

*Rev.*

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Fall 2017

## EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

### Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to Russell B. Goodman

On May 26, at the American Literature Association conference in Boston, the Emerson Society presented Russell B. Goodman *in absentia* with its 2017 Distinguished Achievement Award. Educated at the Universities of Pennsylvania, Oxford, and Johns Hopkins, Professor Goodman subsequently taught philosophy for nearly half a century at the University of New Mexico, where he is now Emeritus Regents' Professor, with visiting appointments along the way at universities in the U.K., Spain, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and China. While he himself has consistently credited fellow philosopher Stanley Cavell with initiating serious study of Emerson in that discipline, no one has done more in modern times to secure Emerson's stature as a philosopher than Russell Goodman. Through dozens of papers, articles, books, encyclopedia entries, NEH institutes (perhaps most significantly "Ralph Waldo Emerson at 200: Literature, Philosophy, Democracy" in 2003), and a host of other academic activities, Professor Goodman has not only diligently framed and mounted in the halls of American philosophy Cavell's two major portraits of Emerson—as a skeptic and as a moral perfectionist—but also has outlined several other depictions of Emerson that have since become among our most valuable today, including Emerson the cosmopolitan, the environmentalist, and, most of all, the pragmatist.

In 1984, when Lawrence Buell reported a new "de-transcendentalizing" program issuing from "The Emerson Industry," he identified the movement's leaders as entirely from the field of English: textual editors, literary historians, and critics. It was not until a 1987 tribute to this same innovative interpretation of Emerson that Richard Poirier in *The Renewal of Literature* pointed to

Stanley Cavell as the rising movement's philosopher. Not that this meant Emerson's philosophical credentials were secure by 1987: on the contrary, as Russell Goodman observed that same year, in the very first sentence of his very first publication on Emerson, "Emerson's position in American literature is secure, but his position in American philosophy is not." Thus, Goodman announced his own agenda: "Part of what can be made of Emerson as a philosopher lies along the path taken by Stanley Cavell," but much else "remains unexplored" (5).

As Goodman then explained, Cavell actually takes two paths, the first leading to Emerson the skeptic. Like Cavell and Poirier, Goodman understood Emerson to embrace skepticism as an enabling style of thought, indeed even a kind of "freedom" as he argued in that first 1987 essay through bold readings of "The American Scholar" and "Circles." In 1990, in his first book, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition*, Goodman specified how Emerson's constructive skepticism works through what Cavell called an "epistemology of moods," especially evident in the succession of "lords" in the essay "Experience." "When properly employed," Goodman wrote, "the plastic powers of the human mind" are indeed lords, for they "gain us access to, as they shape, the only world about which we can possibly gain truth" (56).

Goodman followed Cavell down his second path, too, which led to an ethical rather than epistemological version of the de-transcendentalized Emerson. Emerson's "freedom" was not anti-social, Goodman subsequently insisted, a position he took up vigorously in a tough review of David Marr's primary thesis in 1989; instead, it leads to a kind of "humanism" as he put it in the 1990 book (56-57). Later, in a 1997 essay, "Moral Perfectionism

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## 2017 EMERSON SOCIETY DONORS

Emerson Society members continue generously to join at various “patron” levels of membership. All donations above the \$20 annual regular membership go to support special programs of the Society. Dues categories are Life (\$500), Sustaining (\$50), Contributing (\$35), Regular (\$20), and Student (\$5). You may pay by PayPal or by check, payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) and mailed to Roger Thompson, The Program in Writing and Rhetoric, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794.. For further details, see [emerson.tamu.edu/membership](http://emerson.tamu.edu/membership).

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### EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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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, Derek Pacheco, English Department, Purdue University, 500 Oval Drive, West Lafayette, IN 47907 or [dpacheco@purdue.edu](mailto:dpacheco@purdue.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, 8 Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

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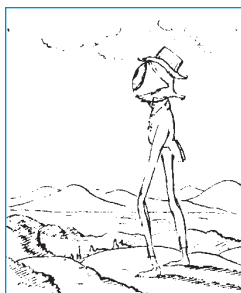
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# PROSPECTS.



## Emerson Sightings/Citings

Our frequent correspondent, Clarence Burley, reports a discrepancy in attributions for an Emersonian allusion. In the second sentence of his essay, “Circles,” Emerson writes:

“St. Augustine described the nature of God as a circle whose centre was everywhere and its circumference nowhere.”

But, in his daily email meditation, *Nature: Great Chain of Being*, for Sunday, November 13, 2016, Richard Rohr, O.F.M., writes:

“Saint Bonaventure, who is called the second founder of the Franciscan Order, took Francis of Assisi’s intuitive genius and spelled it out into an entire philosophy. He wrote: The magnitude of things clearly manifests . . . the wisdom and goodness of the triune God, who by power, presence and essence exists uncircumscribed in all things. [1] God is within all things, but not enclosed; outside all things, but not excluded; above all things, but not aloof; below all things, but not debased. [2] Bonaventure spoke of God as one whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. [3] Therefore the origin, magnitude, multitude, beauty, fullness, activity, and order of all created things are the very footprints and fingerprints (vestigia) of God. [4] Now that is quite a lovely and very safe universe to live in. Welcome home!”

[1] Bonaventure, 65. [2] 5, 8, 100ff. [3] 5, 8, 100. [4] 1, 15, 67-68.

*Bonaventure: The Soul’s Journey into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis.* Translated by Ewert Cousins, Paulist Press, 1978.

Spotting this difference, Burley asks: “Was Emerson (or Rohr) incorrect, or did Bonaventure quote Augustine without attribution?”

Another of our eagle-eyed correspondents, Wendell Refior, shares these Emerson two sightings/citings: Responding to the UK’s “Brexit” crisis, *Herald Scotland* reader, Ian Thomson writes, “Mr. Flint referred to the ‘formidable challenge within Europe of negotiating both the terms of the UK’s exit from the EU and the basis of the future relationship.’ Early in Attlee’s premiership he was faced with major problems with regard to Britain’s relationship with the

United States, including the abrupt cessation of the Lend-Lease arrangements and the American decision to withdraw from an earlier agreement to share nuclear technology. Faced with these problems and other pressing international matters, Attlee referenced the American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson who, in the 1840s, had written about Britain when it was faced with an economic crisis and difficulties in handling the substantial increase in international competition, as having seen ‘dark days before’ and ‘with a kind of instinct that she sees a little better in a cloudy day.’” See “Letters: We can rise to the monumental challenge that is posed by Brexit.” *Herald Scotland*, 7 Aug. 2017, [http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/15458641.We\\_can\\_rise\\_to\\_the\\_monumental\\_challenge\\_that\\_is\\_posed\\_by\\_Brexit/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/15458641.We_can_rise_to_the_monumental_challenge_that_is_posed_by_Brexit/).

Emerson wrote: “And so gentlemen, I feel in regard to aged England . . . I see her not dispirited, not weak, but well remembering that she has seen dark days before;—indeed with a kind of instinct that she sees a little better in a cloudy day” (*CW* 5: 177).

On “The New York Jewish Week” blog post for July 6, 2017, Rabbi David Wolpe writes:

In his famous parable “Before the Law,” Kafka writes about a man who stands before a door designated only for him, but dies without entering. A very different spirit from Kafka, Ralph Waldo Emerson, nonetheless anticipated the existentialist by writing: “Men live on the brink of mysteries and harmonies into which they never enter, and with their hand on the door latch they die outside.”

See “To Carlyle.” 12 March 1835. *Selected Letters*, edited by Joel Myerson, Columbia UP, 1998, 147–48. To read the blog post, see <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/opendoors/#.WV6seRKxzD8.email>.

Emerson Society member David Greenham has written the script for a popular educational video on the Concord sage. The video now has over 260,000 hits. For more, see “Ralph Waldo Emerson,” uploaded by School of Life, 6 May 2016, [youtube.com/watch?v=EOkdFMw0pmk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOkdFMw0pmk).

## Emerson Texts Available

Wes Mott has duplicate copies of *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, volumes 1–3 and 6–10. The price of each is \$8.00 (proceeds will go into the society’s scholarship fund) plus postage. Order individual or multiple volumes while supplies last. Email [wmott@wpi.edu](mailto:wmott@wpi.edu) for more information.

## Reminder

Please be sure to update your contact information (including email address) with our incoming Emerson Society Secretary/Treasurer, Roger Thompson ([Roger.Thompson@stonybrook.edu](mailto:Roger.Thompson@stonybrook.edu)), or on your annual membership renewal form.

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## PROSPECTS

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### ALA Call for Proposals

The annual meeting of the American Literature Association will be held in San Francisco, May 24–27, 2018. Conference information: [americanliteratureassociation.org/calls/annual-conference](http://americanliteratureassociation.org/calls/annual-conference).

### Emerson and/in the Arts

As an essayist and a poet, Emerson is, of course, a literary artist in his own right. But how have the other Arts seen Emerson, or drawn on his influence? We invite presentations on “Emerson and/in the Arts.” These might consider depictions of Emerson or Emersonianism in fiction, music, the fine arts, or cinema. We similarly welcome presentations that investigate the significance of Emerson’s aesthetics for the Arts broadly conceived. Also welcome are presentations that explore the wider Transcendentalist movement and its place in the Arts.

E-mail 300-word abstracts by January 12, 2018, to David Greenham: [david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk). Membership in the Emerson Society is required of presenters, but it is not required to submit proposals for consideration.

### Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, July 2018

#### Thoreau’s Influence on Emerson

The influence of Emerson on Thoreau, and of Thoreau on Emerson, is well known. But this should not hide their differences. In this panel, “Waldo and Henry: Points of Parting,” we welcome papers that productively explore the differences between these two transcendentalists. Themes of particular interest include writing, politics, philosophy, influence, friendship, nature, the past, race, the self, gender, and the environment.

E-mail 300 word abstracts by January 12, 2018, to David Greenham: [david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk). Membership in the Emerson Society is required of presenters, but it is not required to submit proposals for consideration.

The Emerson Society also provides grants that may be of interest to presenters, including a Research Grant and a Graduate Student Paper Award. The travel grant provides \$750 of travel support to present a paper on an Emerson Society panel at the American Literature Association Annual Conference (May 2018) or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (July 2018).

### 2018 Barbara L. Packer Fellowship

The Barbara L. Packer Fellowship is named for Barbara Lee Packer (1947–2010), who taught with great distinction for thirty years in the UCLA English department. Her publications, most notably *Emerson’s Fall* (1982) and her lengthy essay on the Transcendentalist movement in the *Cambridge History of American Literature* (1995), reprinted as *The Transcendentalists* by the University of Georgia Press (2007), continue to be esteemed by students of Emerson and of the American Renaissance generally. She is remembered as an inspiring teacher, a lively and learned writer, and a helpful friend to all scholars in her field—in short, as a consum-

mate professional whose undisguised delight in literature was the secret of a long-sustained success. In naming the Fellowship for her, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society offers her as a model worthy of the attention and emulation of scholars newly entering the field. The Barbara L. Packer Fellowship is awarded to individuals engaged in scholarly research and writing related to the Transcendentalists in general, and most especially to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. Ph.D. candidates, pre-tenure faculty, and independent scholars are eligible to apply. Deadline: January 15, 2018. For more information, see [americanantiquarian.org/acafellowship.htm](http://americanantiquarian.org/acafellowship.htm).

### 2018 Thoreau Society Fellowship

The Thoreau Society is pleased to announce the second annual Marjorie Harding Memorial Fellowship. Recipients will receive \$1,000 towards travel and research expenses at archives in the Greater Boston area on Thoreau-related projects, as well as free attendance at the Thoreau Society 2017 Annual Gathering and Bicentennial Celebration held in Concord, Mass., in early July. Both emerging and established scholars, as well as Thoreau enthusiasts, are encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to candidates who will use the Thoreau Society’s Walter Harding Collection housed at the Thoreau Institute for at least part of the fellowship period, but applicants intending to use any of the Thoreau Society Collections or other Thoreau archives in the Greater Boston area are encouraged to apply. (The Collections are described at [thoreausociety.org/research](http://thoreausociety.org/research).) The awardee is also encouraged to present at the Annual Gathering during the fellowship period or the following year. To apply, candidates should send an email to the fellowship committee chair, Ronald Hoag ([hoagr@ecu.edu](mailto:hoagr@ecu.edu)), with the following:

1. A current curriculum vitae or resume
2. A project proposal of approximately 1,000 words, describing the project, explaining its significance, and specifying the relevance of area archives, collections, and resources to be visited
3. Graduate students only: Optional letter of recommendation from a faculty member familiar with student’s work and the proposed project (Letter can be emailed separately to the committee chair.)

Applications are due by Thursday, March 1, 2018. The awardee will be notified by the end of March and acknowledged in July at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Massachusetts. Please contact the fellowship committee chair with questions.



**\*\*Awards Announcements\*\***  
**2018**

**The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society announces four awards  
for projects that foster appreciation for Emerson.**

**\*Graduate Student Paper Award\***

Provides up to \$750 of travel support to present a paper on an Emerson Society panel  
at the American Literature Association Annual Conference (May 2018)  
or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (July 2018).

Submit a 300-word abstract to David Greenham (david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk) by January 12, 2018.  
Abstracts should address the 2018 CFPs posted at emersonsociety.org.

**\*Research Grant\***

Provides up to \$500 to support scholarly work on Emerson.  
Preference will be given to junior scholars and graduate students.  
Submit a confidential letter of recommendation, and a 1-2-page project proposal,  
including a description of expenses, by April 1, 2018.

**\*Pedagogy or Community Project Award\***

Provides up to \$500 to support projects designed to bring Emerson to a non-academic audience.  
Submit a confidential letter of recommendation, and a 1-2-page project proposal,  
including a description of expenses, by April 1, 2018.

**\*Subvention Award\***

Provides up to \$500 to support costs attending the publication of a scholarly book or article  
on Emerson and his circle. Submit a confidential letter of recommendation,  
and a 1-2-page proposal, including an abstract of the forthcoming work  
and a description of publication expenses, by April 1, 2018.

Send Research, Pedagogy/Community, and Subvention proposals to  
Prentiss Clark (Prentiss.Clark@usd.edu) and  
Kristina West (k.j.west@reading.ac.uk).

Award recipients must become members of the Society;  
membership applications are available at <http://www.emersonsociety.org>.

## RUSSELL B. GOODMAN

(Continued from page 1)

and Democracy,” Goodman explained Emerson’s plastic powers to be not only ethical—what Cavell called moral perfectionism—but also political, or what George Kateb called a “democratic individuality” (171-72). Ever since, Goodman has consistently demonstrated the inseparability of Emerson’s skeptical epistemology and his perfectionist-democratic ethics, such as in his indispensable



Russell B. Goodman

entry on Emerson for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, as well as in a splendid 2010 essay, “Paths of Coherence through Emerson’s Philosophy.”

The gesture to unite Cavell’s and Kateb’s readings is typical of Goodman, who has sought not only to clarify Emerson’s philosophy but to place it properly within a number of larger traditions, including not only skepticism and perfectionism but also neo-Platonism (as argued in his 1997 “Emerson’s Mystical Empiricism”) and, most insistently, American pragmatism. It is here, notably, that Goodman significantly departs from Cavell, who—in “What’s the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?” (1998)—hears in Emerson’s call for “patience” at the end of “Experience” a different strain than Dewey’s “practice.” Typically, Goodman would generously reprint that contrarian essay by Cavell in the fourth volume of his monumental 2005 anthology *Pragmatism: Critical Concepts in Philosophy*, even as he showcased Emerson’s

work in the first; one can find the same pluralism in the excellent single-volume *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* from 1995, which opens with “Circles.” Introducing that essay as exemplifying “classical pragmatism,” Goodman points out how Emerson, like future pragmatists, not only emphasizes “action” (most famously in “The American Scholar”) and but also takes up the more radically pragmatist contention that no morality is final (22). These are but two of the pragmatist qualities of Emerson’s thought that Goodman has teased out over the years, most prominently in his essay on Emerson for the 2008 *Oxford Handbook on American Philosophy* and in a major 2015 book, *American Philosophy before Pragmatism*.

In the course of filling out these three portraits of Emerson—the skeptic, the perfectionist democrat, and the pragmatist—Goodman has also sketched a few others that have subsequently become central to contemporary conversations about Emerson. In his 1990 book, for example, he advanced a reading of “The American Scholar” that not only underscored the essay’s pragmatism but also what we’d now call its cosmopolitanism. That Emerson articulates a philosophy that pointedly does *not* demand the “renunciation of Europe and its intellectual traditions” (127) subsequently has become the standard understanding, particularly since Buell’s argument along these lines in *Emerson* (2003), though Goodman made this observation more than a decade earlier. Even more innovative is his sketch of Emerson as an environmentalist. Very few academic humanists have been willing to admit that Thoreau’s appreciation of nature is not strictly intrinsic; the most persuasive reading of Thoreau’s undeniably instrumental interest in nature is, in my view, Bob Pepperman Taylor’s contribution to *Conservation Reconsidered* (2000). In a 2004 chapter, however, Goodman not only acknowledges this strain in Thoreau’s environmentalism but also concludes that Emerson shares it. The two Concordians are thus aligned in their environmental thinking, a highly persuasive interpretation that unfortunately remains nearly as neglected today as when Goodman first made it. “For all their interest in nature as it is in itself,” he wrote, Emerson and Thoreau’s “interest is not so much in nature *simpliciter*, as it is in the proper human relation to nature” (2).

Back in 1987, when Richard Poirier announced a contemporary American school founded by Emerson that could rival the European postmodernists rooted in

Nietzsche, he enlisted another philosopher besides Cavell: Richard Rorty. At the time, this was, frankly, wishful thinking. I still recall how, five years after that announcement, in 1992, toward the end of a graduate seminar on Emerson and pragmatism at Rutgers, Professor Poirier responded to my office-hour query about why Rorty—who since his 1989 *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* had become one of the most influential philosophers in the world—had nonetheless never been mentioned in class. “He needs to read Emerson,” Poirier responded with some exasperation.

Goodman also recognized that the best philosophical friend for a de-transcendentalized Emerson would be Rorty. In 1996, he began an essay on Emerson’s European roots by citing Rorty’s famous assertion from *Contingency*—that two-hundred years ago European intellectuals stopped finding truth and started making it—and then added that “the first point to understand about Emerson the European is that he participates in this change” (111). About ten years later, though, Goodman did more than speculate about this philosophical alliance of Emerson and Rorty; he made it happen by inviting the latter to join

a 2007 NEH seminar on pragmatism. As Goodman describes in a beautiful 2008 essay, Rorty answered enthusiastically (in a letter Goodman cites) with the offer of “a session on pragmatism and romanticism (emphasizing links between Shelley and Emerson on the imagination and Nietzsche’s and William James’ discussions of truth)” (79). Alas, about a week before that seminar began, Rorty passed away. What we will always have, though, is Goodman’s magnificent 2008 articulation of what a Romanticism bookended by these two giants, Emerson and Rorty, looks like.

For these as well as many more scholarly activities, all generously pursued in support of Emerson’s enduring philosophical significance, Russell B. Goodman is a most deserving recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award. It is especially fitting that he will be joining us as one of our keynote speakers at “Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion” at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, July 26-29, 2018.

—Daniel S. Malachuk  
Professor of English  
Western Illinois University

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## Works by Russell B. Goodman Cited

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## 2017 Emerson Society Annual Business Meeting

**Friday, May 26, 2017**, Westin Hotel, Boston

President Todd Richardson called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. About 21 people present.

### Announcements and Updates

1. The RWES has formed a Media Committee to oversee and coordinate public outreach through ESP, social media, and the website. The Society's new website launched earlier this year.
2. RWES members are eligible for a discount for attending the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering. RWES members will receive the same rate as Thoreau Society members. Also, RWES will offer a 25% discount towards our regular membership for Annual Gathering attendees. The Thoreau Society is giving us a free ad in its conference program. The RWES will continue our tradition of making a \$250 donation to the Annual Gathering.
3. Joseph Urbas is proposing an Emerson theme for the Summer Institute in American Philosophy (SIAP) hosted by the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP).
4. Todd encouraged people to distribute bookmarks at conferences and other events in the effort to bolster membership.
5. Minutes from the 2016 meeting were approved.
6. Bonnie O'Neill presented the 2017 Secretary/Treasurer's report.

### Presentations

1. Prentiss Clark presented the special awards recipients for 2017. The Research Grant is awarded to Krissie West for her work "To Be Boy Eternal: Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Transcendental Child." The Community Project Award is awarded to Tyson Forbes and TigerLion Arts for their theatrical presentation, *Nature*. Prentiss extended her thanks to the applicants for the awards. She noted that the subvention award would not be given this year, as there were no submissions.
2. Roger Thompson presented the graduate student paper award to James Hussey, who delivered his paper at the ALA Conference.
3. Todd announced that the Barbara Packer Fellowship is awarded to Molly Reed.
4. Todd announced that the Distinguished Achievement Award will be given to Russell Goodman.

### Business

1. Officer and Board Member elections: Todd presented the nominations from the Board:

RWES Board: Sean Ross Meehan / Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso  
Secretary/Treasurer: Roger Thompson  
President Elect: Bonnie Carr O'Neill

Todd invited nominations from the floor; none were offered. The nominations from the Board were each elected, and they will begin their terms in January 2018. Todd expressed thanks to outgoing board members (whose terms will expire Dec. 31, 2017) Neal Dolan and David Greenham, as well as to Past President Sue Dunston, Program chair Roger Thompson, and Secretary/Treasurer Bonnie Carr O'Neill.

2. Heidelberg Conference: Dan Malachuk reported that the conference will take place in July 2018, with the theme "Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, and Religion." (He noted that the subtitle comes from *The Dial*). The CFP can be found at the conference website, <https://transcendentalistintersections.wordpress.com/>. Proposals are due by August 1, 2017.

3. Media Committee: Dan Malachuk reported on the committee's initiatives to coordinate the website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. He reported that the committee continues to explore ways to use social media and the RWES's online presence to reach non-specialist scholars and teachers, as well as our traditional audience of Emerson specialists.

4. Programming Committee: Committee chair Roger Thompson reported on the increasing numbers of applications to panels, noting that the committee was able to reject more proposals than it accepted this year. He noted that the travel award is a major draw for applicants, including international applicants; he reported more interest from India, in particular. He noted as well more interest from across academic disciplines.

5. RWES website: Webmaster Michael Weisenburg reported that the new website has been operational for over a year now, and website traffic has increased since ESP was added to the site. The site is moving up on Google (specifically, the site is not yet a first-page result for searches for "Ralph Waldo Emerson," but it is among the top two hits for searches for "Ralph Waldo Emerson Society.") Michael led a discussion of plans to revise the website page featuring links to Emerson's writings. He also discussed the website's role in reaching potential donors; plans to improve syncing among the website, Facebook, and Twitter; and adding a page to the website on teaching resources.

6. Bylaws: Todd presented his proposed changes to the bylaws and detailed the process by which the membership at large would vote on any changes.

7. The annual Society dinner was announced for 8 p.m. at Legal Seafood.

8. Next meeting: RWES will meet at the ALA conference in San Francisco.

### Other Business

1. Derek Pacheco reminded those present of the upcoming Kyoto Conference and referred them to *ESP* and the RWES website for more information.

2. Several members of the Society have published or are publishing new works:

- Joel Myerson and Leslie Perrin Wilson, *Picturing Emerson: An Iconography* (May 2017)
- Roger Thompson, *Emerson and the History of Rhetoric* (November 2017)
- Sean Ross Meehan, *Approaches to Teaching Emerson* (mid-2018)

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bonnie Carr O'Neill, Secretary/Treasurer



# Treasurer's Report: The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc.

May 26, 2016

## Membership and Comparisons (as of May 26, 2017)

	May 2009	May 2010	May 2011	May 2012	May 2013	May 2014	May 2015	May 2016	May 2017
Total membership	176	165	160	181	177	143	142	137	128
Life members	26	27	27	31	33	33	35	35	35
Sustaining members	19	20	18	24	28	23	22	21	21
Contributing members	40	41	52	49	30	27	23	23	18
New members	19	17	12	15	20	14	12	9	11
Student members	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	16	12	12	12
States represented	35	31*	34	32	34	32	32*	34*	32*
Non-U.S. countries	12	10	9	11	12	19	20	22	18

\* +DC

Our international membership includes Australia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

## Finances (as of May 19, 2017)

\$ 13,510	Current Balance, checking account	\$ 15,669	Checking Account Balance, May 19, 2017
150	Current balance, PayPal	+ 3,376	Credits to checking account
\$ 13,660	Current assets	– 5,535	Debits from checking account
		\$ 13,510	Checking Account Balance, May 19, 2017

Major *debits* for the period May 20, 2016, to May 18, 2017:

- Graduate Student Paper Award: Tim Sommer (\$750)
- Spring 2016 *ESP*: layout (\$700)
- Honorarium, Michael Weisenburg/website work (\$1,000)
- Donation, Thoreau Annual Gathering (\$250)
- Fall 2016 *ESP*: layout (\$800), printing (\$540.50)
- Medals for the Special Achievement Award (\$960)
- Spring 2017 *ESP*: layout (\$600) (Printing not yet been billed.)

*Credits* for the period May 20, 2016, to May 18, 2017 are membership dues and donations.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bonnie Carr O'Neill  
Secretary/Treasurer  
bco20@msstate.edu  
RWESociety@gmail.com



# Emerson Society Panels at the American Literature Association, 2017

*The Emerson Society presented two panels at the 28th Annual American Literature Association Conference, which was held from May 25 to 28, 2017, at the Westin Copley Hotel in Boston.*

*The sessions were arranged by David Greenham and Roger Thompson. Abstracts appear below.*

## Emerson and Social Justice Thursday, May 26

### The Utopian Emerson: American Renaissance in the Age of Fourier

HOLLY JACKSON, *University of Massachusetts, Boston*

In May of 1837, a bank panic kicked off a long and disastrous period of deflation and unemployment, the country's first major economic depression. Rather than bringing about limitless expansion and opportunity that the Jacksonian market revolution seemed to promise, capitalist excesses had cast Americans into ruinous poverty. Reflecting on this state of affairs in his journal that month, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Young men have no hope ... The world has failed." Yet Emerson saw in this cultural crisis an opportunity: "I see a good in such emphatic and universal calamity as the times bring, that they dissatisfy me with society. Under common burdens we say there is much virtue in the world, and what evil co-exists is inevitable ... but when these full measures come, it then stands confessed—society has played out its last stake; it is checkmated." This dissatisfaction with society allowed for a heightened critical perspective and provided an opening for radically different approaches: "I am forced to inquire if the ideal might not also be tried. Is it to be taken for granted that it is impracticable?"

Emerson accurately predicted that the failure of capitalism would allow for a serious hearing of radical alternatives drawn from the "ideal" realm of utopian imagining. Such thinking was widespread in the 1840s, most notably in the translation of the thought of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier for an American audience and the emergence of numerous communal living experiments. In addition to his plans for reorganizing labor, Fourier described a "harmonic" future in which seas would brim with lemon soda and people would be seven feet tall and amphibious, sporting a long tail with a hand at the end. Utopian thought found surprising traction in the American 1840s, and Fourier appears frequently in Emerson's oeuvre (and in that of Fuller, Hawthorne, and other major American Renaissance figures). While Emerson seems to ridicule these ideas, I argue that Fourier, radical countercultures, and utopian socialism were all centrally important to his philosophy, specifically as the straw man for his own utopian discourse of individualist self-reliance, the free market, and American nationalism.

While Sacvan Bercovitch and others have noted Emerson's conservative turn in the crucial period from 1841 to 1844, this paper posits instead what might be called Emerson's utopian turn. In the evolution of Emerson's treatment of American capitalism and the socialist alternative, this paper identifies a utopian mode drawn from the very zeitgeist it was meant to counteract. Revisiting Emerson's speculative, futurist rhetoric—particularly in "Man the Reformer" to "The Young American"—enables us to break down the false binary between utopian socialism and the seemingly inevitable triumph of "pragmatic" forms of liberalism and nationalism, positioning Emerson within the competing utopianisms that defined this period.

### "...not content to slip along through the world": Emerson's "Active Soul" and Social Justice in Jacksonian America

JAMES HUSSEY, *Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland* (winner of the Emerson Society Graduate Student Travel Award)

Speaking at a remove of over four years from "The American Scholar," Emerson's "Man the Reformer" maintains some of the themes of his earlier clarion call to embrace the "active soul." The centrality of the speaker's brand of individualism to these texts, and particularly its uneasy relation to the era's ethos of Jacksonian individualism, constructs a discourse surrounding the power of creativity to expound both human rights, and the right to be human.

This paper will elucidate the sense Emerson provides of the active soul in working for social justice in "Man the Reformer," utilizing his "American Scholar" lecture as a lens through which to view calls for affirmative individual action. In analyzing this relationship, I wish to highlight how this strain of Emerson's thought acknowledges the need to work in public for the public good, a remarkable moment of congruence in Emerson's beliefs with a central tenet of Jacksonian political rhetoric.

Emerson points in these lectures to "an isolation" that endangers man's efforts. "Man the Reformer" extols an examination of social structures through an introspection that rejects the potential selfishness of individualist action in order to foster "an opening of the spiritual senses," where benevolent work is necessarily endeavor that will "hold nothing back" from one's fellow man.

Tellingly, Emerson delivers "Man the Reformer" at the Masonic Temple in Boston, an aspect of this speech's properties that problematizes its call for social justice. Jacksonian America saw the politicization of fierce distrust against works carried out in private, away from the inspecting eyes of "the people," perhaps exemplified in the brief success of the Anti-Masonic Party in the 1832 election. This paper will look at Emerson's "Man the Reformer" in its milieu of Jacksonian democratic thought as a text that, through its connection to "The American Scholar," calls for expansive social justice based on openness and transparency.

### Ralph Waldo Emerson, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the (African) American Spiritual Legacy of Double Consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk*

KEVIN PYON, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

Perhaps no other concept has been more influential to our understanding of African American history than W. E. B. Du Bois's epochal depiction of black double consciousness. First appearing in an essay entitled "Strivings of the Negro People" in 1897 for the *Atlantic Monthly*, Du Bois's description of black life as one divided by irreconcilable conflicts became immortalized when he repackaged it as the first chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903. As the title of his most celebrated work suggests, Du Bois draws upon Ralph Waldo Emerson's nineteenth-century Transcendentalist ideal to depict double consciousness as primarily a spiritual dilemma that is at once distinctly American and African American.

## ALA Conference Boston, May 2017



*From left, Andrea Knutson, Christopher Hanlon, Noelle Baker, Kate Culkin, Sarah Ann Wider, Phyllis Cole*



*Todd Richardson, Molly Reed*



*Roger Thompson, James Hussey*



*Holly Jackson, Kevin Pyon, Prentiss Clark, James Hussey*

Though scholars have drawn many connections between Emerson and Du Bois, from their shared lineage of pragmatism to their opposing conceptions of race, they have largely overlooked the spiritual heritage both share within (African) American intellectual history. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. has done the most in teasing out this relationship, briefly mentioning that Emerson's spiritual ideals "related particularly to Du Bois's efforts to privilege the spiritual in relation to the materialistic, commercial world of white America." Nevertheless, Bruce does not consider the ways Du Bois also reinterprets Emersonian spirituality—specifically, double consciousness—through a twentieth-century racial framework to champion his goals for racial justice.

Unlike the optimism of Emerson's earlier writings (which engendered his oft-debated ambivalence towards societal reform), Du Bois's portrayal of the divided black life accounts for the spiritual impact of racial oppression upon the black individual's ability to achieve self-consciousness. Yet Du Bois does not merely condemn the nation for its past sins. He also rediscovers through the lens of Emersonian double consciousness a future pathway for spiritual and racial harmony in the nation's troubled history—namely, through the spiritual lives and gifts of the slaves themselves. For Du Bois, then, Emersonian double consciousness was not only a trope to portray post-bellum black life, but the very birth and future of the nation itself.

*(Continued on page 12)*



## EMERSON SOCIETY PANELS

(Continued from page 12)

### The “perpetual achievement of the impossible”: Emerson, Du Bois, and Baldwin Writing Toward “a larger, juster, and fuller future”

PRENTISS CLARK, *University of South Dakota*

“If a man wishes to acquaint himself with the real history of the world, with the spirit of the age,” Emerson suggests in *Society and Solitude*, “he must not go first to the statehouse or the court room. The subtle spirit of life must be sought in facts nearer. It is what is done and suffered in the house, in the constitution, in temperament, in the personal history, that has the profoundest interest for us” (CW 7: 54-55). This essay traces the ways in which Emerson, W. E. B. Du Bois, and James Baldwin—unexpected interlocutors from across the American nineteenth and twentieth centuries—together make legible how the ordinary yet often unobserved particulars and affective registers of human life and relations participate in constituting the justness and unjustness of our shared social state. More specifically, these thinkers foreground how a “larger, juster, and fuller future” (Du Bois 51) depends on what Emerson calls “reading...facts harder to read” (CW V7: 55); matters, Du Bois says, “most elusive to the grasp” (86); “All these things,” Baldwin emphasizes, “which no chart can tell us” (148). Ultimately, what draws these historically distant and intellectually different thinkers together—their differences making their convergences all the more resonant and provocative—are their attempts to address what politics, laws, and even all our knowledges can address only partially, which necessitates the potentially transformative compensations our conduct of life alone can accomplish.

### Beautiful Foes: A Roundtable Discussion of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Affiliations with Women

PHYLLIS COLE\*, *Penn State University, Brandywine*

SARAH ANN WIDER, *Colgate University*

KATE CULKIN, *Bronx Community College*

NOELLE BAKER, *Independent Scholar*

CHRISTOPHER HANLON, *Arizona State University*

ANDREA KNUTSON, *Oakland University*

\*Chair, Respondent

Examining Emerson’s place within communities that were largely female augments other efforts to understand how extensive networks shaped his resonance, from his gilded-era canonization to his ongoing centrality in twentieth-century Americanist criticism. But even more than these prior studies, the recovery of Emerson’s connections with women undermines a mythology of Man Thinking that has come to seem particularly Emersonian, and yet particularly limiting.

This roundtable gathers together key scholars in transcendentalist studies in order to unsettle a pattern of enshrinement that has underplayed a series of women Emerson described as crucial interlocutors, influences, and provocateurs. We hope further to clarify Emerson’s position in a series of personal and domestic affiliations even as we strive to widen the discussion toward broader perimeters of interest within nineteenth-century literary historiography. We are especially grateful that Phyllis Cole, author of *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism* (2002), and co-editor of *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* (2014), has agreed to serve as respondent.

## Emerson Society Panels at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, 2017

*During the Thoreau Society’s 2017 Annual Gathering from July 11 to 16 in Concord, Massachusetts, the Emerson Society presented its annual panel, this year on the topic of “Thoreau’s Influence on Emerson.”*

*The panel was arranged by Roger Thompson. Abstracts appear below.*

*For further information about the Annual Gathering, visit [www.thoreausociety.org](http://www.thoreausociety.org).*

### No Truer American: Thoreau’s Influence on Emerson’s Later Lectures

MARK GALLAGHER, *University of California, Los Angeles*

By now we know that Emerson’s version of Thoreau reveals “more about its author than its subject.” It was, of course, the stoic philosopher he memorializes in “Thoreau” whom he deems worthy of praise. At the same time, a lack of ambition would cause Emerson to lament that his friend had squandered his powers when, “instead of engineering for all America,” he found contentment as “the captain of a huckleberry party.” Emerson clearly had hoped to see his ideal of the “Young American” realized in Thoreau. That his life ended in a “broken task” was a bitter disappointment. What Emerson failed to see, however, was what Thoreau was able to achieve.

That would soon change, for the years following Thoreau’s death would give Emerson an opportunity to become reacquainted with his friend. He assisted Thoreau’s sister Sophia with the prepa-

ration of *Excursions* and *Letters to Various Persons* as well as the republication of *Walden*. More important, Emerson began reading Thoreau’s voluminous journals. The industriousness evident in the journals would allow for a somewhat subtle reassessment of the ideal American that Thoreau represented.

I hope to say a few words about Thoreau’s posthumous influence on Emerson’s idea of American citizenship, particularly in the three lectures he gave in the years immediately following Thoreau’s death—“The Scholar,” “Fortune of the Republic,” and “Resources.” In the first of these lectures, “The Scholar,” Emerson advocates for a moral self-reliance that echoes Thoreau’s sentiment for a “majority of one” in recognizing “the importance of minorities of one.” The second lecture, “Fortune of the Republic,” draws some of its force from *Walden* in both its resistance to England and optimism for America. Finally, the third lecture, “Resources,” finds inspiration in a passage from Thoreau’s journal that Emerson transcribes into his own.



## F. L. Wright as Measure and Mirror of Emerson's Influence on Thoreau

AYAD RAHMANI, *Washington State University*

We may argue that even as we agree that Emerson had a lasting influence on Thoreau, the latter did not fully or accurately live out the Emersonian ideal. Emerson's self-reliance was only in one sense an admonishment to cultivate in one's self the strength and wisdom to live a life of independence. "What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think," Emerson says. But he also goes on to say this: "It is easy to live after the world's opinion, it is in solitude to live after our own, but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." This means that along with self-determination comes the challenge to do so with a view of and concern for community. It is easy to live after our own thoughts in solitude, or everyone else's thoughts in the city, but the great man is he who can exercise his own ideas and opinions while in the presence of others. Inner strength cultivated in solitude must be tested against the will to advance the wellbeing of the larger good, or, as Christopher Newfield puts it, developed "with civic virtue and duty." Thoreau's excursion into the woods is well and good, testing man's ability to live within natural means, but it also stops short of the demands Emerson placed on that experiment, of calibrating the yield next to a society that might very well benefit from it. To meet them it seems we would need to extend the lineage beyond Emerson and Thoreau. This paper proposes that we look to F. L. Wright for that lineage, an architect born to the same spiritual nineteenth-century tradition as these two predecessors, of whom he not only knew but whose work he assimilated in his architectural ideals. In doing so, the paper will make three key stops. The first at his early houses where we see him look to the façade as a thin but critical membrane with which to balance relations between individuality and community, privacy and publicity. The second at the "Living City," a direct extension of Emerson's essay on "Farming," and in which we see him take the principles espoused in that piece and use it to structure and inform a new American agrarian society, including how to advance education through growing and harvesting food. And, the third, at his last building, the Guggenheim in New York where nature and culture come to blows in a struggle between linear and organic powers.

## Emerson's Thoreauvian Ear and the Music of the Spheres

CHRISTINA KATOPODIS, *CUNY Graduate Center*

Reading Henry David Thoreau's *Journal*, Ralph Waldo Emerson writes in 1863: "In reading him, I find the same thought, the same spirit that is in me, but he takes a step beyond..." In frequent walks together, Thoreau carrying a music book under his arm to press flowers with, Emerson observed his world—heard his world—differently. His companion seemed to have "additional senses," seeing as if with a microscope and hearing as if with an "ear-trumpet," Emerson writes in his essay "Thoreau." Emerson was surrounded by music in his own home and in visits to the Alcott house, but it was Thoreau who taught him to listen for the wild, everyday music of nature. Ever a nonconformist, Thoreau broke away from a traditional notion of music as the human-organized sound played in concert halls, preferring to listen for nature's unregulated and unpremeditated expressions in sound.

While studies of Emerson have largely focused on the visual metaphors in his works, sight subscribes to one-way visual aesthetics and is a limited window into Emerson's relation to his environment. The aural in Emerson reveals more of the multidimensional relation he felt with nature. My paper, distilled from my dissertation on the influence of music on the American Transcendentalists, provides a study of Emerson's Thoreauvian listening habits, and his translation of nature's music into symbolic meaning. I argue for a musical understanding of Emerson's transcendentalism, bringing together Emerson's impressions of sounds he heard on his walks, Thoreau's lasting influence on his habits of listening, and the ancient Greek philosophy of the Music of the Spheres. In this analysis, I show that Thoreau brought Emerson's understanding of music outdoors and into his transcendentalist philosophy, helping Emerson unite the Pythagorean concept of universal music with actual experience.

## "Where Do We Find Ourselves?": The Experience of Idealism in Emerson and Thoreau

DAVID HECKERL, *Saint Mary's University, Canada*

An especially illuminating way of eliciting Thoreau's presence in Emerson is to engage certain ideas of their great Danish contemporary, Søren Kierkegaard. In *A Literary Review* (1846), Kierkegaard remarks that "Certain phrases and observations circulate among people, in part true and sensible, yet de-animated; for there is no hero, no lover, no thinker ... no one in despair, who vouches for their validity by having experienced them primitively." The word at issue for Emerson and Thoreau is "idealism," which, having suffered the de-animating systematizations of Kant and Hegel is now in need of existential rehabilitation. Emerson names this return to the primacy of lived experience "transcendentalism," the peculiar disposition in the American context of "Idealism as it appears in 1842." What I propose to trace here, with a particular emphasis on Emerson's essay "The Transcendentalist" and Thoreau's *Walden*, is the recovery of idealism as (in Kierkegaard's phrasing) an "existence-determination." Emerson's essay begins with the abstract sorting of humankind into Materialists and Idealists, but then shifts to an existential characterization—the transcendentalist—in which idealism signifies the complex temperament of certain "intelligent and religious persons [who] withdraw themselves from the common labors and competitions of the market and caucus, and betake themselves to a certain solitary and critical way of living." Emerson's figure of the transcendentalist gestures toward the recovery of idealism as an "existence-determination," but it is Thoreau's *Walden* that consummates this movement. Whereas Emerson writes at a distance *about* the transcendentalist's sensibility, Thoreau's writing *manifests or enacts* this very sensibility. It is Thoreau who completes the existential tendency of Emerson's thought and who vouches for idealism in its lived primitiveness as a mood of "quiet desperation" (we recall here Kierkegaard's emphasis on despair). What is most Thoreauvian in Emerson is the effort to revivify certain words or concepts, in this case "idealism," by returning them to the exigencies of inwardness, the earnestness of personality. In Thoreau's writing this effort is not, as in Emerson, the detached characterization of a certain experience, but is itself the achievement of such experience.

## Reviews

**Two Cities: The Political Thought of American Transcendentalism.** DANIEL S. MALACHUK. UP of Kansas, 2016. 312 pp. \$39.95 cloth.

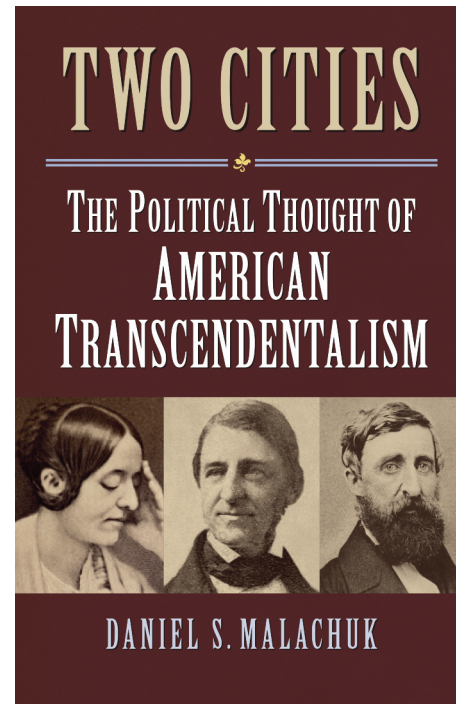
Writing in *A Christian America* (1984), Robert T. Handy asserts that “(t)he same religion which held the key to eternity as American Protestants saw it, also showed the way to a sound and satisfying civilization” (28). This politico-religious dynamic at the heart of quotidian life bespeaks the titular “two cities” of Daniel S. Malachuk’s powerful and engaging study. Malachuk’s work successfully reconfigures the respective careers and ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau in order to illustrate their concerns with liberal democracy as the site of individual betterment. In placing the three most prominent Transcendentalists irrevocably within the Augustinian tradition, this multi-faceted book reassesses the role of personal and communal space through analysis of these writers’ commitments to individualism, politics, and social conscience. In referring to the prominence of Augustinian thought within Transcendentalism, Malachuk shows the importance of introspective self-examination so often associated with Augustine’s writings while, of course, emphasizing the lasting influence of his works, particularly the *Confessions* and *De Civitate Dei*.

*Two Cities* advances increasingly revisionist readings of nineteenth-century American writers, thinkers, and novelists as significant political actors. Malachuk positions his subjects within a dynamic nexus of radical thought, which sought to question the projected inherencies of democracy and the system’s ability to provide sufficient moral or spiritual succor for its people. Importantly, in analyzing Emerson’s ridiculing of “democratic cant” (45), Malachuk indicates the central importance of an actualized sacralization of the individual to the project of Transcendentalism. Furthermore, his critique of Emerson’s major writings demonstrates the integral, foundational aspects of Emerson’s use of the “two cities” model. In affirming Emerson’s bipartite view as evidenced in the book’s title, Malachuk further distinguishes Emerson’s thought from the rugged individualism of the Jacksonian Democrats, whose near complete absence from this book suggests immediately Emerson’s emphasis on “higher” theory and philosophy, and his attempts to remove his individual from the corrupting “wheel of Chance,” provided irregularly by the “city of man” (56).

In apprehending Emerson’s works as sites of continuous engagement with “two cities” thought, Malachuk places Emerson within the broader historical and canonical remit of the Augustinian tradition, while also working against criticisms that, in a manner contrary to their aims, de-transcendentalize Fuller, Emerson and Thoreau. This book works to rebut such de-transcendentalization, seeing this process as something that dehistoricizes and decontextualizes these writers’ work. Malachuk categorically rejects the charge that Transcendentalism’s esoteric thought tended towards the timeless, situating it firmly in its contemporary milieu. Not simply does Malachuk’s analysis work to legitimize these writers as important political thinkers, but *Two Cities* accentuates Transcendentalism as constantly evolving and adapting in order to answer difficult ethical and social questions.

Malachuk’s construction of Fuller locates her writing at the intersection of a variety of divisive contemporary issues, from women’s rights to abolition. In emphasizing her use of legal language, the “Great Lawsuit” (60), to recognize America as a “city of man” that may “overlap” with the “city of God” (62), Malachuk examines elements of the Transcendentalist worldview that sees the theoretical coincidence of the two cities not in terms of visionary politics, but as a matter of jurisdiction. This book’s chapter on Fuller is an exciting contribution to the study of her work, demonstrating how her use of judicial language altered not only this element of Transcendentalism’s corpus, but fundamentally brought under review the “higher law” aspects of the movement and the percolations of political thought that pervade Transcendentalism throughout the 1850s, after her untimely death.

Although Emerson is the leading thinker in *Two Cities*, Malachuk’s adept figuration of Fuller and, in later chapters, Thoreau, consistently highlights their respective defenses and criticisms of democracy as a force for moral betterment, against and interwoven with its vulgar antebellum embodiment. In teasing out the intricacies of Thoreau’s engagement with nature, and, through nature, race and society, this book provides a defining interpretation of Thoreau’s essential sacralization of the individual in the face of the corrupting abstractions of the state. In apprehending Thoreau’s democratic thought, Malachuk seeks to correct the missteps of ecocriticism and those analyses that unnecessarily centralize *Walden* and extrapolate upon Thoreau’s meaning from there. *Two Cities* is at pains to extricate Thoreau from a tradition of dangerous individualism, seeking rather to demonstrate his appreciation of solitary “pilgrimage” (249) as a fundamental connection with community. In turning to “the stately pine wood (that is) of no politics” (251), Thoreau’s questioning of democracy is framed in natural terms, but terms that see the overlapping of the eponymous cities as a necessary negotiation.



*Two Cities* expertly delineates the centrality of Augustinian thought to the work of the three most prominent Transcendentalist writers. Furthermore, it demonstrates these writers' consistent engagement with pressing, contemporary social and political issues, beyond the abstractions of state-run antebellum democracy. Although framed through the metaphysical rubric of the cities of God and man, their respective positions fundamentally questioned the ideas of equality and individuality as well as the era-defining issue of slavery. In exciting new depth, Daniel Malachuk has reconstructed many of Transcendentalism's perceived ephemeral notions to showcase its powerful commentary on contemporary political and social life, while redressing the perception of this movement as one without a cohesive societal strand of thought. This book is essential reading for any student of Emerson, Fuller, or Thoreau who wishes to explore the implications of Transcendentalist stances on contemporary issues, particularly those rooted in the moral rights of self and society.

—James Hussey  
Trinity College, Dublin

**Picturing Emerson: An Iconography.** JOEL MYERSON AND LESLIE PERRIN WILSON. Harvard UP, 2017. 140 pp. 135 color illustrations, 5 halftones. \$30.00 paper.

Emerson did not photograph easily. We know this from his own observations, for example in the 1841 journal entry where he reflects on the new process of being “Daugerrotyped” [sic] by noting both the physical and metaphysical discomfort of the experience: “unhappily the total expression escaped from the face and you held the portrait of a mask instead of a man” (*JMN* 8:115-116). But we would be wrong to assume, therefore, that Emerson, unlike Walt Whitman or Frederick Douglass, did not participate actively and extensively, as those authors did, in the mid-nineteenth-century

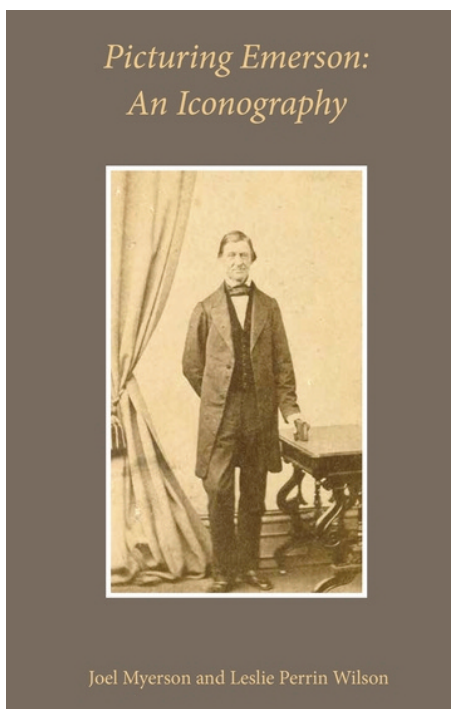
conjunction of visual technologies, photography in particular, and the development of public personality and authority. We now have *Picturing Emerson: An Iconography* to correct this assumption and to illuminate the fascinating and complex record of Emerson portraiture.

Compiled by Joel Myerson and Leslie Perrin Wilson, this catalogue draws upon their unique access to, and expertise in, “two of the richest collections of Emerson portraits in the country, the Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature at the University of South Carolina and the William Munroe Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library” (4). Myerson and Wilson restrict the focus to photographs and other works of art depicting Emerson—including painting, drawing, and sculpture—that were produced during Emerson's lifetime and from what they characterize as firsthand or nonderivative portrayal, that is, created from life. This excludes posthumous portraits as well as caricatures, including the famous Christopher Cranch sketch of Emerson as eyeball, since Emerson did not sit as a subject. Regarding posthumous portrayals, Myerson and Wilson suggest they are worthy of a separate iconography and invite others to consider them for a future study.

Published by Houghton Library as a special double issue of the *Harvard Library Bulletin*, *Picturing Emerson* is an extensive and thorough description of Emerson portraiture that ranges from an 1829 painting by Sarah Goodridge to the last photographic portraits made of Emerson in the early 1880s, and of course much in between. Some of these images will be familiar to readers from their use on book jacket covers over the years, while others will be new and, in some cases, such as the 1858 William James Stillman painting *The Philosophers' Camp in the Adirondacks*, unusual and refreshing. In all cases, Myerson and Wilson provide rich context for the image and its origination, supplemented by generous endnotes that include the archival locations for the images. They supplement this curatorial labor, already of great value to Emerson scholars, with two equally useful appendices: “Apocryphal Images of Emerson” as well as “Unlocated Images of Emerson.” In the first category, “images described as being of Emerson for which conclusive evidence is lacking or which are definitely not of Emerson,” we find an undated painting that most will recognize from the dust jacket of Carlos Baker's *Emerson Among the Eccentrics* (1996) but which, according to this catalogue, is “definitely not of Emerson” (91, 104).

All Emerson scholars will be grateful for the precision that results from the curatorial and scholarly labors of Myerson and Wilson. Braced by their “labor and invention,” as Emerson characterizes “creative reading” in “The American Scholar” (1837), our understanding of Emerson is made “luminous with manifold allusion” (*CW* 1:58). But as they rightly propose, the uses of this Emerson iconography should extend beyond that of providing illustrations for publications. A better grasp of Emerson's iconography and further context for how and where images were made of this author in his lifetime can also provide “a personal link to its subject, creating intimate access to character and condition” (4). This is well said, and this catalogue succeeds in collecting and representing the masks that portrayed the man.

—Sean Ross Meehan  
Washington College





# An Emerson Bibliography, 2016

TODD H. RICHARDSON, *University of Texas of the Permian Basin*

*Readers should also consult the Thoreau bibliographies published quarterly in the Thoreau Society Bulletin and the chapters "Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism" and "International Scholarship" in the annual American Literary Scholarship (Duke University Press).*

- Alves, Isabel, Rochelle Johnson, and Edgardo Medeiros da Silva, editors. *Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): Naturally Emerson*, special issue of *Anglo Saxonica*, vol. 3, no. 12. [Includes fourteen essays by such scholars as David Greenham, Lawrence Rhu, and Alexandra Urakova.]
- Arsić, Branka. "Against Pessimism: On Emerson's 'Experience.'" *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 72, no. 3, pp. 25-45. [Responds to critics who see "Experience" as "a transformation of Emerson's alleged optimism into a more sober pessimism."]
- . "Poetry as Flowering of Life Forms: Rancière's Reading of Emerson." *Textual Practice*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 551-77. [Theorizes a genealogy of modernism beginning with Emerson and John Ruskin.]
- Bailey, Austin. "'The World Is Full': Emerson, Pluralism, and the 'Nominalist and Realist.'" *The Pluralist*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 32-48. [Argues that "pluralism for Emerson must also ethically and epistemologically mirror the pluralisms of embodied communities."]
- Beebe, Ann. "The Conversation: Ralph Waldo Emerson and Frederick Douglass." *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 17-29, <http://www.cpcc.edu/taltp/winter-2016-8-2-1/the-conversation-ralph-waldo-emerson-and-frederick-douglass/view>. [Details Beebe's experience teaching Emerson together with Douglass.]
- Boatright, Michael. "Emersonian Reading and Ethics: Reading for Developing an Ethical Stance toward Self and Other." *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 15-30. [Endeavours to show how Emerson's program of reading develops "an ethical stance toward self and others."]
- Casalini, Cristiano. "American Jesus: Emerson and Thoreau on Religion, European Heritage and Education." *Seen from Afar: Images of Europe in the Cultivation of American Identity*, edited by Luana Salvarani, Anicia, pp. 113-40. [Argues that Emerson stands against "both imitation and mediation" in his uniquely American push for religious reform.]
- Corrington, Robert S. *Deep Pantheism: Toward a New Transcendentalism*. Lexington Books. [Conceptualizes a Transcendentalism that shows the way forward for a planet in crisis while resisting nihilistic elements within postmodernist thought.]
- Djockoua, Manyaka Toko. *Cross-cultural Affinities: Emersonian Transcendentalism and Senghorian Negritude*. Peter Lang. [Argues that "African religions and philosophy have influenced the formation of American Transcendentalism."]
- Einboden, Jeffrey. *The Islamic Lineage of American Literary Culture: Muslim Sources from the Revolution to Reconstruction*. Oxford UP. [Includes a meticulously researched chapter on Emerson's engagement with Islamic literature, religion, and culture.]
- Frank, Jason. "Willful Liberalism in America." *Theory & Event*, vol. 19, no. 1, [muse.jhu.edu/article/607273](http://muse.jhu.edu/article/607273). [(E)xplores problems of personalism and impersonalism in Richard Flatham's theory of willful liberalism and ... Emerson's theory of self-reliance."]
- Goto, Shoji. *Emerson's Eastern Education*. Nova Science Publishers. [Approaches an understanding of the enormous debt Emerson owes to eastern thought.]
- Greenham, David. "The Atlantic Adam: Emerson and the Origins of United States Literature." *The Edinburgh Companion to Atlantic Literary Studies*, edited by Leslie Eckel and Andrew Taylor, Edinburgh UP, pp. 253-265. [Argues that Emerson is an "Atlantic Adam" who helped "(bring) about an American Renaissance."]
- . "Corresponding Natures: Ralph Waldo Emerson's Letters." *The Edinburgh Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Letters and Letter-Writing*, edited by Judie Newman, Celeste Marie-Bernier, and Matthew Pethers, Edinburgh UP, pp. 319-31. [Examines Emerson's letters from 1816-1842 for "the emergence of his central philosophical and literary concerns."]
- Grünzweig, Walter. "Parasitic Simulacrum: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Richard Florida, and the Urban 'Creative Class.'" *Urban Representations in the U.S.A.: Spaces, Communities, Representations*, edited by Julia Sattler, Transcript Verlag, pp. 81-97. [Argues that Florida's concept of the "creative class" originates with Emerson but lacks Emerson's critical sensibility.]
- Guardiano, Nicholas L. *Aesthetic Transcendentalism in Emerson, Peirce, and Nineteenth-Century American Landscape Painting*. Lexington Books. [Presents Aesthetic Transcendentalism as a philosophy seeking to uncover an "aesthetic dimension in nature."]
- . "Ecstatic Naturalism and Aesthetic Transcendentalism on the Creativity of Nature." *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 55-69. [Traces out Transcendentalist origins in the cosmology of Charles Sanders Peirce.]
- Heddendorf, David. "What is Emerson for?" *Sewanee Review*, vol. 124, no. 3, pp. 482-88. [Characterizes Emerson as seemingly irrelevant but somehow persistent.]
- Heidarzadegan, Nazila. "The Discourse of Transcendentalism and Mysticism: Poetry from East and West." *Interstudies*, vol. 19, pp. 21-31. [Compares Emerson, Khayyam, and Hafiz. (Unseen.)]
- Hodder, Alan. "The Bhagavad Gītā in American Transcendentalism." *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Religion*, edited by Mark Knight, Routledge, pp. 298-309. [Details Emerson's reception of the Bhagavad Gītā.]
- Kaag, John and Martin Clancy. "Can Transcendence Be Taught?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 63, no. 7, pp. B6-B9. [Suggests that "Experience" provides a starting point for students asking "the big questions."]



- Kane, Paul. "Work: Emerson, Wittgenstein, Gurdjieff." *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 110-14. [Explores similarities in Emerson, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and G. I. Gurdjieff in their notion that philosophical work helps us realize truth, even when such truth brings pain.]
- Knutson, Andrea and Kathryn Dolan, editors. *Fugitive Environmentalisms*, special issue of *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, vol. 49, no. 1. [Conceptual framework as put forth in "Introduction: Fugitive Environmentalisms" (7-24) is informed by Emerson's lifelong mission to unsettle "the oppressive stability of hardened 'fact.'"]
- Levine, Robert S. "The Canon and the Survey: An Anthologist's Perspective." *J19*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 134-40. [Indicates that 97% of college instructors teaching American literature, 1820-1865, considered Emerson "absolutely essential to their survey classes."]
- Loots, Christopher. "'That Inscrutable Thing': Holography, Nonlocality, and Identity in American Romanticism." *Configurations*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 71-108. [Sees common ground in Emerson's thought and "the science of quantum nonlocality and optical holography, and David Bohm's holomovement theory."]
- Malachuk, Daniel S. *Two Cities: The Political Thought of American Transcendentalism*. UP of Kansas. [Argues, contrary to received opinion, that Emerson, along with other Transcendentalists, viewed "democracy as a profane project and individuality as a sacred one."]
- Mastroianni, Dominic. *Politics and Skepticism in Antebellum American Literature*. Cambridge UP, 2014. [Explores Emerson's belief in a "secret spring" that mysteriously transforms the individual. The book received a subvention award from the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society.]
- Macleod, Glen. "Influence or Affinity?" *Wallace Stevens Journal*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 1-5. [Calls for a clearer understanding of Emerson's influence on Stevens.]
- Meehan, Sean Ross. "Metonymies of Mind: Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, and the Rhetoric of Liberal Education." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 277-99. [Uncovers "ways that Emerson and James engage and enact a congenial and unconventional rhetoric of mind" that both "associate with the older liberal education of the college."]
- Mondello, Kaitlin. "'Perpetual Analogies' and 'Occult Harmonies': Ralph Waldo Emerson's Ecological Selves." *Romantic Ecocriticism: Origins and Legacies*, edited by Dewey W. Hall, Lexington Books, pp. 105-22. [Examines biblical typology as a source for Emerson's scientific thought.]
- Mott, Wesley T. "Choral Setting of Emerson's 'Boston Hymn' Premiers at Symphony Hall." *Emerson Society Papers*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 6-7. [Reviews Boston's Handel and Hayden Society Period Instrument Orchestra and Chorus's performance of *My Angel, His Name Is Freedom*, an arrangement of Emerson's poem "Boston Hymn." Another version of the review appears in the online *Boston Musical Intelligencer*.]
- Myerson, Joel and Michael C. Weisenberg. "'I liked the town no better at our second interview': A New Emerson Letter from Charleston in 1827." *New England Quarterly*, vol. 89, no. 3, pp. 493-504. [Prints and historically contextualizes Emerson's letter to his uncle Samuel Ripley.]
- Myerson, Joel and Leslie Perrin Wilson. *Picturing Emerson: An Iconography*, special double issue of *Houghton Library Bulletin*, vol. 27, no. 1-2, spring-summer 2016. [Includes color reproductions of every known photograph, painting, sculpture, and drawing of Emerson taken from life.]
- Posnock, Ross. *Renunciation: Acts of Abandonment by Writers, Philosophers, and Artists*. Harvard UP. [Devotes a chapter to commonalities in Emerson, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein.]
- Rabee, Robert Yusef. "Feudalism, Individualism, and Authority in Later Emerson." *ESQ*, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 77-114. [Argues that Emerson's early theorizing of a "dialectical relationship ... between society and the individual gave way to a doctrine of natural aristocracy."]
- Schlett, James. *A Not Too Greatly Changed Eden: The Story of the Philosophers' Camp in the Adirondacks*. Cornell UP. [Relates the story of the August 1858 camping expedition to the Adirondacks in which Emerson participated.]
- Scholnick, Robert J. "Whigs and Democrats, the Past and the Future: The Political Emerson and Whitman's 1855 Preface." *American Periodicals*, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 70-91. [Argues that Whitman's agenda as a Democrat and Emerson's affinities with the same party are apparent when their work is read in context of the *Democratic Review* and the Whig affiliated *American Review*.]
- Shanahan, John. "Digital Transcendentalism in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*." *Criticism*, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 115-45. [Posits that Mitchell has crafted a new form of Transcendentalism for the digital age.]
- Sommer, Tim. "Economies of Value: Emerson, Thoreau, and the (Literary) Market." *Oxford Research in English*, no. 3, pp. 42-53, <https://oxfordresearchenglish.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/ore3win16value.pdf>. [Discusses "the ambiguity about the market economy" expressed by Emerson and Thoreau.]
- Stanley, Kate. "Through Emerson's Eye: The Practice of Perception in Proust." *American Literary History*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 455-83. [Identifies an intellectual lineage extending from Plotinus to Emerson to Marcel Proust.]
- Sweeny, Jon M., editor. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essential Spiritual Writings*. Orbis Books. [Designed for spiritual seekers coming to Emerson for the first time.]
- Urbas, Joseph. *Emerson's Metaphysics: A Song of Laws and Causes*. Lexington. [Drawing on the entire corpus of Emerson's work, Urbas makes a strong case for Emerson's metaphysics of causation.]
- von Frank, Albert J. *An Emerson Chronology*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. Studio Non Troppo. [Roughly twice the size of the first edition of the *Chronology*. Includes a thorough index.]
- Weber, Edward P. *Endangered Species: A Documentary and Reference Guide*. Greenwood. [In the chapter "Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Nature,'" Weber reprints and offers commentary upon the first three chapters of Emerson's book to underscore his contributions to an ethos of biodiversity.]
- West, Kristina. "#Emerson in 140 Characters or Less." *Emerson Society Papers*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 8-9. [Explores how "Twitter ... might be a useful tool in introducing students to Emerson."]

# My Emerson

*A column devoted to our readers' personal reflections on Emerson*

TYSON FORBES

I have always felt called to wild places. There is a constant yearning to escape into wilderness. It is in wilderness that I feel at home. This desire has been running through my veins since I can remember. My mother says that as a young child I used to disappear for hours into the woods of Concord, exploring the secrets that only a five-year-old can discover.

This love of nature grew with me as I learned to sail along the coasts of the Northeast, descended whitewater, and summited peaks in the heart of the Colorado Rockies, where my family moved when I was in elementary school. I took to these activities like a duck takes to water and soon started guiding students and adults into these wild landscapes. The more time I spent in nature, the more at home I felt. The snowy mountain ridges, arid deserts, and turbulent waters of Montana, Utah, and Colorado became familiar to me. At the age of 25, I moved into the National Forest in the Gore Range of Colorado, where I built a tree house suspended between trunks of aspen. There I lived for six months, walking for miles barefoot into my secret mountain retreat, never taking the same route twice, so as to hide my tracks.

Emerson was always this enigmatic figure in my childhood. I knew that he was an incredibly special figure, but I didn't really understand why. His portraits hung above the mantels and his quotes were stuck to the bumpers of our cars and were artfully laid out in the magnetic poetry on our fridge. And, of course, I was always surrounded by his descendants. The Emerson family is a tight clan and we make it a habit of gathering. Playful excursions in nature and lively meals full of stories, laughter, and mischief were a regular occurrence.

I studied Emerson briefly in high school but the whole concept of transcendentalism went right over my head. I had neither the attention nor experience to grasp the depth of those thoughts. Years later, after graduating from college, I sat down one quiet afternoon with Emerson's essay *Nature* and it hit. Suddenly, the enormity of his mind and spirit grabbed me. When someone perfectly articulates what you know in your heart to be true, there is this incredible bond. I was hooked. I read *Nature* over and over and over again. Then "Self-Reliance," then "History" and "Art." Reading his essays and poetry led me to Robert Richardson's *Mind on Fire*, and I started to get to know the man behind these transcendent thoughts.

At this point, I was pursuing a life in theater and performing in professional theaters throughout the country. I was learning the repertoire of western plays but also focusing my craft on creating original works. Actors approach roles from different angles. While I always researched my characters, mine was never an intellectual approach. I used physicality, improvisation and intuition to find my way into a character. At the time, my father kept suggesting creating a piece about Emerson and sent me a video of Hal Holbrook performing *Mark Twain Tonight*. It sounded like a great idea, but how do you create a show about someone as original and epic as Emerson? I've never considered myself an intellectual, and here was the master of all intellectuals. I didn't know where to begin, or what I had to say that could elevate this giant.

At that time, I was reacquainted with my soon-to-be wife and collaborator, Markell Kiefer. Markell was just finishing her graduate studies in actor-created physical theater at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. She was learning from a pedagogy that was established by this incredibly curious and brilliant theater practitioner named Jacques Lecoq. He taught many of the great minds of theater and film and his influence can be seen everywhere. While most western acting approaches focus on the internal psychological workings of a character, Lecoq's approach looks more at the external qualities and then explores how they resonate within: outside-in vs. inside-out. At first these feel like different approaches, and they are to some degree, but where it gets exciting is when you realize that they are just different tools that can be used towards the same end. I loved this approach because it opened up a world of options to explore character and theatrical themes beyond the psychological and intellectual approach. I had studied with teachers of this pedagogy before, but when Markell and I got together and were steeped in this work, we fell in love with the approach and with each other.

And this was my way into Emerson. I didn't have a deep intellectual understanding of his writings, but I did have that point of sublime connection that I felt when I read his works, that I felt in my bones to be true, from my experiences growing up in the Emerson family and living a life close to nature. I could use this new creative tool set to start devising a piece about him. And so, Markell and I, and our close friend Sam Elmore, set out on a journey to create a theatrical experience

that would share with audiences the intimacy with nature Emerson writes of so eloquently.

Our exploration of Emerson brought us to Henry David Thoreau, his fellow author, student, and friend. We spent weeks improvising around themes of nature in our own lives and in their writings. An outline began to emerge and with it the complex and dramatic story of their relationship. Human nature and Mother Nature began to weave together in the most beautiful of ways. One day at rehearsal we had a long debate about whether we wanted to make our work into a film, a play for the stage, or an outdoor walking play, a style that we had been developing and performing for over a decade. Once we committed to making it an outdoor walking play, the creative palette got even more interesting. Now we could share the ideas and experiences of these extraordinary minds in the very environment from which they were born.

Perhaps what is so divine about Emerson's nature writings is that they express such deep universal truths. While his writing may be demanding on the modern-day reader, his articulation of the subtle truths of our shared experience in nature is still relevant. It was of the utmost importance to us to share these universal truths at levels that were accessible to audiences of all ages and walks of life. We wanted the experience to offer as much to the professor of American literature as it did the grade-schooler and passerby. Like nature herself, we wanted to offer a myriad of perspectives into her ever-changing and ever-present world.

In 2010, we first created and produced *Nature* at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Audiences instantly responded to the work, and we were able to draw huge crowds. In 2014, we redeveloped the piece and brought in a professional cast. 2015–16 marked the beginning of a tour of *Nature*, which we titled *Nature for the Nation*, taking the production to parks and arboretums throughout the Midwest, from the oak forests of northern Minnesota, to the prairies

of Grinnell, Iowa, to the meadows and woods of Chicago's Morton Arboretum. In 2017, we received grants to offer *Nature* free to the public in a park in Minneapolis. We then took *Nature* to the Old Manse in Concord, Mass., for its East Coast debut.

Performing in Concord was the manifestation of a dream that we had for the production since its inception. When the Trustees of Reservations suggested the Old Manse as a venue, we leapt at the offer. Our experience there was

extraordinary. There was this sense of timelessness, of the past speaking to the present. The production had this incredible resonance as it played out on the very land from which it was conceived. The audiences in Concord were exceptional; their interest and understanding of the story was unparalleled. *Nature* had found its way back to its spiritual home.

When I think about my relationship to Emerson, it is both deeply personal and public. His genius is in his universal resonance with us all. Our job has been to share that brilliance with an audience. Audiences often ask me what it's like playing my great-great-grandfather. In some ways, it is no different from any other role, but there are times when it becomes utterly magical; when I feel like the spirit of my ancestors are

channeling through the work; when human nature and Mother Nature are dancing together; and when it feels like we have blown the walls off the church and are taking our audiences deep into the heart of the wild. While this experience has brought me closer to Ralph Waldo Emerson, it has also brought me closer to my fellow human beings. Emerson speaks to the collective force and energy in nature that unites us all. It has been our incredible privilege to share that with the world.

*Tyson Forbes is Co-Artistic Director of TigerLion Arts, where he also serves as writer, performer, creator, and producer.*



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BARRY M. ANDREWS

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Barry M. Andrews, a retired Unitarian Universalist minister, is author of several books, including *Emerson as Spiritual Guide*.

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