A new letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Loretta Sutton Metcalf, managing editor of the *North American Review*, and two letters by Metcalf concerning the same matter, shed new light on Emerson's compositional practices in his declining years. The letters help document an extended awkward episode revealing the confusion that sometimes resulted from the editorial collaboration—in this case from three separate locations—of Ellen Tucker Emerson, James Elliot Cabot, and Emerson himself.

On 7 June 1877, Cabot arrived in Concord to help Ellen work on her father's manuscripts. At least one of the tasks presumably was preparation for publication of "Perpetual Forces," the title of a lecture Emerson had given frequently between 18 November 1862 and 19 November 1863. This was the manuscript referred to in Emerson's own disjointed Pocket Diary notes at the end of July 1877: "[Fri., July 27] <Carry MSS to Osgood> <ask send proofs to care of W[illiam] H[athaway] F[orbes] Woods Hole>; [Sat., July 28] 10.30 o'clock from Concord..." North American <paper> article": James R. Osgood was publisher of the *North American Review*, and Ellen was spending much of that summer with her sister and brother-in-law, Edith and Will Forbes, on the island of Naushon, across from the mainland village of Woods Hole. Emerson evidently took the train to Boston to deliver the manuscript himself, among other errands, but Ellen wished to oversee the editorial process.

A tangle of misdirected mailings, conflicting editorial judgments, and general misconimation began when Forbes "intercepted" the proofs of "Perpetual Forces" in Woods Hole and forwarded them directly to Waldo in Concord instead of first giving them to Ellen for review. She writes her father from Naushon on 9 August, urging him to keep the proofs until she can see them, or to send them to Cabot in Beverly for correction. She is worried that Emerson's use of the word "crown" is inappropriate, that an allusion to Bonaparte is too "elliptical," and especially that the beginning of the essay is "confusingly abrupt and varied." But Ellen is too late. Waldo writes her from Boston on 16 August that he returned his "corrected sheets to Osgood & Co, immediately; & only yesterday received your lines & Mr Cabot's corrections." He goes on to complain about cuts in the manuscript, including a quotation by Michael Faraday, but promises, "I shall obey your united opinion with thanks & trust." "Perpetual Forces" was published in the September-October issue of the *North American Review*. The Faraday quotation was restored, satisfying Emerson's complaint, but evident from new letters is that Ellen's and J. E. Cabot's concerns would not be addressed until they later prepared the essay for inclusion in *Lectures and Biographical Sketches* (1883). Two letters from L. S. Metcalf to H. H. Clark, evidently written sometime in September, indicate that Emerson wanted the proofs of the article returned. Implicit in Emerson's request is Ellen's and Cabot's frustration with the article as published, and Emerson's request likely was made at Ellen's insistence. Both Metcalf letters are on *North American Review* letterhead:

Mr. Clark:
Mr. Emerson now calls and asks that he may have the copy of his article, & also the proof which he examined. He desires to preserve the article as originally written, for future use. Please send both to me again and I will deliver them to him.

[Two paragraphs of other business are deleted.]

Metcalf

Frid. P.M.

(Continued on page 2)
Dear Sir

I am informed by my daughter that she received the proofs in my absence & has them safely placed for such purpose of comparison with other pages as we may hereafter wish to make. With thanks to your kind care, Yours,

R. W Emerson

Mr L. S. Metcalf

North American Review

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Clark:

Please remember to send me again the copy and second proof of Mr. Emerson’s article. Am sorry to bother you, but make the request at Mr. Emerson’s earnest desire.

Respectfully,

Metcalf

Sat eve.

Emerson cordially acknowledged receipt of the proofs. This letter is owned by Mr. Michael Muir, of Worcester, Massachusetts, and is published here with his kind permission. 4

Concord Sept 77

Dear Sir

I am informed by my daughter that she received the proofs in my absence & has them safely placed for such purpose of comparison with other pages as we may hereafter wish to make. With thanks to your kind care, Yours,

R. W Emerson

Mr L. S. Metcalf

Comparison of the magazine version of “Perpetual Forces” with that published in Lectures and Biographical Sketches reveals that Ellen and Cabot finally exerted editorial control over that “confusingly abrupt and varied” opening. In the 1883 Riverside Edition of The Complete Works, the first two paragraphs are reversed; the third paragraph and most of the fourth are deleted, with the last two sentences of the fourth paragraph and the entire fifth paragraph (with its Faraday quotation) moved; five sentences are deleted from the sixth paragraph; and all but the last two sentences of the seventh paragraph are deleted. The rest of the essay is marked by minor deletions and by changes in punctuation and paragraphing. (Emerson’s use of the word “crowner” and his Bonaparte allusion are allowed to stand, despite Ellen’s earlier objections.)

But before this outcome, an affidavit of Emerson’s venture with the North American Review caused Ellen both great embarrassment and an occasion to be frank about the origins of the article. On 29 January 1878, Charles Allen Thorne and Alice, the editor of the North American Review, visited at the Emerson home, “in the happy belief that Father wrote Perpetual Forces last summer fresh for the Review,” as Ellen wrote to her sister, Edith, “this belief I meant to leave flourishing, but Father innocently chopped it down and let every cat in the house out of the bag, told him he never did anything about it, that Mr Cabot & I compiled these things etc etc. And I sat quite peacefully & listened but within I was stamping wildly about, tearing my hair & uttering ever new shrieks of surprise & dismay. Still it all was true & truth does no real harm.”

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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

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Managing Editor: Wesley T. Mott
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Notes

1 Declaration of copyright for the Boston Public Library. Loretta Sutton Metcalf (1837–1929) was managing editor of the North American Review from 1876 to 1885. He later founded and edited both The Forum (1886–91) and the Florida Daily Citizen (in Jacksonville, 1895–97) before settling in Los Angeles (Who Was Who in America, vol. 1, 1897–1942 [Chicago: The A. N. Marquis Company, 1943]).

2 Mr. Muir, a member of the Emerson Society, is accounting manager for the Community Newspaper Company in Needham, Massachusetts.


4 Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 2:259–60.


Emerson’s essay “Circles” has been described in summary as “the heart of Emerson's problem and the theme of many of his writings that express his view of the center and authoritative moment, expression, or mode of action in a centrifugal field.” Other scholars have suggested a symbolic connection with yet another Latin author, Seneca. Emerson’s essay is said to be related to Seneca’s Epistle 12. According to Seneca, a day must be organized as if it closed off the age; it reaches from the day of birth to the day of death (emancipations and recollections of a lifelong friend). Emerson’s essay is considered “a point outside of our hodiemal thinking” (184).

Emerson’s “Circles” reveals a connection with yet another Latin author, and that is Seneca. The fifth letter of Seneca’s Epistle 12 has been suggested a connection with yet another Latin author, and that is Seneca. Emerson’s essay is said to be related to Seneca’s Epistle 12. According to Seneca, a day must be organized as if it closed off the age; it reaches from the day of birth to the day of death (emancipations and recollections of a lifelong friend). Emerson’s essay is considered “a point outside of our hodiemal thinking” (184).

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1. The birthplace, a 300-year-old farmhouse on 18.4 acres of agricultural land, is now up for sale by the current owners. It is threatened. "Thoreau is widely recognized," writes Ms. Sawyer, "as the father of American conservation. In his writing he argued for the preservation of wildness."

2. "Newspapers and journals on both sides of the Atlantic. Attacks on Emerson and Thoreau: The Contemporary Reviews contains 445 double-column pages of criticism, including extended essays by such prominent figures as Orestes Brownson, William Henry Channing, James Freeman Clarke, Margaret Fuller, Robert E. Burrough, and Theodore Parker. The collection also contains brief pieces by numerous other writers, among them Robert E. Burrough and Joel Myerson, who were both close friends with the deceased. Several critics reviewed Emerson's and Thoreau's works for the New England Magazine, the Overland Monthly, and the Atlantic Monthly. Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard, who recommended Walden "as a study to all folks, male and female" (p. 395). In fact, the intelligentsia and vulgarians who reviewed the works often equaled that of Emerson and Thoreau.

3. The value of this collection is enhanced by Joel Myerson's superb editorial work. He has included only those reviews of Emerson's and Thoreau's works by—Emerson—from Nature (1836) through Letters and Social Aims (1876)—and of the two books Thoreau published during his lifetime, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (1849) and Walden (1854). "Nine hides his selection of reviews for each work strikes me as balanced and judicious, representing a wide range of literary, philosophical, and religious perspectives. Moreover, virtually every review about this collection is user-friendly. Following the reviews of each work, Myerson includes a "Checklist of Additional Reviews," and he concludes the section on Emerson with a checklist of reviews of Thoreau. In each of the volumes, Myerson gives full bibliographical information. Although most of the reviews were anonymous, or were signed only with initials, he has identified many of the authors and their pseudonyms (or his attribution) in square brackets. He prints the complete texts of the reviews, omitting only extended extracts from the work under review. (He identifies those extracts by page and line numbers in volumes of the standard editions of Emerson and Thoreau.) Where a reviewer also discussed works by other authors, Myerson prints only the section of the review concerning Emerson or Thoreau, identifying the other works in a note. He also provides an index of the names of reviewers and the periodicals in which their reviews appeared, including a fascinating array of newspapers and journals on both sides of the Atlantic."

4. In his excellent introduction, Myerson effectively summarizes the reception of works by Emerson and Thoreau, but neither that summary nor this review can indicate the rich diversity of criticism that appeared in the reviews of Emerson's Poems (1847) suggest the kinds of insights into antebellum culture to be gained in every section. For example, Myerson's notes indicate that Emerson's collection was reviewed by contemporaneous collections of verse by Frances Elizabeth Browne, William Ellery Channing (which Emerson insisted Munroe and Company publish), with which Browne included additional reviews of Thoreau's writings, or, better yet, that it had been possible for him to edit a separate volume on Thoreau. As it is, Myerson devotes nearly four times as much space to Emerson as he does to Thoreau, a disparity that "reflects both their relative importance as seen by their contemporaries and the length of their careers" (p. ix). But their "relative importance" has changed a good deal, though perhaps less dramatically among members of the Emerson Society. In any case, Contemporary Reviews is of somewhat lesser value to students of Thoreau. Myerson includes several reviews of posthumous editions of A Week and Walden, as well as those three essays reprinted by Thoreau's contemporaries. What is included by "A Parish Priest" (1864); and James Russell Lowell's infamous review of Letters to Various Persons (1865), a volume of letters Emerson, chronically, did not want much damage to Thoreau's reputation. Myerson, however, does not include reviews of the other volumes edited by Thoreau's friends and published in swift succession after his death in 1862: Excursions (1853), The Maine Woods (1845), Cape Cod (1856), and A Yankee in Canada, with Anti- Slavery and Reform Papers (1866). Together with new editions of A Week and Walden, those volumes generated a good deal of interest in Thoreau in the New York Times during the antebellum period. "Mr. Thoreau's friends are doing good service to his memory and to American literature by the collection and preservation of his remains" (2 May 1865). Indeed, those volumes helped pave the way for his later emergence, which was given added impetus by the publication of H. G. O. Blake's selections from Thoreau's Journal: Early Spring in Concord (1875), Summer (1884), Winter (1885), and Autumn (1892). Since Myerson includes a review of A Week published as late as 1889, such posthumous publications fail within the time frame of Copley to Emerson, but for those who wish much wish he had been in a position to collect and reprint some of the reviews they generated. It is, however, no doubt clarifying to ask for more, when Myerson has given so much, and in so usable a format. Whatever limitations this volume may have for those primarily interested in contemporary responses to Thoreau's writings, Myerson's collection is of vital interest, not only to students of Emerson, but to all who are interested in the culture in which both writers were so deeply rooted. Moreover, contemporary reviews pose a fruitful challenge to our own readings of the texts, reminding us that all readings are historically contingent. This collection also reminds us of how seriously certain aesthetic, philosophical, and theological issues were taken during the antebellum period. Attacks on Emerson and Thoreau by conservative critics now seem retrograde and rather quaint, as statements by those on the losing side of a historical debate must almost inevitably appear. But Orestes Brownson that preoccupied such critics was of equal interest to Emerson and Thoreau, and their many defenders, whose fundamental concerns were far closer to those of their adversaries than to our own. In fact, among many other things, Contemporary Reviews teaches us that these writers are not so far removed from our contemporaries, however much we may seek to claim them and to make their writings our own. LINCOLN C. JOHNSON Colgate University
Emerson in the Corporate World

LEN GOUGEON
University of Scranton

Forbes magazine, that bastion of American business savvy and corporate consciousness, recently introduced a new monthly “Department” which has been given a most unlikely title, “Transparent Eyeball.” How is it that the pundits of Wall Street came to adopt this quintessential Emersonian image, indeed, the very logo of the Emerson Society itself, for their latest offering? The editor, James W. Michaels, offers the following explanation in the 22 January 1996 issue, in a note titled, “With thanks to Ralph Waldo Emerson”:

When we had to pick a name for the new feature that appears on page 37, Nina Munk remembered an essay she read in college: “Nature,” written in 1836 by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Recalls Munk: “Emerson describes walking across Boston Common at twilight under a cloudy sky with snow on the ground. He suddenly feels exhilarated, illuminated: He understands his place in the universe. He wrote: ‘I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all.’”

The phrase “transparent eyeball” catches the sense of what Munk is trying to achieve—reporting small events to illuminate general business principles. Or, as Munk says, “To show the big picture through the small picture.”

The items discussed in the first Transparent Eyeball offering (p. 37) include “Learning from Kodak,” which describes vast improvements in New York State’s Department of Motor Vehicles due to customer-friendly innovations provided by Eastman Kodak Co. The second is titled “You’ve got spam!” and describes the irritation e-mail users have experienced due to the increasing flow of advertising directed towards subscribers to such services as America Online. What Emerson’s reactions to these issues might be is anybody’s guess, but he would undoubtedly be pleased to be remembered almost 200 years after his birth by a magazine with such a friendly and familiar name. If this proves popular we might consider suggesting yet another Emerson-inspired department name to Mr. Michaels, perhaps something like “SUCCESS,” or “POWER,” or “WEALTH.”

New “Transparent Eye-ball” Tee-Shirts

A fourth edition of Emerson Society tee-shirts is hot off the press. Made of heavy-weight, pre-shrunk, 100% cotton, the shirts are available in navy and in “sunset red” (an “earth color”), both with white ink. Sizes are L and XL. Price is $12 each, plus $2 postage/handling for the first shirt and $1 for each additional shirt. Because supplies are limited, call the secretary, Wes Mott, at 508-696-7472, to order.

Annual Meeting

The 1996 annual meeting of The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc. will be held at 12 noon on Saturday, 1 June, at the American Literature Association conference in San Diego, California. The room location, at the Bahia Hotel, will be announced later. For details on the conference, see “PROSPECTS.”

Seneca’s Epistle 12

(Continued from page 4)

2 Emerson did own a copy of Sir Roger L'Estrange’s translation of Seneca, Morals by Way of Abstract (Keene, N.H.: John Prentiss, 1806), which paraphrases portions of this letter. It does not specifically mention circles, however. For the bibliographical details consult Walter Harding, Emerson’s Library (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1967), p. 245.

Let this small note begin to acknowledge my enormous debt to Dr. Anna Lydia Motto, Professor of Greek and Latin, and to her husband, Dr. Jack Clark, Professor of English, who taught me how to think about literature.