



*R.W.C.*

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Fall 2010

## EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

### Lawrence Buell Honored with 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award

At its annual meeting in San Francisco on May 29, 2010, the Emerson Society announced that the recipient of its 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award is Lawrence Buell.

Larry, the Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University, received his B.A. in 1961 from Princeton, and both his M.A. (1962) and Ph.D. (1966) from Cornell, where he wrote his dissertation on "Emerson: From Preacher to Poet" under the supervision of Jonathan Bishop. His first few articles established him as a sophisticated reader of poetry and prose—both religious and literary—and works such as "Unitarian Aesthetics and Emerson's Poet-Priest" (*AQ*, 1968), "Transcendentalist Catalogue Rhetoric: Vision versus Form" (*AL*, 1968), and "Reading Emerson for the Structures: The Coherence of the Essays" (*QJS*, 1972) have remained necessary readings through various shiftings of the critical winds.

His *Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance* (Cornell, 1973) was one of the books, like Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (whose subtitle is riffed by Larry's own), that instantly changes the way a period is viewed. Prior to *Literary Transcendentalism*, the best work on the movement had been done by historians and students of religion. Transcendentalism proved awkward for literary scholars to tackle, beyond the major works of Emerson and Thoreau, and Larry's book provided the first extended view of the writers that evaluated them as literary artists and attempted to discuss the genres in which they wrote.

In following years, Larry has published widely. His interest in American narrative led to his next books: an edition of *The Morgesons and Other Writings* by Elizabeth

Stoddard (Pennsylvania, 1984), which re-introduced her to the literary canon, and his magisterial *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1986), a meticulously researched historical, cultural, and social examination of the most influential literary region of the period.



Lawrence Buell at the Emerson House in Concord.

Later articles led to new areas of inquiry: "Henry Thoreau Enters the American Canon" (*New Essays on Walden*, 1992) continued Larry's studies of canon formation, and "Melville and the Question of American Decolonization" (*AL*, 1992) launched a series of studies of globalization. Most important, "The Thoreauvian

(Continued on page 15)



## 2010 EMERSON SOCIETY DONORS

Emerson Society members continue generously to join at various "patron" levels of membership. All donations above the \$10 annual regular membership go to support special programs of the Society. Dues categories are Life (\$500), Sustaining (\$50), Contributing (\$25), and Regular (\$10). Please send check payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) to Todd H. Richardson, Dept. of Literature and Languages, University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Odessa, TX 79762-0001.

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## EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society  
Published at Ball State University

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

Editor: Robert D. Habich  
Book Review Editor: Jennifer Gurley  
Editorial Assistant: Megan C. Zimmerman  
Design and Production: Peggy Isaacson

*Emerson Society Papers* is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are \$10 a year. Send checks for membership (calendar year) and back issues (\$5 each) to Todd H. Richardson, Department of Literature and Languages, University of Texas of the Permian Basin, Odessa, TX 79762-0001.

*ESP* welcomes notes and short articles (up to about 8 double-spaced, typed pages) on Emerson-related topics. Manuscripts are blind refereed. On matters of style, consult previous issues. We also solicit information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news of Emersonian scholars. Send manuscripts to the editor, Robert D. Habich, Department of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0460 or email [rhhabich@bsu.edu](mailto:rhhabich@bsu.edu).

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

## EMERSON SOCIETY OFFICERS

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## PROSPECTS.



## Classic Works, Now in Paperback

Two classic works by Emerson Society Life Members have recently been issued in paperback by the University of Georgia Press: *The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1843-1871*, volumes 1 and 2, edited by **Ronald A. Bosco** and **Joel Myerson**, and *Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform* by **Len Gougeon**. For details visit the University of Georgia Press at [www.ugapress.org](http://www.ugapress.org)

## Emerson Society Grad Student Travel Award

This award provides up to \$750 of travel support to present a paper in one of the Emerson Society panels at the American Literature Association annual meeting. Graduate students interested in applying should submit their abstracts by Dec. 20, 2010, to Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) and indicate their desire for consideration. See complete information about this and other Emerson Society awards elsewhere in this issue.

## American Literature Association Call for Proposals

The Emerson Society will once again sponsor two panels at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held in Boston from May 26–29, 2011. For information about the conference, see [www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2/](http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/ala2/). Members are encouraged to submit abstracts on the following topics:

### Panel I: Emerson and Creativity

Ralph Waldo Emerson's interests in creativity range widely from the universe's fluid volatility and life's series of surprises to his own whim and genius. The Emerson Society invites papers on any aspect of Emerson and creativity including inspiration, spontaneity, originality, nonconformity, experimentation, the connection between creativity and change, and the ethical, aesthetic, or political dimensions of creativity. Email 300-word abstracts to Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) by Dec. 20, 2010.

### Panel II: Emerson and the Economics of Authorship

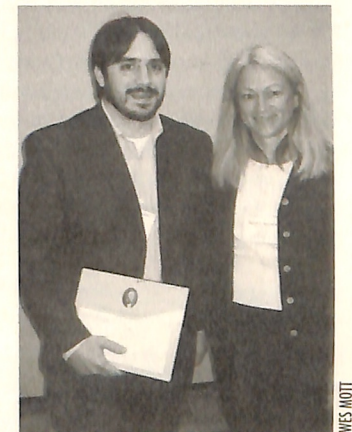
Emerson celebrated the "independence of solitude," but to what degree were his thoughts dependent on the literary market? The Emerson Society welcomes inquiries into the professional elements of Emerson's career, including the lecture circuit and lyceum culture, the oratorical roots of his essays and books, his relations with editors, publishers, reviewers, and readers, and the conjunction of his business interests with those of other writers. Email 300-word abstracts to Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) by Dec. 20, 2010.

## 2010 Emerson Society Award Winners

**Jim McAllen**, a staff member at Towson University in Maryland, won the Emerson Society's 2010 Pedagogy/Community Project Award. Jim shares this link to his online, multimedia presentation of "Self-Reliance": <http://tinyurl.com/25sxx3t>. The program, part of a projected series of six PowerPoint presentations, uses word, image, and sound to engage varied audiences. Jim has shared these presentations with high school and college students as well as community and church groups.

Our second award in 2010, in the Research Category, supports research by **Ashley Hetrick** of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Ms. Hetrick is studying Emerson's transatlantic journey in 1833 as part of her proposed dissertation on the materials of loss in early American writing and culture. She reports that funding from the Emerson Society allowed her to travel to New England to consult archival holdings at the Concord Free Public Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Houghton Library, Harvard, as well as touring the Emerson house as part of further work on Transcendentalists' construction and inhabitation of U.S. domestic space.

Recipient of the Society's 2010 Graduate Student Paper Award is **Carter Neal**, a Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University writing a dissertation on Emerson and friendship. The award supported Carter's presentation of his paper, "Considering Charles Loring Brace's Effort to Implement Self Reliance," at the American Literature Association meeting in San Francisco. See his abstract on page 10.



Neal, accepting his award from program chair Susan Dunston

## Thoreau Society Annual Gathering: Call for Proposals

The theme of next year's Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (Concord, Mass., July 7–10, 2011) is "Thoreau's Environmental Ethos and Its Relevance Today." The Emerson Society sponsors a program at the Annual Gathering; the topic for 2011 is "Emerson's Nature Writing." For a conversational panel on the relevance and usefulness of Emerson's nature writing today, the Emerson Society invites brief papers that identify and discuss Emerson's nature writings, particularly less familiar passages from the *Journals* and letters, that best represent his interests in nature, human nature, and natural history, as well as the dialogue between Emerson and Thoreau on these matters. Email 300-word proposals to Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) by Dec. 20, 2010.



## PROSPECTS

(Continued from page 3)

### Two Win Major NEH Grant

Hearty congratulations to **Noelle Baker** and **Sandra Harbert Petrulionis**, whose work on a scholarly, digital edition of the Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson, reported in the spring 2010 issue of *ESP*, has been awarded a prestigious Scholarly Editions grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the amount of \$230,000. In addition, the project has been designated an NEH "We the People" project and is being supported in part by funds the agency has set aside for this special initiative. The goal of the "We the People" initiative is to encourage and strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture through the support of projects that explore significant events and themes in our nation's history and culture and that advance knowledge of the principles that define America. The project is a collaboration with the Brown Women Writers Project (WWP) and will be published in its subscription database, Women Writers Online, a digital collection of early modern women's writing. The Almanacks are functioning as a pilot document for the WWP's recent commitment to develop procedures and Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) specifications to support collaborative editorial projects within the Women Writers Online collection, where they will reach an international audience at nearly 250 subscribing institutions.

### Sightings/Citings

**Joel Myerson** has spotted an Emersonian endorsement—maybe—in issue 9 of *WineBrix*, a newsletter of the USAirways Club. In an article on whole berry fermentation entitled "Fermenting to Get Noticed" (pp. 2-3) appears a quotation attributed to Emerson: "God loves fermentation just as dearly as he does vegetation." Not quite the bacchanalian he appears in the article, in context Emerson was actually positing the common sense of those who prepare meals against those dietary reformers who rode their particular hobby-horses to extremes, giving the example of those who insist upon eating only unleavened bread. "It was in vain urged by the housewife," Emerson wrote, "that God made yeast, as well as dough, and loves fermentation just as dearly as he loves vegetation." The quote appears in the first paragraph of "New England Reformers" (1844).

The Emerson home in Concord and its latest caretakers were showcased in a feature article in the Home and Garden section of the *New York Times* for September 15, 2010: <http://tinyurl.com/2fcmrat>. In "Keeping Mr. Emerson's House," Paige Williams points out how few caretakers the historic home has had, and how time-consuming the gardening and housekeeping tasks can be. It's a tradition that dates back to Lidian Emerson, herself a meticulous housekeeper. "I have a carpenter's eye — I know when anything is a hair's breadth off the right line," she said, according to her daughter Ellen. Thanks to members **Rick Delano**, **Bob Hudspeth**, and **Wes Mott**, as well as my Ball State colleague **Brian McNely**, who pointed the article out on the day it appeared.

### Words and Deeds

• **Rick (aka Sterling F.) Delano** has been co-directing a summer workshop on "Concord, Massachusetts: Transcendentalism and Social Reform in Antebellum America." The workshop, launched in 2006, is sponsored by the Community College Humanities Association (CCHA). It has been funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of its Landmarks of American History and Culture initiative. The program enables 50 faculty members from two-year colleges across the United States to spend a week in Concord (25 a week) working closely with several scholars-in-residence and visiting historical sites in and around Concord. The NEH recently notified Rick and his co-director Martha Holder (Wytheville Community College in Virginia) that the program has been funded again in 2011, for the fifth time.

Emerson Society members will recognize the names of the scholars-in-residence who participate in the workshop. **Robert Gross** provides the first evening welcome address, "Why Concord?" Workshop participants then spend mornings working with **Sandra Petrulionis**, whose seminar examines "Antislavery and Abolitionism in Antebellum America"; **Leslie Perrin Wilson**, who introduces participants to the extensive holdings in Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library; **Phyllis Cole**, who deals with "Transcendentalist Women"; and **John Matteson**, who focuses on the educational activities of Bronson and Louisa May Alcott. Participants also spend a full day with Rick himself, who reviews the contours of the Transcendentalist movement itself before he leads them on site visits to the Brook Farm community in West Roxbury, and to Fruitlands and the Shaker Village in Harvard.

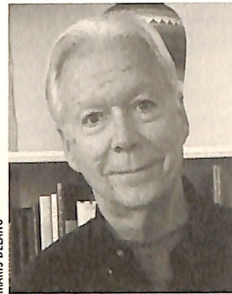
Along with the morning seminars, afternoon site visits are an integral part of the workshop experience. Participants enjoy private tours of the Emerson House, the Old Manse, the site of Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond, the School of Philosophy, and the Orchard House. Participants will be housed at the Colonial Inn for the week.

"It has been my great good fortune," Rick says, "to be able to work so closely with full-time and adjunct faculty from two-year colleges, who rarely receive the professional support that faculty at four-year colleges usually do. You couldn't ask for a more stimulating or eager audience!"

Additional information is available on two websites: [www.ccha-assoc.org](http://www.ccha-assoc.org) and [www.ccha-concord.org](http://www.ccha-concord.org).

• In August, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum was the setting for the world premier of *Nature: A Walking Play*, in which Ralph Waldo Emerson, the author of *Nature*, and Henry David Thoreau, the author of "Walking," are reunited in a mythic 21st century walk through nature. Created by **Tyson Forbes** and **Markell Kiefer** of TigerLion Arts, the play was performed outdoors in a beautiful, natural setting where the site of each scene was carefully selected to provide the ideal ambience for the performance.

Forbes, as Emerson, and **Samuel Elmore**, as Thoreau, are lifelong friends portraying the friendship of the authors and their love of nature. "All biography is autobiography," wrote Emerson, and in *Nature*, Forbes and Elmore express not only Emerson and Thoreau's love of the natural world, but their own as well. A



MARIS DELANO



descendent of Emerson, Forbes has long "imagined a play that could bring his spirit and teachings to a broader audience." In *Nature* he has accomplished this and more by including Emerson's friend Thoreau in the walk.

As a walking play, *Nature* is a delight for the audience. Guided along the walk by an ensemble of actors and musicians, the audience moves from the opening scene at the church to three sites; the hillside, the cabin, and the field (Thoreau's bean field). The cabin doubles as Thoreau's Walden Pond house and a room in the Emerson home. Here, Emerson and Thoreau discuss nature, antislavery, the infinite bustle of daily life, the racket of commerce and industry, and other issues relevant to their time and ours. The scene then shifts to the Emerson home where Henry is living while Waldo is away in Europe.

During the course of the play, birds sang, Canada geese joined the walk or flew overhead, migrating Monarch butterflies fluttered among the goldenrod, and cooling breezes provided relief from the heat. A line from the play, which is begun by Emerson and ended by Thoreau, may well describe the experience of many in the audience: "I went for a walk today...and touched the sky."

Preliminary planning has already begun for an East Coast tour of *Nature* for the fall of 2011 to Concord, Boston, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

—Dale R. Schwie

Thoreau and Emerson enjoy a stroll (left) and a cup of tea (below) at Thoreau's house on Walden Pond.

PHOTOS COURTESY TIGERLION ARTS





## 2010 Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society convened at 12:35 p.m., 29 May 2010, in Pacific A of the Hyatt Regency Hotel at Embarcadero Center. Wesley Mott presided. Approximately twenty members were in attendance.

1. Minutes and Treasurer's report from the 2009 annual board meeting were presented. Approved unanimously.
2. Wes Mott announced the recent passing of Richard Poirier, Ed Schofield, and Frank Shuffelton.
3. Todd Richardson gave the Treasurer's report; see attached. Approved unanimously.
4. Sue Dunston reported on Program Chair activities.
5. Awards announcements:

- Lawrence Buell has been awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award
- Ashley Hetrick has been awarded the Research Award
- Jim McAllen has been awarded the Community/Pedagogy Award

6. Graduate Student Paper Award announcement and presentation to Carter Neal.

7. Bob Habich gave a report on the new (Spring 2010) *Emerson Society Papers*. It now includes two new sections: "Words and Deeds" and "Emersoniana." William Rossi will begin contributing the annual "Emerson Bibliography."

8. Ron Bosco gave a report on Emerson's *Collected Works*: Volume 8 came out in January 2010, Volume 9 is currently in press, and Volume 10 will be in press as of this summer.

9. Jean Mudge's efforts to receive an NEH grant for her documentary film on Emerson continue.

10. Joel Myerson reported that the Society's website will be updated within the next eight months.

11. New Society officers:

- Sandra Petrulionis and Dieter Schulz have been approved by acclamation to the Emerson Society Advisory Board.
- Leslie Eckel has been approved by acclamation to serve as program chair.

- Peter Balaam has been appointed by the president to the Distinguished Achievement Award Committee.

- Jessie Bray has been appointed by the president to the Special Awards Committee.

### 12. Additional announcements and items discussed:

- Possibility of selling back issues of *ESP*, placing all back issues of *ESP* on the Society website, and/or offering a disc of all past issues of *ESP* in PDF format as an incentive for annual memberships at the Contributing level. The topic is tabled for now.

- Society membership names and lists will remain private.

- Graduate Student Paper Award—the decision was reached to keep the award amount the same.

- Awards recipient accountability—recipients will now deliver a report to the Society regarding the progress of their research and community projects one year after receiving their awards.

- Florence conference—Sue Dunston gave an update regarding conference to be held June 8-10 2012: plans for conference location, hotels, and conference theme are moving forward. Sue and Todd will serve as planning representatives for the Emerson Society, to join representatives from the Poe and Hawthorne Societies.

- Dues rates will remain constant.

- Library subscriptions—recommendation put forward to encourage university libraries to subscribe to *ESP*.

- The donation of a valuable edition of Emerson's works to the Society—Bob Habich agreed to look into the matter more fully before making a recommendation to the Advisory Board about how to proceed.

- Agreement was reached to hold the Society's next meeting in Boston at the American Literature Association's annual meeting.

Adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Todd H. Richardson  
Secretary/Treasurer  
RWE Society

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

May 29, 2010

### Membership and Comparisons (as of May 20, 2010)

	May 2004	May 2005	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008	May 2009	May 2010
Total membership	188	183	194	210	184	176	165
Life members	25	22	22	22	25	26	27
Sustaining members	17	18	18	25	29	19	20
Contributing members	48	46	51	55	41	40	41
New Members	n/a	11	22	40	15	19	17
States represented	35	35	43	43	38	35	31 (+D.C.)
Non-U.S. countries	5	6	10	10	13	12	10

Our international membership includes the countries of Japan, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, Canada, China, Russia, Spain, and Turkey.

### Finances (as of May 1, 2010)

\$ 32,340	Balance, May 1, 2009	\$ 374	Current balance, checking account
3,274	Credits	4,201	Current balance, savings account
4,223	Debits	15,000	Current balance, CD #1
\$ 31,391	Balance, May 1, 2010	11,816	Current balance, CD #2
		\$ 31,391	Current assets, May 1, 2010

Major debits for the year ending May 1, 2010, include the Graduate Student paper award (\$750), postage and mailing (\$618), new stationery (\$463), design and layout of *ESP* (\$1,550), petty cash for postage and supplies (\$50), a wire transfer fee (\$25), and new checks (\$12).

Major credits for the four months ending May 1, 2010, include membership dues and donations (\$2,785) and interest on savings (\$371).

### Additional notes:

- Membership is down somewhat from this time last year by about 10 members. But during the course of the year we will certainly pick up new ones.
- Our CDs are not performing as well for us as they had been. Our current interest rates for our two CDs are 1.85% and 1.15%, down from last year's 2.5%.

- The debit/credit ratio listed above is somewhat misleading. The credits do not reflect a deposit of about \$700 after the May 1 cutoff date. Even so, our income vs. outgo is somewhat in the red, which can be attributed, in part, to about \$500 in costs associated with the transfer of Secretary/Treasurer responsibilities—specifically new stationery, new checks, and the cost for the wire transfer of funds.

Many thanks to my predecessor, Robert D. Habich, for doing such a fine job for so many years as Secretary/Treasurer of the Emerson Society. His excellent work implementing a sensible system of accounting and record keeping has made my transition relatively easy.

Respectfully submitted,  
Todd H. Richardson  
Secretary/Treasurer  
RWE Society



# Abstracts of San Francisco ALA Papers

The following panels, organized by Sue Dunston, were presented by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society at the twenty-first annual conference of the American Literature Association on May 29, 2010.

## SESSION I: The Emerson Society at 20 Years: Retrospects and Prospects

Chair, Robert D. Habich,  
Ball State University

### "What we are? and Whither we tend?": The Emerson Society at 20

WESLEY T. MOTT, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

In an 1841 lecture, Emerson stated that the "main interest which any aspects of the Times can have for us, is... the light which they can shed on the wonderful questions, What we are? and Whither we tend?" (CW 1:182). Sprinkled with amusing anecdotes, this paper is an overview of the emergence, achievements, and condition of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society. Founded in December 1989, the society enjoyed start-up funding and twenty years of subventions from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Our growth has paralleled that of the American Literature Association, of which we were a founding member and at each of whose annual conferences we present two panels and hold our annual business meeting. Since 1991 we have also presented a popular program at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Mass. Our newsletter, *Emerson Society Papers*, features blind-refereed articles, book reviews, abstracts of conference papers, an annual Emerson bibliography, and news of events and Emerson scholarship. We provided a subvention to prepare the cumulative index for Eleanor M. Tilton's four supplemental volumes of the Letters of RWE and established an archive housed at the Thoreau Institute's Henley Library half a mile from Walden Pond. We present a Distinguished Achievement Award to recognize outstanding Emerson scholarship, a Graduate Student Paper Award, and grants to support worthy community-based projects, creative works, graduate student research, and innovative pedagogy.

Led by Ron Bosco and Joel Myerson, over many months in 2003, in Concord, Cambridge, and Boston, we conducted a Bicentennial observance of Emerson's birth, culminating in a major conference at the Massachusetts Historical Society (and the book *Emerson Bicentennial Essays*). In this and other activities we have enjoyed a cordial collaboration with the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, particularly the late David Emerson and his daughter Margaret Emerson "Bay" Bancroft, the current president of RWEMA. In July 2006 we collaborated with the Hawthorne and Poe societies to present the groundbreaking conference "Transatlanticism in American Literature" at the University of Oxford in the U.K. (Plans are afoot for a similar collaboration in Florence, Italy, in 2012.) Generously supported by our members, the Emerson Society—during two decades of dynamic change and celebration of a famously protean writer—has become what Emerson called a "principle of fixture or stability," a base of professional identity, intellectual energy, and friendship.

### Extending the Legacy: Emerson's Editors and Readers in the Twenty-First Century

RONALD A. BOSCO, University at Albany, SUNY,  
and Joel Myerson, University of South Carolina

We assessed the importance of editing and the Emerson editions to

mid- to late-twentieth-century scholars. Building on our observation that everyone in the audience owes their careers in Emerson studies in large part to these editions, which now total fifty-one volumes, we discussed what it was like to be working on Emerson in the 1960s and to observe the direction of Emerson scholarship change as these editions began appearing. To illustrate the point, Bosco discussed his participation as an editor of the *JMN*.

### Batting Oranges on the Beach: And the Way Forward in Emerson Studies

ALBERT J. VON FRANK, Washington State University

It is the distinction of the generation of Emerson scholars now passing into retirement to have given us a fully documented Emerson: e.g., the *JMN*, the *Sermons*, the *Poetry Notebooks*, the *Later Lectures*, and, imminently, the finished *Collected Works*. That effort being complete, the work of future generations must necessarily be of a different kind. The shape of Emerson studies to come will in a very short time have less to do with plugging holes in the documentary record than with the drastic, economically driven changes in professional conditions in higher education—in what the MLA has taken to calling "The Academy in Hard Times."

The state of the economy brings vocational training to the fore in university planning, in a not unreasonable response to student demand and to the requirement of legislators that education have a direct economic impact. The values of a liberal education continue to receive lip-service, but it is driven underground. The discouragement of faculty in the humanities has to have a decisive bearing on their view of themselves, of the work they do, and of the larger effect they might have. How, then, might scholars in our field react productively to the stress that is here and the stress that is coming? As colleges and universities increasingly lose the power to incentivize (and therefore to control the professional agenda of) its faculty, individual scholars will become increasingly dissatisfied with the ordinary result of English-professor work: that is, of having no effect beyond the walls and only a very dubious effect within the walls. The fact that we pay more attention to our few students than to the larger public is a sign both that



Panelists from ALA session "The Emerson Society at 20" relax outside the Tadich Grill, the oldest restaurant in California. From left, Al von Frank, Ron Bosco, Joel Myerson, Bob Habich, and Wes Mott.

we do what we are paid to do and that we have no practical faith that our valuation of the humanities could be of interest or benefit to the larger public. In the future teacherly excellence will consist in the broadest public advocacy of the humanities. Publication and teaching will become, as they were at first, the same thing.

Emerson is a good point of reference in thinking about these matters. His intellectual life is now more elaborately documented and set forth than that of almost any American, precisely because there has always been a fascination with it. Let that fascination be the theme of future work. If anyone might serve as the subject of "interpretation," even of being made to stand as a model of the sort of intellect that real education (as opposed to vocational training) ought to concern itself with, it is surely Emerson. Scholars may come to see that they have a duty to use such figures to modify the public's indifference to humanistic values and help to give the humanities a public constituency. This thesis is examined toward the end of the essay in relation to several books that point in this direction, including Charles E. Mitchell's *Individualism and Its Discontents: Appropriations of Emerson, 1880-1950* and Jurgen Habermas's *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays*.

Full text of the paper is available by request from [ajvonfrank@roadrunner.com](mailto:ajvonfrank@roadrunner.com).

## SESSION II: Emerson as Mentor

Chair, Susan L. Dunston, New Mexico Tech

### Emerson's Hero: Mentoring Margaret Fuller

DAVID DOWLING, University of Iowa

Much has been written about Emerson's exasperation at the professional demise of his main protégé and pupil, Henry David Thoreau, who amounted to nothing more than a "captain of a huckleberry party," as he lamented in his eulogy for Thoreau. Frustrated that he had joined the ranks of so many young men that had disappointed his efforts to lead them into the literary limelight, Emerson's initial project of making Thoreau a poet resulted in his commanding the young man to throw his verse in the fire. Not the least of Thoreau's troubles was that, among established authors, Emerson was arguably the least successful promoter and mentor of aspiring writers of the entire American nineteenth century. The tumultuous tutelage of Thoreau began with the young apprentice aping Emerson's style, both in his literature and the



Panelists from ALA session "Emerson as Mentor" continue the discussion in the hallway. From left, Carter Neal, Karen English, Sue Dunston (chair), and David Dowling.

way he combed his hair, and ended with a bitter break in the early 1850s that Robert Sattelmeyer has aptly detailed.

Equally tumultuous, yet ending with professional success rather than failure in New York City, Margaret Fuller's apprenticeship under Emerson tells a different and seldom discussed story. Judith Mattson Bean represents the critical commonplace of sorting the Emerson-Fuller correspondence into three phases; the first from 1836-38 saw Emerson "adopt a tone of mentor—encouraging and challenging her to increase her efforts in writing," a time in which she appears to have had "little influence" over Emerson. Instead, I argue that this presumed one-way conversation with Fuller was in fact mutually enriching. Further, much has been made of his quarrels with her in his essays "Friendship" and "Love," when in fact a great deal of praise for Fuller (and disdain for Thoreau) as promising pupil is expressed in "Heroism." I thus argue that Fuller and Emerson's relationship, though tumultuous, was reciprocally inspirational to both, and that her first two years of work under him were in fact extremely consequential in setting her on the path toward success she would achieve as columnist and literary critic for Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune*. The chemistry of their relationship during those pivotal first two years, I would argue, bore distinct differences from Thoreau's early training under Emerson. Fuller's training better prepared her to adapt transcendental authorship to the literary marketplace of New York than Thoreau's poetic apprenticeship, which contrastingly left him ill suited for the commercial context of the antebellum publishing industry.

### Emerson's Proxy: Mark Salzman and True Notebooks

KAREN ENGLISH, San José State University

This paper explores the confluence between novelist and memoirist Mark Salzman's experience as a writing teacher of High Risk Offenders at a juvenile detention center in Los Angeles with Ralph Waldo Emerson's notions about mentoring. While Salzman does not explicitly present his project as being informed by American transcendentalist ideas on or practices of self-culture through conversation and writing, my paper argues that *True Notebooks: A Writer's Year at Juvenile Hall* (2003) reveals fundamentally Emersonian ideas about the process of mentoring as "divine teaching," especially through conversation and the creation of true, or good, proxies.

While Emerson felt that mentoring could take place through lectures or books, he believed that conversation, with its emphasis on proximity of speakers, immediacy of communication, and suggestiveness of expression, is a superior form of discourse. Although he was ambivalent about participation in group conversations, Emerson consistently articulated the values of private, liberal, or sincere conversation as a discourse marked by sympathetic hearing and inspired speaking.

Drawing on "Uses of Great Men," the paper then explores the parallels between Emerson's concepts of proxy in the system of political representation in public discourse and proxy in divine teaching through private conversation—both being reciprocal, dynamic (not mechanical) processes. When speakers inspire others or are inspired by them, true proxies are created. The moral value of true proxies is amplification of political and spiritual awareness, as Emerson observes: "Well, in good faith, we are multiplied by our proxies."

Focusing on chapter 4 "Trip to the Museum" in *True Notebooks* and its first draft ("The Writing Class" published in *American Scholar*), the paper foregrounds the transcendentalist nature of the dynamics of the first classroom interactions between these young men in jail and their teacher/mentor: experiences marked by otherness, silence, spontaneity, and reciprocity. Finally, the paper concludes that Salzman's success as an Emersonian mentor to these boys creates new proxies in them, and of us, his readers, through their stories.

(Continued on page 10)



## Abstracts

(Continued from page 9)

### Considering Charles Loring Brace's Effort to Implement Self Reliance

CARTER NEAL, *Indiana University*

(Carter Neal is the 2010 winner of the Emerson Society's Graduate Student Paper Award)

Emerson's thinking about friendship is complex and nuanced, but, generally, Emerson rejects the nineteenth century's prevailing sentimental understanding of friendship, in which friends are possible only among people who are alike. Instead, Emerson tries to imagine a friendship that can transgress those boundaries of like. I argue that Emerson's key insight is that every non-sentimental friendship's success depends upon having self-reliant individuals as friends. Charles Loring Brace keys in on this insight—that friendship is about self-reliance—in his work with the Children's Aid Society of New York City, and this paper considers how Brace's work was influenced by Emerson's conception of friendship.

In January of 1853, a group of New York City reformers chose Brace to be secretary of the Children's Aid Society of New York (CAS), a position he would continue to hold until his death in 1890. Under Brace's leadership, the CAS became the most influential child-saving organization. The CAS is most famous for its emigration program of "Orphan Trains," where orphaned children were taken from New York City and sent to live on rural farms in the West. I argue that Brace drew on Emersonian theories of self-reliance because they seemed to him well suited to charitable work with orphans. I also argue that they seemed so well suited because such rhetoric came easily to Emerson and Brace as half-orphans (they had both lost one parent) in a culture intensely concerned with kinship and with orphans.

This paper pursues these arguments about how Brace involved self-reliance in the work of the CAS through a consideration of two of the CAS's projects: the Newsboy's Lodging House and the Orphan Trains. The lodging house was designed to encourage the material and

the moral forms of self-reliance in its residents. For instance, the newsboys were charged a modest nightly rent and offered night classes. In the orphan trains, Brace believed that he had found an ideal solution to the problem of these orphans—to place them with families in the West who need their labor and will welcome their presence. In keeping with the guiding principle of self-reliance, Brace established a quasi-voluntary relationship between child and foster family. These adoptive families functioned as families of choice, and the voluntary nature of the relationship between child and foster family looks less like employment, indenture or apprenticeship, and less like family, and more like friendship.



On May 29, concluding a day of two panels and the annual business meeting, Emersonians gather at the Embarcadero Center of the Hyatt Regency San Francisco before proceeding to the nearby Tadich Grill for the annual Emerson Society dinner. From left: Peter Balaam, Carter Neal, Wes Mott, Elizabeth Addison, Dan Malachuk, Bob Habich, Bonnie Carr O'Neill, Todd Richardson, and Karen English.

## Abstracts of Panel Presentations at the Thoreau Society's Annual Gathering

To commemorate the bicentennial of Margaret Fuller's birth, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, in cooperation with the Margaret Fuller Society, presented a panel entitled "Transcendental Conversations" at the Thoreau Society's Annual Gathering in Concord, Massachusetts, at 7:30 on Thursday, July 8, 2010. The panel was moderated by Leslie Eckel.

### From Schoolroom to Cosmos: Margaret Fuller and Bronson Alcott in Conversation

LESLIE ECKEL, *Suffolk University*

This paper argues that Fuller's and Alcott's shared values of intellectual exchange turn conversation into the transcendentalists' most successful social experiment: one that pursues utopian ends by profoundly practical means. Fuller and Alcott's alliance was a friendship between equals, for their professional careers as educators developed in tandem and they often exchanged their personal journals, keeping the conversation going even when they were apart. In 1839, Alcott urged Fuller to follow his lead by holding a series of public conversations for adults. She jumped at the chance, but tailored the project to suit

her own vocational interests. While Alcott questioned his students in order to ignite their spiritual intelligence, and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody treated discussion as an end in itself, Fuller set an explicitly feminist course: a path that combined fervent idealism with the kind of pragmatic methodology that she thought Alcott was missing. As she explains to Sophia Ripley, her conversations would be "systemat[c]" and philosophical at once, for they would ask what Fuller called "the great questions. What were we born to do? How shall we do it?"

Just as experimental as Alcott, Thoreau, and at least in theory, Emerson, Fuller creates a kind of utopian community in conversation, where all is forgiven and everything is possible. She explains to William Henry Channing that although she and her interlocutors may not achieve a "full expression" of the "truth," their efforts are no less

genial for their incompleteness. Unrealized expectations melt into the utopian power of mutual acceptance, under the banner of "one love," which we might recognize now as the gist of a countercultural anthem or the name of a favorite Bob Marley tune. In these conversational gatherings, the transcendentalists were able to find paradise, even if only in the space of a single evening.

### Transcendentalism's Private World: Fuller and Sturgis in Newport

KATHLEEN LAWRENCE, *George Washington University*

For the women of the transcendental circle excluded from pulpit, podium, lectern, and lecture hall, and burdened by domestic duty, private thought and friendship became even more significant modes for self-culture and artistic creation. During the 1840's, Margaret Fuller and her young acolyte-turned-friend Caroline Sturgis organized a series of sojourns away from Boston for purposeful parallel work and private colloquy. The corollary to Fuller's "Conversations" recorded by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody and Caroline Healey Dall was this other series of even more intimate interactions that underpinned Fuller and Sturgis' productivity and sanity. Fuller and Sturgis' July, 1841 sojourn in Newport, Rhode Island, the first of many extended withdrawals together for shared solitude, was in essence their own "Walden." While readers associate the concept of literary and philosophical retreat into nature in antebellum America with Thoreau, Fuller and Sturgis invented their own form of removal into nature. They chose Newport for its historic associations with William Ellery Channing, as well as for its natural beauty, securing lodgings, as Fuller wrote her mother, "on the second beach, which is far more beautiful in its curve and longer than the first beach, is bounded by noble rocks. We are closer to the high peak of Paradise which overlooks the ocean and adjacent country with much boldness." Dating her letters from "Paradise Farm," Fuller emphasized the millennial symbolism of the retreat. Given the need for propriety and the difficulty of securing time away from pressing family concerns that burdened both women, their retreats were of necessity for two and of shorter duration. Like Thoreau, they proved that a poetic soul can and should assert her independence from mainstream bourgeois society, and that America's true spiritual identity is to be found in doing so. But they went further: bolstered by their dialogic friendship, they also proved that women could attain this freedom in the midst of pressing personal cares and the demands of convention. In thus reinforcing independence necessary to self-culture, Fuller and Sturgis' series of extended retreats were a corollary to their communal activities among their respective families, at Brook Farm, at Fuller's "Conversations," and as members of the transcendental band, enabling Fuller ultimately to write *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* and Sturgis to create her drawings and watercolors.

### "Rich in Friends, Rich in Experiences, Rich in Culture": Fuller, Emerson & Friendship

JULIU RATIU, *University at Albany*

Building on groundbreaking studies by Bell Gale Chevigny and Christina Zwarg, the presentation asked and imagined how the friendship between Emerson and Fuller might have fared had Emerson overcome his personal need to "shed all influence" and challenged the gender expectations of the mid-nineteenth century. Even when Emerson seemed ready to give Fuller the credit she deserved in rare yet memorable journal entries and letters, he only managed to distance himself from her intellectual influence through criticism and (self)-editing practices. Rather than presenting her as an inspiring muse, as a contestable rival, or as a friend, Emerson preferred to reinforce the stereotype of mentor and student without acknowledging the fact that

Fuller became his "wise counter-voice," active audience, and resource for new experiences not long after they first met in 1836. Thus not only did Fuller and Emerson maintain strictly differentiated roles, but also enjoyed and cultivated each other's company, shared common literary and philosophical ideals, and learned from one another. In the end, the versatility if not spontaneity of their relationship allowed for their friendship to be extended in long letters and copious journal entries, as well as in published works, which justified the social and conversational nature of such interactions and stimulated the critical debates of the time with regards to gender roles, literary authority, and cultural precedence.

### Margaret & Her Friends: Dall, Emerson, and the Gender Politics of Transcendental Conversation

TIFFANY K. WAYNE, PH.D., Independent Scholar,  
Santa Cruz, California (tkw@sidera.com)

I presented a paper based on Caroline Healey Dall's account of the co-ed season of Fuller's conversations in spring 1841. Dall's account (published in 1895 as *Margaret and Her Friends; or, Ten Conversations with Margaret Fuller upon the Mythology of the Greeks and its Expression in Art*) reveals the gendered tensions involved in the practice of Transcendentalist conversation. In particular, Dall sought to emphasize Emerson's role in Fuller's meetings, and my paper looked at Dall's text in conversation with Emerson's remembrances in *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, in which, according to Dall, Emerson "shows his attendance made absolutely no impression on him."

Dall ultimately judged the meetings according to whether Fuller's agenda was pursued without interruption, and her criticisms of Emerson, as an attendee at the conversations as well as in his record in the *Memoirs*, focused on Dall's desire to protect Fuller's authority and to protect the conversations as a space for "younger women," Fuller's originally intended and, in Dall's view, true audience. Dall concluded that the men present had a difficult time accepting Fuller as a teacher and as a woman of genius and that Emerson, in particular, "pursued his own train of thought. He seemed to forget that we had come together to pursue Margaret's." Of the little he did say in his own account of Fuller's 1841 class, Emerson admitted "that she seemed encumbered, or interrupted, by the headiness or incapacity of the men," who tended to "assert and dogmatize."

Dall's account and analysis in *Margaret and Her Friends*, read in conversation with Emerson's in the *Memoirs*, then, expose some of the limits of conversation as a Transcendentalist educational experiment, especially around issues of gender, power, and authority.

*Review*



## Reviews

**Letters and Social Aims.** By Ralph Waldo Emerson. **The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Vol. VIII.** Textual Editor JOEL MYERSON, Historical Introduction by RONALD A. BOSCO, Notes and Parallel Passages by GLEN M. JOHNSON. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010. cclxxiv + 397 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

On the morning of July 24, 1872, as flames consumed Bush, the Emerson home, and friends and neighbors desperately attempted to save furnishings, clothing, books, and, most importantly, the household's precious papers, Ralph Waldo Emerson himself was observed *throwing into the fire* letters written by his first wife, Ellen Louisa Tucker Emerson, and the clothing of his first child, Waldo. This fact is the most astonishing revelation of Ronald A. Bosco's informative and compelling "Historical Introduction" to the new scholarly edition of *Letters and Social Aims*, the last collection of Emerson's essays published in his lifetime. As Bosco notes, the final decade or so of Emerson's life has consistently received short shrift from his dozens of biographers; Bosco's 200-page introduction, drawing from newly available sources, delineates poignantly Emerson's last years: his difficulties in delivering lectures; his inability to compose new material; his problems with arranging old materials for lectures or publication; and, increasingly, his memory problems. Emerson's attempts to meet his obligations in the early 1870s left him feeling harried and overwhelmed. The picture is not quite all grim; although the story of the destruction of Bush and its effect on Emerson (it clearly hastened his decline) is tragic, Bosco depicts the tragedy as mitigated to some degree by the tremendous outpouring of generosity to the Emerson family from friends and townspeople.

Both Bosco and Joel Myerson, author of the "Textual Introduction," shed new light on the issue of Ellen Tucker Emerson's role as her father's indispensable companion and literary aide. Surprisingly (or at least surprising that she would admit it), she found the latter role uncongenial and burdensome, confessing to James Elliot Cabot that "[m]y lines lie in a different direction. I never knew my Papa as a literary man, nor had the slightest knowledge of nor interest in his work. When necessity threw it for those few years into my hands I did it as anyone would in my place, but that was accident, and a fleeting thing, already past. Let it pass" (cliv). Clearly, Ellen's relationship with her father's work is more complex than we may have imagined.

*Letters and Social Aims* was published in December 1875, though Emerson had been worrying over it since mid-1870. Bosco and Myerson detail the tortured history of the genesis and publication of the collection. It was a work that Emerson undertook in self-defense rather than on his own initiative, after Moncure Conway wrote in July 1870 advising him that he and the English publisher John Camden Hotten were preparing an English edition of his uncollected essays. Alarmed that he would be unable to exercise control over the volume, Emerson entered into an agreement whereby publication would be delayed until he could furnish the texts, which he promised to do within a year. But he seemed unable to perform the necessary tasks of selecting, organizing, revising, and proofing. This led to a cycle of procrastination, then guilt and worry, and, even when he put his mind to the task, no satisfactory results. Ellen attempted to help but eventually was forced to call in the family friend James Elliot Cabot. Their collaboration succeeded in completing the volume but, in Cabot's words, "without much active coöperation on [Emerson's] part, except where it was necessary to supply a word or part of a sentence" (ccxxxvii).

Thus this collection of eleven essays poses significant challenges for its editors, who were forced to revisit and revise the editorial principles that governed earlier volumes of the *Collected Works*. Reasoning that this volume represents "more a selection and compilation by James Elliot Cabot, assisted by Ellen Tucker Emerson, than...an original work by Emerson himself" (ccxvii), the editors resorted to choosing three different types of copytexts: holograph manuscripts (for "Quotation and Originality" and "Progress of Culture"), previous magazine publication (for "The Comic" and "Persian Poetry"), and the first edition of the book itself (for the remaining seven essays). As usual in the *Collected Works* series, the editorial principles are well reasoned and clearly expounded and the textual apparatus adequate to fulfill the needs of the scholar. Likewise, Glen Johnson's "Notes" and "Parallel Passages" constitute significant contributions to the volume. The first of these sections explains allusions and obscurities in the text and generally sets the essays in their context; the latter identifies essay passages that are similar to those elsewhere in Emerson's writings, often his journals, thus enabling scholars to trace the genesis and evolution of his ideas and expressions.

Bosco, Myerson, and Johnson have produced a work that establishes a reliable text for this uneven collection of essays ("Poetry and Imagination" being prime among them), a rationale for that text that grapples with complex textual issues, and a useful scholarly apparatus. Moreover, this edition rather unexpectedly constitutes a significant contribution to Emerson biography, adding importantly to our understanding of Emerson's last dozen years.

—Helen R. Deese  
Massachusetts Historical Society

**On Leaving: A Reading in Emerson.** BRANKA ARSIĆ. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010. xvi + 388 pp. \$49.95 cloth.

Whatever you think you know about Emerson is likely to be challenged by Branka Arsić's new book. In *On Leaving: A Reading in Emerson*, Arsić asks the reader to re-evaluate Emerson as an ethical, indeed a political, thinker whose epistemology and ontology develop consistently and coherently across his career. In so doing, she is cutting across the grain of 150 years of Emerson scholarship.

Arsić's book acknowledges two principal influences. The first, and I think the most important, is Stanley Cavell. Cavell has contended that Emerson and Thoreau "propose and embody, a mode of thinking, a mode of conceptual accuracy, as thorough as anything imagined within established philosophy, but invisible to philosophy because based on an idea of rigor foreign to its establishment." In *Emerson's Transcendental Etudes* (2003), Cavell characterizes this rigor as "the task of endless responsibility for one's own discourse" (45-46). That is, Emerson establishes his own internal rigor in his language; not one drawn from any particular intellectual tradition, but one which is appropriate to what he wants to say. Arsić offers exemplary readings of the way that individual terms are utilized by Emerson and always she finds a rigor therein. Such words include "leaving," the keystone of her study, which posits Emerson as a philosopher of flux, but also, to a greater or lesser extent, "aversion," "glance," "touch," "cosmos," "water," "surface" and "manner." In tracing the use of these words throughout Emerson's corpus, Arsić has provided the first full-length study of Emerson that fully engages with Cavell's insights, and one which goes far beyond anything that Cavell has himself articulated.

Arsić's other significant influence is Sharon Cameron, whose work on "the impersonal" in Emerson leads Arsić to many of her most surprising claims—in particular, the absolute decentering of

Emerson's "I," which has long stood at the center of American literature and a representative site of American individualism. In Arsić's work Emerson's "I" is a kind of epiphenomenon resulting from an established impersonal relationship with the world. She claims, in one remarkable sentence, that "The 'I' is thus an a posteriori instance that comes to the impersonal to respond to it" (212). Worldly relation *precedes* the "I"; indeed, much of life, from habit to dreams, is achieved in opposition to the "I." The "I" then becomes the site not of original being but of an ethical, and eventually a political, response to what precedes it. Hence, at the heart of Arsić's book is an argument for the explicit importance of political agency in Emerson's work. Her final chapters on the Cherokee Removals and the Fugitive Slave act clarify this convincingly.

The more philosophical perspective that runs through Arsić's book is only one way in which it is useful. Equally important is the way that she revitalizes so many of what are often construed as Emerson's minor essays. Yes, the references to "Experience," "Self-Reliance," and "The American Scholar" are there. But the way that Arsić establishes Emerson's coherence and many of her most successful insights come from lengthy analyses of Emerson on dreams ("Demonology"), on household and marriage ("Prudence" and "Love"), on mannerism ("Manners"). In addition, she has made use of the early and later lectures to show that Emerson's thought is a sustained and consistent enterprise. Surprisingly Arsić's Emerson is one of the moderns, an urban cosmopolite (*On Leaving* is thoroughly convincing in its refutation of Emerson as a merely national figure) in the company of Goethe, Poe and Baudelaire, not a genteel Victorian. Perhaps less fully worked through is the way Arsić positions Emerson as a proto-phenomenologist, with transcendentalism as "the end of metaphysics." It is questionable whether Emerson is as free of the pull of romantic and idealist philosophy as Arsić suggests. Nevertheless, the thoughts here, as throughout, are pregnant. In the end, Arsić's Emerson is an intellectual nomad, always leaving, not merely to abandon, but to test, to *experience* what it is possible to think and to be. Reading him is to similarly test the self. Certainly I want to believe in Arsić's Emerson: yet there is always the lingering doubt, a doubt that affects all scholars of Emerson, that this coherence has been constructed from out of the vast opportunities offered by his contradictions. Nevertheless, *On Leaving* is one of the most arresting accounts of Emerson that we have been offered, and I hope Arsić's rigorous attention to the words Emerson wrote, to the different forms of his writing, and to his coherence, set the benchmark for Emerson scholarship in the 21st century.

—Dr. David Greenham  
The University of the West of England

**Listening on All Sides: Toward an Emersonian Ethics of Reading.** RICHARD DEMING. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007. x + 182 pp. \$50.00 cloth.

The writers engaged in *Listening on All Sides*—Emerson, Melville, Stevens, and Williams, primary among them—are "writers in the Emersonian mode" (8), participating in a "phenomenological performativity" (40). In Richard Deming's terms, their writing "remains in a perpetual conversation with itself as well as with its reader" (8), their works "examples of thinkers trying to find and even make new vocabularies, new tools...in order to find new ways to address and respond to (and thus be responsible for) the world" (26). "This conversation," Deming suggests, "becomes both the ground for and call to an ethics of reading" (8). The heart of this work is "language use" (3). We see it in Deming's reading of "Hawthorne and His Mosses," a complicated reading of a writing which, "in its breaking down of authorial boundaries and questioning of the sovereignty of

author as explanation," dramatizes the way in which "the possibilities of resistance and identification are not contradictory but complementary imperatives by which the warp and woof of one's own consciousness can be discerned" (100, 106). We see it, as well, in Deming's account of the poetries of Stevens and Williams, poetries which are "enactments of alternative democratic processes" that "call into being interpretive occasions by which not only beliefs but the whole language of the community is tested" (7, 152). And we see it in Deming's ongoing exchanges with Emerson, whose endeavors to "make possible a critique, at the level of epistemology and rhetoric, of the foundations of culture itself" (71) in part characterize the "Emersonian modernism" shared by the writers in discussion.

An especially attractive aspect of this modernism is its "alternative to the deconstruction paradigm": a "circulation" of Emersonian, Nietzschean, and Wittgensteinian thinking, making "available what [Deming] describe[s] as 'constructive' or 'constitutive' skepticism" (27). It is a skepticism willing to commit to "meaningfulness and values that hold within a range of contingencies," and a skepticism aware that "[i]f those contingencies change—and they must and do—then the terms change" (111). Rather than (unethical?) infinite deferring, this skepticism works at reorienting us. It "uses doubt and self-consciousness in order to discover what is necessary, what is useful, to create the possibilities for ethics that are ever dependent on the possibility of choosing" (152). For example, the "inconclusiveness" of Emerson's essay "Fate," Deming contends, "creates a space necessitating action in the form of participation" (65-66). Put differently, "Fate" requires a certain investment in its ambiguities, in order that we might claim "a freedom shaped by responsibility" (74). Constitutive skepticism, then, requires us to become our skeptical activity; to be agents ever assessing the vocabularies composing our forms of life. As Deming wagers, "By throwing into doubt riverbed propositions, we are given more possibilities of life, and thus greater depths of sympathy among people and texts become possible as well" (106). If not shored up by these possibilities, at least we find ourselves in real negotiation.

The appeal of Deming's *Listening on All Sides* is that it doesn't leave us drowning, unmoored in a "sea of doubt" (5). It is a call for us to "come back" to our language, to come back to ourselves. Neither reading, nor modernism, nor ethics, changes in this conversation; rather, "it becomes evident that what first must change is one's stance toward such things" (8). According to Deming, "Reading as a poet, in Emerson's sense of the word, or reading as a modernist as I would put it, is the path back to one's own language, a recognizing (that is, a thinking again) of one's 'rejected thoughts' that in our encounters by way of another's text and textual negotiations 'come back to us with a certain alienated majesty.' Yet, it is both the alienation and the majesty that must be continually overcome" (156). If, however, our stance changes, do we not see, rather than a dialectic we must overcome, a new (yet unapproachable) form of life? As Emerson finds it in "Experience," "Life is not dialectics." Perhaps this is where Emerson departs from "Emersonian modernism." Either way, at the end of *Listening on All Sides* we circle around to where we begin: struggling to reckon our life in language, yet now going on in our conversation—a beginning full of "pathos" (1, 156), not without promise.

—Prentiss Clark  
University at Buffalo



# An Emerson Bibliography, 2009

WILLIAM ROSSI  
University of Oregon

What follows is a listing of new scholarly works on Emerson from 2009. 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).

Beck, Janet Kemper. *Creating the John Brown Legend: Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass, Child, and Higginson in Defense of the Raid on Harpers Ferry*. McFarland & Co. [Emerson's involvement in the defense of John Brown]

Bilbro, Jeffrey. "A real practical, in the American manner": Turgenev's Emersonian Reformer." *Concord Saunterer* 17: 99-124. [Emerson as influence and model for the reformer, Solomin, in Ivan Turgenev's Virgin Soil]

Bilwakesh, Nikhil. "Emerson, John Brown, and Arjuna: Translating the *Bhagavad Gita* in a Time of War." *ESQ* 55: 27-58. [Influence of *Bhagavad Gita* in Emerson's support for radical abolition]

\_\_\_\_\_. "'This Prospering Country is Your Ornament': Emerson and the 'Instructive' Value of the Cosmopolitan Project." *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 36: 77-112. [Emerson, capitalism, national infrastructure, and national identity]

Bosco, Ronald A., Joel Myerson, and Daisaku Ikeda. *Creating Waldens: An East-West Conversation on the American Renaissance*. Dialogue Path Press. [Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman as inspiration for global peace, self-culture, and global citizenship]

Bray, Jessie. "'Not a pure idealist': Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Waldo Emerson, and the Civil War." *Resources for American Literary Study* 32: 85-97. [Evaluation of Emerson's effort, in a previously unpublished 1863 letter, to prevent his son Edward from enlisting in the war]

Buschendorf, Christa. "The Challenge of German Pessimism: The Reception of Schopenhauer in Transcendentalism and Pragmatism." *Nineteenth Century Prose* 36: 165-84. [Emerson, William James, and the reception of Arthur Schopenhauer]

Cladis, Mark S. "Religion, Democracy, and Virtue: Emerson and the Journey's End." Pp. 49-82 in *Religion & Literature* 41. Ed. Paul Kane. [Three spiritual practices in Emerson]

Crick, Nathan. "The Rhetorical Singularity." *Rhetoric Review* 28: 370-387. [Moral perfectionism, rhetoric, and democracy in Emerson]

Dolan, Neal. *Emerson's Liberalism*. Wisconsin. [Comprehensive and sympathetic study of Emerson as liberal thinker and writer]

Dowling, David. *Capital Letters: Authorship in the Antebellum Literary Market*. Iowa. [Emerson contrasted with other writers in the antebellum literary marketplace]

Elliot, Clare. "'A Backward Glance O'er' the (Dis)United States: William Blake, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the 'Authentic American Religion.'" *European Journal of American Culture* 28: 75-93. [Emerson's interest in the poetry of William Blake]

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Robinson, David M. "'For Largest Liberty': Emerson, Natural Religion, and the Antislavery Crisis." Pp. 1-22 in *Religion & Literature* 41. Ed. Paul Kane. [Effects of a belief in an evolutionary process of social improvement on Emerson's antislavery thinking]

Ronda, Bruce. "The Concord School of Philosophy and the Legacy of Transcendentalism." *New England Quarterly* 82: 575-607. [Emerson's role in the history and reception of the Concord School]

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Tuchinsky, Adam. *Horace Greeley's New-York Tribune: Civil War Era Socialism and the Crisis of Free Labor*. Cornell. [Common vision of democratic self-culture shared by Transcendentalism, socialism, and the Tribune; Fuller's tenure as literary editor and foreign correspondent]

## Lawrence Buell

(Continued from page 1)

Pilgrimage: The Structure of an American Cult" (AL, 1989) was one of the early works in ecological criticism, and was the first step to such major writings as *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Harvard, 1995), *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U. S. and Beyond* (Harvard, 2001), and *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Blackwell, 2005), all of which established Larry at the head of this now established field.

More recently, Larry has returned to his roots with *Emerson* (Harvard, 2003) and his edition of *The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings* (Modern Library, 2006).

Such bibliographical "catalogue rhetoric" suggests a major reason why Larry has been honored by the Emerson Society. In a way, though, his personal contributions are more important than the heft and scope of his writings. He has always been a gracious, generous, and informed reader of manuscripts from both beginning and established scholars. He takes his professionalism seriously, and has

Voelz, Johannes. "Emerson and the Sociality of Inspiration." Pp. 83-109 in *Religion & Literature* 41. Ed. Paul Kane. [Emerson, inspiration, and social responsibility]

Walls, Laura Dassow. *The Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America*. Chicago. [Emerson's reading of and allusions to Humboldt, a model scientist for him]

Wolosky, Shira. "Emerson's Figural Religion: From Poetics to Politics." Pp. 25-48 in *Religion & Literature* 41. Ed. Paul Kane. [Figural theory in Emerson's writings]

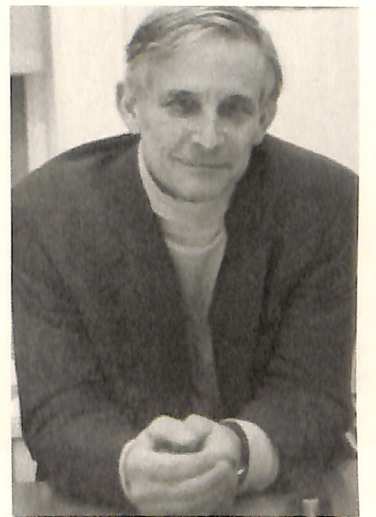
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given back many times as the reader for journals and presses (and as an administrator). One might even argue that, as a behind-the-scenes force, he is in many ways responsible for the direction of American literary studies over the past forty years.

Yet Larry has never aimed at being a model as much as an instigator, and his own scholarship and his support of the works of others--regardless of their critical approach to the material--have advanced the profession, and especially Emerson studies, on a regular basis. He is, as he himself described Emerson, "the sage as anti-mentor" (*Emerson*, p. 292).

—Joel Myerson





## **\*\*Awards Announcements\*\***

### **2011**

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

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

Provides up to \$750 of travel support to present a paper on an Emerson Society panel at the American Literature Association Annual Conference (May 2011) or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (July 2011). Please submit a 300-word abstract by December 20, 2010 to Leslie Eckel at [leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu) and indicate your desire for consideration.

#### **\*Research Grant\***

Provides up to \$500 to support scholarly work on Emerson.  
Preference given to junior scholars and graduate students.  
Submit a 1-2-page project proposal, including a description of expenses, by March 1, 2011.

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

Provides up to \$500 to support projects designed to bring Emerson to a non-academic audience.  
Submit a 1-2-page project proposal, including a description of expenses, by March 1, 2011.

#### **\*Subvention Award\***

Provides up to \$500 to support costs attending the publication of a scholarly book or article on Emerson and his circle. Submit a 1-2-page proposal, including an abstract of the forthcoming work and a description of publication expenses, by March 1, 2011.

Send Research, Pedagogy/Community, and Subvention proposals to  
Jessie Bray ([brayjn@etsu.edu](mailto:brayjn@etsu.edu)) or Daniel Malachuk ([ds-malachuk@wiu.edu](mailto:ds-malachuk@wiu.edu))

Award recipients must become members of the Society;  
membership applications are available at [www.emersonsociety.org](http://www.emersonsociety.org).