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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Emerson Studies in the USSR

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Moscow, U.S.S.R.

[Mr. Trofimov's account of Russian acquaintance with Emerson's writings up to 1917 appeared in the Fall 1990 issue of ESP.]

The long period from the October revolution of 1917 till the beginning of Khrushchev's era seemed to be the Dark Ages for philosophy and aesthetics in the USSR. Dictatorship of the communist ideology in all spheres of intellectual life made extremely difficult or even impossible profound and unbiased appreciation of the Western philosophies, which for a long time had been treated as bourgeois and idealistic. However, the name of Emerson didn't fall into oblivion forever. Right after World War II a review of Emerson's role in the development of American culture was made by A. Startzev in his *History of American Literature* released in 1947. Several years later, the USSR Academy of Science undertook publication of *History of Philosophy* in four volumes, representing a Marxist account of the heritage of human thought. In volume two a special chapter written by M. Baskin was devoted to Emerson and his transcendentalist circle. Emerson's teaching was described as an eclectic mixture of idealistic and materialist approaches to the principal problems of philosophy. The author of the article drew the following conclusion: "Thanks to its contradictory nature, Emerson's philosophy appeared to be a source of both reactionary and progressive currents in American schools of philosophy and sociology" (p. 547).

The more positive approach to the writings of Emerson expressed in the above-mentioned books was in sharp contrast with their negative attitude towards such American thinkers as Josiah Royce, William James, George Santayana, and John Dewey. (For example, in *Essays on Modern Anglo-American Philosophy* by D. Kwitko, issued in 1936, it was maintained that the key objective of these scholars had been "to stop the triumphant march of the evolutionary theory" and "to lay the ground for the growing Nazi movement", p. ix.) The reason why Emerson was more acceptable to Soviet ideology was linked perhaps with the fact that the former criticized in his works some extremes of capitalism and rendered support for abolitionists, i.e., took a "progressive" stand in the class struggle.

The "thaw" of the late 1950s-1960s, despite all its shortcomings, gave fresh impulses to the humanities in this country. Old dogmas began to weaken bit by bit and scholars enjoyed comparatively more freedom in their researches. It was a time when Western scientific literature gained access to the Soviet public.

At this time translations of several American scholars dealing with Emerson's heritage were published. Probably the first of this kind was "The Living Emerson"—an article by Samuel Sillen included in the book *Progressive People of the USA in the Struggle for Leading Ideology* (1955). *American Thought* by M. Cohen was published in 1958, and four years later *Main Currents in American Thought* by V. L. Parrington was at hand in the USSR.

In 1965 a considerable part of Emerson's "Nature" appeared in the third volume of *History of Aesthetics*, while more important in this relation was a collection of works called *Aesthetics of American Romanticism* (1977), permitting an ample outlook on the American artistic taste of the era of the transcendentalists. Together with translations of key writings by Philip Freneau, C. B. Brown, W. C. Bryant, E. A. Poe, and Margaret Fuller, a reader could find such pieces by Emerson as "Nature," "The American Scholar," "Literary Ethics," "Art," "The Young American," and "The Poet." The texts were preceded by a foreword written by A. Nikoljukin.

We ought to mention also *The Writer in America* by V. W. Brooks, released in two volumes in 1967-1971, which had considerable influence on the Soviet researches. Among titles dealing with Emerson should be noted *Literary History of the United States* under the editorship of R. E. Spiller, Willard Thorp, and others, released in Russian in 1977. Being the child of Brezhnev's détente, it represented for Soviet scholars a valuable source by demonstrating the role of Emerson in moulding American thought and letters. Another two items should be added to the numbered translations. In 1986 the

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Soviet public could acquaint itself with the 1st and 2nd series of the famous *Essays* by Emerson and four years later with his *Representative Men*, making part of the collection of writings of prominent American writers of the 19th century bearing the title "To Make Our Day Beautiful . . ."

Despite the growing number of publications, the true research into Emerson's thought started not earlier than in the middle of the 1970s. The scientific interest in Emerson had been promoted not only by the accumulation of information but by ongoing changes in Soviet culture as well.

After the Stalinist era with its pseudo-classical tastes was over, a new style emerged on the national scene. It was named the "severe style," as it denied unjustified decorations in fine arts, architecture, and letters. For the most part it was inspired by the heritage of the Russian avant-garde of the first decades of the century as well as by the Western functionalism which won the ground anew in Europe and America after World War II. By studying the theory and practice of Western functionalists, especially in the field of architecture, Soviet art historians came inevitably to their roots and to the ideas of such fathers of the functional movement as F. L. Wright, L. H. Sullivan, H. Greenough, and at last R. W. Emerson. Among studies of Emerson we should note an article by V. Posersky, "Aesthetics of Romanticism in England, the USA and France" included in the book *Lectures on the History of Aesthetics* (1974), in which the author drew Emerson's philosophy from the English version of romantic ideas, stating that "transcendentalism was born by interpretation of the aesthetics of Coleridge and Schelling as well as the use of several of Goethe's ideas" (p. 126). A profound review of Emerson's

understanding of nature and the meaning of history was developed by V. Skrypnik in his work "Philosophy of History of R. W. Emerson" contributed to the book *History of Philosophy Today* (1977). The same scholar arranged a more detailed analysis of Emerson's ideas in the article "Philosophical Heritage of R. W. Emerson" in the collection *Critics of Modern Bourgeois Philosophy* (1979). The aesthetic aspect of Emerson's teaching and its conjunction with the general development of the functionalist theory was a subject of the work "Functionalism in Aesthetics" by V. Samokhin in *The Modern Bourgeois Aesthetics* of 1978.

The 1980s were years of more extensive studies of American transcendentalism. "The Herald of Leningrad University" published articles by E. Osipova ("Neo-Platonic Traditions in Emerson's Works", 1984) and by A. Islamova ("Emerson and Carlyle", 1985). T. Morozova undertook a study of Emerson's principle of self-reliance (her article is in *Traditions of Romanticism in the American Literature of the 19th Century and Present Times*, 1982). Of more importance are two fundamental works written in this time. One of them was a dissertation called "The Transcendentalism of R. W. Emerson" defended by V. Skrypnik in 1982, in which a refined and amplified estimation of Emerson's contribution to the theory of the movement was outlined. The other dissertation, defended by S. Pavlychko in 1984 and entitled "The Poetry of R. W. Emerson and E. Dickinson," dealt with aesthetic and literary aspects of both outstanding Americans.

Among the latest books worth mentioning is a study by I. Sidorov called *American Philosophies of Action: From R. W. Emerson to J. Dewey* (1989), in which the specified features of American thinking have been traced from the early works of Emerson to the epistemology developed by American pragmatism.

REVIEWS

"The Strains of Eloquence": Emerson and His Sermons. By WESLEY T. MOTT. University Park and London: Penn State Press, 1989. xii, 236 pp. \$26.50.

It is encouraging that so much scholarly attention is being devoted to Emerson. His career as a preacher, so long neglected, is being studied. Until 1989 we had only McGiffert's *Young Emerson Speaks* and one other sermon, "The Lord's Supper." Then came the first of four volumes of the complete sermons, edited by Albert J. von Frank, and Wesley Mott's *"The Strains of Eloquence."*

"We have discovered," writes Mott, "that Emerson was not simply a rebel or a sage, but that he had been a brooding, searching young man whose self-conscious gropings toward eloquence are an intriguing prelude to the great Transcendentalist essays." His sermons are "a brilliant young mind's dramatic encounter with personal doubt and ambition and with urgent issues of theology, power, and expression." Emerson's ministry was not "a stifling sidetrack from his real literary ambitions." It was a vital part of his career that needs to be recognized and understood.

Mott takes us on paths seldom travelled. He develops Emerson's Christology. Though not orthodox, it is derived from the gospels and carefully worked out. We knew this was so in "The Lord's Supper," and here we learn that that sermon was not an aberration. Emerson as a preacher was a careful thinker. He struggled with traditional Christian doctrine. His views on Christ, the ministry, and immortality were well thought out.

Mott traces in the sermons the development of his ideas on compensation, self-reliance, history, and aesthetics, as well as his theology. He follows Emerson's intellectual development through this important period: his ideas on preaching and the minister's responsibility to his congregation; his growing confidence in himself and the indwelling God; then his progress from conventional religious thinking to Transcendentalism. We see Emerson's insecurity as a preacher and thinker, and his ambivalence toward the ministry. Mott shows how Transcendentalism crept into the sermons: the theme of Emmanuel, "God with us," became "God within us."

Considerable attention is given to the intellectual background and environment in which Emerson grew, preached, and flourished. There is excellent historical setting. For example, Mott shows that Emerson was not the originator of the renunciation of miracles. That controversy had been brewing at least 15 years. He gives the economic, intellectual, political, and religious climate.

Here we gain a better insight into Emerson's ministry. Our understanding of his whole career is broadened. The book is to be read slowly and thoughtfully. It is like Emerson's sermons: it requires the attention and participation of the reader. This is

a scholarly, thoughtful book. Remember, though, it is about Emerson's sermons, not his whole ministry. It is likely to be the definitive book on that important aspect, so necessary to understanding the later Emerson.

The book is not light reading. It requires concentration. But it's worth it. *"The Strains of Eloquence"* is a penetrating analysis of the theology of Emerson's sermons. It should have a place in your Emerson collection. It greatly enlarges our understanding of him and fills a gap in the Emerson literature.

J. FRANK SCHULMAN
Manchester College, Oxford

Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform.

By LEN GOUGEON. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990. xiii, 408 pp. \$45.00.

The recent publication of Len Gougeon's *Virtue's Hero* will come as no surprise to those interested in this important (and thus surprisingly overlooked) area of Emerson studies. For the past decade, Gougeon has almost single-handedly been examining different aspects of Emerson's relationship to the abolition movement and the nature of his commitment to the antislavery cause. *Virtue's Hero* pulls together much of this work that has appeared in several scholarly journals, but let me quickly add that it considerably expands upon it as well. Those familiar with Gougeon's labors will not be surprised either to find in *Virtue's Hero* a study that is meticulous in its research, and far-ranging in its examination of primary materials that heretofore have been either overlooked or only partially examined.

To be sure, among Emerson studies the Concord Sage's relationship to the abolition movement has been a matter of interest right from the time of the first major biography, George Willis Cooke's in 1881. Every important biography since has at least raised the question of Emerson's role as a social reformer, if not typically devoting very detailed attention to his activities in the antislavery arena. There have been as well a handful of brief articles (before Gougeon, barely half-a-dozen in the 20th century), and a smattering of Ph.D. dissertations and M.A. theses. Considering, however, that Emerson was a committed social reformer throughout his life, who, as Gougeon states, "never wavered in his commitment to clearly defined principles of human liberty, equality, and equal rights," the scholarly record on Emerson, antislavery, and abolition seems thin indeed.

This relative lack of attention, though, might well be expected. As Gougeon notes, scholarly efforts to understand Emerson's relationship to the abolition movement have been hampered because, though he spoke often on the abolition question from the mid-1840s to the Civil War, "many of the manuscripts for these speeches have apparently not been preserved." Moreover, "other addresses for which manuscripts existed were not published until long after Emerson's death."

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

For future issues of *Emerson Society Papers* we solicit information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news (promotions, transfers, retirements, deaths, etc.) of Emersonian scholars. We will also consider notes and short articles (about 4 to 5 double-spaced typewritten pages, or less) on subjects of interest to our membership. MLA stylesheet is preferred. Send manuscripts to the editor, Douglas Emory Wilson, 1404 Christine Ave., Anniston, AL 36201.

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Reviews

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Virtue's Hero does not suffer from these weaknesses. It is informed by what Gougeon himself calls a "painstaking ten-year effort" that involved the examination of "over a thousand primary documents . . . includ[ing] Emerson's antislavery speeches, as well as newspaper accounts of the same, the unpublished correspondence of abolitionists, records of abolition society meetings and annual reports, scrapbooks, giftbooks, newspaper and journal accounts of abolition meetings, and reports of abolition activities that appeared in Concord's local newspapers . . . [,] the larger Boston papers . . . , as well as the *Liberator*, the *Anti-slavery Standard*, and Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*." Gougeon notes too that his work has also benefitted from the now complete Harvard edition of the *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*.

And what does all this good old-fashioned rigorous scholarship add up to? Gougeon modestly claims "a more complete, accurate, and detailed accounting of Emerson's abolitionism than was heretofore possible." He is certainly right about that. But *Virtue's Hero* is, in fact, the most thorough and completely documented portrait of Emerson and abolitionism that we are ever likely to get.

Gougeon divides his study into ten chapters that range from "Early Concerns: 1821-1837" to "Reconstruction and Other Struggles: 1865 and After." Included is an opening chapter on "Abolition and the Biographers," which provides the opportunity to trace the "disagreement and controversy" on Emerson's relationship "to the abolition movement and the degree of his commitment to the cause of antislavery." Gougeon devotes most of his attention, however, to "Conflict and Victory: 1860-1865," and to the period from 1838 to 1852—"The Silent Years: 1838-1844," "Confusion and Commitment: 1844-1849," and "Counterattack: 1850-1852."

It is the early period, though, that in many respects is the most interesting to consider—the years leading up to "Emancipation in the British West Indies" in August 1844, an address that Gougeon describes as "alive with the emotions of sympathy, outrage, and hope," and one which marked Emerson's transition from "antislavery to abolition." Gougeon is very

good at contextualizing the local and national forces, people, and events (and there were many) that were at work on Emerson between 1826—the year of his first sermon as a Unitarian minister, which included his first public reference to the institution of slavery—and the Emancipation address of 1844. He is equally effective exploring later events.

What soon emerges is the always refreshing portrait of Emerson amidst the hauling and shoving of life. Yes, many instances are noted in the journals and elsewhere in which his dislike of abolitionists, such as George Thompson, is registered, or he occasionally wrestles with the question of Negro equality, or he reiterates the necessity of individual moral reform to ameliorate social problems, or he expresses passing reservation about the appropriateness of his antislavery activities. But the most vivid images in *Virtue's Hero* are of an Emerson moving steadily—always thoughtfully, at times reluctantly, never indifferently—from faith in an individualistic response to the evil of slavery into the "rancorous realm of public polemics and party politics."

The images are plentiful throughout. Just a few that stand out are of Emerson refusing to speak at the New Bedford Lyceum in 1845 because of its decision to exclude blacks from regular membership; or of Emerson delivering an emotionally charged "Fugitive Slave Law" speech in 1851 to an audience of Harvard undergraduates who boo and hiss him; or of Emerson refusing to condemn John Brown and publicly defending him on three separate occasions in a few months in 1859-60; or of Emerson speaking at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-slavery Society in 1860 over calls of "put him out" and "dry up."

Considering the extent of Emerson's commitment and contribution to the abolition movement over a period of many years, we can only thank Len Gougeon for providing these and numerous similar images in his impressive study. We can thank him too for finally providing the richly detailed, thoroughly documented, and long overdue study that—as Philip Gura observes on the book's dustjacket—places "Emerson in the street and on the platform for the cause of abolition. And it is high time."

STERLING F. DELANO
Villanova University

An Emerson Bibliography, 1989

DAVID M. ROBINSON
Oregon State University

New editions and critical works from 1989, also including several late-appearing items from 1988.

Editions.

The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Albert J. von Frank. Historical Introduction by David M. Robinson. University of Missouri, 1989. [The first volume of a four-volume scholarly edition of Emerson's extant sermons.]

Books.

Barish, Evelyn. *Emerson: The Roots of Prophecy*. Princeton, 1989. [A study of Emerson's intellectual and emotional development, stressing his struggle with the personal and professional legacy of his father.]

Cavell, Stanley. *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures After Emerson and Wittgenstein*. Living Batch Books, 1989. [Extends Cavell's explorations of Emersonian philosophy with a meditation on the question of skepticism in "Experience."]

Cayton, Mary Kupiec. *Emerson's Emergence: Self and Society in the Transformation of New England, 1800-1845*. North Carolina, 1989. [A study of Emerson's intellectual "emergence" from the culture of Boston Federalism and Unitarianism.]

Hodder, Alan D. *Emerson's Rhetoric of Revelation: Nature, the Reader, and the Apocalypse Within*. Penn State, 1989. [Stresses *Nature's* mystical elements, and its presentation of an inward apocalypse.]

Hoopes, James. *Consciousness in New England: From Puritanism and Ideas to Psychoanalysis and Semiotic*. Johns Hopkins, 1989. [A reading of New England intellectual history, including Emerson and the Transcendentalist movement, focussing on the evolution of the concept of "consciousness."]

Leverenz, David. *Manhood and the American Renaissance*. Cornell, 1989. [Emerson is given a prominent opening chapter in this study of the American ideology of manhood.]

Mott, Wesley T. *"The Strains of Eloquence": Emerson and His Sermons*. Penn State, 1989. [A study of Emerson's sermons, placing them in the context of his ministry and its traditions.]

West, Cornel. *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism*. Cornell, 1989. [Traces a praxis-oriented American philosophy, originating with Emerson.]

Essays.

Bartlett, Irving H. "The Philosopher and the Activist: New Letters from Emerson to Wendell Phillips." *NEQ* 62 (1989):280-96. [Emerson's correspondence with Phillips on issues of reform.]

Baym, Nina. "Early Histories of American Literature: A Chapter in the Institution of New England." *AmLH* 1 (1989):459-88. [Describes the construction of American literary history centering in New England, with Emerson as a central figure.]

Bickman, Martin. "'The Turn of His Sentences': The Open Form of *Essays: First Series*." *ESQ* 34 (1988):59-75. [Analyzes a repeated structure of turns or reversals in the essays.]

Bosco, Ronald A. "'Poetry for the World of Readers' and 'Poetry for Bards Proper': Theory and Textual Integrity in Emerson's *Parnassus*." *SAR* 1989: 257-312. [Describes the evolution of *Parnassus*, stressing its close connection with "Poetry and Imagination."]

Burkholder, Robert. "The Radical Emerson: Politics in 'The American Scholar.'" *ESQ* 34 (1988):37-57. [Argues that the address, contrary to Holmes, constituted no departure in nationalist consciousness or rhetoric.]

Dant, Elizabeth A. "Composing the World: Emerson and the Cabinet of Natural History." *NCL* 44 (1989):18-44. [On the impact of the cabinet of natural history that Emerson encountered at the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris.]

Fisher, Mathew. "Emerson Remembered: Nine Letters by Frederic Henry Hedge." *SAR* 1989:313-28. [The texts of letters written by Hedge to James E. Cabot for use in Cabot's *Memoir*.]

Goluboff, Benjamin. "Emerson's *English Traits*: 'The Mechanics of Conversation.'" *ATQ* n.s. 3 (1989):153-67. [Notes the conversational form in *English Traits*.]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson, Carlyle, and the Civil War." *NEQ* 62 (1989):403-23. [An account of the growing intellectual rift between Emerson and Carlyle over the slavery issue and the Civil War.]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson, Poetry, and Reform." *MLS* 19 (1989):38-49. [Analyzes a series of 1851 poems in the context of the Fugitive Slave Act.]

Gross, Robert. "The Machine-Readable Transcendentalists: Cultural History on the Computer." *AQ* 41 (1989):501-15. [A description of the uses of computer analyses of 1850 census data for understanding the social context of Transcendentalism.]

Grusin, Richard. "Revisionism and the Structure of an Emersonian Action." *AmLH* 1 (1989):404-31. [Focuses on the 1837 Letter to Van Buren to develop a perspective on several recent critical studies.]

Hill, David W. "God, Wolf, and Law: Emerson's Indeterminant 'Fate.'" *ESQ* 34 (1988):229-55. [A detailed analysis of the structure of "Fate."]

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Hutson, Richard. "Two Gardens: Emerson's Philosophy of History." *The Green American Tradition: Essays and Poems for Sherman Paul*. Ed. H. Daniel Peck. Louisiana State, 1989, pp. 21-38. [Uses *Essays: First Series* to argue against the idea that Emerson's work is ahistorical.]

Kouidis, Virginia M. "Prison into Prism: Emerson's 'Many-Colored Lenses' and the Woman Writer of Early Modernism." *The Green American Tradition*, pp. 115-34. [Emerson's influence on Kate Chopin, Dorothy Richardson, Marianne Moore, and Mina Loy.]

Leonard, George J. "Emerson, Whitman, and Conceptual Art." *P&L* 13 (1989):297-306. [Argues that Emerson and Whitman anticipated modern art's attitude toward the object.]

Lopez, Michael. "De-Transcendentalizing Emerson." *ESQ* 34 (1988):77-139. [An essay-review that develops Lawrence Buell's term for recent reconceptions of Emerson, and locates him as a "post-idealist" philosopher.]

Lundin, Roger. "Emerson and the Spirit of Theory." *R&L* 21,iii (1989):17-42. [Emerson's resignation from the ministry is seen as a paradigmatic act.]

Nagarajan, S. "Emerson and Advaita: Some Comparisons and Contrasts." *ATQ* n.s.3 (1989):325-36. [Notes some general similarities between Emerson and Advaita, but stresses the more significant differences.]

Richardson, Robert D., Jr. "Emerson's Sicily: History and Origins." *ESQ* 34 (1988):23-26. [On Emerson's reaction to Sicily in his first European tour.]

Robinson, David M. "Grace and Works: Emerson's Essays in Theological Perspective." *American Unitarianism, 1805-1861*. Ed. Conrad Edick Wright. Northeastern University and Massachusetts Historical Society, 1989, pp. 121-42. [Discusses the interplay of reformulated concepts of grace and works in "Self-Reliance," "Spiritual Laws," and "The Transcendentalist."]

Robinson, David M. "Poetry, Personality, and the Divinity School Address." *HTR* 82 (1989):185-99. [Reads the Address against the context of Unitarian concerns over religious and aesthetic emotionalism, and the personhood of God.]

Roberson, Susan L. "Beauty and the Soul: The Beginnings of Emerson's Aesthetics." *JASAT* 19 (1988):23-33. [Traces the development of an aesthetic theory in Emerson's sermons.]

Sattelmeyer, Robert. "'When He Became My Enemy': Emerson and Thoreau, 1848-1849." *NEQ* 62 (1989):187-204. [Analyzes the strains in their friendship after Emerson's return from his English lecture tour.]

Sebouhian, George. "A Dialogue with Death: An Examination of Emerson's 'Friendship.'" *SAR* 1989:219-39. [An analysis of Emerson's attitudes toward, and practice of, friendship.]

Simic, Charles. "Visionaries and Anti-Visionaries." *DQ* 24 (1989):114-23. [Emerson's visionary experience provides a backdrop for the modern skeptics Dickinson, Frost, and Stevens.]

Wider, Sarah. "'Most Glorious Sermons': Anna Tilden's Sermon Notes, 1824-1831." *SAR* 1989:1-93. [Anna Tilden's summaries of Unitarian sermons at Federal Street Church, including Emerson's.]

Wider, Sarah. "What Did the Minister Mean: Emerson's Sermons and Their Audience." *ESQ* 34 (1988):1-21. [A discussion of audience response to Emerson's preaching based on the sermon notes of Anna Tilden.]

Zwarg, Christina. "Emerson as 'Mythologist' in *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*." *Criticism* 31 (1989):213-33. [Discusses the *Memoir* as a record of Emerson's self-recognition in Fuller and her work.]

as co-editors (with Douglas Emory Wilson) of Volume 10, "Uncollected Prose," of the *Collected Works*.

Volume 2 of the *Topical Notebooks*, edited by Ronald A. Bosco, is expected to be published by University of Missouri Press late in 1991 or early in 1992.

American Literature Association Conference

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels on "Emerson and Biography" at the second annual conference of the American Literature Association in Washington, D.C. on 24-26 May 1991:

Session 1. Chair, Ronald A. Bosco (SUNY-Albany)
"Inventing a Life: The Example of the Sermons," Sarah Wider (Colgate Univ.)

"'Build therefore Your Own World': Emerson's Constructions of the 'Intimate Sphere,'" Albert J. von Frank (Washington State Univ.)

"The Politics of Biography and History in Emerson," Frank Shuffelton (Univ. of Rochester)

Session 2. Chair, Irene Williams (Univ. of San Diego)

"Young Emerson and the Mantle of Biography," Susan L. Roberson (Auburn Univ.)

"The Misuses of Great Men: Emerson, Anti-Slavery, and Biography," Len Gougeon (Univ. of Scranton)

Respondent: "Emerson and Biography, I and II," Joel Myerson (Univ. of South Carolina)

The 1991 annual meeting of The Emerson Society will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, 24 May following the second Emerson session.

The ALA conference will be held at the Mayflower Hotel. Preregistration conference fees will be \$30 (with a special rate of \$10 for independent scholars, retired individuals, and students). The hotel is offering a conference rate of \$60 a night (single or double). To register or obtain housing information, write to Professor Alfred Bendixen, English Dept., California State University, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

Barish Wins Christian Gauss Prize

Congratulations to founding member Evelyn Barish on the award of the Christian Gauss Prize for her book *Emerson: The Roots of Prophecy* (Princeton, 1989). Professor Barish teaches at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York.

Emerson Texts Available

The Emerson Society has available a number of copies of standard Emerson texts, some of which are hard to come by. The price of each is \$8.00. Proceeds will go into a Society scholarship fund. Please contact Ralph H. Orth, President, Emerson Society, Department of English, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405.

JMN 1 (3 copies); *JMN* 2 (2); *JMN* 5 (1); *JMN* 6 (4); *JMN* 7 (6); *JMN* 8 (1); *JMN* 9 (2); *JMN* 10 (1); *JMN* 13 (2); *Rusk, Life* (2); *Early Lectures* 3 (2).

Brook Farm Exhibit

An exhibit to commemorate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the founding of Brook Farm—the celebrated nineteenth-century utopian community—will be held in the Falvey Memorial Library of Villanova University from 19 April to 11 October 1991. For further information about "Brook Farm: A Retrospective and Celebration," contact the exhibit coordinator, Sterling F. Delano, Department of English, Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085.

Special Concord Session on "Emerson and Thoreau"

In conjunction with The Thoreau Society's annual meeting and gala 50th anniversary celebration, The Emerson Society will present a special session on "Emerson and Thoreau" in Concord, Massachusetts, on Sunday, 14 July 1991.

One of the most significant friendships in American literature will be explored in a series of five-minute presentations.

This format will allow for discussion of a wide range of views and will encourage audience participation.

The panel, moderated by Wesley T. Mott (WPI), features "Emerson and Thoreau in Concord," Marcia E. Moss (Concord Free Public Library); "Running amuck against the world: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Problem of Reform," Len Gougeon (Univ. of Scranton); "Emerson, Thoreau, and the Crisis of the 1850s," Linck C. Johnson (Colgate Univ.); "Concord, 1851-1852: Three Perspectives," Nancy Craig Simmons (Virginia Tech); "Thoreau and Emerson: The Lidian Connection," Robert Sattelmeyer (Georgia State Univ.); and "Emerson's Probity and the Severity of Thoreau's Ideal," Bradley P. Dean (East Carolina Univ.). Joel Myerson (Univ. of South Carolina) will serve as respondent.

The program will be held in the French Gallery of The Concord Museum, across from the Emerson House, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. Immediately following will be a tour of the Emerson Study and the Thoreau Gallery hosted by Jayne Gordon, Director of Education at The Concord Museum.

For details on other events in the two-week Thoreau Society Jubilee, write The Thoreau Society Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration, 60 Thoreau Street #320, Concord, MA 01742.

Fruitlands Museums Call for Papers

In conjunction with the 150th anniversary of Bronson Alcott's Utopian community at Fruitlands in Harvard, Massachusetts, Fruitlands Museums is planning a two-day symposium to be held in the summer of 1993.

The Museum invites proposals for papers, slide presentations, and reports on work in progress which relate to Fruitlands and the mid-nineteenth-century reform movements which its members embraced. Topics may include other communal or religious societies, such as Brook Farm, the Shakers, or the Millerites, which influenced and interacted with the Con-Sociate family at Fruitlands; personalities involved in the Fruitlands experiment such as Bronson Alcott, William Lane, Isaac Hecker, and Joseph Palmer; educational, health, and dietary reform; Abolitionism; Temperance; and Phrenology.

Please send a single-page abstract and a brief vita by 15 September 1991 to Maggie Stier, Curator, Fruitlands Museums, 102 Prospect Hill Road, Harvard, MA 01451.

Society Business

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc. was granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service on 19 November 1990. The Society is now able to accept tax-exempt contributions under the terms of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

The Society had 129 Founding Members in 1990, including four in India, four in Japan, two in Canada, and one each in England and the USSR. Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for 1990 (which were distributed at the annual meeting) may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to

PROSPECTS.



Status Report on Emerson Editions

Volume 3 of the *Sermons*, edited by Ronald A. Bosco, is at the press (Univ. of Missouri Press) and is expected to be published this year. Douglas Emory Wilson is now Contributing Editor (for textual matters) of the *Sermons*, replacing the late Wallace E. Williams.

Joseph Slater and Linck C. Johnson, both of Colgate University, will replace James H. Justus and the late Wallace Williams

secretary/treasurer Wesley Mott, Dept. of Humanities, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609.

The Society acknowledges the following Founding Members who joined after the Fall issue of *ESP* went to press: Yoshitaka Aoyama (Japan), Evelyn Barish, John C. Byrd, Robert D. Habich, and M.R. Joshi (India). We also welcome the following new members in 1991: John E. Abraham (India), Larry R. Bowden, Gary L. Collison, Mark R. Dunphy, the Emerson Study Club of Sioux City, Iowa, Jane E. Rosecrans, Nancy S. Shackford, Susheel K. Sharma (India), Susan Sutton Smith, Shunichi Ueno (Japan), and Marilyn Urion.—WTM

Book-of-the-Month Club Selection, 1927

[Our President, Ralph H. Orth, sends the following miscellany.]

Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who was a member of the editorial board of the Book-of-the-Month Club for many years, recalled an unhappy experience in the early days of the Club which will be of interest to Emersonians. In an interview some years later she said:

"To go on to 1927, [one of the first book choices we offered our members was] *The Heart of Emerson's Journals*, edited by Bliss Perry, and with that we came to our first big cropper, in refusal from the readers. In those days, we made a point of telling the subscriber that if he didn't like a book, he could send it back. It turned out, I believe, not to be practical from the business point of view, because it was impossible to arrange, without too great loss [In] the case of *The Heart of Emerson's Journals*, every one of the judges had been extremely enthusiastic about it. We thought it gave an intimate view of

Annual Meeting

The 1991 annual meeting of The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc. will be held during the American Literature Association conference in Washington, D.C. (24-26 May). The meeting will convene at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, 24 May immediately following the second session presented by The Emerson Society. The location, in the Mayflower Hotel, will be published in the convention program.

the inner life of one of our greatest American writers And we still don't know, I think, why it was a complete failure with the readers. We haven't had many such instances of first-rate books like that which did not win acceptance. This came back, as the saying went at the Book-of-the-Month office, 'in carload lots.' It was a very great disappointment to us, and as it was only the second year of the whole venture, it rather shook our confidence in the American reader. Perhaps they *didn't* like books of such good quality as we had assumed the first year."

The transcript of Fisher's interview was uncovered by Mark Madigan, a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts who is engaged in editing the letters of Dorothy Canfield Fisher. It is from "An Interview with Dorothy Canfield Fisher" by Louis Starr, 1956, in the Columbia University Oral History Collection.

[Transcript reprinted here courtesy of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office.]

IN MEMORIAM

Bette Morgan Sheatsley
1920-1990

When visitors came to Mr. Emerson's door, it was Bette Sheatsley who welcomed them and invited them in. This was but one of her many roles as Director of the Ralph Waldo Emerson House. A woman of quick wit and easy conversation, she was the informed expert-in-residence patiently answering visitors' queries whether simple or complex. Bette was the common-sensical instructress who insisted that her "ladies" relate the details of Mr. Emerson's family life with accuracy, enthusiasm, and good taste. She was the kind mentor of many an awkward, shy novice whom she tutored and encouraged, and she beamed with pleasure whenever she overheard her pupils' presentations complimented by departing guests.

A Memorial Service for Bette was held on a brilliantly sunny day in early October. The church, pristinely white inside and out, its interior furnished with restraint, imparted a sense of loftiness and light. Before the lectern rested a single bouquet of richly hued autumnal flowers, freshly cut from Lidian's garden. Arranged in a modest woven basket, the bouquet symbolized, as aptly as any one thing could, Bette and her life. An enthusiastic gardener, a collector of fine hand-crafted antiques, a hostess dedicated to gracious entertainment in both her own and Mr. Emerson's homes, Bette was a woman who admired the inherent elegance of classic simplicity and lived her life accordingly.

—Nancy S. Shackford