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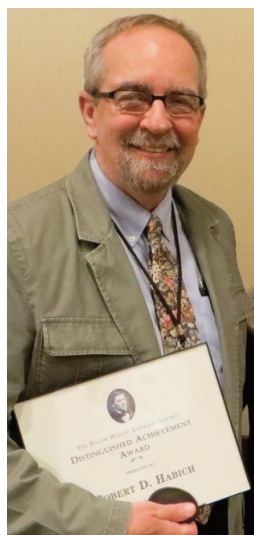
Volume 25, Number 2

Fall 2014

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to Robert D. Habich

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society is proud to name Robert D. Habich, Professor of English at Ball State University, as the recipient of its 2014 Distinguished Achievement Award. An influential scholar in Emerson studies and in New England transcendentalism, Professor Habich is also an award-winning teacher with a distinguished career at Ball State. His dedicated service and effective leadership have contributed substantially to the Emerson Society's many recent accomplishments. Habich is author of *Transcendentalism and the Western Messenger: A History of the Magazine and Its Contributors* (1985) and *Building Their Own Waldos: Emerson's First Biographers and the Politics of Life-Writing in the Gilded*



Age (2011), as well as editor of *Lives Out of Letters: Essays on American Literary Biography and Documentation, in Honor of Robert N. Hudspeth* (2004). After completing his BA (Stony Brook) and MA (Colorado State) in English, he completed his PhD in English and American Studies at Penn State in 1982, and joined the English faculty at Ball State in 1984, where he is completing his third decade of outstanding work. His university presented him with an Outstanding Young Faculty

Award within a few years of his arrival, and conferred on him the University Excellence in Teaching Award in 1992.

Habich's historically oriented scholarship has provided an important affirmation of the principle that an understanding of the literary past must include a clear

grasp of the intellectual and cultural pressures that helped to shape both authorship and readership at every historical moment. His book on the first of what could be considered the transcendentalist periodicals, the *Western Messenger*, offered an invaluable reminder of the ways that periodicals can shape the authorship that sustains them, and that the texts we explicate as literary scholars are in some important senses defined by their modes and places of publication. His work was part of a more general recognition among literary scholars that our work would be greatly enriched if we understood in more detail the world in which authors of the past did their writing (and reading), a path that led to the magazine, the private letter, and the diary as venues of often powerful literary expression. This recognition was especially transformative for transcendentalist studies. Among the succession of periodicals devoted to the new views, the seemingly short-lived *Messenger* actually seems durable, as Habich explains, when compared with Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's *Aesthetic Papers*, William Henry Channing's *The Present*, or even the *Dial*. This was largely because of the network of aspiring, transcendently inclined ministers who held it together for six years, and whose varied efforts Habich records. "Ultimately," he concludes, "the *Messenger's* achievement lies in the quality of its seeking and in the persistence with which it asserted the possibilities of progress." Habich's book also takes its readers to the heart of one of the most complex questions of the transcendentalist movement: what is a transcendentalist? The *Messenger* editors and contributors themselves were troubled (but also animated) by their "newness," and as Habich reminds us, it was their resistance to creed and sect that defined them. They were moving toward emerging truths, but not yet full exponents

(Continued on page 16)

2014 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 Bonnie Carr O’Neill, Department of English, Mississippi State University, Drawer E, Mississippi State, MS 39762. For further details, see emerson.tamu.edu/membership.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society
Published at Le Moyne College

www.emersonsociety.org

Editor: Jennifer Gurley
Book Review Editor: Leslie Eckel
Design and Production: Peggy Isaacson

Emerson Society Papers is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are \$20 a year. You may subscribe using PayPal by visiting us at emerson.tamu.edu. Send checks for membership (calendar year) and back issues (\$5 each) to Bonnie Carr O’Neill, Department of English, Mississippi State University, Drawer E, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

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

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

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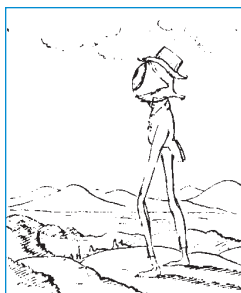
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PROSPECTS.



ALA Call for Proposals

The Emerson Society will sponsor two panels (covering one topic) at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held in Boston May 21–24, 2015. For information about the conference, visit americanliterature.org.

Digital Emerson, I and II

We invite presentations on a wide range of approaches to digital developments in Emerson studies. As old technologies and artifacts give way to new electronic tools and ways of knowing, research and interaction with Emerson's texts has transformed.

Topics may include, but are not limited to, the recent renaissance in online reading communities and their reinvention of conversation about Emerson's works, digitized versions of Emerson's texts, pedagogical uses of digital interfaces, and scholarly research on Emerson through digital archives and concordances. Also welcome are projects on any aspect of Emerson considered in light of electronic media.

This two-part panel—which includes a traditional conference panel with three 20-minute papers and a roundtable with roughly six briefer presentations—is designed to represent as broad a spectrum of perspectives on this crucial issue as possible. Thus all research concerns intersecting the digital are encouraged. Some areas of interest may include Emerson's contemporary web presence, the reconstruction of his works and biography for the digital age, online versions of his texts, the development of Emerson reading communities on the Internet, Emerson and social media, the digital humanities, or big data, and Emerson's present and future place in digital culture.

Send 300 word abstracts to Roger Thompson (roger.thompson@stonybrook.edu) and David Dowling (david-dowling@uiowa.edu) by Jan. 15, 2015. Membership in the Emerson Society is required of presenters.

Thoreau Society Annual Gathering Call for Proposals

The theme of next year's Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (Concord: July 9–12, 2015) is "Thoreau's Sense of Place." The Emerson Society sponsors a panel at the Annual Gathering; the topic for 2014 was "Place in Emerson." The Emerson Society invites proposals for brief papers that consider the significance of place in Emerson's life and works. In addressing the cultural, political, and social geography in Emerson's thinking and its concern for the natural environment, papers might explore his sense of

urban and rural space, domestic and public locales, transatlantic distances, and the role of the media and transportation in bridging cultural divides. Papers might also consider Emerson's environmental ethos, his immersion in astronomy and the work of Alexander Von Humboldt, and Thoreau's work as land surveyor as avenues into Emerson's sense of place. Email 300 word abstracts to Roger Thompson (roger.thompson@stonybrook.edu) and David Dowling (david-dowling@uiowa.edu) by Jan. 15, 2015.

Emerson Society Graduate Student Travel Award

This award provides up to \$1,000 of travel support to present a paper on one of the Emerson Society panels at the American Literature Association Annual Meeting or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering. Graduate students interested in applying should submit their abstracts by Jan. 15, 2015, to Roger Thompson (roger.thompson@stonybrook.edu) and David Dowling (david-dowling@uiowa.edu) and indicate their desire for consideration for the award.

The Barbara L. Packer Fellowship

The American Antiquarian Society is now accepting applications for the 2015–16 competition for this fellowship; deadline is Jan. 15, 2015. From the AAS website: 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 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. Both postdoctoral scholars and doctoral candidates may apply. For more information, visit americanantiquarian.org/acafellowship.htm.

Call for Lesson Plans for Emerson and American Philosophy Website

Please consider submitting lesson plans on Emerson, Thoreau, and others for a new teaching resource, Teaching American Philosophy (teachhigh-phi.org), a website sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities that will be featured on EDSITEMent!, "the web's premier resource for teachers in the humanities." edsitement.neh.gov.

See the site's readings, content timeline, and other resources and submit initial queries and/or completed lesson plans to Jennifer Gurley, gurleyja@lemoyne.edu, anytime. Lesson plans will be posted as they are received.

2014 Emerson Society Annual Business Meeting

Saturday, May 24, 2014

Concord Room, Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC
President Sue Dunston called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.
About 14 members were present.

- 1) 2013 Minutes approved.
- 2) 2014 Treasurer's Report approved.

Announcements and Updates

- 1) Sue announces that the IRS has reinstated the Society's tax-exempt status.
- 2) Website: Sue asks that members give any feedback on the newly redesigned website directly to her or to webmaster Amy Earheart.
- 3) Special Award Presentation: Noelle reports on efforts to advertise awards
- 4) Packer Fellowship: Sue recognizes the 2014 Packer Fellowship recipient, Peter Wirzbicki
- 5) Projected 2018 Heidelberg Conference: Sue passes around a sign-up sheet for members to join the planning committee; she mentions interest in co-sponsoring the conference from the Poe, Hawthorne, and Fuller Societies.
- 6) Other Announcements:
 - a. The Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy has invited the Emerson Society to offer a panel at their annual meeting in March, 2015; Sue invites any interested parties to let her know of their desire to get involved. She notes that there is a possibility for this to become a regular panel at future SAAP conferences.
 - b. Jardin des Plantes: the Society is exploring the possibility of sponsoring a plaque commemorating Emerson's formative experience at the Jardin; Joe Urbas and another member who is also based in France will pursue this.
 - c. New/Forthcoming Publications: Phyllis Cole and Jana Argersinger's new book, *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism* (University of Georgia Press); David Dowling's *Emerson's Proteges: Mentoring and Marketing Transcendentalism's Future* (Yale University Press)
 - d. Conference in Paris: Joseph Urbas and Thomas Constantinesco are organizing a conference on Emerson in Paris on June 3, 2015.
 - e. Bob Habich announces that he is writing the annual essay on American literary scholarship on the Transcendentalists, and asks that anyone publishing a relevant work provide him with a copy so that he may include it in his essay.

Presentations

- 1) Graduate Student Award: David Dowling presents the award, including a check for \$1000, to Robert Rabiee, a Ph.D. student at the University of Southern California.
- 2) Distinguished Achievement Award: Sue presents the Distinguished Achievement Award to Bob Habich.

Business

- 1) Election of David Greenham and Neal Dolan to three-year terms on the Advisory Board.
- 2) Election of Roger Thompson to a three-year term as Program Chair.
- 3) Board approves a recommendation to form a Media Committee to advise the webmaster and coordinate the Society's various media presences (website, Facebook, *ESP*). Sue passed a sign-up sheet and encouraged members to sign up for the committee or recommend possible committee members.
- 4) Next Meeting: ALA in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2015.
- 5) Other Business:

The members discussed ways of recognizing work on Emerson in digital humanities environments with an award. There was consensus to change the language of the CFPs for awards to include DH projects as well as traditional projects.

Sue reminds panelists to submit abstracts of their papers to *ESP* for publication.

Bob thanks officers for agreeing to serve.

Meeting adjourned, 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie O'Neill
Emerson Society Secretary/Treasurer

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

24 May 2014

Membership and Comparisons (as of 15 May 2014)

	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008	May 2009	May 2010	May 2011	May 2012	May 2013	May 2014
Total membership	194	210	184	176	165	160	181	177	143
Life members	22	22	25	26	27	27	31	33	33
Sustaining members	18	25	29	19	20	18	24	28	23
Contributing members	51	55	41	40	41	52	49	30	27
New members	22	40	15	19	17	12	15	20	14
Student members	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	16
States represented	43	43	38	35	31 (+DC)	34	32	34	32
Non-U.S. countries	10	10	13	12	10	9	11	12	19

Our international membership includes Japan, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Australia, Russia, and Spain.

Notes on Membership:

- Membership is down from previous years. This may owe to general attrition as we put the Florence conference further behind us, but also it may be that the new Secretary/Treasurer needs to be more proactive in reminding people to renew.
- Student membership is up slightly, suggesting that student memberships are a success.

Finances (as of 15 May 2014)

\$ 23,500 Balance, 15 May 2013

\$ 19,480 Balance, 15 May 2014

\$ 19,557 Wire transfer from Wells Fargo accounts, 13 Jan 2014

2,440 Credits to Renasant Bank since 1 Jan 2014

3,069 Debits to Renasant Bank since 1 Jan 2014

552 Current balance, PayPal

\$19,480 Current assets

Major *debits* for the period 1 January to 15 May 2014 include the Subvention award (\$500), Research grant (\$500), printing and envelopes for Spring 2014 *ESP* (\$54), design and layout of Spring 2014 *ESP* (\$600), new letterhead (\$251), a donation to the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (\$250), new checks and sundry office expenses (\$133).

Credits for the period 1 January to 15 May 2014 are membership dues and donations.

Notes on Finances:

- The figures listed above account only for the half-year that I have been keeping the Society's financial records.
- The figures above do not reflect payments to winners of the Graduate Student Paper Award or the Community Service Award.

- Special thanks to Life Member Wendell Refior for his donation of \$250, which allowed us to increase the Graduate Student Paper Award to \$1000 this year.

Additional note:

- Special thanks to Todd Richardson for his assistance as I assumed the office he formerly held. Thanks to him as well as Sue Dunston, Bob Habich, and Jennifer Gurley for their patience with me as I got the Society's accounts set up in Mississippi and learned the ropes of my position.

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

Emerson Society Panels at the American Literature Association, 2014

The Emerson Society presented two panels at the 25th Annual American Literature Association Conference, which was held from May 22 to 25, 2014 at the Hyatt-Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

The sessions were arranged by David Dowling and Todd Richardson. Abstracts appear below.

SESSION I: Emerson's Later Career Friday, May 23

Chair, David Dowling, *University of Iowa*

Feudalism, Individualism, and Authority in Later Emerson

ROBERT YUSEF RABIEE, *University of Southern California*

Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions, that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests.... Who can doubt, that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years? ("The American Scholar")

In modern Europe, the Middle Ages were called the Dark Ages. Who dares to call them so now? They are seen to be the feet on which we walk, the eyes with which we see. 'Tis one of our triumphs to have reinstated them. ("Progress of Culture")

The selections above dramatize a shift in the rhetoric of Emerson's transcendentalism from pugnacious rejection of pre-modern European models to an embrace of them as signifiers of U.S. cultural hegemony after the Civil War. As Emerson moved away from the liberalism of *Nature*, "The American Scholar," and "Self-Reliance," the dialectical relationship he posited between society and the individual—"all society devolves on the individual, and yet the individual is a mutilated product of society," as John Peacock puts it—gave way to a neo-feudal doctrine of natural aristocracy we see first in *English Traits* (1856), and then even more forcefully in the public addresses published as *Conduct of Life* (1860/76) and the Phi Beta Kappa address "Progress of Culture." Where the young Emerson in 1844 proclaimed that "the uprising and culmination of the new and antifeudal power of commerce, is the political fact of most significance to the American at this hour" ("The Young American," EL 370), Emerson at the dawn of the Gilded Age looks for a "strong man...[to make] estates, as fast as the sun breeds clouds," a man who, like the feudal baron before the system's decadence in modernity, is "born to own" (*Conduct of Life*, EL 974, 995). I approach this evolution toward biological and economic hierarchy through a comparative close reading of "The American Scholar" and "Progress of Culture," alongside shorter readings from *English Traits* and *The Conduct of Life*. By highlighting Emerson's use of allusions to social models derived from his study of medieval English history and literature, I demonstrate that the shift in his thought over these thirty years hinges on his continuing interest in the individual's relationship to broader social development. I finally conclude that this late-career shift in Emerson's thinking is not unique to him, but instead mirrors a more general trend towards medievalism amongst other New England intellectuals at the cultural vanguard of the Gilded Age.

ROBERT YUSEF RABIEE IS THE GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD WINNER

"Character" and the Example of Mary Moody Emerson

PHYLLIS COLE, *Penn State Brandywine*

I reflect on a pair of linked texts representing Emerson's thought in its last still productive decade of the 1860s: "Character" (an 1865 lecture published in the *North American Review* the year after) and "Mary Moody Emerson" (an 1869 lecture published posthumously in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 1883.) The two pieces hold completely different status in the recently completed *Collected Works*, especially its final volume, *Uncollected Prose Writings* (2013). "Character" is beautifully illuminated as a radical, anti-ecclesiastical late statement by Emerson, "Mary Moody Emerson" omitted from the collection along with other pieces of apparently composite, inauthentic authorship. As part of the paper, I'll argue for the value and authenticity of "MME," as well as the wider importance of Emerson's late biographical papers and sketches, many still unavailable to readers in scholarly editions.



Session I panelists Sean Ross Meehan, David Dowling, Phyllis Cole, and Robert Yusef Rabiee

Emerson's Memory and the Use of Metonymy

SEAN ROSS MEEHAN, *Washington College*

Many critics have followed James Eliot Cabot in diagnosing and discounting the late work of Emerson's last decade as a regrettable problem of failing memory or a loss in mental acuity associated with aphasia, his inability to remember and produce certain words and names. For Cabot, the judgment extends to *Letters and Social Aims*, the final book published in Emerson's lifetime, with considerable editorial help from Cabot and Ellen Emerson. In the process, significant works

such as “Poetry and Imagination” and “Quotation and Originality,” if not much of the work and thought of Emerson’s later career, have been neglected as merely repetitions at best, and at worst confusions and compromises, of Emerson’s earlier, more vital writing and thinking. I argue that this conventional view of Emerson’s late memory problem misunderstands the rhetorical significance to Emerson’s work of the aphasia’s primary symptom: Emerson’s reliance on metonymy, the rhetorical figure of contiguity, used to substitute for words he could no longer remember or at least produce. After providing critical and theoretical context for the rhetorical power of metonymy in Emerson’s work, I explore Emerson’s philosophy of “Memory,” particularly in the lecture with that title from the 1858 *Natural Method of Mental Philosophy* that reappears in the *Natural History of Intellect* course Emerson teaches at Harvard in the early 1870s. Moreover, I correlate this thinking from Emerson’s later work with William James’s chapter on “Memory” in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890), a chapter in which James invokes Emerson on memory’s crucial yet paradoxical powers in forgetting. This is one of several points where James in his early work develops his thinking by way of reading the philosophy of intellect Emerson develops in his later career.

I conclude that unlike James, Cabot and other critics neglect the fact that Emerson’s use of metonymy as a figure for thought’s analogical and contiguous correlation of new and old, or the remembered and the forgotten, is not just a physiological circumstance of the older Emerson, something to be edited out of the published product. Rather, Emerson’s rhetoric of metonymy reiterates the organizing principle of his work and is part and particle of the metamorphosis of thinking that the work, both late and early, sought to express.

SESSION II: Emerson and the Business World, Saturday, May 24

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

New Atlantic Utopias: Rhetorical Response in Emerson and the Puritans

MICHAEL LORENCE, *Innermost House*,
Independent Scholar

Hierophany at the Heart of Place

ED KRAFCHOW, *Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate*,
Independent Scholar

Transcendentalism in a Technological Age

J. SCOTT BRIGGS, *Ziff-Davis Publishing*,
Independent Scholar

This panel consisting of independent scholars featured Michael Lorence and two attendees of his woodland retreat for Emersonian study called Innermost House, an unelectrified, twelve-foot-square cabin in the woods of California where he provided mentorship for industrial leaders from 2004 to 2011. In his presentation, “Emerson and the Transcendentalism of Industry,” Lorence spoke of his experience mentoring professionals in the world of commerce seeking to transcend the boundaries of specialized knowledge. In his analysis of Emerson’s complex relationship to industry and industrialists, Lorence

situated *Nature*, “The Transcendentalist,” and “Self-Reliance” as works oriented toward the ideal in opposition to the exigencies of what Friedrich Nietzsche called “the wretched ephemeral babble of politics.” But by 1860, Lorence argued, Emerson appears in the *Conduct of Life* largely to embrace circumstances—“civil war, national bankruptcy, or revolution”—as the proper field of human perfection. Lorence brought these texts into view in the anecdotal light of Innermost House. In the seven years of its existence, Innermost House became a sanctuary to self-selected leaders of industry who found in it a home for their isolated and highly individual natures—and a mirror in which they recognized the essential transcendentalism of their lives in industry. In doing so, Lorence linked the mature strains of Emersonian transcendentalism with the modern business world.

Two former attendees of Lorence’s Innermost House also delivered papers on the panel. Ed Krafchow’s presentation, “Hierophany at the Heart of Place,” discussed the power of the rustic retreat’s location in the California mountains, admiring its mindful painstaking construction, and reflecting on its function as a source of inspiration for reflection on business practice and ethics with respect to Emerson. He mentioned the risks inherent in his high stakes business transactions that demanded both bold individualistic thinking and compassion for stakeholders who suffered great personal losses during market recessions, particularly that of 2008.

J. Scott Briggs was the other former member of Innermost House who discussed “Transcendentalism in a Technological Age.” He focused on his experience in the magazine industry with Ziff-Davis Publishing Company and *Wired*, especially the transformation toward the digital age, and the nonconformist innovation it demanded. He made connections between his entrepreneurial pursuits and those of Samuel Ward, Boston financier and member of the Concord inner circle of transcendentalists. The move toward digitization, he argued, bears the promise of accommodating and inspiring further transcendentalist conversation.



Session II panelists J. Scott Briggs, Michael Lorence, Ed Krafchow,
and Todd Richardson

Emerson Society Panels at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, 2014

During the Thoreau Society's 2014 Annual Gathering from July 10 to 13 in Concord, Massachusetts, the Emerson Society presented its annual panel, this year on the topic "Emerson's Eclectic Creativity."

The panel was chaired by Roger Thompson, SUNY at Stony Brook. Abstracts appear below.

For further information about the Annual Gathering, visit www.thoreausociety.org.

Between Tradition and Novelty, Emerson's Progressive Religion

NICHOLAS AARON FRIESNER, *Brown University*

Speaking on the reception of Emerson's wide-ranging claims about the reigning philosophers of the Western tradition, John Dewey wrote in 1903: "I fancy he reads the so-called eclecticism of Emerson wrongly who does not see that it is reduction of all the philosophers of the race, even the prophets like Plato and Proclus whom Emerson holds most dear, to the test of trial by the service rendered the present and immediate experience." Beginning with Dewey's insight, this paper focuses on Emerson's progressive reconfiguration of religion, a reconfiguration predicated on the need for a religion that conforms to present lived experience, while enabling a better future experience. I show that Emerson is mindful of the need to preserve and adapt extant forms of religious tradition, but also the need to open space for creative novelty. In other words, Emerson situates his thought on religion between the new and the old, incorporating both tradition and novelty, by redefining the core ideas of religion in America.

First, I put Emerson's underappreciated essay "Quotation and Originality" in conversation with "The Poet," which together supply a method for thinking about how creativity is possible despite the acknowledgment that humans are formed within the horizon of a particular tradition. Having established this method, I turn to four key concepts that Emerson creatively redefines in his middle and later works: the spirit/spiritual, religion, worship, and the church. All four concepts display the way that Emerson calls upon a wide variety of materials, both local and distant, which are put to the test of the present. My paper reads Emerson's work philosophically, (following the work of Russell Goodman, Stanley Cavell, Charles Mitchell, and Barbara Packer), but extends this tradition by contributing to an understanding of Emerson as an important philosopher and theorist of religion for American thought (as Randy Friedman's recent work has tried to do).

Emerson and the Environment

MICHAEL POPEJOY, *Purdue University*

This paper examines how Emerson's views on nature might be extended into what we now call environmental ethics. In an Emersonian vein, I do not merely catalogue Emerson's views relevant to this topic, but further develop and expand upon them. Thus I take Emerson's views on nature, which I argue are already interdisciplinary in nature, and extend them to current problems having to do with environmental change, which are themselves interdisciplinary in nature and require creativity to solve.

I approach this project by focusing on the relation between nature and the three primary objects of ancient philosophy, which I think Emerson, along with the ancients, takes to ultimately comprise a unity: the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. According to Emerson nature is ordered and intelligible. The objects of the intellect in this realm are

the laws of nature, truths accessed through the methods of natural science. In part due to this order, nature possesses intrinsic rather than merely instrumental value, and is purely an expression of the good. Similarly, Emerson claims that all nature is beautiful, and the acme of its beauty is as an object of the intellect. This aesthetic or affective component of our relation to nature lends itself to a kind of natural religiosity. These diverse strands that feed into Emerson's account of nature, including natural science, ethics, aesthetics, religion, and philosophy more generally, get weaved together into one of his most enduring concepts, the generation of which required adept creativity on Emerson's part. I think that Emerson's concept of nature can be made even more enduring by bringing his ideas into conversations in current environmental ethics and thus contributing to solutions to some of the gravest problems that we face today.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Gorham Palfrey, and the Influence of Free Soil

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In 1851, at the urging of Charles Sumner, Emerson joined the Congressional campaign of John Gorham Palfrey, putting aside his well-known ambivalence toward organized reform and the political process to take part in his first stump campaign. A former minister from Cambridge, Palfrey became involved in Whig politics in the early 1840s. After aligning himself with the Conscious Whigs and explicitly supporting the Wilmot Proviso in the late 1840s, Palfrey was pushed out of the party in 1848, at which point he joined the nascent Free Soil party and was nominated as the Free Soil candidate for Congress from Massachusetts' Fourth District. Refusing to join a coalition of Democrats, Palfrey ultimately lost the election after fourteen run-offs. During this series of run-offs, Emerson began supporting Palfrey, who had enjoyed a long relationship with the Emerson family. Additionally, Palfrey's well-circulated attacks on the Slave Power would likely have resonated with Emerson, and Emerson "on several occasions" delivered his anti-Fugitive Slave Law "Address to the Citizens of Concord" at Palfrey campaign events.

This paper traces Emerson's association with Palfrey's campaign and argues that Palfrey's particular articulation of Free Soil ideology—portraying slaveholding as unnatural, agriculturally unproductive, and environmentally destructive—resonates deeply with Emerson's antislavery writings, particularly his response to the Compromise of 1850 and its strengthened Fugitive Slave Law. I suggest that Emerson, in confronting the expansive and pollutive nature of slaveholding hegemony, was influenced by and draws upon the ideological and rhetorical elements of Free Soil discourse that Palfrey himself emphasized. At the same time, I argue that Emerson's response to the Fugitive Slave Law represents a creative reformulation of Palfrey's Free Soil argument. Whereas Palfrey articulates a distinctive dichotomy between Northern and Southern topographies, Emerson imagines the breakdown of that dichotomy and explores the ecological and epistemological consequences of an expansive and transgressive Slave Power.

Reviews

Estimating Emerson: An Anthology of Criticism from Carlyle to Cavell.

Ed. DAVID LARocca. New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
x + 720 pages. \$42.95 paper.

Here's the problem—and pleasure—of reading *Estimating Emerson: An Anthology of Criticism from Carlyle to Cavell* as a graduate student: In every work of criticism we recognize our own derivative thoughts. Take Theodore Parker's 1850 assertion that "Mr. Emerson is the most American of our writers" (108). The young scholar might let her eyes glaze over—how typical of nineteenth-century parochialism, she thinks, we *know better now*—only to blink, a little chagrined, at Parker's next pass: "While he is the most American, he is almost the most cosmopolitan of our writers" (108). In this mammoth collection of 170 years of writing about Emerson, old chestnuts serve fresh meat and even our newest insights reveal their long ancestry. The effect is stimulating as well as humbling—suddenly lost cousins (who knew Baudelaire would turn up to the family reunion?), aged but sprightly uncles (if too few aunts), shake off their sepia tones and show up vocal, virile, and *alive* to the critical conversation.

If nothing else, the volume provides a wonderful corrective to any comfortable idea of criticism's inevitable progress. There is very good criticism throughout these 700 pages—perhaps as much in the first third, representing 32 contributors and taking us up to the twentieth century, as in the final third, which covers just 1981–2008 with contributions from Harold Bloom, Richard Rorty, William Gass, Richard Poirier, Cornel West, and Stanley Cavell, among others. As the centuries pass, editor David LaRocca trades a diversity of voices for longer page counts—certainly a defensible choice, but one that might reinforce the idea that early criticism is "local color" in comparison to the extended treatments of today's academics. Thankfully the entries from Orestes Brownson, Theodore Parker, and John Jay Chapman remind us that some of Emerson's earliest critics are some of his best. While modern scholarship relegates these names to the footnotes, here Brownson and Bloom, Chapman and West face each other across the table of contents as equals.

It's also true that there are a number of early entries better described as "color" than "criticism." LaRocca is careful to state that the criterion for selection was not the quality of the criticism, *per se*, but the stature of the writer. The volume includes 67 authors, among them "some of the most accomplished, influential and celebrated writers" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (2–3). Hence Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Dickens, Melville, and Douglass make landfall—despite their dubious, oblique, or merely passing remarks on Emerson—and are later joined by Baudelaire, Robert Musil, Marcel Proust, T. S. Eliot, Robert Penn Warren, and Jorge Luis Borges. These last three contributors offer their most interesting insights in the form of poems, highlighting another peculiarity, and strength, of the volume: its diversity of archival material, including "oration, address, epistle, lecture, note, diatribe, poem, essay, review, journal entry, conversation, [and] stump speech" (3). (This diversity, too, tapers off in the final third of the volume where LaRocca privileges more conventional forms of criticism.) LaRocca's clear, careful prefatory remarks to each entry, which often cross-reference contributions or point to further scholarship, establish what is relevant and vital in even the least substantial con-

tributions. They also occasionally double as acts of criticism (for example, his full-page preface to Santayana's entries).

LaRocca is particularly strong at surfacing cross-Atlantic conversations. All the more pity that no excerpts from the lectures of Adam Mickiewicz appear. Their inclusion would have been worthwhile purely on historic grounds—the Polish poet and revolutionary was probably the first to introduce Emerson to Paris—and would have allowed LaRocca to narrate one of the most colorful anecdotes of Transcendentalism: the meeting of Mickiewicz and Margaret Fuller, who wooed her visitor by sending him a copy of Emerson's poems.

This slighter absence points to a larger problem—besides entries from Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, and Virginia Woolf, it's an entirely masculine volume. Was Emerson "inherited" differently by the sexes? There's little here to help us know. LaRocca's introduction cites in passing Emerson's influence on Dickinson, Chopin, and Stein and serves up hefty quotations from Sharon Cameron, Mary Oliver, and poet Ann Lauterbach. Perhaps permissions problems explain the latter trio's absence. As for the former, LaRocca takes pains to remind us that influence, if uncatalogued, is not enough for inclusion. Still, if he really privileges "the most accomplished, influential and celebrated writers" (2–3), why is Louisa May Alcott ("Reminiscences of Ralph Waldo Emerson") absent while her less accomplished, influential, and celebrated father roams fourteen pages?

It's petty to fault an anthologist of a work this size—especially one who accounts for his selection process as conscientiously as LaRocca—for not including more. But it makes me hope for a future volume, perhaps inspired by the recent publication of Jana Argersinger and Phyllis Cole's essay collection, *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism*, subtitled: "An Anthology of Criticism from Mary Moody Emerson to Mary Oliver."

—Ruth Martin
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Experience and Experimental Writing: Literary Pragmatism from Emerson to the Jameses. PAUL GRIMSTAD.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. x + 176 pp. \$69.00 cloth.

Paul Grimstad's book takes as its starting point the pragmatist shifting of the term "experience" away from the idea of correspondence and toward the idea of process: "When the classical pragmatists talk about experience, they do not mean getting inner representations to correspond to outer phenomena, nor of securing the possibility for rationally justified knowledge, but an experimental loop of perception, action, consequences, further action, further consequences, and so forth" (1). Grimstad joins earlier scholars of "literary pragmatism" (centrally, for him, Ross Posnock and Richard Poirier) in connecting this view, according to which, as William James has it, "truth *happens* to an idea," to literary practices of meaning-making (James, *Pragmatism* [1907] in James, *Writings* 1902–1910, ed. Bruce Kuklick [New York: Library of America, 1987], 574). It is a move suggested, if not actually made, by the classical pragmatists themselves; if, as James has it, "in our cognitive as well as our active life we are creative" (James, *Pragmatism*, 599), if even our most basic acts of perception and judgment are in fact acts of creative negotiation with the world, the process of linguistic creation takes on a new philosophical centrality.

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Reviews

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In Grimstad's particular version of "literary pragmatism," the compositional experiments of Emerson, Poe, Melville, and Henry James constitute a "prehistory of the pragmatist insight that experience is not a matter of correspondence but of process and experiment" (1). Each of the four chapters highlights "a particular scene or encounter" that dramatizes the central notion of composition as experience, a notion heavily indebted to and best illustrated by Emerson's writing (2).

Readers of Emerson will be especially interested in Grimstad's opening chapter, "The Method of Nature," which revisits the impact of both Emerson's visit to Cuvier's exhibit of comparative anatomy at the Jardin des Plantes in 1833 and James Marsh's editions of Coleridge on Emerson's thought and writing. Grimstad focuses not on the familiar questions of the degree of Emerson's idealism and/or skepticism but rather on his absorption of Coleridge's concept of *method*. In Grimstad's reading—and one senses that it is the instance around which his model evolved—Emerson's reading of Coleridge didn't so much motivate a new philosophical or spiritual position as model a method of composition that would *itself* amount to Emerson's redescription of experience. Grimstad reads this redescription explicitly in terms of Emerson's vocational crisis, concluding that if, for Emerson, "formalism was preaching insufficiently suffused with experience, then his own idea of experience treats it as continued, and realized, in composition" (27).

The remaining chapters are equally complex and wide-ranging, each advancing an ambitious range of interrelated literary and philosophical claims. In the Poe chapter, "Nonreasoning Creatures," for example, Grimstad argues that "Poe imagines what Peirce will later call abduction in the invention of a genre [the detective story] whose identity hinges on difference between creatures capable of 'intelligible syllabification' and those that merely make sounds. Poe thus aligns the 'intelligible'—the sharable, the meaningful—with a literary experiment that, while being an individual example, at the same time invents the general category of which it is an instance" (120–1). The chapter on Melville, "Unearthing *Pierre*," makes a similarly complex series of claims about Melville's dramatic revision of the novel in 1852, a revision that not only announces his rejection of the literary standards of the day but that also, Grimstad claims, allows him to find "in allegory a way of giving form to the general as such" (121). A chapter on Henry James's *The Ambassadors* links James's late style not only to his brother William's radical empiricism but also to the "cosmopolitanism" (defined by way of a discussion of Kant and Hannah Arendt) that he sees manifest in William's correspondence with Henri Bergson.

These readings are compelling and illuminating, if a bit baroque. But if one of the consequences of pragmatism is a greater sense of our creative agency in every aspect of our mental life, then critical ingeniousness of the kind Grimstad deploys in *Experience and Experimental Writing* is not to be maligned. Indeed, even when they don't convince, his readings are rather marvelous critical inventions. It seems the special obligation of the pragmatist critic, however, to present critical creativity as such, rather than in the tone of empirical discovery Grimstad relies on, as evidenced in the summary of the Poe chapter above: a tone that literary criticism, even the kind most critical of (non-radical) empiricist claims, continues most often to assume. In "The American Scholar" (1837), Emerson exhorts us to "creative reading as well as creative writing," an exhortation that seems in keeping with the pragmatist ethos, according to which inventiveness of the kind Grimstad displays here might well have been embraced explicitly as a critical method. That Grimstad leaves this possibility unexplored seems implicitly to divorce his own processes of composition from the idea of experience he advances, a split that perhaps speaks more to the constraints of contemporary critical discourse than to Grimstad's own position. Operating within these constraints, however, *Experience and Experimental Writing* makes a significant contribution to the study of both literary pragmatism and nineteenth-century American literature, one readers interested in the Emersonian legacy won't want to miss.

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R. E. C.

An Emerson Bibliography, 2014

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

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My Emerson

A column devoted to our readers' personal reflections on Emerson

The Banion of The Forest: Emerson Thrives in Colorado Springs

LUCY BELL

Founder of Friends of Emerson, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Prone on the couch across from my husband's empty recliner, I face the start of another day. I turn on the TV hoping for a few minutes of distraction from the unrelenting pain of Ollie's death. Lung cancer ended thirty years of marriage, but I have not accepted it. The mantra pounds in my brain, "This is too horrible to be true." I feel fragile enough to shatter.

A newspaper article about a new TV series caught my attention the day before, and I reach for it now. "American Writers—A Journey Through History." I need something to combat my emptiness.

I find the channel. It seems to be a call-in talk format. I'm not in the mood. I almost turn the TV off when the setting pierces my numbed awareness. It's a lake, no, a pond—Walden Pond. I've never been there, but my kids' favorite high school teacher, from whom they'd both taken four years of Latin, found it captivating. She occasionally shared tidbits from her annual visits, and as an appreciative mom, I'd look for Walden-themed gifts to give her at the end of the year.

The program topic is Emerson. Hmmm. "Self-Reliance" pops into my mind. Have I ever read it? Don't think so. But the speaker, relaxed and sitting in a chair by the shore, catches my attention. His name is Robert D. Richardson and he has written a biography titled *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*. As he talks about Emerson's life and the losses he endured, I begin to engage with what he says. I sit up. The dark cloud in my mind lifts a little as I realize that Emerson's experiences mirror my own.

That afternoon I make a quick trip to Borders Bookstore, and in the classics section I spot a copy of *The Mind on Fire*. I start it that night in bed, and in the next few days I have read it cover to cover. Waldo is a kindred spirit. He loved Ellen the way I loved Ollie. Utterly lost without her, he gives up his career and possessions, and books a passage to Europe. He looks so haggard the captain almost doesn't take him for fear he won't survive the rough Atlantic passage. Emerson spends months in Europe, emerges through the pain and returns home. He begins life anew but more losses lie ahead. His two closest brothers die of tuberculosis and his 5-year-old son succumbs unexpectedly to what is usually a benign childhood illness. How does he keep going?

I need his strength. I need his words. I head back to Borders and the classics shelf. This time I choose a 1990 Bantam paperback titled *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Essays,*

Lectures, and Poems edited by Robert D. Richardson. I picture Mr. Richardson sitting by the Walden shore. Yes. He's my connection. I read Richardson's forward, underlining and starring as I go. I underline "Emerson was shattered." Exactly the word for the feeling I carry. Above "Emerson was himself bookish, even as a child," I write "me, too." I note in the margin how Emerson's thinking correlates with Jung. I underline and circle "How should I live my life?" adding "without Ollie." It is my all-encompassing question.

I devour the essays. In addition to the thoughts, the words themselves sing healing music to me. I crave their sounds. In one of those minor miracles that occur more often than we realize, a Lab puppy comes into my life the very same day of my husband's death. I name her Mollie after him and am comforted that whenever I say her name, I say his. At night she sits by my bedside as I read Emerson aloud to her: *These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day.* RWE, "Self-Reliance." And even though Mollie attentively turns her head from side to side and lifts her ears in a most beguiling manner, I know there must be a better way.

I submit a note to my church newsletter asking if anyone would like to meet to read Emerson aloud and I am amazed when nine people respond. Friends of Emerson is born in Colorado Springs. Some people come once and never return, but over time the number grows. I send out a background email prior to each meeting, learning as I go. Several of those unable to make the twice monthly 4:00–5:00 meeting time, opt to read the essays on their own, following the group schedule.

The mailing list grows to forty and broadens to include people outside of church members. Of the forty, about a dozen, equal numbers of men and women, become regulars, rarely missing the sessions. While most have only a passing acquaintance with Emerson, trying a group named *friends* of Emerson does not deter them. They come out of intellectual curiosity, and they stay because they like the provocative conversations that Emerson inspires. We wrestle with the text, swear at Emerson's contradictions, swoon at the beauty of his lyricism, and...we laugh a lot.

The process evolves into selecting an essay with a choice of reading it ahead of time or coming with a fresh "beginner's mind." We sit in a circle, take turns reading one paragraph at

a time, followed by discussion. Sometimes the topic is so potent that two or three paragraphs take the entire hour. We began with *Essays, First Series*, and frequently return to them. We've read several twice, some three times. We read *Nature* in 2006 and again in 2013. "The Divinity School Address" was a three-peat. Repeated readings increase our understanding and show us how much of Emerson we have absorbed through our regular practice. We paired *Experience with Threnody, Friendship* with the Thoreau Eulogy, Emerson's political writing with election years. I periodically compile an inventory with "What We've Read" printed in black and "What's Left" printed in red. No one doubts that Emerson will outlive us all.

Over the years, Emerson scholars become our comrades-in-arms. We refer to them like next-door-neighbors. "You know what Geldard said on that subject." "I thought we might get into that, so I brought Gougeon." Emerson leads assuredly to Thoreau and I have become a regular attendee at the Thoreau Annual Gathering held each July in Concord, Mass. This year, some of the Friends of Emerson plan to join me. Because of family obligations, I was extremely disappointed to miss the 2013 Thoreau Annual Gathering when Robert Richardson was the keynote speaker. My next best thing was to write to him, telling him about the group and the part he had played in its formation. I ended my email with: "Writers don't always know when they've become a link in a chain. I wanted you to know." I was thrilled to receive an email response, closed graciously with "Long may your group thrive."

When I began the group, I thought it might last six weeks. At the end of one year, I said to myself, "Things run their course. When I find myself sitting alone here three times in a row, that will be a sign to call it quits." But I no longer worry about the longevity of the group. Emerson has permeated our thinking: *Fill my hour, ye gods, so that I shall not say, "behold an hour of my life gone," —but rather, I have lived an hour.* RWE, "Works and Days." We continue our experience with Emerson, one hour at a time. Our Rocky Mountain outpost, far from the Concord mother ship, is now in its twelfth year.

Twelve years. I think back to the question I asked at the beginning of my relationship with Emerson: "How can I live my life without Ollie?"

Love and loss remain in my heart but they are cradled by Emerson's words. *Accept, accept*, he wrote in the margins of his journal after the death of his young son. *The only ballast I know is a respect to the present hour*, he counsels in "Experience." He ends "Compensation" by acknowledging a surprising gift, which unthinkable to me the first time I read it, has indeed become true: *The death of a [loved one], which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide. . . and the man or woman who*

would have remained a sunny garden-flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head...is made the banian of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighborhoods of men.

Lucy Bell, from Colorado Springs, is a retired teacher and writing consultant. In the years since founding the Friends of Emerson reading and discussion group, her "banian roots" have taken the form of teaching Emerson and Thoreau in various community venues, researching and speaking on the history of the Colorado Springs black community in which her husband grew

up, and becoming a volunteer naturalist at Cheyenne Mountain State Park, where she created "A Literary Walk in the Woods," a program that features reading the words of nature writers in a ponderosa forest setting.



Portrait artist Dick Eustice with Lucy Bell, founder and facilitator of Friends of Emerson (2003), at the unveiling of Journey to Walden. The sketch portrays the group's members in discussion.

Robert D. Habich

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of an *ism*. Habich's recognition of the fluid boundaries of transcendentalism, and of the experimental qualities of its best thinking, has greatly enriched his colleagues' awareness that they also pursue a most subtle and elusive subject.

In 2004 Habich provided us with one of the best examples that I have seen of the venerable academic tradition of the *Festschrift*, a collection of essays written both to honor and to extend the scholarly work of a scholar who has made an exceptional impact on a field of study. *Lives Out of Letters* honored Habich's doctoral mentor Robert N. Hudspeth, whose splendid edition of *The Letters of Margaret Fuller* (1983–1994) was a major advance in the study of transcendentalism. Such editions are foundational sources for the kind of interpretive biographical and historical work that has greatly advanced our understanding of transcendentalism as a movement central to the cultural transformation of the United States in the antebellum period. *Lives Out of Letters* was a celebration of Hudspeth's work, and also a defense of Hudspeth's kind of work. Habich and the eleven contributors who joined him suggest the complexities of letters and the lives they shape, and show decisively that "the genre of literary biography continues to weather every theoretical storm." In this context I think we should also take note of Habich's superb biographical reconsideration (*New England Quarterly*, 1992) of the greatest of the anti-transcendentalists, Andrews Norton, a man whose attacks on the movement did much to give it cohesion and coherence. With the careful research in primary sources that have consistently characterized his work, Habich shows how deeply Norton's critique of Emerson's Divinity School "Address" was grounded in the institutional politics of the Divinity School that few scholars have been aware of, and also in a broader intergenerational rift that in some respects foreshadowed the anti-slavery controversy.

It was fitting, then, that Habich's own 2011 masterwork, *Building Their Own Waldos*, would examine the achievements, and the burdens, of Emerson's early biographers. Readers of this remarkable book learn not only about the complexities of constructing a "life" of Emerson in the late nineteenth century, when he was on the verge of becoming a cultural icon, but of the trials of the genre of

biography itself, caught between the increasing pressures of satisfying new demands of scientific accuracy and of nurturing the nascent celebrity culture that now defines our era. *Waldo* is indeed a built object, as Habich's title suggests, even a series of such objects, reflecting the needs and resources of each successive biographer. Habich makes the instructive observation that this series of early Emerson biographies, as well as a number of other biographies of figures in the transcendentalist movement, were being written at a moment when transcendentalism as a creed, or worldview, or subject of philosophical discussion, was losing favor. Biography thus seemed to be working against the flow of history at this moment, a process that resulted in a peeling away of individual figures in the movement from the cauldron of controversy that their shared efforts generated. In these early biographies—six within an eight-year period of the 1880s—Emerson's reputation began its transformation from "the latest formulator of infidelity" to "the benign Sage of Concord." It has taken the combined insights of Friedrich Nietzsche, Robert D. Richardson, Jr., Stanley Cavell, and a generation of Emerson scholars, to give us a truer picture.

I should not, however, leave the impression that Bob Habich never left the library to converse with his colleagues. Those active in the Emerson Society know of his gifts of time, expertise, and leadership to the organization. I note here his unfailing generosity and beyond-the-call service as the Society's Secretary/Treasurer (2001–09), editor of *Emerson Society Papers* (2010–12), and President (2012–13). He helped to establish the Society's Barbara Packer Award and played an important role in the planning and execution of the Society's international conferences in Oxford (2006) and Florence (2012), memorable events that greatly enhanced the Society's efforts in fostering the study and discussion of Emerson and his ideas. Bob Habich has provided over a decade of sound guidance to the Emerson Society during a crucial period of its growing prominence and expanding programs. His achievements deserve our sincerest thanks.

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