

*R.W.E.*

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# EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

## William H. Gilman, a Reminiscence

RALPH HARRY ORTH

In September 1956 I was a newly minted graduate student in English at the University of Rochester taking a course in the works of Herman Melville. I had never read anything by Melville in four years of English classes at Queens College, but I had read *Moby-Dick* in a large-format edition with color plates by Mead Schaeffer when I was fifteen years old and had thought it a wonderful adventure story. I had even enjoyed the whale chapters.

The door opened and a tall, spare man with a narrow, serious face and rimless glasses entered. He was slightly stooped, and his dark suit hung loosely on his angular frame. I knew only his name, William H. Gilman.

He began to talk in a dry, rather inflectionless voice. He said that we were going to read most of Melville's works, and we'd each write three short papers of ten pages each and one long paper of thirty pages. We would read them in class and be expected to defend our views. We were also expected to take part in class discussions. We could have conferences with him whenever we wanted.

He began to talk about the works of Melville, beginning with *Typee* (I had heard of that one), and as he went through the others I began to really look forward to the course. Who knew that Melville had written so much stuff, and of such variety? Even poetry!

Gilman's classroom manner was rather distant at first. He was apparently not comfortable meeting new people. He avoided eye contact and did a lot of looking down at his notes. His speaking manner involved a lot of nervous coughs and frequent "uh"s, although these abated as he went on. He never smiled. A polished speaker he was not.

But what he said conveyed great conviction. You saw that he was totally committed to his subject and to scholarly investigation. Before the three hours were over, I knew that the seminar would be a rigorous but rewarding journey and could barely wait to begin.

At the time of the seminar Gilman was forty-five years old. He was working on an edition of Melville's letters with Merrell R. Davis. No such collection had ever appeared. Gilman gave us an intimidating task: to find any letters that he and Davis had missed in their canvass of multiple sources. He gave us a list of reference works and sent us off to the library. Imagine actually coming up with an unknown letter somewhere! But, of course, none of us found anything.

It turned out that he had another project in the works besides that of Melville's letters. He and three other scholars had proposed a modern edition of the journals and miscellaneous notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Harvard University Press had contracted to publish an anticipated sixteen volumes. A turn-of-the-century edition had been edited according to antiquated principles, and an updated version was overdue. Gilman had acquired some funding and was in the early stages of work on volume one of what came to be known as the *JMN*.

He called me into his office one day and asked me if I would like to be a research assistant on the project. It took me two milliseconds to answer yes. There was a stipend, but that's not what attracted me. I loved the idea of doing research, even on a lowly level. It was arranged, and the next day Bill gave me a stack of half-sheets with quotations written on them and told me to find the sources.

I sat for hours rummaging through concordances and books of quotations picking up one identification after another. It was very much like fishing, with the same feeling of satisfaction when you hooked your prey. I would return at the end of my foray to Gilman's office and give him the completed half-sheets. He would take them and give me some more.

Sometimes a quotation would be identified as, say, from "Byron's *Siege of Corinth*." If I could not find the quoted lines in any secondary source, I would sit down and read

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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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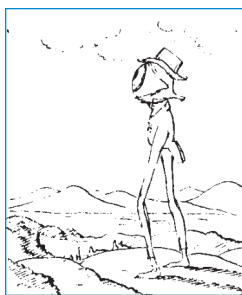
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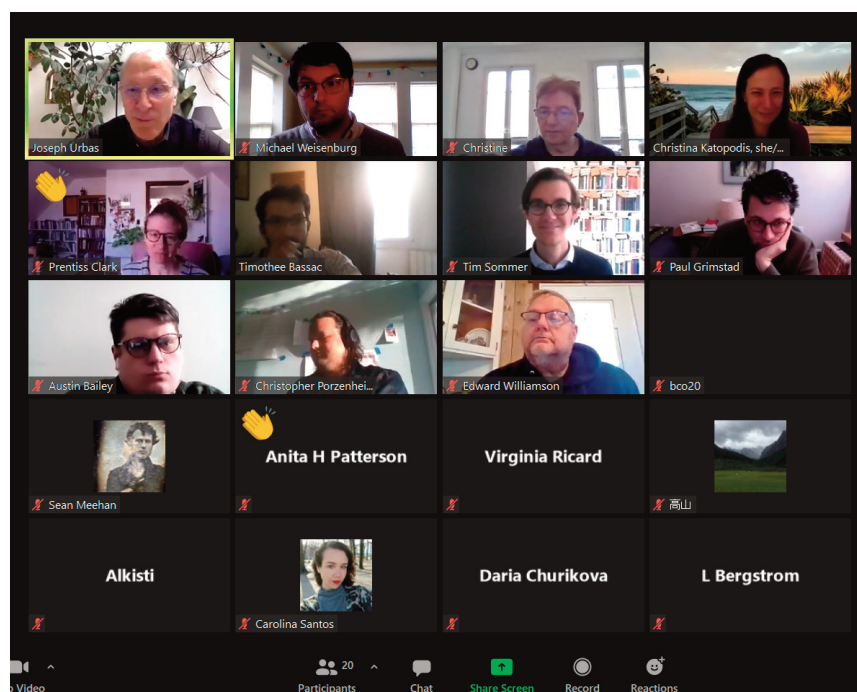
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# PROSPECTS



On March 6, 2021, the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society hosted a Graduate Student Workshop via Zoom. Organized and chaired by Joseph Urbas, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, the event featured new and emergent work from young scholars whose Doctoral Dissertations and M.A. Theses were

recently completed or in progress. The workshop was well attended by members of the society, and it is our intention to host future workshops. If you know (or are) a grad student writing on RWE and co., look for it next year—a friendly environment for fresh scholarship.



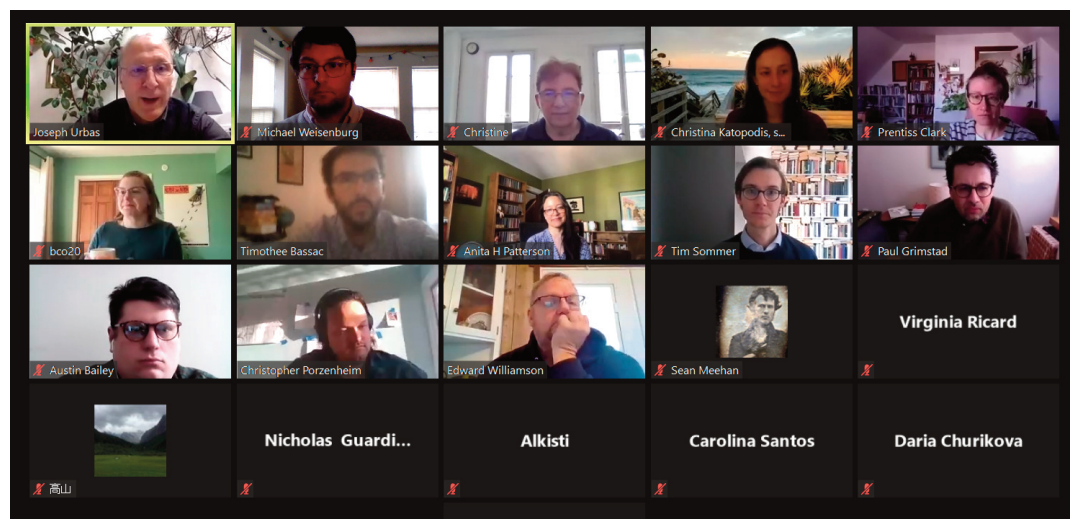
## Presenters:

Austin Bailey, Ph.D candidate,  
English, CUNY Graduate Center:  
“Emerson and the Passional Self”

Timothee Bassac, Ph.D candidate,  
English, Université Bordeaux  
Montaigne: “Surrendering with  
Hedge and Emerson”

Christina Katopodis, Ph.D, English,  
CUNY Graduate Center: “Sound  
Ecologies: Music and Vibration in  
19th-Century American Literature”

Christopher Porzenheim, M.A.,  
Philosophy, Georgia State University:  
“Why Ralph Waldo Emerson Is a  
Virtue Ethicist”



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## PROSPECTS

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### Emerson Society Panels at ALA Conference 2021

The Emerson Society will present two panels at the American Literature Association meeting. Due to the ongoing constraints of the COVID-19 Pandemic, The Emerson Society Board has decided to take the ALA's virtual option and will prerecord the sessions on Saturday, June 5, 10 a.m. EST, 4 p.m. CET, with the two panels back-to-back. All members in good standing will receive instructions on how to join the sessions on Zoom via email a few days before the event. For more information about participating in the online session, contact the webmaster at [emerson.society.webmaster@gmail.com](mailto:emerson.society.webmaster@gmail.com).

#### Emerson and Health

Chair: Joseph Urbas, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

1. "The Hyacinthine Boy": Reading Death, Grief, and Childhood in Emerson's Works," Kristina West, University of Reading
2. "Scene painting and counterfeit": Performing Grief in Emerson's Elegiac Writing and George Saunders's *Lincoln in the Bardo*," Georgia Walton, University of Leeds
3. "Beauty in Nature as Health for the Soul: Emerson's Poetics of Givenness," J. Edward Hackett, Southern University and A&M College
4. "Get Health: Emerson, Health, and Cultural Pathologies," Stephen Rachman, Michigan State University

#### Emerson Studies Now: A Roundtable Discussion

Chair: Bonnie O'Neill, Mississippi State University

1. "Editing the Oxford *Handbook of Ralph Waldo Emerson*," Christopher Hanlon Arizona State University
2. "'A Future Worthy of the Past': Emerson's Poetic Thinking," Michael Jonik, University of Sussex
3. "'Where Do We Find Ourselves?': Provocations for Emerson Studies Now," Prentiss Clark, University of South Dakota
4. "Reconsidering Emerson's Critique of Busybodies in an Age of Scholarly Activism," Joseph Urbas, Université Bordeaux Montaigne

### Thoreau Society Annual Gathering

The Emerson Society will present a panel at the Thoreau Society Annual Gather, to be held July 8–12. Due to ongoing health concerns related to COVID-19, the Thoreau Society is planning an exciting, full, entirely online conference. More details at [thoreausociety.org/event/annual-gathering-2021](http://thoreausociety.org/event/annual-gathering-2021).

#### "Other Views of Emerson's Writing and Activism"

Chair: Kristina West, University of Reading

1. "Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and the Body in *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli* (1852)," Alice de Galzain, University of Edinburgh
2. "José Martí's Emersonian Vision of a Self-Reliant Cuba," Rev. Daniel Medina, Drew University
3. "Radical Emerson: Radical Actions, Radical Writings, Radical Friendships, Radical Legacy," Kathleen Bitetti, Artist and Independent Scholar





## WILLIAM H. GILMAN

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through Byron's poem until I came across them. I soon developed the ability to skim whole pages in such searches. A side result was that I developed an extensive superficial knowledge of such works as Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and the essays of Plutarch and Montaigne.



William H. Gilman

Gilman eventually gave me personalities and events to research, and in doing so I would write what were essentially proto-footnotes. He would look them over and either approve them or tell me to do more research on them. I can still remember the suspense with which I watched his profile as he read. I became expert at interpreting his grunts, coughs, and raised eyebrows as unconscious signs of approval or disapproval.

Bit by bit we fell into a comfortable relationship and began to have little conversations. He told me to sit down instead of just standing there. Gilman was the most egalitarian of men, and once you got beyond his initial reserve it was pleasant and easy to chat with him. He asked me about my life, and I began to learn about his.

He had been born in the Hyde Park section of Boston into a middle-class Catholic family. He graduated from Harvard with a B.A. in 1933, in the depth of the Depression, and didn't get his PhD from Yale until 1948, fifteen years later. In the intervening time he had held various temporary jobs, and taught for a while at Robert College in Istanbul and at Georgetown University's School for Foreign Service. I don't believe he was in the military during the Second World War, probably because of poor eyesight. He joined the faculty of the University of Rochester in 1947.

In my second year of graduate school the subject of my doctoral dissertation came up. I knew that I wanted to do it on American literature and leaned toward Melville as a subject, but after my experience as an Emerson research assistant I decided Emerson would be a better choice. Gilman, of course, would be my thesis adviser.

He found a way to solve a problem in the Emerson journals edition and give me a topic for a thesis at the same time. Emerson, in addition to keeping regular journals (chronological) and notebooks (mostly topical), also regularly entered quotations from his reading in what at the time were called "blotting books." The amount of research needed to annotate these "books" was enormous, since they consisted of strings of often unrelated quotations very much like the

ones I had been researching. The progress of the edition would be seriously hindered if volumes could not be published on schedule because editors were bogged down in research on quotation books compiled during the time period the volume covered.

The proposed solution was to gather all the quotation books into one volume, to be issued at a later time out of the chronological sequence of the regular volumes. There would be a staggering amount of research to do, but years to do it in. And if a test run of one of the books could form the basis of a dissertation, the eventual volume would already have had substantial work done on it.

An unspoken assumption was that the person responsible for the test run could become the editor of the later volume, and thus a member of the editorial team preparing the entire sixteen-volume edition. Result: a scholarly career ready-made.

Gilman suggested I take the quotation book entitled *Encyclopedia*, which Emerson had kept off and on from 1824 to 1836, identify the sources of the eight-hundred-plus quotations it contained, and present it in a genetic (unmodified) text with an interpretive introduction. The identification process would be mostly a matter of cold, hard labor, I knew, but what was the "interpretation" to be? Then I discovered that Emerson had conveniently written an essay called "Quotation and Originality," which gave me the framework for an introduction that, in its final form, totaled ninety pages and proved sufficiently intellectual to pass scrutiny with my defense committee.

In September 1959 I became an instructor at the University of Vermont. In 1961, having secured the PhD, I was promoted to assistant professor. I kept in touch periodically with Gilman during this time.

In 1960 the first volume of the *JMN* was published, and the second appeared in 1961. The edition was well under way. Unfortunately, the original editorial team had shrunk from four to two; one member (George P. Clark) had resigned, and the other (Merrell R. Davis) had died. To replace them, Gilman and the other original editor, Alfred R. Ferguson ("Fergy"), had recruited two stellar scholars, Merton M. Sealts and Harrison Hayford. This very strong team was the backbone of the edition for the next dozen years.

Then there was me. In 1962 Gilman called and said that he had brought together all nine of Emerson's quotation books (including *Encyclopedia*) and, as we had tacitly agreed, I would be their editor for the projected volume six, scheduled for publication in 1966. This would mean more endless hours researching quotations, but with an entry into the edition assured and, for my future at the University of

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Vermont a clear path to tenure, I accepted, thus beginning a scholarly involvement that lasted for the greater part of my professional career.

Somewhere in this period Gilman said, "Call me Bill." That made us socially, if not professionally, equal.

I eventually met the other two editors, Sealts and Hayford. Sealts was the epitome of the monkish scholar, reserved, precise, with little tolerance for anything short of perfection. Hayford was expansive, jocular, something of a showboat. The two had worked together on an edition of Melville's *Billy Budd*, and given their conflicting personalities I could hardly conceive how they managed the feat.

My first day in the Houghton stacks Gilman shoved a bulging looseleaf notebook in front of me. This, he said, was the Manual. (Always capitalized, like "Bible" or "Constitution.") It contained the procedures for editing the manuscripts, and I was to learn it by heart. Included were numerous examples of this or that complex situation, and as more and more of them arose the Manual got thicker and thicker. Bill often browsed through it and made little notations and changes, and eventually there was a supplement. One of his favorite sayings when I asked a textual question was, "It's in the Manual."

Soon Gilman rented a small apartment near Central Square and the two of us stayed there. (I went home to Vermont on weekends, but Gilman stayed in town.) I was assigned the role of cook. Since my experiences in this field did not extend much beyond bacon and eggs and other such simple fare, we ate a lot of spaghetti and meatballs. Eventually we ate out about half the time in the little restaurants around Harvard Square, but Gilman also occasionally took me into Boston and introduced me to Locke-Ober's and other legendary eating establishments. My Beantown horizons widened.

We both smoked, and the atmosphere in our apartment was dense. I learned Bill's attitude toward alcohol: drink a lot of it. His whiskey glass was never empty, yet his mind always remained clear. He talked shop a lot, but we also had more general conversations. It turned out Bill was politically and socially liberal, and later in the Sixties he took part in civil rights demonstrations and marches against the Vietnam war. He was a mild-mannered person, but with a steely interior that took social justice, racial equality, and the peace movement seriously.

In 1966 volume six duly appeared, and my transition to full editor followed.

Each volume had a chronology at the beginning noting events in Emerson's life during the years covered by the

volume. Mine was very abbreviated and this resulted in the following entry for 1831: "February 8, Ellen [Emerson's first wife] dies; during this year Encyclopedia remains his main quotation book." When Gilman saw this, his eyebrows lifted, and he looked at me. "So much for the human dimension, eh?" he said. But he let the entry stand.

I was paired with Fergy to produce volume 9, scheduled for 1971, and in fact became its senior editor when Ferguson assumed the post of General Editor of Emerson's *Collected Works*. Around the same time Hayford became the General Editor of a collected edition of the writings of Melville.

It was clear that additional editors were needed, and Gilman reached into his Rochester grab bag of recent PhDs and came up with two: A. W. ("Bill") Plumstead, a Canadian teaching at the University of Saskatchewan, who had done his dissertation on Melville under Gilman, was paired with Hayford on volume seven and, later, with Gilman on volume eleven; and J. W. ("Jay") Parsons, who was paired with Gilman on volume eight.

Mert Sealts was responsible for volume ten. Mert preferred to work alone (after his experience with Hayford on *Billy Budd*?) and had even asked to have his name taken off the edition title page after volume six. He was happier being a sort of free agent or contract editor.

Two noteworthy events occurred in the Sixties. The first was that the edition began to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, in an era when federal support for the arts and humanities was a national priority. That was the end of our scrimp-and-save period. All the editors got summer stipends, and we had money for travel, supplies, office personnel, and lodging. This support lasted through the edition's completion in 1982.

The other event was Gilman renting a place in Cambridge every summer for our gaggle of editors. Not everybody was there all the time, of course; but it would be a great advantage to know that you would always have a familiar nest to settle down in when you came. Gilman found a large house on the grounds of the Episcopal Theological Seminary less than a mile from the Houghton that was perfect for our needs. The occupant, Dr. Snow, who taught at the seminary, spent the summers with his family in bucolic western Massachusetts and was glad to rent us the house.

The "Snow house" became legendary in Emerson lore. It was large, rambling, with many bedrooms and a spacious living room where editors could sit and socialize after going out to dinner at the Acropolis and other Cambridge eateries. It had a lived-in look which the more fastidious editors called shabby. To this day it is fondly remembered by all those who had the good fortune to stay there and share the camaraderie.

The general social liberalization of the Sixties produced

an interesting change in Gilman. He began to get “hip.” He grew a goatee, adopted turtleneck sweaters, and hung a peace pendant around his neck. I don’t remember that he ever lit up a joint, but I wouldn’t have put it past him at this time.

Sometime in the late Sixties I noticed that Bill was spending an inordinate amount of time looking at the manuscripts of lectures Emerson had delivered in the middle 1840s and beyond. Since our focus was on the journals and notebooks only, I asked him why. He said that so far we had been noting appearances of journal passages in Emerson’s lectures by reference to where they appeared, by volume and page, in the recently published edition of his *Early Lectures*. But we were now moving into the era past that edition’s 1842 cutoff date, and he was wrestling with the problem of how to refer to later lectures that were still only in manuscript.

I thought this over for a couple of days and then we had another conversation. “Bill,” I said, “I think you should forget the whole idea of referring to the later lecture manuscripts.” I added that he’d have to identify them by the manuscript page number within the library’s call number. A reader, instead of checking a page in a published volume, would instead need to see a manuscript only accessible in the library. Because the later lectures would be published someday, let “those editors do the cross-referencing.” Bill had a look of relief on his face. “I’m glad you said that, Harry,” he said. “I’ve been thinking it myself. I work myself into a frazzle about side issues like this and lose perspective. The hell with the lectures from now on.” And the lecture manuscripts returned to the library shelves.

I came away from this incident with an interesting insight. It was the first time I had ever helped Bill decide something significant—something he couldn’t quite decide on his own. He clearly respected my opinion the way he would Fergy’s or Mert’s. From that time on I felt not like a subordinate but like an equal.

The future of the edition had been plotted out now to volume fourteen. Volume twelve had been assigned to Linda Allardt, thirteen to Fergy and me, and fourteen to Hayford and Susan Sutton Smith, another of Gilman’s doctoral successes. That left only the last two volumes unassigned of the sixteen contracted for with Harvard University Press.

Then, sometime in 1974 or 1975, Bill discovered that he had cancer, I think of the lungs. This news struck us all very hard. He began treatment for it, and I remember him toting about an oxygen canister in the Houghton as he worked on the journal manuscripts. He tired easily and often returned to the Snow house early, and also stayed in Rochester for portions of the summer. But he was not going to stop work until he was absolutely too weak to go on.

The thought hung over him, and over all of us, that he was the Emerson edition, and no one had ever expected him not to be its director to the very end. After all, he was only sixty-four years old, and the edition would be finished in six or seven years.

To make matters worse, Fergy had died in May 1974, also of cancer. Sealts and Hayford had said they would do no more volumes and were off on other projects. Parsons had disappeared without a trace. Plumstead was shortly to resign from the University of Massachusetts and return to his native Canada to open a fishing lodge. The continuing editorial staff consisted of me, Linda Allardt, and Susan Smith.

Under the circumstances, it was almost comical when Bill took me aside one day for a chat. “Harry,” he said, “I may not make it to the end of the edition. If anything happens to me, you’ll have to take over.” I paused for a moment as if to suggest this idea had not occurred to me. “Don’t worry, Bill,” I finally said. “I’ll do it. I’ll get it finished.”

Bill’s last volume, number eleven, whose editing he shared with Plumstead, appeared in 1975. On the title page, along with the two editors’ names, was the name of an Associate Editor, Ruth H. Bennett. She was the wife of a Rochester industrialist and who had served as a research assistant without pay (by her own choice) for Bill for many years, and this was his way of rewarding her for her dedication. She had no academic credentials and I think did not seek the title, but Bill was determined, I think out of a sense of having exploited her (“no pay”), to see that she got her due.

Then, in February 1976, the dreaded phone call came: Bill had died the previous day, the seventeenth. I wrote a heartfelt tribute to Bill that appeared in volume twelve, which was published later that year. I felt it unfortunate, however, that the tribute appeared in the volume I considered his biggest mistake.

What was wrong with it? Let Linda Allardt’s description of the contents provide the answer: it contains “a complex mixture of index-like surveys of [Emerson’s] journals and more narrowly focused collections of journal references, lists of topics and titles, salvaged journal passages and revisions, notes and translations from his reading, working notes, fragmentary drafts and near-outlines, all the various kinds of material Emerson collected for the composition of his lectures, articles, and essays.” In other words, a potluck, a jumble, a farrago, a hodgepodge. At over six hundred pages, this melange was the heftiest volume the edition ever published.

What was Gilman’s reason for interrupting the chronological sequence of the volumes to publish miscellaneous “index-like” notebooks kept over twenty-seven years? Why, the example of volume six, devoted to quotation books, which nicely supplemented the volumes surrounding it and

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helped illuminate Emerson's reading and intellectual development. But volume twelve, except for a few sections here and there, was almost all index jottings, mostly single lines. The intent was to show how assiduously Emerson had collected disparate entries from his journals to create lectures and essays on particular topics, but the result remained only raw material. The next step, showing the cohesion process, was missing. It's hard to imagine that many scholars have ever made use of volume twelve. Our copy editor at the Press, Natalie Frohock, was shocked by the size and miscellaneous character of the typescript when it was sent to her, and I think the volume damaged our relationship with the Press, which until then had gone smoothly.

In the six months following Bill's death, I helped move the edition from Rochester to Vermont. Rochester was very unhappy to lose the edition not only because of its prestige but also because the Humanities Endowment was still funding it and providing the university with overhead costs. The chairman of the English department even suggested that the edition could remain in Rochester and I could direct it from my office in Vermont. My dean and I had a good laugh over this.

Rochester allowed Linda and Ruth Bennett to keep working in Gilman's office, which still held voluminous files going back to the beginning of the edition. If I needed to know about anything not in my own files, I could always call them and ask them to research it.

My main job was to find editors for volumes fifteen and sixteen. The University of Vermont lacked a doctoral program in English, so I could not dip into a reservoir of recent graduates, as Bill had; and thus, I advertised in several scholarly journals for individuals with editing skills who might like to join us.

Volume thirteen, edited by Fergy and me (although I had to do almost all of it after Fergy fell ill) appeared in 1977, and volume fourteen, edited by Susan Smith and Harry Hayford (although Susan did most of the work), appeared in 1978. Linda, assisted by Ruth Bennett, began to work on volume fifteen, publication date undetermined.

It was obvious that Linda needed a co-editor, and that volume sixteen needed a pair of them. About a dozen individuals had responded to my advertisements, and from among them I chose two, Ronald A. Bosco and Glen M. Johnson. Linda provided two more, David W. Hill and Albert J. von Frank, whom she had come to know while they were in an editing program at Rochester.

Hill was teamed with Linda on fifteen, and Bosco and Johnson became the editors of volume sixteen. (Von Frank later became a co-editor of Emerson's poetry notebooks.) Both volumes appeared in 1982. From start to finish the edition had taken twenty-five years.

In my tribute to Bill in volume twelve I had not quoted Emerson's dictum that "an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man" because I thought it slighted all the other individuals who had made the *JMN* possible. Yet that's the way I feel. He began as one of four original editors but quickly became the leading figure in the edition. He compiled its manual, determined the contents of each volume, oversaw the various editorial teams, scrutinized the printer's copy of each of the volumes before it went to the press, read all the galley and page proofs, and kept at it nearly to the end, even as it drained his energy and perhaps even affected his health.

Thirteen editors worked on the *JMN*, but it is essentially Bill Gilman's monument, and will remain so. The others of us were his comrades, but he had no peer.

—Ralph Harry Orth is Professor of English, emeritus,  
University of Vermont





# Giving and Taking: The Relation of Idealization and Degradation in Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Spofford's "Circumstance"

SIMON NAVARRETE  
UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY PRIZE

Though race is neither the central focus of Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" nor of Harriet Prescott Spofford's "Circumstance," both texts contain racialized figures that are characterized through a close association with nature. This association is superficially idealizing: both Emerson and Spofford admire the robust "power [...] in nature" ("Self-Reliance" 1160) and believe that nature engenders a godly connection or "divine rapture" (Spofford 2595). However, Emerson and Spofford's natural idealization of racialized figures also carries an inextricable underside of degradation: Emerson appraises the power of the "naked New Zealander" only through its disparity to "civilized man" ("Self-Reliance" 1174-75) and Spofford's "Indian Devil" engenders "divine rapture" only because it brutishly threatens the "white arm[ed]" woman (Spofford 2589). Idealization and degradation are thus inextricably linked in Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Spofford's "Circumstance." "For every [idealizing] thing that is given" to racialized figures through their association with nature, "something [else] is [degradingly] taken" away from them ("Self-Reliance" 1174).

The simultaneously idealizing and degrading way that racialized figures are characterized through their close association with nature is manifest in Emerson's "Self-Reliance," which argues against conformist society on the grounds that it "never advances" because, even as "society acquires new arts, [it] loses old instincts" ("Self-Reliance" 1174). Emerson substantiates this argument against conformist society by contrasting the civilized "white man" with the "wild virtue" of an idealized "naked New Zealander" ("Self-Reliance" 1175). While the "white man" is "well-clad, reading, writing, [and] thinking," says Emerson, the "naked New Zealander, whose [only] property is a club, a spear [and] a mat" ("Self-Reliance" 1175), possesses a tremendous "aboriginal strength [that] the white man has lost" and is able to withstand "blow[s] that [would] send the white [man] to his grave" ("Self-Reliance" 1175). This "aboriginal strength" of the "naked New Zealander," says Emerson, stems from a lifestyle that is closely associated with nature: from "some vigor of wild virtue" ("Self-Reliance" 1175). Emerson thus idealizes the racialized "New Zealander" by associating him with the power of nature and elevating his "strength" unconventionally above that of "the white man." Emerson further idealizes the "naked New Zealander" by listing a series of shortcomings that he is free of but that are suffered by the "white man": the "white man" knows not "a star in the sky," has "impair[ed] memory," and has "overload[ed] wit" ("Self-Reliance" 1175). Though it is true that Emerson's characterization of the "naked New Zealander"

results in racialized idealizations of the figure, it should be considered that these racialized idealizations—which derive from the New Zealander's close association with nature—might carry a positive connotation considering Emerson's transcendentalist admiration of nature and his belief that an association with nature grants a "return to reason and faith" (*Nature* 1.4). Emerson's nature-derived idealization of the "naked New Zealander" thus—perhaps intentionally—emphasizes certain aspects of the "naked New Zealander" in a positive sense.

However, Emerson's idealizing emphasis on certain positive aspects of the "naked New Zealander" is unavoidably degrading because it makes other aspects of the "naked New Zealander" notable by their absence. Emerson, perhaps unwittingly, himself pithily surmises this inextricable relationship between idealization and degradation with an aphorism: "for every thing that is given, something is taken" ("Self-Reliance" 1175). Indeed, once viewed through this lens of "giv[ing]" and "tak[ing]," Emerson's superficially favorable idealization of the "naked New Zealander" takes on a degrading underside. The "aboriginal strength" that nature gives to the New Zealander is "given" only because his "reading, writing, [and] thinking" capacity are "taken" away ("Self-Reliance" 1175). Similarly, though the "white man" knows not "a star in the sky" and suffers "impair[ed] memory" and "overload[ed] wit," this is only because "white man" is "civilized man," while the New Zealander "is barbarous" ("Self-Reliance" 1174-75). Emerson's notion that "for every thing that is given, something is taken" thus makes it impossible to describe any positive feature of the "naked New Zealander" without degradingly suggesting that the "naked New Zealander" lacks some other positive feature in equal measure. This relationship of idealizing "giv[ing]" and degrading "tak[ing]" is structurally emphasized through Emerson's use of parallelism, which aligns the "watch, [...] pencil, and [...] bill of exchange" owned by the American with the antithetical but correspondingly structured "club, [...] spear, [and] mat" owned by the "naked New Zealander" ("Self-Reliance" 1174). Notice how Emerson's parallelism distinguishes the "American" from the "naked New Zealander" through examples of property: the "watch, [...] pencil, and [...] bill of exchange" owned by the American—which all require a degree of education and literacy to use—emphasizes the civilized American's cognitive capacity, while the "club, [...] spear, [and] mat" owned by the "naked New Zealander"—which merely satisfy the ultra-basic human needs of safety, food, and shelter—emphasizes the unchangeably primitive nature of the New

(Continued on page 10)

Zealander. Emerson's parallelism thus idealizes the "aboriginal strength" of the "naked New Zealander" only through the degrading suggestion that the New Zealander possesses none of the white American's "thinking" capacity. Emerson also structurally prioritizes "white man" over the "naked New Zealander" even as he describes the latter's advantages over the former: by saying that, unlike the "naked New Zealander," the "white man" knows not "a star in the sky" and suffers "overload[ed] wit," Emerson describes the positive features of the "naked New Zealander" only through their disadvantageous relation to the "white man" rather than simply describing them through their advantageous relation to the "naked New Zealander" himself. Any apparently positive idealization of the racialized "naked New Zealander" in "Self-Reliance" is thus inevitably followed by degradation of the "naked New Zealander" in equal measure: Emerson's positive idealization of the New Zealander "recedes as fast on one side as" his negative degradation of the New Zealander "gains on the other" ("Self-Reliance" 1174).

The insidious effect of this "give" and "take" relationship between idealization and degradation is even more pronounced in Harriet Prescott Spofford's "Circumstance," which uses the racialized figure of the "Indian Devil" to conflate a wild animal with a "stealthy native" ("Circumstance" 2589). Just as the "aboriginal strength" of Emerson's "naked New Zealander" derives from nature's "wild virtue" ("Self-Reliance" 1175), Spofford asserts that the "ponderous strength" of the "Indian Devil" derives from the "powers of the forest" ("Circumstance" 2592). Emerson and Spofford thus similarly idealize the "power" and "strength" of their respective racialized figures by closely associating them with the powerful natural world. Spofford's nature-derived idealization of the "Indian Devil," which is similar to Emerson's nature-derived idealization of the "New Zealander," also has a similarly degrading "give[]" and "take[]" effect: by only emphasizing the "ponderous strength" of the "Indian Devil," and not any other quality, Spofford degradingly leaves other aspects of the "Indian Devil" conspicuously absent. The conspicuous absence of the "Indian Devil[s]" other aspects again emphasizes the Indian Devil's idealized "ponderous strength," and in turn undermines even this positive aspect of the "Indian Devil" because he uses this emphasized "strength" only to capture and lasciviously "lick[]" the unwilling woman's "bare white arm with his rasping tongue" ("Circumstance" 2589). The "Indian Devil[s]" strength thus loses any positive connotation and becomes a degrading "strength of a lower nature" that "inspire[s] [...] loathly horror" ("Circumstance" 2592). Spofford further degrades the "Indian Devil" by drawing a parallel between its nighttime attack on the woman and the native's nighttime raid of "tomahawk and scalping knife" upon the woman's village ("Circumstance" 2597); such a parallel is degrading because it conflates the animalistic

behavior of the "Indian Devil" with the behavior of human natives and followingly suggests that the natives possess a nature that is subhumanly "wild [and] beast[ly]" ("Circumstance" 2595). Spofford similarly conflates notions of native and beast through the use of a structural parallel with her description of "a wilderness untrodden save by stealthy native or deadly panther tribes" ("Circumstance" 2588). Here Spofford uses similar adjectives ("stealthy," "deadly") and similar syntactic structure ("stealthy native," "deadly panther") to create an interchangeability between the notion of "native" and the notion of "panther." Spofford's choice of adjectives furthermore encourages the reader to accept the interchangeability of native and panther: the line "stealthy native" and "deadly panther tribes" reads much more intuitively when transposed into "stealthy [panther]" and "deadly [native] tribe." This transpositional reading is moreover rewarded by Spofford because it foreshadows the native "tomahawk and scalping knife" raid that concludes "Circumstance." Spofford thus degrades the racialized figure of the "Indian Devil" by using its idealized "ponderous strength" only for beastly purposes "of a lower nature," and subsequently conflates the notion of native and beast throughout "Circumstance" in a way that demeans native people to an animalistic level.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Harriet Prescott Spofford's "Circumstance" thus—through their nature-derived characterization of both the racialized "naked New Zealander" and of the racialized "Indian Devil"—create a relationship of idealization and degradation that idealizingly "give[s]" certain positive aspects to racialized figures even as it degradingly "take[s]" other positive aspects of these racialized figures away. This relationship of idealizing "giv[ing]" and degrading "tak[ing]" is apparent in Emerson's racialized "naked New Zealander," who's idealizingly given "aboriginal strength" degradingly takes away his capacity for "reading, writing, [and] thinking" ("Self-Reliance" 1175); this relationship of idealizing "giv[ing]" and degrading "tak[ing]" is also apparent in Spofford's racialized "Indian Devil," who's idealizingly given "ponderous strength" degradingly takes away his human qualities and demeans him to the level of a "wild beast" ("Circumstance" 2595). Idealization and degradation are thus inextricably linked in Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Spofford's "Circumstance," which both subject their respective non-central racialized figures to similar processes of idealized "giv[ing]" and degrading "tak[ing]."

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# Bodily Metaphor, *Nature*, and “The American Scholar”

PATRICK J. WOHLSCHEID  
UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY PRIZE HONORABLE MENTION

In his 1837 speech to the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa Society, later published as “The American Scholar,” Ralph Waldo Emerson lapses into metaphor every few sentences, using complex language to critique the state of Anglo-American intellectual life and posit a holistic alternative, the all-encompassing “Man Thinking” instead of the limited “Thinking Man.” Amidst the metaphors, several specific images play a greater role in clarifying Emerson’s view on the state of the individual, and what might be thought of as the epistemological crisis that he identifies. By using the body, its parts, and natural processes, Emerson draws on familiar imagery to offer a more original and unfamiliar critique, especially to an audience of “American scholars” steeped in the tradition which he challenges.

Near the beginning of the essay, Emerson writes that in the contemporary period, members of society “have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about as so many walking monsters, —a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man” (583). This visceral metaphor, both of people as reduced to their parts and as walking monsters, immediately strikes the reader as greatly critical, with Emerson conjuring imagery of something like a gothic entity to identify a central problem articulated in the speech. This problem, that man is no longer a “whole” man, inevitably results in the individual being identified by only one aspect of their being, and more particularly their profession. For instance, someone who grows food is labeled a farmer, and their other faculties are downplayed or ignored. Emerson relies on this very example, in that “the planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry ... [and] sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm” (583). Thus, the farmer can be seen as one of those walking about a monster, whose labor is the only thing valued by himself and others.

Arguably, a more central example that Emerson illustrates through the imagery of amputation and man being “metamorphosed into a thing, into many things” is that of the scholar (583). In the current conditions, or as a “victim of society,” the only one with the ability to deploy the faculty of the intellect is the scholar, or what we might consider “the Thinking Man” (583). This, for Emerson, is entirely wrong. Just as the farmer is more than his labor, the scholar is more than the intellect. In fact, all people should have the intellect play a transformative role in their lives and become what Emerson calls “*Man Thinking*.” Throughout the rest of the address, Emerson utilizes “*Man Thinking*” to critique the new scholasticism he sees as prevalent, offering Nature and Action as better theories of knowledge.

It is interesting to consider the ways in which Emerson relates the physical and the intellectual, the connections between thinking and doing. It is not that Emerson turns to a metaphor related to the mind to describe the incorrect ways the intellect

is viewed, but a bodily metaphor. So for Emerson, the act of thinking and the act of doing might be viewed as inextricably linked, as the “whole man” requires the mind and the body. This is also reminiscent of Emerson’s philosophical metaphor in *Nature* of the transparent eye-ball that “sees all” and becomes “part or particle of God” (556). Emerson is not a transparent *mind* that receives the “currents of the Universal Being” but an *eye-ball*, something physical, another bodily metaphor (556). Emerson’s bodily metaphors are also reminiscent of his contemporary Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, in which he writes “I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet” (98). In this way, we might consider the entanglement of thinking and doing, or the intellect and the physical body, as a feature of the American Transcendentalist philosophical system.

The first section of “The American Scholar” is not the end of Emerson’s use of bodily metaphor to illustrate his philosophy, though, and Emerson expands the body to encompass natural processes as a whole. In discussing the value of action as preferable to the form of scholastic learning closely associated with European intellectual culture, Emerson refers to action as “the raw material out of which the intellect moulds her splendid products,” something similar to the process by which “a mulberry leaf is converted into satin” (588). Therefore, action is not only good for its own sake, but experience from action is converted into an intellectual experience as well. The metaphor comparing this philosophical process to a natural-to-artificial one seems to be quite purposeful, as it underscores the importance of action as it transitions into the realm of the mind, and the dual role that action plays for “*Man Thinking*.”

When describing the duties that “*Man Thinking*,” or the true American scholar has, Emerson uses another bodily metaphor, writing that they must be “the world’s eye ... [and] the world’s heart” (586). In being “the world’s eye,” like the transparent eye-ball, Emerson seems to be referencing a sight higher than just physical, as the scholar must “guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances” (590). This statement, put in fairly explicit philosophical idealist terms, essentially demands that the American scholar must show others real knowledge instead of what only seems to be real knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in being “the world’s heart,” the scholar must “cheer” and “raise” all men through knowledge, and even further, preserve what seems to be Emerson’s idea of the “heart” of humanity, such as “heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history” (590). Thus, another metaphor dealing with the body and its parts serves a crucial role in illustrating Emerson’s conception of the ideal American scholar, this time offering an alternative vision rather than a pure critique.

(Continued on page 12)

## WOHLSCHIED

(Continued from page 11)

Though these are only a few of the figurative devices used in “The American Scholar,” bodily metaphors, both positive and negative, provide an interesting lens with which to view the meanings of the address. In critiquing modern society as making monsters reduced to their body parts, but then referring to the role of the American scholar as the eyes and hearts of the world, Emerson forces the reader to think about possible contradictions and connections between the reality of things and Emerson’s idealism. And while Emerson offers a transcendental interpretation of the American scholar, it is interesting to think of “The American Scholar” as reflective of philosophical trends in the mid-19th century. While the Transcendentalists mounted a critique of modern society and labor and other American thinkers experimented with utopian communities, at the same time, European thinkers like Marx and Engels also focused on ideas of alienation and human nature, albeit in a very different context. The prominent Emerson scholar Lawrence Buell makes this very observation, writing that “like his

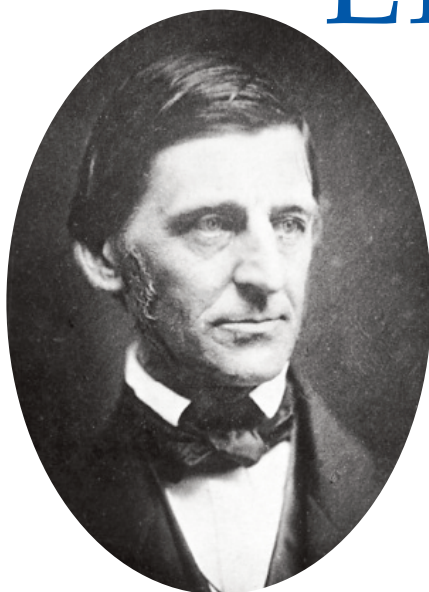
younger contemporary Karl Marx, but in a wholly different way, Emerson argued that the modern professional and working classes ... were unnecessarily ‘subject to things’ of their ‘own creation’” (Buell 8). Finally, it seems that a reflection on the American scholar and Emerson’s philosophy is as pressing as ever, in a society increasing dominated by atomization and the complete association of the individual with their labor in American society.

<sup>1</sup> Emerson’s knowledge of the German Idealist tradition, through both Kant and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is well documented. See Rene Wellek’s “Emerson and German Philosophy.”

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# The RALPH WALDO EMERSON SOCIETY





## The Visit



First published in the *Dial*, April 1844, Edward Waldo Emerson, Ralph Waldo's son, remarks that "The Visit" is a comic expression of how Emerson's hospitality "was so often overtaxed that he felt that a word of general counsel was due on the subject of visits. For a call he used to say that fifteen minutes was the limit, except in very unusual circumstances" (W, IX, 407). However, Emerson seems to have written the poem under such unusual circumstances. As Albert J. von Frank points out, Emerson first drafted the poem "in the midst of a week-long visit from Caroline Sturgis ... a pleasant visit from a valued and interesting friend" (CW, IX, 30). Though the image was produced with the intent of imagining a domestic scene of welcome to the guest walking up to Bush, Emerson's home, Emerson's own poetic record encourages us to second-guess the idyllic fantasy the image presents.

*The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library. "Homes & haunts." The New York Public Library Digital Collections.*

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—or: [shorturl.at/bdpDS](https://shorturl.at/bdpDS)

ASKEST, 'How long thou shalt stay?'  
Devastator of the day!  
Know, each substance and relation,  
Thorough nature's operation,  
Hath its unit, bound and metre;  
And every new compound  
Is some product and repeater,—  
Product of the earlier found.  
But the unit of the visit,  
The encounter of the wise,—  
Say, what other metre is it  
Than the meeting of the eyes?  
Nature poureth into nature  
Through the channels of that feature,  
Riding on the ray of sight,

Fleeter far than whirlwinds go,  
Or for service, or delight,  
Hearts to hearts their meaning show,  
Sum their long experience,  
And import intelligence.  
Single look has drained the breast;  
Single moment years confessed.  
The duration of a glance  
Is the term of convenance,  
And, though thy rede be church or state,  
Frugal multiples of that.  
Speeding Saturn cannot halt;  
Linger,—thou shalt rue the fault:  
If Love his moment overstay,  
Hatred's swift repulsions play.

# Reviews

**THINKING NATURE AND THE NATURE OF THINKING: FROM ERIUGENA TO EMERSON.** Willemien Otten. Stanford University Press, 2020, 312 pp. \$28.00 cloth.

Willemien Otten, Professor of the History of Christianity and Theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School, has written extensively on medieval humanism, the writings of Johannes Scottus Eriugena (c.800–c.877) in particular. In this book, she enlists Ralph Waldo Emerson along with Eriugena in challenging the biblical stewardship notion of nature which views nature as an object serving human purposes. “The aim of my project,” she writes, “is to explore nature or creation as driving the structure of thought rather than being driven by it” (1). In furthering this aim, she points to an alternate stream of discourse, anchored at both ends by Eriugena and Emerson, that bestows “identity and agency on [nature] rather than objectifying it by means of thought” (13).

Otten characterizes this alternate view as “thinking nature,” although the term is somewhat elusive. Beginning and ending her argument with Eriugena and Emerson (Introduction, Chapter 1, and Conclusion), she compares this line of thought with that of near contemporaries of both writers, in Eriugena’s case, Maximus the Confessor (Chapter 2) and Augustine (Chapter 3), and in Emerson’s, Schleiermacher (Chapter 4) and William James (Chapter 5). She wants to demonstrate that there is nothing

esoteric about the notion of “thinking nature.” It is a strand within the mainstream of Western religious philosophy, not an alternative to it.

That said, both writers have been accused of pantheism, a term Otten prefers to avoid since, were that the case, they would be out of the mainstream of Christian thought. It is easy to see why they might be considered pantheists. Eriugena’s major work is *On Natures*, an inquiry into the various

forms or aspects of *natura*. His model of *natura* is more complex than that of Spinoza’s, but there are similarities between them. Spinoza (1632–1677) made a distinction between *natura naturata* and *natura naturans*, that is, nature natured—the physical manifestation of nature—and nature naturing—the internal process of nature. Insofar as God is identified with the process of nature it would appear that God is immanent rather than transcendent.

Eriugena lived prior to Spinoza, of course, but Spinoza’s distinction between the two aspects of *natura* was well-known to Emerson (as it was to Coleridge also). In his essay “Nature” (1844), Emerson describes *natura naturans* as “the quick cause, before which all forms flee as the driven snows, itself secret, its works driven before it in flocks and multitudes” (CW III: 105). In his address “The Method of Nature” (1841) he uses the phrase “immanent force” to capture its essence. Eriugena used the word *operans* in place of *naturata*, but the meaning was the same. Both writers sought to capture the vigor and wildness of nature. And what Otten says about Eriugena’s understanding of *natura* applies to Emerson as well: “ingrained in *natura* we find a deep-seated desire to act and move on its own and, especially, to chart its own course, rather than being something more passive that exists simply to execute a divinely dictated script” (4).

Otten uses the term “thinking nature” as a means of holding nature in our minds, “always reserving space for nature’s ability to dictate thought, all the while recognizing the innate correspondences or links between nature and self-hood” (5). If the term invites us to recognize nature’s agency, it also raises the teleological question of nature’s intentionality. Does nature have a mind of its own? What thought or type of thinking does it dictate? Otten views “thinking nature” as a subterranean tradition running through Western religious thought, not as a countertradition. She views consideration of pantheism, for example, as a distraction. She does not want to sink God into the world. But “thinking nature” pushes the boundaries she is trying to maintain.

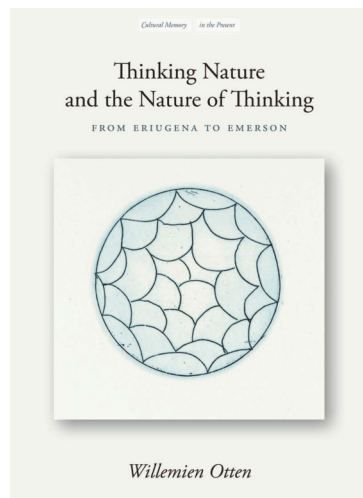
Emerson is famous for pushing boundaries. His emphasis on *natura naturata* in “Nature” and “The Method of Nature” raises the question of his pantheism. God is not identified with the world. The world is not God or vice versa. For Emerson God is in the world but has no existence apart from it. God is the force that manifests the world and everything in it. Philosopher Robert S. Corrington, examining the distinction between the two aspects of *natura* in his book *Deep Pantheism: Toward a New Transcendentalism* (2015), concludes that Emerson was both an ecstatic naturalist and a deep pantheist. “Nature naturing, for Emerson, is the great underground torrent that has no beginning and no ending,” Corrington writes. “This sensitivity to the underground of nature makes Emerson a deep pantheist precisely because the ultimate reality of nature naturing is ‘located’ in the depths of a self-unveiling nature that seems driven to manifest itself” (13). Thus, I don’t think the issue of Emerson’s pantheism can be avoided.

Otten shows obvious enthusiasm for Emerson’s writings, but one wishes she made more use of him than she does. The middle chapters, though scholarly, tend to obscure rather than elucidate the author’s argument.

—Barry M. Andrews, Minister Emeritus  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY

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**INDIVIDUALITY AND BEYOND: NIETZSCHE READS EMERSON.** Benedetta Zavatta. Translated by Alexander Reynolds. Oxford U Press, 2019, 265 pp. \$90.00 hardcover.

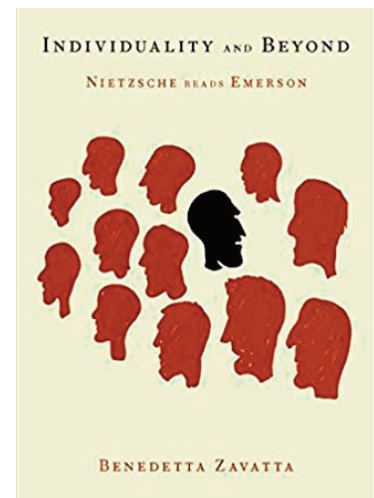
The dual ambition of this new legacy reading is to provide a scholarly interpretation of the Emerson-Nietzsche relation “a solid philological basis” (xv)—that is, by following “the real traces of Nietzsche’s reading of Emerson” (155) in marginalia and annotations in his personal editions of Emerson’s writings and in excerpts he copied into his notebooks—and at the same time to make a “decisive contribution to the understanding of Emerson’s philosophy and its relevance to the philosophical debates of the present day” (xx). If Benedetta Zavatta’s first ambition is fully realized, she falls well short on the second, in large part because of her commitment to a view of Emerson that is as partial as it is dated. Zavatta’s Emerson is a late twentieth-century “detranscendentalized” figure who has not aged well.

This *parti-pris* is perhaps to be expected, given the crucial role Nietzsche played in the formation of what Zavatta calls—with an unintentionally revealing parenthesis—the “new” Emerson ushered in by “the ‘Emerson renaissance’ that made itself felt from the 1980s onward and is still developing today (see Buell 1984; Wilson 1997)” (xx). The reader of this book by a Nietzsche scholar will search in vain for evidence of a correspondingly thorough engagement with Emerson scholarship over the last twenty years (the critical apparatus contains only one reference after 2009). There are a number of inexplicable omissions, such as Laurence Buell’s discussion of Emerson and Nietzsche in his now classic study *Emerson* (2003) or the more recent writings of the “retranscendentalizing” movement, such as Dan Malachuk’s “Emerson’s Politics, Retranscendentalized” or Alan Levine’s “Skeptical Triangle?: A Comparison of the Political Thought of Emerson, Nietzsche, and Montaigne” in *A Political Companion to Ralph Waldo Emerson* (2011). This last omission is particularly unfortunate, given that Nietzsche was often used to detranscendentalize Emerson by association. Perhaps even more surprising is the absence of any reference to new Emerson scholarship in Germany, in the work of Dieter Schulz, Herwig Friedl, Jan Stievermann, and Johannes Völz. Nor do American philosophers publishing important work on Emerson outside the Cavellian circle—David Dilworth, Douglas Anderson, Nicholas Guardiano—fare any better. Such omissions cannot be considered mere pécadilloes in a work that also makes strong claims about the nature of Emerson’s own thought and career.

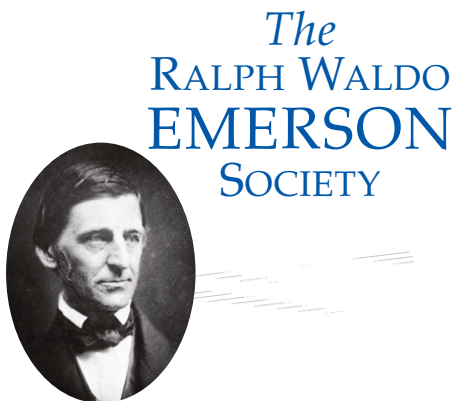
If the proper task of the “philosophic critic” is (as Shelley put it) “to distinguish rather than confound,” then Zavatta is at her philosophic best when closest to the text, in full philological mode—for example, when developing her critique of George Stack’s 1992 *Nietzsche and Emerson* for “departing too far from the philosophical identities of both authors” and effectively *Emersonizing* Nietzsche (15). But Zavatta herself yields to the opposite temptation, particularly on the subject of metaphysics, where she wavers between a salutary emphasis

on differences and a tendency to erase them to fit the conventional image of a postmetaphysical Emerson as forerunner of Nietzsche. On the one hand, she rightly contrasts Emerson’s “mystical” and “metaphysical presuppositions” about agency, character, and self-reliance to Nietzsche’s “antimetaphysical,” “biological” foundation (96, 37, 65–66, 191). As Zavatta shows convincingly, Nietzsche did indeed transfer a number of major Emersonian ideas “from metaphysics to biology” (188). On the other hand, in the treatment of certain key themes she cannot resist the temptation to detranscendentalize. She thus declares Compensation—for Nietzsche, a false doctrine attributable to the baleful influence of German idealism (56)—to be in the end merely a “rhetorical” or “interpretative strategy to increase the optimism of [Emerson’s] philosophical audience” (58). Similarly, the Over-Soul becomes a regulative idea capable of inspiring the *Übermensch* because already imagined as “nonmetaphysical” by a later Emerson who rejects his earlier “mysticism” (193, 205n6). Zavatta removes the metaphysics from Emersonian morals, which then become a matter of “interpretation” or “psychology” rather than, primarily, of the agent’s oneness or alignment with the moral and spiritual order of the universe. By making Emerson out to be a rigid dualist for whom “thought does not at all belong to the same ontological realm as matter” (65), she betrays a serious misunderstanding of his philosophy, early and late.

Despite its shortcomings, *Individuality and Beyond* stands as a major achievement. Zavatta has set the record straight on the Emerson-Nietzsche relation by putting it on a sound material and scholarly basis. Emerson specialists will learn a great deal from her fascinating account of what happens when one philosopher adopts and transforms the thought of another so unlike himself in many ways but for whom he had enduring respect and affection (one is reminded of Emerson’s description of his “love” for his own “otherest,” Montaigne). I would single out for special praise Zavatta’s discussions of Emersonian influence on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–85) and on the Nietzschean critique of compassion, not to mention—in a useful corrective to the often somber tone of “new” readings of Emerson—his decisive contribution to Nietzsche’s “Gay Science” and to his philosophy of friendship as *Mitfreude*—a sharing not of pain but of joy.



—Joseph Urbas  
Université Bordeaux Montaigne



## AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS 2021

**The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society  
announces two awards for projects  
that foster appreciation for Emerson.**

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

Provides \$1,000 to support scholarly work on Emerson.

Preference is given to junior scholars and graduate students.

Submit a confidential letter of recommendation,  
and a carefully crafted 1 or 2-page single-spaced project proposal,  
including a description of expenses, by May 16, 2021.

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

Provides \$1,000 to support projects designed  
to bring Emerson to a non-academic audience.

Submit a confidential letter of recommendation  
and a carefully crafted 1 or 2-page single-spaced project proposal,  
including a description of expenses, by May 16, 2021.

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All proposals will be evaluated based on clarity, originality,  
and relevance to the award or grant.

Please send proposals to Kristina West ([kristina.west@btopenworld.com](mailto:kristina.west@btopenworld.com))  
and Austin Bailey ([abailey2@gradcenter.cuny.edu](mailto:abailey2@gradcenter.cuny.edu)). Award recipients must become members  
of the Society; membership applications are available at [www.emersonsociety.org](http://www.emersonsociety.org).