

R.W.C.

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# EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

## Society and Solitude for an “everlasting Now”

PRENTISS CLARK

“It is Emersonian throughout,” declared an anonymous reviewer in a *Putnam’s Magazine* review of *Society and Solitude* (1870), “but if you ask us whether it is above or below the average of this unique writer, we confess that we don’t know” (617). Published ten years after *The Conduct of Life* (1860), years that saw the Civil War and years that included the peak of Emerson’s lecturing career and his extensive participation in clubs and in organizations and on committees, *Society and Solitude* is a particularly intricate weave of material from nearly fifty years of thinking and writing. Put differently, it is Emerson’s method of composition now mining lustres from a lifetime, and arguably his last book prior to the publications substantively shaped by editorial collaboration. “[F]rom beginning to end,” Ronald Bosco suggests in his “Historical Introduction,” “*Society and Solitude* is as much Emerson’s expression of his personal autobiography as it is of his intellectual autobiography ... a comprehensive poetic account of his life and mind drawn from his journals, to be sure, but also from multiple other sources” (il). The book sold well—“old age is a good advertisement” (*JMN* XVI: 175) Emerson quipped in his journal—and in an early review John Burroughs found it to be “twelve more of those terse, epigrammatic essays of sense, poetry, and philosophy” (qtd. in Bosco xviii).

Though less searching, less charged and charging, and less rhetorically exuberant than many of Emerson’s earlier works, *Society and Solitude* nevertheless expresses his keynotes, those points to which he steadily returned, even, perhaps especially, in the wake of personal and national trials. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Bret Harte concluded an 1870 review of the book by observing, “from a secular pulpit [Emerson] preaches better practical sermons on the conduct of life than is heard from two-thirds of the Christian pulpits of America; and that, what is rare on many a platform and pulpit, he believes what he says” (387). In other words, the

volume recalls and recounts the ideas Emerson lives by, setting them to work in contexts rich with new events and new learning; the gifts of the days and of society and solitude. In fact, one might summarize the book by saying it comes near to achieving what the chapter “Eloquence” names the “perfection” of that art: “when the orator sees through all masks to the eternal scale of truth, in such sort, that he can hold up before the eyes of men the fact of today steadily to that standard, thereby making the great great, and the small small, which is the true way to astonish and to reform mankind” (*CW* VII: 50). “[T]o see the miraculous in the common,” Emerson had said in *Nature* (1836), is the “invariable mark of wisdom” (*CW* I: 44). So the orator enables us to see the ordinary “fact[s] of today” as they are—held up against “the eternal scale of truth”—and in this way the orator fulfills a duty akin to the one Emerson described thirty-three years earlier in “The American Scholar” (1837): “The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances” (*CW* I: 62).

In our volatile twenty-first century—amidst today’s “vertigo of shows and politics” (*CW* III: 35), to borrow an apt phrase from “Experience” (1844)—*Society and Solitude* offers the necessary perspective, if not the corrective, of a seasoned scholar as well as orator: a public intellectual who, for example, knows the difference between the many books that “work no redemption in us” and those “books which take rank in our life with parents and lovers and passionate experiences” (*CW* VII: 95); who differentiates between “powers of speech” (41) wielded to “ensnare and mislead” (46)—the “glib tongue,” “a petty lawyer’s fluency,” “the mischievous member of Congress” (37), “the vituperative style well described in the street-word ‘jawing’” (37)—and “the truly eloquent man [who] is a sane man with the power to communicate his sanity” (46), his “feet ever on a fact”

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## EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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*ESP* welcomes notes and short articles (up to eight double-spaced, typed pages) on Emerson-related topics. Manuscripts are blind refereed. On matters of style, consult previous issues. We also solicit news about Emerson-related community, school, and other projects; information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news of Emersonian scholars. Send manuscripts to the editor, Michael Weisenburg, Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina, 1322 Greene Street, Columbia, SC 29208, or [emersonsocietypapers.editor@gmail.com](mailto:emersonsocietypapers.editor@gmail.com) (email submissions are much preferred).

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Prentiss Clark, Department of English, University of South Dakota, Dakota Hall, Room 212, 414 E. Clark St., Vermillion, SD 57069.

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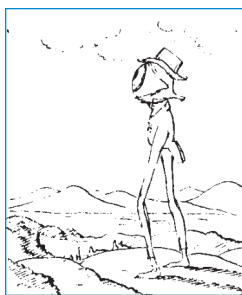
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# PROSPECTS



## From the editor . . .

*Society and Solitude* was published 150 years ago, by Fields, Osgood, & Co. of Boston, on 5 March 1870 and was simultaneously published by Sampson Low, Son, & Marston of London. In celebration of this anniversary, Prentiss Clark and Sean Meehan each have essays in this issue that both contextualize the book in its historical context and reflect on how Emerson's work remains relevant to our current moment. Also of note is this issue's emphasis on music. Paul Rudoi updates us about the pedagogy award and the educational efforts that supplement his work, *Our Transcendental Passion*, and composer and poet Brian Blyth Daubney supplies us with notation for his adaptation of Emerson's poem "Rubies."

## Emerson Sightings/Citings

Compiled and Reported by Wendell Refior

- The *National Review* section The Corner, on the topic of education, highlighted Emerson's take on the Role of the Scholar and a critique of the scholars of the day. "Emerson on the Scholar," by George Leef, Jan. 17, 2020:

Reflecting on the wide range of human capabilities, he wrote, "In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or, still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.... Thought and knowledge are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns and pecuniary foundations, though of towns of gold, can never counter-vail the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year." [bit.ly/2Wk4ia6](https://bit.ly/2Wk4ia6)

- From *Time's Illusions*, by Bill Benson, Jan. 24, 2020, 10:00 am: Benson quotes Emerson's "Experience": If we master the seconds, minutes, and hours of our lives, we master the days, months, and years. Along the way, we learn some things, or, as Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The years teach us things that the days never knew."

Benson then goes on to quote from the "Illusions" chapter in *Conduct of Life*: Emerson also wrote an astonishing essay that he titled "Illusions." He says, "Every god is there sitting in his sphere. The young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there is he alone with the gods alone. On the instant fall snowstorms of illusions. He fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that and whose movement and doings he must obey. What is he that he should resist their will, and think or act for himself. And when, by and by, for an instant, the air clears and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones—they alone with him alone." [bit.ly/2vmKKqP](https://bit.ly/2vmKKqP)

- Lines from "Experience" make an appearance in an article from *The Irish Times*, Mon. Feb. 24, 2020, "In Praise of Walking in Video Games," by Darragh Garaghty:

"Walking for pleasure was summed up by Ralph Waldo Emerson: To finish the moment, to find the journey's end in every step of the road, to live the greatest number of good hours, is wisdom." [bit.ly/39U9ci4](https://bit.ly/39U9ci4)

- Here is a commonly heard quote from "Fate" in a different kind of story from *Osprey Observer*, Valrico, Fla. "A Fighter's Chance Hosts Its First Annual Mother and Son Dance," by Libby Hopkins, Feb. 17, 2020.

Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Men are what their mothers made them." Justin Mitchell of Brandon could relate to Emerson's statement because his mother raised him to be a kind and caring man. Mitchell is a local personal trainer and fitness coach whose clients have health issues due to anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorders. [bit.ly/2WdFUXG](https://bit.ly/2WdFUXG)

- From *NextMosh*, Calligram premiere second video for single "Vivido Periere" by Johnny Perilla, March 5, 2020.

"Today, Calligram have revealed (via Metal Injection) part two of their "Vivido Periere" video. The track is the second single to come off their upcoming album, *The Eye Is The First Circle* (out April 10 via Prosthetic Records)."

"A press release notes: *The Eye Is The First Circle* is an 8-track pummeling of raucous guitars, d-beat rhythms, and lyrics sung entirely in Italian. The album title derives from a Ralph Waldo Emerson essay titled *Circles*, which starts: "The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second; and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end." Although the essay is about the transience of life and the ever-evolving aspect of nature, the band chose to give the first sentence a new meaning by interpreting the image of the circle that surrounds every person as a sphere within which one has a duty of care towards the people around them. This message of love acts as a counterpoint to the negative and pessimistic lyrics, and gives a sense of purpose to an otherwise seemingly meaningless existence." [bit.ly/3cWVDAI](https://bit.ly/3cWVDAI)

- Finally, we're reminded that Emerson may provide the first written example of an old adage in English. From KPCNews.com, March 6, 2020, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" by Grace Householder.

With the wonderful photo of Salma in a tree that Faiza shared with me, I thought of the old saying "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" when reflecting on Faiza's heart-warming story. "Curious about the origin of the saying, I did a quick Google search and found this: "The American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson apparently was the first to use it in English when in an 1839 letter, he wrote that 'the apple never falls far from the stem.' But here Emerson used it in another sense, to describe that tug that often brings us back to our childhood home."

On December 22, 1839, Mr. Emerson wrote a letter to his Aunt Mary Moody Emerson. The abbreviated last half of the first paragraph reads:

"... I feel as if I have lost a great deal of *my family* in her death [death of Mrs. (Phoebe) Ripley]. Mother ... has carefully gathered in the past months all the details that came from Waterford. Her

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departure will cut one of your own ties to your present abode, and as men say **the apple never falls far from the stem**, I shall hope that another year will draw your eyes & steps to this old dear odious haunt of the race.” — Source: *Selected Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Myerson, Joel, editor, Columbia U. Press, 1997, p. 204.

It seems that Waldo was longing for the return before too long of Aunt Mary to Concord, Mass. *bit.ly/2xEHQ11*

### Emerson Society Panels at ALA Symposium on American Poetry

The Emerson Society presented a panel at the American Literature Association’s Symposium on American Poetry in Washington, DC, this past February 20–22.

#### Ralph Waldo Emerson and Poetry

Organized by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society  
Session Chair: Joseph Urbas, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

1. “‘If these enclosed pieces are worthy a place in the new magazine, will you stand as their godfather?’: Emerson as advocate and editor of *The Dial*.” *Michael C. Weisenburg, University of South Carolina*
2. “Emerson, Impersonality and Lyric Theory.” *Danielle Follett, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle*
3. “Grieving for the Poet: Emerson’s ‘Threnody.’” *Yves Gardes, Université de Rouen Normandie*

### Emerson Society Panels at ALA Conference 2020

The Emerson Society presents annual panels at the American Literature Association meeting, May 21–24, in San Diego.\* More information at [americanliteratureassociation.org](http://americanliteratureassociation.org).

#### Emerson and Resistance, 1: Politics, Religion, and Literature

Chair: Susan L. Dunston, New Mexico Tech

1. “Legacies of Resistance: Emerson, Buddhism, and Richard Wright’s Pragmatist Poetics,” *Anita Patterson, Boston University*
2. “Emerson’s Translation: An Act of Resistance,” *Sarah Khalili Jahromi, Université Paris Sorbonne*
3. “The Health of the Eye Seems to Demand a Horizon: Emersonian Resistance in Frederick Douglass’s Narrative,” *Regina Yoong, Ohio University*
4. “Emerson and Reconstruction,” *Christopher Hanlon, Arizona State University*

#### Emerson and Resistance, 2: Philosophy and Culture

Chair: Anita Patterson, Boston University

1. “The Ethics of Resistance: Emerson on Self-Reliance and Toni Morrison on Self-Regard,” *Susan L. Dunston New Mexico Tech*
2. “Shifting Paradigms: A Cultural Context for Emerson’s Racism and Abolitionism,” *Leslie Brownlee, University of California Davis*

3. “Why Ralph Waldo Emerson Should be Seen as a Eudaimonist Philosopher of Virtue Ethics,” *Christopher Prozenheim, Georgia State University*

4. “Whim at Last? Stanley Cavell on Emerson’s Resistance to Pragmatism,” *David Heckerl, Saint-Mary’s University*

\**ALA 2020 and COVID-19: at the time of putting this issue together, there remain concerns and uncertainties regarding academic conferences and the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the American Literature Association’s website for up-to-date information about the conference and any possible cancelations, contingencies, or postponements.*

[americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-2020-and-covid-19/](http://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-2020-and-covid-19/)

### Thoreau Society Annual Gathering

The Emerson Society presents annual panels at the Thoreau Society Annual Gather, to be held this year July 8–12. More information at [thoreausociety.org/event/annual-gathering-2020](http://thoreausociety.org/event/annual-gathering-2020).

“‘The Way to Mend the Bad World, Is to Create the Right World’: The Transcendentalists and Forms of Righting the World”

1. Kristina West, “Radical Transcendentalism: Emerson and Civil Disobedience in the 21st Century.”
2. Ayad Rahmani, “Reading Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City through the Lens of Emerson’s ‘Farming.’”
3. Christina Katopodis, “Emerson’s Transcendental Sonic Self and the Tuning of the World.”
4. Christopher Porzenheim, “Emerson’s Virtue Ethics and Righting the World.” [*Possible speaker, pending final Thoreau Society approval and his agreement to move to the TAG*]





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(47) and his words delivered from the “platform” of “the moral sentiment” (49); who, after living through the Civil War and championing human rights, can conclude, “the true test of civilization, is, not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, no, but the kind of man the country turns out” (16). Indeed, among the book’s many lustres, one might include the survey, in “Civilization,” of the nineteenth-century’s new knowledges, technologies, and harnessed forces—“steam, gravity, galvanism, light, magnets, wind, fire” (14)—characteristically qualified by Emerson’s return to persons, to “man acting on man” (16), and his sense that in the final analysis “There can be no high civility without a deep morality; though it may not always call itself by that name” (13). The chapter “Success,” structurally analogous to “Civilization” in its position in the book, extends this proposition by a catalogue of so-called successes not founded on principle:

I hate this shallow Americanism which hopes to get rich by credit, to get knowledge by raps on midnight tables, to learn the economy of mind by phrenology, or skill without study, or mastery without apprenticeship, or the sale of goods through pretending that they sell, or power through making believe you are powerful, or through a packed jury or caucus or, bribery and ‘repeating’ votes, or wealth by fraud. (147)

*Society and Solitude* brims with these pointed discernments.

Particularly apt in a world where “Politics were never more corrupt and brutal” (83) and in which “‘Tis too plain that with material power the moral progress has not kept pace” (84), is how Emerson, provocatively as ever in the chapter “Works and Days,” shifts our angle of vision; specifically, turns our attention from works to “the deep to-day” (88), such that we might better see and hear what it is and who we are, now, in this present hour. He grants that “life seems almost made over new” (80) with its many “mechanical aids” (80), “grand tools” (81), and invention after invention, yet “we must look deeper for our salvation than to steam, photographs, balloons, or astronomy” (83). Looking deeper means looking nearer, toward “the heart of the day”: “in seeking to find what is the heart of the day, we come to the quality of the moment” (93) and of the person. Learn to see, Emerson says, not simply “the works” but also “the faculties which rule them”; not simply “what is done” but also “the depth of thought it betrays” (94); not simply “how the hero does this or that, but what he is” (93). Sound the moment. “It is the depth at which we live, and not at all the

surface extension, that imports” (93). The chapter “Domestic Life” best illustrates this way of reading the times:

If a man wishes to acquaint himself with the real history of the world, with the spirit of the age, he must not go first to the statehouse or the court room. The subtle spirit of life must be sought in facts nearer. It is what is done and suffered in the house, in the constitution, in the temperament, in the personal history.... These facts are, to be sure, harder to read. It is easier to count the census, or compute the square extent of a territory, to criticise its polity, books, art, than to come to the persons and dwellings of men, and read their character and hope in their way of life. (54-55)

The tendency to measure an age by what can be easily counted, computed, and criticized, continues, arguably overwhelmingly, today, yet we cannot afford to neglect other facts, “facts nearer” and “harder to read.” Along these lines, Emerson’s commitment to reading what might be called the ordinary intimacies of daily life, and his sense that here is to be found a fuller measure of the times, seems especially necessary.

Not alone in this commitment, he joins public intellectuals and activists distant in time and temperament who equally believe “The great facts are the near ones” (CW VII: 55) and that a juster world will require, among other things, addressing them face to face. It was W.E.B. Du Bois who would advise “turning our attention for a space to colored America, to an average group of Negroes, say, in Harlem, not in their role of agitation and reform, but in their daily human intercourse and play” (*Dusk* 89), and who, throughout a long and continually evolving career, ever returned to the point “that each unit in the mass is a throbbing human soul” (*Souls* 69) and “that life, as any man has lived it, is part of that great national reservoir of knowledge without use of which no government can do justice” (“Revelation” 1063-164). And it was James Baldwin during the Civil Rights era who insisted that “the political institutions of any nation are always menaced and are ultimately controlled by the spiritual state of that nation” (*Fire* 88), and who, accordingly, sought “the spirit of the age” in the streets: “I walk out of my house toward no particular destination, and watch the faces that pass me. Where do they come from? how did they become—these faces—so cruel and so sterile? they are related to whom? they are related to what?” (“Nothing” 384). “What would we really know the meaning of?” Emerson had asked in “The American Scholar” (1837), “the meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body” (CW I: 67).

*Society and Solitude* thus offers the particular pleasure of encountering Emerson’s earliest thoughts return “with a certain alienated majesty” (CW II: 27), mix with the people,

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affairs, and perspectives of many decades—his, ours, others—and make of time the illusion that it is. In other words, one might say this labor of love, years in the making and long on Emerson's mind, delivers something of the sequel promised by the "insight" received in "Experience" (1844):

I do not at once arrive at satisfactions ... but I am at first apprised of my vicinity to a new and excellent region of life. By persisting to read or to think, this region gives further sign of itself, as it were in flashes of light .... But every insight from this realm of thought is felt as initial, and promises a sequel. I do not make it; I arrive there, and behold what was there already. I make! O no! I clap my hands in infantine joy and amazement, before the first opening to me of this august magnificence, old with the love and homage of innumerable ages, young with the life of life.... I am ready to die out of nature, and be born again into this new yet unapproachable America I have found in the West. (CW III: 41)

So indeed "shall we come to look at the world with new eyes" (CWI: 44). Like the "realm of thought ... old with the love and homage of innumerable ages, young with the life of life," *Society and Solitude* gifts what its chapter "Old Age" calls "the central wisdom, which was old in infancy, [and] is young in fourscore years" (CW VII: 170). The America Emerson faced in 1870 was as "new yet unapproachable" as the America he faced in 1844 and is as "new yet unapproachable" as the nation we face today, a nation with technologies, knowledges, climates, and conflicts Emerson never saw, yet a nation in so many ways the same—the same in its battles over identity (what is America and who are Americans?); the same in its boasting of arts and inventions without asking, "What have these arts done for the character, for the worth of mankind? Are men [and women] better?" (84); the same in the way "Society seems to have agreed to treat fictions as realities, and realities as fictions" (122); the same in its drive for success gauged by "public opinion ... fame ... feats ... lucre ... monopoly" (156).

What Emerson said succinctly in "Success" might accurately be said now: "We are great by exclusion, grasping, and egotism" (CW VII: 146). Equally prescient, "'Tis cheap and easy to destroy" (157), easy to make "little hope less with satire and skepticism" (158) and criticism; "but to help the young soul"—or any soul—"add energy, inspire hope, and blow the coals into a useful flame; to redeem defeat by new thought, by firm action, that is not easy, that is the work

of divine men" (158) and women. For Emerson, such work begins with self-trust, requires courage—"equality to the problem before us" (133)—and "embraces the affirmative" (155). "Without any shadow of doubt, amidst this vertigo of shows and politics, I settle myself ever firmer in the creed, that we should not postpone and refer and wish, but do broad justice where we are" (CW III: 35). Such was Emerson's faith in the "well-founded, wide-seeing soul" (CW VII: 158), as he put it in "Success," to be realized in believing one's own thought and doing one's own work. Accordingly, *Society and Solitude* is a provocation from out of an "everlasting Now" (CW VII: 88) to meet each day with those seemingly simple yet exacting questions, "Where do we find ourselves?" (CW III: 27), "How shall I live?" (CW VI: 1), and to have the courage to test "the depth at which we live" (CW VII: 93), individually as well as collectively, in solitude as well as in society.

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## Note from Composer Paul John Rudoï

My latest concert-length musical work, *Our Transcendental Passion*, takes its libretto's source material from the formal Transcendentalist movement. Transcendental poems are wedded to Sacred Harp tunes and arranged in pseudo-chorales (reminiscent of the German passion form) are used in the solo and choral components. The result is a work outlining the rise, neglect (due to the oncoming Civil War), and legacy of the movement.

The project itself has shown some promising potential already. Boston Cecilia, the celebrated community chorus partnering with me for the project, has been rehearsing it for about a month and finds it to be an exciting work. We've found several news outlets interested in the project, many of my colleagues in Boston's professional choral scene are planning to attend the premiere, and we even have Megan Marshall, the biographer of Margaret Fuller for which Marshall received a Pulitzer Prize, working with us for our pre-concert talk.

Taking a step back from the logistics of the event, it's important to note that this piece would not exist were it not for the incredibly rich tapestry of textual resources available via the Transcendentalist legacy. One of the largest components of this legacy is Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson's work was crucial to the success of the Transcendentalists, even as his relationship with the movement was a complicated one. The *Passion* only scratches the surface of this relationship due to time constraints, so I felt there could be ways to invest beyond the performance itself.

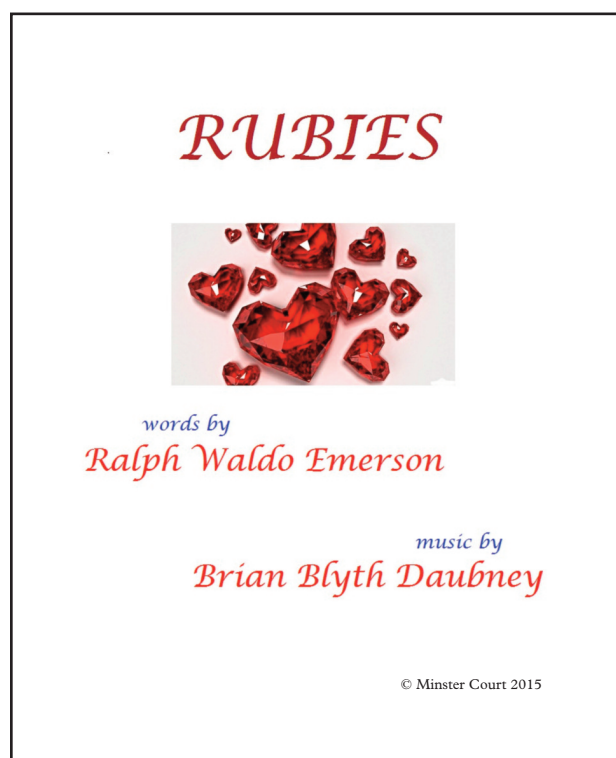
This led me to a goal of sharing the *Passion* and Emerson's own legacy beyond the musical community immediately present in the project, namely the performers and concert-goers. It was important to me to offer in-depth presentations with discussions and musical examples so that those who might be interested in the textual material—especially given that the Transcendentalists were primarily driven by writing and oratory—could find common ground in what I had created on a musical level. With all this in mind, coupled with choosing such a New England-centric source as the Transcendentalists, I thought it best to connect with retirement communities that might enjoy a reminder of Emerson's influence on a current work of art.

Due to circumstances related to COVID-19, *Our Transcendental Passion* has been postponed until the fall of 2020, at which point the work will premiere, and the associated lecture conversations, made possible by the Emerson Society, will take place.

I look forward to a lively discussion around Emerson's materials used for the *Passion*, what is still left to discover, and why it is important for us all to remember our own American potential as uncovered through Emerson's relationship with the Transcendentalist movement.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society for its generous award, which assists in numerous ways: minimizing travel expenses to these locations, printing costs, research materials, and time to create the presentations. Without the Society, these presentations would not have become a reality.

—PJR



Brian Blyth Daubney recently contacted us about his adaptation of Emerson's poem "Rubies" to music for voice and piano. More information about him can be found at [brianblythdaubney.co.uk](http://brianblythdaubney.co.uk).

(Continued on pages 8–9)



# Rubies

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Brian Blyth Daubney

**Andante** *mp*

They brought me ru - bies from the mine, And held them to the sun;

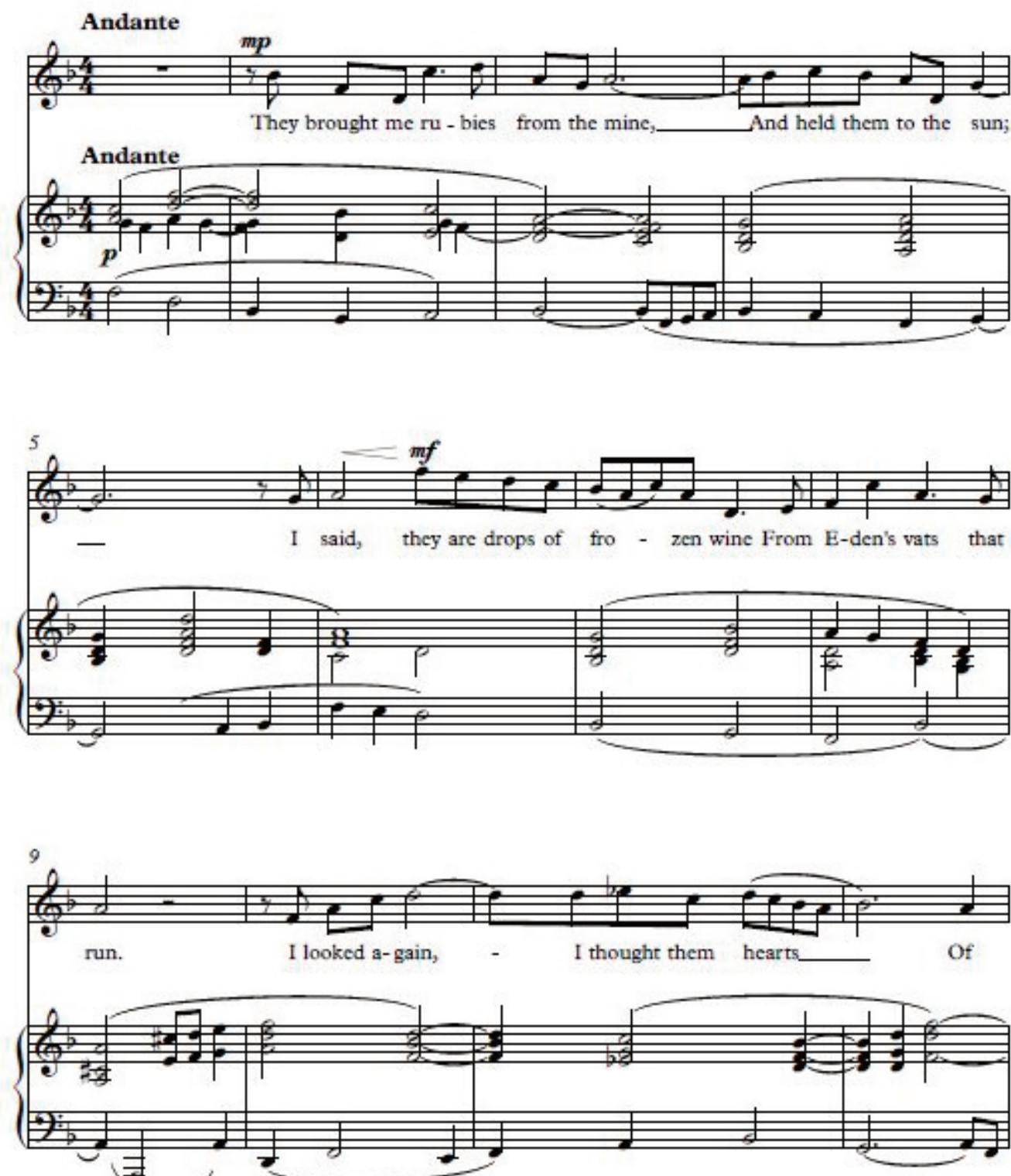
**Andante** *p*

5 *mf*

I said, they are drops of fro - zen wine From E-den's vats that

9

run. I looked a-gain, - I thought them hearts Of





13 3

friends un-known; *f* Tides that should warm each neigh-bour-ing life

*mf*

17 rit. . . . A tempo

Are locked in spark - ling stone. *mf* But fire to thaw

rit. . . . A tempo

21

that rud - dy snow, To break enchant-ed ice, And give love's scar - let

25 *f*

tides to flow, When shall that sun a - rise?

## Awards Updates

David Faflik

*Professor of English, University of Rhode Island*

My forthcoming book, *Transcendental Heresies: Harvard and the Modern American Practice of Unbelief* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2020), takes seriously the contemporary charge of “infidelity” made in certain Unitarian quarters against New England’s Transcendentalists of the 1830s and 1840s. In the eyes of not a few of its detractors, Transcendentalism was less a reliable basis for an



alternative belief system than a spurious, perhaps dangerous, demonstration of misguided religious sensibilities in the decades-long aftermath of the regional disestablishment of an officially endorsed religion. *Transcendental Heresies* contends that the nineteenth-century distinction between belief and “unbelief” was far from clear. In fact, *Transcendental Heresies* goes so far as to suggest that the variety of unconventional spiritual positions and be-

haviors that Transcendentalism made possible in such Massachusetts locations as Cambridge, Concord, and the dynamic metropolis of Boston played an important role in the formation of what we would recognize today as a modern American religion.

As is typical with any such study, my research for this project has occurred across many years and carried me to any number of places. Students of Transcendentalism will be familiar with these last. At Harvard’s Houghton Library and University Archives, I broadened my knowledge of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s early involvement in the Transcendentalist challenge to institutional religion, not least the Unitarianism he encountered at Harvard. At the Walden Woods Project’s Thoreau Institute Library, as well as the Concord Free Public Library, I deepened my understanding of the full, unorthodox range of what I have come to think of as Henry David Thoreau’s sacramental practices. The Schlesinger Library at Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study was the site for my archival examinations of the individualized religious outlooks of the women of Transcendentalism’s first, second, and third generations. And I further extended my sense of the *urban* orientation of Transcendentalism with investigations into such disparate figures as the sometime Unitarian minister Theodore Parker, the self-proclaimed “rational” Transcendentalist Francis Ellingwood Abbot, and the notorious freethinking atheist Abner Kneeland. I conducted this last work at an additional number of research facilities, including the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenæum, and the Andover-Harvard Theological Library.

The book that has resulted from this research would not have been possible without the support of a subvention grant from the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society. Much of this grant helped to offset the expense of reproducing the twelve illustrative images that appear in *Transcendental Heresies*, with the remaining balance being used to pay for a professionally compiled index. I am grateful to the Society and its supporters for their help in promoting the continuing study of Transcendentalism in New England.

Zachary Tavlin

*Assistant Professor, Department of Liberal Arts,  
Art Institute of Chicago*

The Emerson Society’s generous support of my research came at an auspicious time. This year my book project, currently titled *Glancing Visions: American Literature Beyond the Gaze*, has progressed to the point of (near) completion. The award allowed me to present that work in progress at MLA events in Lisbon and Seattle. Those talks revealed much to me about my thinking and the book that was emerging. It is not insignificant that the award brought my attention back to Emerson himself and his place in the manuscript: he is something of a (great, great-grand)father to my argument. That comes with all the expected anxieties of patrilineality: the evasions, contests, processions, and returns. Tracing the competing didacticisms of vision throughout his work, I found myself seeing in Emerson’s work a luminous pool hiding swift eddies, each of which could lead a literary tradition along its own current.



I hope many of Emerson’s readers become readers of *Glancing Visions*. The book begins with Emerson but includes extended meditations on Hawthorne, Harper, Dickinson, and James, ending at the dawns of cinema and modernist poetry. Along the way it challenges assumptions that visuality in the period’s literature was inherently imperialistic, possessive, and theological. It examines critiques of “the gaze” that these writers already developed (well before Laura Mulvey and others made it an intractable topic in the late twentieth century), exposed as they were to contemporaneous developments in visual art and technology. Ultimately, my book calls for a re-vision of our popular theoretical commitment to the gaze as the dominant visual mode revealed through art, ubiquitous in contemporary literary studies, art history, and critical philosophy. I find Emerson to be both a partner and an occasional antagonist in this project, split as his attentions were between transparency and opacity, gazes and glances.

In “Experience,” Emerson writes, “[D]irect strokes never gave us power to make; all our blows glance, all our hits are accidents.” In this comment Emerson holds two principles together that contemporary “reading wars” discourse tends to separate: surprise encounters and critical agency. He says we make or create new things in our readings, but only through glancing blows, accidental connections, things the glance picks up as if haphazardly and without prior knowledge. And yet our impetus is still always to create. There’s something about this formulation that sustains the work of literary criticism and describes the electricity that always remains latent as we push ourselves back to the text again.

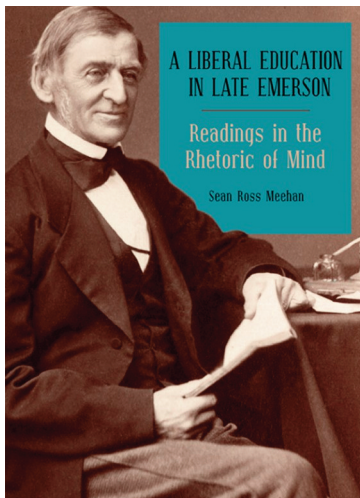
I began this project as a dissertating graduate student at the University of Washington. I received support from the Society as a newly minted faculty member at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. For me, beginning this scholarly career, despite the everyday frustrations of navigating a sadly wounded profession, has been a lesson in the comradeship of colleagues near and far. My sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone willing to bolster my work and the work of my struggling generation of academics.



## Reviews

**A LIBERAL EDUCATION IN LATE EMERSON: READINGS IN THE RHETORIC OF MIND. A LIBERAL EDUCATION IN LATE EMERSON: READINGS IN THE RHETORIC OF MIND.** Sean Ross Meehan. Camden House, 2019, 188 pp. \$90.00 hardback.

In “The American Scholar,” Ralph Waldo Emerson famously diagnoses the condition of American education and society through a vivid use of metonymy: “Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things . . . . The priest becomes a form; the attorney, a statute-book; the mechanic, a machine; the sailor, a rope of a ship” (CW I: 53). Dissevered from the larger social body, individuals become fragments of technological specialization. One might even say they are metonyms for societal fragmentation itself. This would certainly be Sean Ross Meehan’s claim, whose vivacious new study, *A Liberal Education in Late Emerson: Readings in the Rhetoric of Mind* (2019), plumbs nineteenth-century Harvard’s transformation from a college steeped in generalist knowledge and the classical rhetorical arts to the modern university of scholarly specialization and disciplinary atomization. Meehan’s study comes as part of a general renewed interest in Emerson’s rhetoric—also the subject of Roger Thompson’s important new work, *Emerson and the History of Rhetoric* (2017)—as well as in Emerson’s later works, as found in Christopher Hanlon’s *Emerson’s Memory Loss: Originality, Communitality, and the Late Style* (2018). Both Thompson and



Meehan show Emerson’s central place within American cultures of rhetoric and oratory, and all three works challenge the largely Romantic image of Emerson as the solitary genius of poetic self-creation.

Metonymy is the “trope in which a word associated with, or physically or temporally related to, a thing or concept substitutes for that thing or concept” (8), and, accord-

ing to Meehan, “metonymy for Emerson . . . is *the* figure of rhetoric at work in the exercise of all thinking and writing” (70). To its credit, Meehan’s study is not a linear telling of events but rather a series of fruitful, interlocking excursions, or “readings,” organized around lecture titles taken from Emerson’s later works. Chapter 1, “‘Natural Method of Mental Philosophy’: William James’s *Principles of Pedagogy*,” reexamines Emerson’s influence on William James—Emerson’s greatest prog-

eny—through the lens of metonymy as rhetoric. Meehan argues that like Emerson, James understood philosophy as “a form of rhetorical, liberal education” (37), and he illuminates a link between Emersonian metonymy—flexible thinking through analogizing—and James’s pluralistic metaphysics of radical empiricism. One slight issue I have with Meehan’s use of metonymy in this chapter is that it at times seems to evoke the associationist psychology James’s radical empiricism expressly repudiates: “for James, this power of rhetoric’s metonymy reiterates a crucial principle in the psychological laws of association” (28).

Chapter 2, “‘Education’: Charles W. Eliot’s Invention of the University,” is one of Meehan’s most exciting chapters. It argues that two organic intellectuals—Emerson and Wendell Berry—pose similar critiques of the University’s turn to disciplinary specialization. Meehan challenges the common view that antebellum education at Harvard, steeped in Lockean epistemology, was enervating—as for instance Barbara Packer suggests in *The Transcendentalists* (2007)—instead arguing that its curriculum of classical oratory steeped in Cicero and Isocrates trained scholars in intellectual flexibility, and, more importantly, community engagement through the *lingua franca* of rhetorical culture.

Chapter 3, “‘Poetry and Imagination’: Rhetorical Exercises in Walt Whitman’s *Gymnasium*,” argues against the narrative that Whitman, as America’s poet of the body, stands as the sanguine counterpart to Emerson’s bloodless transcendentalism. Meehan artfully overturns this misconception by tracing Emerson and Whitman’s overlapping interest in tropes of digestion—tropes themselves metonymic of rhetoric as a mode of flexible thinking and reading.

Chapter 4, “‘Eloquence’: Lessons in Emerson’s Rhetoric of Metonymy,” closes the book, minus an interesting epilogue on Emerson and W. E. B. Du Bois that positions Du Bois as a proponent of classical liberal education (which he was exposed to during his years at Fisk University) as a vital force for black citizenship despite such education’s history of racist exclusion. Meehan’s last chapter devotes the most attention to his central claim that “metonymy, despite its prominence in Emerson’s thinking, has been largely neglected in Emerson criticism” (18). Counter to this tradition of dismissal, Meehan identifies an evolution in Emerson’s poetics from “‘the fixed natural symbolism’ of metaphor to the concept of metonymy” (101).

In recovering Emerson’s later use of metonymy as the master term for thinking, Meehan argues that metaphor is not adequate for Emerson’s rhetoric of metamorphosis—or, to use Meehan’s term, “recomposition”—because metaphor implies fixity whereas metonymy implies fluidity through contiguous relation and dynamic context: “‘Metamorphosis’ is not simply metaphor in a series . . . so much as metaphor failing to hold since it moves along a metonymic chain operating through rela-

(Continued on page 10)

## REVIEWS

(Continued from page 7)

tions, both near and far, of contiguity and context” (101). Yet such a materially contiguous chain of figural associates seems, in one sense, to imply a pre-existing order the rhetor selects from and “recomposes”—a term Meehan repeatedly draws on. Meehan’s emphasis on metonymy as a master term, in other words, raises questions about the tension between Emerson’s originality and his “unoriginality,” a term Meehan also tropes as a figure for rhetoric’s ecologies of recomposition. One wonders if there is not a way to claim both the “original” and the “unoriginal” Emerson—the early inventor of new metaphor and the later recomposer of eloquence. Whatever the answer may be, Meehan’s study does indispensable work in illuminating transcendentalism’s materiality and communality, and in reclaiming rhetoric as an essential feature of Emerson’s thinking. It is a book that should be read by anyone interested in transcendentalism and in the fate of higher education.

—Austin Bailey

The City University of New York

**EMERSON’S MEMORY LOSS: ORIGINALITY, COMMUNALITY, AND THE LATE STYLE.** Christopher Hanlon. Oxford University Press, 2018, 164 pp. \$69.00 hardcover.

Many readers of *ESP* are likely familiar with Christopher Hanlon’s field enlivening book, *America’s England: Ante-*

*bellum Literature and Atlantic Sectionalism*

(2013), in which he offered a fresh assessment of the years leading up to the American Civil War, and specifically, how Northern and Southern factions related to English origins, real and imagined. Now in *Emerson’s Memory Loss*, Hanlon focuses his attention on a more conscribed subject, and not just a single author (Emerson), but on a specific pe-

riod—or we might say, condition—of his creative life. The period is “late,” and as for so many others, it is defined, in part, by an emerging dementia, an attendant loss of memory, and a disposition-defining aphasia. How that now-familiar affliction shaped Emerson’s last years has, according to Hanlon, “remained barely discussed” by those charged with inheriting his work, and when addressed the topic is “for the

most part treated quickly or euphemistically” (14). Is this “tradition of evasion,” this “habit of “sublimat[ing] the facts of Emerson’s senescence” (19) an indication, perhaps, of a certain entrenched disciplinary forgetfulness, or willful neglect? In any case, in Hanlon’s fine study, we have an act of remediation: a sustained, multivalent appraisal of the impact of Emerson’s cognitive capacities (and disabilities) on his later work—and, as intriguingly, how that later work stokes reconsideration of his heralded, culture-defining early work. Quite saliently, we learn of the communal creation of *Natural History of Intellect*, *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, and “Perpetual Forces,” among others. Hanlon emphasizes that the discovery of such “corrupted,” “polyvocal” (8), and “communal styles of intellection” (3) should not be seen mainly “as a scandal, but, perhaps surprisingly, as a conduit toward reading Emerson anew” (8). Yet, there can be productive frisson in a scandal, and this belated news may be worth allowing and courting. Perhaps, like Emerson’s early style, our reading of his work should be “perturbed” (3).

As he showed in *America’s England*, Hanlon is, in Susan Ryan’s words, “as adept at reading political, visual, and scientific commentary as he is at unpacking dense literary essays.” Despite the specificity of his charge on this occasion, Hanlon’s chronicle of Emerson’s mental deterioration—and the marshaling of resources, personal and communal to respond to it—will be familiar to anyone who has experience with memory loss (one’s own and in others). Indeed, the poignancy of Hanlon’s case studies coupled with his scrutiny and contextualization of these examples (both private and public) makes the volume a compelling account for those who may have little, or even no, interest in Emerson as a person or writer. Obviously, such a scenario is not pertinent to readers of *ESP*, but it may be handy to keep Hanlon’s book in mind when thinking of how to interest fickle, “undecided” undergraduates or during encounters with adults who are indifferent, antagonistic, or otherwise deaf to Emerson’s call. In a brisk 164 pages, a reader at most any level, from any discipline, can find worthy company in Hanlon’s treatment not just of a titan of American literary and philosophical thought, but in a story of how memory transforms our capacities—one and all—for the postulation of originality or the achievement of communality.

Hanlon’s handling of what Dominic Mastroianni described as “an area of Emerson’s writing that has been deemed more or less off limits” (580) is the occasion this study provides for rethinking our commitment to one of the most notorious aspects of Emerson’s body of work: the concept of “self-reliance.” In short, in addressing the nature of Emerson’s last decade of life and writing, we are given an opportunity to re-consider his “earlier formulations concerning the autonomous and self-reliant,” “independent, self-sufficient mind” (3). For some readers, the suggestion that “self-reliance” is an idea calling for reevaluation



may arrive as a mild outrage, yet, ... in Hanlon's company, in his careful, measured, and deeply-informed research and capable readings of late works, there is instead convincing, text-based reason to believe that the seemingly indelible notion deserves a radical overhaul—at least within Emerson's oeuvre, and by extension its legacy beyond it.

A particularly vital moment of reckoning arrives when Hanlon considers Emerson's *Natural History of Intellect* (given at Harvard in academic year 1870–71), a collection of lectures Emerson "said he envisioned as a most refined expression of his life's work" (23). Problem is: these lectures were the most collaborative of his career, created in partnership with his daughter Ellen Tucker Emerson because of a dawning and increasingly aggressive dementia. This twinned circumstance creates a logical antagonism to two of Emerson's most central doctrines—mind-body dualism and self-reliant consciousness as the hallmark of intellectual integrity. If the champion of self-reliance is suddenly *other*-reliant, and if the hero of individualism is struck by a need for companionship, collaboration, and "communality"—and again, all the while deigning to create a *magnum opus* of sorts—many key tenets, confident formulations, and strident doctrines will be forced into the field of reassessment. Not incidentally, the ambiguous authorship led to the exclusion of Emerson's *summa philosophica* from the just-

completed *Collected Works*. Hopefully, this perspicuous case suggests how potentially disruptive Hanlon's study is to settled opinions about—in a Cavellian register—the "constitutional" nature of Emerson's work: for example, the sanctity of its authorship and the authority of its sanctions.

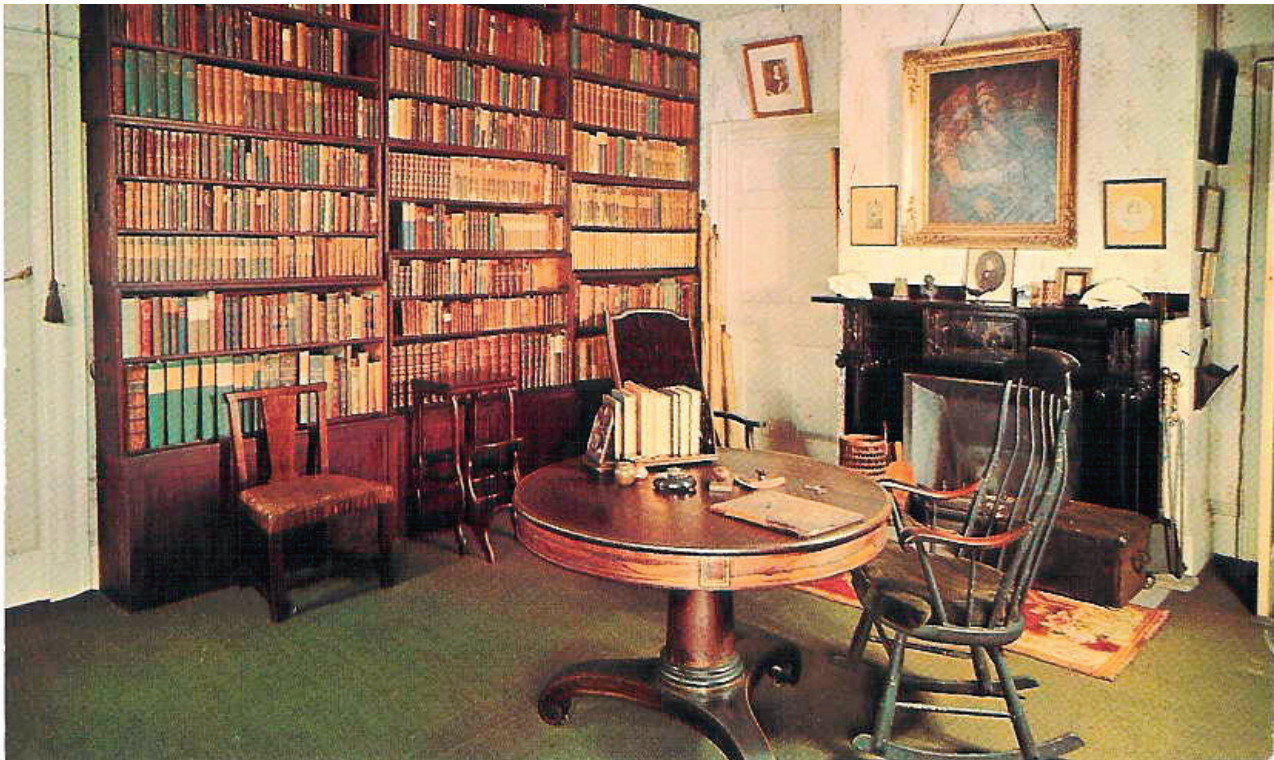
What may have at first appeared to be an afterthought of Emerson studies—an oft-repeated, yet brief and inconsequential mention of Emerson's late-in-life dementia—has suddenly become central on account of Hanlon's astute archival, textual, and conceptual analysis. Memory loss "at the end" recasts many core conceits of the early (and more famous) work: the sanctity of the self, independence, isolation, individual power, originality, autonomous creation, the personal and impersonal, distance, withdrawal, and much else. A close student of Emerson's cannot help but be shaken by Hanlon's unexpected, expertly defended propositions, which make Emerson's early work subject to the volatility, ambiguities, and revelations of "his" later work.

—David LaRocca  
Cornell University

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Susan Ryan, drawn from an endorsement of *America's England*.

<sup>2</sup> Dominic Mastroianni, "Transcendentalism Without Escape," *American Literary History*, vol. 31, issue 3 (Fall 2019): 575-85, [doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajz020](https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajz020)



*Emerson's Study, Joel Myerson Collection, Irvin Department, University of South Carolina Libraries*

# The Mediacy of “Works and Days”: From McLuhan to Emerson

Readers of Emerson might be surprised to learn that Marshall McLuhan, the twentieth-century Canadian media theorist, derived his core definition of media from a concept Emerson articulated in “Works and Days,” the seventh chapter in *Society and Solitude* (1870). Declaring in the opening paragraph that the “nineteenth century is the age of tools” and the “human body is the magazine of inventions, the patent-office,” Emerson amplifies the organic understanding of technology as a measure and means of the human: “All the tools and engines on earth are only extensions of [the human body’s] limbs and senses” (CW 7: 79). Emerson’s further description of the telegraph as “that extension of eye and ear” could be transposed into many of McLuhan’s works, without quotation marks and without disruption (CW 7: 81).

McLuhan, you might recall, gave to his groundbreaking book, *Understanding Media* (1964), the subtitle, “the extensions of man.” McLuhan’s readers well know the prominence of this concept of media as “extensions” throughout his writing. With it, McLuhan redefines physical media to be fundamentally metaphysical, ultimately acts of consciousness and mind. “As the hand, with its extensions, probes and shapes the physical environment, so the soul or mind, with its extensions of speech, probes and orders and retrieves the man-made environment of artifacts and archetypes” (*From Cliché* 122.) While that analogy sounds Emersonian, it’s McLuhan in 1970. Despite the resonance, McLuhan scholars have tended to neglect the fact that in his late work *Laws of Media: The New Science* (1988), published posthumously by his son, McLuhan himself quoted Emerson’s “Works and Days” as an older source for his concept and specific phrasing, after first crediting a contemporary, the anthropologist Edward T. Hall (94).

My current research explores the misunderstood significance of unoriginality across the arts and sciences, and uses Emerson as its primary guide. McLuhan’s understanding of the extensions of media provides a further reference point. Here, I am not arguing for Emerson merely or exclusively as McLuhan’s source. Not unlike Emerson, McLuhan often argued by extending and reproducing, and not always with quotation marks, the words and thoughts of many others. My interest, rather, is to use McLuhan to reconsider the mediacy of Emerson’s thought as a way of understanding, though it might seem perverse given what he says about imitation in “Self-Reliance,” Emerson’s underappreciated interests in unoriginality. As Emerson proposes in “Quotation and Originality,” the 1868 essay later published in *Letters and Social Aims* (1875), and in which the “patent-office” reappears as a figure of human inventiveness, originality is inseparable from the reproducibility of quotation.

Media theorists such as Walter Benjamin or Friedrich Kittler, more au courant today than McLuhan, provide critical

insights for situating Emerson’s “magazine of inventions” within the nineteenth-century discourse networks of technological reproduction including telegraphy, photography, and the typewriter, which received its first U.S. patent in 1868. However, my hypothesis is that Emerson also has older senses of invention and the arts in mind when he argues for the relation between the original and its reproduction through others. And McLuhan’s work, I believe, can help us recognize and reconsider those older senses informing Emerson’s language of technology and invention. In fact, Emerson’s older usage of “information” in “Works and Days” illuminates the critical problem. New and astonishing inventions such as the ocean telegraph are not so new, but are rather “new informations of the same Spirit that made the elements at first.” Recognizing the unconventional usage, Ron Bosco speculates that “Emerson probably intends inspirations or animations” (CW 7:81; 210). But I hear a similar usage in “Progress of Culture” where “information” resonates still as partly a verb, not yet an abstract noun; Emerson conceives the mediacy of “[t]he inviolate soul” as being “in perpetual telegraphic communication with the Source of events” and thus having “earlier information” (CW 8:119).

Although many would view McLuhan as celebrating the obsolescence of older media rendered by the new media forms of the electronic age, in fact McLuhan argues for understanding media as a complex and continuing relation between new and old. In *Laws of Media*, where he quotes Emerson, McLuhan conceives of all media as a complex tetrad of dynamic relations: extension and obsolescence, yes, but also retrieval (of the old within the new) and reversal (of the new into the old). To blend Emerson’s last word from “Quotation and Originality” with McLuhan’s thought, every new medium is a “recomposition” of what it replaces (CW 8:107). For this reason, McLuhan is not the technological determinist that some critics have assumed. Nor is Emerson in “Works and Days,” who offers a counter-statement about the “questionable properties” lurking in the very tools he surveys and celebrates: “The weaver becomes a web, the machinist a machine. If you do not use the tools, they use you” (CW 7: 83). Here, with his focus on the way tools reshape human sense experience even as they extend from it, Emerson provides for the nineteenth century what McLuhan calls, in the subtitle of *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), “an inventory of effects.”

Moreover, with his argument for the laws of all media as fundamentally metaphorical, media as extensions of the human body primarily through the means of language and the ways language focalizes human sense experience, McLuhan engages a rhetorical understanding of media that is particularly suited to an understanding of Emerson. Emerson’s rhetorical commitments are perhaps more well known. It is not much of a stretch



to recognize in McLuhan's twentieth-century brand of media poetics Emerson's understanding of nature as semiosis, as metaphor of mind. Like McLuhan and his conception of media ecology, Emerson understands tools as an organic extension of the mind, dynamic outgrowths and insights of what he called the "natural history of intellect."

But McLuhan has a concrete and historically specific understanding of language in mind: the rhetoric, grammar, and dialectics of the classical trivium. In brief, for McLuhan the new electronic forms of multimedia and multisensory technologies extend and obsolesce the typographic media of what he called, in the title of his second book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962). Think only of scrolling down a web page for evidence of the ways our new inventions are mediated and metaphorized through their precedents. But, at the same time, these forms of new media retrieve and potentially reverse into older, acoustic forms that McLuhan calls, by way of T. S. Eliot, the "auditory imagination." Indeed, McLuhan identifies Hesiod's *Works and Days* as a source for Eliot's "ritual hymn" in "Prufrock" (*From Cliché* 51, 35). McLuhan, it is not as well known, traced the sources of those recomposed, acoustic dynamics of new media back through the tradition of rhetorical education and its earlier instructions in the oratorical imagination. As McLuhan writes in "The Humanities in the Electronic Age": "The Ciceronian ideal of the *doctus orator* is current again" (6). Establishing his "new science" in *Laws of Media* by retrieving and extending Bacon and Vico, McLuhan declares: "The trivium is our concern: all three of its elements are arts and sciences of language" (9).

Emerson's title "Works and Days," reaching back more than 2500 years to the Greek poet Hesiod, reiterates the way new tools and inventions extend and are shaped by older forms. Emerson suggests the verbal and specifically rhetorical nature of mediacy in his third sentence in "Works and Days," quoting from the sophist Protagoras, "Man is the metre of all things," and then from Francis Bacon and *The Advancement of Learning*, "the hand is the instrument of instruments, and the mind is the form of forms," except Emerson, as Bosco notes, misattributes both to Aristotle (CW 7:79; 206-07). The intellectual power that Emerson extends from Protagoras and Bacon, or from Aristotle, for that matter, and which informs his understanding of media and their relation to human limbs and senses, is itself mediated by the various rhetorical and grammatical technologies with which Emerson, not unlike McLuhan, made his mark as a scholar and public intellectual. The various nineteenth-century "arts" of invention celebrated throughout this essay are extensions of the liberal arts. These arts retrieve and also seemingly obsolesce various rhetorical and grammatical techniques of extending human experience through language that Emerson addresses in the "Eloquence" chapter included in *Society and Solitude*. Emerson uses a phrase that aptly synthesizes the arts of inventing, arranging, amplifying, remembering, and delivering (old) ideas in the (new) media that extend from human limbs and senses: quotation and originality.

If Emerson and McLuhan are working from similar sources shaped by the classical trivium, and from a shared understand-

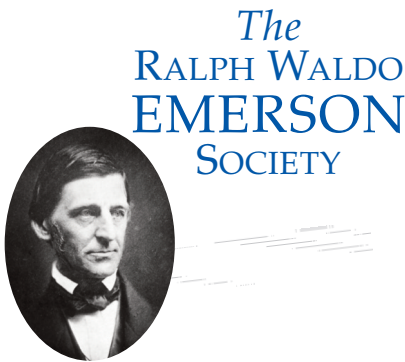
ing of media as an extension of such humanistic sources, might we also recognize shared aspects (and problems) in the style of thinking and writing for which both are known? I am thinking of the quality (and the critical complaint) of writing that is aphoristic and iterative, encyclopedic in scope, which relies on analogical relations, on extensive quotation (attributed and unattributed) of others' thinking, and on nonlinear repetitions and circulations of ideas that resist conventions of logical, linear, rationalistic thought. And I am thinking of a multidisciplinary style of scholarship that resists the expectations of academic specialization, and makes the problem of specialization no small part of the argument. Both scholars think through the power and tradition of what I call "rhetorical generalism" and perform it in their writing (*A Liberal Education* 43). McLuhan had his mosaic, Emerson his circles. McLuhan argues that such stylistic and logical dissonances result from visually-dominant print media rubbing up against the new acoustic spaces of electronic media and their retrieval of aural techniques. I think there is need and opportunity to reconsider some of the dissonances of Emerson's late work with this understanding of what McLuhan's student, Walter Ong, describes as the residual rhetoric of "secondary orality" in print (135).

I'd want to be careful, of course, and not align too closely the late and very popular work of McLuhan (in the 1960s and 1970s) with that of Emerson a century earlier. But I would hypothesize that as we further explore and probe Emersonian mediacy, we can continue to recover the value of late works such as "Works and Days" and its volume, *Society and Solitude*. This is, in effect, the lesson of the "days" that Emerson traces back to Hesiod: "we must look deeper" through our current and illusory forms in order to know their earlier information (CW 7: 83). Doing so, we might better recognize Emerson's humanistic interest in the arts that resonate with the unoriginality of the individual in any moment, those inventions that extend and repeat the deeper origins of our works and days.

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