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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The "As Yet Unconquered" Eye: Emerson, J.M.W. Turner, and the Uncertain Property of Art

DOMINIQUE ZINO
CUNY Graduate Center

On June 26, 1848, nearing the end of a ten-month trip to Europe and a series of sixty-seven public lectures that carried him throughout England and Scotland, Ralph Waldo Emerson breakfasted with the English painter Clarkson Stanfield. After breakfast, Stanfield showed him his private collection of work by the country's preeminent landscape painter, Joseph Mallord William Turner. He then took him to see the Turners in the Windus collection at Tottenham. "Turner, you know, is reckoned by his lovers the greatest of all geniuses in landscape painting," Emerson wrote to Lidian after returning from the gallery. Three days later Emerson visited the anatomist and curator, Richard Owen, a man he considered "one of the best heads in England."¹ During the full day Emerson spent with Owen, they made two stops: first, the Hunterian Museum (where Owen was the curator) and, secondly—perhaps spurred by the visit to the Tottenham gallery—Turner's studio to meet the artist himself. However, when Owen and Emerson (along with Boston-based lawyer and author George Hillard) arrived at the studio, they found that Turner had stepped out.

Considering Turner's reputation for being rather cantankerous and reclusive in his old age, it would not have been a surprise to those who knew the artist that he would have disregarded the note Owen sent him announcing the visit. At 73, Turner was in poor health, signaled by the fact that 1848 was only the second year in his entire career that he failed to enter paintings into the annual exhibition at the Royal Academy. To friends and acquaintances who interacted with him in person, Turner appeared more like the captain of a steamboat than a national icon. He thumped across a room with a heavy sailor-like gait, often wore dirty trousers, spoke with a cockney accent, and had a tendency to mumble when addressing an audience in public.² Whether he slipped away from his studio that afternoon out of embarrassment, complete disregard for his guests, physical illness, or some pressing commitment remains a vacant detail in the story of Emerson and Turner's failed meeting. Regardless, such an opportunity would never present itself

again. Emerson did not return to England and, less than three years later, Turner was dead.

As Emerson, Hillard, and Owen walked through Turner's studio, Owen recounted one annual dinner he had attended at the Royal Academy during which, as evening fell and the light slipped out of the room, many of the paintings on the walls were overcome by shadow, "—all but Turner's, and these glittered like gems, as if having light in themselves," Emerson wrote, recalling Owen's fascination.³ He carefully recorded in his journal Owen's remarks about the stages of Turner's career: "In his earlier pictures...Turner painted conventionally, painted what he knew was there, finished the coat and button; in the later he paints only what the eye really



J.M.W. Turner, Snow Storm—Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth (1842). Representative of the turn to abstract representation, heightened color contrasts, and vortical effects that appear in many of Turner's works of the 1830s and 1840s. Credit: Tate Britain, Turner Bequest, 1856. Image © Tate Britain.

sees and gives the genius of the city or landscape."⁴ During the previous two decades, Turner had become less focused on capturing and framing an identifiable locale a viewer could recognize or visit and more enthralled by the visual experience of creating the representation itself. More interesting to Turner than the natural properties of the

(Continued on page 9)

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PROSPECTS.

Emerson Sightings/Citings

From my friend and Ball State colleague **Paul Ranieri** comes this mention of Emerson in film: At the start of the made-for-television movie *Goodnight for Justice: The Measure of a Man* (dir. Kristofer Tabori, 2012), the traveling judge in the Wyoming territory burns his law book for his campfire rather than using Emerson's *Conduct of Life*. At the end of the movie he gives the book to a young man who he discovers to be innocent of a capital offense after he finds out that he also likes to read while riding from place to place.

Our frequent correspondent **Clarence Burley** reports that *The Atlantic* has a Special Commemorative Issue titled *The Civil War* which re-presents three pieces by Emerson previously published on its pages: third stanza of the poem "Voluntaries," October 1863 issue; "American Civilization," the January 1862 speech urging emancipation, April 1862 issue; "The Presidential Proclamation," hailing Lincoln's action, November 1862 issue.

Another Ball State colleague, **Frank Felsenstein**, reports a new comedy produced by the Working Theatre in New York City, titled *Call Me Waldo*. Written by Rob Ackerman and directed by Margaret Perry, the play features "an everyday assistant electrician [who] begins channeling Ralph Waldo Emerson." Says the playwright, "*Call Me Waldo* is not a play about Emerson. It's about a guy who falls in love with Emerson's idealism, and how he shakes up those around him and forces them to question everything. The story takes place in two worlds—the blue collar and the white coat—and the worlds collide. Out of this collision comes the first comedy I've ever written. Turns out Transcendentalism is funny. Who knew?" Visit <http://www.theworkingtheater.org/CallMeWaldo.htm> for details.

Barbara L. Packer Fellowship

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society proudly announces that the first recipient of the Barbara L. Packer Fellowship, which the Society has established in cooperation with the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), is James S. Finley, an instructor and doctoral candidate in English at the University of New Hampshire. His research project is titled "'Violence Done to Nature': Free Soil and the Environment in Antebellum Antislavery Writing." Visit www.emersonsociety.com for more details.

The fellowship is awarded to individuals engaged in scholarly research and writing related to the Transcendentalists in general, and most especially to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. It is open to both postdoctoral scholars and graduate students at work on doctoral dissertations.

Contributions to the fund are still welcome. Please honor Barbara's memory by donating through the AAS; for details, visit <http://www.americanantiquarian.org/packer.htm>.

Emerson Society Panels at ALA

The Society presents two panels annually at the American Literature Association meeting, to be held this year on May 24-27, 2012, at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. Visit americanliterature.org for more information. *Note: As was agreed last year, the annual business meeting of the Emerson Society, normally held at ALA, will take place instead at "Conversazioni in Italia," the conference we are co-sponsoring in Florence, June 8-10, 2012.*

Emerson and African American Writers

Friday, May 25, 2012, 12:40 –2:00 pm
Chair: Richard Hardack, Independent Scholar

"Emerson, Douglass, and the Politics of Private Life,"
Bonnie Carr O'Neill, Mississippi State University

"Emotions, Ethics, and Double Consciousness in the Work of Emerson and Du Bois," Ryan Schneider, Purdue University

"Which Emerson and African American Writers?"
James M. Albrecht, Pacific Lutheran University

Emerson and Lincoln

Friday, May 25, 2012, 5:10 – 6:30 pm
Chair: Susan Dunston, New Mexico Tech

"The Emerson-Lincoln Relationship," Jean M. Mudge, Independent Scholar and Documentary Filmmaker

"Lincoln, Emerson, and the American Representative Man,"
Matthew McClelland, New York University

"The Craft of Freedom: Emerson, Lincoln, and the Artisanal Ideal," Peter Betjemann, Oregon State University

Thoreau Society Annual Gathering

The Emerson Society will once again conduct a program at the Thoreau Society's annual gathering, to be held in Concord, Mass., July 12–15, 2012. The Emerson program, scheduled for Thursday evening, July 12, 7:30–9, will be followed by a reception sponsored by the Society. For information and a full schedule, visit http://www.thoreausociety.org/_activities_ag.htm.

Emerson's Contribution to Thoreau's Legacy

Chair: Jessie Bray, East Tennessee State University

"Becoming Emerson's Poet: Thoreau's Troubled First Apprenticeship," David Dowling, University of Iowa

"The Mystical Fissure of Thoreau and Emerson: Emerson's Antagonistic 'Contribution' to Thoreau's Mysticism," Deeanna Rohr, State University of New York at Albany (co-winner of the Emerson Society's 2012 Graduate Student Paper Award)

"Going Nowhere in a Go-Ahead Age: Thoreau, Emerson, and the Problem of Ambition," Andrew Kopec, Ohio State University (co-winner of the Emerson Society's 2012 Graduate Student Paper Award)

"'My Giant Goes With Me': The Travails and Travels of Emerson and Thoreau," Nikhil Bilwakesh, University of Alabama

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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ESP welcomes notes and short articles (up to about 8 double-spaced, typed pages) on Emerson-related topics. Manuscripts are blind refereed. On matters of style, consult previous issues. We also solicit 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.

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.

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Maria Mitchell on Emerson: The 1855 Nantucket Lecture Identified, and Concord 1879

WESLEY T. MOTT
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Ralph Waldo Emerson traveled to the island of Nantucket five times to lecture before the Atheneum, and none of his topics or titles on these occasions has been identified with certainty.¹ Because he did not consistently mention lecture titles in his journals, notebooks, or letters, Emerson scholarship has relied upon newspaper accounts and other auditor reports to fill in the record. Thanks to the pioneering American astronomer Maria Mitchell—a Nantucket native and, later, Vassar College professor—we can conclusively identify his November 13, 1855, lecture as “Beauty.”

Dazzled by Emerson’s lecture, Mitchell recorded her impressions in her diary for November 14, 1855. Her sympathy for a reporter trying to capture the lecture for readers notwithstanding, her summary of the lecture’s outline

and contents, as well as an exact quotation of a key phrase, are a faithful account of what Emerson delivered. (The ellipsis in paragraph three of her account appears in the published text.) Page numbers supplied in brackets in her description below correspond to the text of “Beauty” in the *Collected Works* edition of *The Conduct of Life*.²



Above, Maria Mitchell (1818-1889), the American astronomer who found Emerson’s Nantucket lecture “exceedingly captivating.”

<http://pinetreeweb.com/maria-mitchell.htm>

Left, engraving of Emerson in 1846 (from *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, 1913, vol. 7)

<http://emerson.tamu.edu/ImagesOfEmerson/1846b.html>

Last night I heard Emerson give a lecture. I pity the reporter who attempts to give it to the world. I began to listen with a determination to remember it in order, but it was without method, or order, or system. It was like a beam of light moving in the undulatory waves, meeting with occasional meteors in its path; it was exceedingly captivating. It surprised me that there was not only

no commonplace thought, but there was no commonplace expression. If he quoted, he quoted from what we had not read; if he told an anecdote, it was one that had not reached us. At the outset he was very severe upon the science of the age. He said that inventors and discoverers helped themselves very much, but they did not help the rest of the world [150]; that a great man was felt to the centre of the Copernican system [cf. 151: “a right and perfect man would be felt ...”]; that a botanist dried his plants, but the plants had their revenge and dried the botanist; that a naturalist bottled up reptiles, but in return the man was bottled up [151].

There was a pitiful truth in all this, but there are glorious exceptions. Professor Peirce is anything but a formula, though he deals in formulae.

The lecture turned at length upon beauty, and it was evident that personal beauty had made Emerson its slave many a time, and I suppose every heart in the house admitted the truth of his words....

It was evident that Mr. Emerson was not at ease, for he declared that good manners were more than beauty of face, and good expression better than good features [153]. He mentioned that Sir Philip Sydney was not handsome, though the boast of English society [160]; and he spoke of the astonishing beauty of the Duchess of Hamilton, to see whom hundreds collected when she took a ride [158]. I think in these cases there is something besides beauty; there was rank in that of the Duchess, in the case of Sydney there was no need of beauty at all.³

Mitchell was not only a scientist, but also a feminist and reformer, who was close to such Transcendentalists as Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. Thus in her account of Emerson’s lecture, she is capable of acknowledging the “pitiful truth” of his critique of modern science’s cold reason, even as she jumps to the defense of “glorious exceptions” such as Benjamin Peirce, the Harvard mathematician and astronomer (and member, with Emerson, of the Saturday Club). And she delights in Emerson’s unconventional, non-linear style and “expression,” even capturing his non-“method” in astronomical images of light and meteors. Nearly a quarter century after hearing Emerson at Nantucket, Mitchell enthusiastically took part in the first years of Bronson Alcott’s Concord School of Philosophy, hearing Emerson speak on “Memory” on August 2, 1879, at the Trinitarian Church. The man had changed, but not his vision or style:

Emerson entered,—pale, thin, almost ethereal in countenance,—followed by his daughter, who sat beside him and watched every word that he uttered. On the whole, it was the same Emerson—he stumbled at a quotation as he always did; but his thoughts were such as only Emerson could have thought, and the sentences had the Emersonian pithiness. He made his frequent sentences very emphatic. It was impossible to see any thread of connection; but it always was so—the oracular sentences made the charm.⁴

It was crowded and hot: “The little vestry, fitted perhaps for a hundred people, was packed with two hundred,—all people of an intellectual cast of face,—and the attention was intense. The thermometer was ninety in the shade!” Sensitively, Mitchell dared not intrude on the fragile old man she had admired for so long. “I did not speak to Mr. Emerson; I felt that I must not give him a bit of extra fatigue.”⁵

Wes Mott, familiar to readers of ESP, is Professor of English at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Prospects

(Continued from page 3)

Conversazioni in Italia

The international conference we are co-sponsoring with our friends in the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society and the Poe Studies Association, will be held at Villa La Pietra in Florence, Italy, June 8–10, 2012. The conference features 35 panels, over 100 presentations (many of them by Emerson Society members), cultural activities in Florence, and a plenary address by Emerson scholar and board member Dieter Schulz, Universität Heidelberg (emeritus), who will speak on “Transcendence: Emerson, Poe, and the Metaphysics of the One.” Special thanks for their tireless work on the conference go to Jennifer Gurley, who has put together the conference program; Todd Richardson and Dan Malachuk, who screened proposals; and Sue Dunston, whose brainstorm about “a meeting in Italy” germinated after the success of our 2006 conference in Oxford. Much more about the meeting will appear in the fall 2012 issue of *Emerson Society Papers*. For a full program and conference information, visit <http://web2.uconn.edu/transatlanticlit/>.

Notes

1. He gave four lectures from November 18 to 24, 1844; four beginning on May 4, 1847; one on November 13, 1855; one each on March 31 and April 1, 1857; and one on October 29, 1857. Attempts to identify the 1847 lecture topics are conflicting. Wendell Refior, an Emerson re-enactor who has performed at the Nantucket Atheneum, notes Edward W. Emerson’s speculation that the 1847 lectures were from the Representative Men series (Refior, “The Nantucket Atheneum Calls for Emerson in 1847 and 2009,” *Emerson Society Papers* 20 [Fall 2009]: 8, 10). William Charvat recorded that Emerson gave six lectures (“probably from ‘Representative Men’”) plus a “discourse” on “Worship,” which Refior also notes (Charvat, *Emerson’s American Lecture Engagements* [New York: New York Public Library, 1961]); Merton M. Sealts, Jr. thought that Emerson gave seven lectures (*The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 16 vols., ed. William H. Gilman, Ralph H. Orth et al. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960–1982], 10:62, n.8); and Eleanor M. Tilton accepted Charvat’s speculation in light of evidence in Emerson’s Account Books (*The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 10 vols., ed. Ralph L. Rusk and Eleanor M. Tilton [New York: Columbia University Press, 1939, 1990–1995], 8:118, n.51). Albert J. von Frank’s authoritative *An Emerson Chronology* (New York: G.K. Hall, 1994), which supersedes Charvat, states that Emerson gave only four lectures plus the discourse in 1847.

2. “Beauty,” *The Conduct of Life* (1860), vol. 6 in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Douglas Emory Wilson et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 149–63.

3. Mitchell, *Life, Letters, and Journals*, compiled by Phebe Mitchell Kendall (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1896), pp. 45–47.

4. Mitchell, p. 246. The date and place are given in von Frank, p. 526.

5. Mitchell, p. 247.

IN MEMORIAM

The Society notes with sadness the death of **Marie B. Mazzeo** (1948–2011), who passed away at her home in West Caldwell, N. J., on Christmas Day. She was a teacher, valued Emerson Society member, beloved wife of Frank Mazzeo and mother of Paul Mazzeo and Christine Holzschuh.



Her husband writes, “Marie loved the written word; combined with her love of nature, it’s no wonder she loved Emerson. The words of Emerson and Thoreau influenced her life in many ways, whether it was lessons handed down to her children or how she lived her own life.

“Marie believed in nature and the wonder of trees. She was a strong advocate to preserve the wilderness and save the environment. To make the world better, she contributed to charities and was a member of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Thoreau Society, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and the Arbor Day Foundation.

“Respected and admired by her peers and the countless students she touched, Marie influenced and encouraged her students to follow their dreams, enjoy nature, and become their own person.”

Reviews

The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Volume IX: Poems: A Variorum Edition. Historical Introduction, Textual Introduction, and Poem Headnotes by Albert J. von Frank. Text established by Albert J. von Frank and Thomas Wortham. Volume IX of *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 1971–. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011. vii-cxlvii + 705 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

The appearance of this volume is a long-anticipated and significant event in Emerson scholarship. Emerson's poetry is fundamental to an adequate engagement with any of his texts; we simply misunderstand and misrepresent Emerson, intellectually and aesthetically, unless we combine the study of his poetry with the study of his prose. Poetry was in some ways the most crucial genre to Emerson, one he wrote in for much of his life. Yet despite Emerson's prominence as a poet in his own time, and the importance of his poetry to a number of poets from his contemporaries forward (among them the Cuban revolutionary and writer José Martí, Frost, Ammons, and Oliver), Emerson's poetry remains the most overlooked part of his canon. Such has been the case even amid the resurgence of Emerson scholarship begun several decades ago and continuing through the 2003 bicentennial of his birth to now. This book helps restore the indispensability of Emerson's poetry to explorations of Emerson, Romanticism, American Transcendentalism, and American poetry.

The volume prints all the poems in Emerson's two main collections, *Poems* (1847) and *May-Day and Other Pieces* (1867), along with eight additional texts from *Selected Poems* (1876) and thirty-one uncollected pieces – bringing together for the first time critically edited texts of all the poems and translations that Emerson chose to publish, and all their variants that are authoritative or deemed by the editors as indicative of Emerson's intent. The Editorial Board's decision to produce the book as a variorum edition, unlike its predecessors in *The Collected Works*, is particularly wise. This format enables readers to trace the individual histories of textual emendations, and at the same time produces each text, in accordance with the editorial principles of the series as a whole, that Emerson considered finished in the form he most likely would have wanted it.

As *CW* General Editor Ronald A. Bosco explains in his Preface, this volume and the one to follow and complete the series—*Uncollected Prose Writings: Addresses, Essays, and Reviews*, edited by Bosco, Glen M. Johnson (*CW* Editorial Board member), and Joel Myerson (*CW* Textual Editor)—are distinctive, by virtue, in part, of the challenge of textual establishment. Von Frank and Wortham, longtime workers in the vineyard of Emerson scholarship, meticulously and splendidly fulfill that task. Wortham began working on the texts decades ago with the late Douglas Emory Wilson, a past Textual Editor and General Editor of the series. Eventually, von Frank agreed to assume editorship of the poems with Wortham, so that the two established these texts collaboratively, while von Frank also composed the introductions and headnotes. This fine book represents an apt culmination of (although we would hope not a finale to) the distinguished scholarly careers of both men.

Largely because of house editorial principles, the text and content of this volume differ from those of the other major modern edition of the poems, *The Library of America Ralph Waldo Emerson: Collected Poems and Translations*, edited by Harold Bloom and Paul Kane. The Bloom/Kane collection prints first book publication texts, as well as uncollected poems and translations, and selected manuscript texts. While that volume has been tremendously helpful in providing readers with initial modern access to Emerson's poetry, and remains valuable as an affordable and broadly inclusive edition, the Library of America texts suffer from the editors' adherence without exception to the series editorial policy.

Following instead the *CW*'s modified Greg editorial approach, the editors of *Poems* established the text for each poem by working with previous printings, correction copies annotated by Emerson and others, and manuscript and editorial matter. Thus, importantly, for example, von Frank and Wortham, unlike *LA*, print Emerson's famous poem "Hamatreya" in the version that begins with a patronym from Emerson's own family ("Bulkeley"), thus maintaining that significance and also the text in accord with the poem's considerable cultural currency. Having worked with some of this material, I appreciate the complexity of sorting through these many layers of textual subtlety, as have specialists in the poetry from the pioneering Carl F. Strauch forward. Only very rarely do I remain puzzled by the choice of a particular variant. Simply establishing the texts was an intricate and tremendously significant labor of love.

While it begins, as do other volumes in the *CW*, with extensive historical and textual introductions, the volume goes on atypically to provide a headnote and textual variants for each poem. Most striking among the book's three appendices is an extended reading of Emerson's "The Sphinx" appearing over a four-day period in Thoreau's journals. Wortham brings to the volume long-standing and intricate editorial work with the poems and other texts. Von Frank's effort is informed by his editing, with Ralph Orth, Linda Allardt, and David W. Hill, of *The Poetry Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, also of vital importance. His equally noteworthy *An Emerson Chronology*, an impossible-to-find book that merits reissuance, and his role as chief editor of the four-volume *Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, similarly inflect the range and depth of the book's material.

Von Frank has created in the introductions and the substantial poem headnotes the single most valuable contemporary scholarship on Emerson's poetry. The "Historical Introduction" contains abundant information along with sophisticated synthesis and analysis. It offers interesting accounts of Emerson's development as a poet throughout his career; perceptive discussions of Emerson's theoretical statements about poetry and his vital engagement with Persian poetry (especially that of Hafiz); overviews of his early reception; and descriptions of the production of each volume of his verse, including the posthumous Riverside and Centenary editions. The headnotes, one of the most appealing and useful features of the book, provide a rich array of contextual and biographical information; composition and publication histories; and cross-references to Emerson's letters, journals, notebooks, and other primary texts, and to Edward Emerson's Centenary Edition Poems annotation.

Deeply appreciative readings, as is mine, often include the occasional caveat. I would have liked additional engagement with European, especially British, Romanticism, as well as an index more nearly comparable to those in the other *CW* volumes, for example. These, however, are quite minor concerns.

In sum, the volume represents a monumental achievement. I hope it will help affirm the imperative for us to read, to teach, and to write about Emerson's poetry. It is essential for all serious Emersonians.

—Saundra Morris
Bucknell University

Transcendental Resistance: The New Americanists and Emerson's Challenge. Johannes Voelz. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2010. xiv + 322 pp. \$85.00 cloth; \$39.95 paper.

While it offers a thoughtful reading of Emerson's rhetorical style in light of his role as a public lecturer, the chief interest of Johannes Voelz's new study is its polemical interrogation of the "New Americanist" critical paradigm, which has dominated the field of American Studies for the past twenty years. Closely reading works by a series of representative New Americanists (including Donald Pease, John Carlos Rowe, Christopher Newfield, Russ Castronovo, and Myra Jehlen), Voelz argues that a "deeply utopian" (61) bent in this criticism has led it to *totalize* its conceptions of resistance and hegemony, freedom and

determinism, figuring these subject positions as "a matter of either-or" (3) rather than as valences within a given text's or author's politics. On this view, Voelz contends, to propose anything less than a radical break from the given is "a sign of having been co-opted" (9). In place of this stringency, Voelz advocates for an alternative idealism which would understand freedom to emerge out of what he calls, citing Pheng Cheah, "a responsibility to the given" (195)—an ongoing engagement with, rather than a determination to transcend, the forces which limit our freedom. In his three chapters on Emerson, Voelz demonstrates how Emerson's notoriously contradictory style might exemplify such a negotiation between the actual and the ideal (this is Emerson's "fractured idealism"). Voelz's Emerson thus emerges as "neither a reactionary nor a revolutionary" (10) but an early theorist of this "aporetic" freedom which is "situational and momentary, rather than utopian" (204).

If this all sounds somewhat abstract, it is—this study's core audience will be those with an interest in the disciplinary formations of American Studies, as well as postgraduate students of Emerson. However, the import of its critique of New Americanist thought extends beyond these two fields insofar as it contributes to a broader critical reassessment of the hermeneutics of suspicion in the humanities (joining in conversation with, for example, the 2009 *Representations* special issue on "Surface Reading," edited by Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best, and the "new formalist" turn announced in works like Isobel Armstrong's *The Radical Aesthetic*). Together, these critics propose that the literary critical project need not (and indeed, should not) continue to be predominantly conceived along the lines of ideological policing. Taking issue with what Voelz refers to as "the critic's game of writing books and articles that divide a list of authors into progressive and reactionary" (201), these studies suggest that the canon-wars question of *what* we should read is giving way to a renewed focus on *how* we should read. This approach resists the binarism implicit in framing our project as one centrally concerned with text selection. The answer Voelz offers here belongs with Christopher Nealon's compelling recent appeal which claims that "the more deeply we allow ourselves to understand literary texts as being written out of histories of struggle, of liberation, of toil, the less pressure we will feel to super-add an activist orientation to them, since they will all the more clearly be documents of a history of human struggles to be free" ("Reading on the Left," 43).

I find Voelz's disciplinary critique both timely and persuasive, supported as it is by his methodical analysis of the assumptions underlying New Americanist projects. It seems a shame, however, the extent to which this polemical work preempts the reading of Emerson. To be fair, Voelz takes up Emerson as an "exemplary interpretive object" (2) rather than the subject proper of his analysis; however, this priority allows his claims about Emerson to remain sometimes frustratingly loose. Thus, for instance, his account of how the dynamics of the lyceum lecture format shed new light on the problem of Emerson's rhetorical style is intriguing but seems incompletely worked out: he at times proposes that Emerson "developed a style of thinking conducive to the needs of success in the public lecture hall" (11), while elsewhere he insists that Emerson's contradictory style is not in fact a product but only a fortuitous beneficiary of lecture market forces ("I am not arguing that Emerson consciously chose to be inconsistent... I am rather claiming that the inconsistencies at which he arrived... worked particularly well in the marketplace of the modern lecture system" [207; emphasis in original]). Nonetheless, the incompleteness of this otherwise highly nuanced reading does not undermine Voelz's thesis; rather, it makes one hope that the disciplinary ground-clearing to which his study contributes will succeed in creating new space for the sort of analysis to which he here gestures.

—Cristin Ellis
University of Mississippi

Emerson's Liberalism. Neal Dolan. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010. xl + 301 pp. \$29.95 paper.

Scholars who attempt to place Emerson within intellectual history tend to fall into two camps: the retrospective, who, focusing on the diverse writers and movements that influenced Emerson, see his thought as a synthesis of past influences, and the prospective, who, approaching Emerson through the writers he in turn influenced, locate the vital heart of his thought in its proleptically modern attitudes. Neal Dolan's impressive study is a provocative entry into this ongoing debate. Emerson's thought is, in Dolan's view, quintessentially liberal. Emerson's entire career, Dolan argues, constitutes an effort to articulate the ethical worldview of classic liberalism and "charge this ethos with inspired moral feeling": he is a "self-appointed ... high-rhetorical literary priest-celebrant of the moral emotions appropriate" to liberal society (21, 49).

Dolan's book traces the main elements that compose Emerson's liberalism: a Whig theory of history as a "gradual emancipatory ascent" that sees private property and Anglo-American commercial culture as the engines of progress (32); an epistemology that draws upon Romanticism and the Scottish enlightenment concept of the "moral sense" to reaffirm an "Enlightenment-Platonic" belief in a "universal" and "objectively intelligible moral law" (15, 9); and, last, a classic liberal politics based on the natural right of individual liberty, a libertarian distrust of government, and faith in the beneficent operations of market forces. Having located this worldview in Emerson's early lectures and essays, Dolan concludes by reading Emerson's later works—his anti-slavery addresses, *English Traits*, and *The Conduct of Life*—as reaffirming these liberal principles. The considerable strengths of *Emerson's Liberalism* reside in the detail and lucidity with which Dolan fleshes out this vision of a liberal Emerson. By documenting the liberal Enlightenment traditions that shaped Emerson's thought, Dolan provides an important contribution to Emerson studies.

Dolan's study is provocative in the unequivocal nature of its case for Emerson-as-liberal—and the correspondingly conservative portrait of Emerson it constructs. Dolan offers his study as a corrective to what he terms the "starkly anachronistic" misreadings in Emerson criticism of recent decades: readings of Emerson as proto-pragmatist, proto-Nietzschean, or as democrat in the Deweyan strain (9). In effect, Dolan advocates jettisoning critical trends that have reinvigorated Emerson studies and returning to a much more traditional vision of Emerson. In painting Emerson as a champion of private property, Dolan underplays the criticisms of property and the division of labor that Emerson voices in works like "Self-Reliance," "Man the Reformer," and "The Method of Nature." By placing faith in an objectively knowable universal law at the center of Emerson's epistemology, Dolan largely ignores the Emerson of "Circles," who stresses the limitations of all human knowledge and celebrates flux, transition, and power. And in portraying Emerson as a spokesman for the shop-keeping virtues of liberal culture, Dolan mutes the Emerson who argues that "Your goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none," who, in works like the 1844 essay "Nature" and the 1860 collection *The Conduct of Life* affirms the role of exaggeration and excess in the unruly energies of growth. Readers who value an Emerson with more edge—rhetorically, philosophically, and politically—will find him oddly absent from this book.

Dolan asserts that we should get over such desires to construct an Emerson palatable to our contemporary sensibilities—resist the urge to "aggressively assimilate Emerson to [our] outlook": "Emerson may be more interesting and valuable to us," he argues, "precisely to the extent that he does not exactly share our contemporary views" (9-10). Perhaps. But Dolan is clearly swimming against prevailing scholarly currents. To paint an Emerson who affirms absolute truth that is knowable through moments of individual intuition runs the risk of relegating Emerson to the position critics have so often prepared for him—that of an antiquated, obsolete idealist. And to depict Emerson as a high priest

(Continued on page 8)

Reviews

(Continued from page 7)

of classic liberalism is to reinforce the familiar charge that his ethics are easily co-opted by the conservative forces in the liberal-capitalist status quo.

Ultimately, any rigid opposition between liberalism and other aspects of Emerson's thought—pragmatic or democratic—is unproductive. Critics such as Richard Teichgraber and Sam McGuire Worley have portrayed Emerson as a thinker who strategically engaged liberal ideals in order to transform liberal culture. Dolan's zeal to construct a liberal Emerson prevents him from considering how Emerson was working to move beyond classic liberalism. Pragmatic approaches to Emerson, for example, are repeatedly cited by Dolan only to be dismissed as anachronistic misinterpretations. That's unfortunate, for there is work to be done in exploring how certain strains of liberalism nurtured and morphed into pragmatic re-conceptions of democracy: it's worth recalling that William James dedicated *Pragmatism* to John Stuart Mill. While Dolan provides an excellent resource for understanding the liberal contexts of Emerson's thought, readers interested in how Emerson moves beyond the confines of classic liberalism will need to look elsewhere.

—James Albrecht
Pacific Lutheran University

Building Their Own Waldos: Emerson's First Biographers and the Politics of Life-Writing in the Gilded Age. Robert D. Habich. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011. vii-xxv +186 pp. \$29.95 paper.

“What unites the existing scholarship on Emerson's early biographies,” Robert D. Habich explains in this superb revisionist account of six of those biographies, “is its attention to the formative influence of culture and ideology” (xix). This is Habich's courteous way to note that modern scholarship has wrongly charged the 1880s biographers with reducing the nation's greatest writer to the bland “Sage of Concord.” These 1880s biographers were not in fact ideologues animated by the spirit of Nature's first paragraph—“build[ing] the sepulchers of the fathers”—but thoughtful practitioners inspired by the last: “Build...your own world,” or, as Habich's title has it, “their own Waldos.”

In the first of six chapters, Habich explains how late Victorian life-writers were pressured by the market to transform their bland commemorations into sensationalist accounts, though at the risk of offending social codes. Particularly instructive for these six biographers was James Anthony Froude, whose admiring but salacious 1881 biography of Thomas Carlyle was excoriated by the press. Chapters Two through Five review how these biographers negotiated the “tension between reverence and revelation” (8). It is in these chapters, especially, that Habich's archival research shines. In Chapter Two, thanks to his close attention to Ellen Emerson's comments on George Willis Cooke's 1881 manuscript draft, we now know that she consulted her parents before offering him advice, making Cooke's biography the only one “to have benefited from Waldo Emerson's direct intervention” (24). In Chapter Three, Habich nicely illustrates Alexander Ireland's judicious use of personal details from Emerson's life strictly to reveal “character” (57) (an important theme in the book) and (another important theme) vividly proves that Moncure D. Conway's 1882 biography sold poorly not for bucking the “Sage of Concord” icon (as many modern critics have assumed) but due to “a complex of personal and business circumstances” (69). Chapter Four not only reveals Oliver Wendell Holmes to have been much more sympathetic to Emerson's transcendentalism than modern criticism has allowed but also brilliantly demonstrates how as a medical doctor Holmes' clinical diagnosis of Emerson's psychological complexity “was unmatched for more than a century” (97). Chapter Five offers yet more wonderful documentary evidence,

this time to show how the polite rivalry between Emerson's final two biographers of the 1880s, James Elliot Cabot and Emerson's son, Edward, led to two very different but effective accounts of Emerson's life: Cabot's (intentionally, not ideologically) “shaping...Emerson's life to show the consistency of word and deed” (112), and the younger Emerson's achieving “a symbolic balance between the civic and the spiritual” (114).

Habich writes that his book has three purposes. Two of them—to tell these six biographers' stories and to show “the interpretive possibilities of circumstance, genre, and commerce on Emerson's biographies” (xxiv)—he accurately promises and delivers; this review has especially not done justice to Habich's achievement with the latter. But Habich sells his third purpose short. Far from just showing how these biographers “negotiated” generic and ideological tensions (xxiv), Habich reveals that they all shared a common goal as life-writers: to show how “[Emerson's] character manifested itself in distinctive personal behavior” (133). That agenda deserves more praise today, especially in contrast to biography as practiced then and theorized now. As practitioners, these six biographers successfully steered between late Victorian life-writing's Scylla and Charybdis: biography as exploitation and biography as “iconic monotone” (126). Today's theorists of biography—dismissing biography as entirely subjective (per Stanley Fish) or entirely ideological (biographers as “unconscious scribes” [xxi])—have blinded us to the merits of these six biographies. In *Representative Men*, Emerson provides a better measure of their collective achievement. In that book, Emerson effectively takes up a question for which we still do not have a good answer: what is the use of great persons in a democracy? The extremists in the 1880s saw great persons' biographies as opportunities for profit or hero worship; today we too often dismiss great persons' biographies as entirely subjective or ideological. In contrast, Emerson hoped we might build a democratic culture that grasped that “great men exist that there may be greater men.” These six biographers seem to have agreed: they built six different Waldos, but in tribute to a single representative man.

—Daniel S. Malachuk
Western Illinois University

Review

The “As Yet Unconquered” Eye

(Continued from page 1)

landscape was the eye's attempt to formulate an image, to react to certain visual cues while simultaneously aiding the imagination. Extending his treatment of the ethereal, light-filled atmosphere even further than did his respected exemplar, Claude Lorrain, Turner strove to make the airy depths of light and darkness the most vast and vibrant parts of his landscapes, sometimes pushing a scene to the point where the event indicated by his title was no longer identifiable. Each of his paintings was, triumphantly and self-consciously, its own creation story. Emerson, too, understood that reflection upon and animation of one's unique vision needed to take precedence over a mimetic notion of resemblance based around the act of mirroring.

During the first half of his career in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Turner's work would have conformed more closely to a picturesque aesthetic, defined by its innovator, William Gilpin, as that which is “expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture.” Gilpin's picturesque aesthetic sometimes inspired wealthy British aristocrats to roam the English countryside looking for “beauty spots” that would match their favorite paintings. By 1792, however, this definition comes more in line with Romantic thought, emphasizing the importance of achieving “a united whole” out of “the combined idea” of simplicity and variety—a process of selection and combination in which “the picture is not so much the ultimate end as it is the medium, through which the ravishing scenes of nature are excited in the imagination.”⁵ The principle instrument in this search for the picturesque was the Claude glass, a small, tinted, slightly convex lens that would be used to frame a landscape, soften its edges, and reduce a scene to gray tones of light and shadow that would make it easier for an artist to sketch. Ironically, using the Claude glass (named for the way it allowed the average viewer to mimic Lorrain's pictures), required the observer to turn away from the natural landscape so that, with one's back to the view and one's eyes shielded from the sun, he or she could hold up the mirror and see the landscape reflected in it.⁶

While Turner's early paintings emulated the calm fusion of an ideal image of nature that typified Lorrain's work, his later style indicates a desire to immerse himself in a more direct, unmediated, untamed visual experience. “Seemingly out of nowhere,” Jonathan Crary observes, “[Turner's] painting of the late 1830s and 1840s signals the irrevocable loss of a fixed source of light, the dissolution of a cone of light rays, and the collapse of the distance separating the observer from the site of optical experience.”⁷ Each morning,

Turner would watch the sun rise out of his window, staring at the light and paying attention to the after-images that formed on the retina. The abstractness of his late style was so striking that some of his contemporaries wanted to attribute this shift to eye damage. One “eminent German oculist,” for instance, diagnosed him with an astigmatism in a lecture before the Royal Society in London. “The effect of astigmatization,” the doctor asserted, “is to elongate all perpendicular lines and almost to obliterate horizontal ones. A person whose eyes are so affected sees objects, he believes, correctly, but really sees them elongated and without accurate relations to horizontal lines.” The doctor reportedly proceeded to take out a stigmatized glass, hold it up to the later works of Turner, and reveal for the audience how the circular sfumatos of his late style were transformed back into a more “normal” landscape view.⁸ While the original audience may have found this display compelling, astigmatization has not held up to critical scrutiny as the primary cause of Turner's change in style.⁹

While Turner's techniques have been widely discussed and cannot be done justice here, a partial explanation for the transformation of his work in the 1830s and 1840s might be found in his increasingly informal and dynamic approach to filling in his canvases just days before they were to be exhibited.¹⁰ When his colleagues had perfected their finished work, he could often be found revising and editing his paintings in the final hours before an exhibition opened. The Royal Academy officially slotted three “varnishing days” to every one of its painters prior to an exhibition; this time allowed artists to tweak the tone or color contrasts in their works once they saw how they would appear when hanging on a wall frame-to-frame with other pieces. From the 1830s on Turner used this time to move dramatically from mere suggestions of shape and color on a canvas to a richly layered piece with sweeps of his palette knife. (In order to achieve a desired effect Turner was even known to have spit on a painting or to rub brown snuff on the canvas, habits that would have horrified most of his contemporaries.) Turner called for the Royal Academy to continue to allow its members the requisite number of varnishing days through the final decades of his career and believed they held an important social function within the art community. They allowed the artists to challenge one another, to learn from each others' successes and missteps as they watched their paintings emerge, without idealizing the paintings themselves as complete and overly precious material assets.¹¹ The artist's unique relationship to his artistic property, his sense that the paintings had little innate value that could match the far more important imaginative impressions they might make on viewers, was further signaled by the directions he gave his executors in his will. The 1831 version

(Continued on page 10)

The “As Yet Unconquered” Eye

(Continued from page 9)

of Turner’s will decreed that the nation should receive “all the Pictures, Drawings, and Sketches by the Testator’s hands without any distinction of finished or unfinished” (and, of course, such a distinction would have sometimes been hard to make).¹² By 1856, five years after the artist’s death, nearly 300 oil paintings and 30,000 watercolors and sketches were bestowed to England’s national galleries. The gifting of an entire collection to the general public was unprecedented.

Turner’s immersion in the process of painting and the bodily experience of perception, rather in the glorification of the intrinsic value of art, was an attitude which Emerson would have shared. Though he was a lover of painting, Emerson admitted that he was an unsure evaluator of the worth of a piece or the talent of its artist. After viewing the engravings a friend sent him of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, he replied, “Will you let me say, that I have conceived more highly of the possibilities of art sometimes in looking at weatherstains on a wall, or fantastic shapes which the eye makes out of shadows by lamplight, than from really finished & majestic pictures.”¹³ Seven years after his tours of the artwork within the churches and galleries of Italy, and seven years before coming face-to-face with Turner’s paintings in England, Emerson wrote in “Art,” “In landscapes, the painter should give the suggestion of a fairer experience than we know. The details, the prose of nature he should omit, and give us only the spirit and splendor.... The best pictures are rude draughts of a few of the miraculous dots and lines and dyes which make up the ever-changing ‘landscape with figures’ amidst which we dwell.”¹⁴

While many claimed that Turner approached his paintings like a poet, Emerson, “the Poet,” often conceptualized visual space like a painter.¹⁵ The poet, according to Emerson, is he who sees “the unique property” of the horizon and whose eye “can integrate all the parts.”¹⁶ The horizon, as both a symbolic structure and a real aspect of lived experience, extends the shallowness of the normal field of vision while also marking its limits.¹⁷ In his commentary on “beauty” in Nature, Emerson insists that “the health of the eye demands a horizon” to orient oneself within the vast expanse of experience. Thus what Turner understood about how to navigate the limits of a landscape view, Emerson understood as a historian, philosopher, and biographer: we only ever gain a partial view—yet what our incomplete picture suggests, the extent to which it inspires others to fill in new segments of the scene themselves, determines its value. During the first half of the nineteenth century panoramas, landscape paintings that displayed full 360 degree scenes as the viewer stood in the center, were already a widely popular and powerful visual trope.¹⁸ Yet rather than mindlessly allowing oneself to be overtaken by such a scene,

a poetic understanding of the horizon encourages viewing it as a heuristic marker of our own perceptual sense-making.¹⁹ As a figure that, for Emerson, is both visual and metaphorical, the horizon line was a reminder of the extent to which experience was mediated by one’s own bodily act of perceiving.

For Emerson, Turner, and western visual culture at large, the 1830s mark a significant shift in the discussions about and representations of vision. With the thinking about optics that led up to the patenting of Charles Wheatstone’s stereoscope in 1838, scientists begin to define the seeing body as binocular, to calculate the angle from which each eye could see, and to identify the physiological basis for the discrepancy.²⁰ Previous theories presupposed a singular monocular field, reasoning that either we only see objects in space one eye at a time or that the eye projects an object to its actual location. For Emerson, born a generation after Turner, a critical distance from the popular Claude glass exposed the instability of our visual access to the real world. On December 2, 1834, the 31-year-old Emerson wrote,

I look upon every sect as a Claude Lorraine glass through which I see the same sun & the same world & in the same relative places as through my own eyes but one makes them small, another large; one, green; another, blue; another, pink. I suppose that an Orthodox preacher’s cry “the natural man is an enemy of God” only translates the philosopher’s that “the instinct of the Understanding is to contradict the Reason”; so Luther’s Law & Gospel (also St Paul’s); Swedenborg’s love of self & love of the Lord; William Penn’s World & Spirit; the Court of Honor’s Gentleman & Knave. The dualism is ever present though variously denominated.²¹

Emerson’s heightened awareness of philosophical dualisms is underscored by a broader uncertainty about appearances. The eye remained unconquered yet, now, visual instability was becoming not a mark of deception but intrigue. Certainly, this cultural shift is also reflected in the increasingly abstract focus of Turner’s paintings in the 1830s and 1840s. Seemingly replacing the authoritative view of the transparent eyeball, the Claude glass still hovers over Emerson’s meditation in “Experience” with a distinct attention to the inescapably uncertain properties of our reflections: “Dream delivers us to dream, and there is no end to illusion. Life is a train of moods like a string of beads, and, as we pass through them, they prove to be many-colored lenses which paint the world their own hue, and each shows only what lies in its focus.... We animate what we can, and we see only what we animate.”²²

One has to imagine that, if Emerson and Turner had met and spoken, they would have agreed on a number of things: the contingency of appearances, the necessary instability of the eye’s access to reality, and the “spiritual” quality of art. In July of 1862, Ellery Channing brought Turner’s “Old

Téméraire” to Bush. It was to hang in Ellen’s room, Emerson remarked, “for a time, till she gets acquainted with it.”²³ By this point Emerson seems to have come to terms with the fact that “the ruin or the blank... is in our own eye,” a notion that had plagued him decades before.²⁴ “Well, ’tis all phantasm,” he concludes in the final essay in *The Conduct of Life*, “Illusions”:

And what avails it that science has come to treat space and time as simply forms of thought, and the material world as hypothetical, and withal our pretension of property and even of self-hood are fading with the rest, if, at last, even our thoughts are not finalities; but the incessant flowing and ascension reach these also, and each thought which yesterday was a finality, to-day is yielding to a larger generalization?... The notions, ‘I am,’ and ‘This is mine,’ which influence mankind are but delusions of the mother of the world.²⁵

National debates over how much land a man might need to farm, how many slaves he might own, or where territorial boundaries might be drawn erupted in the midst of an even deeper destabilization of the concept of property. Not only was one unsure of the security of his material possessions, even his own bodily processes were persistently unverifiable and unconquerable. As both Turner and Emerson come to realize, pure transparency—and absolute verifiability—are decidedly beyond the limits of human visibility.²⁶ Within a culture that was emphasizing the importance of moving from mystery to authentication, Emerson and Turner accept and animate the fall of an autonomous eye.

Notes

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Lidian Emerson, June 28, 1848, in *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk and Eleanor M. Tilton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939, 1990-1995), 4: 93. Hereafter abbreviated *Letters*. A record of Emerson’s encounter with Turner’s work, referenced in his journal and letters, can also be found in Albert J. von Frank’s *An Emerson Chronology* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1994), 235-236.
2. Charles Robert Leslie, “Leslie’s Personal Notes,” *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* (Volume 4, Number 3, 1860): 122. See also *Bulletin of the American Art Union* (Number 9, 1851): 151-152 for another lively description of Turner’s physical appearance.
3. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 16 vols., ed. William H. Gilman, Ralph H. Orth et al. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-1982), 10:538. Hereafter abbreviated *JMN*.
4. *JMN* 10:537.
5. Gilpin qtd. in Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1997), 75-76.
6. Michael Kitson, “Claude Lorrain,” *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 49.
7. Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992): 138.
8. M. D. Conway, “Turner, the Landscape Painter, His Later-Years’ Obliquity of Vision. A Singular Discovery.—Interesting Facts and Hints for all Painters and Connoisseurs—A Future Special Chapter on Art.” *American Antiquarian Society* clip file [1872?].



The Fighting Téméraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up (the “Old Téméraire” of Emerson’s letter), 1838 (1839). Credit: The National Gallery, Turner Bequest, 1856. Image © The National Gallery.

Dominique Zino is a Ph.D. candidate in English at the CUNY Graduate Center, working on a dissertation that explores the ways in which nineteenth-century visual cultural paradigms and research on psychological optics are expressed in the work of Emerson, Emily Dickinson, William James, and Henry James. The nineteenth-century art periodicals cited in this article are located at the American Antiquarian Society, where Dominique was a Jay and Deborah Last Fellow during the summer of 2011. She would like to thank the Antiquarian Society staff, especially Lauren Hewes, for pointing her to these sources.

9. Despite the fact that some of his contemporaries may have accused him of having a “diseased eye” (which implies a condemnation that probably has more to do with his aesthetic judgments than his physiological condition), modern biographies of Turner, such as James Hamilton’s *Turner: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2003), Anthony Bailey’s *Standing in the Sun: A Life of J.M.W. Turner* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), and John Gage’s *J.M.W. Turner: “A Wonderful Range of Mind”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), do not try to “diagnose” the artist in order to explain his style. The move, however, to locate a physiological “cause” for stylistic experimentation, to consider optical experience as something rooted in—and thus regulated through—the body of the observer, is a telling indication of the nineteenth-century’s juridical approach to vision, which Crary describes in depth in *Techniques of the Observer*.

10. See entries categorized under “Media & Techniques” and “Working Practices” in *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner* for a preliminary sense of Turner’s complex process.

11. For more on Turner’s treatment of the canvases on varnishing days, and his competition with Constable, see *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner*, 354-357.

12. N.R.D. Powell, “Will and Bequest” in *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner*, 382.

13. *Letters* 7:358.

14. *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson, Joseph Slater, Douglas Emory Wilson, Ronald A. Bosco, et al. 9 vols to date. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971—), 2:209, 212. Hereafter abbreviated *CW*.

(Continued on page 12)

The "As Yet Unconquered" Eye

(Continued from page 11)

15. In annual exhibition catalogues, Turner often paired his paintings with poetic verses. After 1812, in fact, the verses were mostly ones he had written himself, the majority from his series of poems, *Fallacies of Hope*. See *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner*, 271.

16. *CW* 1:9.

17. For Emerson, it functions both a figure of hope and of frustration. In his remarks on the horizon in *Nature*, Emerson insists, "We are never tired so long as we can see far enough" (*CW* 1:13). Yet, elsewhere, in "Experience," he writes, "Every ship is a romantic object except that we sail in. Embark, and the romance quits our vessel, and hangs on every other sail in the horizon. Our life looks trivial, and we shun to record it. Men seem to have learned of the horizon the art of perpetual retreating and reference" (*CW* 3:28).

18. See Stephen Oettermann, *The Panorama, History of a Mass Medium* (New York: Zone Books, 1997).

19. "What is man but a finer and compacter landscape, than the horizon figures—nature's eclecticism?" Emerson asks in "Art" (*CW* 2:209).

20. Crary 119.

21. *JMN* 4:348

22. *CW* 3:30.

23. *Letters* 5:284.

24. *CW* 1:43. In early 1825, eleven years before the publication of *Nature*, Emerson was struck with a series of headaches, which were likely the result of uveitis, a rheumatic inflammation of the eye that was probably caused by tuberculosis. He underwent two operations in which his cornea was punctured by a cataract knife and was forced to stop writing in his journal. The "ruin" he feared was both spiritual and physiological.

25. *CW* 6:171, 173. Emphasis in original.

26. Crary suggests this with regard to Turner, 71.

Emerson Society Awards 2012

The Emerson Society is pleased to announce the recipients of the annual community project, research, subvention, and graduate student paper awards.

COMMUNITY PROJECT AWARD (\$500)

Illinois Humanities Council, Chicago, Illinois

The Odyssey Project, "An American Inheritance: Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Baldwin"

The Odyssey Project is part of the Illinois Humanities Council. From the grant proposal: "The Odyssey Project is a free eight-month college course of study in the humanities for individuals living on low incomes, minorities, first-generation students, and adult learners. Participants meet twice a week for courses in philosophy, literature, critical thinking, writing, and history taught by professors from top academic institutions. Students who successfully complete the program earn six hours of transferable college credit from Bard College.

"This six-part seminar will use the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson and James Baldwin to help students reflect on American democracy and the Emersonian tradition. While college-level courses typically offer Baldwin alongside other African-American writers and Emerson within an antebellum or transcendentalist context, this discussion series will show Baldwin to be one of Emerson's most important heirs." For more information about The Odyssey Project, see the program's website: www.prairie.org/programs/odyssey-project.

Funding from the Emerson Society will help the Odyssey Project pay for students' transportation costs, photocopies of students' reading materials, and an honorarium for a guest speaker.

RESEARCH AWARD (\$500)

Mark Russell Gallagher (Department of English, University of California, Los Angeles)

"Friending Emerson: *The Conduct of Life* and The Social Network of the Saturday Club"

Mr. Gallagher explains: "My project aims to read Emerson's

The Conduct of Life (1860) as a product of this social network and as a manifestation of the American Victorian culture that emerges during the 1850s."

This project is part of Mr. Gallagher's dissertation at UCLA. Mr. Gallagher proposes to use funding from the Emerson Society to offset travel costs to Boston, where he will conduct research at the Massachusetts Historical Society, which houses Edward Emerson's records of the Saturday Club.

SUBVENTION AWARD (\$500)

David LaRocca (Independent scholar, New York City)

Estimating Emerson: An Anthology of Criticism from Carlyle to Cavell (Continuum: Dec. 2012)

From Dr. LaRocca's application: "My aim is to collect the best criticism on Emerson written between 1841 and the present, focusing especially on gathering the hardest to find work. The hope is to create an essential resource for scholarly research and an engaging set of readings for a general audience."

Funding from the Emerson Society will offset costs of permissions for this collection.

GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD

This award provides travel support to present a paper on an Emerson Society panel at either the American Literature Association meeting or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering. Two winners will share the award this year, both for presentations at the Annual Gathering in July 2012.

Deeanna Rohr (State University of New York at Albany)

"The Mystical Fissure of Thoreau and Emerson: Emerson's Antagonistic 'Contribution' to Thoreau's Mysticism"

Andrew Kopec (The Ohio State University)

"Going Nowhere in a Go-Ahead Age: Thoreau, Emerson, and the Problem of Ambition"