community helps challenge the familiar view that Emersonian individualism is incompatible with any meaningfully collective or communal ethos. Dewey defines democracy as a communal ideal or "way of life" (to be pursued in all areas of human association) in which groups allow individuals to cultivate their talents by participating in the pursuit of common ends, and, conversely, individuals find personal fulfillment through such participation. Rejecting the dualism between egoism and altruism posited by classic liberalism, Dewey insists that liberty lies not in freedom from society and obligations, but in creating new forms of association that better harmonize personal fulfillment with the desire to benefit others. A democratic individual cultivates the habit of finding satisfaction in pursuing ends that serve a common good; but because we live in a changing world where ideas that define the common good must be continually revised, a democratic self must also be a dynamic, nonconformist self that questions conventional formulations of duty. Emerson's ethics prefigure this model of moral individuality within community: Self-reliance, he insists, cannot be a detachment from society, but requires forging an authentic mode of participating in society; moreover, cultivating one's own most vital self is not ignoring one's duties to others, he asserts, but the best way to fulfill those duties.

By rejecting any rigid dualism between individualism and collectivism, Dewey's experimentalism also provides a valuable correc-

tive to common assessments of Emerson's politics. The choice between comparatively collective and individualistic forms of association, Dewey argues, should be based on inquiry into the needs of a particular situation; moreover, when large-scale collective efforts are required, this in no way precludes the demand for individual imagination, initiative and responsibility. Accordingly, Emerson's critique of socialist experiments like Brook Farm need not imply a wholesale rejection of collective efforts, nor was his subsequent support for the massive mobilization required by the Civil War a tacit rejection of individualism. Dewey allows us to see Emersonian nonconformism not as a barrier to collective action, but as necessary to any collective effort that aspires to a democratic model of community.

### Elizabeth Palmer Peabody: The First Transcendentalist?

MEGAN MARSHALL, *Biographer, The Peabody Sisters*

Although it would be impossible to prove definitively, Elizabeth Peabody may have been the first American to use the term "Transcendentalism," and could have been the first to explicate the word in print. Putting together clues from letters, journals, and reminiscences while working on a biography of the Peabody sisters, I learned that Peabody had written a series of six essays on the "Spirit of the Hebrew Scriptures," in 1826, at age twenty-two, during a period when she met weekly with Rev. William Ellery Channing to read and discuss Coleridge and Wordsworth. In the fourth of these essays, Peabody later recalled, she introduced "the word transcendentalism," a term "I never had seen except in Coleridge's friend." In 1834, Peabody published three of the six essays in the *Christian Examiner*, at Andrews Norton's invitation. But Norton "cut off" the series before the fourth.

What did Peabody mean by "Transcendentalism," when she wrote about it in 1826? Because the fourth essay does not survive, we can't be sure. But Peabody writes elsewhere that the essay expressed thoughts "concerning the socialism of true Religion." A reading of the first of Peabody's *Christian Examiner* essays reveals that while she was in tune with other Transcendentalists about the importance of "inward revelation," she was just as insistent that an instinct to form and cultivate social relations was innate. The "social principle," she wrote, is "the very principle of our nature"; and "consciousness of the common nature...lead[s] the human being gently out of himself," stirring a desire to "communicate happiness" and do good for others. Social relations, she wrote, can "be considered a miniature of the spiritual universe." Transcendence could take place in a social context; she even proposed that "the social sentiment" is so strong that "there [can be] no solitary enjoyment."

Peabody pushed her theory of "the social principle" on numerous occasions and acted on it herself in opening her West Street bookshop as a meeting place for her Transcendentalist colleagues. She used the phrase in her essays promoting Brook Farm in *The Dial*. And on at least one occasion, her theory was taken up in discussion by others: Henry Hedge faulted the established church for not fully realizing "the social principle." Speaking in the final meeting of the Transcendental Club, Hedge charged that "the church of Humanity has yet to grow." The setting was Peabody's West Street bookshop.

### Emerson's Politics of Reluctance

JENNIFER GURLEY, *Le Moyne College*

American literary studies over the last 20 years have transformed an aloof Emerson into a politically aware public intellectual. This metamorphosis has enabled scholars from a variety of disciplines to reassess Emerson's place in American letters and politics. But the shift has occurred, I think, too empirically and mechanically. First, we



## Abstracts

(Continued from page 5)

mine the public record for “proof” of a politically invested Emerson that presumably is not to be found in the published essays, and then, armed with such evidence, we swing Emerson like a pendulum from the side of thinking to the side of acting. Yet Emerson’s political commitment, as I argue, does not appear in the act itself. Emerson would have us consider instead: 1. how one makes the decision to act, and 2. how one regards oneself before the act. Each derives from an Emersonian blend of Platonic and Kantian dialogue. First, Emerson opts for action (his preferred way: delivering a town lecture) only once he has felt personally the effects of social ills, and finds himself compelled to perform the “duty” (vs. complete the desire) of action. Second, Emerson approaches the public in order to “partake” (Emerson’s term from Plato), by sacrificially offering his private experience to a community that owns it thereafter. He does not “intervene”—the currently fashionable way of assessing the intellectual’s positioning toward his society—and cure it with his wisdom. Therefore, Emersonian political action is determined by one’s own dialogic bearing toward the world that insists on—precisely as it restrains—the individual. Not a volitional assertion of personal authority, Emerson’s manner of public participation is constitutionally dialogical and consequently reluctant. Emerson as I present him did not turn to politics at mid-career, but is alive in *Nature*, apparent in the early essays, explicit in the lectures on reform, and still waging in the *Later Lectures*.

### Emerson: The Private Man as Democratic Citizen

LESLIE ECKEL, *Yale University*

Emerson has been known by many representative titles—poet, preacher, philosopher, mystic, reformer—but perhaps none as imaginatively appealing or enduring as “Mr. America.” Although we are now more comfortable speaking of Emerson in political or “de-Transcendentalized” terms, recent work has cautioned us against equating Emerson too seamlessly with the nation itself. Emerson’s credentials as a nation-builder have been called into question by scholars who emphasize his global intellectual interests, but more needs to be done to clarify Emerson’s consistent pattern of philosophical objection to national forms of thought.

In his antislavery lectures of 1851 and 1854, Emerson confronted the discourse of patriotism head-on, and that encounter proved transformative in his thinking about the moral value of national allegiance and its relation to citizenship in a democratic society. He began to practice what I would call denationalization, a mode of cultural critique that sought, as he later explained, to “exasperate our nationality” rather than to reinforce it. American nationality became instantly invalid and “hollow” for Emerson, and he carried that skepticism forward into his work of emptying out nationalist rhetoric in his subsequent book, *English Traits*.

Emerson was in fact at his most original and most characteristic when he brought a philosophical “largeness” of thought to bear on the questions of national life. His doubts about national institutions and their pressure on individual citizens ran deep and frequently came into conflict with his core belief in the freedom of intellectual self-culture. Emerson was able to resolve that conflict by giving the individual power both to embody and to reshape the nation according to his or her own principles. By holding America and Americans to higher standards, he established himself as both an individualist and a cosmopolitan defender of what he called “an older and wider union, the law of nature and rectitude.”

## Reviews

### The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Edited by RONALD A. BOSCO AND JOEL MYERSON, 2 vols. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001. 432, 440 pp. \$130.00 cloth.

The recent rise in scholarship about Emerson suggests that we may well be in a new era of exploration about the Sage of Concord, and that new era, I think, will one day be marked as beginning with the publication of the *Later Lectures* in 2001. These lectures offer perhaps our best opportunity in many years to expand our understanding of Emerson’s vision of his native New England, to consider broadly his stance on slavery, to understand his vision of nature and the environment, and to reconsider the ways in which he develops as a prose stylist. Most importantly, however, they provide the strongest collection of material on Emerson’s chosen vocation: orator. In the opening words of the introduction, Ron Bosco and Joel Myerson have put in rather clear terms the work ahead for scholars: “There are not many studies of Emerson as a lecturer.” The *Later Lectures* is the first step toward a new set of discoveries in an already carefully mapped Emerson life and writings.

The editors make clear that any void in work on Emerson has as much to do with lack of clear information as anything else: Up to this point, scholars at large have had only early lectures (and sermons) to examine; many of the later lectures in manuscript are in disarray, so that examining them remains a time-consuming task; and accounts of Emerson as a speaker are so widespread that the collection of them seems an insurmountable task. Even so, we cannot escape the need to fully assess Emerson as a lecturer. It is, after all, where Emerson seems rather consciously to have chosen to circulate many of his ideas, and where, at least in mid-career, Emerson believed he might offer powerful possibilities for change in American culture. He writes in the lecture “Genius, Manners, and Customs” a passage that echoes in various forms in the *Later Lectures*, his journals, and even a letter to Carlyle:

For here is all that the true orator will ask, namely, a convertible audience... Here, everything is admissible, philosophy, ethics, divinity, criticism, poetry, humor, anecdote, mimicry,—ventriloquism almost,—all the breadth and versatility of the most liberal conversation, and of the highest, lowest, personal, and local topics—all are permitted, and all may be combined in one speech. (1:48)

We see in the *Later Lectures* the unfolding of what Emerson will call the “panharmonicon” of the podium: the possibility of new sounds, new messages, and “a total transformation of himself [the orator] into the minds of men” (1:48).

Bosco and Myerson, in publishing the lectures, established a new methodology that clarifies this panharmonicon of Emerson’s own work, work the editors call at once “complex” and “tortured” (xxxv). Compiling manuscript sources is daunting in its own right, but in reconstructing lectures (as opposed to essays), Bosco and Myerson needed not only a deep understanding of Emerson’s career and a rigorous attention to detail; they needed imagination and an ability to hear the lectures speak for themselves. This is where the lectures shine: in their attempt to capture the orality of the work, their attempt to capture Emerson’s voice.

Part of establishing that voice is the careful contextualization of each work. Each lecture series in these volumes is introduced with a broad discussion that provides the dates of delivery of speeches, payment for lectures, notes on audience, and critical insight into how a particular series fits within Emerson’s development as a writer and speaker. Additionally, each lecture itself is given a careful headnote detailing its rhetorical situation, and footnotes clarify references that would otherwise be lost to many readers, such as a footnote on a

“weathervane in the shape of a grasshopper on the top of Faneuil Hall” in the lecture “Essential Principles of Religion” (2:271). When read together with the editorial guidance, the lectures illustrate Emerson’s development as a speaker, and they demonstrate Emerson’s commitment to cultural change through the medium of the podium.

As the editors indicate, and as the arrangement of lectures demonstrates, Emerson’s voice and focus change from the middle portion of his career, covered largely in volume one, to the later portion, covered in volume two. The shift, however, is not a decisive break; instead, it is subtle development. It is an emergent Emerson that the lectures illustrate. We hear, for instance, notes of “Fate” from the Conduct of Life series published in volume one echoing in “Moral Forces” of volume two. Articulating the difference between these lectures and others, when it has been too easy to gather Emerson neatly into phases of “freedom” or “fate,” is the work that these lectures invite us to begin, and it is the necessary labor that awaits scholars. As that work commences, we will no doubt discover an Emerson wholly new, one whose influence and significance broadens beyond our first imaginings, and whose eloquence reaches well beyond the nineteenth century into our own, something many of us no doubt thought a “golden impossibility.”

—ROGER THOMPSON  
*Virginia Military Institute*

### Understanding Emerson: “The American Scholar” and His Struggle for Self-Reliance.

KENNETH S. SACKS. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. \$32.95, cloth.

“I don’t know what the world is coming to, if such a voice as that can be heard in old Harvard,” Orestes Brownson wrote Emerson two months after his delivery of “The American Scholar.” “You bearded the lion in his den.” That unpublished letter (10 November 1837) is cited by Kenneth Sacks in *Understanding Emerson*. In this concise study (128 pages of clear, finely detailed discussion, buttressed by a 14-page appendix containing the text of the oration, and some 30 pages of notes), Sacks succeeds admirably in placing “The American Scholar” in context. The context Sacks establishes for Emerson’s address is multilayered. He introduces us to the milieu of the Transcendentalist rebels and of the Unitarian elite, including the contemporary state of institutional education, especially at Unitarian-dominated Harvard. In addition, drawing on Emerson’s journals and letters, Sacks explores private thoughts that reveal “the hesitation and ultimate courage of an insecure intellectual” trying, simultaneously, to live up to the expectations of his friends and to preserve his own self-reliance (2).

Though that self-reliance was “first fully articulated,” as Sacks notes, in “The American Scholar” (48), the orator, Sacks demonstrates, was not quite the self-reliant man celebrated in the talk. And despite its urging of the need for originality and national independence, the American Scholar Address has another, international context beyond that of Emerson’s immediate milieu. That context is briefly explored in Sacks’s cogent discussion (68-74) of Emerson’s admiring and yet troubled relationship with Frederic (in Sacks, “Frederick”) Henry Hedge. Hedge’s 1833 article on Coleridge and the German idealists was read by Emerson on his return from Europe, where he had met and talked with Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth. Though he had been reading all three on his own, Hedge’s informed essay (along with James Marsh’s introduction to the American edition of *Aids to Reflection*) helped open up Emerson to Coleridge’s interpretation of Kant, and provided the intellectual foundation of Transcendentalism.

As Sacks notes, initial reaction to the oration was, at best, mixed. But it had resonance. The lecture, marked by what Sacks calls “passion, intensity, and towering integrity” (4), established Emerson’s fame, not only in New England but (thanks to the ringing endorsement of Thomas Carlyle) in England itself. We can still appreciate the rapture with which Carlyle read such words: “Out of the West comes a clear utterance, clearly recognizable as a man’s, and I have a kinsman and brother: God be thanked for it! I could have wept to read that speech; the clear high melody of it went tingling through my heart...My brave Emerson!” (30). Even the retrospective assessments of Emerson’s own countrymen capture the drama of the moment. “We were socially and intellectually moored to English thought,” said James Russell Lowell in 1871, “till Emerson cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and glories of blue water” (18). That speech, a third of a century earlier, “was an event without parallel in our literary annals” (21-22).

And Emerson’s first biographer gave “The American Scholar” the label it has had ever since. “This grand oration,” said Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1885, “was our intellectual Declaration of Independence,” probably the most inspired and inspiring address “among all the noble utterances of the speaker,” and one that “no listener ever forgot” (18).

One consequence, in terms of the text of “The American Scholar,” is that the “bearding” to which Brownson refers took place under Romantic auspices, with Emerson insisting, as his mentor Coleridge had, that first truths were to be derived from the mind’s observation of, and interaction with, Nature: an “intuitive” interchange which, Emerson agreed with Wordsworth, was of proportionately greater value than “tuition,” or book learning. This clarifies the argument, in “The American Scholar,” against originality-stifling dependence on books. Having condemned those who parrot the thinking of others, Emerson goes on to emphasize the mistaken “duty” of scholars. The sentence that follows is at the genetic core of the Address. Less than two weeks before he was to give the talk, Sacks informs us (118), a thus far uninspired Emerson suddenly (following a visit by Hedge and then Alcott) saw his theme. “One thing is plain,” he wrote in his journal: “the training of another age will not fit” the “young student, who must judge for himself what is good for him.”

Emerson was not, of course, consigning books to the ash heap. Instead, he was warning that grateful reception must not deteriorate into worship of a dead past, incapable of quickening new creation. Despite the declaration of cultural independence advanced in “The American Scholar,” there remained a crucial interaction with European Romanticism, balancing tradition and revolutionary innovation. I venture into this foreign dimension because the rich context Kenneth Sacks deftly supplies in *Understanding Emerson* is essentially internal and domestic—the New England intellectual milieu, Emerson’s friends. But Sacks insists throughout that it was precisely “because he was not the self-reliant scholar he described in his oration” that Emerson “rose to the occasion, delivering a passionate and enduring talk” (124). That thesis would be reinforced by consideration of this larger transatlantic context: a context charged with, indeed often the origin of, those “contradictory impulses” and “inward tension” that, as Sacks concludes (128), characterize “The American Scholar.”

—PATRICK KEANE  
*Le Moyne College*

(Reviews continued on page 8)



## Reviews

(Continued from page 7)

### Walden Pond: A History.

W. BARKSDALE MAYNARD. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 404 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

At the outset of his sauntering narrative, W. Barksdale Maynard, the architectural historian, remarks: "One comes to Walden seeking nature and Thoreau, but as often as not it is people who arrest the attention" (5). Maynard might as accurately have titled his work *Walden Pond: Biographies*. Though he does briefly consider the geology and prehistory of Walden, Maynard is interested primarily in the people who have used it from its heyday (1835-1862) to the present. A bit like Thoreau portraying the woods' "Former Inhabitants" in *Walden*, Maynard has a gift for conjuring the shades to reappear and replay their special moments at the Pond. Thoreau, however, could evoke a vanished microcosm with a cast of only ten bit-players; Maynard summons throngs. Luckily, he is a compassionate portraitist: His picture, for example, of the aging, increasingly eccentric preservationist Mary Sherwood, founder of Walden Forever Wild, is as poignant in its way as Thoreau's Zilpha White, all differences considered.

*Walden Pond: A History* may not satisfy the purist or the specialist; it is marred by minor flaws including, occasionally, a missed research opportunity to dig a little deeper than the standard sources. At the same time, it is filled with insights even for Thoreauvians. Maynard sensitively reviews the Pond's special meaning for Emerson, the first Concord philosopher to feel the Pond's sacred character and eventually the owner of more and more Walden acreage. The Pond's deep waters consoled Emerson at times of unspeakable grief. His countless walks and meditations in the surrounding woods—which were as habitual as Thoreau's would be—inspired his deepest and most influential thinking, notably in *Nature* (1836). Personal contact with this local natural setting, the equivalent of Wordsworth's lakes, soon became a rite of passage for Concord's budding philosophers—in Maynard's wry words, "the now-customary transcendentalist baptism into the woods and waters of Walden" (41). Emerson, he reminds us, was the one who introduced Bronson Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller and her brother Richard, and others to the Pond and its sacrosanct groves. Not least, it was Emerson's purchase of the Wyman family's woodlot near the Pond in 1844 that made Thoreau's famous sojourn (1845-1847) possible. As the center of an Academe that helped to unify the minds and hearts of those in Emerson's circle, "Walden Water" (as they often called the pond) played a pre-eminent role in the Transcendentalist ideas of individual self-discovery and self-reliance. What Maynard finds interesting is the commonality of these ideas, and the similarity of their formulations, among the great Walden devotees between 1835 and 1845. Time and again, some Thoreauvian-sounding passage turns out to have been penned by one of the older men. As Maynard contends, "Thoreau's ideas and attitudes, however individualistic they have been held to be, cannot be understood without this larger intellectual context" (51).

Maynard becomes wickedly satirical as he describes Walden during the fading of the Transcendentalist era. Walden Woods, he maintains, was desecrated not only by the Fitchburg Railroad with its commerce and tourism, but also by the Civil War speechmakers and Fourth of July celebrants, not to mention the idealistic pilgrims such as Spiritualist and Unitarian picnickers who arrived in hordes on the same trains. Thoreau-worshippers brought cairn-stones and took away relics. Emerson began to sour on the place, though he still walked here with friends and family. By 1900 and after, we find Old Folks' Picnics and Poor Children's Excursions, rowdies and anglers, a gang of drunks bothering the Total Abstinence Society, a dance-hall and bowling alley, "ugly wooden sheds" and "vulgar ice-cream

booths" ushering in a modern epoch of "continuous and rapid change" (189). The deterioration of Walden continued from the 1930s to the 1950s, as the state "eradicated the last lingering traces of the wild" (237). Eateries and a trailer park, newly cut paths, concrete bathhouses, paved roads, heaps of refuse, and swimmers, always swimmers, eroded the land, polluted Walden Water, and shriveled the spirit of the place.

Against the backdrop of the radical counterculture of the 1960s, Maynard narrates the evolution of efforts to reclaim the Pond. A myth as powerful as the story of Walden must rightly finish with a promise of paradise regained, and Maynard's concluding chapters function rather like "Spring" at the end of *Walden*. The pioneering struggles of the Save Walden Committee and the Thoreau Country Conservation Alliance (TCCA), the transfer of the Pond's management to an environmentally enlightened agency, and the latter-day reconsecration of Walden are told with sensitivity and relative fairness to all sides. Maynard details the antagonism between the idealistic, impoverished organizations such as the Thoreau Lyceum, TCCA, and Walden Forever Wild and the juggernaut nonprofit that upstaged (or uprooted) them, the Walden Woods Project, founded by rock star Don Henley in 1990. Maynard nimbly recapitulates the Project's victories over ruinous land developers, as well as its establishment in 1999 of the Thoreau Institute, a state-of-the-art location for the Project, and the Thoreau Society, until the latter decamped to its own quarters after this book was written.

Maynard's selection of illustrations draws primarily from the Concord Free Public Library's outstanding collection of photographs, particularly those of Herbert Gleason, the artist who captured Walden's landscapes from a Thoreauvian viewpoint in the 1920s, and who also immortalized such ephemera as the Walden Breezes food stand (the "Home of Hot Dogs") erected at the edge of the state reservation. Gleason's "Automobiles parked at Walden Pond" (1924), featuring a little motorbike surrounded by Model Ts, is one of many gems illuminating *Walden Pond: A History*.

—RANDALL CONRAD  
*Lexington, Massachusetts*

### Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia.

STERLING F. DELANO. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. 428 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

The scholarship on American utopian communities has focused on collecting and collating various narratives of these communities into histories that try to sell their existence to modern American readers, either by sensationalizing the people involved or desperately arguing that the communal plans are worthy of scholarly attention because they almost worked. Most scholars have been seduced in some way by the views of Alcott, Emerson, Fuller, and Hawthorne. To have such central figures of American Transcendentalism at the edges of a narrative of Brook Farm makes it all too easy to turn that community's story into an account of the literary figures associated with the project. These various approaches enable histories that avoid certain uncomfortable facts about Brook Farm.

Sterling Delano's book serves as a corrective to these tendencies as it accounts for the disagreements among the Brook Farmers, as well as the financial troubles and general administrative disorganization that plagued it. Delano's honesty enables him to succeed in helping to clarify the legacies of the community and in telling its story more accurately than it has been told before. Delano's account does not contain new information per se, but there is likely something new for anyone who has not read through the entire Brook Farm archive, as Delano has.

The community—rather than George Ripley—is at the center of Delano's narrative. Previous accounts that focused on Ripley made

the community's narrative into the style of a failed romance: The promise of Ripley's great project is foiled by the flaws of human nature. There is perhaps a tendency to read Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* a bit too literally as an account of life at Brook Farm. While Delano's curious choice of a subtitle, "The Dark Side of Utopia," would seem to continue the romantic perspective on Brook Farm, Delano eschews sentimentality in his account, and attempts to accurately report the genuine legacies and inadequacies of the community without relying on pat assumptions about utopian communities or American Romanticism to do so. Delano's choice to take multiple voices into the narrative undermines the romantic view of Brook Farm as a community that had a strong beginning that failed suddenly because of the destructive fire in 1846.

Delano opens with George Ripley's debates with Andrews Norton that explain why Ripley began to move away from Unitarianism: his disappointment with its inability to create in people a genuine sense of the need for social change. The intellectual beginnings of Brook Farm have not been adequately explained in this way before. Once the narrative turns to Ripley's decision to purchase property to begin Brook Farm, its voice travels back and forth between members of the community whose letters and writings have survived. This narrative technique serves Delano well because it highlights the ways that individuals' perspectives color their interpretation of events. His choice of narrative style also allows him to include pieces of the Brook Farm story that have been catalogued in the archives or in books summarizing the archives, but that do not fit easily into a narrative told from Ripley's point of view.

The voices that Delano invokes to create the narrative provide substantial evidence that money was a concern for the community from the start, that several of the small-scale industries that were tried there never even returned their initial investment in operating costs, and that no large donations ever came in to put the community on solid financial footing. Delano uses the Brook Farm papers sufficiently to demonstrate that despite the "profits" brought in by these industries, the community never made up for the capital investment to begin them. He also makes clear that no one on the governing committee knew much about how to handle finances. And perhaps most interestingly, Delano makes the case that Albert Brisbane and Horace Greeley consistently discouraged Ripley from putting time into the community's school, the most profitable enterprise in the community.

Nonetheless, the realist perspective that the multiple voices bring to Delano's account also demonstrate the very real accomplishments of the community, such as creating the template for the modern boarding school and creating a situation in which the women residents were spared enough from domestic duties that they could spend time on personal development. Delano manages genuine compassion for his subject as he elegantly demonstrates how the members' participation in Brook Farm influenced the activities they pursued later in their lives. In so doing he also undermines the tendency to see Brook Farm as a romantic aberration in the lives of its members.

The only genuine weakness in the history is the dichotomy established between the narrative of the community and the reasons for its failure. The narrative structure gathers the various threads of people as they joined and left Brook Farm, but it does not parallel this by taking up the failure underway at other communities while Brook Farm was dissolving. The conclusions that Delano produces at the end of the book are by no means surprises, but in reserving them for the last chapter, he misses the opportunity to think about possible connections to the failures of many of the other sixty or so utopian communities founded in the United States in the antebellum period. Delano begins discussing the conception of Brook Farm by describing its connections to communities such as Hopedale, whose founder Adin Ballou had considered working directly with Ripley, and the Zoar community, which the Ripleys visited as they considered creating their own. But he does not return to these (or to Fourierist com-

munities') failures in his concluding chapter. Delano does not go much outside the bounds of the narrative of Brook Farm itself. The book also suffers occasionally from poor editing; descriptive passages repeat themselves as if they appeared for the first time, and because of Delano's decision to break chapters into themes that deal with the same time periods, such as the running of *The Harbinger* and the transition to Fourierism, the occasional repeated reference that is not contextualized as such might cause confusion. But these sorts of blemishes are likely to appear in a complex narrative like Delano's, which is the best and most thorough revisionist account of Brook Farm available.

—ELLEN RIGSBY  
*St. Mary's College of California*

### Emerson's Wisconsin Property

Ralph Waldo Emerson purchased 129 acres of Wisconsin land in 1856 and continued to own it until the year of his death in 1882. The land is located on a small lake near the tiny town of Trade Lake, which is near the larger town of Grantsburg in the northwestern part of the state.

Several years ago we purchased the 25 acres adjoining the lake (referred to as Government Lot # 5) in order to stop a development of the property for recreational homes. On or around 1 October of this year we will place a conservation easement on the property which will prevent any future development, and then will transfer the easement and land to the West Wisconsin Land Trust, a non-profit organization located in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

While the land trust may sell the land subject to the easement, they are entrusted to enforce the easement in perpetuity. Thus the Emerson land should be permanently protected in a natural state which would seem to be a more appropriate reflection of Emerson's ideas about nature.

—Jack and Colleen Holmbeck, Rockford, Illinois

### Annual Emerson Awards and Grants

The Emerson Society announces its second annual awards for projects that foster appreciation for Emerson:

- A Research Grant
- A Graduate Student Paper Award
- A Pedagogical or Community-based Project Grant
- A Subvention for books or articles on Emerson

Each carries up to a \$500 award. The awards emerge from the 2003 Emerson Bicentennial initiative and were discussed and voted on by the Emerson Advisory Board and the general membership at the 2004 annual meeting. The Society is especially eager to foster work by graduate students, junior faculty, and Emerson admirers outside of the academy. We encourage all members of the Society to apply or to help publicize these awards by sharing a copy of the flyer with potential members. For more information about the awards, including deadlines and application procedures, please contact Roger Thompson (thompsonrc@vmi.edu). Information is also available on the Society website, [www.emersonsociety.org](http://www.emersonsociety.org).



## IN MEMORIAM

### John Ford, 1928–2004

John Ford was a life member of the Emerson Society. He and I were the only Australian members of the Society.

He wrote in his first letter to me, 20 April 1999, "Emerson has been a Ford family favourite for many,



many years. My late father, John, was an original ANZAC Gallipoli veteran, and after being terribly wounded, was sent to England to recover, where he was given a book of Emerson's Works which is today probably my proudest and most valuable possession. The publication is nearby the 'full bottle of gas', 656 pages of Richardson's 'The Mind on

Fire' which I read on Wesley Mott's recommendation.... Emerson's work today is as 'fresh as paint' for me and a continual source of enjoyment. Incidentally I bought Edward Emerson's writings – one of those things you can't put down till you are just about exhausted – whilst in Concord in 1993. It was winter, plenty of snow, although plenty of people to talk with about Emerson."

This letter began a firm friendship, with lots of letters about "our hero," as John called R.W.E., and two visits to me. On one of these John took the photo of us both, published in *ESP* (Fall 2003, p.14).

He was born in Moree NSW. His father recovered enough from his war injuries to become a swimming instructor and baths attendant at the Moree bore-fed hot mineral baths. John's father moved to St Leonards in Sydney and became a masseur (like a physiotherapist) and a champion cyclist. John had a life-long passion for bicycles, including motor bikes. He qualified as a motor mechanic and traveled widely in NSW as a salesman for motor parts. He also loved golf and music. He played the piano accordion, largely self-taught. His interests turned to selling life assurance. He married when he was about 35, and had two daughters.

His late-life friend, Dr. Laurel Thomas, has written to me that John was a very sensuous person: "He enjoyed fragrances, especially natural ones, like gardenias and lemon-scented gums. For many years he would run every morning but when he began to have back trouble he reduced the exercise to walking, and not a day passed without at least an hour on the road or on a bush track.... He liked plain food and grew sprouts in his kitchen. He

valued the simple virtues and was a man of integrity, kindness and self-control."

He loved to explore how Emerson influenced others including Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Elbert Hubbard, Napoleon Hill, John Burroughs, and so on, and to correspond with Emerson scholars including Albert J. von Frank and Wesley Mott. He dearly wanted to see a documentary made of Emerson's life in 2003, for the 200th anniversary of Emerson's birth, like Ken Burns' on the Civil War. He suggested an article in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* newspaper to promote our hero, and he helped me write it for the 23 May 2003 issue.

All who knew John Ford will miss this exuberant, exhilarating man of many enterprises and enthusiasms, rapt in his hero, and whose "original relationship with the world" was "as fresh as paint." The order of service for his funeral aptly quotes Emerson: "All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."

—Ian M. Johnstone

### Mary Wider, 1925–2005

A life member of the Emerson Society and an ardent supporter of all things Transcendental, Mary Cunningham Wider died on 15 January 2005 at the age of 80. Born in Guilford, Maine, and always a New Englander at heart, she was delighted to keep one foot in nineteenth-century New England through her youngest daughter's literary interests—not to mention her own.



A born researcher, she had a canny sense of work that needed to be done. In 1978, when we were reading aloud Edward Emerson's *Emerson in Concord* and Van Wyck

Brooks' *The Flowering of New England*, she kept pausing on Mary Moody Emerson. "Someone ought to pay attention to her," she would say. "She's an important person in all this." Years later, how pleased she was to learn that people had paid attention, but in the late 1970s, as Phyllis Cole and Nancy Simmons can tell you, few in the academic establishment felt the same wise conviction as did my mother.

Mary took a keen interest in the Emerson Bicentenary, and ever the good Yankee, she worried

about the expense, wanting to make certain that the poor scholars didn't have to pay their way to Boston and back. Ron Bosco and Wes Mott may well remember her insistence that this or that check be put toward the bicentenary.

As much as she enjoyed Emerson, however, her preference was for Alcott—Louisa May, that is. I will remember her immediate phone call when Joel Myerson and Dan Shealy appeared on the *McNeill/Lehrer News Hour*. Before her husband's death and the difficult last two years of her life, she returned to reading Alcott: *Hospital Sketches*, the novels *Moods* and *Work* as well as the various volumes of *Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag*.

The interest in Alcott had certainly been life long. In high school, she had played Jo in her senior class production of *Little Women*, and she was thrilled to visit Orchard House during her high school class trip to Boston in 1942, a trip she was glad to relive with her youngest daughter thirty-five years later and then a few years after that with both daughters, her two beloved "little women."

Trained as a nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital in the 1940s, she had hoped to continue in a joint program at Simmons College for a B.A. in English and was sorely disappointed when they restricted the program to a science-only major. Judging by her high school essays (including one on Emerson: "a certain pointedness of speech which turns the writer into a speaker, and the printed words into a sounding voice"), she would have enjoyed such work. But in good Emersonian fashion, she found her literature outside the academy. She will be wonderfully remembered for the spirited encouragement she offered to so many—listening to ideas and always seeing connections.

—Sarah Ann Wider

### Gustaaf Van Cromphout, 1938–2005

Gustaaf Van Cromphout's books *Emerson's Modernity* and *the Example of Goethe* (1990) and *Emerson's Ethics*



(1999) are permanent contributions to Emerson scholarship—original and learned, yet, also like their author, modest, accessible, and jargon-free. A graduate of the University of Ghent in his native Belgium, Gustaaf went on to earn his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in 1966. He returned to Ghent to

teach for two years and then began a distinguished thirty-seven-year career in the Department of English at

Northern Illinois University, where he was honored for excellence in teaching. Scholars today are keen to liberate Emerson from the confines of American "exceptionalism" and to place him in global context. With his own international background and thorough grounding in philosophy and in German language, Gustaaf helped prepare the foundation for this venture. Besides his work on Emerson, he wrote important articles on Cotton Mather and on Herman Melville, and his rare knowledge of languages made him an indispensable contributor of entries on the classical tradition and on German culture in reference works on American literature.

In person as in his scholarship, Gustaaf shared ideas with infectious enthusiasm but wore his immense learning lightly. (With his white hair, heavy-framed glasses, and charm, he resembled the mature Cary Grant—with a husky trace of Belgian accent.) One of his students remembered him as a teacher who made students feel like peers and who never ended a conversation without offering some kind of compliment. During an intensive week-long editing session at the NIU-based Thoreau Edition a few years ago, I was informed that Gustaaf had learned of my presence on campus and insisted that I be relieved of scheduled tasks long enough for him to take me to lunch. The next night I tried to keep pace on the long walk to his home, as he waved and shared greetings with neighborhood students and friends. We then enjoyed the gracious hospitality of his beloved wife, Luz, who had prepared a gourmet dinner. Gustaaf spoke vibrantly all evening about ideas, food, travel, and his daughters, Beatriz and Jana, but uttered hardly a word about his own impressive research.

Friends on the Emerson Society advisory board, on which Gustaaf served well for three years, flooded our email exchange upon hearing of his death. They recalled his "wonderful presence," his "wonderful voice," "vitality," "unpretentiousness," "intelligence and humor." And every one called him "kind"—"extremely kind, and sparkly, too." That is the friend we will miss at the annual American Literature Association conference, who lit up every scholarly discussion and brief chat with his knowledge, wit, and warmth. He was eagerly awaiting publication of *Emerson Bicentennial Essays*, which will include his fine paper "Emerson on Language as Action"—given at the Massachusetts Historical Society in 2003. When it appears, we will again be permanently enriched by his scholarship, and we will think again of our friend, who added such life to that Emerson celebration.

—Wesley T. Mott



## Concord 2005: Emerson Society Salutes Whitman, Robinson

This year marks the sesquicentennial of the first edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and the Emerson Society marked the occasion with a symposium on 8 July at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Mass. Megan Marshall, author of an acclaimed new family biography, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism*, spoke about Sophia Peabody's transcendental sense of an inner life to things in nature as she records her heightened sense impressions in her Dedham and Cuba journals; and Len Gougeon, author of a forthcoming study of "Emerson and Eros," discussed Emerson's positive response to the sensuousness of Whitman's controversial work.



BOB HABICH

From left, Megan Marshall, Len Gougeon, and moderator Elizabeth Addison prepare to answer questions following the symposium at the Masonic Temple in Concord.



KRISTINA COLE

David M. Robinson receives the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society Distinguished Achievement Award, presented by Wes Mott at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord on 8 July. (See article on page 1.)

## 2005 Annual Business Meeting

President Phyllis Cole presided at the 2005 business meeting of the Emerson Society in the Adams Room of the Westin Copley Place Hotel, Boston, on 27 May 2005. Bob Habich reported on current membership in the Society to date (183 members from 35 states and 6 foreign countries) and noted with sadness the deaths of four long-time members: John Ford, Roger Gregg, Mary Wider, and Douglas Emory Wilson.

Current assets total \$21,474. Major expenditures since May 2004 include support for the Thoreau Society annual gathering (\$250), where the Society conducts a program; a refundable deposit for the Oxford conference (\$1500); design and layout of *ESP* (\$800); and postage and printing of brochures (\$1064). Major credits for the past 12 months include membership dues (\$3507), appreciation of a CD (\$82), and interest income on savings accounts (\$20).

We welcomed the newest member of the Advisory Board, Professor Beatrice Forbes Manz, who will represent the RWEMA. Officers and new Board members were elected: President, Sarah Wider (already in place); President-elect, Elizabeth Addison; Secretary-Treasurer, Bob Habich; Program Chair, Joe Thomas (already in place); *ESP* editor, Wes Mott; and new Board members Shoji Goto and Jennifer Gurley. Phyllis Cole announced that she would re-appoint Roger Thompson and Barbara Packer to the Special Projects Committee and would serve on the DAA Committee, replacing Wes Mott. The Board thanked outgoing Board members Roger Thompson and Susan Roberson for their service.

Phyllis Cole and Wes Mott discussed plans for "Transatlanticism in American Literature," a conference co-sponsored by the Society, to be held in Oxford, England, 13–16 July 2006. Jean Mudge reported on the progress of her film, *Mr. Emerson's Revolution*. Roger Thompson announced the winners of the first RWES awards, who will receive \$500 each in support of their work on Emerson: Leslie Eckel (Yale University), Naomi Tanabe Uechi (Indiana University), and Steve Wilson (San Marcos, Texas). David M. Robinson was named the winner of the Distinguished Achievement Award for his landmark work in Emerson scholarship; the award will be presented to him at the Thoreau Society annual gathering in July.

In the evening, about 35 members of the Society enjoyed dinner and good conversation at a restaurant at 13 West Street, Boston—former site of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's famous bookstore.

The Secretary/Treasurer's Report for 2005 may be obtained by request from Bob Habich, Department of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306 or via email: rhabich@bsu.edu.