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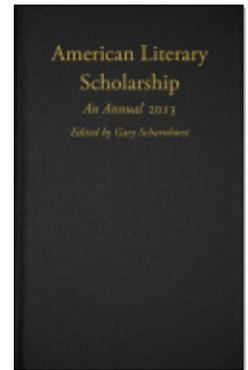
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## Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism

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# I Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and Transcendentalism

*Robert D. Habich*

Substantial work on the Transcendentalist writers appeared in 2013: a new biography of Margaret Fuller; additions to the editions of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau; a collection of essays on Emerson and one on Thoreau; a special issue of *19th-Century Prose* on Emerson's *Collected Works*; and two full-length studies of Transcendentalism. Among the trends in the scholarship are attention to transnational and cosmopolitan contexts and increasing consideration of the later careers of both Emerson and Thoreau.

## **i Ralph Waldo Emerson**

**a. Edition and Reference** The appearance of *Uncollected Prose Writings: Addresses, Essays, and Reviews* (Harvard), the 10th and final volume of the *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, is cause for celebration, bringing to a close a remarkable restoration of Emerson's texts, from his journals and letters to his lectures, sermons, and antislavery writing. Expertly edited and introduced by Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson, premier authorities on Emerson's times and texts, with notes and parallel passages by Glen M. Johnson, volume 10 assembles for the first time 110 "critically edited texts of those works of Emerson which were originally published in his lifetime and under his supervision" but left uncollected at his death in 1882.

The items in this volume are scrupulously edited based on the theories of copy-text articulated by W. W. Greg. Carefully researched historical and textual introductions provide the best narrative we have of Emerson's later career, while also justifying a principle of selection that some readers may find troublesome. Because it omits any work not "completely and solely" written by Emerson, unlike most scholarly editions this one actually shrinks the size of Emerson's canon by excluding texts published under his name that were in fact cobbled together by others from his notes and lectures. In the textual introduction these exclusions are carefully defended, though the principle might still be controversial for textual constructivists who hold that almost all published writing is collaborative to some extent—whether peer-reviewed, line edited, revised to meet publishers' agendas, or actually cowritten by someone else. By carefully navigating a thicket of textual possibilities, Bosco and Myerson have established "a catalogue raisonné in words of his published prose that Emerson never personally collected" and provided a great service to students of the 19th century. For an extensive history and assessment of the edition, see Robert N. Hudspeth's "The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson" (*NCP* 40, ii: 1–104), in a special edition of *19th-Century Prose* celebrating the completion of the project.

A valuable resource for tracing the evolution of Emerson's reputation both in and out of the academy, *Estimating Emerson: An Anthology of Criticism from Carlyle to Cavell*, ed. David LaRocca (Bloomsbury), contains commentary by 67 writers, some famous, some not, organized chronologically. The selections include "oration, address, epistle, lecture, note, diatribe, poem, essay, review, journal entry, conversation, stump speech, among many other forms," on a continuum from "high praise to severe rebuke." A useful annotated listing of Emersonian material appearing in both scholarly and popular venues is William Rossi and Robert Habich's "An Emerson Bibliography, 2012" (*ESP* 24, ii: 16–17).

I also provide a topical online reference guide to Emersonian studies in "Ralph Waldo Emerson," in Jackson Bryer et al., eds., *Oxford Bibliographies in American Literature*.

**b. Biography, Contemporaries, and Sources** While the year saw no full-scale biographical work, Lawrence Buell adds to our understanding of Emerson's public life in "Inventing the Public Intellectual: Conflict-Modeling Models," pp. 27–44 in *Intellectual Authority and Literary Culture*. Particularly in Emerson's role as a lyceum lecturer, Buell argues, he

“foreshadow[ed] the charisma *and* the skepticism surrounding public intellectual work today.”

Emerson's family contexts are better understood thanks to two important digital projects. Waldo's brother Edward Bliss Emerson's *Caribbean Journal and Letters, 1831–1834* has been ably edited by José G. Rigau-Pérez ([bibliotecadigital.uprrp.edu/cdm/ref/collection/librosraros/id/1701](http://bibliotecadigital.uprrp.edu/cdm/ref/collection/librosraros/id/1701)), and Noelle A. Baker and Sandra Harbert Petrulionis continue their digital scholarly edition of *The Almanacks of Mary Moody Emerson*, Waldo's accomplished aunt. The manuscripts span over 50 years and 1,000 pages, with subjects that “range from theology, philosophy, literary criticism, and science, to war, imperialism, and slavery.” Six almanack folders (circa 1804 through 1810, and 1821) have been published, with remarkably complete digital interventions. They are best accessed in an experimental interface at [wwp.northeastern.edu/research/projects/manuscripts/emerson/index.html](http://wwp.northeastern.edu/research/projects/manuscripts/emerson/index.html), where the future of digital editing is on display.

**c. Philosophy and Religion** As part of the ongoing “rehabilitation” of Emerson as philosopher, two of Emerson's most astute interpreters, Joseph Urbas and David LaRocca, continue their careful interrogation of Emerson's thought. In “‘Bi-Polar’ Emerson: ‘Nominalist and Realist’” (*Pluralist* 8, ii: 78–105) Urbas makes a solid case for the importance of synthesis in Emerson's metaphysics. LaRocca consistently challenges the limits of academic categorization. In “Performative Inferentialism: A Semiotic Ethics” (*Liminalities* 9: 1–26) LaRocca chastises contemporary theorists for divorcing creator and work, positing instead that for Emerson, actions are texts, susceptible to inference and interpretation. In “The Education of Grown-ups: An Aesthetics of Reading Cavell” (*JoAeEd* 47, ii: 109–31) he asks why Cavell's work “is sometimes invoked in order to be shelved” and outlines what is at stake when we do so, arguing that “the very thing that Cavell's work makes possible for philosophy is keeping alive the question of an ongoing inquiry into the nature of philosophical investigation itself.” To illustrate, he broadens consideration of Emerson's applicability across disciplines in “Not Following Emerson: Intelligibility and Identity in the Authorship of Literature, Science, and Philosophy” (*MQ* 54: 115–35). David M. Robinson provides a lucid exposition of both Cavell and Emerson in “Stanley Cavell, ‘Aversive Thinking,’ and Emerson's ‘Party of the Future,’” pp. 42–56 in Andrew Taylor and Áine Kelly, eds., *Stanley Cavell, Literature, and Film: The*

*Idea of America* (Routledge). Robinson traces Cavell's long fascination with Emerson's call for "aversive thinking," which is not a "singular act of dissent" but a process by which one escapes from conformity in order to enter "relationship and society."

Other scholars take up the "practical power" of Emerson's philosophy. In "Emerson's *Nature* as an Early Manifestation of the Biological Sublime" (*ChEn* 20: 409–19) Robert Tindol sees *Nature* as Emerson's acceptance of the inevitability of biological processes, while Mathew Foust examines Emerson's recuperation from his son's death in "Experience as a Prelude to Disaster: American Philosophy and the Fear of Death" (*Mortality* 18: 1–16). Herwig Friedl examines "those acts of Emersonian abandonment" that transcend the ordinary in "Out of Bounds: American Visions of the Thinker and of Thinking," pp. 205–17 in *Intellectual Authority and Literary Culture*. T. S. McMillin traces the same concept throughout Emerson's essays and connects it to the contemporary movement of transdisciplinarity, a willful violation of disciplinary boundaries in the "search for responsible approaches to ecological, social, intellectual, and spiritual urgencies" in "The Discipline of Abandonment: Emersonian Properties of Transdisciplinarity and the Nature of Method" (*NCP* 40, ii: 105–28).

Two essays that tie the poetry to the philosophy are Sandra Morris's "Whim Upon the Lintel: Emerson's Poetry and a Politically Ethical Aesthetic" (*NCP* 40, ii: 189–216), a close reading of several Emerson poems to show the "beautiful politics of justice and love" that was Emerson's ethical praxis, and Harold Schweizer's "Are We Not Beautiful?" (*NCP* 40, ii: 217–26), a close reading of "The Rhodora" to illustrate both its Kantian aesthetics and its assertion of "the analogy between the beautiful and human life."

C. Conrad Wright's "Soul Is Good, but Body Is Good Too" (*JUUH* 37: 1–20) is a reprint of a lecture by a leading historian of American Unitarianism, outlining the circumstances of and reaction to Emerson's 1838 "Divinity School Address" and castigating Emerson for his inattention to the church as community. More forgiving is John Ronan's "Self-Reliance in Emerson's Sermons and *Essays: First Series*" (*NCP* 40, ii: 181–88), which argues for the homiletic origins of radical self-reliance in Emerson's career as a preacher.

**d. Social, Cultural, and Literary History** The overlap of Emerson's place in political and literary history is nicely illustrated by T. Gregory

Garvey, who traces the similar views of Lincoln and Emerson about the rise of mob violence in “Anarchy and Public Discourse: Emerson, Lincoln, and the ‘Mobocratic Spirit’ of the 1830s” (*ANCH* 14: 161–82). In an interesting contemporary connection, Michael D. Boatright and Mark A. Faust argue in “Emerson, Reading, and Democracy: Reading as Engaged Democratic Citizenship” (*Democracy and Education* 21, i: 1–9) that Emerson’s concept of creative reading is central to the enterprise of informed democracy, a counterweight to “routinized schooling” and the emphasis today on Common Core State Standards. Leslie Elizabeth Eckel explores and extends this connection in her fine book *Atlantic Citizens*, which places Emerson, Fuller, and others in a cosmopolitan rather than an exceptionalist tradition and situates their literary work in the larger professional contexts of “journalism, publishing, education, and oratory.” Fuller, Eckel maintains, practiced “a form of journalism that she described as ‘conversational,’” as a way of both critiquing and shaping American culture; “emphatically national,” she was also “deliberately transnational.” Emerson, on the other hand, Eckel argues in Chapter 4, “Between Cosmos and Cosmopolis: Emerson’s National Criticism,” came to believe that the world was moving beyond nationality “into a realm of cosmopolitan freedom.” For a different perspective and a different hemisphere, see Sarina Isenberg’s “Translating World Religions: Ralph Waldo Emerson’s and Henry David Thoreau’s ‘Ethnical Scriptures’ Column in *The Dial*” (*CompAmSt* 11: 18–36). In response to those who see Emerson and Thoreau as cosmopolitan in their treatment of Eastern culture, Isenberg argues convincingly that their selection and translations of Hindi, Buddhist, and Confucian texts are “an attempt to comprehend, and yet dominate Eastern scripture,” more allied with repressive orientalism as articulated by Edward Said and others.

In his carefully argued *Writing Beyond Prophecy*, Martin Kevorkian considers how Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville all abandoned and later reclaimed the minister as prophetic figure. Chapter 2, “Emerson’s Call to Worship,” develops Emerson’s nearly obsessive early attention to preachers, leading up to the essay “Worship” (1860), in which Emerson equates self-reliance with loneliness. Jason Richards places Emerson in similar company in “Emerson and the Gothic” (*NCP* 40, i: 61–90), a less-than-convincing account of the “Calvinist rhetoric, dark romanticism, and supernatural characters” that characterized Emerson’s lifelong attraction to Gothic “darkness.” Situating Emerson outside the Western traditions, Yoshiko Fujita outlines the

cultural tendencies that make Japanese students receptive to Emerson in “Teaching Emerson’s *Nature* in a Japanese University” (*ESP* 24, i: 1, 4–5).

**e. Pairings and Influence** The familiar topic of Friedrich Nietzsche’s use of Emerson is furthered by three good studies in the *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* (44) based upon careful readings of Nietzsche’s marginalia and notes. Mason Golden’s “Emerson-Exemplar: Friedrich Nietzsche’s Emerson Marginalia: Introduction” (pp. 398–408) and “Translation and Excerpts” (pp. 409–31) translate for the first time Nietzsche’s Emerson marginalia of 1881 and the passages he copied from Emerson’s essays in 1882. Benedetta Zavatta’s “Historical Sense as Vice and Virtue in Nietzsche’s Reading of Emerson” (pp. 372–97) argues that Nietzsche rejected Emerson’s metaphysical concept of an Over-Soul. Using similar sources, William James’s notes on Emerson, Gregg Crane adds to the Transcendentalism versus pragmatism debate in “Intuition: The ‘Unseen Thread’ Connecting Emerson and James” (*MIH* 10: 57–86), while Kristen Boudreau’s important essay, “The Haunting of History: Emerson, James, and the Ghosts of Human Suffering,” pp. 80–95 in *Stanley Cavell, Literature, and Film*, shows Henry James Jr.’s understanding of Emerson’s “moral darkness” by exploring the connections between *The Portrait of a Lady* and Emerson’s “Fate.” In “Fallibility and Insight in Moral Judgment” (*HumanS* 36: 259–75) John Kaag briefly considers the influence of Emerson on C. S. Peirce. Joseph M. Kramp’s “From Emerson to Erikson: Methodological Reflections on a Common, Anti-American Approach to Biography” (*JPsychobist* 41: 44–51) connects Emerson’s views of biography with those of Erik Erikson, both based on empathy with a subject’s shortcomings. Garrett Stewart offers up a detailed analysis of wordplay in Poe and Emerson in “Self-Reliance: Emerson to Poe,” pp. 57–79 in *Stanley Cavell, Literature, and Film*.

Other work this year stresses the reach of Emerson’s literary influence. Sydney Bufkin’s “Contending Forces’ Intellectual History: Emerson, Du Bois, and Washington at the Turn of the Century” (*ArQ* 69, iii: 77–98) locates Emersonian ideas of race in Pauline Hopkins’s 1901 novel *Contending Forces*. Katherine Biers argues that Susan Glaspell’s plays replicate “an experience of theatrical spectatorship akin to that of reading Emerson’s essays” in “Stages of Thought: Emerson, Maeterlinck, Glaspell” (*MD* 56: 457–77). Rosemary Luttrell finds that Virginia Woolf at once capitalizes on Emersonian ideas of vision and challenges them in “Virginia Woolf’s Emersonian Metaphors of Sight in *To the Lighthouse*:

Visionary Oscillation” (*JML* 36, iii: 69–80). In “Percival Everett’s *Grand Canyon Inc.*: Self-Reliance Revisited” (*CRevAS* 43: 257–68) Sylvie Bauer sees Everett’s satiric 2001 novella as a commentary on Emersonian ideas of self-reliance. Sophie Djigo makes similar claims for the work of German novelist Robert Musil in “Self-Utopia and the Robber’s Ethic” (*GR* 88: 64–82); and Lawrence Rhu points out the Emersonian echoes in Richard Ford’s novels *The Sportswriter*, *Independence Day*, and *The Lay of the Land* in “Emersonian Affinities: Reading Richard Ford Through Stanley Cavell,” pp. 217–29 in *Stanley Cavell, Literature, and Film*.

Two essays with significant implications for 19th-century culture are Sara Atwood’s “Black Devil and Gentle Cloud: Ruskin and Emerson at Odds” (*NCP* 40, ii: 129–62), which outlines the significant disagreements between the two Victorian “Great Men”; and David M. Robinson’s “Emerson, Modern Literature, and the Question of Goethe” (*NCP* 40, ii: 163–80), an exploration of Emerson’s inconsistent enthusiasm for Goethe’s works that recasts the narrative of Transcendentalism not just as a theological conflict but as “a literary insurrection whose central subject was Goethe.”

**f. Rhetoric and Aesthetics** Argument and art are of course part and parcel of almost every study of Emerson, but three particularly good studies of Emerson’s aesthetics merit a separate category this year. Nikhil Bilwakesh’s finely nuanced essay on an often-neglected text, “Emerson’s Decomposition: *Parnassus*” (*NCF* 67: 520–45), develops Emerson’s late method of composition as “an exercise in creative classification and juxtaposition.” Combining close reading with print history, Bilwakesh breaks new ground not only for what he says about Emerson’s late aesthetics but also for what *Parnassus* reveals about issues of authority and ownership in collections and anthologies. Sean Ross Meehan’s carefully argued “Ecology and Imagination: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Nature of Metonymy” (*Crit* 55: 299–329) challenges the familiar dichotomy of an empirical Thoreau and a Transcendental Emerson by arguing for “a rhetorical middle ground, the empirical figure of expression known as metonymy.” Because metonymy is based on contiguity, not metaphorical equation, and recognizes fluidity and change, both Emerson and Thoreau gravitate toward it as a useful trope for exploring our relation to nature.

Finally there is LaRocca’s *Emerson’s English Traits and the Natural History of Metaphor* (Bloomsbury), which addresses the complexities of

Emerson's 1856 book about "the nature of blood and descent" published just before *The Origin of Species*. LaRocca's focus, if we have to pick just one, is how "Emerson habituates the latest science to his existential outlook," science itself being centrally concerned with metaphor: analogy, comparison, classification, and the assessment of similarity and difference. Although LaRocca raises some specific questions about the achievement of *English Traits*, perhaps chief among them whether "its metaphors, associations, combinations and methods . . . transfer intelligibly and intuitively to the present," he creates no linear scholarly Q&A here. Rather than argument, the book is a smart, exciting demonstration of Emersonian thinking and a way to approach his work by its affiliations—to other Emerson texts and to texts by others—and "to make the allusions coalesce." Learned, daring, and lively, LaRocca's book is the most provocative treatment of Emerson this year.

## **ii Henry David Thoreau**

**a. Editions and Reference** A major event in Thoreau scholarship this year is the publication of *Correspondence, Volume 1: 1834–1848*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Princeton), the first of three volumes that will supersede the Walter Harding/Carl Bode edition of 1958. This volume includes "every extant letter Thoreau wrote and received" between 1834 and 1848, a total of 163 letters spanning Thoreau's Harvard years to the beginnings of his book-writing career. Time, negligence, and intentional destruction have resulted in many lacunae. What remains, however, is a meticulously edited correspondence that, as Hudspeth notes, "provide[s] rare, direct access to a network of relationships [Thoreau] participated in throughout his life." As an edition, it is superb. The letters are conservatively edited, with variants noted at the end of texts rather than embedded in them. A historical introduction contains a fascinating account of mid-19th-century letter-writing. A textual introduction lays out the editorial principles, and footnote junkies will find the annotations alone worth the price of admission. But more than this—as if expert editing were not enough—Hudspeth's edition is a testimony to the power of responsible textual recovery to change our understanding, not just add to the common store of facts. With accuracy and sensitivity, this edition presents not the Transcendental loner but a relational Thoreau in all his many guises. Hudspeth assembles "Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography" in each quarterly issue of the *Thoreau Society Bulletin (TSB)*.

*Essays: A Fully Annotated Edition*, ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer (Yale), is a useful reader's edition of Thoreau containing 15 annotated essays Thoreau originally prepared for periodical, newspaper, and lecture presentation. Cramer provides brief, lively introductions to each essay, generally focused on publication and reception.

William Rossi also provides a useful online reference guide in his essay "Henry David Thoreau," in Bryer et al., eds., *Oxford Bibliographies in American Literature*.

**b. Biography and Contemporaries** In the absence of any full-length biographical work on Thoreau this year, several essays contextualize his life in relation to his contemporaries. In "Places of Beginning: Topography and Renewal in Thoreau's *Walden* and Douglass's *Narrative*," pp. 89–106 in Ingo Berensmeyer and Christoph Ehland, eds., *Perspectives on Mobility* (Rodopi), Klaus Benesch positions Walden Pond as a locus for new beginnings in the context of the more general 19th-century struggle "between the attachment to a particular region or space and the embracing of open spaces as a door to the future." Michelle C. Neely examines the implications of Sylvester Graham's vegetarian regimen, which Thoreau alludes to throughout *Walden*, for "debates over capitalism, citizenship, freedom, and the body" in "Embodied Politics: Antebellum Vegetarianism and the Dietary Economy of *Walden*" (*AL* 85: 33–60). Robert Gross's tough-minded historical assessment in "Thoreau and the Laborers of Concord" (*Raritan* 33, i: 50–66) concludes that Thoreau "stands at the front of a long line of American intellectuals so enamored of their own visions of the workingman in general that they are seldom capable of relating to individual laborers in particular." LaRocca meditates on Thoreau's "morning work" in *Walden* and the paradoxical ways absence (of society, for instance) can connote fulfillment and joy in "In the Place of Mourning: Questioning the Privations of the Private" (*NCP* 40, ii: 227–42).

**c. Science and the Environment** A significant contribution to the ongoing discussion of Thoreau and environmental science is James Finley's "'Justice in the Land': Ecological Protest in Henry David Thoreau's Antislavery Essays" (*CS* 21: 1–35), a wonderfully synthetic essay that presents Thoreau's view of slavery as "an environmental problem best addressed through an ecologically inflected protest." Also suggestive is Rob Friedman's "Metaphors of Measurement: Indirection and the

Sublime,” pp. 163–81 in *Toward a Literary Ecology*, an argument for using Thoreau’s metaphors as mediating tropes to bridge the supposed divide between ecological science and ecocriticism. In a somewhat less optimistic take, Andrew McMurry’s “The Moods of Climate Change, with Thoreau” (*CS* 21: 36–51) distinguishes Thoreau’s “optative mood” from today’s “desiderative mood, which is a frame of mind that wishes for things that are no longer realizable.” My award for the best book of the year with the least promising title goes to “*An Insect View of Its Plain*”: *Insects, Nature, and God in Thoreau, Dickinson and Muir* by Rosemary Scanlon McTier. In a contribution to both ecocriticism and “literary entomology,” McTier makes the case for insects not just as Thoreau’s subjects (who knew there were so many?) but as his personae. In his attempt as a scientist to balance observation and wonder, viewing the world through the perspective of insects was one way Thoreau tried to “reevaluate and redefine his own relationship with nature.”

**d. Religion and Philosophy** This year’s annual *Concord Saunterer* (21) includes a roundtable discussion of Thoreau and religion by three scholars who question Thoreau’s views of certain philosophical dualities. In “Thoreau on the Strange Relation of Matter and Spirit” (pp. 53–76) Christopher A. Dustin argues that Thoreau rejected the Cartesian opposition of body/soul or matter/spirit. In “Preservative Care and Becoming Feral: Thoreau’s Religious Perspective in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*” (pp. 77–91) Robert Michael Ruehl holds that religion is not “a means for social coercion” for Thoreau but a means to establish “preservative care” between humans and nature. The result is a “feral religion,” itself “a form of civil disobedience.” Brendan Mahoney reconsiders the relationship between the divine and the natural in *Walden* and situates the book in the Transcendental/Unitarian controversy in “The Echoes of *Walden*: Reading Thoreau’s Inverted Scripture through Cavell” (pp. 92–115). For a sympathetic but clear-eyed appraisal of these three essays, see Alan D. Hodder, “Roundtable on Thoreau and Religion: A Response” (*TSB* 283: 4–7).

Others treat Thoreau more as a seer than a theologian. In “Thoreau’s ‘Concord River’: Living Transcendentally on Currents of Time” (*ISLE* 20: 333–55) Edward F. Mooney finds *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* a “release from affliction and despair” in which Thoreau redirects attention from a “platonic heaven” to the particulars of nature (an activity Joel Porte termed “*descendentalism*”). Lydia Willisky, on the

other hand, finds *Wild Fruits* to be Thoreau's greatest prophetic scripture, "his version of nature's bible," in "Prophet among Rebels: Henry David Thoreau and the Creation of a Transcendentalist Bible" (*NEQ* 86: 625–54). Robert D. Richardson's "The Rooster's Philosophy, or The Gospel According to This Moment" (*TSB* 282: 1–4) is a plea for Thoreau's regenerative spirituality.

**e. Rhetoric and Form** Like discussions of Thoreau's life, attention to structure and technique tends to show up in other aspects of his work. Several essays this year, however, focus on his consummate artistry. Chief among these is Thomas Koenigs's "The Commonplace *Walden*" (*ESQ* 59: 439–80), a compelling case that Thoreau's epigrammatic style encouraged the practice of "commonplacing," a democratic appropriation of a writer's words that Thoreau offered as the key to creative reading. In "Deep Thought, Shallow Aesthetic: Reading Surface Meaning in Thoreau" (*AL* 85: 61–91) David Faflik uses *Walden, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, The Maine Woods, and Cape Cod* to posit an alternative to the Romantic concept of reading symbolically by arguing for surface reading, a strategy that Thoreau himself encouraged. In "Thoreau's Evanescence" (*P&L* 37: 179–98) Deborah Slicer shows how Thoreau "uses evanescence, the poetic device employed widely by the English Romantic poets, to communicate his experience" of the externality of the world.

**f. Influence and Legacy** Thoreau's relevance is a perennial topic, this year tilted toward his connection to later writers. In a well-crafted argument, Manfred Siebold's "Walden Revisited: B. F. Skinner, Annie Dillard, Jon Krakauer," pp. 161–76 in *Ecology and Life Writing*, considers the ways *Walden Two, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, and Into the Wild* extend the legacy of *Walden* in different ways, depending on each author's interest in parts of Thoreau's project: Skinner in his social criticism, Dillard in his natural observation, and Krakauer in his individualism. Using Walter Benjamin's definition of the flâneur, an observer of urban crowds, Catrin Gersdorf contrasts Thoreau's concept of walking, a pastoral activity, with Benjamin's concept of the flâneur as cultural critic, each activity proposing "dawdling as resistance against the mechanistic imperative of economic efficiency," in "Flânerie as Ecocritical Practice: Thoreau, Benjamin, and Sandilands," pp. 27–53 in *Ecology and Life Writing*. Lee A. McBride III's "Insurrectionist Ethics

and Thoreau" (*TCSPS* 49: 29–45) treats Thoreau as part of a disruptive ethic in American philosophy.

Extending Thoreau's influence outside Western aesthetics, Takayuki Tatsumi compares Thoreau's description of frogs in Chapter 4 of *Walden* with "other catastrophic representations created by postmodern artists" in "Planet of the Frogs: Thoreau, Anderson, and Murakami" (*Narrative* 21: 346–56), while in "A Transcultural Consideration of 'Place': Thoreau's Walden Pond and Kitarō Nishida's 'basho,'" pp. 467–77 in *American Lives*, Birgit Capelle correlates Thoreau's vision of Walden Pond with the Japanese concept of *basho* (a place of absolute nothingness).

Discussions of Thoreau's political reach include R. McGregor Cawley's analysis of the "obstructionism" of "Civil Disobedience" in relation to contemporary national politics ("On Ideographs, Individuals, and Freedom," *Administrative Theory and Praxis* 35: 335–55) and M. Jimmie Killingsworth's thoughtful essay "Occupy Walden" (*SCRev* 30, i: 83–96), which compares Thoreau's experience at Walden Pond to the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011, both questioning the values of *occupation* and *vacation* as the terms are traditionally thought of in the United States.

**g. Modernity** The most sustained look ever at Thoreau's modernity is *Thoreauvian Modernities: Transatlantic Conversations on an American Icon*, ed. François Specq et al. (Georgia), papers from a 2009 conference in Lyon, France, addressing "what is modern / premodern / postmodern / antimodern" in Thoreau. Topically, the book is organized in three sections. In part 1, "Thoreau and (Non)Modernity," Laura Dassow Walls ("Walking West, Gazing East: Planetarity on the Shores of Cape Cod," pp. 21–42) explores Thoreau's *Cape Cod* and "Walking" as excursions. Michel Granger ("Antimodern Thoreau," pp. 43–55), William Rossi ("Thoreau's Multiple Modernities," pp. 56–68), and David M. Robinson ("Thoreau, Modernity, and Nature's Seasons," pp. 69–81) examine the ways Thoreau's opposition to his own modernity is itself a modern stance. Randall Conrad ("An Infinite Road to the Golden Age," pp. 82–101) examines Thoreau's difficult journal entry about the old Carlisle road as a metaphor for "that familiar pathway of the mind, . . . the wellspring of Thoreau's imagination and creativity."

Part 2, "Thoreau and Philosophy," begins with a powerful revisionist essay by Joseph Urbas, "Being Is the Great Explainer': Thoreau and the Ontological Turn in American Thought" (pp. 105–25), an argument

against the customary dominance of epistemology in Transcendental thinking (most often represented by Coleridgean distinctions between reason and understanding) in favor of an emphasis on ontology that, for Thoreau, “mark[ed] him as a man of his times [and] provides us with one of the keys to his enduring modernity.” Henrik Otterberg’s “Character and Nature” (pp. 126–36) sees Aristotelianism as foundational to understanding both Thoreau’s “literary portraits” (such as those of Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Carlyle) and his environmentalism. In “Thoreau’s Work on Myth: The Modern and the Primitive” (pp. 137–56) Bruno Monfort examines how Thoreau draws on myths to imbue nature with significance. Christian Maul’s “A Sort of Hybrid Product’: Thoreau’s Individualism Between Liberalism and Communitarianism” (pp. 157–70) counters the reductive but persistent view of Thoreau as a “hermitic crank” by recasting him as a “connected critic” of his times.

Part 3, “Thoreau, Language, and the Wild,” is the most dialogic of the three, with an emphasis on Thoreau’s scientific work and his later career generally. Dieter Schulz’s “Nature, Knowledge, and the Method of Thoreau’s Excursions” (pp. 171–86) examines three notions central to Thoreau’s later thought: walking, reading, and nature. In “Thoreau’s Radical Empiricism: The Kalendar, Pragmatism, and Science” (pp. 187–99) Kristen Case argues for the centrality of Thoreau’s Kalendar project—detailed charts on nature and the seasons—for understanding his late career. Michael Jonik’s “‘The Maze of Phenomena’: Perception and Particular Knowledge in Thoreau’s Journal” (pp. 200–218) holds that Thoreau occupied a “post-Kantian landscape” that made him avoid “hasty judgments concerning observed phenomena” and embrace instead “an active, enactive perception that patiently pulls apart the tangle of particulars around us.” In “Poetics of Thoreau’s Journal and Postmodern Aesthetics” (pp. 219–33) Specq analyzes the aesthetic strategy of the journal, whose elements exist in “a creative, generative tension” that “challenges our ability to make sense of things.” David Dowling situates Thoreau’s “protopostmodern sensibility” about nature as anticipating the work of contemporary writer and design artist Douglas Coupland in “Fraught Ecstasy: Contemporary Encounters with Thoreau’s Postpristine Nature” (pp. 234–48). In “Brute Neighbors: The Modernity of a Metaphor” (pp. 249–64) Thomas Pughe asks what this anthropomorphic trope from *Walden* can “tell us about Thoreau’s views on animality and on human-animal relations.” While Pughe believes Thoreau effects a continuity between the human and the nonhuman,

in “Tawny Grammar: Words in the Wild” (pp. 265–73) Michel Imbert asserts that Thoreau’s writings on nonhuman beings codify nature’s “significant otherness.”

Three additional, fascinating approaches to Thoreau’s modernity—his own and ours—appear outside this collection. Arguing from the perspective of body and disability studies, Benjamin Reiss’s “Sleeping at Walden Pond: Thoreau, Abnormal Temporality, and the Modern Body” (*AL* 85: 5–31) explores the ways Thoreau both advocates wakefulness and tries to reclaim the “natural body rhythms” of sleep coopted by modern industrialization. Jerome Tharaud offers an intriguing revisionist approach to *Walden* in “So Far Heathen: Thoreau, the Missionary Memoir, and *Walden*’s Cosmic Modernity” (*ESQ* 59: 618–61) by seeing it as “an ironic retelling of the Protestant missionary memoir.” Iuliu Ratiu argues in “Land Surveying as a Poetic Exercise in *Walden* and ‘Walking’” (*CS* 21: 126–42) that Thoreau’s work as a surveyor and mapmaker challenged the cultural doctrines of manifest destiny by stabilizing American vastness.

**h. Pedagogy** One of the most frequently taught authors in American literature, Thoreau ironically receives relatively little pedagogical attention, a trend only slightly broken this year by three brief articles in the *TSB* 282, each concerned with the world outside the written texts: Douglass Hochstetler and Richard Lally’s “Teaching Thoreau in a Classroom of Risk and Responsibility” (pp. 5–7); Richmond M. Eustis Jr.’s “Taking it Outside: Reading and Walking in Pursuit of Thoreau” (pp. 7–8); and Michael Stoneham’s “Thoreau’s Hunting Ethos: Teaching Right Natural Relations in Modern America” (pp. 8–10). In a similar vein, T. Hugh Crawford’s “Rediscovering the Material World” (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 3 May: B22–23) reflects upon the merits of digital classes versus “bricks and mortar” education, in which “we learned Thoreau not just by reading what he wrote but also by doing what he did.” An imaginative and charming essay with pedagogical implications, Kathleen Coyne Kelly’s “The Eco-Tourist, English Heritage, and Arthurian Legend: Walking with Thoreau” (*Arthuriana* 23, 1: 20–39) constructs a walking tour of sites associated with Arthurian legend as seen through the lens of Thoreau’s “strategic medievalism,” which associates nature with the past.

### iii Margaret Fuller

**a. Biography** We are fortunate to see two outstanding biographies in as many years. Unlike John Matteson's impressive life (see *AmLS* 2012, pp. 16–17), which emphasizes Fuller's experiments with social roles, in Megan Marshall's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* (Houghton) Fuller does not so much adopt different roles as have different aspects of herself take the fore. Marshall's Fuller is both extraordinary and at the same time “emblematic of her time, an embodiment of her era's ‘go-ahead’ spirit.” This ambivalence is carried throughout the book—the child who resigns herself to be “bright and ugly,” the young Margaret as “half-child half-adult,” the activist Fuller who was “never a joiner,” and the committed feminist emotionally vulnerable in her relationships with men. Marshall is particularly strong on Fuller's activities in Europe, where she was torn between political activism and her desperate concern for baby Nino, and on the heartbreaking details of her death at sea. The implication that Fuller sought (and found) her greatest fulfillment in motherhood may rankle those for whom her sexual politics seem more radical. Nonetheless, Marshall's carefully researched and lively biography disrupts the linear narrative of Fuller's growing independence and extremism that we are accustomed to hearing.

**b. Fuller as Literary Critic** In *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles*, ed. Brigitte Bailey et al. (New Hampshire), a collection derived from a 2010 conference at the Massachusetts Historical Society on the sesquicentennial of Fuller's death, Marshall's delightful “Margaret Fuller on Music's ‘Everlasting Yes’: A Romantic Critic in the Romantic Era” (pp. 148–60) shows how in her frequent pronouncements on music, as on literary criticism, Fuller modeled her own passionate responses for her readers. We also learn of Fuller's lifelong fascination with music performance, despite her own halting attempts at it. (Her uncle once asked her to play the piano for him only when he was asleep.) In the same collection, Charlene Avallone's “Circles Around George Sand: Margaret Fuller and the Dynamics of Transnational Reception” (pp. 206–28) places Fuller's inconsistent views of Sand in the context of a larger transnational debate about her during the 1830s and 1840s. In “Alternatives to Professional Autonomy: N. P. Willis and Margaret Fuller in the Antebellum American Literary Field,” pp. 115–40 in *Intellectual Authority and Literary*

*Culture*, John Evelev contrasts the literary celebrity and the public intellectual, two modes of cultural authority during the mid-19th century, and identifies Fuller with the latter.

**c. Fuller as Social Critic** Not surprisingly, essays in the collection *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* develop most fully her social connections. David M. Robinson demonstrates in “Margaret Fuller, Self-Culture, and Associationism” (pp. 77–99) how Fuller’s early commitment to self-culture, which she defined as “a struggle against paternal authority,” gave way in the 1840s to associationism, a more generalized vision of human progress. Adam-Max Tuchinsky is less confident of that change. In “‘More Anon’: American Socialism and Margaret Fuller’s 1848” (pp. 100–127) Tuchinsky questions the supposed break in Fuller’s thinking between Emersonian individualism and socialism. Fuller’s divergence from others of the Transcendental group, whose orientation was generally pastoral, is well developed in Robert N. Hudspeth’s “Margaret Fuller and Urban Life” (pp. 179–205). Another provocative take on Fuller and urbanism in the same collection is Jeffrey Steele’s “Sympathy and Prophecy: The Two Faces of Social Justice in Fuller’s New York Writing” (pp. 161–78). Steele distinguishes between those who prophesied an imagined future, an activity associated mostly with men, and those who focused on urban realities, seen as the province of women. Fuller “espoused the values of social contact and care” but also urged women to “enter the sphere of public political discourse as prophets.”

Other essays in *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* examine particular aspects of Fuller’s reform agenda. In “Margaret Fuller and Antislavery: ‘A Cause Identical’” Albert J. von Frank traces Fuller’s lukewarm reactions to more militant antislavery reformers of her time, whose views she found confrontational but not revolutionary (pp. 128–47). Phyllis Cole develops a somewhat opposite intellectual genealogy in “Fuller’s Lawsuit and Feminist History” (pp. 11–31), which presents Fuller’s participation in the “shared revolutionary discourse” of Mary Wollstonecraft and the “abolitionist feminism” of Sarah Grimké. Teresa Anne Murphy situates Fuller in contemporary debates over gendered ideas of citizenship in *Citizenship and the Origins of Women’s History in the United States* (Penn.). Derek Pacheco considers educational reform broadly in “‘Conversation of a Better Order’: Margaret Fuller from the Classroom to *The Dial*” in his *Moral Enterprise*, a groundbreaking study that centers the Transcendental dialogue on Peabody and Fuller rather than Emerson.

Pacheco argues convincingly that Fuller's "feminist pedagogy found its print analog in her role as editor" as she abandoned her role as "conversational disciplinarian" to encourage instead a wide range of opinions.

**d. Fuller and Feminism** Two essays in *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles* add to the continuing assessment of her feminism. In an analysis of Fuller's struggle to reconcile her "ideal theory of humankind and the evidence she saw around her" John Matteson's "Woes . . . of Which We Know Nothing: Fuller and the Problem of Feminine Virtue" (pp. 32–51) recounts her struggle to balance spirituality and passion—and particularly the passions that she believed drew women away from "the fulfillment of their divine destinies." A novel historical approach in the same collection is Dorri Beam's "Fuller, Feminism, Pantheism" (pp. 52–76), which holds that Mesmerism offered Fuller an alternative to strictly embodied understandings of sex and gender.

David Robinson guides readers through Fuller scholarship in his online essay "Margaret Fuller" (Bryer et al., eds., *Oxford Bibliographies in American Literature*).

#### **iv Transcendentalism**

**a. Histories and International Contexts** This year saw two book-length studies that placed American Transcendentalism in global contexts. Albena Bakratheva's *Visibility Beyond the Visible: The Poetic Discourse of American Transcendentalism* (Rodopi), translated from the Bulgarian and originally published in 2007, examines the major Transcendentalists, primarily Emerson and Thoreau, as poets, thinkers, and prophets. Part 1, "Core Tenets of Transcendentalism," is an accurate if introductory section arguing for the movement as "an aesthetic-religious cult" with continuities to 17th-century Puritanism and 18th-century rationalism. Part 2, "Transcendentalism and Romanticism," explores the extent to which Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller advocated a necessary separation from European Romanticism while still being "enriched and fructified" by their intersections with it. Part 3, "Transcendentalism: A Creed of Self and Nature," focuses on individual texts. Of particular interest is Chapter II, which examines the shift from the human-natural correspondences of Thoreau's early writing to his "proto-environmentalist commitment" later in life. Critics would argue that Bakratheva presses too hard the connections between the New England Transcendentalists and

Puritan pietists and sometimes backfills arguments short on evidence with terms such as *mystical* and *poetic*. Overall, however, the book is a useful addition to the ongoing dialogue on transnational Romanticism.

That dialogue continues in *Transatlantic Transcendentalism: Coleridge, Emerson, and Nature* (Edinburgh) by Samantha C. Harvey. Harvey explores not just Emerson's antecedents but the indebtedness of American Transcendentalists generally to Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Asserting that Coleridge taught Emerson "not *what* to think, but *how* to think," Harvey traces their mediation of a "Romantic triad" of nature, humanity, and spirit that shows Emerson's debt to Coleridge's distinctions, vocabulary, and methods of intellectual inquiry. More than this, however, Harvey reveals Coleridge's formative influence on Boston Transcendentalism and on what she calls Vermont Transcendentalism, James Marsh's radical revision of the curriculum at the University of Vermont along the lines of Coleridgean "organicism" that in turn opened the door for Deweyan pragmatism almost a century later.

Birgit Capelle's "Asian Aspects of Temporal Experience in Transcendentalist Life Writing," pp. 99–108 in *Ecology and Life Writing*, focusing particularly on Thoreau, compares the thinking of Transcendentalists, Buddhists, and Taoists, who "share an intuitive understanding of the world as an essentially temporal *living* reality that is marked by spontaneity . . . [not by] the classical Western concept of unidirectional, linear time."

**b. Transcendental Afterlives** While some scholars look retrospectively on Transcendental antecedents, others examine the movement's prospects, particularly its influence on members of its so-called second generation. In "'The Delicious Sense of Foreignness': American Transcendentalism in the Atlantic" (*ANCH* 14: 209–31) Daniel C. Dillard recounts the neglected story of visitors such as Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Samuel Longfellow to the Portuguese Azores, where they found in the exotic islands an "absolute otherness" that offered a vantage point for evaluating received religion. Jeremy Leatham argues in "Newborn Bards of the Holy Ghost: The Seven Seniors and Emerson's 'Divinity School Address'" (*NEQ* 86: 593–624) that Emerson's goal in 1838 was "reform, not rejection" of traditional preaching. Though he concedes that only one of the seven divinity students in attendance actually became the sort of minister Emerson had in mind, Leatham maintains that the others "responded in their lives" to Emerson's address.

We welcome the second volume of *Selected Journals of Caroline Healy Dall: 1855–1866*, ed. Helen R. Deese (MHS), an expertly prepared edition of the private writing of the magazine editor, lecturer, and women's rights advocate. Fascinating in her own right, Dall also provides incisive commentary on figures in the Transcendentalist circle, including Emerson, Thoreau, James Freeman Clarke, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, and Fuller, whose "conversations" Dall attended and recorded.

Bridging the centuries and disciplines, Naomi Tanabe Uechi's *Evolving Transcendentalism in Literature and Architecture: Frank Furness, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright* (Cambridge Scholars) explores the influence of Emersonian idealism on Wright's Unity Temple and Thoreau's notions of simplicity on Wright's summer residence, Taliesin.

Bruce Ronda has given us one of the most rewarding essays of the year in "Re-Thinking Transcendentalism: Perry Miller, Truman Nelson, and Thoreau's 'Lost Journal'" (*MLQ* 74: 95–114). Ronda recounts how a parochial feud in the 1950s between two prominent academics, fueled by personal worldviews and sheer cussedness, shaped the profession's understanding of Transcendentalism's genealogy and influence.

Finally, in his online essay "Transcendentalism," David Robinson presents a cogent guide to the field (Bryer et al., eds., *Oxford Bibliographies in American Literature*).

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