

R.W.E.

Volume 29, Number 1

Spring 2019

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Distinguished Service Award Presented to Peggy Isaacson

WES MOTT

Peggy Isaacson, of Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), the indispensable colleague of five editors of *Emerson Society Papers*, has been honored with the inaugural Ralph Waldo Emerson Society Distinguished Service Award. Her nomination was passed unanimously, to prolonged applause, on July 28, 2018, at the society's annual business meeting at the international conference "Transcendentalist Intersections," co-sponsored by the Emerson Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, and the Heidelberg Center for American Studies at the University of Heidelberg in Germany.

"There are no fixtures in nature. The universe is fluid and volatile," Emerson writes in "Circles." Sounds like the disorder of an *ESP* editor's desk. By definition, though, publishing a periodical requires order, form, limits, schedules. Peggy Isaacson provides what Emerson calls the "principle of fixture and stability" needed to bring coherence to the creativity, clutter, and occasional chaos behind the production of *ESP*.

The role of our honoree was first officially identified on the *ESP* masthead in the Fall 1994 issue: "Design and Production: Peggy Isaacson." By this measure, in 2019 Peggy will have served the society for a quarter century. Although earlier issues of *ESP* credited simply "WPI Publications Office" or the independent firm "Darcy Adshead Graphics," the real force behind the newsletter's press-readiness has been, since its first issue in Spring 1990, Peggy Isaacson.

In *The Devil's Dictionary* (1911), American wit Ambrose Bierce defined an editor as a "Silly old quilly old Monarch of Thought" (and much worse). Peggy has kept five *ESP* editors grounded. She employs a keen eye for design issues as well as an expert grasp of style and grammar, serving essentially as a bonus editor and saving us all from countless oversights and errors. She deals patiently with chronic editor tardiness in getting materials to her, and

accommodates our (occasional) missed deadlines. In short, with impressive professional acumen and skill, she diplomatically deals with the foibles of academic editors. Moreover, she keeps us up to date with new and emerging printing technologies. (And she even designs and prints our fliers, brochures, and annual award certificates.)

Founded at WPI in 1989 with a grant from the provost, *ESP* was edited for its first fourteen years by Doug Wilson, with Wes Mott, of WPI, serving as managing editor, then for six years as editor. In 2010, when Bob Habich, of Ball State University, assumed the editorial reins of *ESP*, he was relieved and delighted when Peggy agreed to stay on to oversee design and production from halfway across the country. She continued to work with Bob's successors, Jennifer Gurley at LeMoyne College and Derek Pacheco at Purdue University, communicating with these faraway editors mostly online, of course, with an occasional phone call. But the essentials are unchanged. *ESP*'s post-WPI editors still attest to Peggy's remarkable knack for introducing them to their own editorial duties, for enforcing schedules, for her keen oversight of the whole production process, and for her unfailing professional talents and her invaluable extra pair of attentive eyes for accuracy (and ears for style)—all provided with tact, humor, and warm cordiality.

In Peggy's *real* job outside the Emerson Society, she is a multi-faceted copy editor and designer in WPI's Division of Marketing Communications. In a tribute to Peggy in 2014, on the occasion of her fortieth year at WPI, Mike Dorsey, director of Research Communications at the university, noted that her career began "inauspiciously" when she was hired on August 26, 1974, as a part-time clerk in public relations. Her talent, loyalty, and dedication were quickly apparent, and in time, she was editing a variety of internal communications vehicles, including weekly newsletters,

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2019 EMERSON SOCIETY DONORS

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

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society
Published at The University of South Carolina

www.emersonsociety.org

Editor: Michael Weisenburg
Book Review Editor: Leslie Eckel
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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 Roger Thompson, The Program in Writing and Rhetoric, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794.

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, Michael Weisenburg, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina, 1322 Greene Street, Columbia, SC 29208, 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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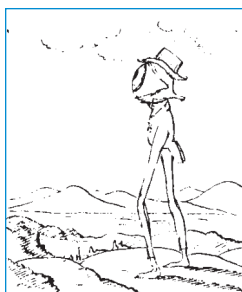
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PROSPECTS



Emerson Sightings/Citings

Wendell Refior brings three to our attention:

“Emerson Would Hate the Divinity School Renovation”

You can’t be at Harvard Divinity School long before someone mentions the “Divinity School Address,” a graduation speech delivered in 1838 by renegade Unitarian Universalist minister and American Transcendentalist poet Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson’s Address is routinely name-dropped as part of the school’s own autohagiography—the chapel in Divinity Hall is even called “Emerson Chapel” now. However, the Address caused controversy in its time.

<https://tinyurl.com/yy6womm6>

Four days before Christmas the *Sonoma Index-Tribune* cited Emerson’s “Gifts,” as the Transcendence Theater Company pondered its appreciation of the gifts and donations to support its theater.

Bill Lynch: All you need is love— “The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn; the miner, a gem; the sailor, coral and shells; the painter, his picture; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing. This is right and pleasing, for it restores society in so far to its primary basis, when a man’s biography is conveyed in his gift, and every man’s wealth is an index of his merit.” ... “But love them, and they feel you, and delight in you all the time.”

<https://tinyurl.com/y487yl7y>

Emerson’s American Scholar address is cited in *Moultrie News*, Jan 29, 2019, by Emilie Hancock, library assistant at Mt. Pleasant (SC) Regional Library

Besides improving your energy and protecting you from injury, adopting a regular yoga practice relieves stress, sharpens your concentration and soothes your nervous system. Indeed, there is something to be said for physical movement, a notion that Ralph Waldo Emerson touted in his famous essay, “The American Scholar.” In that piece—my favorite of all Emerson’s essays—he argues that even scholars, who often have a reputation for bookish reclusiveness, benefit from physical activity. He writes, “Without [action], thought can never ripen into truth... The preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious into the conscious, is action. Only

so much do I know, as I have lived.” Certainly, the heralded writer and philosopher would not have limited the definition of action purely to athletic pursuits; he embraced many acts of doing and making. But considering his study of “The Bhagavad-Gita,” the first book of yoga, I can hardly imagine that Emerson would have resisted the idea that yoga can be a powerful way to improve cognition.

<https://tinyurl.com/y4kz76ag>

Michael Weisenburg offers these two:

Johanna Mayer referenced Emerson’s *Conduct of Life* essay, “Wealth,” in an article about the “The Origin of the Word ‘Crater’” for *Science Friday* (January 22, 2019):

“Pinpointing exactly why the word expanded and seeped into our everyday language remains a mystery. But eventually krater morphed into crater, and came to describe any bowl-shaped depression like the one in those ancient Greek vessels. The English cleric and traveler Samuel Purchas was the first to apply the word to the mouth of a volcano in his 1613 work *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, which covers theological and geographical history from Asia to the Americas.

Purchas recounts a violent volcanic explosion in Mexico, the ash of which burned the indigenous people’s crops: “The Vulean, Crater, or mouth whence the fire issued, is about halfe a league in compasse.” And it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who first penned a reference to the craters of the moon in his *Conduct of Life* in 1860: “Every man wishes to see the ring of Saturn, the satellites and belts of Jupiter and Mars, the mountains and craters in the moon: yet how few can buy a telescope!”

<https://tinyurl.com/yy3sosq3>

On February 7, 2019, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an opinion piece by Crispin Sartwell, “Is Self-Reliance a Mental Illness?,” that argues that the American Psychological Association regards Emerson’s values as obsolete and pathological.

<https://tinyurl.com/yxz2ls75>

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PROSPECTS

(Continued from page 3)

Emerson Society Panels at ALA Conference, 2019

The Emerson Society will present two panels and a roundtable at the American Literature Association meeting, to be held May 23–26 in Boston. More information at Americanliteratureassociation.org.

Emerson and Pedagogy

Organized by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society

Chair: David Greenham, University of the West of England

Tobias Berggruen, “‘There is no original sin’: Stanley Bosworth as Emersonian Teacher,” Brown

Ethan Knight, “‘The American Scholar’ in First-Year,” University of South Carolina

Emil Haloun, “Amity and Enmity in Reading Emerson and Wordsworth,” Bar Ilan University

Kristi Cassaro, “Systems-Gazing: Seeing *Self-Reliance* through *A Treatise on Astronomy*,” CUNY

21st Century Emerson

Organized by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society

Chair: TBD

1. Benjamin Barasch, “Emerson’s ‘Doctrine of Life’: Embryogenesis and the Ontology of Style,” Columbia

2. Michael Weisenburg, “Uses of Great Men: Donald J. Trump, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Limits of Self-Reliance in Twenty-First Century Popular Culture,” University of South Carolina

3. Alex Moskowitz, “Radical Emersonianism and the Politics of Literary Form,” Boston College

4. David Greenham, “Emersonian Forms, Formalists and the New Formalism,” University of the West of England

The Emerson Society at 30: A Roundtable Discussion

Organized by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society

Moderator: Wesley Mott, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Emeritus

1. Albert von Frank, Washington State University, Emeritus

2. David Robinson, Oregon State University, Emeritus

3. Joel Myerson, University of South Carolina, Emeritus

4. Len Gougeon, University of Scranton

5. Helen Deese, Massachusetts Historical Society

6. Phyllis Cole, Penn State University, Brandywine, Emerita

7. Ronald Bosco, University at Albany, SUNY

Thoreau Society Annual Gathering

The Emerson Society presents two panels on Transcendentalism: Men and Women Conversing at the Thoreau Society Gathering, to be held July 11–14. More information at thoreausociety.org.

Session One

Sarah Ann Wider (Colgate University), “The Vexed Nature of Home: Concord in 1845” [Caroline Sturgis in dialogue with several others]

Fritz Fleischmann (Babson College), “Margaret Fuller and John Neal Conversing”

Audrey Raden (New York Theological Seminary), “Helen Thoreau’s Brother Henry and Lucretia Mott

Sabrina Vellucci (Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy), “‘A Cobweb Is a Handkerchief Dropped by a Fairy’: Thoreau’s Magic for Children and Louisa May Alcott’s Works”

Kathy Lawrence (Georgetown University), “Darkened Domesticity: The Sturgis Sisters in Dialogue with Emersonian Poetics”

Session Two

Daniela Daniele (University of Udine, Italy), “Were Conversations a Female Genre? Exploring Bronson and Louisa May Alcott’s Dialogic Style”

Alice de Galzain (University of Edinburgh), “Rewriting the Life of an ‘Ultra-Radical’: Ralph Waldo Emerson on Margaret Fuller in *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*”

Tiffany Wayne (Independent Scholar), “Woman Conversing: Feminine Philosophers at the Concord School of Philosophy”

Jennifer Daly (Drew University), “Let It Be Known: Fuller’s Voice in Emerson’s Work on Women’s Rights”

From the editor . . .

“...but the editor’s room, and who is in it, I did not see, though I shared the curiosity of mankind respecting it.”

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson, English Traits (1856)*

Like Emerson and his contemporaries, I too am curious about this elusive creature, known proverbially as the editor, the one who brings forth. And now, by some miraculous accident of fate, I find myself transformed into such a rare chimera. I pray I will not be, as Ambrose Bierce claims so many editors are, “a severely virtuous censor,” but rather a humble servant of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, one who reports on its business, its advances, its rising scholars, and its public endeavors.

It’s an interesting and exciting time to be taking up the *Emerson Society Papers’* editorship. The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society is approaching its 30 year anniversary. In that time, *Emerson Society Papers* has reported on events and conferences, emergent scholarship, new publications, and the roles Emerson’s life and work has played in the classroom and in the wider world. I hope to continue these traditions as well as innovate some new directions. One thing I am certain of is that in order to be an effective editor I will need fresh copy to edit. So, send me your thoughts, your ideas, your musings about all things Emerson related. >>>

Recent editors have had great success with the “Instruction and Provocation” articles that offer new ideas about how to get students to engage with Emerson’s writings or how Emerson’s ideas might speak to our current social, technological, and political situations. There have been recent trends toward thinking about Emerson from a global point of view, and I would like to encourage more essays from that methodological perspective. The “My Emerson” essays offer more intimate and informal meditations about how the sage of Concord has affected our lives differently, and I hope people will continue to feel compelled to share their experiences with their fellow readers. In keeping with the notes and queries style of the earlier issues in mind, I hope that the pages of *ESP* might also be the kind of venue for graduate students with good ideas who need an early publication or mid-career scholars who have material that’s interesting but did not quite make the cut for a longer article or book chap-

ter. Emerson’s metaphor of the transparent eyeball reminds us that we are all capable of discovering marvelous insights through a careful consideration of the quotidian. So tell your colleagues, tell your friends, tell your family, tell anyone who’s interested in and working on Emerson that we want to hear from them and support their work.

I would like to thank Derek Pacheco, the previous *Emerson Society Papers* editor, for showing me the ropes and helping me transition into the role; I thank Wes Mott for reaching out to offer advice and institutional memory; and, more importantly, many hardy thanks to Peggy Isaacson, whose alacrity for publishing and design has been and continues to be an invaluable service to the Society and whose patience and magnanimity have already made this novice feel welcome in spite of his naïveté. Most importantly, I’d like to thank all of you who support the Society.

—Michael C. Weisenburg

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

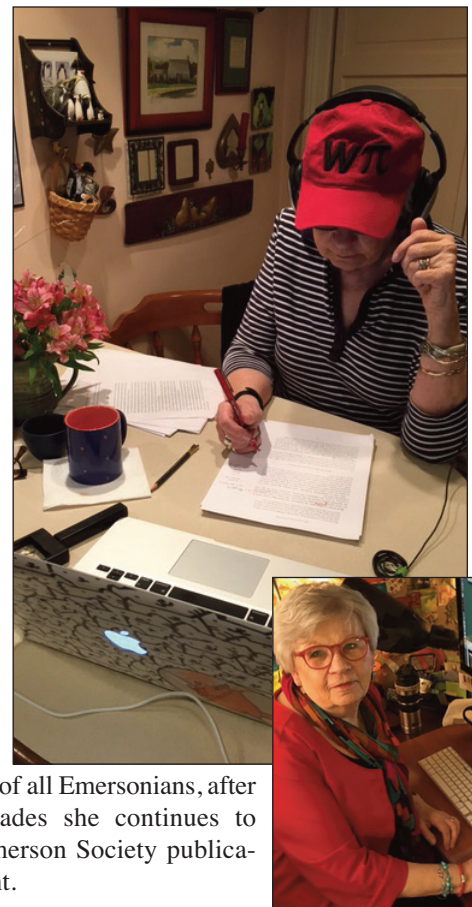
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whose significance steadily grew. “Peggy’s talents and aspirations,” Dorsey noted, “went beyond newsletter editing. She was also a budding graphic designer. In time she was designing brochures, invitations, department newsletters, posters, and myriad other printed pieces. Her skills expanded and deepened as the tools of her trade transformed from galleys, boards, and waxes to digital design, photo editing, and illustration tools.”

Peggy’s “uncommon talent for organization and a remarkable knack for bringing order out of chaos,” Dorsey observed, led to her being given responsibility for printed programs for Commencement, Baccalaureate, Project Presentation Day, and other important annual events, and for sections of campus newsletters, the alumni magazine *WPI Journal*, “and even the campus phone directory, always with accuracy that can only come from being picky, persnickety, and perfectionistic.” Known as WPI’s “proofreader supreme,” Peggy created the university’s official editorial style guide, earning her what Dorsey terms “the informal titles of WPI Style Maven, Grammar Guru, and Punctuation Tsarina.”

Known within her broad circle of colleagues and friends for her kindness and compassion, Peggy frequently works with students. Several years ago, she was elected to the WPI senior honor society Skull, a reflection of great respect as well as warm admiration. Decades of *ESP* student editorial assistants too have learned editorial and production skills from Peggy’s example and her patient tutelage.

If Emerson were to widen the genders and the fields of endeavor embodied in his *Representative Men*, Peggy Isaacson surely would be the subject of his chapter “Isaacson, or the Designer, Editor, and Production Guru.” With this Spring 2019 issue of *ESP*, Peggy already has begun working collegially with our newsletter’s sixth editor, Michael Weisenburg, of the University of South Carolina. With the gratitude of all Emersonians, after almost three decades she continues to ensure that all Emerson Society publications are fit to print.

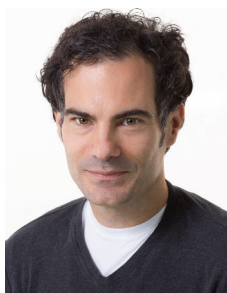


—Wes Mott is professor of English, emeritus, at WPI

EMERGING SCHOLARSHIP

Roger Sedarat

Subvention Award Winner



Receiving the subvention award from the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society in 2018 offered me much needed practical as well as moral support toward the publication of my book, *Emerson in Iran: the American Appropriation of Persian Poetry* (forthcoming with SUNY Press, June, 2019).

That fellow Emerson scholars deemed my manuscript worthy of this honor proved especially validating during a somewhat unusual and rather challenging time. The same

week that I received notice of the award, I also learned that the press with which I had secured a contract (Dartmouth College/UPNE) was closing. Knowing that others believed in my project, I queried other presses with a newfound confidence, able to heed Emerson's admonition to "Trust thyself."

Now close to publication with my current press, I'm teaching the most demanding class schedule of my entire career as well as advising multiple graduate students, all during a semester when I'm up for promotion. Though grateful to have passed through the copy editing stage over winter break, my many professional obligations, along with family responsibilities, leave me almost no time to attend to publication. I am therefore quite grateful that I can use this generous subvention to hire a highly recommended indexer. Free from that extra labor, I also find myself able to better strategize the promotion of this book and to apply for a fellowship from the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at the University of Mainz in Germany, which I just received for 2020.

To introduce my forthcoming book, I conclude with this brief description: *Emerson in Iran: the American Appropriation of Persian Poetry* offers the first full-length study of Persian influence in the work of the seminal American poet, philosopher, and translator. Recently Lawrence Buell, partly responding to the scholarship of Wai Chee Dimock, has called for moving the discussion of Persian verse as an influence upon Emerson "from the edges of discussion" and more toward "the center." Quite tellingly, Paul Kane, in his comparative study of Hafez and Emerson, has expressed doubt about so positioning Emerson's engagement with Persian poetry, remarking, "I'm not convinced there is a center, or at least a stable one." Seeking to reconcile such contradictory views, this book tracks the influence of Persian verse in Emerson's disorienting rhetoric, which through frequent self-displacement subtly accommodates the vision and consequently the identities of the Persian Sufi poets. A sustained examination of a still relatively overlooked foreign influence on Emerson's rhetorical practices shows how generative Persian poetry becomes for America in the nineteenth century, and how such formative effects extend into contemporary English poetry and verse translation.

¹ Dimock, Wai Chee. *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003.

² Buell, Lawrence. *Emerson*. Cambridge: Belknap, 2003. 151.

³ Kane, Paul. "Emerson and Hafiz: The Figure of the Religious Poet". *Religion and Literature*. 41:1 (2009 Spring), 111-139. 134.

Roger Sedarat is Associate Professor of English as Queens College.

Birgit Capelle

On researching at the Concord Free Public Library



In "Circles," Emerson speaks of ideas as inspirational sparks that set our thoughts and actions in motion, becoming centers around which our individual worlds and cultures concentrically evolve. For me, such catalyst ideas could be found at the international conference "Transcendentalist Intersections: Literature, Philosophy, Religion," which took place at the University of Heidelberg in Germany in July, 2018. For many years, I have been doing research on American

Transcendentalism at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, where I wrote my dissertation, *TIME in American and East Asian Thinking: A Comparative Study of Temporality in American Transcendentalism, Pragmatism, and (Zen) Buddhist Thought* (Winter-Verlag, 2011), and where I am now a postdoctoral researcher. My approach is transcultural and comparative (North America and Asia). At the Heidelberg conference (sponsored by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, the Margaret Fuller Society, and the Heidelberg Center for American Studies), I was given the rare opportunity to meet and talk with numerous renowned scholars of Transcendentalism from different continents, some of whom pursue a similar transcultural approach in their work.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society kindly agreed to serve as the supporting institution for my short but intense, three-day research trip to Concord, Massachusetts, in September. The impetus for the trip was my habilitation project, which is a critical comparison of autobiographical texts from North America, Europe, and Asia from the 17th to the 20th centuries. In this book I explore the spiritual crises that inspired writers from diverse cultural backgrounds and I examine how these writers, from three different continents, each contributed to the rise of modernity. I argue that, starting in the 17th century and in conjunction with cultural globalization, writers began to question established religious and philosophical paradigms, bringing together seemingly incompatible, culturally distinct world views and systems of belief. With the research I carried out in Concord, I was able to revise and substantiate some of my claims. I was given the opportunity to view typescripts of Emerson's manuscript journal volumes at the Concord Free Public Library. Jeffrey S. Cramer, Curator of Collections at the Walden Woods Project's Thoreau Institute Library, made it possible for me to explore the various folders of the comprehensive Walter Harding Collection of scholarly publications and popular articles on Thoreau and Asia.

A highlight of the trip, and an especially rewarding and insightful experience, was flipping through Thoreau's 1855 English edition of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which he had received from his friend Thomas Chalmers while on abroad the same year, at Concord Museum, and talking with the curator about the museum's current and forthcoming Emerson-related projects. I returned from my visit to Concord with invaluable findings and experience, which will enhance my book chapter on 19th-century spiritual autobiographical writing from America. I would like to thank the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society once again, in particular Daniel S. Malachuk (President), for their support and trust in my current project, *Spiritual Crises in Autobiographical Texts: A Study of Global Parallels and Convergences in 17th through 20th Century Life Writings from America, Europe, and Asia*.

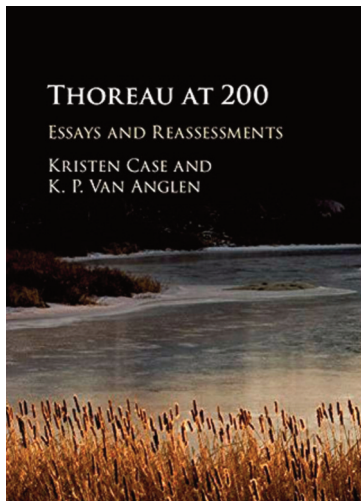
Birgit Capelle is a postdoctoral lecturer at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf.

Reviews

THOREAU AT 200: ESSAYS AND REASSESSMENTS. Kristen Case and Kevin P. Van Anglen, editors. Cambridge University Press, 2016, xxii + 279 pp. \$105.00 hardback.

This collection of essays critically engages what is most relevant today in Thoreauvian scholarship. Sixteen essays divided into four parts—Thoreauvian Materialism(s), The Local Context, The Global Context, and Thoreauvian Cosmos—deliver refreshing kaleidoscopic views of Thoreau in his intra-active human and nonhuman neighborhoods.

Case and Anglen situate readers in a comprehensive introduction that historicizes major pivots in Thoreauvian scholarship, from Thoreau's establishment in the literary canon in the



1940s to the revival of his natural history projects in 1990s ecocriticism. Case and Anglen provide useful modes of reading Thoreau as neighbor and as strategically double (2, 6), opening his writings to new and germane analyses that speak to present crises of climate change, police violence, and the disenfranchisement of minority voters. The essays, although variously structured, together consider Thoreau's thoughts on "the

relationship between humans and other species, about just responses to state violence, about the threat posed to human freedom by industrial capitalism, and about the essential relation between scientific 'facts' and poetic 'truths'" (1). Moreover, each essay pushes readers to live deliberately.

Part I: Thoreauvian Materialism(s) highlights crosscurrents between nineteenth- and twenty-first century materialisms. Lance Newman reminds us that Thoreau recognized environmental issues as matters of justice (19), which opens the floor for James S. Finley to bring Thoreau's abolitionist and environmental politics into conversation. Underlying Thoreau's critique of the Free Soil movement, Finley demonstrates, is his anti-capitalism and resistance to relying on state lines (41), as if borders could contain slavery and environmental destruction without contaminating the rest of the land. Susan E. Gallagher then takes up Thoreau's resistance to capitalism's "Invisible Hand" (45), addressing Thoreau's parallels to and departures from Karl Marx and Adam Smith. For instance, Gallagher compares Smith's work station model meant to resolve "the inefficiencies induced by the 'habit of sauntering'" (51) to Thoreau's treatment of sauntering as a form of art.

Part II: The Local Context returns us to Thoreau's Concord, beginning with the stories of three former slaves—Cato Lee,

Zilpah White, and Elisha Dugan—all former inhabitants of Concord brought together in Elise C. Lemire's tremendous archival work. Joshua David Bellin calls for reading American Indian scholarship on what Thoreau contributes (and what he doesn't) to American Indian peoples today (83), which radicalizes Laura Mielke's work in *Moving Encounters* (2008) in which she problematizes Thoreau as translator of American Indian heritage. Sandra Harbert Petrulionis contributes a discussion of Thoreau's complex reception history, providing a case study of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Thoreau's friend and neighbor, as a cautionary "case study in the construction of a literary reputation" (8). Concord's transition from a village bursting with new initiatives to a town "struggling with political divisions" and "economic decline" (104) is the focus of Robert A. Gross's essay illustrating Thoreau's firsthand exposure to the major political and economic concerns of his time.

Situating American literature within global networks, Part III: The Global Context addresses transnational exchange and climate change. Len Gougeon frames Thoreau's criticism of England and his defense of "the North's rugged democracy" (129) within American-Anglo tensions surrounding England's neutral stance in the Civil War. Paul Giles invites us to think of Thoreau's environmental world-approach macroscopically through deep time and indigenous cultures that undermine "a priori nationalistic categories" (138). Journeying across the Atlantic, Samantha C. Harvey and Rochelle Johnson analyze Thoreau's adaptations of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's dynamic philosophy of spirit, reading Thoreau's perception of man, nature, and spirit as "interrelated and integrated," like a musical chord (154, 157). Wai Chee Dimock confronts past and impending extinctions, presenting *Walden* as a sonic elegy to the bullfrogs whose voices have "waxed hoarse and solemnly grave" (172).

In Part IV: Thoreauvian Cosmos, Laura Dassow Walls examines Thoreau's competing interests as "mystic," "transcendentalist," and "natural philosopher" (189). Lawrence Buell ties together the consistencies in Thoreau's shifting political positions and "course corrections" in his lifetime, arguing for his "commitment to an ethics of disaffiliation" (200). Lawrence F. Rhu explores Stanley Cavell's indebtedness to Thoreau as a creator of worlds, tracing intersections between Thoreau's transcendentalism and a young Cavell's self-discoveries as a developing American philosopher. Alan D. Hodder assesses the twenty-first century turn to "the spiritual Thoreau," emphasizing Thoreau's place in the history of American religious thought. Robert D. Richardson uses William James's philosophy of religious experience to outline the rooster's crow in *Walden* and "Walking" as a reminder to live in the moment and to let go of earlier and older Revelations (244).

Thoreau at 200 works toward equity, justice, and sustainability by making connections between present and past conflicts resulting from political divisions, state violence, and industrial capitalism. Many essays in this volume confront problems in the canon and in the world head-on, paving the way for a more direct engagement with pressing political issues in

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REVIEWS

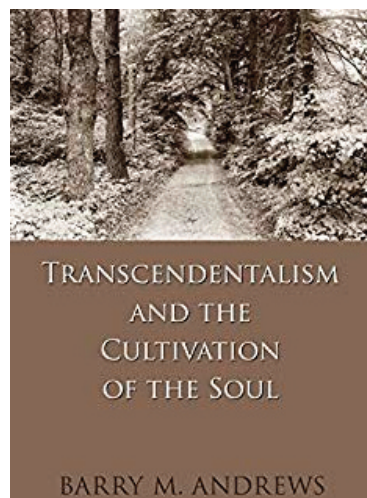
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future scholarship. This volume continues and updates important work done in previous collections, such as *Thoreauvian Modernities* (2013), and many of the essays offer a perfect complement to discussions of Thoreau in an undergraduate classroom—this reader has found that Wai Chee Dimock’s “Vanishing Sounds” especially resonates with undergraduates. *Thoreau at 200*, in its reassessments of Thoreau within local, global, and cosmic contexts, considers the many lessons we—and our students—have learned and have yet to learn from Thoreau and his neighbors.

—Christina Katopodis
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TRANSCENDENTALISM AND THE CULTIVATION OF THE SOUL. Barry M. Andrews. University of Massachusetts Press, 2017, 188 pp. \$26.95 paperback..

Almost forty years ago, Alasdair MacIntyre presented a stark choice: Nietzsche or Aristotle? The question became a shorthand for liberal and communitarian debates that are also familiar to Emerson scholars. Robert Bellah famously singled out Emerson as representative of a radical liberal individualism that undermines virtues necessary to sustain traditions and communities. Indeed, for Bellah, Nietzsche could easily be replaced by Emerson as a stand-in for liberalism’s failures in the American context. However, other careful readers such as David Robinson and Robert



Richardson have insisted that Emersonian self-reliance is more complex, that it too can be practiced as a virtue with benefits to the common good.

In *Transcendentalism and the Cultivation of the Soul*, Barry Andrews, a retired Unitarian minister, draws upon this second line of interpretation to argue that Transcendentalism when defined primarily as a religious movement can help to revive and sustain the religious left as a robust tradition once again. Hence, the purpose of the book is not so much an intervention in literary history and criticism, but an attempt “to reclaim and interpret [Transcendentalists] for contemporary audiences” (146). Though published by a university press, the book’s intended audience can include a wider but no less well-educated public interested in “not relics of the past but prophetic

voices with a spiritual message that speaks to us today” (6). What the Transcendentalists offer despite individual differences is “a rich spiritual tradition that is uniquely American, intellectually credible, and committed to human rights, environmentalism, and social justice” (146). Readers are encouraged to study them not just for their literary or historical value, but also for their hermeneutic claim upon us now. In that sense, the book can be compared to others written by public intellectuals, like Cornel West, who also see in Emerson and other literary figures crucial resources for today.

Although the chapters are not explicitly divided into separate sections, the book does have a discernable three-part structure, each consisting of four chapters. It begins by establishing Transcendentalism as a religious revolt against the perceived weaknesses of Unitarian rationalism in the face of philosophical skepticism and higher biblical criticism (chapters 1-4). Transcendentalists turned instead to mystical experiences that animated their attempts both to redeem everyday life through various spiritual disciplines such as time spent in nature, solitude, and conversation (chapters 5-8) and also to reform society through various efforts from abolition and women’s rights to education, sustainability, and free religious associations (chapters 9-12).

The underlying thread throughout the book seems to be a case for the necessary connection among these three sections. So religious experiences are cultivated through spiritual disciplines that are directed at not merely self-cultivation but also social transformation: “Their notion of self-culture thus links mysticism and social action [...] They fervently believed that individual transformation necessarily resulted in social change and that reform was ineffective without it” (4). That spiritual practices are key to sustaining ethical and political life seems to me the most important contribution of the book, though its aim is not to provide a theory about why religious experiences and disciplines are necessary for activists today. Useful as a theoretical companion might be Jeffrey Stout’s work on Emersonian pragmatism as a democratic tradition with its own virtues and exemplars. And while Andrews does cite Charles Taylor’s work on authenticity, readers interested in the more fundamental relationship between what Taylor calls moral sources and universal ideals will want to read further into his work on identity and secularity.

Nevertheless, Andrews’s principle goal to reclaim Transcendentalism for today indicates a disjunction between Emerson and Nietzsche in a way that would allow us to return to Transcendentalists with what Rita Felski has called a post-critical openness. Andrews is not blind to the historical failures of Transcendental reforms, but he insists their practices can still be relevant to “many Americans [who] are experiencing a hunger for an inner life of greater richness and depth, abandoning the exclusive claims and moral correctness of conservative Christianity in search of new sources of inspiration” (3).

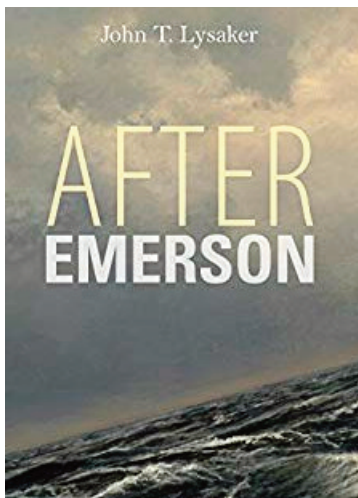
These pastoral attempts to bridge past and present can sometimes be awkward: the Romantic distinction between Reason and Understanding anticipates modern notions about the right and left hemispheres of the brain (13-14); Thoreau’s un-

certain career prospects after graduating from college is like “so many young people then and now” (44); and what would “Emerson make of the fact that so many people today, walking outside, never look up from their smartphones?” (54). Perhaps such observations are necessary to help contemporary readers see a connection to Transcendentalists as a spiritual resource for today. If there are indeed religious liberals and spiritual seekers looking for a rich tradition to inspire deeper connections to nature and enduring convictions about social reforms, then Andrews provides a useful guide on how to re-dig those wells of revival.

—Tae Sung
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AFTER EMERSON. John T. Lysaker. Indiana University Press, 2017, xiv + 182 pp. \$28.00 paperback.

A common prejudice among Anglophone philosophers, less prevalent today than fifty years ago, is that the peregrinations of American thinkers in the tradition of Emerson betray a rambling mind that is pre-philosophical, fuzzy-headed, undisciplined and unreliable. Readers of *ESP* will have heard



of, or studied, Charles Lysaker’s 2008 book, *Emerson and Self-Culture*. There, the focus was Emerson, through and through, and Emerson emerges as anything but fuzzy-headed. In his new book, Lysaker moves on, as if Emerson has sparked a conversation that quickly morphs into discussions far from Concord, Transcendentalism, or Yankee individualism. The tone is exploratory and open to

the new. Lysaker disrupts the “research-model” of philosophical writing: *After Emerson* is not a research-report on what has transpired since Emerson. We jump onto a moving train. We have come to appreciate this sort of beginning and exploratory tone in Emerson and Thoreau, in William James and Stanley Cavell. Their books, like Lysaker’s present one, are not the outcome of research projects, with clearly defined beginnings and endings, following standard procedures for moving from start to finish.

A virtue of Lysaker’s venture is to complicate our sense of apparently simple words or markers like “American,” “self,” or “beginning.” It’s clear immediately that “American Philosophy of The Self, starting with Emerson” is not his theme. This is evident because he immediately problematizes—not whimsically but seriously—each of the words in that proposed title:

“beginning,” “self,” and “American.” “Philosophy” becomes problematized, too.

You might think that “American” in “American philosophy” means whatever is taught in philosophy classes in the United States of America. But Zen and Sartre are taught in the states and neither qualifies as “American” or “American philosophy.” We now know that Nietzsche is heavily indebted to Emerson, lifting ideas and paragraphs—usually without attribution. Does that make Nietzsche, philosophically, of American descent? Or is Emerson thereby proto-German?

“‘American’ must be taken as a polyphonic, dialectical image in which myriad differences and struggles, within and without, are allowed to breathe” (55). Lysaker reflects on the micro-strands of “America” that he’d just as soon disown (its embrace of slavery, for instance). In his refusals he’s like Colin Kaepernick, the NFL quarterback, who refused to salute during the national anthem in protest of racism and police shootings. The American President calls the American Kaepernick un-American. Lysaker would not. He embraces a multivalent sense of “American” that would allow Kaepernick to be a good American while disowning shameful American practices as Unamerican. Lysaker confesses that some form of allegiance to “America” is inevitable for him—perhaps he can embrace “an America to come” (55).

Lysaker wants to trace select threads in philosophy as it has evolved in the last 150 years. He’s interested in much more than American philosophy and in much less than the broad sweep of philosophy. He might have titled his book “Euro-American Philosophy of Self since Nietzsche,” which leaves a place for Foucault as well as for William James, Cavell or Damasio. Lysaker is less interested in a line of descent from Emerson forward than in what it means for philosophical positions to have a beginning and a line of descent. And he’s interested in what it means for a philosophy or philosopher to be American. Was W. V. O. Quine an American philosopher from Ohio—or an American ventriloquizing European Trends? And what does it mean to say that American philosophy has a beginning? Why start with Emerson rather than Jonathan Edwards, Thoreau, or Thomas Jefferson?

If we switch from the polymorphous perversity of “American” to that of “Self” we have similar conundrums. Do we begin with Ryle’s “Systematic Elusiveness of the ‘I,’” with Descartes’ cogito, with Plato’s soul, or with a “carnavalesque sublime” self one finds in Bakhtin or Kierkegaard? Lysaker is at home suggesting sweeping trends in the philosophy of selfhood since Emerson. And he can be surgically analytical, as when he describes his rejection of an “atomistic center of self-experience” (72). There is no such thing, despite our need for identity cards for airports, driver’s licenses, and tax returns. Each of these requires a fixed, atomistically discrete identity for which we claim ownership. But the “I” of passport checks is not the “I” who sings in blackface on stage with Leontyne Price in *Aida* or the “I” facing down a bear in Yosemite.

In place of a single center of identity, Lysaker proposes “the 4P’s” of presence to myself. Such selfhood, or

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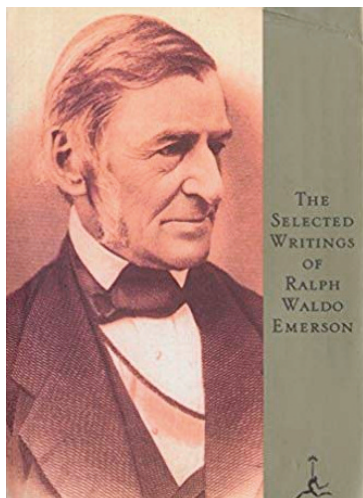
self-awareness, is 1) positioned, 2) purposive, 3) partial, and 4) possibilized. “Knowing this provides us with points (or sites) of self-knowledge [and] meaning. Purposive reflexive life becomes more salient when its course is mapped at all four points” (72). There is no one philosopher who serves as a guiding light. Emerson gives Lysaker one sort of handhold and Nietzsche another; James provides one and Dewey, another. And the handholds are not only for us. It’s clear Lysaker is inching his way over a rockface or through rough and unstable terrain.

Each chapter is provocative and defies easy summary. To read Lysaker—and the book is worth reading slowly—is to know one is learning almost by osmosis. A summary of his itinerary or results is not to be found, and to seek to construct one misses the point. In place of an itinerary or summary one awakens to bafflement not unlike awakening to the infinite disruptions, attractions, and chaos of a teeming street market in Goa. One needs time to acclimate. One is stirred. But there is no abiding lesson to extract, other than the recommendation to dive in, and, in a sense, to enjoy. As Emerson describes metaphysics, “Tis full of paradoxes. It is always new. Tis perpetually running into poetry” (qtd. in Lysaker 143).

Dwelling in the enigmas of “America” “Self” or “Beginnings”—not to mention “Emerson,” “Nietzsche,” or “Philosophy”—leaves us with the sense that matters are more complex and elusive than we could ever have thought. If philosophy time and again verges on poetry, as Emerson suggests, that’s acceptable, for we should know by now that philosophy not only begins in wonder but also ends there.

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Syracuse University

SELECTED WRITINGS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. Robert D. Habich, editor. Broadview Press, 2017, 408 pp. \$19.95 paperback.



Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson is a fresh and welcome collection of Emerson’s works carefully contextualized not only by Habich’s biographical and critical introduction, but also by well-chosen selections from Emerson’s contemporaries. It is especially well-suited for teaching, framed as it is in within Emerson’s own vision of education as best serving us when it

“aim[s] not to drill, but to create,” when it ignites thinking rather than encourages bookworms (CW 1:58). Habich’s approach invites dialogic reading, the disciplined “creative reading” Emerson himself called for in “The American Scholar” (CW 1:58). Instead of an iconic Emerson hovering philosophically and spiritually above the confusing and conflicting demands of everyday life, Habich depicts a worldly Emerson in the thick of “relationships, heartbreak, identity crises, vocational choices, moral decisions, friendships, family, and finances” (11), circumstances that require flexibility, risk-taking, and the capacity to change one’s mind. However, as Habich points out near the end of his introduction, despite the “proliferation of newly edited Emerson texts from the 1960s onward” produced from a stunning diversity of theoretical frameworks, “a persistent roadblock to understanding Emerson” remains: “the charge ... that he is inconsistent” (30). The irony of Emerson’s success both then and now is the expectation of a fixed Emersonianism that is distinctly at odds with Emerson’s own trust in “whim” and abhorrence of “foolish consistency” (CW 2:30, 33). A signature contribution of Habich’s introduction is to reframe readers’ expectations from absorbing conclusions about the meaning and conduct of life to experiencing the transformative process of thinking—both Emerson’s and their own. As Habich writes, “Readers who expect Emerson to tell us *what* to think might consider whether he is more concerned with modeling *how* to think” (31).

Habich’s introductory narrative of Emerson’s life, career, and celebrity foregrounds his recommendation of Emerson as “a performer, acting out or impersonating various states of mind ... something of a playwright whose created narrators act out the struggle to think through and control their lives” (32-33). Habich thus sets the texts he has selected into play, unmooring Emerson’s “narrators” from the status of “surrogates for Emerson” and deploying them as “created personae whose thinking provokes” our “participation” (33).

At just over 400 pages, Habich’s selection includes fewer of Emerson’s texts than others (e.g., *The Portable Emerson* edited by Jeffrey Cramer, Penguin, 2014; edition of; *Selected Writings* edited by William H. Gilman, New American Library, 1965, 2003; *Essential Writings* edited by Brooks Atkinson, Modern Library, 2000; or the 2001 Norton critical edition, *Emerson’s Prose and Poetry* edited by Joel Porte and Sandra Morris). Nevertheless, Habich’s prose selection reflects the span of Emerson’s post-ministerial professional life from *Nature* (1836) to passages from the 1876 essay “Immortality.” Habich also includes the rarely anthologized “Old Age” (1862) in which we read Emerson reflecting not on transcendental epiphanies or the “infinite of the private man” (*JMN* 7:342), but on the ordinary inconveniences, assumptions, and compensations of aging. Habich includes poetry from “Concord Hymn” (1837) to “Terminus” (1867). Unlike Cramer, whose source in almost all cases is the *Complete Works* edited by Emerson’s son Edward (Houghton Mifflin, 1903-4), Habich, following the editorial principle of the modern editors of the standard edition,

the 10 volume *Collected Works*, uses the texts published under Emerson's supervision, specifically "the first published edition of each selection" in order "to present each ... as it existed at the moment of greatest impact" as first readers encountered it (42).

As additional real-time context, Habich provides three appendices—Transcendentalism, The Miracles Controversy, and Contemporary Writers on Emerson—consisting of excerpts from writings by Emerson's contemporaries, thus situating him through his fellow writers' words in public conversations and controversies. This context is an innovative and inclusive alternative to using excerpts from Emerson's journals and letters for context as many collections do. While it is impossible to strip away public and scholarly constructions of Emerson, or even Emerson's own conceptions of himself, and somehow get at Emerson *qua* Emerson, as Habich states in his brief note on the texts he aims to preserve the initial "conversation between readers and writer in their original culture of letters" (42).

Twelve illustrations, including images of the home where Emerson married Lidian, the Harvard Divinity School students' 1838 invitation, Emerson with family, and an 1839 engraving of Concord Square (paired with "Concord Hymn") add further to

appreciating the materiality of Emerson's life and introduce readers to the rich world of archival materials. The cover photograph is of a path in the woods, appropriate to Emerson's nearly daily habit. Habich is a restrained editor, deliberately keeping editorial "intrusions" minimal with succinct headnotes and footnotes. I particularly like his footnoted cross-references which not only link texts for readers, but also model participatory reading. The topical bibliography at the end of the book is curated to encourage and not overwhelm.

The guiding focus of Habich's selection and editorial approach is "free[ing]" Emerson from "the onerous and unwelcome burden of teaching us the meaning of life ... to provoke us into considering our own 'relation to the universe'" (33), that is, to return readers of Emerson, quickened by participatory, creative reading, to a sense that the world and their relation to it are not fixed but full of possibility and choice. Habich's edition thus not only introduces Emerson's aims and style, but also broadly invites active engagement.

—Susan Dunston
New Mexico Tech

The American Mythology of Individualism: Emerson, Ayn Rand, and the Romantic Child

KRISSIE WEST, PhD
UNIVERSITY OF READING, UK

Parallels abound between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Ayn Rand's philosophies of American individualism. Roxanne J. Fand comments: "I could not dismiss Ayn Rand out of hand, as many of my literary and leftist friends did, because Rand's novels resonated with Emerson's 'Self-Reliance', which had inspired my youth." According to Fand, there is an assumption that being 'leftist' should result in a dismissal of Rand, but that taking inspiration from Emerson might trouble such a desire. This quote also links Rand and Emerson through a reading of "Self Reliance," as both essay and concept that resonates with Rand's work. Rand both denies and acknowledges this link between Emerson's philosophy and her own: in "Philosophy: Who Needs It?" Rand discusses people who claim never to have been influenced by philosophy. She argues: "They might say: 'Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.' They got it from a very little mind, Emerson." Although much has been argued about whether

Rand misquotes or misrepresents Emerson here, this is interesting primarily because Rand presents Emerson's views here as contrary to her own; however, in doing so, in her need for denial and repudiation, she also both creates and acknowledges a link between Emerson's philosophy and her own.

Neither of these writers are particularly known for their work on childhood, yet both engage with Emerson's question in his 1836 work, *Nature*, of "What is a child?" repeatedly across the body of their work. In much of Emerson's writing, the child is constructed in its relation to an ideal manhood; not as an exploration of childhood, but as an illustration of what man could or should be. In "Domestic Life," though, Emerson considers the child in the domestic environment and paints a picture of its development, while still considering that relationship between the adult and the child.

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West Essay

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The section I want to look at from early in “Domestic Life” speaks to constructions of the self, and to Rand’s *The Romantic Manifesto* and *Atlas Shrugged* in particular. It reads:

Carry him out of doors,—he is overpowered by the light and by the extent of natural objects, and is silent. Then presently begins his use of his fingers, and he studies power, the lesson of his race. First it appears in no great harm, in architectural tastes. Out of blocks, thread-spools, cards and checkers, he will build his pyramid with the gravity of Palladio. With an acoustic apparatus of whistle and rattle he explores the laws of sound. But chiefly, like his senior countrymen, the young American studies new and speedier modes of transportation. Mistrusting the cunning of his small legs, he wishes to ride on the necks and shoulders of all flesh.

The assumption here is that the male-gendered child will be inside, located within a domestic environment constructed in terms of an interiority, in opposition to the “out of doors” to which the child is unable to find his own way but to which he must be brought. The impact of this adult intervention is an overpowering not by the adult but by “natural objects,” that removes the child’s voice to leave him “silent.” However, the adult narrator insists that the child “is silent” and “is overpowered,” both predicting and constructing the results of the carrying “out of doors” that the narrator itself has directed. At this point, all act upon the child, including both adults and nature, and the narrator that knows how the child will, and does, respond.

However, the development of the child stems directly from this challenging of his power, as a consequence of being “overpowered by the light and by the extent of natural objects.” He has been removed from the domestic environment by the adult to let nature precipitate a new beginning and to reconfigure a troubled compensatory relationship with adults that has already been established earlier in the essay. This act of nature is also constructed in terms of a power that eclipses the power of both child and adult; yet the “overpower[ing]” is both of, and beyond, nature in that it is by the “extent of natural objects,” as well as “the light”—both singular and infinite—that the child is overpowered.

This new beginning, occasioned by the moment of change, at first appears out of the child’s control: “Then presently begins his use of his fingers,” an act constructed as outside of intent in that the child may use his fingers, but he does not take the decision to do so; it happens, rather, despite himself. However, the construction of the child then

shifts to a control over his own environment and himself. The child is the agent of his own education: “he studies” power and transportation, “he explores the laws of sound”. In doing so, he aligns himself with the adult world, but not in the sense of all adults or of a representative man necessarily: in studying power he is studying “the lesson of his race” and, crucially, in his studies, his building, and his explorations as an independent being, he becomes “like his senior countrymen” and achieves the status of “young American”. This is a development that is less about self than it is defined and confined by racial status, by its Americanism.

Emerson claims that the child’s studies of power at “[f]irst [...] appears in no great harm in architectural tastes.” Building, then, is an acceptable study of power—if qualified somewhat by “no great harm”—particularly in the future building of the pyramid, although in building “his pyramid,” it might also be argued that the child is building his own tomb. However, the inference is that not all studies are as harmless as this, and that learning “the lesson of his race” may be harmful in and of itself to the growing child, and potentially to others.

The child here also converts what is constructed as play to study, and it is through play that the child has already become independent, in his interactions with his own world that “he will build” and that he becomes “like his senior countrymen.” The child, at this point, is gendered as male and located geographically, by birth and also by belonging or even ownership—“his race”—as American. This claim to geography is not just in terms of origin, however, but of study: for the American both “senior” and “young,” the subject of study is “new and speedier modes of transportation;” in reading *Atlas Shrugged*, the claim to an American selfhood and Rand’s theory of Objectivism is rooted in the fictional Taggart Transcontinental, the drive to “speedier ... transportation,” and the forces that ultimately undermine it. I would argue that here, Emerson is reading America via the child, designating the child as symptomatic of an American desire or need to learn that supersedes both youth and age, appearing to evolve from and with the country itself.

However, a darker analysis of childhood surfaces here too, with the chilling assertion that the child “wishes to ride on the necks and shoulders of all flesh,” which I read as a possible allusion to slavery, as well as to the power of the child over the adult; and the claim that this is a result of the child “[m]istrusting the cunning of his small legs,” constructing both another reading of the child’s awareness of himself, and an instance of the language of witchcraft in “cunning,” a language that runs throughout this passage. It could also be read, however, in “[m]istrusting the cunning” of his legs that the child is also constructed here as conscious of the witchcraft in himself and that the “cunning,” at least

Reading this passage as a construction of the Romantic child is, of course, not without its problems. However, it speaks to some of the issues raised by Rand in the following passages and to constructions of childhood in *Atlas Shrugged*. For this Emersonian child is one whose interactions with adults are frequently couched in terms of a power balance. From the “perfection of the Providence for childhood” supplied by the parents in the first line of this essay, to “[t]he household is the home of the man as well as the child,” with which assertion the child—if problematically—disappears from this essay in terms of its focus, the child’s “self-reliance,” in Emersonian terms, begins with his studies of power, at first over aspects of his own body but also over the built environment, which both precedes and is constructed by the child. The particularly American construct of transport, with which this passage largely concerns itself, much as it might suggest the railway industry in *Atlas Shrugged*, particularly the building of the John Galt line and Dagny Taggart’s first trip, is also about the self: while the child may be mimicking or following in the footsteps of his seniors, his desire for transport is also about the self: “he wishes to ride,” but to ride on adults; to hijack them for the fulfilment of his own needs and desires.

This power over adults can be read at other points in the essay: Emerson frequently returns to the language of witchcraft—“charming ... bewitching ... cunning”—to describe the child’s relationship with the adult. The claim to the development of self in childhood, then, is always relational for this Emersonian child; selfhood can only be gained against, or through a dominance over, something that is always constructed as other. Therefore, although Emerson constructs this child in terms of a growing self-reliance, a movement away from the adults who provide his early care, the adults remain necessary both as examples of how to construct an American self—which also undermines the very claim to selfhood in that it is and can be raced in this way—but also as that which must be overcome to achieve the problematic selfhood that is constructed as the aim of a proper American child.

Romanticism, in Rand’s works, is concerned with portraying man as self-defining; not with man as he is, and/or as something outside of himself has determined he is or should be, but man as he might or ought to be. But this, of course, is problematic: the “ought” can only ever be situated outside of himself, either directly from those telling him what he ought to be, or via a self-knowledge that sees itself as lack but still sees a possibility beyond itself. Rand, like Emerson, considers the self-defined man via discussing the development of the child and its relationship with adults, primarily its parents, and she positions childhood as the site

of adult moral treason in the denial of its potential and pre-existing relationship with Romanticism. In this passage from her essay, “Art and Moral Treason,” introducing the child’s need for Romantic art to teach him to associate morality with pleasure, Rand argues:

In the translation of that ideal [of morality] into conscious, philosophical terms and into his actual practice, a child needs intellectual assistance, or, at least, a chance to find his own way. In today’s culture, he is given neither. The battering which his precarious, unformed, barely glimpsed moral sense of life receives from parents, teachers, adult “authorities” and little second-handers goons of his own generation, is so intense and so evil that only the toughest hero can withstand it.

In this passage, Rand too considers the relationship between child and adult as part of the child’s development. In this sense, Rand’s child is perhaps more representative than Emerson’s in that he (as with Emerson, her child is gendered male) is situated within “today’s culture” rather than the more confined domestic space; however, as Emerson’s child must be brought outdoors, so Rand’s must translate the ideal into a consciousness that is in and of language, and into “his actual practice;” although an actuality and a practice that precede and do not appear to be troubled by this need for translation. Both Rand’s and Emerson’s children need help from adults to realise their potential and their needs.

However, the “need” of Rand’s child is qualified as an either/or: “a child needs intellectual assistance, or, at least, a chance to find his own way.” As such the adult/child relationship constructed by “assistance” is only ever an option, and one that stands opposed to the “chance to find his own way.” The claim that ‘his own way’ is something that the child both needs to find—and is therefore both located outside of himself and already belongs to him, prior to any potential finding taking place—and that the finding of such is left to “chance,” but a “chance” that must be given, also troubles the status of “own” and therefore of selfhood in the developing child.

Despite Rand’s claims to the child’s needs, these, she believes, are not met: “In today’s culture, he is given neither.” This lack of fulfilment in the child’s need for translation is both temporal—it is “today’s” child who is so denied—and cultural. It is also specifically adult, at least in the first instance: “The battering which his precarious, unformed, barely glimpsed moral sense of life receives from parents, teachers, adult ‘authorities’.” This is more than denial: Rand claims an active, “evil,” “battering” of the child’s needs and of his “moral sense of life” from those grouped adults who stand in positions of authority over—

(Continued on page 14)

West Essay

(Continued from page 13)

and against—the child. This assault, she claims, “is so intense and so evil that only the toughest hero can withstand it.” Both this and the comment on “second-hander goons of his own generation” troubles the construction of the child in this passage in that this problematically representative child is now split: there are others of his generation who are, yet, not him; while only “the toughest hero”—which may or may not include this child—can withstand the adult onslaught against his developing sense of selfhood and the “barely glimpsed moral sense of life” that, in the claim to “barely glimpsed,” both precedes him and is separate to him.

The relationship between adult and child in this passage is both troubled and troubling: Rand’s child needs the intervention of an adult in its quest for self-development, but not of *this* adult; while the adult of her claim to “today” is invested in the child, is giving something, but not what the child needs or desires: the introduction to Romantic art. In fact, the adult is suppressing the child’s “precarious, unformed, barely glimpsed moral sense of life,” one that therefore pre-exists any exposure to Romantic art and is, Rand claims, the basis of his existence as a man, “a being of self-made soul.” The result of this is that the child “gives up” any attempt to shape his soul, “without knowing that what he is surrendering is morality.” Rand’s child is doomed by an interaction with adults that he can neither control nor escape; as such, the next generation of adults is similarly doomed.

In reading Emerson and Rand together, I would argue that, through a close reading of these constructions of childhood, the relationship between man and child, and their constructions of selfhood through that relationship, are quite different, despite the disturbing tenor of both passages. Each is concerned with the relationship between adult and child, particularly in terms of education and development of the child. However, Emerson’s child moves quickly from reliance upon adults to a form of self-reliance and self-fulfilment. This is not without its difficulties: the selfhood he moves towards is one that is always qualified by the example of adults who he appears to mimic or follow, and by the appeal to an American self. It is also a childhood that is concerned with power, and particularly power over adults, through language connected with the unlawful power of witchcraft. Yet Rand’s child, in comparison, needs adult intervention to self-realize (with all the difficulties that conveys), but only ever receives an education that she counts as violence and destruction, therefore splitting what might be read as a representative childhood into a childhood that is both observed and quantified by the narration that situates itself outside of childhood but also outside of the adults she

so reviles, and one that is constructed, again beneath this problematically-situated narration, as an ideal child, the child that should be but that never can be, at least “today;” a child that is therefore simultaneously absent and present.

In both cases, the adult-child relationship is toxic, but in gaining power over adults, Emerson’s child moves to a self-reliance that rejects the retrospective age, one that “builds the sepulchres of our fathers” as Emerson claims in *Nature*, and attempts to answer his question: “Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?” But Rand’s child—despite the hope of Romantic art and literature as the “major (and, today, his only) source of a *moral* sense of life” in “the crucial, formative years” of childhood and adolescence—is in trouble. Not only do the adults holding the power in his life deny him access to Romantic thought with a violence to crush any possibility from him, in the introduction to *The Romantic Manifesto*, Rand claims: “There is no Romantic movement today. If there is to be one in the art of the future, this book will have helped it to come into being.” The only help for Rand’s child, it seems then, is Rand herself.

Krissie West, PhD, is a sessional lecturer at the University of Reading in the UK. Her research focuses on Transcendentalism and childhood, particularly in the works of Emerson. She is also interested in constructions of the child as witch in New England literature, including Salem narratives and the works of Hawthorne and Emerson.

Notes

1. Roxanne J. Fand (2005) ‘Reading *The Fountainhead*: The Missing Self in Ayn Rand’s Ethical Individualism,’ *College English*, Vol. 71, No. 5 (May 2005), pp. 486-505; p. 487.
2. Ayn Rand (1982) ‘Philosophy: Who Needs It?’ (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill), pp. 4-5.
3. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1836) *Nature in Nature, Addresses and Lectures* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1892), pp. 7-80; p. 78.
4. Emerson (1859) ‘Domestic Life,’ *Society and Solitude* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1904), pp. 55-72; pp. 55-56.
5. Rand (1969) ‘Art and Moral Treason,’ *The Romantic Manifesto* (New York: Signet, 1971).
6. Rand, ‘Art and Moral Treason,’ p. 140.
7. Emerson, *Nature*, p. 9.
8. Rand, ‘Introduction,’ *The Romantic Manifesto*, p. v.

2018–2019 Barbara L. Packer Fellowship

MARK GALLAGHER
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

I am honored to be the recipient of this year's Barbara L. Packer Fellowship.

This past June, I spent a month in residence as the 2018–2019 Packer Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. There I discovered a wealth of materials pertaining to my dissertation, "A New Spirit of Truth: The Affective Transcendentalism of Peabody, Parker, Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau." I also had the privilege of being part of a community of friendly and supportive scholars working on a wide range of historical projects.

The Packer Fellowship has special significance for me. It was Professor Packer who convinced me—a former microbiologist and aspiring literary scholar—to move across the country to pursue graduate studies at UCLA. I would eventually take her seminar on Transcendentalism and find her mentorship in my first years as a graduate student to be

invaluable. While I had hoped she would have directed my dissertation, Professor Packer's advice and encouragement has sustained me over the years.

With the support of the Packer fellowship, I was able to complete work on two chapters of my dissertation—one on Elizabeth Palmer Peabody and another on Theodore Parker. Archival research is particularly important

for these two Transcendentalists because, compared to Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau, there has been relatively little written about them. Some of the specific materials I consulted include Peabody's manuscript letters and her 33-page journal of Margaret Fuller's "Conversations"; the correspondence, notebooks, and scrapbook of Theodore Parker; and the unpublished correspondence of Ellen Tucker Emerson. I also consulted a range of materials in book history that the AAS offers, including nineteenth-century

religious periodicals such as the *Christian Examiner*, *Christian Register*, and *Scriptural Interpreter*; Transcendentalist periodicals, such as *Specimens of Foreign Literature* and *The Harbinger*; moral instruction manuals; annuals and gift books. (On Saturdays, when the AAS was closed, I made trips to Boston and Cambridge to look at materials held by the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Houghton Library at Harvard University.)

The subject of my dissertation changed slightly prior to beginning my fellowship. My project had been focused on contextualizing my claims about Transcendental optimism within the cultures of sentiment, criticism, and religious liberalism in 1830s and 1840s. By the time I arrived at the AAS, however, I had moved away from an earlier emphasis on theories of affect and began to turn my attention toward a more formal analysis of the texts I was studying, describing what I call the affective style of Transcendentalism and how the Transcendentalists lay claim to moral truth. To this end I received some valuable advice and suggestions from some of my fellow AAS researchers. I am particularly grateful to Dawn Coleman, Samantha Harvey, and Sandro Jung for their collegiality. My thanks also to the helpful staff of the AAS, especially Nan Wolverton, Vince Golden, and Tom Knowles.

My fellowship period allowed me to complete a draft of my Peabody chapter, a portion of which I presented at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers Triennial Conference in Denver this past November. In addition, I found time to revise and resubmit an essay for publication and located a previously unrecorded review of Thoreau's *A Week* attributed to Octavius Brooks Frothingham.

I want to thank the members and officers of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society for their support. The Packer Fellowship is a unique and valuable opportunity for scholars working on Transcendentalism, one for which I am most grateful.

Mark Gallagher is a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at UCLA. His dissertation, "A New Spirit of Truth: The Affective Transcendentalism of Peabody, Parker, Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau," will be completed this year.

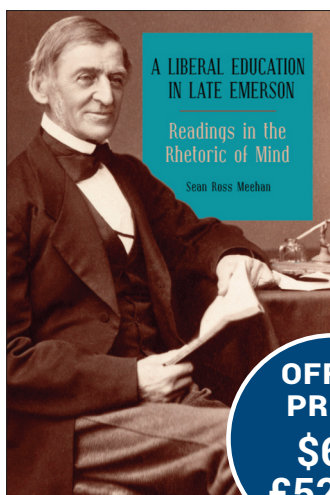




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"mind": first, his engagement with rhetoric, conceived as the organizing power of mind and, unconventionally, characterized by the trope "metonymy"; second, his public engagement with the ideals of liberal education and debates in higher education reform early in the period (1860-1910) that saw the emergence of the modern university; and third, his intellectual relation to significant figures from this age of educational transformation: Walt Whitman, William James, Harvard president Charles

W. Eliot, and W. E. B. Du Bois, Harvard's first African American PhD. Meehan argues that the late Emerson educates through the "rhetorical liberal arts," and he thereby rethinks Emerson's influence as rhetorical lessons in the traditional pedagogy and classical curriculum of the liberal arts college. Emerson's rhetoric of mind informs and complicates these lessons since the classical ideal of a general education in the common bonds of knowledge counters the emerging American university and its specialization of thought within isolated departments.

SEAN ROSS MEEHAN is Associate Professor of English and Director of Writing, Washington College, Maryland.

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