



Rev.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to Shoji Goto

Shoji Goto, Professor Emeritus of English at Rikkyo University, was presented with the Emerson Society's Distinguished Achievement Award in Kyoto, Japan, on June 23, 2018. As the Society's president, Dan Malachuk, points out, "For twenty five years, the Emerson Society has bestowed this award on those scholars who have most prominently kept Emerson alive for readers, both academic and general, around the world." It is no exaggeration to say that, thanks largely to Goto's contributions as a scholar and teacher, readers all over the world have a deeper appreciation of Emerson as a writer whose work is truly international.

Certainly this global focus well describes Goto's achievement. In a number of ways, he has demonstrated his mastery of the intersecting worlds of literature and philosophy, especially pertaining to Asian discourse. In her remarks during the presentation ceremony, past Society president Sarah Wider celebrated Goto's "lifelong work on Emerson [that] laid the foundations for Transpacific Emersonian Studies." On one hand, Goto has helped make literature in English more accessible across linguistic divides. He has translated D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Tokyo, 1962) and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* (Tokyo, 1982) into Japanese and published Japanese-language articles on Jonathan Edwards, Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Henry Adams, Sarah Orne Jewett, and others. On the other hand, he has deepened the understanding of Western readers with essays on Japanese writers such as Nobel laureate Kenzaburō Ōe, whose characters and themes Goto has found comparable to those of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Additionally, Goto has contributed to the study of how

culture affects reception, seen, for example, in his work on the Japanese reception of Upton Sinclair.

Goto's scholarly reach is equally global when one considers his frequent participation in international conferences. A regular participant at American Literature Association meetings in the United States, he has also presented scholarly papers at the Upton Sinclair World Congress (Bremen, 1988), Emerson 2003: An International Celebration of the Bicentennial of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Rome, 2003), Transatlanticism in American Literature: Emerson, Hawthorne, and Poe (Oxford, 2006), and the International Poe and Hawthorne Conference (Kyoto, 2018), where he received the Distinguished Achievement Award. Goto has also served three times as Visiting Scholar at the Harvard Divinity School and has been awarded grants by the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Studies Foundation, and Rikkyo University to support his international experiences.

On the basis of scholarly breadth alone, Professor Goto has had a noteworthy career. We recognize him not only for his catholic interests but also for his outstanding work on Transcendentalist writers, Emerson in particular. Over forty years ago, he published "Recent Trends in Transcendentalism Studies," a lengthy bibliographical study of the field followed by a 20-page list of major scholarship on Emerson and Thoreau. The first of its kind in Japan, Goto's essay introduced Japanese scholars to the wide range of work on Emerson and Thoreau as well as to the lacunae in criticism, thereby providing them with the opportunity to extend their gaze beyond national boundaries.

Emerson, it became clear, needed to be discussed as a world figure, not only as "the Sage of Concord" or "the

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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ESP welcomes notes and short articles (up to eight 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, Michael Weisenburg, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina, 1322 Greene St., Columbia, SC 29208, or emersonsocietypapers.editor@gmail.com (email submissions are much preferred).

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Prentiss Clark, Department of English, Dakota Hall, Room 212, 414 E. Clark St., Vermillion, SD 57069.

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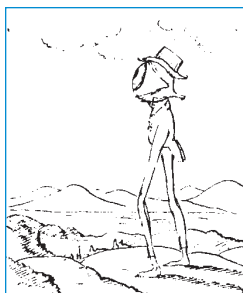
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PROSPECTS.



Emerson Sightings/Citings

Frequent correspondent Wendell Refior has identified a number of Emerson sightings/citings for this issue. In his discussion of the artistic influences of musician Andrew Duhon, journalist RJ Frometa includes Emerson:

Initially, Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Self Reliance" sparked Duhon's artistic will. One line especially, "To believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men." This statement began the resounding question for Duhon, "What is it that I have to say?" That idea of innermost truth resonated most vividly with Duhon when listening to old delta blues and folk singers. It was simple music and hard-earned truth that bore a weight greater than the sum of its parts. It was personal, and it seemed to cost the artist something dear.

See "Andrew Duhon Announces Solo-Penned, Eric Masse-Produced 'False River' (5.25) as follow-up to GRAMMY-nominated album." *Vents Magazine*, 27 Mar. 2018, tinyurl.com/ycr2576x

In "The Language of Now"—an article for *The Frederick News-Post* written on March 21, 2018—Patricia Weller references Emerson's *Nature* (1836) to explain what she sees as our current political moment's perversion of language:

The perversion of words is not a new thing; it's just a different time. The essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) wrote: "The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. In due time, the fraud is manifest and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections."

See *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898, p. 35. tinyurl.com/ycpfdzcs

According to a recent article, "UT Austin Professors to Join American Academy of Arts and Sciences," Emerson was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1864. See "UT Austin Professors to Join American Academy of Arts and Sciences," *UT News*, 18 Apr. 2018. tinyurl.com/yap9odax

While considering the possible existence of a planet that resembles the setting of Isaac Asimov's "Nightfall"—a planet where night occurs only every 2,049 years—Space.com contributor Charles Q. Choi discusses the origins of Asimov's tale. He explains that:

The inspiration for "Nightfall" came from a conversation Asimov had with John W. Campbell, editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* magazine, regarding a quotation from the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson: "If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and

adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God!"

See *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898, p. 7. To read the article, see "Could Isaac Asimov's Planet Where Nightfall Almost Never Comes Really Exist?" Space.com, 9 Apr. 2018. <https://tinyurl.com/yammcywo>

In a *YourStory* article advising readers how to plan a career break, freelance writer Anuradha C concludes with a reference to Emerson: "Ralph Waldo Emerson quotes, 'All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make, the better.'" Go right ahead and experiment with your career—take that sabbatical, and come back to work doubly recharged." See *Emerson in His Journals*, edited by Joel Porte, Belknap P, 1982, p. 294. To read the article, see "Planning a career break? Here's how to convince your employer to let you take one!" *YourStory*, 25 Apr. 2018. tinyurl.com/ycg5lc6j

In a profile written for the *Missourian*, John Tinker, whose involvement in the Supreme Court Case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent* ensured the right to free speech in American public schools, cites Emerson as a major influence on his life and values: "I decided early on that I didn't want a career," he said. "I read Emerson, and he discusses that we should be a wholesome, free person, not just fill some slot in the economy." See Elza Goodlow, "Meet John Tinker: a Missourian whose Supreme Court Case Helped Pave the Way for Today's Student Marches," *Missourian*, 30 Apr. 2018. tinyurl.com/yd92x8zh

According to Cathy Stewart's article for the *Independent Voter Network*, Lois Leveen uses the following quote from Emerson to help explain how fiction and history come together in her book *The Secrets of Mary Bowser*:

If the whole of history is in one man, it is all to be explained from individual experience. ... Each new fact in his private experience flashes a light on what great bodies of men have done, and the crises of his life refer to national crises.

See *Emerson's Essays*, edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920, p. 58. To read the article, see "Politics for the People Book Club: *The Secrets of Mary Bowser*." IVN, 2 May 2018. tinyurl.com/ycrc46zc

Another correspondent, Len Gougeon, shares this interesting Emerson sighting/citing: in an article in the *Scranton Times-Tribune*, journalist Kathleen Bolus Emerson reports that a book from Emerson's personal library, inscribed with his notes, was found by Joseph Unis Jr. in Northeast Pennsylvania. The book, a copy of *The Thoughts of Emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus*, has been sold to Harvard University's Houghton Library. Unis has described his discovery as "finding buried treasure." See "Emerson's Notes Found in Archibald," the *Scranton Times-Tribune*, 4 Mar. 2018, tinyurl.com/y8vdmrh5.

Finally, Joel Myerson shares this Emerson sighting/citing from Rosalie Ham's *The Dressmaker*. The epigraph of the book reads:

*'The sense of being well-dressed
gives a feeling of inward tranquility
which religion is powerless to bestow.'*

—Miss C. Forbes, quoted by Emerson in *Social Aims*

See *Emerson's Complete Works: Letters and Social Aims*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892, p. 88. For Ham's book, see *The Dressmaker*. Penguin, 2000.

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PROSPECTS

(Continued from page 3)

Ralph Waldo Emerson Fellowship, Houghton Library, Harvard University

Houghton Library offers a stipend of \$3,600 to support research in its collections related to Ralph Waldo Emerson and his circle. The Library is home to the major collection of Emerson's journals and correspondence, within the context of the nation's outstanding collection of nineteenth-century American literature. Fellows are expected to be in residence for four weeks during the fellowship year. **NOTE: Fellowships have been suspended due to renovations; they will resume with the 2020–21 year.**

2019 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 consummate professional whose undisguised delight in literature was the secret of 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, 2019. More information:

americanantiquarian.org/acafellowship.htm.

2019 Thoreau Society Fellowship

The Thoreau Society is pleased to announce the fourth annual Marjorie Harding Memorial Fellowship, generously funded by the Harding family. The fellowship honors the life and legacy of Marjorie Brook Harding, who worked diligently to bring together the Thoreau Society, the Walden Woods Project, and SUNY Geneseo so as to advance Thoreau studies and the conservation of Thoreau Country, and to keep alive the legacy of her husband, Walter Harding, widely known as the dean of Thoreau studies. The fruits of this labor can be seen in the *Digital Thoreau Project*, the annual Walter Harding Lecture Series, and elsewhere.

The 2019 Marjorie Harding Memorial Fellow will receive \$1,000 for travel and Thoreau-related research in the greater Boston area, plus free attendance at the 2019 Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord. (Attendance at the Annual Gathering is not required and will not be factored into the fellowship committee's evaluation.)

We welcome applications from emerging and established scholars whose work advances Thoreau scholarship or draws on Thoreau's biography and writings to contribute to related fields

(Thoreau's circle, Transcendentalism, civil disobedience and social justice, environmentalism and conservation, etc.). We also welcome proposals from teachers, creative artists, and Thoreau enthusiasts.

Preference will be given to proposals that make use of the Walter Harding Collection or other collections at the Thoreau Institute Library in Lincoln, Massachusetts, but we will also consider proposals that target other archives and resources in the greater Boston area. For information on the TS Collections, see thoreausociety.org/research.

Applicants should email the following to fellowship committee chair James Finley (james.finley@tamusa.edu):

1. Current curriculum vitae or resume.
2. Proposal of no more than one thousand words. Please describe the project and its significance, situating the work within relevant scholarship, specifying the resources you wish to consult at the Thoreau Institute or in the archives of the greater Boston area, and outlining your plan for sharing the results of your work.
3. Graduate students only: Optional letter of recommendation from a faculty member familiar with the student's work and proposed project (to be emailed separately to committee chair).

Applications are due by Friday, March 1, 2019. The awardee will be notified by end of March and acknowledged in July at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Massachusetts. Please contact the fellowship committee chair with questions.

ALA Call for Proposals

The annual meeting of the American Literature Association will be held May 23–26, 2019, in Boston. Conference information: tinyurl.com/ya7pm8jw

Panel 1: Emerson and Pedagogy

The Emerson Society is inviting proposals that examine or encourage strategies for teaching Emerson that are informed by disciplines other than English or methods other than literary criticism, for example, rhetoric, journalism and media studies, environmental studies, creative writing, philosophy and religion, gender studies, material culture, etc. The society is also interested in proposals that consider pedagogies and approaches that engage the younger generation with the core ideas/ideals of Emerson, reviving them for the current age.

Panel 2: Twenty-First Century Emerson

The Emerson Society is inviting proposals that consider Emerson's relevance in the twenty-first century. Proposals can engage with current scholarly work on climate, politics of resistance, the Anthropocene, and/or affect. We also welcome proposals that re-examine Emerson in the light of twenty-first century critical/literary/philosophical theories and invite papers that address the pressing questions "of the times" by putting Emerson in conversation with twenty-first century writers/artists/thinkers. E-mail 300-word abstracts by January 11, 2019, to David Greenham (david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk). Membership in the Emerson Society is required of presenters.

RWE Awards Announcements

2019

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 2019) or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (July 2019). Submit a 300-word abstract to David Greenham (david.greenham@uwe.ac.uk) by December 20, 2018. Abstracts should address the 2019 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, 2019.

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, 2019.

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, 2019.

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

Award recipients must become members of the Society;
membership applications are available at
emersonsociety.org.

SHOJI GOTO

(Continued from page 1)

wisest American”—the traditional approach that Wai Chee Dimock has termed “academic nationalism.” Goto’s work is an implicit argument against that limited cultural perspective. The heart of his analysis is presented in two major books. The first, *The Philosophy of Emerson and Thoreau: Orientals Meet Occidentals*, collects his observations on the commonalities of East and West as revealed



Shoji Goto

by the two major Transcendentalist writers. Placing them in Asian and Middle Eastern contexts is, of course, at least as old as Arthur Christy’s *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* (1932); however, Goto’s aim is not merely to identify sources or analyze reading habits but also to reinterpret Emerson and Thoreau in light of these Oriental influences. The results for our understanding of Emerson are stunning. In grappling with the concept of the First Cause, Emerson’s debt to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus is pervasive, Goto argues. Yet, it is an immersion in Asian philosophy that clarifies, for instance, Emerson’s thinking about the relationship between the Me and the Not-me. Placing Emerson alongside the Chinese thinker Mencius, a principle interpreter of Confucius, refigures Emerson’s philosophy not as self-reliant and individualistic but as “endowed with sympathy or commiseration” for others (43). Following Mencius, too, Emerson rethinks the difficult notion of the Universal Being or the Over-

soul as something like “vigor” or a “deep force” that is both “essentially one” but constantly in flux (56). Goto’s analysis is both nuanced and startling, his understanding of world philosophy deep and generative. *The Philosophy of Emerson and Thoreau* exposes the affinity between Eastern thought and Emerson’s work, revealing resonances not as borrowings but as something akin to what Robert Richardson calls “kindling ideas” in *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*.

While Goto’s first book traces Oriental echoes in Emerson’s philosophy, his second book, *Emerson’s Eastern Education*, shows Emerson in his struggle to educate himself in Orientalist scholarship of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period of great interest for European scholars of Eastern philosophy. It is worth noting that Goto’s introductory chapter is one of the best short surveys of European scholarship on Eastern thought. According to Goto, Emerson was no mere student, “[feeding] on the sere remains of a foreign harvest,” as he puts it in the “American Scholar” address, but rather an active mind confronting texts by and about the Eastern and Asian ancients to help make sense of his own developing philosophy. Tracing Emerson’s “Eastern enthusiasm” through his journals, notebooks, essays, sermons, and lectures, Goto investigates three important topics: “how Emerson in his *Eastern Education* has come across the ancient philosophy of Heraclitus and Zoroaster, how his education has been developed into his own idealism and Transcendentalism, and then, how modern philosophers have responded to them” (xliv).

Goto turns to key concepts for Emerson—Spontaneity, Instinct, Intuition, and the like—and shows the Oriental corollaries Emerson found so suggestive in his attempt to articulate the philosophy that became his brand of transcendentalism. The arguments here are too complex to summarize. Suffice it to say that Goto’s extensive knowledge mirrors Emerson’s own. Like Emerson himself, he moves gracefully among the products of wide reading, synthesizing philosophy from Heraclitus, Zoroaster, G rando, Locke, and Bacon with texts like the *Vishnu Purana* and the *Upanashads*, “keeping alive” an Emerson who inspired the work of later philosophers such as Levinas, Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Derrida. Finally, Goto argues that Emerson’s transcendentalism was a deeply informed and personally felt idealism—not necessarily Platonic idealism, as is often assumed, but a “new way of philosophy [that] is hybridized with the West and

the East, modern and classic ... in which are mixed what is Greek, Persian, and Indian" (116).

Goto's scholarship has not come at the expense of his collegiality. Teaching at Rikkyo University from 1963 through 1997, he has served his university with distinction as Chair of the Department of English (1978–80, 1982–83, 1995–96), Chair of the Research Center in the College of Arts and Letters, and Dean of Academic Affairs (1990–94). An affable dinner companion and thoughtful conversationalist, Goto is the gentleman and scholar we often imagine but rarely meet. Though he retired in 1997 as Professor Emeritus, his lifelong habit of ardently reading Emerson has obviously continued. It is indeed a pleasure to recognize Dr. Shoji Goto with the Emerson Society's Distinguished Achievement Award for his groundbreaking reinterpretation of Emerson's Transcendentalism as a product of his Asian engagements.

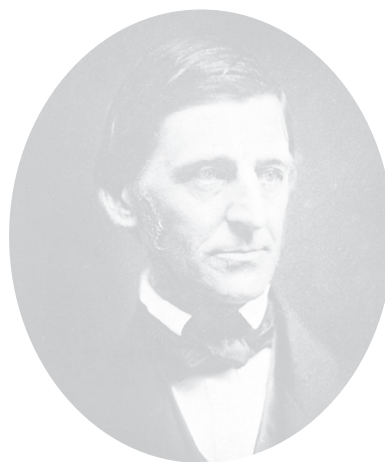
—Bob Habich
Professor Emeritus
Ball State University

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Orientals Meet Occidentals*. Mellen, 2007.



Emerson Society Panels at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, 2018

During the Thoreau Society's 2018 Annual Gathering from July 12 to 15 in Concord, Massachusetts, the Emerson Society presented its annual panel, this year on the topic of "Waldo and Henry: Points of Parting." The panel was arranged by David Greenham. The abstract appears below. For further information about the Annual Gathering, visit thoreausociety.org.

From Ecstasy to Blasphemy: Belief, Critique, and the "Negative" Critical Tendencies of New England Transcendentalism

DAVID FAFLIK, *The University of Rhode Island*

Writing on a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that, she says, dominates the critical discourse of students of literature and culture, Rita Felski has cast doubt on the assumption that it is the role of the social critic to interrogate the unpleasant truths (historical, political, ideological) that we are conditioned to believe lie hidden inside the full range of "texts" we read. The "thought style" that Felski identifies in her book *The Limits of Critique* (2015) is typified by a predictable mix of what she calls "vigilance, detachment, and wariness." In Felski's view, the tenor of this critical perspective is always already *negative*.

The nineteenth century had its fair share of critics, not least among the thinkers, writers, and reformers of New England's transcendentalists. My paper proposes to compare the "suspicious" critical mindset of today with the worldview made manifest by two of transcendentalism's foremost members, Emerson and Thoreau. The crux of my comparison is the *negative* critical impulse itself

and how it relates to the religious impulse that, in the minds of many, lent shape and meaning to transcendentalism during the decades before the US Civil War. Notwithstanding its skeptical tendencies, critique has "failed," Felski says, "to eradicate the desire for the sacred and to root out magical, mystical, and mythological thinking." As such, critique might qualify as a kind of "faith."

Similarly, even though a contemporary like James Freeman Clarke could differentiate between what he called the "Negative Transcendentalism" of a Theodore Parker and the "Positive Transcendentalism" of Emerson, the transcendentalists on the whole subscribed to a hybrid variety of belief that was as susceptible to wild hermeneutical mood swings as critique. Pitting the "magical" ecstasy of early Emerson against the oppositional suspicion of the contrarian Thoreau, I seek to distinguish in my paper between the complex (and often overlapping) critically religious positions that transcendentalism made available to adherents. In brief, my paper explores the critical urge to interrogate, using the contrasting pairing of Emerson and Thoreau to consider the mutually informing relation between cultural critique and religious belief among the New England transcendentalists.

Emerson Society Panels at the American Literature Association, 2018

The Emerson Society presented two panels at the 29th Annual American Literature Association Conference, which was held from May 24 to 27, 2018, at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco.

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

Emerson and Literature

Chair: Michael Weisenburg, U of South Carolina

Fleeing to Fables: Emerson in Children's Literature

KRISTINA WEST, *University of Redding, UK*

From Louisa May Alcott's *Rose in Bloom* (1876), to L. M. Montgomery's Emily of New Moon (1923-27) series, to Ransom Riggs' *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2012-18), Ralph Waldo Emerson has made guest appearances in literature ostensibly for or about children from his own lifetime until the present day. This paper proposes to consider why this might be the case. Emerson, after all, is not particularly remembered for his role as an educator of children, despite the importance of education within the Transcendentalist movement. Although many of his texts think about childhood in some sense, these writings have rarely been given prominence in critical thought. Why, then, do children's authors continue to be drawn to his life and work?

I will therefore look at the links between Emerson and childhood in these texts, considering the context in which Emerson is presented: through his major prose works, as reflected in Alcott's text [although he also appears as a romantic figure in her early adult fictional text, *Moods* (1864)]; through his poetry, as revealed in Montgomery's books; and through his portrayal as a figure of impenetrability and mystery in *Miss Peregrine*. My paper will explore how Emerson's texts and contexts might be thought of as appropriate or relevant for children and consider how they inform the children's fiction to which they have been linked.

I will also consider how a fictionalized Emerson in these children's books might inform our understanding of Emerson as writer and how seeing Emerson through the eyes of children could offer new opportunities for the readings of his texts.

Emerson in Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*

SUSAN DUNSTON, *New Mexico Tech*

Marilynne Robinson mentions Emerson by name only once in her novel *Gilead*, the first-person narrative of an aging preacher written as a letter to his young son whom he will not live to see into adulthood. But Emerson—whom Robinson says she “revere[s]” (*Givenness* 283) and whose integration of theology with social democracy she clearly shares— informs the main character, purpose, and story of *Gilead*, as well as the ways in which to read the novel, with the light and animating heat of a candle flame. Indeed, a candle's flame is the heart of the imagery Robinson's protagonist uses in mentioning Emerson: “The moon looks wonderful in the warm evening light, just as a candle flame looks beautiful in the light of morning. Light within light. It seems like a metaphor for something. So much does. Ralph Waldo Emerson is excellent on this point” (*Gilead* 119).

Against the theoretical backdrop of Catherine Gallagher's analysis of fictional character in her landmark essay, “The Rise of Fictionality,” and the tangible backdrops of Robinson's reading of Emerson in her essays and her published conversation with Barack Obama, this

paper establishes the many concrete biographical and philosophical similarities between Emerson and the fictional John Ames toward appreciating the practical power inherent in Emersonian metaphor-thinking. By “the grace” of Emerson's example, Robinson suggests, “we might be able to make this beautiful form of thought... fruitful” in political and social terms (*Givenness* 284). She names Emerson as central to “our own tradition,” which “rightly taught, should instruct us” (*Givenness* 284). Perhaps a novel such as *Gilead* is Emerson “rightly taught.” Like any fan, Obama gushed his admiration of Gilead to Robinson and told her “the most important set of understandings that I bring to that position of citizen, the most important stuff I've learned I think I've learned from novels.”

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Emerson, Longfellow, and the Professionalization of the Arts

PHILIPP LOEFFLER, *University of Heidelberg, Germany*

As a leading figure of the Transcendentalist movement, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and his role within antebellum intellectual culture, has long been understood in opposition to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and the so-called School Room Poets. This sense of antagonism is not completely inaccurate. Growing contentions about the specific nature of America's spiritual, political, and artistic self-renewal shaped New England in the 1830s. The majority of intellectuals that participated in these debates either belonged to the emerging Transcendentalist community in and around Concord or were part of the aristocratic establishment of Boston (including not only the Schoolroom poets but also popular Whig historians, such as George Bancroft, William Hickling Prescott, and Francis Parkman).

As I want to argue in my paper, however, the alleged divide between the Boston aristocrats around Longfellow, on the one hand, and the Concord radicals, on the other, is the product of early twentieth-century Americanist scholarship (Brooks, Matthiessen, Lewisohn et al.) rather than a representation of a true historical context. This becomes particularly obvious when reviewing Emerson and Longfellow's efforts to promote the professionalization of literature, and the arts in general, as an autonomous discipline. Although they believed in fundamentally different conceptions of artistic excellence (poet-seer vs. poetic worker), both Emerson and Longfellow shared a similar commitment to institutionalizing the arts to assist or refine other “useful” professions. This shown through Emerson's assertion that

"Everything should be treated poetically—law, politics, housekeeping" (*Journals*, 1839) and Longfellow's insistence that poetry should be "an instrument for improving the condition of society" ("Defense of Poetry," 1832), as it represents the "nobility of labor, the great pedigree of toil" ("Nuremberg," 1844).

In addition to excerpts from well-known essays and poems (e.g., "The Poet," "The American Scholar," "The Defense of Poetry"), I use notebook and journal entries as well as personal correspondences, some of which are archival material copied at Houghton Library, that will allow me to illustrate their joint interests in professionalism on three levels: institutionally, in terms of their positions within the New England publishing scene and their Brahmin background (both were founding members of the Saturday Club); intellectually, in their major essays and self-reflexive poetry; and culturally, in their attempts of defining American literature within world-literary space.

"Light is the first of painters": Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Luminism of John Frederick Kensett

ANN BEEBE, *University of Texas at Tyler*

From the beginning of his career as a public speaker and thinker in *Nature* (1836), Ralph Waldo Emerson promoted the importance of art as a metaphor and as a conduit to spiritual beauty. He reasons, "as the eye is the best composer, so light is the first of painters. There is no object so foul that intense light will not make it beautiful." Scholars have rightfully identified the complementary perspective of nature held by Emerson and the Hudson River School painters—Thomas Cole, Asher Brown Durand, and Frederic E. Church. These artists were all inspired by Emerson's assertion in his essay "Art": "Nature paints the best part of the picture, carves the best part of the statue, builds the best part of the house, and speaks the best part of the oration."

This paper will examine the embodiment of Emerson's statements in art, specifically focusing on light and radiance on the canvases of the Hudson River School painter John Kensett (1816-1872). A leading figure in American luminism—an 1850s-1870s artistic movement that meditated on the effect of light on landscapes—Kensett knew Emerson through their mutual friend, George William Curtis (1824-1892). After studying art in Europe for over seven years, Kensett returned to the United States as a dedicated landscape painter. While he contributed his share of renditions of the Catskill Mountains, the White Mountains, and blasted trees to the Hudson River School oeuvre, Kensett excelled as a painter of light's play over lakes and the ocean. This paper will analyze how Kensett internalized Emerson's observations of light in his Lake George and sunset canvases.

"A singularly dandified theory of manners": Emersonian Aesthetics amongst the Decadents

TIM CLARKE, *University of Ottawa*

My paper will explore the significant, but often overlooked, impact of Emersonianism on the Decadent movement that emerged in European visual arts and literature in the late-19th century. Emerson's influence on central Decadent figures like Charles Baudelaire, Oscar Wilde, and Maurice Maeterlinck has long been obscured by the critical caricature of Emerson as a celebrant of rugged individualism, natural grandeur, and ruddy health, in sharp distinction from Decadence's aesthetic fixation on artifice, ennui, and wilting dandies. However, Whitman paints a startlingly "Decadent" portrait of his ex-mentor in an 1880 essay, remarking that "Emerson possesses a singularly dandified theory of manners"—a preference for artifice and what Emerson describes in "Experience" as the art of life amid surfaces. Similarly, George Santayana later dismissed Emersonianism as effete abstraction, a "digestion of vacancy."

These American criticisms contrast markedly with the appreciative comments directed toward Emerson in the journals and criticism of Baudelaire, Wilde, and Maeterlinck. By reading Emerson's "Experience," "Fate," and "Behavior" through the lens of this more generous European reception, I discern an aesthetic of manners and surfaces that disrupts the binary oppositions of artifice and nature, art and life, and surfaces and depths. This "mannerist" Emerson, I argue, anticipates a Decadence that challenges, rather than revels in, such facile dualisms. I situate my argument alongside Branka Arsić's reading of Emersonian relationality (*On Leaving*, 2010) and significant work on Emerson's transatlantic connections by Dudley Marchi (*Baudelaire, Emerson, and the French-American Connection*, 2011) and David Greenham (*Emerson's Transatlantic Romanticism*, 2012). Finally, I conclude by suggesting that this Emersonian Decadence grants us both a fuller picture of Emerson's transatlantic influence and a new understanding of the sharp differences between his European and American receptions during the fin de siècle and early twentieth century.

Aesthetic Experience, Aesthetic Ownership and Worlding in Frank Norris's *McTeague*

CHACKO T. KURUVILLA, *University of California, Santa Cruz*

One of the motivations of Anglo-American aestheticism was to allot art its autonomy. The ambition articulated in Walter Pater's *Studies in the Renaissance*, conferring "a locus of value and a guarantee of authority" to art, influences "the sense of life" in the novels of Henry James and Oscar Wilde. The appropriation of Pater's aestheticism and its emphasis on "ascesis," or what Jonathan Freedman calls austere aestheticism, is a mode of realism with its own truth claims about life. This aspect of aesthetic experience in the American realist novel, with James's *The Portrait of a Lady* as its representative work, is also present in Frank Norris's *McTeague*.

Norris's protagonist might be as different from Isabel Archer as any in American fiction, but they are also austere aesthetes drawn to renunciatory moments of aesthetic ownership. The use and exchange value of things remain the most obvious measures of worth in possessing things in Norris's novel. But they only superficially account for *McTeague*'s obsessive attachment to commodities. The Emersonian mode of possession seen in Isabel Archer is no less prominent in *McTeague* when he is forced to dispossess his most valued things. A hidden but more dominant measure of worth reveals itself in these renunciatory moments, giving his possessive drives shades of Emersonian aesthetic ownership that radically transforms his relation to the world. This Emersonianism, with its more expansive world scale, reveals the transcendental dimensions of *McTeague*'s longing and explains the sense of the novel's ending.

I conclude by also linking aesthetic ownership to Kantian aesthetic experience and Richard Poirier's world elsewhere and tying this all to Norris's account of his art in *The Responsibilities of the Novelist*. I present a Norris we haven't yet fully appreciated: a worldly naturalist working within the tradition of an Emersonian aestheticism that was conceived later in Poirier's work in the 1960s and that has more recently found new articulation in the planetary boundlessness of Wai-Chee Dimock's Emerson.

“Transcendentalist Intersections”

In late July, more than seventy scholars from around the world gathered at the University of Heidelberg for four balmy days of intense cross-disciplinary dialogue about some of the most pressing issues in Transcendentalist studies. Perhaps the largest conference ever held on this subject, “Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion” was the vibrant conclusion to a four-year collaboration of the University’s Anglistisches Seminar and Center for American Studies, the Margaret Fuller Society, and the Emerson Society.

Reflecting at a closing session, participants recalled especially fruitful conversations about recognizing the continued indispensability of archival research, recovering “minor” figures, assessing intra-movement conflicts as well as confluences, determining whether to de- or re-transcendentalize the movement, interrogating (as always) its nationalist character, and remembering periodicals, including the The Dial, whose subtitle was also the conference’s and—let us hope—a continuing prompt for more such intersections.

—Dan Malachuk, President of the Emerson Society



Clockwise from left, “Transcendentalist Forms” panelists Brigitte Bailey, Kaitlin Mondello, Peter Balaam, Mollie Barnes; Jan Stieversmann delivers his keynote; Laura Dassow Walls delivers her keynote; Bonnie O’Neill, Dan Malachuk at the Business Meeting.





Clockwise from bottom left, thirsty colleagues in the Marktplatz; panelists Günter Leypoldt, Tyler Gardner, Peter Balaam; Laura Dassow Walls, Sylvie Specq, Dan Malachuk at the Goldener Hecht; “Ontologies” panelists Dieter Schulz, Herwig Friedl, Joseph Urbas; Russell Goodman in the Alte Aula; Audience for “Ontologies” panel.

2018 Emerson Society Annual Business Meeting

July 28, 2018, Heidelberg Center for American Studies (Oculus)
President Dan Malachuk called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m.
About 21 people were present.

Announcements and Updates

1. Bonnie Carr O'Neill presented the 2017 meeting minutes; the minutes were approved.
2. Bonnie presented an abbreviated Treasurer's Report on behalf of Secretary/Treasurer Roger Thompson. Members present discussed the report and suggested that a report on three-year trends in expenditures and revenues would be welcomed because it might provide a clearer picture of the Society's finances.
3. Joseph Urbas will handle the Emerson theme at the 2019 Summer Institute in American Philosophy (SIAM, SAA) in Dayton, Ohio.
4. New publication: Sean Ross Meehan's *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (MLA, 2018).
5. Phyllis Cole announced her new role as liaison with the Thoreau Society board, facilitating greater involvement and expanding programming among related author societies.

Presentations

1. Prentiss Clark reported on projected efforts to generate greater interest in applications for the Society's awards. She announced that the Subvention Award went to Roger Sederat.
2. Dave Greenham announced that the Graduate Student Paper Award went to Tim Clark, who delivered his paper at the ALA Conference.
3. Dan announced that the Barbara Packer Fellowship was awarded to Mark Gallagher.
4. The Distinguished Achievement Award was given to Shoji Goto.

Business

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

RWES Board: Krissie West and Paul Grimstad

Program Chair: Joseph Urbas

ESP Editor: Michael Weisenburg

Dan invited nominations from the floor; none were offered. The nominations from the Board were elected, and they will begin their terms in January 2019. Dan expressed thanks to Prentiss Clark and Thomas Constantinesco, and to ESP editor Derek Pacheco (whose terms will expire Dec. 31, 2018).

2. The members present approved Dan's proposal to give a Distinguished Service Award to Peggy Isaacson for her years of service to the Society as graphic designer for ESP.

3. Media Committee: Bonnie O'Neill reported on the committee's initiatives to coordinate the website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts.

4. Dan reported (on behalf of Webmaster Michael Weisenburg) on the status of the RWES website.

5. On behalf of Sean Meehan and Michael Weisenburg, Dan shared their proposal "Digital Initiatives," which describes potential activity in four areas: an online ESP, online resources for teaching Emerson, digital editions of Emerson texts, and more expansive use of social media. The Society agreed to continue discussing these activities.

6. Next meeting: RWES will meet at the ALA conference in Boston May 23–26, 2019.

Other Business

No other business was offered.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Carr O'Neill, President-Elect



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

June 24, 2018

Membership and Comparisons (as of May 24, 2018)

	May 2010	May 2011	May 2012	May 2013	May 2014	May 2015	May 2016	May 2017	May 2018
Total membership	165	160	181	177	143	142	137	128	141
Life members	27	27	31	33	33	35	35	35	38
Sustaining members	20	18	24	28	23	22	21	21	16
Contributing members	41	52	49	30	27	23	23	18	11
New members	17	12	15	20	14	12	9	11	6
Student members	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	16	12	12	12	9
States represented	31*	34	32	34	32	32*	34*	32*	30
Non-U.S. countries	10	9	11	12	19	20	22	18	9

* +DC

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

Finances (January 1 – June 24, 2018)

\$ 8,800.00	Current Balance, checking account	+ \$11,366.22	Credits to checking account
4,250.38	Current balance, PayPal	– 2,566.22	Debits from checking account
\$13,050.38	Current assets	\$ 8,800.00	Checking Account Balance, June 24, 2018

Major *debts* for the period Jan. 1 to June 24, 2018:

- Spring 2017 *ESP*: layout (\$600), printing (\$416.25)
- Wire for Heidelberg Conference (\$1,443.24)
- Tim Clarke Travel Prize (\$752.99)

Credits for the period Jan. 1 to June 24, 2018

are membership dues and donations.

Respectfully submitted,
Roger Thompson
Secretary/Treasurer
Roger.Thompson@stonybrook.edu
RWESociety@gmail.com

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Reviews

Henry David Thoreau: A Life. LAURA DASSOW WALLS.
U of Chicago Press, 2017. 640 pp. 44 halftones. \$35.00 cloth.

Laura Dassow Walls's new biography, *Henry David Thoreau: A Life*, provides a comprehensive, sensitive, and moving view of one of the most beloved yet most frequently misunderstood thinkers of the nineteenth century. While Walter Harding's *The Days of Henry Thoreau: A Biography* (1965) and Robert D. Richardson's *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* (1986) remain indispensable to Thoreau scholarship, they each have fairly considerable limitations, focusing on his activities in Concord and its environs at the expense of his writings, or on his intellectual life at the expense of his embodied life, respectively. Walls admirably brings together the external and internal worlds of Thoreau, dwelling especially on the ecological relationship between human society and the wilderness in Thoreau's work and in his "life as a writer" since, she claims, "he made of his life itself an extended form of composition, a kind of open, living book" (xvii). In this way, her biography might be said to have similarities with David M. Robinson's *Natural Life: Thoreau's Worldly Transcendentalism* (2004). Walls, citing her indebtedness to Harding, Richardson, and Robinson, implicitly builds on Robinson's argument that Thoreau sought a "natural life" that would integrate the human individual with the natural world and, thus, would make human relationships and community a deeply important part of "the infinite extent of our relations" (384). "[T]he historical Thoreau was no hermit," Walls argues, "and nature he found everywhere, including the town center and the human heart" (xviii). Above all, this fresh new biography brings Thoreau's interests in natural observation and in human relationships together, showing the deep ecological tendencies of his thought "far in advance of his time" (205).

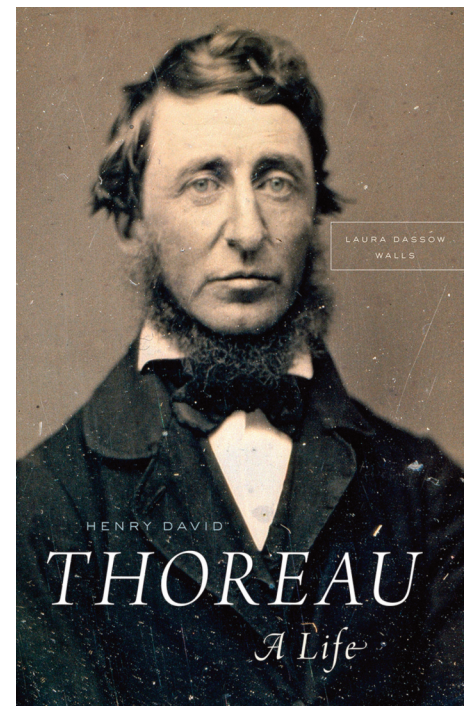
The book's division into three parts—"The Making of Thoreau," "The Making of *Walden*," and "Successions"—suits Walls's interest in Thoreau's ecological thought and, furthermore, helps us to see *Walden* (1854) in a new light. Walls admirably moves beyond Thoreau's most famous work to examine his entire oeuvre, though she sometimes uses *Walden* as an index against which she understands his other works, arguing for instance that "The Natural History of Massachusetts" (1842) is Thoreau's "proto-*Walden*" (132) while *Cape Cod* (1865) is "*Walden*'s dark twin" (405). But even *Walden* itself takes on a new meaning for readers, for Walls emphasizes how Thoreau remained fascinated by "the other [human] inhabitants of Walden woods" (199) and how "[n]early the entire second half was written not by the hermit at the pond but by the walker on Main Street, brimful of discovery" (351). Even if Thoreau could sometimes seem to be a "hermit," he nevertheless immersed himself in human relationships; ironically, however, "[he] wrote into *Walden* a sad epitaph for [his] friendship" with Emerson (323), arguably the most important friendship in his life.

The tensions between the two thinkers, Walls notes, would wax and wane through the years, but she makes one thing clear: Emerson's influence helped "fa[n] [Thoreau's] creativity into genius" (87). Instead of casting Emerson as a figure who exerted a heavy influence upon Thoreau, Walls instead emphasizes the way their minds and spirits complemented one another. "Thoreau was testing out Transcendentalism on his own well before it existed as a movement" (78), and Emerson's ideas helped Thoreau to tap into his unique genius, which was oftentimes at odds with the older thinker

(Emerson himself noted early in their friendship, Thoreau was "spiced throughout with rebellion" [89]). It was, she argues, "[u]nder Emerson's roof" that "Thoreau consolidated his sense of himself as above all a writer" (122); however, as the biography emphasizes, this did not preclude misunderstandings and tensions between the two thinkers. While Emerson praised Thoreau's early poetry, such as the stately and polished "Sympathy," he would eventually declare that the "honest truth" and "rude strength" of his poems was not quite refined into something "pure" (144) (significantly, these notes would become a part of his 1844 essay "The Poet"). Years later, Walls notes, Thoreau would confide to his journal, "Emerson is too grand for me. He belongs to the nobility & wears their cloak & manners" (322). After Thoreau's death, Emerson felt that "reading Thoreau's Journal" was "like seeing his own 'initial grapplings & jumps' continued by a gymnasium full of youths who 'leap, climb, & swing with a force unapproachable'" (308). Walls thus implies that Emerson was the catalyst who helped Thoreau grow into himself as a writer and Thoreau was the thinker who helped propel Emerson's ideas into the future.

Highly accessible and thoroughly researched, Walls's biography gives us a Thoreau who appears not only of the past but also of the present, a thinker who "sound[ed] the alarm and point[ed] to a better way" (9) and who, Walls emphasizes, is still truly with us through "the open, living book" (xvii) he has left us within his writings. If the roots of Thoreau run deep within the context in which he lived and the people who influenced his thought, so too do his roots extend into our present moment, bursting into flower every time the reader acts on his words.

—Karah Mitchell
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Mr. Emerson's Revolution. JEAN McCLURE MUDGE, editor.
Open Book Publishers, 2015, 457 pp. £24.95 paperback.

In this Trump moment it is part of the appeal of Jean McClure Mudge's book, *Mr. Emerson's Revolution*, that its deepest theme—change—reminds us of Obama. But of course the prominence of this theme in American culture long predates our decent and dignified former President. Martin Luther sowed the seeds no later than 1520 when in “The Freedom of a Christian” he placed a narrative of felt inner transformation at the core of a Christian life. A society founded by more and less radical Protestants was thus bound to foster a wide spectrum of changes and change narratives—conversion stories—from the early seventeenth century to the present.

In *Mr. Emerson's Revolution* Jean McClure Mudge and a team of leading Emerson scholars tell the story of Emerson's life and work as one of serial moral-political change. They give us a multi-perspectival but thematically unified recounting of the whole arc of Emerson's career from the point of view of his evolving orientation towards abolition, women's rights, and social reform more generally. Most of the facts here are familiar, but the reader's understanding of Emerson's crisis-full life story is both refreshed and amplified by seeing it from this politically progressive vantage point.

Emerson was primed from early childhood for perpetual but salutary moral crisis in the Calvinist mode. Phyllis Cole reminds us in the book's splendid tone-setting first chapter, by the influence of his extraordinary “Aunt Mary” Moody Emerson. Cole here expands upon her groundbreaking 1998 study, *Mary Moody Emerson and the Origins of Transcendentalism*, to describe a brilliantly idiosyncratic intellectual who in some ways anticipated her nephew's famous finding of God in nature. Aunt Mary's formidably incisive intelligence and ferocious independence of mind not only helped to cultivate her nephew's protestant inclination to moral reorientation via self-reflection, but also provided Emerson from childhood with vivid evidence that a woman could live a fulfilling life in effective defiance of restrictive social conventions of “soft” or “dependent” femininity.

Mudge herself presents Margaret Fuller as carrying forward Aunt Mary's revolutionary example in this regard. In psychologically searching treatments of Emerson's second marriage and adult friendships Mudge finds that Emerson was never

entirely free from the restrictive preconceptions about femininity characteristic of even the most open-minded men of his time. But she builds intriguingly on Cole's account to plausibly credit the influence of Aunt Mary, Margaret Fuller, and Emerson's second wife—Lidian—with counterbalancing these notions strongly enough to enable Emerson ultimately to write and speak in defiance of them. Indeed, Mudge's probing treatment of the crisis provoked by Fuller's forceful emergence into Emerson's life provides one of the book's most original sections. Here as elsewhere Mudge paints a picture of a man who admirably struggled (with only mixed success) to break free of the emotional remoteness that seems to have characterized all of his personal relationships. Mudge also further contributes to the growing consensus that Lidian and other women abolitionists of Concord (and Boston) helped to push the adult Emerson towards vigorous opposition to slavery. And in a later chapter she offers one of the most sensitive and detailed treatments available of Emerson's productive and increasingly progressive postwar years, too often passed over merely as a phase of abrupt decline.

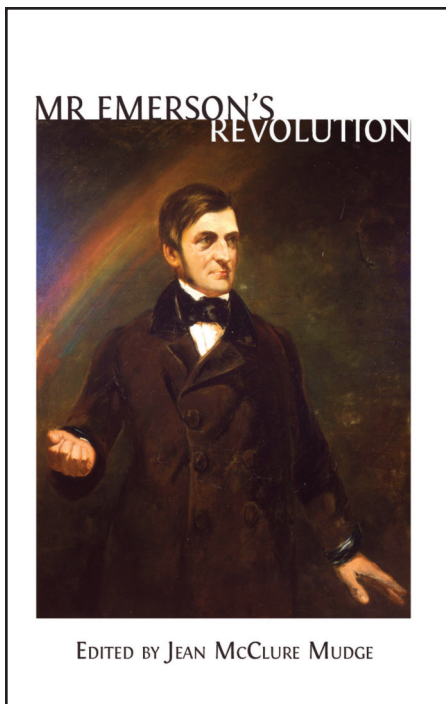
In a short review it must suffice to simply say that Wesley Mott, David Robinson, and Alan Hodder each also expertly treat their respective portions of the story of Emerson's ongoing revolutions. They richly recall his painful break with the Unitarian ministry, his ecstatic discovery of nature as a substitute for Christian orthodoxy, and his openings to eastern literatures. Mudge and Beniamino Soressi then also provide informative and far-reaching surveys of Emerson's extensive ripples of influence on a remarkable number of major nineteenth and twentieth century writers and intellectuals, both American and European.

At the moral heart and chronological center of the book is the matter of abolition and the Civil War. Emerson's ultimately catalytic relationship to this monumental moral-historical transformation is thoughtfully touched upon by most of the volume's contributors, and appropriately assigned to Len Gougeon for extended and detailed treatment. It was Gougeon in *Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform* (1990) who affirmatively settled on the basis of overwhelming empirical evidence the long-debated question of the degree of Emerson's abolitionist commitments. He powerfully distills this account here. Gougeon firmly dates Emerson's turn to full abolitionist commitment even earlier than most of the biographers who share his view—in 1844, with the great “Address... on... the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies.” And he unassailably demonstrates how after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act as part of the Compromise of 1850 Emerson swung into full-scale political engagement.

There were also, to be sure, some significant intellectual anchors for Emerson amidst so much change. Chief among these was his lifelong confidence in the personally and politically transformative power of universal moral sentiment grounded in the rational intuition of a metaphysically subsistent moral law—the fused transcendental-natural rights spine of American nationhood, as John Brown and Abraham Lincoln also affirmed. In this connection Mudge's resonant title takes on yet another connotation. In classical Republican thought the term “revolution” suggested circular turning rather than linear forward movement. With this in mind it becomes possible to see both trajectories in play over the long course of Emerson's political (r)evolution as described here by Mudge et. al. Emerson's constant moving forward, we learn, like that of his country at its best, was paradoxically enabled by no less constant recourse to a stable set of emancipatory moral principles.

—Neal Dolan

University of Toronto, Scarborough



entirely free from the restrictive preconceptions about femininity characteristic of even the most open-minded men of his time. But she builds intriguingly on Cole's account to plausibly credit the

An Emerson Bibliography, 2018

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).

- Altman, Michael J. *Heathen, Hindoo, Hindu: American Representations of India, 1721-1893*. Oxford UP. [Suggests that both Emerson and Thoreau "sought out true religion, and neither was afraid to look to India in his search."]
- Andrews, Barry M. "That Which Was Ecstasy Shall Become Daily Bread." *Religions*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 2-18. [Considers Emerson's mysticism, as well as Unitarianism's influence upon it.]
- . *Transcendentalism and the Cultivation of the Soul*. U of Massachusetts P. [Provides a distillation of spiritual practices engaged in and promoted by Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau, and others.]
- Branch, Michael P., and Clinton Mohs, editors. "*The Best Read Naturalist*": *Nature Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. U of Virginia P. [The Emerson of this collection is not a detached intellectual; he is instead more akin to Thoreau, actively immersed in the materiality of nature.]
- Bush, Stephen S. "Sovereignty of the Living Individual: Emerson and James on Politics and Religion." *Religions*, vol. 8, no. 9, pp. 1-16. [Explores similarities in Emerson's and James's conceptions of individualism.]
- Callaway, H. G. *Pluralism, Pragmatism and American Democracy: A Minority Report*. Cambridge Scholars. [In three essays, Callaway argues that America should return to a culture of Protestant self-restraint that he believes Emerson promotes in English Traits.]
- Dowling, David O. "Emerson's Newspaperman: Horace Greeley and Radical Intellectual Culture, 1836-1872." *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 7-74. [Discusses Greeley's engagement with "the world's most radical countercultural minds" of his era, including Emerson, Karl Marx, and Nathan Meeker.]
- Durant, Sam. *The Meeting House / Build Therefore Your Own World*. Black Dog Publishing. [Catalogues the multimedia exhibits at Concord's Old Manse and Los Angeles's Blum & Poe Gallery that aimed to make visible Native American genocide and African slavery upon which American identity and "freedom" depends.]
- Dumler-Winckler, Emily J. "The Virtue of Emerson's Imitation of Christ: From William Ellery Channing to John Brown." *Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 510-538. [Examines Emerson's hortative claim "imitation is suicide" in light of the Christian belief that followers are to imitate Christ.]
- Elliott, Clare Frances. "William Blake's American Afterlives: Transatlantic Poetics in Emerson and Whitman." *Transatlantic Literature and Transitivity, 1780-1850*, edited by Annika Bautz and Kathryn N. Gray, Routledge, pp. 195-211. [Examines Emerson's and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's early reception of Blake's major works.]
- Foust, Mathew A. *Confucianism and American Philosophy*. SUNY P. [Includes a strong chapter on Emerson's appropriation of Confucius's dictum to "have no friend unlike yourself" in "Friendship."]
- Friesner, Nicholas Aaron. "A Transcendentalist Nature Religion." *Religions*, vol. 8, no. 8: 1-18. [Argues that Emerson's idealism allows for an "expansive notion of nature as the environments in which we live, while preserving the importance of human moral agency."]
- Fuller, Randall. *The Book That Changed America: How Darwin's Theory of Evolution Ignited a Nation*. Penguin. [Argues that Darwin accelerated Transcendentalists' (including Emerson's) engagement with both scientific inquiry and abolition.]
- Gann, Kyle. *Charles Ives's Concord: Essays after a Sonata*. U of Illinois P. [Maintains that Ives found Emerson "maximally open to the infinite," offering him inspiration for and validation of his own fervently experimental style.]
- Gradert, Kenyon. "Swept into Puritanism: Emerson, Wendell Phillips, and the Roots of Radicalism." *NEQ*, vol. 90, pp. 103-129. [Posits that Emerson and Phillips, for all their differences, grounded their abolitionist ideology in the Puritanism of their ancestors.]
- Guardiano, Nicholas L. "Charles S. Peirce's New England Neighbors and Embrace of Transcendentalism." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, vol. 53, pp. 216-245. [Explores Peirce's early life in Concord for sources of Transcendentalist influence in his later work.]
- Gurley, Jennifer. "Louisa May Alcott as Poet: Transcendentalism and the Female Artist." *NEQ*, vol. 90, pp. 198-222. [Argues that Alcott drew heavily on Emerson's conception of self-reliance to forge an aesthetic that eschews both sentimentalism and Emerson's own desire to erase individuality in pursuit of the divine.]
- Habich, Robert D. "Emerson's Canonization and the Perils of Sainthood." *OUPblog*, blog.oup.com/2017/05/ralph-waldo-emerson-reputation/. [Explores vacillations in Emerson's reputation in the years after his death.]
- . "Ralph Waldo Emerson." *Oxford Bibliographies*, doi: 10.1093/OBO/9780199827251-0091. [Updated edition of Habich's bibliography.]
- , editor. *Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Broadview. [Includes writings that most clearly confront "the personal challenges of life with ... 'practical power.'"]
- Hakutani, Yoshinobu. *East-West Literary Imagination: Cultural Exchanges from Yeats to Morrison*. U of Missouri P. [Provides a comparison of Zen and Confucian precepts with those of Emerson and Thoreau, respectively.]
- Hamilton, Geoff. "Continents of Liberty: Emerson and Gerald Vizenor's *Chair of Tears*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 71-91. [Contrasts conceptions of self and perception in *Chair of Tears* and *Nature*.]
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My Emerson

A column devoted to our readers' personal reflections on Emerson

Unity Has Many Names Emerson and the Over-soul

RICHARD MARRANCA

My mother, Evelyn, was the first in our family to recognize Ralph Waldo Emerson's positive vibe and magical spell. A few years before she passed away, I was happy to show her the sacred sights of Concord's luminaries, along with the home of Walt Whitman (in New Jersey), who was influenced by Emerson in ways we can only imagine. My dad had loved his garden, especially the red roses, and the great outdoors in ways that showed the Transcendentalist vision passed down to him; it is also archetypal and within.

Emerson is a lifelong guide no matter who you are or what point of your life you are in. His unifying vision is something we need now more than ever. Who was Emerson? He was a bard, a seeker, a genius, a naturalist, a repository of ancient wisdom and the pathless woods. He was evocative, dazzling, epigrammatic, and difficult too. He showed the extraordinary in ordinary experience, calling for "an original relation to the universe." He believed in innate goodness and the message of nature. Emerson leads you to Thoreau, Fuller, Alcott, Whitman, and the rest. He leads you to your best self. His ideas and inspirations encourage interest in yoga, meditation, the great outdoors, mysticism, and progress on every front. While he was quite bookish from his early years on, he believed in soulful living and self-effort: "Books are for nothing but to inspire." Emerson recognized that nothing great can be done without enthusiasm. If society had gone in the Transcendentalist direction, we wouldn't be suffering so much from greed and violence, materialism and climate change, which are all the same shadow. Emerson's influence is vast and continuous: it has weaved into our literature, culture, politics, and environmentalism, our very future—if we don't end up a mechanical dystopia.

Amidst this revelry, I have a confession: I had to reach my middle years to sit quietly with Emerson—"oh, that's what he meant." When we're young (if we're lucky), we read the great books. When we reach our middle or later years, the authors speak to us in ways we believe to be our own. In the summer of 2009, I had the terrific luck to participate in the NEH seminar in Concord. Our group stayed at the lovely Concord Inn and visited Transcendentalist homes and stomping grounds, with visionary lectures and conversation throughout the day. This one week has lasted a lifetime. Being in such an *axis mundi* lent itself to a unifying

vision, and this experience is one reason for my enthusiasm for Emerson's "The Over-Soul" (1841).

Is everything really the same stuff? Are we gems reflecting other gems, fibers woven from the universal cloth? Are we at one with the world? Did Emerson and numberless mystics know something amazing and simple that others are missing? As creatures of time and space, weighed down by ego, dualism, and the planet-crunching machine, have we lost something that needs to be found?

The Over-Soul is akin to Black Elk's Sacred Hoop, to what Hindus refer to as the Atman and the Brahman experience, and to what Luke Skywalker calls "the force." Goethe wrote the poem, "One and All." Physicist Erwin Schrödinger believed that there is no separate existence, that there are no divisions, and that plurality (the thousand things) is merely an illusion. My late friend Huston Smith, author of *The World's Religions*, put it this way: "Underlying the human self and animating it is a reservoir of being that never dies, is never exhausted, and is unrestricted in consciousness" (22). The Over-Soul reminds me of Carl Jung's notion of the collective unconscious or Buddhism's interdependence. It is the interconnections of trees or mushrooms underfoot, the stampede of horses, and the sparkling stars. It is deep silence. It is the fact that you are made of minerals and nutrients and the breath of nature, what emanated billions of years ago from the Big Bang and keeps on going. Many ancient philosophers believed in a unitary cosmos. St. Francis of Assisi and Sufis mystics, such as Rumi and Kabir, felt this unified cosmos. Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and the Jewish Kabbalah emphasize unity. In fact, the Over-Soul has been the predominant view throughout prehistory. According to Arthur Christy in *The Orient in American Transcendentalism*: "This use of many of the cardinal doctrines of the Vedanta as an expression of his own beliefs is the most interesting features of Emerson's Orientalism. And the first and most obvious parallel is that of Brahma and the Over-soul" (74).

How do we orient ourselves in the Over-Soul? How do we feel it, understand it? Is it numinous and ineffable? How do we seek wholeness in a fragmented, clock- and money-driven society? How do we see the color-burst of nature as our essence? Perhaps the guide to seeking the Over-Soul is immersion and mindfulness. I believe this was Alexander

von Humboldt's message when he encouraged scientists to use a sensual approach in their studies of nature and science, or Aldous Huxley's message in his books on spiritually and hallucinogens. In the first few pages of "The Over-Soul," Emerson writes that there is an "uneasiness" born of separation. That's a valid critique of our loneliness and alienation, our life in the shadows. Emerson writes:

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, within man is the world soul; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One.... We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul (187).

It is clear that Emerson, though he was interested in science, didn't want to get down and dirty with numbers and ratiocination. He was reacting against the Enlightenment. He preferred the intuition of Immanuel Kant and the mystics. As a child, Emerson got some of this thinking from his brilliant, eccentric aunt, Mary Moody Emerson. She was very learned and open-minded; she would have fit in with the hippies and East/West pioneers of the 1960s. Her mind was full of revelation and revolution; Emerson admired her greatly. Emerson was interested in the way knowledge inspires and vivifies us, in the way it evokes the hidden genius—he was not interested in knowledge for the sake of knowledge or ego.

The Transcendentalist vision compels us to transform ourselves and society, to seek what is best, and to live from the inside out rather than from the outside in. In Walt Whitman's "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer," the narrator, bored by the lecture, goes outside and "look'd up at the perfect silence of the stars" (233). There is a time for rationality and measurement, and there is time for immersion and joy. Sacred time requires a beginner's mind more than a filled mind. This is the realm of the child too. Perhaps we have to cool our egos and language-obsession. In *Breakfast at the Victory*, James Carse writes "that in using language we create distinctions where none exist" (24).

Perhaps we can conclude that the Over-Soul is the unifying theory of mysticism, but this is something that must be known through experience, feelings, and intuition. It is the ultimate reality, and we are particles of this immensity with many names. We're not separate and out of kilter in an alienated universe: we're travelers in this undifferentiated flow. Home is everywhere. Just like pieces of a puzzle or roots of a tree, we are always connected.

This past August, my wife, Renah, our child, Inanna, and I visited Concord. At the Old Manse, Inanna explored the garden that Thoreau had crafted, wandering between the rows of corn and marveling at the young pumpkins. In the backyard, we climbed around the stone formation where

Emerson and his friends conversed. We crossed the bridge and continued until we found a bench facing the wildflowers and tall grass of the meadow. "The river, arc of blue sky, swaying flowers, this great cradle and composition of nature, and the inspirations of these visionaries, put me in touch with the highest places," Renah said, "It felt like paradise. I was lulled into a total vision, into pure positive feelings and beauty. I only got out of the trance when Inanna tried to run off into the meadow."

This was a place of moments and centuries, of visions and timelessness.

One of Richard's greatest experiences was participating in the NEH summer seminar "Concord" in 2009. He has had a Fulbright to teach American studies at the University of Munich. He's the author of The New Romantics: Ten Stories (Oak Tree Press), and also enjoys hiking, yoga, and travel.

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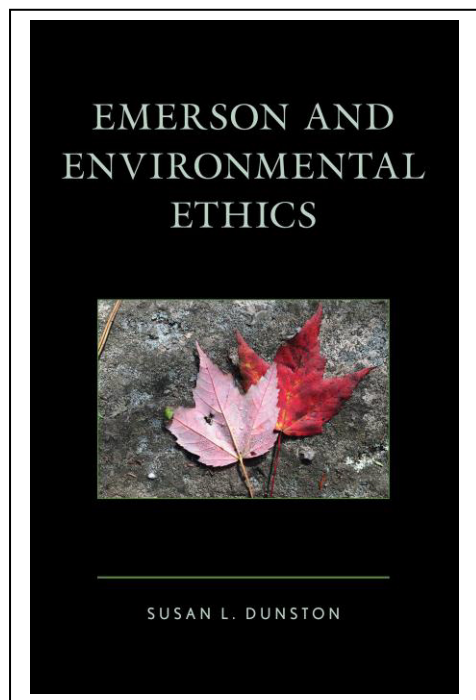
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Emerson and Environmental Ethics



By Susan L. Dunston



“In this lucid, accessible, and beautifully written account of Emerson's philosophy, Susan Dunston charts a compelling path from Emerson's unifying vision to much later environmental philosophies. Her magnificent close readings reveal a writer equally committed to a philosophical thinking that is “sensuous, experiential, and reformist” and a practice that is “attentive, relational, empathetic, and aesthetically sensitive.” Readers of this book will discover a progressive, practical, and influential Emerson who remains the deeply reflective writer we have long known.”

— **Kristin Boudreau, Worcester Polytechnic Institute**

ABOUT THIS BOOK

At the core of Emerson's philosophy is his view as a naturalist that we are “made of the same atoms as the world is.” In counterpoint to this identity, he noted the fluid evolution and diversity of combinations and configurations of those atoms. Thus, he argued, our “relation and connection” to the world are not occasional or recreational, but “everywhere and always,” and also reciprocal, ongoing, and creative. He declared he would be a naturalist, which for him meant being a knowledgeable “lover of nature.” Emerson's famous insistence on an “original relation to the universe” centered on morally creative engagement with the environment. It took the form of a nature literacy that has become central to contemporary environmental ethics. The essential argument of this book is that Emerson's integrated philosophy of nature, ethics, and creativity is a powerful prototype for a diverse range of contemporary environmental ethics. After describing Emerson's own environmental literacy and ethical, aesthetic, and creative practices of relating to the natural world, Dunston delineates a web of environmental ethics that connects Emerson to contemporary eco-feminism, living systems theory, Native American science, Asian philosophy, and environmental activism.

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