Introduction

Emerson

Closing the heavy volume of Montaigne,
The tall New Englander goes out
Into an evening which exalts the fields.
It is a pleasure worth no less than reading.
He walks toward the final sloping of the sun,
Toward the landscape's gilded edge;
He moves through darkening fields as he moves now
Through the memory of the one who writes this down.
He thinks: I have read the essential books
And written others which oblivion
Will not efface. I have been allowed
That which is given mortal man to know.
The whole continent knows my name.
I have not lived. I want to be someone else.

—Borges (189)

The assumption in Borges's poem that Ralph Waldo Emerson, established as a seminal figure in American literature, longs to become "someone else" might seem little more than a product of the Argentinian writer's wild imagination. However, upon closer reflection Borges introduces a problem at the crux of Emerson's self-identification. The same man who fearlessly states in his famous essay "Self-Reliance" that "imitation is suicide" (*CW* 2:27) relies to a great extent on the ideas, quotations, even the identity of others.

Though a volume of Montaigne is referenced in the poem, Borges might just as well have Emerson close a book of Persian verse, considering that in his entire oeuvre Emerson mentions Saʿdi as many times as the French philosopher. If we add Hafez, then poets from Iran collectively become the sixth

most-cited writers in Emerson's work, after Shakespeare, Napoleon, Plato, Plutarch, and Goethe (Holmes 295). Upon his intense reading of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Persian poets after the publication of *Nature*, one of the "essential books" that earned him recognition from "the whole continent" as Borges describes, Emerson indeed wished to become his foreign predecessors from Iran. He translated over seven hundred lines of Persian verse through intermediary German renderings by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, and further attempted to imitate in his own poetry the lines and even identities of classical Sufi masters whom he revered. The same Romantically individualized American who insists, "I must be myself" (*CW* 2:42) similarly adopts the name of Sa'di in his own writing, trying his best to channel his predecessor's voice. Equally paradoxical, Emerson as the great original American visionary longs to possess the perspective of Hafez. Defining himself by his desire to become this fourteenth-century Sufi mystic, he proclaims, "Such is the only man I wish to see or to be" (*JMN* 10:165).

This study considers how Emerson as seminal poet-translator attempts to anticipate classical Sufi masters through his appropriative translation practices of Persian poetry. The following close readings of his rhetoric interrogate his claim of a radical originality in the figurative formation of American literature, revealing the extent to which it remains contingent upon his adoption and accommodation of Persian verse into his writing and translating. In this respect Emerson as subject of the first thirteen lines of Borges's sonnet can be seen as embodying the burden of his predecessors' voices. However, as if following the convention of the last line in the Persian form of the *ghazal*, wherein poets like Hafez attempt to transcend the ego by playful self-objectification through the use of pseudonyms, Emerson in turn reconciles such influence by coopting the strategy of becoming someone else by borrowing their names and poetic styles. In this respect even the final line of the bio-critical poem by Borges, written in a Western form, follows Emerson's transformative renderings of Eastern verse that reorient the self in his own literary tradition.

Though consideration of the Persian material Emerson translated through German sources and also read in previous English renderings continues to build on previous critical insights, a somewhat more radical turn toward his essential rhetorical foundations attempts to expose the formative effects of conflating his American tradition with Persian sources through the centrality of his Romantic vision. The following chapters thus focus as much on the written expression of his identity as on his practice of translation, both of which he firmly based in his Platonic understanding of literature. While previous scholarship has consistently gestured toward Emerson's all-encompassing and accessible literary approach based in Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy

that enabled him to accommodate foreign influence, the extent to which it poetically emerges from his engagement with Persian verse warrants closer attention. Ironically, from his earliest reading practices of transnational literature, the further he seems to get away from his literary origins, the closer he comes to the performance of an authentic self. To preview from a later chapter perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of this phenomenon in Emerson's well-noted missing grief over the death of his son in "Experience," a recurring critical quandary in Emerson studies, he comes to retroactively mourn through the voice of his ideal poet Sa'di in an elegy for the Persian father's own lost boy that he re-translates multiple times in his *Notebook Orientalist*. This connection to Persian verse relatively late in his career in turn connects him back to the development of an earlier way of seeing the world as well as himself beyond his nineteenth-century New England, even prior to his more significant investigation and translation of the Sufi poets he came to revere.

Fully realizing Emerson's Eastern gaze therefore means looking as much toward his vision as at his focus on Iran. Predicating self-depictions on his own elusive rhetoric begins to productively foreground why the influence of Sa'di, Hafez, and others proves especially hard to discern. More than thematic statements of his reading practices and specific signifiers from the foreign tradition in his imitations, influence becomes paradoxically both most profound as well as most invisible within Emerson's own disorienting poetry and prose. Attempting however falteringly to identify this process of rhetorical dislocation thus serves as an analytical entry point into the American forefather's aesthetic, which extends to his translation and imitative practices.

Insofar as the rhetorical means by which Emerson comes to see himself reflected in poets such as Hafez and Sa'di tend to evade critical recognition, an attempt to follow his appropriation of Persian verse on his own creative terms juxtaposes the ubiquitous trope of the mirror found throughout Sufi mysticism with his elusive "transparent eyeball." Interposing such a metaphor reflective of Sufi philosophy, based on a spiritually esoteric interpretation of Islam that informs much of classical Persian poetry, begins to reveal how Emerson's personal view of an all-unifying Platonism effectively sanctions his temporal, stylistic, and even linguistic equations to foreign sources. His mimicry of Persian verse, based in an originating rhetoric expressive of his Romantic vision, consequently offers a specific comparative perspective on how he renders such a disparate influence into English as if he himself anticipated it.

As progenitor poet-philosopher at a turning point in the foundation of his nation's literature, Emerson encountering his own reflection in Persian poetry that he couldn't read in the original language further supports an argument for his initiating a generative approach in the tradition of American

verse translation. Closer attention to his theory and practice of translation necessitates significant revision of previous modernist assumptions about Ezra Pound as first substantial American appropriative translator. Pound has been almost unconditionally credited with establishing the Western tendency to creatively render foreign poetry into English with little regard for literal equivalence. As Steven Yao explains, Pound was the first to have "obviated intimate knowledge of the source language as a precondition for translation by demonstrating in an irrefutable way that successful . . . results could be attained without thorough . . . understanding of the original text translated" (*Languages* 26). Yao further considers Pound as "the first broadly influential writer since at least the seventeenth century to bestow upon translation . . . an explicitly primary and generative . . . role in the process of literary cultural formation" ("Translation" 33–34).

More than influencing the American practice of translation in the twentieth century, Pound's approach to foreign literature from the East has been fundamental in conceptualizing modern poetics in the West, in part by assuming creatively misleading linguistic and temporal equivalence between such radically different traditions as ancient Chinese and contemporary English verse. Emerson through his translation of Persian poetry, however, anticipates by fifty years the literary implications of Pound's claim that "all ages are contemporaneous" (*Romance* 8). Prior to Pound's axioms derived from his appropriative translation practices, Emerson can be seen as a contemporary harbinger of the high modernist's emerging aesthetic. More subtly using translation in the literary formation of his nineteenth century, he relies on his English renderings of Persian verse through German sources to develop a strategic approach that accommodates foreign traditions into his own influential rhetoric.

An initial exploration of Emerson's rhetorical theory as it relates however tangentially to translation helps to further substantiate his having anticipated Pound. His understanding of words as etymologically derived from images in his essay "Language," which reverts back to his consistent reliance upon a Platonic reading of the world, significantly influenced Ernest Fenollosa, the intermediary Asian scholar-translator who like von Hammer-Purgstall for Emerson greatly informed Pound's translations. Pound can be understood as claiming more of his original voice after a long process of translating and imitating Eastern verse—as evidenced by his writing the much more personal and far superior *Pisan Cantos* in confinement for political transgression. Emerson as his most substantial American predecessor begins inversely, within the delimited confines of his original lyric vision expressed through his transparent eyeball, moving outward from the self, and consequently more

on his own Romantic terms, to Eastern poetry. With such a trajectory, he precedes Pound along with the Persian masters he transforms through his Platonic a-temporality. As the final two chapters of this study will reveal, by figuratively establishing himself as the first and seemingly all-encompassing poet-translator in his literary tradition, he continues to influence American verse translation into the early twenty-first century.

More than contending with a formidable modernist inheritor, such essays as "Language," when contextualized within a sustained close reading of his engagement with Persian poetry, introduce what can be considered as Emerson's emerging theory of translation. Writings that reflect on his own rhetorical practices do more than merely justify his appropriation of the Persian poets. They effectively foreground an approach to literary translation that invites Pound's comparable rhetorical practices as they further extend their influence upon contemporary verse renderings into English. Extracting and re-categorizing Emerson's key rhetorical concepts based in his Platonic relation to Persian poetry helps to position him as predecessor-translator by showing how his own theorizing allowed him to subvert the limitations of literal equivalences to foreign source texts. Examining his theoretical under-standing of writing that unapologetically advocates for brazen intertextuality reveals the process through which he disregards such linguistic equivalence to more radically equate his rhetorical vision to the foreign source poets themselves. At best the ideal translator is said to remain an invisible agent, seamlessly channeling the voice of the original literary work. Despite the distance of language, culture, and time, Emerson draws so close to Persian poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that he tends to invert this ideal, often rendering himself indistinguishable from the appearance of his predecessors in the Sufi mirror through his insistence on invisibility. Though various literary theory is used to better identify and examine the implica-tions of Emerson's approach to translation, his own reflections best serve to outline the functioning of his elusive rhetoric that so easily dissembles his assumption of foreign verse.

Recently Lawrence Buell, partly responding to the scholarship of Wai Chee Dimock, has called for moving the discussion of Persian verse as an influence upon Emerson "from the edges of discussion" and more toward "the center" (151). Quite tellingly, Paul Kane, in his comparative study of Hafez and Emerson, has expressed doubt about so positioning Emerson's engage-ment with Persian poetry, remarking, "I'm not convinced there is a center, or at least a stable one" (134). In part to extend the close correspondence of the Persian letter in Emerson's writing to the spirit of Persian influence, Kane begins to show how the foreign verse remains latent in the writing of

the American poet, helping to foreground a problematic critical tendency that limits comparative analyses between Emerson's specific translations of Persian poetry and his own writing.

Such repositioning aptly identifies both the necessity and the difficulty of investigating this topic. Emerson's ability to make the Sufi verse of Iran his own through his comparable rhetorical and spiritual sensibility often means that his writing becomes as de-centered as the source texts he translates. Because comparative study necessitates a locus of signifiers from two disparate traditions, his close mirroring of foreign literature makes it hard to differentiate him from his Persian sources. His Romantic individualism relative to his refutation of an inherited Christian tradition, for example, combined with his close relation to the essential rhetorical functioning of English in his prose and poetry, often reads like the Sufi mystic poets' struggle with the hypocrisy of seemingly devout Muslims as well as with the materiality of language itself. Even at the level of identity both Emerson and the Persian poets distance themselves from their names. Ironically, by straying so far from what translation studies terms an equivalence of meaning between two languages, the American poet closely resembles poets like Sa'di and Hafez, making it especially difficult to locate his intervention with the source texts. At times, according to Harold Bloom's understanding of influence, he seems to have anticipated his Persian predecessors.

In this sense Emerson can further be seen as having preceded critical approaches that interpret his use of Persian poetry, which do little more than acknowledge his perceived similarity to his foreign sources by admitting the difficulty of separating him from their influence.[1] Oliver Wendell Holmes, recognizing Emerson's interest in Persian verse, comments: "In many of the shorter poems and fragments published since 'May-Day,' as well as in the 'Quatrains' and others . . . it is sometimes hard to tell what is from the Persian from what is original" (173). Also noting the close resemblance between Emerson and his Persian sources in the nineteenth century, Joel Benton asks, "Shall we say on account of this homogeneity that the Oriental is but another Yankee? Or is it that the Yankee is merely the Oriental moved further west?" (28). Robert Alfred Vaughan, a nineteenth-century scholar who "made comparing mysticisms an art" (Schmidt 47) similarly conflated Emerson with the spiritual underpinnings of the Persian verse tradition, calling him, "chief singer of his time at the high court of Mysticism" and "a true brother of those Sufis of whose doctrine he has so much in common" (8).

Attempts to differentiate Emerson's writing from his Persian sources have required both strict linear considerations of equivalence as well as more speculative readings of literary influence. Though J.D. Yohannan's early

scholarship focuses primarily on the former with comparisons of Emerson's translations to German intermediary renderings, it importantly begins inviting further interrogations of the latter by looking at Emerson's conceptualization of Saʿdi as his ideal poet. Even so, calling attention to the need of identifying influence in Emerson's decentering rhetoric, Yohannan claims to have left out an examination of the "less tangible effect of Persian poetry on Emerson's philosophy," commenting on how difficult it proves to ascertain ("Influence" 25).

Despite Benton basing some of his comparative assumptions on egregiously sweeping statements about "all oriental verse" (27) without a thorough understanding of his foreign subject matter, he successfully initiates keen insights beyond mere denotative concerns with Emerson's resemblance to his Persian influences, exploring how the Eastern poems tend to share the same "mood, texture, and tune" (28). As one of the earliest scholars to significantly associate rhetorical tendencies in Emerson's poetry and prose relative to his Persian sources, he begins to provide an important foundation on which further scholarship has been built.

Paul Kane's observations that link Emerson's writing to the thematically "inconsecutive ghazals of Hafez" (31), like Charles Ives's early study observing how "Emerson wrote by sentences and phrases" as opposed to "logical sequence" (25), have significantly expanded such critical speculation to include comparative insights relating Persian verse to the disparate tension between Emerson's epigraphs and his essays (130–132). In part to extend the close correspondence of the letter in Emerson's writing to the spirit of foreign verse that he translated, Kane begins to convincingly reveal the greater presence of a latent Persian influence on Emerson than what has been previously acknowledged. Importantly foundational for this study, Kane also moves beyond Saʿdi, a Persian influence Western critics tend to privilege as a result of Emerson's more overt identification through his own biographical "portrait" of the poet (*JMN* 9:37), extending his focus to Hafez. As Yohannan has previously commented, "Hafiz, no less than Saadi, contributed to the composite picture" ("Influence" 37).

Considering the interconnectedness of Emerson's poetry and prose to the fourteenth-century classical Persian poet Hafez, Kane demonstrates a subtler yet more pervasive effect of the Persian tradition upon Emerson's sensibility beyond a line-by-line analysis of translations or Emerson's imitations of Persian verse as previously offered by Yohannan. Arguing that Emerson appreciated Hafez as a bridge between the secular and the spiritual, he stresses that the American followed the Iranian in part because Hafez kept mysticism from becoming a mere static concept in his poetry. It remains "vehicular" (119), much like the functioning of metaphor, which seems to considerably

resemble Emerson's rhetoric. Such de-centered literary analysis also leads Kane to assert that Emerson became especially attracted to Hafez for his spirit of self-reliance, insofar as he asserted a liberating power within the confines of religious context (119). To a great extent Kane's study thus offers a way to move Hafez more toward the center of Persian influence. As he explains,

> It is Hafiz who occupies a key position in Emerson's notion of who or what the poet is, and he reflects what Emerson himself is attempting to do in his own verse. . . . To understand Hafiz is to understand Emerson's poetry. (134)

Essays in the recently published *Sufism and American Literary Masters* further broaden and deepen such early research by examining the stylistic and spiritual relationship between Emerson and the Sufi poetic tradition exemplified by Hafez and Sa'di. Mehdi Aminrazavi's introduction highlights a correspondence between Emerson's nineteenth century and some central themes from Sufi philosophy such as "vanity of the world, the analogies between experience in Nature and in love, and the inability of human reason to explain or address the world's mysteries" (2). Revisiting Emerson's sustained interest in Sa'di, Parvin Loloi offers historical context for a convincingly specific reading of the thirteenth-century Persian poet's influence on the American author. In addition to a meticulous examination of Emerson's interest in the Persian poets, she revisits Yohannan's comparison of Emerson's translations and the German renderings from which he worked. Importantly, she goes on to analyze the influence of Persian verse on Emerson's own writing, drawing such strong comparisons between Emerson and the Sufis as their relation to nature (107).

Specifically tracking Emerson's reading of literature from and about Iran as well as other Islamic cultures, Mansur Ekhtiyar questions the assumption that his real interest in Persian poetry begins with his reading of Baron von Hammer-Purgstall's translations in 1841 (Carpenter 161). Making an even further-reaching case for Emerson's much earlier introduction to literature from Iran, Farhang Jahanpour offers a rather exhaustive bibliography of Emerson's Oriental reading, inviting greater investigation of Emerson's subtler mining of Eastern influence closer to the onset of his development as a writer. To this end, it becomes necessary to consider the respective expansions of Phillip Edmonson and Parvin Loloi on Benton's early work that explicates what first attracted Emerson to the Iranian poets. Reexamining the similarity between Sufi mysticism and an American Transcendental Romantic sensibility, Edmonson discovers a similar linguistic framework relative to an accessible spirituality

that enabled Emerson to easily introduce Persian poetry to America during a period when the country's sensibility became especially receptive to it. As Leigh Eric Schmidt notes, by the time Williams James published *The Variety of Religious Experience*, "American Transcendentalists and their like-minded heirs had created an ahistorical, poetic, essential, intuitive, universal, wildly rhapsodic mysticism" (48). While validating such comparisons as those made by Edmonson and Loloi, Marwan Obeidat importantly reinforces previous critical considerations of Emerson's ambivalent relation to "the Muslim Orient," reading it "as stemming from a mixture of condescension and admiration" (87). This latter summation begins to suggest the recurring critical inability to establish Emerson's stance toward Persian verse, further necessitating closer comparative interrogation.

The importance of Albert von Frank's introduction and notes to Emerson's translations and imitations of Persian verse cannot be overstated. In addition to exacting scholarship that has organized and synthesized previous discoveries, his speculation that Emerson's especially "intense creative outbursts" from 1845 to 1846 "could be attributed to the discovery of Hafez" invites greater investigation. Locating "an oriental influence" (*CW* 9:xvii) in much of Emerson's *Poems* published in 1847, von Frank extends the analysis initiated by such previous critics as Oliver Wendell Holmes. Like Buell, von Frank further foregrounds the significance of Persian influence while stressing that "it has not been adequately explored" (lxvii). Following his scholarly commentary on Emerson's engagement with the verse tradition of Hafez and Sa'di with such a qualification has proven especially motivating to both the research and writing of this study.

Though not specifically invested in the influence of Persian poetry on Emerson's verse, the recent and rather groundbreaking *A Power to Translate the World: New Essays son Emerson and International Culture* has offered several important critical models for a transnational relation to American studies. Varied approaches to Emerson's engagement with different cultures, national traditions, and religions prove especially instructive in how to read the American against, as well as alongside, a plethora of foreign influences. The willingness of David LaRocca and Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso to include a formative chapter, "Middle Eastern-American Literature: A Contemporary Turn in Emerson Studies" (310–325), in which many of the ideas for this book first began to take shape, provided significant motivation and instruction toward further investigation of Emerson's relation to Persian poetry.

Susan Dunston's essay "East of Emerson" in the recently published *Emerson for the Twentieth Century: Global Perspectives on an American Icon* presents further insightful readings into Emerson's specific interest in Persian

verse informed by Sufism and its correspondence to his own aesthetic. The following chapters remain indebted to her introductory scholarship, especially for suggesting a similarity between Emerson's transparent eyeball and the Sufi mystics' clearing away of the self as they comparably experience or "see all" (121). Chapter 2 attempts to extend this insightful reading, juxtaposing Emerson's transparent eyeball to the trope of the mirror informed by Sufi mysticism for a sustained comparative analysis. Additional use is made of Dunston's observation of how both Saʻdi and Emerson attempt to rhetorically reconcile the loss of their sons (117). Slight repositioning of her reading suggests that Emerson uses translation to identify with another poet-father as a cathartically imitative attempt of an elegy to locate his displaced grief in "Experience," an essay that on closer investigation demonstrates surprisingly more significance to Emerson's appropriation of the Middle East and Islam than has been previously recognized. Other observations by Dunston, such as general Platonic connections between Saʻdi and Emerson (123), also prove foundational in more specific comparative readings between the American poet and his Persian predecessors.

Finally, Jeffrey Einboden's recent scholarship addressing in part Emerson's engagement with Islamic sources offers several significant insights that extend to the influence of Persian poetry. His close consideration of Emerson adulterating a quote from the *Qur'an* at the beginning of his scholarly development in a college notebook sets a subtle precedent for a sustained tendency toward appropriative verse translation throughout much of his life. Elsewhere, Einboden's tracking of the layered process through multiple drafts of English renderings from Persian lines in *Notebook Orientalist* practically reveals Emerson's creative interventions in his approach to translation. Perhaps most importantly, Einboden's emerging attention to Emerson's adoption of the Middle Eastern name "Osman" and his consequent change to "Saʻdi" as related to the aforementioned translated elegy for the Persian poet's son, help direct even greater critical attention to Emerson's imitation of Persian poets.

This study continues the examination of Emerson's engagement with Sufi mysticism based on these previous analyses of his biography and rhetoric. Revisiting observed similarities between the classical verse of Iran and the conflation of Emerson's prose and poetry by Benton and Kane, it argues that in attempting to translate foreign verse through German intermediary texts without knowledge of the source language, he exposes an overriding aesthetic of global literary appropriation that becomes especially generative for the American literary tradition. His idealized relation to the Persian Sufi poets, which leads him to assume their voices and even identities as he projects himself onto his English renderings, reveals his spiritual and thematic claims

upon a well-established foreign poetics. Looking at Emerson's paradoxical anticipation of such an ancient literary tradition through his transformation into a transparent eyeball, which reflects the crux of tension between the materiality of language and the transcendence of spirit in Sufi poetry, close readings of his writing interposed with the mystic's vision demonstrate how he in turn attempts to make the Persian verse he discovered and introduced to America his own through the fantasy of *a-priori* influence.

Such theoretical and practical approaches, which are shown to establish an imaginary transcendent unification to Persian verse through Emerson's reading of Platonic philosophy, come to closely resemble the ubiquitous trope of the mirror in Sufi mysticism. Just as devout Sufis try to rid themselves of ego and reach the clarity of divine reflection, Emerson attempts a self-overcoming through his transformation into "a transparent eyeball" (*CW* 1:10). This idealized and all-encompassing visionary trope reflects the Persian verse he reads and translates as if he somehow originated it. Against the Sufi mirror and his own vision, Asia—representative for Emerson as both "unity" and "infinitude" (*CW* 4:31)—positions him in a kind of Lacanian mirror stage relative to what he sees as the West's more "defining" and "surface seeking" individuated "detail" (*CW* 4:31). In looking East, he thus attempts to realize the fantasy of an all-unifying Platonic ideal. Such reconciliation can be seen in the very first sentence of his essay, "Plato, or the Philosopher," where writing of this ideal thinker from the Western tradition gets compared to the holy text from Islam: "Among secular books, Plato only is entitled to Omar's fanatical compliment to the Koran, when he said: 'Burn the libraries; for their value is in this book'" (*CW* 4:23). Here for Emerson, argues Obeidat, "Plato's work brings East to West whereby certain boundaries and categories are set up, associations and distinctions made." Consequently, "the Orient is given a space where it stands vis-à-vis the Occident" (77).

While contributors of *Sufism and the Literary Masters* as well as other aforementioned scholars have importantly tracked Emerson's encounter with the verse of Hafez and Sa'di, which proved especially significant through the 1840s with his reading of collected translated works that include von Hammer-Purgstall's German anthology (Ekhtiyar 64–65), problematic questions remain as to how and why he comes to see himself in the Persian mirror. More than wishing to write *like* his Persian predecessors, he often longs to write *as* them. His Platonic approach of disavowing linguistic and literary differences to see these foreign poets "vis-à-vis" therefore surfaces as a viable starting point to consider why such a seminal writer in American literature so adamantly insists on being himself while also, as depicted in the last line of the Borges's sonnet, longing to become "someone else."

The somewhat radical claim underpinning this book takes the self-reliant Emerson at his own words, arguing that by willingly trying to become Hafez and Sa'di, the American poet-philosopher effectively attempts imitative "suicide" (*CW* 2:27) according to his own criteria of what constitutes destruction of the authentic self. This appropriative foreign identification paradoxically liberates him through disassociation of his Romantic American identity. Though he mimicked a plethora of other writers from different languages and traditions, isolating his attempted entry into Iran can to some extent specifically exemplify his rhetorical engagement with an important foreign tradition while inviting conjecture as to why he attempted it, thereby better understanding Emerson's tendency toward a general transnational appropriation based on translation. While the amorphous nature of influence eludes complete explication, Emerson's uncanny reproduction of the Sufi mystic poets' spiritual self-obviation without reading knowledge of the language in which their verse was originally written offers a critical trail worth following. To slightly amend Buell's astute observation, it is perhaps not so much the Persian poetry, but Emerson's desire to have both written and translated it, that lies at the center of his oeuvre.

Despite Western Orientalist assumptions of Emerson's appropriative gaze toward the Middle East that previous scholarship has made explicit, a revisionist interrogation of recurring theoretical and critical examinations concerned with literary influence also reveals the figurative and even spiritual effects of Sufi mysticism on Emerson's thinking and writing. The American self-authorizes his use of the Persian material so well it is easy, yet potentially erroneous, to lose sight of the Eastern gaze reflecting back, "vis-à-vis," onto his aesthetic. As examined in chapter 3, for example, encountering through Persian verse the latent influence of Islamic fatalism that he overtly disparages paradoxically reflects his own philosophical ambivalence of freedom versus fate. The Persian tradition informed by a religion that Emerson saw as problematically predicated on pre-determinism can be seen as deterministic of his own spiritual vision. Such an analysis begins to suggest perhaps more of a reciprocal relation of Emerson to his foreign source material than previously realized.

For the purposes of this investigation, a few theoretical approaches are used to consider the implications of influence in Emerson's appropriative translation practices. First, Harold Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* allows for a comparative analysis beyond previous scholarly contributions of close linear distinctions between Emerson and his Persian predecessors, helping to demonstrate how he had to reckon with the poetry originating in Iran that he transformed into English through previous German translations. Following Bloom, Emerson is read as progenitor poet of the "American Sub-

lime" (*Anxiety* 103) under the category of *daemonization*, a term aptly taken from "Neo-Platonic usage," considering the American poet-translator's ultimate conception of an all-unifying literary origin. Defined as "an intermediary being, neither divine nor human" that intervenes to enable the writing of verse, the *daemon* helps show how Emerson in his relation to the Sufi mystics exemplifies the "later poet" who "opens himself to what he believes to be a power in the parent poem that does not belong to the parent proper, but to a range of being beyond that precursor." In attempting to make claims upon a transcendent spirit in the verse of Hafez and Sa'di, Emerson translates Bloom's definition into praxis by positioning his verse against "the parent-poem" in order "to generalize away the uniqueness of the earliest work" (*Anxiety* 15).

However, as helpful as such a theory of influence proves to be for a comparative analysis of verse traditions rooted in vastly different cultures and languages, Emerson's proclivity toward the Persian poets calls such an approach into question. The majority of examples offered in Bloom's influential book focus exclusively on Western models. The Greek terms themselves, as well as the Freudian analysis that greatly informs his theory, demonstrate a recurring critical bias towards Western literary and philosophic origins, as seen in the very etymology of the word used to categorize Emerson. Subtly, much like how anglicizing names in translations of the Bible tend to slight the foundational importance of Jewish culture, Bloom demonstrates a kind of Oedipal breaking from the plethora of foreign traditions and languages that precede and heavily inform the English literature he favors. Like Emerson, he too tends to "generalize away the uniqueness" of foreign work. This in turn reinforces, if not condones, the modernist American move of appropriative translation established so firmly by Pound in the early twentieth century. If only to foreground a discursive space to serve as a continual reminder that writers accommodating the work from foreign sources don't merely attempt to reckon with influence into their own rhetoric but have their own texts transformed into something new, further theoretical understanding that accommodates difference appears necessary.

Partly in response to Bloom, Willis Barnstone begins to offer an alternative approach to influence in translation studies. According to Barnstone, in translating a source text, a literary translator must invent a new voice in the receiving language belonging neither entirely to the original poet nor to his or her own style. By implication, this new voice becomes its own influence with which the poet-translator must now reckon. As Barnstone explains, "the influence of translation in the work of poet translators occurs not so much because of their encounter with an extraordinary source text but through their own transformation of that source text into their own invented language." Consequently,

"the poet translator self-reflexively discovers the language of his or her own inventions and borrows or steals it" (23). Here Pound truly excelled, proving "strong enough" (to use Bloom's rhetoric) in overcoming the predecessors he engaged. Though upon cursory observation Emerson relative to Pound at times appears to revert to simpler poetic mimicry of both the Persians and their intermediary German translators, a weaker move according to Bloom (*Anxiety* 5), he too surreptitiously attempts to subvert influence from a foreign tradition.

Barnstone's theory importantly invites needed consideration of intermediary renderings from other languages through which original source poems are brought into English. Though acknowledged by Yohannan and others, Emerson's reliance on German translations of Persian verse remains somewhat critically overlooked, especially insofar as it influences the development of his aesthetic. To some extent failure to more fully consider Emerson's engagement with German renderings exemplifies the frequent disregard of texts beyond those in the originating source or receiving literary traditions. Because intermediary translation, or "relay translation," interposes greater distance between source and translated text, it typically has been seen at best as a "necessary evil." As James St. André explains, "the assumption is that it is always preferable to translate from the original, just as it is always preferable to read the original than the translation" (230). Though generally true, as Gideon Toury correctively argues, such a translation practice "can be taken as evidence of the forces which have shaped the culture in question, along with its concept of translation." In this respect, continues Toury, "mediated translation should be taken as a *syndromic* basis for descriptive-explanatory studies" (129). For Emerson, the intervening German renderings of von Hammer-Purgstall between original Persian and translated English affords a conceptually rich creative realm that shapes much of American translation, wherein he can reconfigure both ideas of poetry and himself as poet-translator. It is less about losing a particular word equivalence—first through Persian into German, then German into English—than gaining a sense of proximity to a more foreign and ancient tradition. Tending to "emphasize the 'messy' nature of the translation process and the blurring of lines between original, translation, ADAPTATION, and PSEUDOTRANSLATION" (St. André 232), relay translation much like the site of Emerson's transparent eyeball opens a formative space for new orientations and interventions. Toury goes so far as to claim that "no *historically* oriented study of a culture where indirect translation was practiced with any regularity can afford to ignore this phenomenon and what it stands for" (130). At an important time in his development as a writer as well as the formation of American literature, Emerson discovered the Persian verse from von Hammer-Purgstall's relayed renderings and also from previous imitations by his Romantic German contemporary Goethe. Consequently, using the etymology of verse to

follow the "turns" of the source text, he can be seen as inheriting in English his seemingly original claims upon a re-turn to Hafez and Saʾdi around his transition through German. Retranslation thus becomes a means by which he reorients himself through his writing, figuratively renewing his voice and vision as if for the first time in the American tradition.

Significantly, "English's increasing dominance in the world of international exchange" has come to make it the predominant mediating language (St. André 231). Looking back to Emerson in this respect reveals how his early interventions with translation have helped give rise to contemporary Persian translators, covered in chapter 5, who render new Hafez and Rumi poems from English versions. One predominant strain of American translation from the nineteenth into the twenty-first century can be read as originating with Emerson's English reflections on German sources. Much as "it was often common in colonized territories for all knowledge of Europe to be mediated by one language, that of whatever European country happened to have control over the area" (St. André 232), English has come to dominate much of the world. Though various factors account for such a trend in translation, Emerson's all-encompassing vision embodied by what can be taken as the colonizing consciousness of his transparent eyeball effectively sees this dynamic coming.

In the triangle Barnstone draws to conceptualize the range from equivalence to free interpretation when rendering source texts into new languages, both Pound and Emerson as American poet-translators end up egregiously close to the far right of the spectrum, as shown in figure 1. Considering that

source author
originality

servile translator   new author
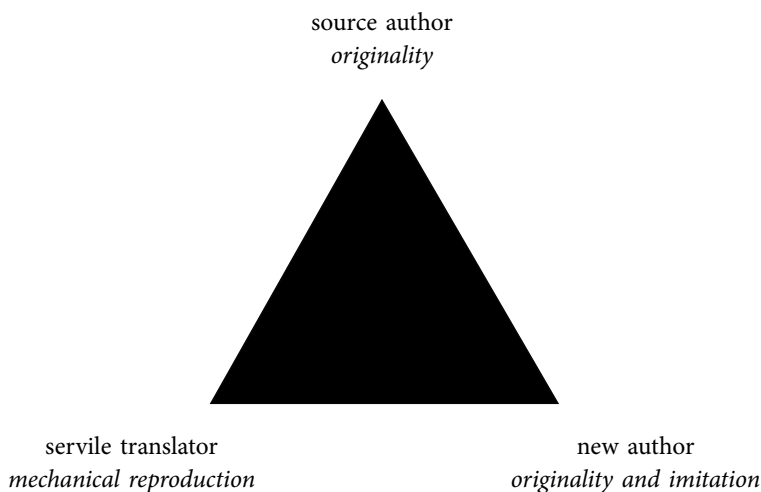*mechanical reproduction*   *originality and imitation*

Figure 1.

Emerson and Pound somewhat ignore the real source poems by going through intermediary texts, in a sense they challenge the originating source author to the point of reinventing the translating self and the culture from which the source poem derives. In Emerson's case, such rebellious translation allegorizes his rejection of the Christian trinity and his incessant struggle with patriarchal literary inheritance. Like his own refusal to participate in communion, Emerson favors Hafez for the Persian poet's seeming rejection of Islamic strictures in a somewhat true though overdetermined reading of wine as metaphor for independence of spirit. "Hafiz does not write of wine and love in any mystical sense," he explains, "further than that he uses wine as the symbol for intellectual freedom" (*TN* 2:120). Emerson's sustained attempt of freeing himself from the original source text and author further demonstrates a patriarchal challenge with Oedipal implications. His opening sentence in the introduction of *Nature* takes aim at the top point of Barnstone's triangle: "Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers" (*CW* 1:7). Often Emerson's appropriation of foreign influence becomes so subversive that he appears to completely transcend the triangle. In calling himself Sa'di and claiming the vision of Hafez, he tries to overcome Persian influence, becoming alpha of the American tradition through a Platonic relation to a comparable divine source sought by the Sufi mystics. Instead of aspiring to a translating equivalence of the source text, he equates himself as much as possible to his predecessors' attempts at preceding all temporal and linguistic limitation, sharing their spiritual starting point in the pre-eternal, before and above all writing.

To consider Emerson's attempt at a hegemonic claim upon foreign influence that ultimately transforms his writing in the kind of alternate discursive realm described by Barnstone, wherein the poet-translator must invent a new voice to render the source text in the target language, Homni Bhabha's postcolonial concept of a "third space of enunciation" offers an additional theoretical approach. Applied mainly to traditional formations of hybrid literature, Bhabha's "third space" is understood as the circle embodied by the colonizer's culture and all it entails (language, tradition, etc.), which intersects with part of a circle from the colonized world. The intersection thus becomes a formative third space, embodying the synthesis of different traditions that transform into something new (52–56). While Emerson's America does not literally colonize the cultures it engages, its figurative approach to world literatures attempts to considerably render invisible the foreign through cultural appropriation. Emerson especially looked to various traditions with a kind of colonizing consciousness, subsuming significant difference through his all-encompassing transparent eyeball. Along such lines Mark Paryz argues that in his encounter with a "redefinition of history," Emerson "embodies a

kind of postcolonial syndrome, which manifests itself in the writers' inability to express America on its own special terms" (20). Similarly reading Melville as attempting to create a more radical "newness" through an engagement with hybrid traditions, Geoffrey Sanborn locates a comparable analogue in Emerson's contemporary, wherein "the colonist must come into being by way of a postulated native" and vice versa (9).

Harish Trivedi's criticism of cultural translation that he attributes to Bhabha's seminal theory, which he claims has tragically caused "the very extinction and erasure of translation as we have always known and practiced it" (282), all the more necessitates its application to Emerson's frequent translingual claims upon the Persian poets. Closer consideration of Emerson's appropriation suggests that he anticipates and perhaps even initiates in the American tradition such problematic cultural translation. Though Trivedi locates the "postmodern idea of cultural translation" that remains both "nontextual and nonlinguistic" within the realm of contemporary Western literature (283), Emerson's much earlier adoption of foreign sensibilities beyond traditional translation in the very foundation of the American tradition warrants closer consideration. Bhabha's theory helps conceptualize and problematize Emerson's cultural reckoning beyond mere language difference, foregrounding the effects of translation, understood in a much broader sense than word meaning, upon the language and nation in which he wrote.

Intersecting Bhabha's theory with more traditional approaches to translation as well as to Bloom's understanding of influence provides an alternative discursive space to consider how Emerson's voice, predicated on visionary language, might derive both culturally and linguistically from elsewhere. Such interdisciplinary theoretical context thus outlines the presence of a formative influence that otherwise remains hidden. As such, it begins to make visible Emerson's seemingly transparent claims upon a first priority that dissemble important sources outside his assumed sphere of influence. Bhabha's interpretation of disruption in postcolonial hybrid literature, which "reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (159–160), offers a productive means to interrogate the effect of Emerson's vision on Persian poets. More than investigating a niche influence for its local implications in Emerson's writing, exploring these visual implications allows for a greater meta-analysis of how Emerson clears figurative space to invite, appropriate, and ultimately adopt foreign literature as his own.

Before introducing such necessary theoretical correctives, chapter 1 first outlines the correspondence between Emerson's Platonic view of the world and the Sufism that informs the Persian poets he both translates and imitates.

Though his Platonic and Neoplatonic connection to Persian poetry and other foreign literature has been consistently referenced by scholars, the extent to which it establishes an aesthetic that enables him to claim the verse of Hafez and Sa'di as his own has yet to be fully explored. His emerging and sustained interest in Persian poetry from a young age and through the development of his writing career, juxtaposed with a Platonism that obviated temporal and even linguistic differences of classical foreign verse, reveals how he so easily came to sanction his literary appropriation. More specifically, Emerson's Transcendentalism, best represented by his belief in the Over-Soul, proves so close to the Sufi mystic's relation to nature as well as the insistence on an all-encompassing indivisible unity that at times it seems to have anticipated it. In this respect Emerson's overarching theoretical reach comes before his own more practical poetic attempts to establish himself prior to even the classical Persian verse tradition that he will introduce to America.

To exemplify how Emerson more specifically clears figurative space in the American tradition with such Platonic underpinnings, which in turn enables his attempt to claim as predecessor the Persian poet's mystic vision, chapter 2 introduces the trope of the mirror from Sufi mysticism in comparison to the all-seeing transparent eyeball on Boston Common. Revisiting the rhetorical accounting of Emerson's transformation into visual transparency better allows for theoretically tracking how he attempts to polish away all material distraction to reach an elusively transcendent spirit much like the ancient poets of Iran trying to reach the divine. Using the theories of Bloom, Bhabha, and Barnstone to expose Emerson's appropriative attempts, the transparent eyeball can be seen as an intertextual site subsuming the discovery of Persian poetry into his own far-reaching American sphere of influence.

Essentially declaring himself "nothing" yet able to "see all" (*CW* 1:10), he makes an early claim upon the Sufi mystic vision of Hafez, anticipating his own discovery of the great poet from Iran, who, he remarks, "sees too far." Though he finds himself so distantly intrigued by Hafez's predecessor vision that he declares, "Such is the only poet I wish to see and be" (*JMN* 10:165), he still attempts to become him in the Sufi mirror, polishing away as much influence as possible while transforming his predecessor into all-encompassing visual agency. Close consideration of Kane's comparison of the rend in Sufi mysticism to Emerson's rhetorical self-reduction, as well as an examination of the inherently disconnected Persian form of the *ghazal* in relation to the American poet's fragmented sensibility, invites further correspondence with the Persian poets by revealing how Emerson attempts to obviate influence by rhetorically subverting a fixed or unified identity.

In addition to locating in the transparent eyeball the primal lyric tension that invites yet clears away all predecessors, such a reading further

necessitates an examination of what Emerson rhetorically represses to make himself, along with the formative effects of texts he uses for self-definition, so hard to find. Taking the transparent eyeball that inhabits the paradoxical reporting of his invisibility as definitive trope for the transformation of his Romantic identity as well as his relation to influence makes his relative disappearance at such key biographical moments as the death of his own son in "Experience" especially worthy of further interrogation. Using the theoretical framework developed in a close reading of Emerson's transcendence that seemingly erases predecessors, along with the American writer himself, the discovery of multiple drafts of an especially emotional Saʾdi poem about the loss of the foreign poet's son begins to foreground how such repression of Persian influence returns much closer to Emerson's life and work. Following the "eye/I" pun in the spirit of the Persian poetic vision that Emerson uses to evade the constraints of his identity while attempting to subvert his role as literary heir to a foreign forefather begins to reveal his displaced grief over the death of Waldo, his literal descendent. Ironically, Emerson most surfaces as himself through the process of evading discovery with his translation of Persian verse.

With the figurative stage set upon which Emerson will begin to perform his Persian identity, chapter 3 offers extensive examination of both his seeming success and failure at Persian imitation by juxtaposing his close imitation of Saʾdi, his adopted namesake, with his thwarted attempts to repress the influence of Islamic fatalism that underpins the poetry he translates. Reading Emerson's favorite Sufi poets whose verse derives from their inherited religion against his adamant belief in self-determination presents a contradictory impulse difficult to reconcile. Such symptomatic tension exposes his otherwise rather unrecognizable strategy of incorporating the verse and identity of Saʾdi within his Platonically comprehensive vision. Nowhere does Emerson become more paradoxical by depending on quotation in his famous essay "Self-Reliance" than when he quotes a fatalistic proverb of Imam Ali, cousin and son in law of the prophet Muhammad. Esteeming both Hafez and Saʾdi for their self-reliant abilities to subvert the fatalistic cosmology of Islam that he disparages, Emerson problematically posits a statement that affirms predestination against his famous insistence upon individual agency.

Words attributed to Ali in this one paragraph as well as in the poem "Saadi," which serves as a model for "Self-Reliance," thus invite closer critical comparison between Emerson and the Sufi poets in their relation to fatalism. Repositioning Bloom's idea of influence in Bhabha's understanding of a hybrid "third space" reveals how Emerson actually locates his own struggle of freedom versus fate, exemplified in his essays "Fate" and "Power," in a dichotomy identified with Sufi philosophy that emerges from the *Qurʾan*. The Islamic fatalism

that Emerson disparages in his self-reliant praise of Hafez and Sa'di resurfaces in their seemingly more liberated verse, mirroring similar tension at the crux of his own quandary where "fate slides into freedom, and freedom into fate" (*CW* 6:20). Closely tied to the wrestling with language itself in an attempt to precede all determinants of meaning for a glimpse of the divine, the effect of Sufi mysticism upon Persian poets like Hafez further reflects Emerson's will to transcend and "see all" through a translingual gaze predicated on revealed wisdom beyond intellectual knowledge. In addition to explaining his general attraction to the spiritual nature of classical Persian poetry, such an analysis offers a compelling example as to just how close Emerson comes to both style and meaning of his foreign sources.

Following an examination of Emerson's rather uncanny reconciliation with the Islamic underpinnings in the rendering of Persian verse on his own terms, chapter 4 demonstrates just how significant Emerson's appropriative translation practices become in his attempt to transcend the integral importance of the foreign source text. Locating what can be seen as Emerson's emerging theory of translation based in part on the essays "Language," "The Poet," "Persian Poetry," "Quotation and Originality," and others helps account for how the combination of his Platonic and intertextual understandings of literature allows him to better foreground his creative interventions by subverting strict equivalence. Much like Albert von Frank considers Emerson's early understanding of poetics as transformative of his verse (*CW* 9:xxx), his broader rhetorical theories offer a means by which to understand both the radical development of his appropriative translation practices as well as their far-reaching influence upon his inheritors. Emerson's ultimate reversion of sources to a translingual origin based on image further reveals how he manages to deftly negate profound differences between literary traditions. Insofar as Ernest Fenollosa based his interpretation of Chinese writing on Emerson's way of looking at language and literature, which Pound in turn used in his own translation practices, this close reading proves especially foundational to better comprehending a generative theory for American verse starting in the nineteenth century.

The relation of Emerson's theoretical approach as developed in the aforementioned essays proves especially illuminating when applied to how he comes to view Persian poetry in the praxis of translation. The recurring comparative trope of the Sufi mirror used in this study can be seen in Emerson's own "meta-view" of translation via his extended metaphor of a critical telescope at the beginning of his essay "Persian Poetry." Looking as if with the first eye from his "Circles" essay, the expanse of temporal distance from an originating perspective between Emerson's nineteenth century and the classical