



*R.W.E.*

Volume 23, Number 2

Fall 2012

# EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

## Distinguished Achievement Award Presented to Laura Dassow Walls

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society is pleased to present its 2012 Distinguished Achievement Award to Laura Dassow Walls, William P. and Hazel B. White Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame. Professor Walls is the author or editor of several books and articles on Transcendentalist authors, including *Seeing New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Natural Science* (Wisconsin, 1995), *Emerson's Life in Science: The Culture of Truth* (Cornell, 2003), and, most recently, the award-winning *Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America* (Chicago, 2009). With Joel Myerson and Sandra Harbert Petrulionis, she edited the recent *Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism* (Oxford, 2010). For the project on which she is currently under way, a new biography of Thoreau, Professor Walls was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in 2010.

Professor Walls earned her B.A. and M.A. at the University of Washington and her Ph.D. at Indiana University. Before joining the faculty at Notre Dame in 2012, she taught at Lafayette College and the University of South Carolina. Her scholarship has restored vital components of their intellectual foundation to American Transcendentalist authors—their identities as natural philosophers and committed members of a transnational, cosmopolitan society and culture. Working against the “two cultures” divide, she recovers the Transcendentalists as thinkers consumed with the ideas of nineteenth-century science, as authors who were not just familiar with but deeply immersed in the “very intimacy” of the material world and its theoretical underpinnings. Cued by Thoreau’s acknowledgement that “every poet has trembled on the verge of science,” Professor Walls examines the close alignment of

the Romantic authors’ thinking with the tangible, physical world. Thanks to her insights, Thoreau’s copious phenological charts have become central to our understanding of his insistence on wildness; the importance of Emerson’s visit in 1833 to the Paris Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle grounds her conclusion that Emerson “becomes a lens through which to survey the wider world of the meaning of science to readers and writers of the nineteenth century.”

Leading figures across the disciplines attest to Professor Walls’s success in achieving this manifest goal of re-joining



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME



LAURA DASSOW WALLS

Laura Dassow Walls, standing in the tarns below Yellow Aster Butte, North Cascades, with Mt. Baker behind.

the disciplinary chasm. Pulitzer-prize winning historian Daniel Walker Howe recognizes her for “bridg[ing] the worlds of science and the humanities with learning and sensitivity.” Lawrence Buell calls for *Passage to Cosmos* to be “required reading for all students of nineteenth-century U.S. literary, cultural, and environmental history.” Robert D.

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## 2012 EMERSON SOCIETY DONORS

Emerson Society members continue generously to join at various "patron" levels of membership. All donations above the \$20 annual regular membership go to support special programs of the Society. Dues categories are Life (\$500), Sustaining (\$50), Contributing (\$35), Regular (\$20), and Student (\$5). 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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Ryoichi Fuji

## PROSPECTS.



### NEH Summer Institute on Transcendentalism and Social Action, Concord, 2013

Life Member **Sterling F. ("Rick") Delano** sends word that he has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to direct a two-week Summer Institute on "Transcendentalism and Social Action in the Age of Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller." The Summer Institute will be held in Concord, Massachusetts, from July 7 to 20, 2013.

NEH Summer Institutes are designed primarily for teachers of American undergraduate students. Qualified independent scholars and those employed by museums, libraries, historical societies, and other organizations may be eligible to compete, provided they can effectively advance the teaching and research goals of the project.

Twenty-five Summer Institute Scholars will be selected to participate. Three Summer Institute spaces are reserved for current full-time graduate students in the humanities. Community college faculty, adjunct faculty, and first-time participants are also encouraged to apply. A generous stipend is provided to participants. S. I. Scholars will stay at Concord's historic Colonial Inn.

From 2009 to 2012, Rick was Co-Director of the popular NEH "Landmarks of American History and Culture" program held each year in Concord, Massachusetts, so it's fair to say that he has traveled a good deal in Concord.

NEH Summer Institute Scholars in July 2013 will have the opportunity to work closely with many distinguished colleagues who comprise the program faculty, among them Phyllis Cole, Robert Gross, John Matteson, Wesley Mott, Joel Myerson, Sandra Petrulionis, Laura Dassow Walls, and Leslie Perrin Wilson. S. I. Scholars will also spend time in the Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library, and will visit all the relevant literary and historical sites in Concord. Two days of the program will be spent in Boston at the Massachusetts Historical Society and on the African American Heritage Trail.

For further information, visit [www.neh.gov/projects/si-university.html](http://www.neh.gov/projects/si-university.html), or contact Rick directly at [sterling.delano@vil-lanova.edu](mailto:sterling.delano@vil-lanova.edu). Application deadline is March 1, 2013.

### Emerson Sightings/Citings

**Clarence Burley**, transcendental sleuth, has noted the commemoration of Emerson's birthday in the Writer's Almanac for May 25, 2012. Garrison Keillor quotes from the poem "Merlin's Song"—"Live in the sunshine, swim in the sea, drink the wild air"—and notes that Emerson's birthday is shared with fellow writers Raymond Carver and Theodore Roethke. Read the full article at <http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php?date=2012/05/25>.

**Bethany Stewart**, an English Education student at Ball State University, passes along the news of Phi Tau Nu fraternity at Hope College in Michigan, a group that goes by the name "Emersoni-

ans." The organization was founded in 1919 as the Emerson Literary Society and has retained that name in honor of their "patron saint." For a history of the fraternity and its connections with Emerson, visit <http://www.hope.edu/student/life/greek/emersonian/history.html>.

My friend and Ball State colleague **Paul W. Ranieri** spotted this Emersonian reference in a somewhat unlikely place:

Chad Harbach in *The Art of Fielding* (Little, Brown, 2011) frames his narrative with the story of Emerson's opening up the coffin of his first wife, Ellen (pp. 118, 489, 500). Harbach's first novel, which blends university life, baseball, and multiple references to American literature and culture, has been well received by critics. In his "Acknowledgments" he credits Robert D. Richardson, Jr. (*Emerson: The Mind on Fire*) as the source for his story of Waldo and Ellen Emerson.

Emerson was spotted in the 2012 political campaigns. **Clarence Burley** notes that *The Christian Science Monitor* (July 24, 2012), in an article entitled "Will the 2012 campaign be a record for lies—and charges of lying?" quotes Emerson's cautionary line from the essay "Prudence" (1841), "Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society." **Steven C. Bullock** of Worcester Polytechnic Institute notes that Emerson's famous "Are they my poor?" quote comes up in a discussion of self-reliance, Paul Ryan-style, by Leon Wieseltier in his essay "His Grief, and Ours: Paul Ryan's Nasty Ideal of Self-reliance" (*New Republic*, August 24, 2012.) For the entire article, visit <http://www.tnr.com/article/magazine/politics/106459/paul-ryan-nasty-philosophy-self-reliance-ayn-rand?page=0.0#>. And **Clarence Burley** points out a passage from Doris Kearns Goodwin's introduction to her *Team of Rivals* (Simon & Schuster, 2005) that reveals Emerson's tepid first reaction to a reformist president in a time of war:

When Lincoln won the nomination each of his celebrated rivals believed the wrong man had been chosen. Ralph Waldo Emerson recalled his first reception of the news that the "comparatively unknown of Lincoln" had been selected: "we heard the result coldly and sadly. It seemed too rash, on a purely local reputation, to build so grave a trust in such anxious times." (xv-xvi)

### From the President...

Our June 2012 board and business meetings in Florence, Italy were memorable not only for their stunning location but for several decisions that will strengthen the Society as we move into our third decade. The minutes printed elsewhere in this issue of *ESP* give the full story, but here are some important highlights:

- **Expansion of our web presence.** In addition to the biannual *Emerson Society Papers*, we continue to develop our web site at [emersonsociety.org](http://emersonsociety.org), thanks to the work of Amy Earhart, who supervises our web pages. On our site you can now find title/author listings for the first 20 volumes of *ESP*, our Society's constitution and bylaws, the most recent annual bibliography of Emerson studies, calls for proposals, and announcements about awards and award winners, as well as our expanding collection of Emerson images and memorabilia.
- **Emerson Society on social media.** Thanks to Leslie Eckel and Bonnie O'Neill, you can now visit the Emerson Society on Facebook. That presence is still under development, but please visit, offer your suggestions, and remember to "like" us on Facebook. Our Facebook presence will allow for more timely announcements of calls for papers and other news and opportunities for members.

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### EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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

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Editor: Robert D. Habich  
Book Review Editor: Jennifer Gurley  
Editorial Assistant: Tricia Johnson  
Design and Production: Peggy Isaacson

*Emerson Society Papers* is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are \$20 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 [rhabich@bsu.edu](mailto:rhabich@bsu.edu).

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

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### EDITOR, ESP

Robert D. Habich (2012)  
*Ball State University*



## PROSPECTS

(Continued from page 3)

- **Options for the delivery of ESP.** Beginning with the spring 2013 issue, members may now choose to receive *ESP* either electronically (as a pdf attached to email) or in traditional paper form via surface mail. We encourage electronic delivery: it is faster, more environmentally friendly, and less expensive, as we continue to cope with rising costs of production and postage.
- **PayPal option for paying dues.** Thanks to the work of our treasurer, Todd Richardson, members may now pay their annual dues electronically via our PayPal account, which dramatically streamlines the process of both paying and depositing dues, especially for our international members.
- **New membership goals.** Our membership remains robust at around 200, but we have set an ambitious target: to double our membership to 400 over the next few years. Help us achieve it by recommending the Society to interested friends and colleagues, involving students in the Society, giving gift memberships, and encouraging your college or public library to subscribe to *ESP*. (At \$20/year, it's an unheard-of bargain for libraries!)
- **Increase in dues amounts at regular and contributing levels.** Though the cost of virtually everything else we pay for has risen in the past 20+ years, Society dues have remained the same since they were set in 1989. In order to continue the good work of our awards program, to pay for printing/designing/mailling *ESP*, and to seek out opportunities like the Florence conference held this summer, the Board recommended and the membership agreed to a modest increase at the regular and contributing member levels. *Beginning with the 2013 dues, regular membership will be \$20/year and contributing membership will be \$35.* Sustaining (\$50) and Life (\$500) memberships remain the same, and we will actively welcome student members at just \$5.
- **Tax-exempt status.** Like several thousand other non-profits around the United States, the Emerson Society is in the process of re-applying for its federal tax-exempt status, with the generous assistance of an experienced tax lawyer. Further news will be forthcoming.
- **Changes on the Board.** We welcome two new Board members, Noelle Baker and Joseph Urbas, whose three-year terms will begin on January 1, 2013. Both bring exceptional talents to the Board. Noelle is an independent scholar, working on the Mary Moody Emerson and Thoreau editions; Joseph is a professor of American Literature at Université Michel Montaigne in Bordeaux, France, working on Emerson and philosophy. Many thanks to outgoing Board members Sandra Morris and Bonnie O'Neill for their energy and ideas.
- **New editor of ESP.** My three-year term as editor of *ESP* expires with this issue; I will be succeeded by our new editor Jennifer Gurley and by Leslie Eckel, who will replace Jennifer as book review editor. My sincere thanks to Jennifer, Leslie, and the dozens of contributors, reviewers, student assistants, and Emerson spotters who have made *ESP* such a good read. It's been my pleasure to serve as editor. My term as president will continue a while longer, through the end of 2013.

—RDH

## Packer Fellowship Awarded to James S. Finley

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."

Finley earned his B.A. at Grinnell College and his M.A. at the University of New Hampshire. His dissertation addresses environmental critiques of the slave system. The project argues that a group of antislavery authors radicalized Free Soil ideology, taking its emphasis on land and labor and deploying it toward environmental and antiracist ends. In addition, it examines how Transcendentalists such as Thoreau and Emerson fused their interest in the natural environment with social justice and abolitionism.

James plans to be in residence at the AAS in spring 2013. In the meantime, he reports, "I'm now writing the dissertation (having just finished a draft of my first chapter) and working as a research assistant for one of my advisors at UNH, Siobhan Senier, on a digital humanities project concerning Indigenous New England literature." He has also conducted research this summer at the Thoreau Institute and the New Hampshire Historical Society, researching Thoreau and abolitionist Nathaniel Rogers.

The official AAS description of the fellowship reads: "The Packer Fellowship is named for Barbara Lee Packer (1947-2010), who taught with great distinction for thirty years in the UCLA English department. She is remembered as an inspiring teacher, a lively and learned writer, and a helpful friend to all scholars in her field—in short, as a consummate professional whose undisguised delight in literature was the secret of a long-sustained success. In naming the Fellowship for her, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society offers her as a model worthy of the attention and emulation of scholars newly entering the field. The Barbara L. Packer Fellowship is awarded to individuals engaged in scholarly research and writing related to the Transcendentalists in general, and most especially to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau. It is open to both postdoctoral scholars and graduate students at work on doctoral dissertations."

Directed by Professor Albert J. von Frank, the campaign for the Packer Fellowship began in the spring of 2011. With a major gift from the Emerson Society and generous donations from members and friends of the Society, the AAS opened the first Fellowship to competition last fall. A committee of senior scholars was named by the Emerson Society to collaborate in the selection

process with AAS staff, led by Director of Academic Programs Paul Erickson. "The Barbara L. Packer Fellows," according to the guidelines, "are selected on the basis of the applicant's scholarly qualifications, the scholarly significance or importance of the project, and the appropriateness of the proposed study to the Society's collections."

The Emerson Society is pleased to be working in partnership with the AAS to provide a living tribute to our dear friend and colleague Barbara L. Packer.



Board member Jessie Bray congratulates James S. Finley, Ph.D. student at UNH and recipient of the inaugural Barbara L. Packer Fellowship.

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## 2012 Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society convened at 8:15 a.m., June 9, 2012, in the Cipressi Room at La Pietra, Florence, Italy. Robert D. Habich presided.

- 1) 2011 minutes approved
- 2) 2012 treasurer's report approved. President Habich thanked Todd Richardson for his excellent work as secretary/treasurer.

### Announcements and updates

- 1) Annual award winners (for details see *ESP* sp12, p. 12)
  - a) Illinois Humanities Council (Community Project)
  - b) Mark Russell Gallagher, UCLA (Research)
  - c) David LaRocca (Subvention)
  - d) Deanna Rohr, U at Albany, and Andrew Kopec, Ohio SU (Grad Student Paper)
  - e) James E. Finley, U New Hampshire (Packer Fellowship)
- 2) Distinguished Achievement Award winner: DAA Committee has chosen Laura Dassow Walls, Notre Dame—confidential until she is notified.
- 3) Collections policy progress: Past President Wesley Mott reported that he has been in conversation with Kevin van Anglen of the Thoreau Society, and Jeff Cramer of the Thoreau Institute and Henley Library about their collections policy as he is in the process of formulating a policy for the Emerson Society.
- 4) Volume 10 of The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Uncollected Writings*, has been announced by Harvard as available November 17, 2012; publication date is 2013. Congratulations to all, especially Ron Bosco and Joel Myerson.
- 5) Amendment to the bylaws concerning the filling of vacated board terms was unanimously passed by RWES membership in February.
- 6) RWES tax exemption lapsed in May 2011, but we were not notified of the change until February 2012. President Habich, along with Todd and Wes, has been working with tax attorney Jane von Frank, who is doing the work pro bono. She hopes to complete the work later this month. She will require a fee of \$300 to accompany form 1023. The Board gave approval for the \$300 fee yesterday. We would also like to send Jane a gift card to the nicest restaurant in Pullman, Washington.
- 7) President Habich thanked Sandra Morris and Bonnie O'Neill, whose terms on the Board end this year. He also thanked Program Chair Leslie Eckel, who was responsible for our excellent panels at ALA and the AG; Jennifer Gurley, who will be new editor of *ESP* after Bob's term ends with the fall 2012 issue; and Leslie Eckel, who will take over as book review editor of *ESP* and has agreed to set up a Facebook page for the Society. Thanks as well to Bonnie O'Neill and Jessie Bray, who once again served as reviewers for our annual awards.

### Business

- 1) Announcement from David Robinson regarding a new book on Emerson to be published by Dieter Schulz.

- 2) PayPal account: brief discussion regarding this account for receiving dues payments for the Emerson Society.

3) Noelle Baker and Joseph Urbas to serve as board members. As Bob reported, Noelle is an independent scholar, working on MME and HDT editions; Joseph is professor of American Literature at Université Michel Montaigne in Bordeaux, France, working on Emerson and philosophy. Approved.

4) Packer Fellowship review committee: This committee membership will remain anonymous. The committee members will be selected by the RWES board and will have staggered three-year terms. The member in his/her third year will become chair. Wes will see to the details. Bob offered his thanks to the committee members.

5) The Board proposes that RWES membership be increased from \$10 to \$20 for regular membership and from \$25 to \$35 for contributing membership. The rates for student, sustaining, and life membership will remain unchanged at \$5, \$50, and \$500, respectively. The new dues structure will take effect for membership year 2013. Approved.

6) According to President Habich, our options regarding *ESP* include posting pdfs on our web site, emailing pdfs to those who prefer electronic delivery, or keeping the status quo. He noted that it now costs more than \$10/year per member to design, print, and mail both issues of *ESP*, so we lose money on every regular membership. We will now offer each member the option of receiving *ESP* in print or digitally, with a check-off box on the annual renewal form beginning with 2013. We will keep open the option of posting back issues on our web site. Bob will look into other library database possibilities besides JSTOR. Jennifer will consider more options after she takes over as *ESP*'s editor. The new dues structure will help cover the costs of paper-copy *ESP*.

7) Suggestions for increasing our membership. Bob has sent invitations to all who appear in the annual *ESP* bibliography but are not members. Other ideas include:

- Set a membership goal of 400 within the next couple of years.
- Develop a Facebook page (Leslie volunteered to do this; thank you, Leslie)
- Contact allied societies to share membership lists
- Revise brochure and distribute it electronically
- Involve high school teachers and students (Sandra discussed her experience with this idea)
- Jennifer recommended a new feature in *ESP*, "My Emerson"
- Promote local discussion groups.

8) Next year's meeting time and place: American Literature Association, Boston, May 23-26, 2013

9) Other business? None.

Adjournment at 8:56 a.m.

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



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

June 8, 2012

### Membership and Comparisons (as of May 17, 2012)

	May 2005	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008	May 2009	May 2010	May 2011	May 2012
Total membership	183	194	210	184	176	165	160	181
Life members	22	22	22	25	26	27	27	31
Sustaining members	18	18	25	29	19	20	18	24
Contributing members	46	51	55	41	40	41	52	49
New Members	11	22	40	15	19	17	12	15
States represented	35	43	43	38	35	31 (+D.C.)	34	32
Non-U.S. countries	6	10	10	13	12	10	9	11

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

### Finances (as of May 1, 2012)

\$ 28,115	Balance, May 1, 2011	\$ 4,359	Current balance, checking account
5,803	Credits	7,631	Current balance, savings account
14,875	Debits	7,053	Current balance, CD
\$ 19,843	Balance, May 1, 2012	\$19,043	Current assets, May 1, 2012

Major *debits* for the year ending May 1, 2012, include our donation of \$10,000 to the American Antiquarian Society for the Barbara Packer Fellowship, the Graduate Student paper award (\$750), Subvention award (\$500), Research grant (\$500), contribution to the Thoreau Society for the 2012 Annual Gathering (\$250), printing and envelopes for Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 ESP (\$1,255), design and layout of Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 ESP (\$1,000).

*Credits* for the four months ending May 1, 2012, include membership dues and donations (\$5,755) and interest on savings (\$48).

#### Additional notes:

- Total membership is up by 21 members—a very favorable development. There is a discrepancy between this figure and the 13 new members. Most likely this can

be attributed to lapsed members returning to the fold and to new members who did not indicate on the membership form that they were new members.

- Our balance is down about \$9,000 from last year. This can be attributed exclusively to our contribution to the Packer Fellowship. Aside from this one-time charge, our credits have increased for the year.
- Our affiliation with the West Texas Educators Credit Union has ended. I cashed in our CD held at that institution for the Packer Fellowship. We incurred a small charge (\$23) for early withdrawal.

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

## Emersonians Gather in Florence for Conversazioni in Italia: Emerson, Hawthorne, and Poe

On a warm day in early June, three years of planning culminated in the international conference “Conversazioni in Italia,” cosponsored by the Emerson Society and our friends in the Poe Studies Association and Hawthorne Society. The conference was held from June 8 through 10, 2012, at La Pietra International Conference and Events Center, a 56-acre estate on the northern edge of Florence, Italy, overlooking the Tuscan hills. Some 120 participants from 19 countries and four continents participated in three days of presentations, shared learning, and good company, with musical performances, fine meals, a visit to the world-

famous Uffizi art gallery, plenary addresses by Richard Kopley and Emerson Society Board member Dieter Schulz, and the occasional glass of wine. The photographs reproduced here can only hint at what was, for the conference's participants, a thoroughly memorable event.

Sincere thanks to those Emerson Society members who were instrumental in the planning of the event: Sue Dunston, Jennifer Gurley, Dan Malachuk, and Todd Richardson.

A program is posted online:

<http://web2.uconn.edu/transatlanticlit/Schedule.pdf>



Florence's Santa Maria Novella plaza,  
site of several of the conference hotels (Photo: Wes Mott)



Conference program (Courtesy Jennifer Gurley and LeMoyne College)



Emersonians enjoy dinner on the grounds of La Pietra. From left, Leslie Eckel, Jennifer Gurley, Joseph Urbas, David Greenham, Todd Richardson, and Wes Mott. (Photo: Sandy Mott)





David Greenham discusses "Emerson and Europe" with panelists Andrew Sidle and Kristin Boudreau, and moderator Todd Richardson



Jennifer Gurley, one of the Society's members on the conference committee, introduces board member Dieter Schulz, who gave the closing address, "Transcendence: Emerson, Poe and the Metaphysics of the One"



SANDY MOTT

Some of the Emersonians attending the Florence conference gather on the grounds of La Pietra (PHOTO: SANDY MOTT)



Clockwise, from left, Masahiko Narita, Todd Richardson, Nikhil Bilwakesh, and Neal Dolan pause after their session "Emerson and Social Reform" • Moderator Yuji Kato and program chair Leslie Eckel relax after her presentation on the panel "Emerson's Politics in Europe" • Past president David M. Robinson discusses Emerson's philosophy with Heikki Kovalainen • Sandy Mott and past president Wes Mott relax near the Ponte Vecchio on Florence's Arno River • Conference participants on their way to Villa Sassetti, the conference headquarters on the grounds of La Pietra • Brenda Yates Habich and friends on Florence's Piazza della Signoria • Emersonians visit the tomb of Michelangelo in the Basilica di Santa Croce in Florence: from left, Bob Habich, Brenda Yates Habich, Sandy Mott, Todd Richardson, and Wes Mott • The Arno, viewed from the balcony of the Uffizzi Gallery, where conference participants toured the collections



WES MOTT



WES MOTT





## Emerson Society Panels at the American Literature Association, 2012

*The Emerson Society presented two panels at the 23rd Annual American Literature Association Conference, which was held from May 24 to 27, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco in Embarcadero Center. The sessions were ably (as always) arranged by Leslie Eckel, program chair. Abstracts appear below.*

### SESSION I: Emerson and African American Writers, Friday, May 25

Chair, Richard Hardack,  
*Independent Scholar*

#### Emerson, Douglass, and the Politics of Private Life

BONNIE CARR O'NEILL, *Mississippi State University*

Drawing on theories of public and private spheres as well as analysis of the works of both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Frederick Douglass, the paper traces the political dimensions of Douglass's claims to privacy. Emersonian self-reliance regards privacy and publicity as complementary, each necessary in itself and at the same time giving value and meaning to the other. Notwithstanding interest in his personal story, Douglass managed his public image to preserve his family relationships and friendships, and his career as a spokesman for black equality gains its power from the contrast between his public visibility and his claims of privacy. Because it is earned through public action, Douglass's privacy differs profoundly from the condition of the slave, whose existence is restricted to the master's private sphere. Resting his claim of public authority on his carefully protected privacy, Douglass's work makes explicit the assumption of privilege in Emerson's writings. He highlights the ways that the privacy Emerson values is not just a counterpart to public action but a privilege of citizenship and a sign of political legitimacy.

#### Emotions, Ethics, and Double Consciousness in the Work of Emerson and Du Bois

RYAN SCHNEIDER, *Purdue University*

This paper examines the role of affect in shaping the concept of double consciousness in the reform writings of Emerson and Du Bois. While I touch briefly on the intellectual origins of double consciousness (Hegelian philosophy, Lamarckian science, Jamesian psychology), my analysis is devoted mainly to the emotional discourse that gives this idea its shape and substance—and how Du Bois's and Emerson's respective strategies for articulating the affective qualities of double consciousness undergird and dramatize the ethical stakes of individual and social reform. I offer a comparative analysis of Du Bois's treatment of emotions, ethics, and double consciousness (in works such as "The Conservation of Races" and *The Souls of Black Folk*) by bringing it into juxtaposition with the affective and ethical aspects of Emersonian double consciousness, a concept he addresses in "The Transcendentalist" and (most famously) in "Fate." Comparing these narratives of double consciousness reveals its special relevance to the notions of ethical leadership that govern each man's vision of reform.

#### Which Emerson and African-American Writers? The Case of Morrison's *Sula*

JAMES M. ALBRECHT, *Pacific Lutheran University*

Emerson's relation to African-American writers is never simply a matter of reading the Emersonian allusions in a specific text, but involves the question of *which* Emerson is being assumed. At issue, usually, is whether Emerson's ethics are inescapably co-opted by classic liberal ideology. Typically, Emerson's individualist ethics are viewed as endorsing a politics that cannot account for the social structures of racial inequality: self-reliance may be viable for the privileged who enjoy meaningful opportunities to cultivate their individuality, but for African-Americans it is a bitterly ironic false hope. Yet when Emerson's model of individuality is seen as offering an *alternative* to classic liberalism—for instance, one that anticipates John Dewey's ideal of democracy-as-community—a more nuanced version of Emerson's relation to African-American writers emerges. Toni Morrison's *Sula* provides an intriguing case in point. Readers familiar with Emerson can't help but be struck by the Emersonian echoes in Morrison's nonconformist heroine, Sula Peace. Cyrus Patell's reading of *Sula* perpetuates the standard critical narrative outlined above: viewing Emerson as a champion of liberalism's merely "negative" conception of liberty, Patell reads *Sula* Peace as an extreme and ultimately bleak example of self-reliance. By contrast, I argue that *Sula*—and her friendship with the novel's twin protagonist, Nel—embodies an alternative model of relationship that incorporates an Emersonian commitment to nonconformist individuality-in-community.

### SESSION II: Emerson and Lincoln, Friday, May 25

Chair, Susan Dunston,  
*New Mexico Tech*

#### The Emerson-Lincoln Relationship

JEAN M. MUDGE, *Independent Scholar and Documentary Filmmaker*

This paper explores how Emerson's and Lincoln's paths coalesced over several years, beginning in the early 1850s, first tracing how each came to know of the other, then following their relationship as it climaxed over the issue of emancipation after the two met at the White House in early February 1862. Both Emerson and Lincoln agreed about the need to end slavery but differed on its place and pace as a Civil War goal. At their meeting, each took measure of the other. Later, Lincoln could appreciate Emerson's measured views on emancipation

and his political savvy when his January "American Civilization" speech on that subject was published with a new coda in the April issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He also read Emerson's *Representative Men*. Emerson cheered Lincoln's public progress throughout 1862 as the president waited for a Northern victory to strengthen his hand before issuing a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Finally, Antietam's Northern "victory" in late September gave him that opportunity. Emerson's Transcendentalist ideas as applied to slavery appear to have influenced Lincoln's thinking, evidently his perspective, and perhaps even his expression. And thereafter Emerson promoted Lincoln at every opportunity, including a penetrating elegy for Lincoln after his death.

#### Lincoln, Emerson, and the American Representative Man

MATTHEW MCCLELLAND, *New York University*

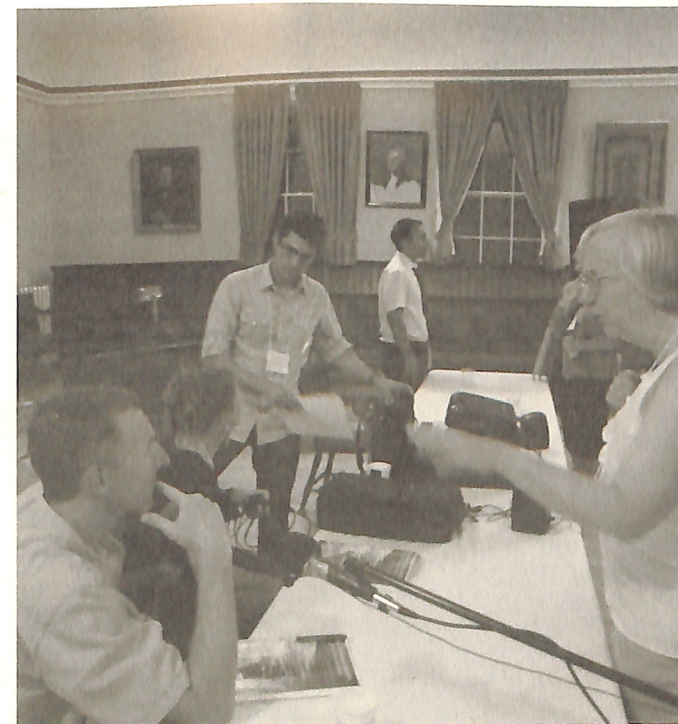
This paper situates Emerson's 1850's idea of the "Representative Man" within the context of the public address he delivered in Concord on April 19, 1865, just four days after Lincoln's death. It shows how for Emerson, Lincoln became "the true history of the American people in his time," and thus allowed Emerson to recast a singularly American version of what had previously been his own non-nationalistic idea. Drawing upon a little known fact of commemorative American history, that the man responsible for the statue of Lincoln at Washington, D.C.'s Lincoln Memorial, Daniel Chester French, was also one of Emerson's young protégés, the paper also explores the distinction between the public and private intellectual, arguing that the literary monument that is Emerson's work secures a "infinitely private" mutability that does not seem available to the public works demonstrated by Lincoln's presidency, or the cultural representations that have served to depict Lincoln.

#### The Craft of Freedom: Emerson, Lincoln, and the Artisanal Ideal

PETER BETJEMANN, *Oregon State University*

A classic definition of craft—apparent in texts ranging from Plato's *Republic* to recent theoretical treatments of artisanship—centers on the artisan's dedication, focus, careful sequence, teleological process, and intentional pursuit of a single goal. For Emerson, abolition demanded such virtues. In his eulogy for Lincoln, Emerson praises the President for coming so "slowly, and yet by happily prepared steps" to what he describes as the progressive "work" and "labor" of freedom itself. Such statements (joined, in the first half of my paper, to visual images that typify the Platonic model of artisanship in nineteenth-century material culture) justify the long delay between Fort Sumter and the Emancipation Proclamation by citing Lincoln's artisanal process.

The second half of my paper complicates the picture, arguing that Emerson's image of emancipation as a Platonic craft (that is, a narrow pursuit of a single purpose) coexists with an alternate view of artisanship, emerging in the mid-nineteenth century and equally apparent in Emerson's writing about Lincoln and abolition. This view, allied to Republican arguments about free labor and typified by the rise of "rustic" furniture as a model for the handcrafted, stressed not training and singularity of purpose but the generic instinct of artisans for labor. In depicting Lincoln's craft of emancipation as much in terms of instinct as in terms of intentionality, Emerson tapped mainstream associations of Lincoln with rustic handiwork and with a relatively freeform practice. Understanding Emerson's links between craft, freedom, and Lincoln thus depends on understanding how notions of artisanship were evolving away from the Platonic model. Lincoln, for Emerson, is the craftsman *par excellence*—but what that means is ultimately something more complicated than his patient preparation of his materials and the singularity of his focus.



At left, past president Phyllis Cole (right) talks with panelists at the Annual Gathering's panel on "Emerson's Contribution to Thoreau's Legacy." From left, David Dowling, Deeanna Rohr, Andrew Kopec, and Nikhil Bilwakesh.

Below, board member Jessie Bray (center) presents the Outstanding Graduate Paper Awards to Andrew Kopec, a Ph.D. candidate at the Ohio State University, and Deeanna Rohr, a Ph.D. student at SUNY, the University at Albany.





## Emerson Society Panels at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, 2012

During the Thoreau Society's 2012 Annual Gathering from July 12 to 15 in Concord, Massachusetts, the Emerson Society presented its annual panel, this year on the topic of "Emerson's Contribution to Thoreau's Legacy."

The panel was organized by Leslie Eckel, program chair, and moderated by Board member Jessie Bray.

Abstracts appear below. For further information about the Annual Gathering, visit [www.thoreausociety.org](http://www.thoreausociety.org).

### "My Giant Goes With Me": The Travails and Travels of Emerson and Thoreau

NIKHIL BILWAKESH, *University of Alabama*

In *Walden*, Thoreau rejects the hypothetical proposition of two young men traveling the world together, one without money and another with a bill of exchange in his pocket, seeing that "they would not long be companions or cooperate, since one would not *operate* at all. They would part at the first interesting crisis in their adventures."

While Emerson and Thoreau spent a great deal of time together, much of it walking, their long-distance travelling diverged. While Thoreau's circle of travel was much smaller than Emerson's, which ranged from California to Egypt, the ensuing writings that came from travel—*A Week*, *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod*, among many others—quantifiably and qualifiedly distinguish Thoreau from Emerson, whose *English Traits* is his only notable "travel" volume, and is, in fact, something of an anti-travel narrative. Emerson considered the noblest "mag-nets" of travel to be great men, though he sometimes found those to be ruins, as in the case of Wordsworth, but he also traveled to make money, and he traveled with a reputation that preceded him and paid his way.

Thoreau's errands had other, more ambiguous ends. Sometimes they were at the behest of Emerson—to Staten Island to tutor William Emerson's children, to Fire Island to retrieve the remains of Margaret Fuller, and at least apocryphally, away from jail and back into a Concord that immediately became dreadfully foreign to him. In a letter, Thoreau advised his friend Harrison Blake to "live at home like a traveler," to remain, as the Puritans would, a "pilgrim" without a terrestrial destination, "sans terre" equating to "sainte terre" in the etymology of the saunterer.

This paper consists, in part, of a comparison of the different experiences and writings on travel between Thoreau and Emerson, but mostly, I want to look at the intersections of the two—when they *did* travel together, and how they "cooperated" in the highest and lowest sense of the term, how their travels involved one another. In the spirit of this year's Gathering's theme, I also illustrate how Emerson promoted Thoreau's writings and image, defining and creating a legacy, during his travels.

### Becoming Emerson's Poet: Thoreau's Troubled First Apprenticeship

DAVID DOWLING, *University of Iowa*

Much has been written about Thoreau's apprenticeship under Emerson, but comparatively little has been said about the vocation of poetry in which he was immersed during the first five years of their relationship. His prose, of course, has taken the spotlight from his verse, and for good reason. But Thoreau's conception of authorship, and Emerson's best intentions for him in that regard, began with poetry. Known primarily as a sharp-tongued prose craftsman adept at skewering the

commercial world's impact on social behavior, the young Thoreau is hard to imagine wedding his authorial craft to poetry at the onset of his career, let alone making one of his earliest forays into verse with a love poem. Yet for those who knew him, poetry signified his baptism into the transcendentalist literary circle. His poetry was so indelibly etched into Thoreau's local memory in Concord that Bronson Alcott chose it among hundreds to read at his funeral. Emerson would later anthologize Thoreau's verse in *Parnassus*, a high honor recognizing his genius. This research explores Emerson's own verse writing process in comparison to Thoreau's to suggest that the learning of such a process premised in profound innate lyrical skill as Emerson's, met with frustration when Thoreau attempted to adopt its strategies.

### Going Nowhere in a Go-Ahead Age: Thoreau, Emerson, and Ambition

ANDREW KOPEC, *The Ohio State University*

At the outset of her 1856 review of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854), the Victorian novelist George Eliot remarked: "In a volume called *Walden*...we have a bit of pure American life (not the 'go ahead' species, but its opposite pole, animated by that energetic, yet calm spirit of innovation...which is peculiar to some of the finer American minds)" (*Westminster Review* 68 [Jan. 1856]: 302-3). In her trenchant analysis, Eliot identifies Thoreau's great book as antithetical to what people on both sides of the Atlantic knew as the American Go-Aheadism. But, as this paper argues, the review indirectly accomplishes something else: it helps us further apprehend Emerson's eulogy entitled "Thoreau" in which he laments his one-time pupil's lack of "ambition." If Thoreau's *Walden* articulates an ethos of the slow ("calm," in Eliot's idiom), Emerson's work articulates one of the fast, one that is more consonant with the imperatives of Go-Aheadism. And this difference—understood along an axis of speed—provides a new way of accounting for the late rift between Emerson and Thoreau that has generated such a rich body of scholarship and commentary.

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

DEEANNA ROHR, *SUNY, the University at Albany*

In 1838, the Transcendental Club discussed "the question of mysticism": "Was Jesus a mystic? Most deemed him such, in the widest sense. He was spiritual... He used the universal tongue, and was intelligible to all men of simple soul" (Alcott qtd. in Schmidt 31). But already two years earlier, Emerson had described his mysticism as the "transparent eyeball." With this image, Emerson's mysticism begins to exist as one that relies on the dissolution of the ego as a singular form. Marking a fissure in their friendship, Thoreau writes of his identity as a mystic: "The fact is I am a mystic a transcendentalist and a natural

(Continued on page 15)

## Reviews

### Time in American and East Asian Thinking: A Comparative Study of Temporality in American Transcendentalism, Pragmatism, and (Zen) Buddhist Thought.

BIRGIT CAPELLE. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2011.

xiv + 384 pp. \$74.00 cloth.

Nothing in the universe stands still, only we human beings stop to think. While we figure out what is going on at any given moment and give it a specific name, things never stop changing and happening, so our idea of the world is continually displaced from its ever-elusive reality. This is the problem of temporality and mutability in the secular world, and *Time in American and East Asian Thinking* is a trans-cultural comparative study on the way this problem is handled by American Transcendentalism, Pragmatism, and Zen Buddhism, respectively.

At the center of Birgit Capelle's comparative study is a fundamental dichotomy between the traditional Western conceptualization and abstraction of the universe on the one hand and the Transcendentalist, Pragmatist, and Zen Buddhist inquiry into the pre-conceptual, pre-differentiated background of reality on the other. While the long-standing convention of Western metaphysics postulates that there is the *other* ideal world of eternal truth and completion beyond this world of temporality and mutability, the thinkers featured in *Time in American and East Asian Thinking* all reject this Platonic dualism of eternity and time, and claim that eternal truth is actually immanent in the ongoing flow of the temporal world. Put another way, their philosophy is an attempt at "*temporalization* of reality, Being, knowledge and truth" (34) to show that "the characteristic trait of Being is continuous transition or *change* and that knowledge and truth are in continual evolution rather than in a state that is final, universal, and absolute" (44). Emerson's "everlasting Now," for one, is "an always renewed, discontinuously continuous instant of infinite vision and revelation" (83). It is a moment of revelation, to be sure, but it is also in the process of perpetual renewal and revision, so every revealed truth is never to be finalized as a fixed and unchanging principle. As Capelle's phraseology indicates, moreover, Emerson's notion of the transient present is not a simple expression of relativism; for, although each *now* is different (or discontinuous) from both the previous and following *nows*, the world itself keeps its overall identity (or continuity) in the very "*processuality* or temporality" (199). In this sense, the "everlasting Now" is "inherently dynamic and progresses, as a temporally extending process of ongoing *transition*, marked by the dynamic intermingling and partial simultaneity (i.e., merging or overlapping) of its constituting phases or states" and thus "characterized by both identity and difference, continuity and change, linearity and circularity" (4). This might be better understood when compared to the cellular makeup of our body, which Capelle alludes to in the closing paragraph of the book: while our bodily cells are being replaced at any moment, we somehow remain the same through the constant changes. To live in the "everlasting Now" is to fulfill this sort of dynamic equilibrium of our being, which is simultaneously temporal and eternal, different and identical.

The latter half of *Time in American and East Asian Thinking* tracks down the same idea of the simultaneity of eternity and temporality in other key concepts of Pragmatism and Zen Buddhism, such as James's "pure experience" and Suzuki's "Absolute *now*," and Capelle makes a perfect point in detecting interesting parallels between American and East Asian philosophies of time. Although Capelle avows that the book is not a study of cross-cultural influ-

ence between them, it is certainly open to discussion from the perspective of the global literary network of reception and translation. Such studies in that vein are likely to follow on Capelle's work. The book stimulates and amply rewards those who attempt the reconfiguration of trans-cultural literary history, as well as those interested in the philosophy of time in itself.

—Yoshinari Yamaguchi  
*University of Kochi*

### Radical Beauty: American Transcendentalism and the Aesthetic Critique of Modernity.

CLEMENS SPAHR.

Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2011. 251 pp. € 31.90 paper.

Question: How do you synthesize the political and philosophical strains of Transcendentalism? How do you reconcile a program of original revelation through solitary immersion in nature with a social commitment to political activism?

Choose the answer that best satisfies:

A) What social commitment? Emersonian self-reliance represents the Transcendentalists' scantily qualified support for emergent market capitalism and its attendant individualism. Self-reformation is the only basis for aggregate societal melioration. Reluctant political advocacy was an aberration from the movement's true and lasting intellectual work.

B) Transcendentalism is rooted in revolutionary politics and Concord was the epicenter of nineteenth-century reform, exemplified by Emerson's lifelong commitment to justice, from his 1838 letter to President Van Buren protesting Cherokee removal, to the excoriation of British apologists for the Confederacy. Apparent skepticism and occasional racism are dialectical exercises in rhetorical whetting. The Transcendentalists' reclamation of language was and remains a potent weapon against political cant.

C) Closer to (A) but with a complication of terms that steers one away from imagining a Ronald Reaganesque Emerson and an AIG-endorsing Thoreau.

D) Closer to (B) but with some kind of critical reformulation.

Clemens Spahr offers an informed contribution in the key of D. Drawing on the utopian dimension of continental aesthetics that is central to transatlantic Romanticism, Spahr argues that if the world's beauty offers refuge where the individual can experience transcendental wholeness, "the realization of this potential" occurs only in society; the Transcendentalists attempted to shape the sociopolitical sphere according to the utopian ideal glimpsed during these aesthetic experiences. Their political radicalism "is the dialectic obverse of their aesthetic utopianism" (16).

Rejecting the critical split that privileges the "philosophical" Transcendentalists (Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller) over the movement's "social critics" (Alcott, Brownson, Ripley), Spahr offers an introductory chapter re-situating Transcendentalism in the context of European Romanticism and German aesthetics, followed by six chapters on William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Orestes Brownson, George Ripley and Bronson Alcott (one chapter), and Henry David Thoreau that describe a teleological sequence in the development of practical Transcendentalism. This division by author provides for remarkable in-depth and new readings of Channing, Fuller, and Brownson in particular. But it may undermine the book's cohesive potential. For example, while Spahr examines eight different texts published between 1836 and 1838, their spacing dilutes the potential critical impact that reading them in closer proximity may have offered.

(Continued on page 15)



# An Emerson Bibliography, 2011

WILLIAM ROSSI  
University of Oregon

*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).*

Case, Kristen. *American Pragmatism and Poetic Practice: Crosscurrents from Emerson to Susan Howe*. Camden House. Pp. 21-42. [Pragmatist thinking in Emerson's prose and Marianne Moore's poetry]

Corrigan, John Michael. "Visions of Power and Dispossession: Emerson, Whitman, and the 'Robust Soul.'" *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 28:122-140. [Emerson's conception of ascent and Whitman's poetics]

Dolan, Neal. "Property in Being: Liberalism and the Language of Ownership in Emerson's Writing." Pp. 343-382 in Levine and Malachuk. [Emerson, property, and liberal democracy]

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Poems: a Variorum Edition*. Ed. Albert J. Von Frank and Thomas Wortham. Harvard. [Volume 9 of *Collected Works*. Authoritative text with comprehensive historical and textual introductions plus informative headnotes, gems of scholarship and critical insight, for every poem.]

Flanagan, G. Borden. "Emerson's Democratic Platonism in *Representative Men*." Pp. 415-449 in Levine and Malachuk. [Emerson's metaphysics in relation to the ancient political theory of Plato and Aristotle]

Frank, Jason. "Standing for Others: Reform and Representation in Emerson's Political Thought." Pp. 383-414 in Levine and Malachuk. [Evaluation of the political consequences of Emerson's conception of representation in the 1840s and *Representative Men*]

Fuller, Randall. *From Battlefields Rising: How the Civil War Transformed American Literature*. Oxford. [Impact of the War on Emerson and other midcentury authors]

Goodman, Susan. *Republic of Words: The Atlantic Monthly and Its Writers, 1857-1925*. New England. [Anecdotal portrait of contributors, including Emerson, during the magazine's first seventy years]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson, Self-Reliance, and the Politics of Democracy." Pp. 185-220 in Levine and Malachuk. [Emerson's adaptation of transcendental philosophy to social reform]

Greenham, David. "Ralph Waldo Emerson." Pp. 11-50 in *Emerson, Melville, James, Berryman*. Ed. Peter Rawlings. Great Shakespeareans VIII. Continuum. [Emerson on Shakespeare]

Grimstad, Paul. "Emerson Discomposed: Skepticism, Naturalism, and the Search for Criteria in 'Experience.'" Pp. 163-176 in *Stanley Cavell and Literary Studies: Consequences of Skepticism*. Ed. Richard Eldridge and Bernard Rhie. Continuum. [Affinities between Stanley Cavell's and John Dewey's readings of Emerson's "Experience"]

Habich, Robert D. *Building Their Own Waldos: Emerson's First Biographers and the Politics of Life-writing in the Gilded Age*. Iowa. [Well-crafted and imminently readable study of the first six full-length biographies of Emerson, in cultural and human context]

Hodgson, Naomi. "Citizenship and Scholarship in Emerson, Cavell and Foucault." *Ethics and Education* 6:85-100. [Democracy, citizenship and the concept of voice]

Holzwarth, John. "Emerson and the Democratization of Intellect." *Polity* 43: 313-336. [Emerson's faith in self-reliance as a basis of democratic living]

Knutson, Andrea. *American Spaces of Conversion: The Conductive Imaginaries of Edwards, Emerson, and James*. Oxford. [Conversion as a process of active knowing in Emerson]

Levine, Alan M. "Skeptical Triangle? A Comparison of the Political Thought of Emerson, Nietzsche, and Montaigne." Pp. 23-264 in Levine and Malachuk. [Emerson's most skeptical essays compared with the skepticism of Nietzsche and Montaigne]

Levine, Alan, and Daniel S. Malachuk, eds. *A Political Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Kentucky. [Thirteen essays--four reprinted, nine new--on the political importance of transcendentalism, the politics of self-reliance, and Emerson's vision of liberal democracy]

Lopez, Marissa. "The Sentimental Politics of Language: Ralph Waldo Emerson's and Jose Maria Sanchez's Texan Stories." *Western American Literature* 45: 385-409. [Romantic responses to nationalism from either side of the US-Mexican border]

Malachuk, Daniel S. "Emerson's Politics Retranscendentalized." Pp. 265-304 in Levine and Malachuk. [Three critical strategies used in the postmodern depoliticizing of Emerson]

Mariotti, Shannon L. "Emerson's Transcendental Gaze and the 'Disagreeable Particulars' of Slavery: Vision and the Costs of Idealism." Pp. 305-340 in Levine and Malachuk. [Emerson's visual practice in six antislavery addresses]

Meehan, Sean Ross. "Education after an Earthquake: Emerson's Lessons in Panic and Pedagogy." *Pedagogy* 11: 247-255. [Emerson as a guide to retaining educational beliefs in the current crisis]

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Nature's Stomach': Emerson, Whitman, and the Poetics of Digestion." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 28: 97-121. [Whitman's complicated assimilation of Emerson]

Meola, Frank M. "Emerson Between Faith and Doubt." *New England Review* 32:111-123. [Emerson's early dealings with skepticism, based on a study of the late 1820-1830s journals]

Miller, John P. *Transcendental Learning: The Educational Legacy of Alcott, Emerson, Fuller, Peabody and Thoreau*. Information Age Publishers. Pp. 15-28. [Emerson on active education and the "soul-to-soul connection between teacher and student" (25)]

Rampell, Palmer. "Laws That Refuse to Be Stated: the Post-Sectarian Spiritualities of Emerson, Thoreau, and D. T. Suzuki." *New England Quarterly* 84: 621-654. [Impact of Emerson and Thoreau on the Japanese interpreter and popularizer of Zen Buddhism]

Read, James H. "The Limits of Self-Reliance: Emerson, Slavery, and Abolition." Pp. 152-184 in Levine and Malachuk. [Insufficiency of a philosophy of self-reliance in dealing with the reality of slavery]

Reynolds, Larry J. *Righteous Violence: Revolution, Slavery, and the American Renaissance*. Georgia. 56-84. [The evolution and conflicted revisions of Emerson's peace principles from *Nature* through the Civil War]

\_\_\_\_\_. and Albert Von Frank. "Emerson, John Brown, and Transcendental Idealism: A Colloquy." *South Central Review* 28: 31-56. [Extended exchange of views on Emerson's idealism, his activism, and the ethical responsibility of moral criticism]

Roberson, Susan L. "Emerson's *English Traits* and the Paradox of Empire." *New England Quarterly* 84:265-285. [Emerson's critique of British imperialism and his recognition of America's empire within]

Schlueter, John P. "Private Practices: Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Recovery of Possibility." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 66: 283-306. [Two conceptions of antebellum privacy]

Spahr, Clemens. *Radical Beauty: American Transcendentalism and the Aesthetic Critique of Modernity*. Ferdinand Schöningh. [Aesthetic freedom as a means of realizing utopian alternatives to modernity]

## Thoreau Annual Gathering

(Continued from page 12)

philosopher to boot. Now think of it I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist. That would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations" (Thoreau qtd. in Porte 4). I argue that Thoreau's mysticism allows for the legibility of Emerson's mysticism, and it happens through the dissolution of the human into nature. Rightfully, Stanley Cavell asks, "Does it matter whether I read, say, *Walden*, or go, say, to Walden?" (49).

## REVIEWS

(Continued from page 13)

One of the most valuable sections of the book might be Spahr's reading of William Ellery Channing's "Remarks on the Character and Writings of John Milton" (1826). Contrasting Channing's political conventionality with his aesthetic egalitarianism, Spahr's reading is compelling beyond its claims. Channing writes that Milton's poetry "concentrates" life's "scattered beauty" and "spreads our sympathies over all classes of society," which "helps faith to lay hold on the future life" (64). W.E.B. Du Bois may not have read this New England forerunner, but Spahr's work offers a potential framework of aesthetic critique by which we can read anew Du Bois' "Criteria of Negro Art," appearing a century later, in which he writes "Such is Beauty...[t]he world is full of it; and yet today the mass of human beings are choked away from it, and their lives distorted and made ugly... Who shall let this world be beautiful? Who shall restore to men the glory of sunsets and the peace of quiet sleep?"

Furthermore, Spahr notes that while Unitarian contemporary rival Joseph Buckminster chided Milton for his support of Oliver Cromwell, and saw Milton's blindness as offering a fortuitous turn away from "more praises of Cromwell" toward the composition of

Turner, Jack. "Self-Reliance and Complicity: Emerson's Ethics of Citizenship." Pp. 125-51 in Levine and Malachuk. [Complicity as the other side of self-reliance in the anti-slavery addresses]

Willis, Lloyd. *Environmental Evasion: the Literary, Critical, and Cultural Politics of "Nature's Nation"*. SUNY. 19-36. [Avoidance of environmental destruction in the philosophies of Emerson and Thoreau]

Woelfel, James. "'The Beautiful Necessity': Emerson and the Stoic Tradition." *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 32:122-138. [Emerson's adaptation of ancient stoicism as mediated by Western Christian tradition]

Wry, Joan R. "Emerson, the Genius Tradition, and the Aspirant Poems of Margaret Fuller." *CEA Critic* 73: 21-33. [Fuller's challenge, in four mythic poems, to Emerson as spiritual and poetic father]

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Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

*Paradise Lost*, Channing reads Milton's blindness as a sacrifice in the cause of Milton's "fervent and constant attachment to liberty," approving of his politics as a dedication to "not so much what man is, as of what he might become" (67). Where David S. Reynolds marked Thomas Carlyle's 1840s work as instigating a change in attitudes towards Oliver Cromwell, Spahr's Channing finds in Milton an earlier local origin for a respect that would culminate in support for John Brown, whom Thoreau called "a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles."

Spahr may fail to acknowledge the harangues on American Utopianism dating back to Shakespeare's Antonio and Sebastian cracking on Gonzalo, and he hardly reckons with Emerson's and Thoreau's direct criticisms of Utopian movements (their writings on J.A. Etzler, Fourier, Swedenborg). However, the book is well worth reading for its original reading of Fuller alongside Shelley's "Mask of Anarchy," the positing of Alcott's conversations as aesthetic experiences and of Brook Farm as an illustrative type of the Utopian ideal, the depth of attention given throughout the book to critical writings on literature and art by figures who have sometimes been relegated to biographical and historical context, and for the perspective-shifting thesis itself.

—Nikhil Bilwakesh  
University of Alabama



## PROSPECTS

(Continued from page 4)

### Calls for Proposals

#### American Literature Association

The Emerson Society will sponsor two panels at the annual meeting of the American Literature Association, to be held in Boston from May 23 to 26, 2013. For information about the conference, see [americanliterature.org](http://americanliterature.org). Members are encouraged to submit abstracts on the following topics:

#### Emerson and the Mechanism of Fame

The rise of "Emerson mania," a phrase coined disapprovingly by the *English Review*, simultaneously inspired a new generation of young followers and raised the ire of the conservative Unitarian church, drawing Emerson into the limelight and eventually propelling him to fame. The Emerson Society invites new research on Emerson and the mechanism of fame, from the antebellum period to the present, and on Emerson's core ideas about literary production, promotion, and publicity. Papers might address the multiple biographies of Emerson and the construction of his reputation to serve various intellectual, literary, and political interests. E-mail 300-word abstracts to David Dowling ([david-dowling@uiowa.edu](mailto:david-dowling@uiowa.edu)) and Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) by January 15, 2013.

#### Emerson and Utopianism

Emerson moved in utopian circles, keeping pace with the architects of Walden, Brook Farm, and Fruitlands, yet chose not to join a utopian community, telling George Ripley, "I think that all I shall solidly do, I must do alone." The Emerson Society welcomes papers on Emerson's ambivalence about utopian experimentalism,

patterns of utopian language and thought in his poetry and prose writings, the competing demands of collectivism and self-culture, and his impact on utopian practitioners and social movements, including Thoreau, Alcott, Hawthorne, Albert Brisbane, Fourierism, and socialism. E-mail 300-word abstracts to David Dowling ([david-dowling@uiowa.edu](mailto:david-dowling@uiowa.edu)) and Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) by January 15, 2013.

#### Thoreau Society Annual Gathering

The theme of next year's Thoreau Society Annual Gathering (Concord: July 11-14, 2013) is "Mystic, Transcendentalist, and Natural Philosopher to Boot." The Emerson Society sponsors a panel at the Annual Gathering; the topic for 2013 is "Emerson as a Renaissance Man." The Emerson Society invites proposals for brief papers that consider the interplay of Emerson's many roles in public and private life: lecturer, friend, family man, individualist, essayist, journal keeper, traveler, minister, philosopher, mentor, reader, conversationalist. Papers also might address or interrogate his role in Americanist criticism as the leader of an "American Renaissance" movement. E-mail 300-word abstracts to David Dowling ([david-dowling@uiowa.edu](mailto:david-dowling@uiowa.edu)) and Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) by January 15, 2013.

#### Emerson Society Graduate Student Travel Award

This award provides up to \$750 of travel support to present a paper on one of the Emerson Society panels at the American Literature Association annual meeting or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering. Graduate students interested in applying should submit their abstracts by January 15, 2013 to David Dowling ([david-dowling@uiowa.edu](mailto:david-dowling@uiowa.edu)) and Leslie Eckel ([leckel@suffolk.edu](mailto:leckel@suffolk.edu)) and indicate their desire for consideration.

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## Laura Dassow Walls

(Continued from page 1)

Richardson Jr. credits her with no less than "chang[ing] an entire field of study."

Laura is a frequent speaker on panels of the Emerson and Thoreau societies at American Literature Association conferences and at other scholarly venues. She also has a gift for presenting her remarkable findings to wide audiences, including the diverse group that assembles for the Thoreau Society's Annual Gathering in Concord, Massachusetts. A couple of decades ago, it was common at the Gathering to hear Thoreauvians lament Ralph Waldo Emerson's characterization of Thoreau; Emerson's portrayal of his protégé in the famous eulogy, they believed, had delayed appreciation of Thoreau by a hundred years. Laura's exploration of the rich sweep of the transnational Romantic

project, and its manifestation in Transcendentalist Concord, has helped make clear that Emerson and Thoreau were uniquely accomplished thinkers and writers with a shared fascination with cosmic issues personally experienced. Thanks in large part to Laura's example, Emersonians and Thoreauvians today enjoy civil explorations of these writers' relationship and achievements. Professor Walls has served as the editor of the Thoreau Society's *Concord Saunterer*, on the boards of both the Emerson and Thoreau Societies, and on the editorial board of many scholarly journals, including *NEQ* and *ESQ*.

—Sandra Harbert Petrulionis and Wesley T. Mott

For more information, see the story on the University of Notre Dame website: <http://al.nd.edu/news/32828-english-professor-laura-dassow-walls-studies-emerson-and-science>.