"So Emerson, by recurrent challenge and by cumulative example, provoked and inspired and educated his students—and in turn his students’ students—to walk on their own feet, to work with their own hands, to speak their own minds, just as every great teacher invariably does.” So wrote Merton M. Sealts, Jr. in “Emerson as Teacher,” an essay that teaches us much about Emerson’s own self-devised career as a lecturer and freelance mentor to the world, and also about the process of teaching and learning. The Emerson Society honors Sealts as one of our great Emersonians, a man who has made an enormous contribution to our understanding of Emerson through his scholarship, teaching, and tireless mentoring of doctoral students—both before and after they earned their degrees.

Sealts was educated at The College of Wooster (A.B., 1937) and Yale (Ph.D., 1942). After brief teaching stints at the University of Missouri and Wellesley College, he joined the faculty at Lawrence University in 1948, and moved to the University of Wisconsin—Madison in 1965. He is now Henry A. Pochmann Professor of English Emeritus at Wisconsin. It was at Wisconsin that his work with graduate students made, and continues to make, such a strong and positive impact on our profession. In 1974 Sealts was granted an Honorary Doctorate from The College of Wooster, and in 1992 he was awarded the Hubbell Medallion for his achievements as a scholar of American Literature by the American Literature Section of the Modern Language Association.

There are many things to praise in Sealts’ distinguished and continuing career, but it is his generosity—a generosity of both time and energy expended, and a generosity of spirit—that stands out. He understands the importance of cooperation, collaboration, and dialogue among scholars, and holds it his duty to maintain and encourage it among various generations of scholars. But he is motivated by more than a sense of duty. Sealts entered with real delight into dialogue with his students and colleagues, transforming what might have been duty into something more real and satisfying. He brought the same kind of commitment to his scholarly work as well, always seeing it as a way of teaching and of entering into dialogue with others, and demanding of himself a kind of historical acumen that gives his work a lasting reliability. His deeply respected work on Melville would ordinarily account for one very busy career, but he pursued Emerson just as tenaciously, leaving us an important legacy. His *Emerson’s Nature—Origin, Growth, Meaning* (1969; 1979) is an important sourcebook for teachers and students of Emerson’s difficult but essential first book, and it teaches those who use it how to consider a literary text in terms of its genesis and process of production. His editions of volumes 5 and 10 of *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson* were of great importance to this distinguished edition, one that had much to do with initiating the revival of interest in Emerson in the past two decades. His extended explorations of Emerson’s conception and enactment of the intellectual life, centering around his concept of the “scholar,” resulted in *Emerson on the Scholar* (1992), the definitive examination of Emerson’s lifelong struggle to define his role and vocation, and an important call to reexamine the middle and later phases of Emerson’s career. The Emerson Society pays honor to Merton Sealts, who has “by cumulative example, provoked and inspired and educated his students—and in turn his students’ students.”

—David M. Robinson
Abstracts of Baltimore ALA Papers

The following panels were presented by the Emerson Society at the sixth annual conference of the American Literature Association on 25 May in Baltimore, Maryland

SESSION 1: Emerson's Later Work
Chair, David M. Robinson, Oregon State University

Tears for Emerson
JULIE ELLISON
University of Michigan

How does genre pertain to the representation of mourning in Emerson's writings in response to the death of his son, Waldo, in 1842? A comparison of "Threnody" and "Experience" suggests that Emerson's strong engagement with antebellum fictional narratives absorbed with the death of children and with the writer-parent's affective witness is diverted away from the essays and into the personal letters. In a series of complicated defensive and expressive moves, Lidian Jackson Emerson's letters, Ellen Tucker Emerson's manuscript biography of her mother, Charles Newcomb King's Dialog story, "The Two Dolons," and Margaret Fuller's letters allow us to access both of Emerson's texts as partsaking of a highly social, intensively written response to the child's death throughout the spaced typewritten pages, or less)

on subjects of interest to our

1842? A comparison of "Threnody" and "Experience" suggests that Emerson was alarmed by the apparent impotence of individual

the world. While Emerson undeniably differentiated between the inevitably moral purposes of the universe and the inherently immoral motives of slavery in America, the problem of efficacious individual agency was still central to him. Emerson's conception of fate, in fact, involves the conviction and deliberate choice of "suffering" that is the excretion of individual agency. Most important to him was the insight that the opportunity for giving or withholding assent had

E.MERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society Publicized at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Editor: Douglas Emory Wilson Managing Editor: Wesley T. Mott Book Review Editor: Sarah Wicker, Colgate University Editorial Assistants: Sarah T. Mott, Jeff Rosse Design and Production: Peggy Isaacsen

Emerson Society Papers is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are $10 a year (students $5). Send checks for membership (calendar year) and back issues ($5 each) to Wesley T. Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute,Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

For future issues of Emerson Society Papers we solicit information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news (promotions, transfers, retirements, deaths, etc.) of Emerson scholars.

We will also consider notes and short articles (about 4 to 5 double-spaced typewritten pages, or less) on subjects of interest to our membership. MLA stylesheet is preferred. Send manuscripts to the Editor, Douglas Emory Wilson, 1404 Christian Ave., Amherst, MA 36021-3924.

Emerson Society Papers

'Fate, Freedom, and Foreknowledge': Assent, Stoical Belief, and Reformed Theology in Emerson's The Conduct of Life
ROBIN SANDRA GREY
University of Illinois-Chicago

Recent efforts to acknowledge the relation between Emerson's The Conduct of Life and the political struggles of America in the 1850s have raised the problem of how to reconcile the pole of forces that Emerson designates as "immovable limitations," or "fate," with his increasing disposition toward individual political activism. How did Emerson distinguish virtuous conduct from "passive obedience" or "tameness"—from versions of moral collusion? To see the fatal forces only as recalcitrant obstacles, or at best as provocations to insight and power, ascribes to Emerson the acceptance of a period of resignation and loss of individual agency. But the litany of catastrophes at the beginning of "Fate" suggests that Emerson was alarmed by the apparent impotence of individual will in the face of the inexorable laws of the universe. While Emerson undoubtedly differentiated between the inevitably moral purposes of the universe and the inherently immoral motives of slavery in America, the problem of efficacious individual agency was still central to him. Emerson's conception of fate, in fact, involves the conviction and deliberate choice of "suffering" that is the excretion of individual agency. Most important to him was the insight that the opportunity for giving or withholding assent had

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'The Conduct of Life: The Seductions of Necessity
B. L. Packer
University of California, Los Angeles

[Abstract not available at press time.]

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN CANADA

SESSION 2: Emerson in Recent Criticism
Chair, Gary L. Collins, Penn State-York Campus

Emerson's Centrality to American Literary Studies: Will It Endure?
LAWRENCE BOULLHarvard University

The question of whether Emerson will seem to remain central to American literary and cultural studies seemed more open during the middle third of this century than it does now, despite recent challenges to white androcentric canonicity. The question now facing us is rather what form will that centrality take? Emerson studies present a shifting picture in this respect. Since 1980 the Whickeran "plot" of Emerson's career as a brief Transcendental efflorescence followed by a long decline into "acquiescence" has been displaced by a renewed attention to the late Emerson, which is viewed with more respect. Henceforth, in addition, we may expect to see more study of the sociopolitical valences of Emerson's moral abstractions, of the ethical (as against the epistemological) side of Emerson's thinking, and of Emerson's thought and writing in its transatlantic contexts.

Radical Humanism!!: Stanley Cavell's Emerson
CARY WOLFE
Indiana University

No one has had more to do with the resurgence of Emerson studies over the past two decades than the Harvard philosopher Stanley Cavell, who argues that the philosophical and ethical value of "Emersonian perfectionism" stems from Emerson's confrontation with the problem of the "condition" (as Emerson terms it in "Experience") that "the world exists," as Cavell puts it, "as it were for its own reasons." For Cavell's Emerson, the loss of philosophical foundations opens onto the ethical problem of how the contingency of the human situation is to be confronted in language, how we register the "constitutive condition" of our situation in language, and how we struggle with the problem of moral perfectionism, however—in Cavell and in Emerson—is that it is an essentially sedate gesture. What gives the Emersonian vision of perfectionism its critical power—in other words, its extreme, unsurpassed ideality—is precisely what prevents the Emersonian subject from engaging in collective practice with others. Cavell confronts this problem in his most recent work, and attempts to turn this apparent "political liability" (as he puts it) into a virtue by arguing that the "inassociability of the world's work

(Continued on page 4)
"should be interpretable politically as a rebuke and confrontation" of tyranny and oppression. The larger point, however, is that Emerson's vision of the self is so pure, so antinomian, that it rejects not only oppression but also the idea of slavery in that essay should be viewed as a quintessentially philosophical response on behalf of freedom, as the only response that philosophically can happen to respond to the refusal to take sides. Yet Cavell agonizes with good reason, as I have suggested—over the implications of this reading for philosophy as a whole. Those misgivings suggest a conclusion that Cavell is unwilling to pursue: that there are other responses philosophy or at least another sort of philosophy, can have to social injustice on behalf of freedom.

Art, Language, and Mind: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Transcendentalism

GAYLE L. SMITH
Penn State Worthington Scranton Campus

When Barbara Novak linked Emersonian transcendental ideas with the style of later nineteenth-century American landscape painting known as luminism, she put luminism in a more familiar context and also seems to have prompted a great deal of interdis- ciplinary work on Emerson, Thoreau, and other writers of the period. Since then, we have seen criticism that focuses on defining, or criticizing, Cavell's initial theory. The resulting attempts to interpret one art form in terms of another, or to find analogous relationships between the works of different artists, have raised interesting possibilities and difficult methodological questions as well.

While Novak works from Emersonian concepts of self, time, and the relationship between the real and the ideal, Betty Chmaj restricts herself to Emerson's aesthetic theories and their influ- ences but extends the influence beyond painting to include litera- ture, architecture, and music. Her book includes more statements of indebtedness to Emerson. Richard Schneider, Kevin Radaker, Bartley L. St. Armand, and H. Daniel Peck compare various descriptions of landscape by Thoreau with par- ticular nineteenth-century American paintings or styles of paint- ing. As close as some seem to each other, the reasons for that resemblance are not self-evident. Shared influences can help account for the development of certain aesthetic theories in general, and about the specific intentions of each. As close as some critics attempt to stay to comparing purely stylistic features, the larger implications of these features, in the paintings or the prose, seem to begin for interpretation.

Interdisciplinary approaches have brought more attention to the journals kept by Emerson and Thoreau. Here we find rich descriptions of the natural world, a great deal about the art of composition and prose style. Thoreau's journals are emerging as artistic works on their own terms.

Russian Biography Published

The first Russian-language biography of Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson: In Search of His Universe, by Nikita Pokrovsky, has been published by the Center for American Studies in Concord, Pokrovsky, a member of the Emerson Society, is a professor at Moscow State University. Publication was supported by contribu- tions from the Society and by many individuals. Those who contributed will receive a copy of the introduction, which is in English. For details, write Stuart B. Weeks, director of the Center, 196 Elm St., Concord, MA 01742.

NEH Summer Programs

Two dozen Emersonians are offering NEH Summer Seminars for Teacher in 1996. David Robinson will be directing a seminar on "Transcendentalism and American Cultural Transfor- mation: Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau," to be held June 24-26 June 1996 at Oregon State University. Len Gougeon will be directing a seminar on "The Individual: Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, Douglass," to be held June 24-June 26 at the University of Oregon in Eugene. Fifteen teachers will be chosen from among applicants for each seminar, and receive a $2,825 stipend. American teach- ers of all ages, in public or private or church-affiliated schools, levels K-12, are eligible to apply. Applicants should contact the directors of the seminars for further information and application forms.

Emerson/Nietzsche Papers Sought

Plans are underway for a special issue of EQ: Journal of the American Renaissance on Emerson and Nietzsche. The guest editor for this issue, Professor Michael Lopez, invites submissions, proposals, and inquiries before 15 December 1995, directed to him at 10234 Fordham Rd., Westwood, CA 90024. While we are left, perhaps unsurmountable questions about the writer's knowledge of particular paintings, the artist's awareness of the writings of a particular individual or of transcendental precepts in general, and about the specific intentions of each. As close as some critics attempt to stay to comparing purely stylistic features, the larger implications of these features, in the paintings or the prose, seem to begin for interpretation.

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PROSPECTS

Supplementary Letters Edition Complete

The fourth and final volume of the late Eleanor M. Titon's supplementary edition of The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson has been published by Columbia University Press. The edition in- cludes letters not published in Ralph L. Hervey's standard 6-volume Letters (1939). The Emerson Society provided a subscription to assist in printing the comprehensive index to the new four volumes.

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Prospects
The Topical Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson


The publication of The Topical Notebooks has proceeded at a rapid pace, producing all three volumes in only four years, printing topical notebooks that were not included in The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1960-82) or The Poetry Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1980). As Ralph H. Orth notes in the Introduction to all three volumes, treatment of the text is a modification of that used for The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks, employing a genetic text with deletions, insertions, alternate readings and changes, thus reflecting the development of Emerson's thought and his writing process.

Volume 1 prints seven topical notebooks from the 1850s and 1860s, including Naturalist, the earliest and one of the least used notebooks, with quotations and extracts on Natural History. As Susan Sutton Smith observes in her introduction to Volume 1, Thoreaus's influence can be seen here along with the influences of Darwin and Linnaeus. Emerson's use of the edelweiss to signify Thoreaus's intellectual legacy has its source in this notebook. "Fate" (Notebook EO), not surprisingly, contains source material for the essay on Persian poetry. In the Rhetorico notebook, Emerson examines the relationship between art and criticism and explores both high and low (or common) speech. Literary Quotations is a copybook of excerpts printed as a sandglass for literary criticism and contains the raw material of the essay "Quotation and Originality." The Poetry notebook, a source of the essay "Poetry and Imagination," deals with both theory and practice, traces Emerson's arrival at the conclusion that the ancient primitive poet had come closest to the true role of the Poet as an inspired and inspiring force, a "liberating god," and includes multiple versions of "Brahma." The notebook on Philosophy contains much that is familiar, and philosophy courses he taught in 1870 and 1871, which the aged Emerson considered a "doleful ordeal," and which were collected as "Natural History of the Intellect." Volume 3, the final volume in the series, prints four notebooks dating from the 1860s through the early 1870s. Gulistan is divided into biographical entries on individuals including Alcott, Charles Eliot Norton, Mary Moody Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Charles King Newcomb. As Glen Johnson observes in his Introduction, these pages are for "the scholar's eye," and are to be read as "for the purpose of gaining a feeling for Emerson's close relationships that continue to be of use for a long time to come."

The Topical Notebooks will be of interest to students of Emerson's work, including his intellectual development dating from the 1840s through the early 1870s, critics of Emerson's later work, historians of Transcendentalism and of Transcendentalism and the Transcendentalist movement, literary and artistic historians, and literary critics who will find in the notebooks as they relate to Stephen Whicher's thesis in Freedom and Rhythm a rich and varied source of information for their research. Emerson considered a "doleful ordeal," and which were collected as "Natural History of the Intellect." Volume 3, the final volume in the series, prints four notebooks dating from the 1860s through the early 1870s. Gulistan is divided into biographical entries on individuals including Alcott, Charles Eliot Norton, Mary Moody Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Charles King Newcomb. As Glen Johnson observes in his Introduction, these pages are for "the scholar's eye," and are to be read as "for the purpose of gaining a feeling for Emerson's close relationships that continue to be of use for a long time to come."

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A thorough bibliography, an appendix containing all poems (and poetic drafts and fragments) contained in notebooks not published in JMN, PN, or TPN, and a helpful index add to the usefulness of these attractive volumes. My only caveat is that those of us researching Emerson's position on women's issues may wish that there could be a more convenient and more complete index of the subject. When the several interesting comments on that topic could be indexed better one can only hope for serious research on that topic as well as the length of ZO suggests how important the subject was to Emerson. Began in 1865, Moral Law is the latest of the notebooks. It contains Emerson's meditations on religion and especially re- flects Emerson's long-standing faith in the ultimate moral development of the country. Johnson's notes on the contents of these notebooks as they relate to Stephen Whittier's thesis in Freedom and Fate are thus particularly valuable.

Books.


von Frank, Albert J. An Annotated Bibliography of Transcendentalist Literature. Cambridge, 1994. [Includes the development of Transcendentalist racial identity and De Boos's conceptualization of the Transcendentalist movement as a political and cultural force.]


(Continued on page 8)
Grodzins, Dean and Joel Myerson. “The Preaching Record of Theodore Parker.” SAR 1994, pp. 55-122. [The complete record of Parker’s extensive career as a preacher.]


In Memoriam
Gay Wilson Allen
1903-1995

The profession of literary criticism and biography has lost one of its brightest lights with the death of Gay Wilson Allen on 6 August of this year. Known as the “Dean of Whitman scholars” for his Walt Whitman Handbook in 1946 (New Walt Whitman Handbook in 1975) and The Solitary Singer: A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman in 1953 as well as many other books and articles on the subject, Professor Allen was the author of Waldo Emerson (1981), then the most important life of Emerson since Ralph L. Rusk’s biography in 1949, and William James: A Biography (1967). Professor Allen was also the founding and general editor (along with Professor Sculley Bradley) of The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman, today a 20+ volume collection that lacks only the poet’s collected journalism.

Professor Allen became interested in Whitman and the American Romantic poets generally as a student of Jay B. Hubbell at Duke University in the 1920s. A native of North Carolina and the son of a carpenter, Professor Allen received both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Duke, and went on to receive his Ph.D. in English at the University of Wisconsin. Along with finishing his dissertation under Harry Hayden Clark in 1934, he completed independently and published American Prosody that year. He taught at Bowling Green State University from 1935 to 1946, when he moved to New York University, retiring in 1969. He continued to publish till his middle eighties, commencing and completing Waldo Emerson in his retirement and coauthoring with Professor Roger Asselineau of the Sorbonne St. John de Crevecoeur: The Life of an American Farmer (1987). He had also contributed heavily to and coedited with Professor Ed Folsom the forthcoming Walt Whitman and the World.

—Jerome Loving