Lawrence Buell Honored with 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award

At its annual meeting in San Francisco on May 29, 2010, the Emerson Society announced that the recipient of its 2010 Distinguished Achievement Award is Lawrence Buell. Larry, the Powell M. Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University, received his B.A. in 1961 from Princeton, and both his M.A. (1962) and Ph.D. (1966) from Cornell, where he wrote his dissertation on “Emerson: From Preacher to Poet” under the supervision of Jonathan Bishop. His first few articles established him as a sophisticated reader of poetry and prose—both religious and literary—and works such as “Unitarian Aesthetics and Emerson’s Poet-Priest” (AQ, 1968), “Transcendentalist Catalogue Rhetoric: Vision versus Form” (AL, 1968), and “Reading Emerson for the Structures: The Coherence of the Essays” (QJS, 1972) have remained necessary readings through various shiftings of the critical winds.

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

In following years, Larry has published widely. His interest in American narrative led to his next books: an edition of The Morgesons and Other Writings by Elizabeth Stoddard (Pennsylvania, 1984), which re-introduced her to the literary canon, and his magisterial New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance (Cambridge, 1986), a meticulously researched historical, cultural, and social examination of the most influential literary region of the period.

Lawrence Buell at the Emerson House in Concord.

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

(Continued on page 15)
EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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

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2010 EMERSON SOCIETY DONORS

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

PROSPECTS.

Classic Works, Now in Paperback

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

Emerson Society Grad Student Travel Award

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

American Literature Association Call for Proposals

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

Panel I: Emerson and Creativity

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

Panel II: Emerson and the Economics of Authorship

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

2010 Emerson Society Award Winners

Jim McAllen, a staff member at Towson University in Maryland, won the Emerson Society’s 2010 Pedagogy/Community Project Award. Jim shares this link to his online, multimedia presentation of “Self-Reliance”: http://tinyurl.com/25z5x9. The program, part of a projected series of six PowerPoint presentations, uses word, image, and sound to engage varied audiences. Jim has shared these presentations with high school and college students as well as community and church groups.

Our second award in 2010, the Research Category, supports research by Ashley Herrick of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Ms. Herrick is studying Emerson’s transatlantic journey in 1837 as part of her proposed dissertation on the materials of love in early American writing and culture. She reports that funding from the Emerson Society allowed her to travel to New England to consult archival holdings at the Concord Free Public Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Houghton Library, Harvard, as well as touring the Emerson house as part of her work on Transcendentalists’ construction and inhabitation of U.S. domestic space.

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

Thoreau Society Annual Gathering: Call for Proposals

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

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Two Win Major NEH Grant

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

Sightings/Citations

Joel Myerson has spotted an Emersonian endorsement—maybe— in issue 9 of Wadrive, a newsletter of the USA Airways Club. In an article on whole berry fermentation entitled “Fermenting to Get Noticed” (pp. 2-3) appears a quotation attributed to Emerson: “God loves fermentation just as dearly as he does vegetation.” Not quite the bacchanalian he appears in the article, in context Emerson introduces participants to the extensive holdings in Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library; Phyllis Cole, who deals with “Transcendentalist Women”; and John Matteson, who focuses on the educational activities of Bronson and Louisa May Alcott. Participants also spend a full day with Rick himself, who reviews the contours of the Transcendentalist movement itself before them on site visits to the Brook Farm community in West Roxbury, and to Fruitlands and the Shaker Village in Harvard. Along with the morning seminars, afternoon site visits are an integral part of the workshop experience. Participants enjoy private tours of the Emerson House, the Old Manse, the site of Thoreau’s cabin at Walden Pond, the School of Philosophy, and the Orchard House. Participants will be housed at the Colonial Inn for the week. “It has been my great good fortune,” Rick says, “to be able to work so closely with full-time and adjunct faculty from two-year colleges, who rarely receive the professional support that faculty at four-year colleges usually do. You couldn’t ask for a more stimulating or eager audience!”

Additional information is available on two websites: www.cca-assoc.org and www.cca-concord.org.

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

Forbes, as Emerson, and Samuel Elmore, as Thoreau, are lifelong friends portraying the friendship of the authors and their love of nature. “All biography is autobiography,” wrote Emerson, and in Nature, Forbes and Elmore express not only Emerson and Thoreau’s love of the natural world, but their own as well. A
The annual business meeting of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society convened at 12:35 p.m., 29 May 2010, in Pacific A of the Hyatt Regency Hotel at Embarcadero Center. Wesley Mott presided. Approximately twenty members were in attendance.

1. Minutes and Treasurer’s report from the 2009 annual board meeting were presented. Approved unanimously.


3. Todd Richardson gave the Treasurer’s report; see attached.

4. Sue Dunston reported on Program Chair activities.

5. Awards announcements:
   - Lawrence Buell has been awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award
   - Ashley Hetrick has been awarded the Research Award
   - Jim McAllen has been awarded the Community/Pedagogy Award
   - Todd Richardson gave the Treasurer’s report; see attached.

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

7. Bob Habich gave a report on Emerson’s Collected Works: Volume 8 came out in January 2010, Volume 9 is currently in press, and Volume 10 will be in press as of this summer.

8. Ron Bosco gave a report on Emersoniana. William Rossi will begin contributing the annual “Emerson Bibliography.”

9. Jean Mudge’s efforts to receive an NEH grant for her book continue.

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

11. New Society officers:
   - Sandra Petrulionis and Dieter Schulz have been approved by acclamation to the Advisory Board
   - Leslie Eckel has been approved by acclamation to the Special Awards Committee
   - Ashley Hetrick has been awarded the Research Award
   - Jim McAllen has been awarded the Community/Pedagogy Award

12. Additional announcements and items discussed:
   - Possibility of setting back issues of ESP, placing all back issues of ESP on the Society website, and offering a disc of all past issues of ESP in PDF format as an incentive for annual memberships at the Contributing level. The topic is tabled for now.
   - Society membership names and lists will remain private.
   - Graduate Student Paper Award—the decision was reached to keep the award amount the same.
   - Awards recipient accountability—recipients will now deliver a report to the Society regarding the progress of their research and community projects one year after receiving their awards.
   - Florence conference—Sue Dunston gave an update regarding conference to be held June 8-10 2012: plans for conference location, hotels, and conference theme are moving forward. Sue and Todd will serve as planning representatives for the Emerson Society, to join representatives from the Poe and Hawthorne Societies.
   - Dues rates will remain constant.
   - Library subscriptions—recommendation put forward by spills and supplies ($50), a wire transfer of funds.
   - Transfer of funds.

13. Additional notes:
   - Membership is down somewhat from this time last year by about 10 members. But during the course of the year our income vs. outgo is somewhat in the red, which can be attributed, in part, to about $500 in costs associated with the transfer of funds.
   - The debit/credit ratio listed above is somewhat misleading. The credits do not reflect a deposit of about $700 after the May 1 cutoff date. Even so, our income vs. outgo is somewhat in the red, which can be attributed, in part, to about $500 in costs associated with the transfer of funds.
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Respectfully submitted,
Todd H. Richardson
Secretary/Treasurer
RWE Society

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

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

ALBERT J. VON FRANK, Washington State University

It is the distinction of the generation of Emerson scholars now pass-
ing into retirement to have given us a fully documented Emerson: e.g.,
the JMN, the Sermons, the Poetry Notebooks, the Later Lectures, and,
imminently, the finished Collected Works. That effort being complete,
the work of future generations must be directed in a different way.
The shape of Emerson studies to come will be very different from the
shape of Emerson studies that we have known. But the Emersonian
principle of the importance of the idea is not new. What is new is the
situation of the idea in the wider world. Emerson’s works have been
read and re-read for generations. The shape of Emerson studies to
come will in a very short time have begun to take shape.

The shape of Emerson studies to come will in a very short time have
began appearing. To illustrate the point, Bosco discussed his partici-
pation as an editor of the JMN.

Emerson’s Hero: Mentoring Margaret Fuller

DAVID DOWLING, University of Iowa

Much has been written about Emerson’s exasperation at the profes-
sional demise of his main protégé and pupil, Henry David Thoreau,
who amounted to nothing more than a “captain of a huckleberry party,”
as he lamented in his eulogy for Thoreau. Frustrated that he had joined
the ranks of so many young men that had disappointed his efforts to
lead them into the literary limelight, Emerson’s initial project of mak-
ing Thoreau a poet resulted in his commanding the young man to throw
his verse in the fire. Not the least of Thoreau’s troubles was that,
among established authors, Emerson was arguably the least successful
promoter and mentor of aspiring writers of the entire American nine-
teenth century. The tumultuous tryste of Thoreau began with the young
apprentice aping Emerson’s style, both in his literature and the
way he combed his hair, and ended with a bitter break in the early
1850s that Robert Sattelmayer has aptly described as “mutual
tumultuous, yet ending with professional success rather than failure.”
In the same way, Emerson’s apprenticeship under Emerson tells a different and seldom discussed story. Judith Matson Bean
represents the critical commonplace of sorting the Emerson-
 Fuller corpus within this context. From 1855-58 she saw Emerson “adopt a tone of mentor—encouraging and challenging her
to increase her efforts in writing.” A time in which she seems to have had “little influence” over Emerson. Instead, I argue that this presumed
one-way conversation with Fuller was in fact mutually enriching.
For, through her experience of being “friend” and “mentor,” as Fuller
turns to talk about the ways in which Fuller and Emerson’s relationship,
though it was personally tumultuous, was relationshipally inspirational,
both to her as a writer and to the world of literary criticism.

Emerson’s Proxy: Mark Salzman and True Notebooks

KAREN ENGLISH, San Jose State University

This paper explores the confluence between novelist and memoirist
Mark Salzman’s experience as a writing teacher of High Risk Offend-
cers at a juvenile detention center in Los Angeles with Ralph Waldo Emerson’s notions about mentoring. While Salzman does not explic-
tly make use of transcendentalist ideas or on practices of self-culture through conversation and writing, my paper argues that True Notebooks: A Writer’s Year at Juvenile Hall (2003) reveals fundamentally Emersonian ideas about the
process of mentoring as “divine teaching,” especially through con-
tact and conversation and the creation of true, or good, proxies.

While Emerson felt that mentoring could take place through lec-
tures or books, he believed that conversation, with its emphasis on proximate embodied participation, the very fact of em-
In this sense, the paper explores also the gap between Emerson’s con-
cept of the modern student and the experiences of the students he mentored at the University of Iowa. In particular, my paper argues that the
idea of mentoring is often conflated with the idea of the modern student
as a passive consumer of knowledge and that Emerson’s writing
about the student as a “true” or “good” proxy is often misinterpreted as
simply a rhetorical flourish or a metaphor.

The paper concludes with an analysis of the implications of Emerson’s
ideas about mentoring for contemporary literary studies, especially for
the study of the autobiography and the concept of the literary mentor.

...continued on next page...
Abstracts (Continued from page 9)

Considering Charles Loring Brace’s Effort to Implement Self Reliance

Carter Neal, Indiana University

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

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

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

This paper pursues these arguments about how Brace involved self-reliance in the work he did through a consideration of a key event in his CAS’s project: the Newby’s Lodging House and the Orphan Trains. The lodging house was designed to encourage the material and moral forms of self-reliance in its residents. For instance, the newsboys were charged a modest nightly rent and offered night classes. In the orphan trains, Brace believed that he had found an ideal solution to the problem of these orphans—to place them with families in the West who need their labor and will welcome their presence. In keeping with the guiding principle of self-reliance, Brace established a quasi-voluntary relationship between child and foster family. These adoptive families functioned as families of choice, and the voluntary nature of the relationship between child and foster family looks less like employment, marriage or apprenticeship, and less like family, and more like friendship.

Abstracts of Panel Presentations at the Thoreau Society’s Annual Gathering

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

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

Leslie Eckel, Suffolk University

This paper argues that Fuller’s and Alcott’s shared values of intellectual exchange turn conversation into the transcendentalists’ most successful social experiment: one that pursues utopia only by profusely practical means. Fuller and Alcott’s alliance was a friendship between equals, for their professional careers as educators developed in tandem and they often exchanged their personal journals, keeping the conversations going. Even when they were apart, in 1839, Alcott urged Fuller to follow his lead by hosting a series of public conversations for adults. She jumped at the chance, but tailored the project to suit her own vocational interests. While Alcott questioned his students in order to ignite their spiritual intelligence, and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody treated discussion as an end in itself, Fuller set an explicitly feminist course: a path that combined fervent idealism with the kind of pragmatic methodology that she thought Alcott was missing. As she explains to Sophia Ripley, her conversations would be “subjective, philosophical and intellectual at once, for they would ask what Fuller called ‘the great questions. What were we born to do? How shall we do it?’

Just as experimental as Alcott, Thoreau, and at least in theory, Emerson, Fuller creates a kind of utopian community in conversation, a world of intellectual interchange. Even her interlocutors may not achieve a “full expression” of the “truth,” their efforts are no less genial for their incompleteness. Unrealized expectations melt into the utopian power of mutual acceptance, under the banner of “one love,” which we might recognize now as the gist of a countercultural anthem. In these conversational gatherings, the transcendentalists were able to find paradise, even if only in the space of a single evening.

Transcendentalism’s Private World:
Fuller and Sturgis in Newport

Kevin Lawrence, George Washington University

For the women of the transcendental circle excluded from pulpit, podium, lectern, and lecture hall, and burdened by domestic duty, private thought and friendship became even more significant modes for self-definition and artistic creation. During the 1840s, Margaret Fuller and her young acolyte-turned-friend Caroline Sturgis organized a series of evening events away from Boston for purposeful parallel work and private conversation. The corelarity to Fuller’s “Conversations” recorded by Elizabeth Palmer Peabody and Caroline Healey Dall was this other series of even more intimate interactions that underpinned Fuller and Sturgis’ productivity and sanctity. Fuller and Sturgis’ July, 1841 sojourn in Newport, Rhode Island, the first of many extended withdrawals together, was, wrote Dall, “our own ‘Walden’.” While Dall and Fuller readers associate the concept of literary and philosophical retreat into nature in antebellum America with Thoreau, Fuller and Sturgis invented their own form of removal into nature. They chose Newport for its historic associations with William Ellery Channing, as well as for its natural beauty, securing lodgings, as Fuller wrote her mother, “on the second beach, which is far more beautiful in its curve and longer than the first beach, is bounded by noble rocks. We are closer to the high peak of Paradise which overlooks the ocean and adjacent country with much boldness.” Dating her letters from “Paradise Farm,” Fuller emphasized the millennial symbolism of the retreat. Given the need for two extended retreats to free Fuller and Sturgis from the overwhelming family concerns that burdened both women, their retreats were of necessity for two and of shorter duration. Like Thoreau, they proved that a poetic soul can and should assert her independence from mainstream bourgeois society, and that America’s true spiritual identity is to be found in doing so. But they went further: bolstered by their philo-

logic friendship, they also proved that women could attain this freedom in the midst of pressing personal cares and the demands of conven-

tion. In doing so, they demonstrate independence necessary to self-culture, Fuller and Sturgis’ series of extended retreats were a corollary to their com-

munity activities among their respective families, at Brook Farm, at Fuller’s “Conversations,” and in members of the transcendental band, enabling Fuller ultimately to write Woesas in the Nineteenth Century and Sturgis to create her drawings and watercolors.

“Rich in Friends, Rich in Experiences, Rich in Culture”: Fuller, Emerson & Friendship

Julia Ratke, University at Albany

Based on general and specific studies by Bell Gale Chevigny and Christina Zwang, the presentation took on how the friendship between Emerson and Fuller might have fared had Emerson over-

come his personal need to “shel all influence” and challenged the gender expectations of the mid-nineteenth century. Even when Emer-

son seemed ready to give Fuller the credit she deserved in rare moments, Fuller and Alcott’s letters, he often managed to distance himself from her intellectual influence through criticism and (self)-editing practices. Rather than presenting her as an inspiring muse, as a comradely rival, or as a friend Emerson ignored or dismissed, this paper focuses on William Henry Channing that although she and her interlocutors may not achieve a “full expression” of the “truth,” their efforts are no less genial for their incompleteness. Unrealized expectations melt into the utopian power of mutual acceptance, under the banner of “one love,” which we might recognize now as the gist of a countercultural anthem. In these conversational gatherings, the transcendentalists were able to find paradise, even if only in the space of a single evening.

Fall 2010

Emerson Society Papers
Reviews


On the morning of July 24, 1872, as flames consumed Bush, the Emerson family and friends attempted to save furnishings, clothing, books, and, most importantly, the house-old's precious papers. Ralph Waldo Emerson himself was observed in the fire written letters by a final round or so of Emerson's life has consistently received short shift from his dozens of biographies; Bosco's 200-page introduction, drawn from newly available sources, delineates poignantly Emerson's last years, his difficulties in delivering lectures; his inability to compose new material; his problems with arranging old materials for lectures or publication; and, increasingly, his memory problems. Emerson's attempts to meet his obligations in the early 1870s left him feeling harried and overwhelmed. The picture is not quite all grim: although the story of the destruction of Bush and its effect on Emerson (it clearly hastened his decline) is tragic, Bosco depicts the tragedy as one of the tremendous outpouring of generosity to the Emerson family from friends and townspeople. Both Bosco and Joel Myerson, author of the "Textual Introduction" and "The Tucker Emerson's role as her father's indispensable companion and literary aide. Surprisingly (or at least surprising that she would admit it), she found the latter role uncongenial and burdensome, confessing to James Elliot Cabot that "[my] lines lie in a different direction. I never knew my Papa as a literary man, nor had the slightest knowledge of nor the necessary tasks of selecting, organizing, revising, and proofing. Emerson's photographs and holograph manuscripts for "Quotation and Originality" and "Progress of Culture", previous magazine publications for "The Common Sense" and "Patriotic Poetry" are expounded and the textual apparatus adequate to fulfill the needs of the scholar. Likewise, Glen Johnson's "Notes" and "Parallel Passages" constitute significant contributions to the volume. The first of these sections explains allusions and obscurities in the text and generally sets the essays in their context; the latter identifies essay passages that are similar to those elsewhere in Emerson's writings, often his journals, thus enabling scholars to trace the genesis and evolution of his ideas and expressions.

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

-Helen R. Deese

Massachusetts Historical Society


Whatever you think you know about Emerson is likely to be challenged by Branka Arsic's new book. In On Leaving: A Reading in Emerson. Arsic's book acknowledges two principal influences. The first, and undoubtedly the more significant, is Sharon Cameron, whose work has grappled with complex textual issues, and a useful scholarly apparatus. Moreover, this edition rather unexpectedly constitutes a significant contribution to Emerson biography, adding importantly to our understanding of Emerson's last dozen years.

"Emerson's "L" which has long stood at the center of American literature, and a representative site of American individualism. In Arsic's work Emerson's "L" is a kind of epiphany resulting from an explication of "L's" division between the "I" and "Thou". Given his account of "L's" "I" and "Thou" claims, in one remarkable sentence, that "The "I" is thus an a posteriori construct, an instance that comes to the impersonal to respond to it" (212). Wordsworth, for example, is "the "I" that is not the "I", that is the "I" of dreams, is achieved in opposition to the "I". The "I" then becomes the "I" of virtue, the "I" of ethical, and eventually, a political, response to what precedes it. Hence, at the heart of Arsic's book is an argument for the explicit importance of political agency, or more precisely, political effort, in Emerson's writing. As Arsic puts it, "the transformative will to form a political practice, at the level of epistemology and rhetoric, of the foundations of culture itself" (71) in part characterizes the "Emersonian mediations" shared by the writers in discussion.

An especially attractive aspect of this modernism is its "alteration of the deconstruction paradigm" a "circulation" of Emersonest, Nietzschean, and Wittgensteinian thinking, making "available what [Deming] describes as 'constructive' or 'constitutive' skepticism" (27). It is a skepticism willing to commit to "meaningfulness and values that hold within a range of contingencies, and a skepticism aware that '[i]f those contingencies change — and they must and do — then the terms change" (111). Rather than (unethical)? infinite deferring, this skepticism works at reorienting us. It "uses doubt and self-consciousness in order to discover what is necessary, what is useful, to create the possibilities for ethics that are ever dependent on the possibility of choosing" (152). For example, the "inconstancies of Emerson's essay "Fate", Deming contends, "creates a space necessitating action in the form of participation" (65-66). Pat differently, "Fate" requires a certain investment in its ambiguities, in order that we might claim a "freedom shaped by the symbolic representations of our lives" (74). Constitutive skepticism, then, requires us to become our skeptical activity; to be agents ever as we read, as we "call into being interpretive occasions by which not only beliefs but also ways of being, ways among people and texts become possible as well" (106). Not only are we up by these possibilities, at least we find ourselves in real negotiation.

The appeal of Deming's Listening on All Sides is that it doesn't leave us feeling" (5). We're given more possibilities of life, and thus greater depths of sympathy, but also "it becomes evident that what first must change is our way of life. As Emerson finds it in "Experience," "Life is not di- man. As a poet, in Emerson's sense of the word, or reading as a modern, it becomes clear that " experience' 'is the result of our critical apparatus. Perhaps this is where Emerson departs from "Emersonism" vocabularies, new tools...in order to find new ways to address and answer the question: 'What is the form of life?' As Emerson finds it in "Experience," "Life is not..." (156), not without promise.

The writers engaged in Listening on All Sides — Emerson, Melville, Stevens, Williams, and Davis — are "participants in a "cultural" transition, in the "Renaissance of the Poetic," the "experimental" moment in American history. In Richard Deming's terms, their writing "remains in a perpetual conversation with itself as well as with its readers" (8); their "primary examples of thinkers trying to find and even make new words, new vocabularies, new tools...in order to find new ways to address and respond to (and thus to) the world" (212). This con- ventional, "Emersonian" becomes "the self" and the "agency of life, and the act of "Being," and "the" in "Ethics."

The heart of this work is "language" and "writing." We see in Arsic's reading of "Hawthorne and H. M. Modernism" Either way, at the end of Listening on All Sides we circle around to where we begin: struggling to reclaim our life in a world with older boundaries and a beginning— a form of "pathos" (1, 145), not without promise.

Dr. David Greenham

The University of the West of England

Listening on All Sides: Toward an Emersonian Ethics of Read- ing. By Dr. David Greenham. Stanford University Press, 2007. x + 182 pp. $30.00 cloth.

Electricity and "disorders come back to us with a certain alienated majesty." Yet, it is possible to think and to be. Reading him is to similarly test the self. Certainly I want to believe in Emerson's Emerson. Yet, as is always the case, the leavings, a doubt that affects all scholars of Emerson, that this coherence has been constructed from out of the vast opportunities offered by "L's" "philosophy" in the sense of the first in which we have been offered, and I hope Arsic's rigorous attention to the words Emem- son's work, wrote to the benchmark for Emerson scholarship in the 21st century.

The University of the West of England
What follows is a listing of new scholarly works on Emerson from 2009. Readers should also consult the Thoreau bibliographies published quarterly in the Thoreau Society Bulletin and the chapters “Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism” and “Scholarship in Languages Other Than English” in the annual American Literary Scholarship (Duke University Press).


---“This Prosperous Country is Your Ormament”: Emerson’s and the ‘Instructive’ Value of the Cosmopolitan Project.” Nineteenth-Century Prose 36: 77-112. [Emerson, capitalism, national infrastructure, and national identity]


Bry, Jessy. “Not a pure idealist”: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edward Waldo Emerson, and the Civil War.” Resources for American Literary Study 32: 85-97. [Evaluation of Emerson’s editor, in a previously unpublished 1863 letter, to prevent his son Edward from enlisting in the war]


Dolan, Neil. Emerson’s Liberation. Wisconsin. [Comprehensive and sympathetic study of Emerson as liberal thinker and writer]

Dowling, David. Capital Letters: Authorship in the American Liberal Market. Iowa. [Emerson compared with other writers in the antebellum literary marketplace]


Finseth, Ian Frederick. Shades of Green: Visions of Nature in the Literature of Schopenhauer. SUNY. [Emerson’s Nature as a step toward nature as a source of salvation]


Matl, Wicky T. “George Harrison, Waldo Emerson, and Lao Tse: The Same Comptenance.” ESP 20. 1. 5-7. [Reflections on striking parallels between passages in Emerson’s “Wisdom of Lao Tze, and by the spirit itself]

Nevel, Robert C. Ruralism in Relation: A Pragmatist’s Perspective. Albany. [Emerson’s ruralism and rural landscapes]

Noble, Mark. “Emerson’s Atom and the Matter of Suffering,” Nineteenth-Century Literature 64: 16-47. [Emerson’s thematic focus on the myth of spiritual transcendence]


Perry, J. [Emerson’s critical role in the development of American antislavery thought]

Pilgrimage: The Structure of an American Cult.” Architecture 62: 641-2. [Emerson’s influence on Cuban writer Jose Marti]

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

More recently, Larry has returned to his roots with Emerson (Harvard, 2003) and his edition of The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings (Modem Library, 2006). Such bibliographical “catalogue rhetoric” suggests a major reason why Larry has been honored by the Emerson Society. In a way, though, his personal contributions are more important than the height and scope of his writings. He has always been a gracious, generous, and informed reader of manuscripts from both beginning and established scholars. He takes his professionalism seriously, and has given back many times as the reader for journals and presses (and as an administrator). One might even argue that, as a behind-the-scenes force, he is in many ways responsible for the direction of American literary studies over the past forty years.

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

---Joel Myerson
**Awards Announcements**

2011

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

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

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

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

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

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

Award recipients must become members of the Society; membership applications are available at www.emersonsociety.org.