



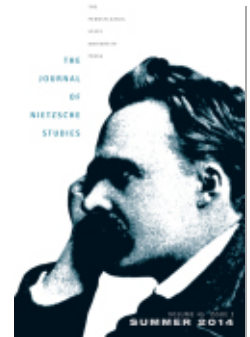
PROJECT MUSE®

Emerson-Exemplar: Friedrich Nietzsche's Emerson Marginalia: Introduction

Mason Golden

The Journal of Nietzsche Studies, Volume 44, Issue 3, Autumn 2013,
pp. 398-408 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press
DOI: 10.1353/nie.2013.0044



➔ For additional information about this article
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nie/summary/v044/44.3.golden.html>

Emerson-Exemplar: Friedrich Nietzsche's Emerson Marginalia

Introduction

MASON GOLDEN

ABSTRACT: Nietzsche once remarked of Emerson's *Essays*, "never have I felt so much at home in a book." Indeed, throughout his intellectual life, Nietzsche returned to Emerson more than any other author. This text is a presentation, for the first time in English, of Nietzsche's Emerson marginalia of 1881, along with those passages that he copied, with variations and abridgments, from Emerson's *Versuche (Essays)* into a separate notebook in January 1882. For context, I have included in my notes brief passages from the German translation alongside Emerson's original that bear the most direct relevance to the texts here presented. Often these are passages Nietzsche himself underlined. With particular attention to the German translation Nietzsche was reading, I demonstrate in my introduction critical ways in which Emerson provoked Nietzsche's thought, and articulate what I take to be the basis of Nietzsche's deep and abiding affinity with the American thinker.

Nearly four decades ago, Walter Kaufmann, while simultaneously acknowledging and downplaying the Emerson-Nietzsche connection, complained that "writers have covered the same ground again and again, but unfortunately without comparing Nietzsche's German excerpts with the original English text—and context!"¹ Kaufmann's grievance, still largely valid, could also be addressed to the general neglect of Nietzsche's Emerson marginalia. From his student days to the last years of his intellectual activity, Nietzsche read and reread Emerson. The copy of Emerson's *Versuche* (1858)—*Essays: First Series* (1841) and *Essays: Second Series* (1844)—from which Nietzsche was excerpting is probably "the most heavily annotated book in his library."² The present texts, Nietzsche's *Versuche* marginalia, published in his Nachlass under the title "Emerson-Exemplar (Autumn 1881)," and the contents of his "Excerpts from Emerson's *Essays*," those passages from *Versuche* that he chose to copy, with variations and abridgments, into a separate notebook in January 1882, are an indispensable resource in assessing the relation of Nietzsche to Emerson.³ In presenting a translation of Nietzsche's Emerson marginalia—as far as I know the

only translation into English—alongside the German original, and by indicating where in Nietzsche’s source text these remarks appear, my goal has been the creation of a straightforward and accessible guide. To facilitate further research, included here are brief passages from *Versuche* along with the original text by Emerson that, in my estimation, bear the most direct relevance to the texts here presented. Often these passages are from pages on which the marginal entries appear and are those Nietzsche himself underlined or indicated in the margins. I have not tried in my notes, as has been done elsewhere, to chart potential lines of Emerson’s influence on Nietzsche, but have, for the most part, restricted my comments to attempts at further contextualizing and clarifying, briefly, when possible, Nietzsche’s often cryptic marginalia.⁴

Following the chronology of Colli and Montinari, I place Nietzsche’s *Versuche* marginalia before the passages he excerpted in my arrangement of the texts. Nietzsche himself dates the marginalia to the fall of 1881, inscribing onto a page of Emerson’s essay “Character,” “What have I learned up to today (15 October 1881)?” It was Nietzsche’s thirty-seventh birthday. He had returned to Genoa from Sils-Maria less than two weeks earlier and rented a room in yet another boarding house. His marginal notes were likely written in the nearby café where Nietzsche maintained, mostly in the form of postcards, his regular correspondences. As he complained to his sister, Elizabeth, “my room has not light enough for reading and writing” (*KSB* 6, no. 159, p. 135).⁵

Nietzsche’s “Excerpts from Emerson” are followed here in each case with Emerson’s original. Because Nietzsche’s transcriptions are seldom verbatim, and because of the changes Emerson undergoes in the German translation of G. Fabricius, I have found it necessary, with few exceptions, to translate Nietzsche’s entries rather than simply present them alongside the corresponding Emerson passages. The translations appear directly under Nietzsche’s transcriptions, before the passages from Emerson. The notes that accompany Nietzsche’s excerpts are occupied primarily with indicating the ways in which Nietzsche departs in his transcriptions from the Emerson of Fabricius. What Nietzsche alters, adds, or elides in his transcriptions of the text is often readily apparent. In some cases, for example, Nietzsche changes Emerson’s third-person to the first-person. In other instances he condenses longer passages into aphoristic statements. Beyond Nietzsche’s intended deviations, there are places where Fabricius, on whom Nietzsche relied, drifts from Emerson. One cannot help but notice in *Versuche* how the pungency of Emerson’s prose is caramelized by Fabricius. It is important to acknowledge, however, that this impression is compounded by the fact that Fabricius’s source for what would become known as the *First Series of Essays* was the scarcely reprinted first edition of the text, not the edition revised by Emerson six years later in 1847, which has since been the basis of the standard edition. Emerson’s alterations reveal the essayist still refining the characteristic immediacy and naturalness of style he conveyed to posterity.⁶

The changes were not, however, exclusively stylistic. Emerson's phrase "intellectual nomadism [geistige Nomadenthum]," from his essay "History" acquires a distinctly different meaning in the essay as we know it. Although Emerson is persistently concerned with thoughts *en route*, "intellectual nomadism" is promoted by him in relation to "home-keeping wit." What Emerson ultimately espouses in the 1847 edition of the essay is a mastery of dueling drives, that of "home-keeping wit," "which finds the elements of life in its own soil" but which risks "deterioration" if not "stimulated by foreign infusions" and "intellectual nomadism," which, if unchecked, can in turn "bankrupt the mind" through dissipation (*E* 247). The earlier edition contains no such warning. There, Emerson writes, "[t]he intellectual nomadism is the faculty of objectiveness, or of eyes which everywhere feed themselves" (*E* 19). Translated by Fabricius into "the gift of objectivity [die Gabe der Objektivität]," this statement was excised from the essay as we know it (*V* 17). Given that Nietzsche was very soon to articulate his notions of *amor fati* and eternal recurrence and thereby announce his resolution to become a "Yes-sayer," it is not hard to see how the grandly affirmative line, "to find everywhere a feast for the eyes" (*V* 17), in this passage would have appealed to him. But as they stand, I can think of no place in his *Essays* where Emerson, a "philosopher of moods," purports or praises objectivity or "objectiveness."⁷ Still, the passage elicits commentary. Nietzsche, it seems to me, is engaging the passage directly in the section of *Daybreak* (1881) dedicated "to the admirers of objectivity" (*D* 111; *KSA* 3, pp. 99–100). In this short section, he offers a third-person account of one who spends childhood "in the imitation of feelings" and who, as an adult, is overwhelmed by "the pressure of experience" and is oppressed by his preferences and judgments, his "liking or dislike or envy or contempt." In the end, he "admires *neutrality of feeling* [*Neutralität der Empfindung*], or 'objectivity' as a matter of genius" and "refuses to believe that this too is only *the child of habit and discipline*" (*D* 111; *KSA* 3, p. 100). In exposing the "feelings" informing the admiration of objectivity, Nietzsche also recalls a passage from "Self-Reliance" that he draws on in his excerpt notebook (*KSA* 9:17[25], p. 669). Early in that essay Emerson admires "a boy" who can observe "unbiased [unparteiischen]" and who "gives an independent, genuine verdict" (*E* 261; *V* 36). In Emerson's telling, these capacities fade with the commitments of adulthood and he laments, "Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality!" (*E* 261). Unlike the admiration for objectivity, the longing for "neutrality" is extant in the revised text. Translated by Fabricius as "göttliche Unabhängigkeit" ("godly independence" or "godly autonomy"), noteworthy is how Nietzsche restores Emerson's word choice with the German equivalent, "Neutralität." The *Daybreak* passage is traceable, I believe, to a direct confrontation with Emerson, and their differences on this point are crucial. The youthful neutrality Emerson wishes to return to and to access appears to Nietzsche to be a ruse and self-deception, a phantasm born out of unarticulated affective forces.

Whether or not this is an instance where Nietzsche found Emerson's view, as he put it, "clouded through the milk-glass of German philosophy," it speaks of a deep critical distinction (*KSA* 9:12[151], p. 602). Nietzsche would never contend, as Emerson does in "Intellect," that the "Intellect is void of affection" (*E* 239; *V* 417). Neither does he find respite from outside influence. Nietzsche sees childhood not as a period of intellectual neutrality or as a period, however brief, to experience nonconformity, but rather as a time of the most intense enculturation. The valuing of "neutrality" or "objectivity," and the degree to which either can be approximated in practice, accordingly, result not from an intrinsic "open mind" per se but from dutiful cultivation. Having believed himself to have uncovered the history, or genealogy, of a prejudice (the admiration of objectivity), Nietzsche relates the discovery as he finds it, in psychological terms. The boy in Emerson's "Self-Reliance" provides for him not an answer but a question, a case study, and microcosm of a phenomenon.

If Emerson's *Versuche* constituted fertile ground for the promoting and testing of Nietzsche's theories, it is because Nietzsche *felt* it to be so. To admit as much is not to reduce Nietzsche's intense and lifelong engagement with Emerson to a mere matter of temperament but to recognize, provided the intellectual context in which he was reading Emerson, that Nietzsche himself understood his connection to the American philosopher in terms of his disposition. Nietzsche's heightened interest in natural science, physiology included, which coincides with this phase of his Emerson reading, should not be overlooked.⁸ But the attraction to Emerson is itself owing in no small part to Emerson's chosen form, the essay. Like the English word "essay" and the French "essai," the German word "Versuch" denotes "attempt," "experiment," "test." The progression of an essay is by design not subordinate to a thesis, an aspect of the genre Nietzsche certainly considered advantageous.

A particular type of skepticism inheres in the form of the essay as Emerson and Nietzsche practice it. In order to comprehend Emerson's appeal for Nietzsche, for the Emerson-Nietzsche connection to lose at last its air of incongruity and incredibility, it must be understood that Nietzsche saw Emerson not as a sage, as was for so long the American trend, but as a skeptic. In an early draft of his autobiography, *Ecce Homo* (1888), Nietzsche writes, "Emerson, with his Essays, has been a good friend and someone who has cheered me up even in dark times: he possesses so much *skopsis*, so many 'possibilities,' that with him even virtue becomes full of wit [geistreich]" (*KSA* 14, p. 476n3). Although this observation is left out of the published version of the book, in the same section of the published work, Nietzsche declares the skeptics "the only *honorable* type among the equivocal, quinquivocal [zwei- bis fünfdedeutigen] tribe of philosophers!" (*EH* "Clever" 3; *KSA* 6, p. 285).⁹ In both instances, skepticism is characterized by the capacity to entertain and convey multiple possibilities. Counter to a nihilistic, enervating skepticism, Nietzsche's skepticism, allied with the essay

and with experiment, is life-affirming: “Skepticism! Yes, but a *skepticism of experiments!* Not the lethargy of despair” (*KSA* 9:6[356], p. 287).¹⁰

“Montaigne; or the Skeptic” (1850), Emerson’s tribute to the great essayist, doubles, as the title suggests, as an exploration of skepticism. There, in what reads like the essayist’s creed, Emerson writes, “I stand here to try the case. I am here to consider” (*E* 694). “This,” he continues, “is the right ground of the skeptic,—this of consideration, of self-containing” (*E* 695). “Self-containing,” that is, insofar as the findings of a particular case are not deemed universally applicable. “Why fancy you have all the truth in your keeping?” (*E* 694), Emerson asks; and he makes plain his philosophic alternative: “The philosophy we want is one of fluxions and mobility” (*E* 696). Importantly, Emerson does not claim skepticism is for everyone. “Some minds,” he writes, “are incapable of skepticism” (*E* 706), adding, “it is a question of temperament, or of more or less immersion in nature” (*E* 707). That Emerson felt a temperamental affinity with the skeptic is clear from his remarks. Recalling his discovery of Montaigne, Emerson effuses, “It seemed to me as if I had myself written the book, in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thought and experience” (*E* 697). The affirmation of flux, mobility, and immersion is reiterated in Emerson’s postscript to the essay, a single line of William Ellery Channing’s that suggests the open-ended nature of his philosophic venture: “‘If my bark sink, ’tis to another sea’” (*E* 709).¹¹ There is in this the sense of an attendant and necessary fearlessness in the face of uncertainty. Those not capable of skepticism, Emerson tells us, are those “secure of a return” (*E* 706). For his part, Emerson likely could have said with Montaigne, “doubting pleases me no less than knowing.”¹² Essaying forth, the skeptic engages in “the interrogation of custom at all points” (*E* 702).¹³

Acknowledging that there are significant differences between the two thinkers, it is clear that Nietzsche believed he found in Emerson a temperament close to his own.¹⁴ A notebook entry contemporaneous with the period of his Emerson reading that sparked the marginalia reads, “Emerson: Never have I felt so much at home in a book, and in *my* home” (*KSA* 9:12[68], p. 588, emphasis mine). Home, it must be said, wherever Nietzsche found it, was never a place of rest. He read to be spurred, not comforted. Emerson’s confession in his “Divinity School Address” that “it is not instruction but provocation that I can receive from another soul” touches on a critical aspect of Nietzsche’s stance toward texts and life. With this feeling of “home” comes an implicit understanding and candor but also, as a matter of course, the taking of liberties and, to a reader like Nietzsche, for whom it seems facing any page is a manifestly oppositional stance, the freedom to pose a challenge on the terms provided—or, to use the language of Zarathustra’s inaugural speech, to “try” or “tempt the tempter [den Versucher zu versuchen].” Receptive yet agitant, Nietzsche is a reader perfectly suited to Emerson.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Emerson's essay "Friendship" ("Freundschaft") is one of the most heavily marked in Nietzsche's copy of *Versuche*. The essay speaks volumes to the Emerson-Nietzsche connection.¹⁵ Consider what Emerson says of his friend, along with Nietzsche's comment, in brackets: "I am equally balked by antagonism and by compliance, [bravo]. Let him not cease an instant to be himself. The only joy I have in his being mine, is that the *not mine* is *mine*. [. . .] Better be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo [bravo]" (*E* 350; *V* 154–55). A persistent antagonism of thought is essential for both Emerson and Nietzsche, as well as what Emerson referred to in his journal as "Otherism." "I see plainly the charm which belongs to Alienation or Otherism," he writes, "'What wine do you like best, O Diogenes?' 'Another's,' replied the sage. What fact, thought, word, like we best? Another's." The charm of Otherism is not merely the introduction of differing ideas, opinions, or tastes, however, but something less obvious and fundamental. Emerson concludes the passage with the observation, "a new mind is a new method. How often we repeat in vain the words or substance without conveying to others the genius of a friend's remark."¹⁶

Emerson relates similarly to his reading. "As soon as I read a wise sentence anywhere," he acknowledged, "I feel at once the desire of appropriation." In March 1859, this desire, more an instinctive impulse, was the topic of a lecture, "Quotation and Originality," eventually published as part of *Letters and Social Aims* (1875) and quickly translated into German as *Neue Essays* (1876). Along with *Versuche* (1858) and *Die Führung des Lebens* (*The Conduct of Life*) (1862), it was a volume of Emerson's that Nietzsche owned and read.¹⁷ "All minds quote," says Emerson, "next to the originator of a good sentence is the first quoter of it." Provocatively, and speaking most directly to the materials at hand, Emerson maintains, "We are as informed of a writer's genius by what he selects as by what he originates." Both bespeak "the indefeasible persistency of the individual." But beyond the selecting impulse there is the process of assimilation. What is appropriated must "pass into the substance" of another particular "constitution."¹⁸ Nothing is assimilated unchanged. What should concern readers of Nietzsche is the precise manner in which Emerson's writings were assimilated by him, how they were transformed and deployed. With the individual endures a persistent antagonism. Nietzsche seems closest to Emerson where Emerson valorizes intellectual independence. Here Nietzsche's final piece of marginalia, written on one of the blank pages at the back of book, is apt. It is, regarding his affinity to Emerson, his clearest and most striking testimonial. He writes, "Here you sit, relentless as the curiosity which compelled me to you: well then, Sphinx, I am, like you, a questioner: we have this abyss in common—is it possible we spoke with one voice?" (*KSA* 9:13[22], p. 622). A deep affinity marked by a relentless skepticism kept Nietzsche returning to Emerson, year after year, not for the sake of appropriating his ideas, but to interrogate and adapt them.

Finally, regarding the excerpt notebook, what is most compelling are the particulars not only of what Nietzsche takes from *Versuche*, but how, after encountering Emerson through the opaque medium of Fabricius, Nietzsche re-presents passages to himself. This is compelling, not only for what he appropriates but for what he leaves behind. Emerson's terse "But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me, I give them by a weak curiosity" ("Self-Reliance") is in *Versuche* a meditation in which the reader is counseled not to "throw your soul away on the earthly" and "remain in your own heaven," and in which "dreary darkness" contends with light (*EI* 59; *V* 54). These flourishes, which, like "the gift of objectivity," Nietzsche would not have known were ultimately excised by Emerson, are precisely what he excises in crafting his abridgment (*KSA* 9:17[37], p. 672). Nietzsche instinctively brings us closer to Emerson as we know him. Similarly, in excerpt 25 (*KSA* 9:17[25], p. 669), Nietzsche trims a sentence, not inconsequentially, at the point where Fabricius departs from Emerson. Straying from Emerson's unpretentious praise of youthful "neutrality" and intellectual self-reliance, Fabricius asserts such a youth would "win the respect of a poet as of a man" (*V* 36). The sentiment is a misreading of Emerson's original and Nietzsche leaves it out of his transcription. Emerson's exemplar, as Nietzsche must have understood, is an individual unencumbered by the opinions of others. Winning esteem or respect is not the point. Where Nietzsche's excerpt notebook is concerned, neither, apparently, is faithfulness to the text. The proximity to Emerson that Nietzsche achieves is chanced upon precisely through his irreverent bearing in approaching the text, through a skepticism that, it might be argued, enabled him to be creative. What these excerpts illustrate, perhaps more than a conveyance of ideas, is an affinity of temperament.

Without underestimating the potential of these texts to open interpretative avenues for readers of Emerson, if, as Emerson claims, "Art is the path of the creator to his work" ("The Poet" [*E* 466; *V* 300]), the greatest value of these texts may lie in the extent to which Nietzsche's own "path" is here mapped and narrated.

Independent Scholar
masongolden@gmail.com

NOTES

I would like to thank Harro Müller and Andreas Urs Sommer for reading an early draft of this commentary.

1. Walter Kaufmann, from the introduction of his translation of Nietzsche's *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 11.

2. Thomas H. Brobjer points out, "Nietzsche's reading (and annotations) of Emerson began early and continued for the rest of his life." *Die Führung des Lebens (The Conduct of Life)* was likely Nietzsche's introduction to Emerson. The German translation was published in 1862, two years after its American original. Nietzsche's earliest philosophical writings are two essays from April 1862, "Fatum und Geschichte" ("Fate and History") and "Willensfreiheit und Fatum"

(“Freedom of the Will and Fate”), both inspired by Emerson’s essay “Fate” (“Das Fatum”) in *Die Führung des Lebens (The Conduct of Life)*, ins Deutsche übertragen von E. S. v. Mühlberg (Leipzig: Steinacker, 1862). Nietzsche’s first copy of *Versuche* was likely acquired and read in 1863 or 1864. Notably, the annotated copy of *Versuche* was Nietzsche’s second copy. His first copy of the book was stolen in 1874 in a train station while he was en route to Basel from Bergün. He had been working on *SE*, an essay with explicit references to Emerson. Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche’s Philosophical Context* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 23–24, 117. Nietzsche’s Emerson marginalia, taken from his extant copy of Emerson’s *Versuche (Essays)*, trans. by G. Fabricius (Hannover, 1858) (hereafter *V*) appear in *KSA* 9:13[1]–13[22], pp. 618–22. A scan of Nietzsche’s copy of Emerson’s *Versuche* is accessible online via the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek. The G. Fabricius translation contains the twenty *Essays* comprising Emerson’s first and second series of essays that were published in 1841 and 1844, respectively. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays & Lectures* (New York: Library of America, 1983) (hereafter *E*).

3. Nietzsche’s thirty-nine “Exzerpte aus Emersons ‘Essays,’” which were copied into a separate notebook (M III 7), appear as *KSA* 9:17[1]–17[39], pp. 666–72. Excerpts 1 through 19 are from “Geschichte [History]”; 20 through 39 are from “Selbstvertrauen [Self-Reliance].” Eduard Baumgarten, the first to critically examine Nietzsche’s Emerson marginalia excerpts, numbered these excerpts 1 through 40, counting the final line of entry 27 as the 28th entry. This has led some commentators to repeat that there are forty entries, while Colli and Montinari have them numbered at thirty-nine. There is an additional entry not collated with the others but noted by them (*KSA* 14:6[451], p. 638): “*Dies ist die Sache und nicht nur das Gleichniß. Mein Verdienst, daß wir eine Sprache für chemische Thatsachen haben [This is the thing and not merely the analogy. My merit, that we have a language for chemical facts]*” (*KSA* 14:6[451]). This entry appears at the bottom of *V* 149 (*E* 347), “Freundschaft”; “Friendship.” On this page Nietzsche also underlines as follows: “Ein Freund ist ein Wesen mit dem ich wohl aufrichtig sein kann. [. . .] und mich so einfach und in solcher Ungetheiltheit zu ihm stellen kann, wie ein chemisches Atom sich zum ändern stellt. Aufrichtigkeit ist ein erlaubter Luxus, gleich Daidemen und Vollmachten, aber nur ersten Ranges, das Erlaubtsein im Sprechen der Wahrheit, das nichts mehr übersich erblickt, dem es irgendwie zu huldigen oder selbst bei zustimmen geneigt wäre [A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. [. . .] I may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank, that being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform unto]” (all underlining is Nietzsche’s unless otherwise noted). Eduard Baumgarten, “Mitteilungen und Bemerkungen über den Einfluss Emersons auf Nietzsche,” *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien* 1 (1956): 93–152.

4. Two often-cited monographs are occupied with establishing Emerson’s influence on Nietzsche: Stanley Hubbard, *Nietzsche und Emerson* (Basel: Verlag für Recht und Gesellschaft, 1958); George J. Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992). Hubbard’s text, a necessary continuation of Baumgarten’s work on the marginalia, is the first to diagram where Nietzsche underlined and marked his copy of *Versuche*. Hubbard arranges the passages thematically and, with some analysis, sets them alongside passages from Nietzsche. Stack, as he puts it, “concentrated on the major themes that first appear in Emerson’s prose and then reappear slightly disguised, but enhanced, embellished, raised to a higher power, in Nietzsche’s writings” (x). Arguing strenuously for the recognition of their similarities, whether to establish philosophic correspondence or to expose Nietzsche’s reading of Emerson as an uncomplicated act of “disguised” appropriation, Stack paints the Emerson-Nietzsche connection in broad strokes.

5. I use the following translations: *Unfashionable Observations*, trans. Richard T. Gray (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann

(New York: Vintage, 1974); *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to the Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989); *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1989); *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 2003). Otherwise, the translations are my own throughout.

6. As blunt a declaration as “I hate” supplants what was in the first edition, “It turns the stomach, it blots the daylight.” The Emerson of the later edition is also less inclined to employ antiquated terms like “thy” and “thine.” “He may read what he writeth,” for example, becomes “[h]e may read what he writes.” R. W. Emerson, *Essays* (Boston: James Munroe, 1841), 173, 59, 121 (hereafter *EI*).

As Joel Porte notes in his brief publishing history of *Essays*, the original edition of 1,500 copies had been sold by 1845, and Emerson “yielded to the urgings of his publisher, James Munroe and Company” to revise the volume. The extended title, *Essays: First Series*, was introduced then to distinguish it from the second essay collection, published in 1844. Emerson did not revise the text of *Essays: Second Series* after its initial publication in 1844 (*E* 1135–36).

7. Stanley Cavell refers to Emerson as a “philosopher of moods” in his *Emerson’s Transcendental Etudes*, ed. David Justin Hodge (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 26. The nearest to an affirmation of objectivity in Emerson’s *Essays* in the 1847 edition is his remark at the beginning of “Intellect” that “Intellect is void of affection, and sees an object as it stands in the cool light of science, cool and disengaged” (*E* 417; *V* 239). Dieter Thomä has pointed out how Nietzsche, without acknowledging the source, appropriated Emerson’s phrase “spiritual nomadism [geistige Nomadenthum],” referring to it as “the strongest drive of our spirit” (*AOM* 211; *KSA* 2, p. 469). Dieter Thomä, “‘Jeder ist sich Selbst der Fernste.’ Zum Zusammenhang zwischen personaler Identität und Moral bei Nietzsche und Emerson,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 36 (2007): 340.

8. During the fall of 1881, the time in which Nietzsche was reading and annotating Emerson’s *Versuche*, Brobjer informs us that Nietzsche was also engaged in his “heaviest programme of reading” in natural science. Thomas H. Brobjer, “Nietzsche’s Reading and Understanding of Natural Science: An Overview,” in *Nietzsche and Science*, ed. Gregory Moore and Thomas H. Brobjer (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 38.

9. Walter Kaufmann includes in the appendix to his translation of *EH* short excerpts from Nietzsche’s variant drafts (translation modified). Consulting *KSA*, one finds the remark on Emerson follows Nietzsche’s appreciation of Stendhal’s “best atheistical joke: God’s only excuse is that he does not exist,” retained in the final version, at the end of section three of “Why I Am So Clever” (*KSA* 14, p. 476n3).

10. Citing notes on the third and fourth parts of *Zarathustra*, Andreas Urs Sommer observes how Nietzsche’s skepticism is equated with “temptation” [Die Skepsis als Versuchung] (*KSA* 10:16[83], p. 527) and how “life itself is understood as ‘an experiment’” [Das Leben als Versuch] (*KSA* 10:16[84], p. 528). “Nihilism and Skepticism in Nietzsche,” in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 262. Nietzsche’s variation on “temptation” [Versuchung] and “attempt” or “experiment” [Versuch], though anything but frivolous, recalls the playful affirmation of the life requisite to a “gay science.”

Scholars have noted Emerson’s referring to himself as a “professor of the Joyous Science” in his 1842 lecture “Prospects.” See Baumgarten, “Mitteilungen und Bemerkungen,” 97, and Gay Wilson Allen, *Waldo Emerson: A Biography* (New York: Viking, 1981), 469. Although Nietzsche would not have known this lecture, he read Emerson’s later expansion of that lecture, the essay “Poetry and Imagination.” The essay appears in *Neue Essays (Letters and Social Aims)*, autorisierte Übersetzung mit einer Einleitung von Julian Schmidt (Stuttgart: Abendheim, 1876). Alluding to the tradition of *gaya scienza* as a method of versification, there Emerson writes, “Poetry is the *gai science*. The trait and test of a poet is that he builds, adds and affirms.” Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Letters and Social Aims,” in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: AMS Press, 1979), 8:37. Nietzsche, in a contemporary letter to Rohde, and later in his autobiography, acknowledges the troubadours and “Provençal concept of *gaya scienza*—that unity of *singer, knight, and free spirit*” as his inspiration (*KSB* 6, p. 292/*EH* “The Gay Science”; *KSA* 6,

p. 333). Reading *gaya scienza* as method, Paul Grimstad observes, “Nietzsche names [Emerson] as one of those in the nineteenth century who had attained “mastery in prose” [*Meisterschaft der Prosa*], making explicit his admiration for Emerson as a stylist” and adds, “For both Emerson and Nietzsche, to practice *gaya scienza* is to become attuned to the rhythms of poetry (in the broad sense Emerson uses the word, which would include prose) as it is being set down sentence by sentence.” Paul Grimstad, *Experience and Experimental Writing: Literary Pragmatism from Emerson to the Jameses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 32–33.

11. The line is in keeping with the tone of Montaigne’s “Apology for Raymond Sebond,” an essay that certainly informs Emerson’s piece. Montaigne writes, “I do nothing but come and go. My judgment does not always go forward; it floats, it strays” and then quotes Catullus, “Like a tiny boat,/Caught by a raging wind on a vast sea.” *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 426. Notably, Emily Dickinson also borrows Channing’s line to open her 1,234th poem.

12. *Complete Essays of Montaigne*, 111. Emerson was not, as Stanley Cavell claims, threatened by skepticism; neither is his skeptic, as Branka Arsić has recently asserted, “a figure of stasis,” “driven” by “the fear of insecurity” into a “numbness of experience” (*Emerson’s Transcendental Etudes*, 221; Arsić, *On Leaving: A Reading in Emerson* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010], 61). Arsić, following Cavell’s lead regarding Emerson’s skepticism, also claims the skeptic’s decision “not to participate” renders his “politics reactionary” and leads to “the affirmation of the status quo” (61). This claim may be derived from Emerson’s observation of the skeptic that “neither is he fit to work with any democratic party that ever was constituted” (*E* 702), but that would be the wrong conclusion. In the same passage Emerson tells us the skeptic is “No conservative” and that “he is a reformer” (*E* 702). Remarkably, with the exception of a single footnote, Cavell, in the nearly three hundred pages that compose *Emerson’s Transcendental Etudes*, makes no mention whatsoever of “Montaigne; or, the Skeptic,” a conspicuous omission considering Cavell’s obsession with skepticism.

13. Benedetta Zavatta puts it well in her “Nietzsche, Emerson und das Selbstvertrauen,” when she writes, “With Nietzsche, as with Emerson, skepticism has a positive connotation as long as it leads not to paralysis but rather to an active employment of the mind”; she continues, “[i]t is not about the rejection of a position which arises from a degeneration and a disease of the will, rather that intellectual nomadism which is put forth by Nietzsche as an attribute of *esprit forts*.” Benedetta Zavatta, “Nietzsche, Emerson und das Selbstvertrauen,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 35 (2006): 287–88. Nietzsche’s own best differentiation of what might be termed weak and strong skepticism comes in two consecutive passages in *BGE*; he writes, “There is today, according to common consent, no better soporific and sedative than skepticism, the gentle, fair lulling poppy of skepticism; and even *Hamlet* is now prescribed by the doctors of the day against the ‘spirit.’” This type of skepticism, he maintains, is the “expression of a certain complex physiological condition that in ordinary language is called nervous exhaustion and sickliness” in which “unrest, disturbance, doubt, attempt [Unruhe, Störung, Zweifel, Versuch]; the best forces have an inhibiting effect” (*BGE* 208; *KSA* 5, p. 138). Against this type, Nietzsche espouses “another and stronger type of skepticism,” one that “does not believe but does not lose itself in the process; it gives the spirit dangerous freedom” and the “will to undertake dangerous journeys” (*BGE* 209; *KSA* 5, p. 141). It is worth recalling in this context Nietzsche’s later assertion that “[o]ne should not be misled: great intellects are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. The vigour of a mind, its *freedom* through strength and superior strength is *proved* by skepticism. [. . .] A spirit which wants to do great things, which also wills the means for it, is necessarily a skeptic. Freedom from convictions of any kind, the capacity for an unconstrained view, *pertains* to strength” (*A* 54; *KSA* 6, p. 236).

14. The deepest insight in Ratner-Rosenthal’s recent work regarding the Emerson-Nietzsche connection is the realization that, as she puts it, “we miss what Emerson meant to Nietzsche if we fail to consider how Nietzsche used Emerson to get closer to *himself*” (Jennifer Ratner-Rosenthal, *American Nietzsche* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012], 17). In her reading this has to do with how Emerson “helped Nietzsche imagine himself as a ‘free-spirit’” (18).

15. For a comprehensive analysis of Nietzsche and Emerson's understanding of friendship, see Benedetta Zavatta, "Nietzsche and Emerson on Friendship and Its Ethical-Political Implications," in *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, ed. Herman W. Siemens and Vasti Roodt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 511–542. See also Vivetta Vivarelli, "Nietzsche und Emerson: über einige Pfade in Zarathustras metaphorischer Landschaft," *Nietzsche-Studien* 16 (1987): 227–63.

16. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. William H. Gilman et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960–82) [November 28, 1836], 5, 254 (hereafter *JMN*). Emerson would later revise this remark in his essay "Spiritual Laws [Geistige Gesetze]": "A man is a method, a progressive arrangement; a selecting principle" [*auswählendes Princip*] (*E* 311; *V* 107).

17. *JMN* [November 16, 1834], 4, 336. *Neue Essays (Letters and Social Aims)*; autorisierte Übersetzung mit einer Einleitung von Julian Schmidt (Stuttgart: Abendheim, 1876); *Die Führung des Lebens: Gedanken und Studien (The Conduct of Life)*, ins Deutsche übertragen von E. S. v. Mühlberg (Leipzig: Steinacker, 1862), bound with *Über Goethe und Shakespeare*, aus dem Englischen von Herman Grimm (Hannover: Carl Rümpler, 1857). See Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context*, 119.

18. "Letters and Social Aims," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 178, 191, 194, 200–201.