

Volume 3, Number 2

# Emerson Society Papers

### Scanning "Hamatreya": Emerson as Miltonic Prosodist

RICHARD R. O'KEEFE The Pennsylvania State University

It seems that no one has ever questioned one of Hyatt Waggoner's judgments about Emerson's "Hamatreya," that neither its first nor its third line "can be scanned by any traditional prosodic system."1 Emerson as Poet did, however, devote considerable attention to "Hamatreya." The poem has remained to a surprising degree unread, even by those few commentators who interest themselves in Emerson's verse.<sup>2</sup> It still deserves more study, especially now when recent critical investigations have been de-emphasizing Emerson's "Transcendentalism," stressing instead his post-idealism, pragmatism, or Existentialism.3 "Hamatreya," no celebration of the Transcendental self, but rather a chilling evocation of the self's angst confronting mortality, merits by now an appreciation of its strength as a poem, before we can begin to appraise its value as a philosoph*ical* poem. Rather than a curiosity, a hodgepodge of botched verses, "Hamatreya" can be read, even metrically, as a powerfully imaginative poem using a perfectly traditional scansion. Its prosody would have seemed normal to Emerson's ear, given some of the best English poetry that tutored it. The metrics of "Hamatreya" have models in the practice of John Milton.<sup>4</sup>

The difficulty that Waggoner and others have had with the poem's arrestingly dramatic first few lines suggests a failure to recognize technical sophistication: Emerson's learned exploitation of the possible variations playable upon the standard iambic pentameter. The two metrical variations relevant to "Hamatreya," ones honored by Milton's practice, are that of the number of stresses within the line, and, secondly, the substitution of some non-iambic feet within the five-iamb structure, the latter change sometimes creating additional syllables for these decasyllabics. Such variations create a rich rhythmic counterpoint, and the skillful prosodist will be sure to follow irregular lines with strictly regular ones, to keep the reader's ear appreciative of the variation by re-enforcing the norm. Thus the very first line of Paradise Lost is dramatically irregular, a clustered rush of stresses, the second a perfectly orthodox iambic pentameter. The second line of "Hamatreya" is completely regular for the same reason.

This note suggests the following scansion of line 1:

/ U / / U / U / UU / Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Merriam, Flint,<sup>5</sup>

a trochee, a spondee, two iambs, and an anapest. Many lines in Milton offer close parallels, but an almost identical prosodic model can be heard in *Paradise Lost*, IV, 248:

Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm[.]<sup>6</sup>

This line, like many in Milton, suggests metrical ambiguities, but however it is scanned it will appear to be very close to Emerson's line quoted above. One may hear either

 $/ \cup / / / \cup \cup / \cup /$ Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm,

a trochee, a spondee, another spondee, an anapest, and an iamb, or

/ U / / U / U / U / U / Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm,

a trochee, a spondee, an iamb, an anapest, and an iamb. If one hears the line in the latter way, it becomes almost identical to Emerson's, the only metrical difference being the position of the anapest, which occurs in the fourth foot in Milton but in the fifth foot in Emerson.

The third line of "Hamatreya" has an even more exact precedent. If we scan it (and there is very little metrical ambiguity here) as

/ / / / / ∪ / ∪ / Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and wood[,]

we get three spondees followed by two iambs. Milton's metrical practice offers a precise equivalent:

Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death,

in *Paradise Lost*, II, 621.<sup>7</sup> The first and third lines of "Hamatreya" are indeed scannable in a tradition graced by the highest authority, by no less a poet than John Milton.

### Scanning "Hamatreya"

(continued from page 1)

R. A. Yoder is probably correct about the Anglo-Saxon influence on the half-lines of the "Earth-Song," but he fails to observe that this middle section of the poem contains its least interesting lines. When Emerson shifts from "spoken" iambic pentameter to "sung" half-lines, he creates an unpleasant, "singsongy" effect ("Mine and yours;/Mine, not yours./Earth endures;"). Given the metrical mastery of the beginning of the poem, this effect must be deliberate, an emphatic contrast. Emerson is no "jingle man," as lines 1 and 3 certainly prove. But the Earth is a jingle woman because her song is a *taunt*. Earth in this poem is Nature as Bitch Goddess. Her half-lines are crafted to be rhythmically irritating because so is their message.

Emerson's conclusion returns us to musical as well as philosophical excitement. If he skillfully captured our attention at first by surprising our ears, he provides us with an even more satisfying metrical effect in his last lines, to make us remember them:

> U /UU My avarice cooled U / UU / UU / Like lust in the chill of the grave.

Suddenly, in this complex, highly crafted piece of verbal music, we have a series of anapests, in fact three of them in two short lines, "The sound must seem an echo to the sense," wrote Pope. And no metrical diminuendo could be more appropriate. Those three terminal anapests, with their stresses falling on cooled, chill, and grave, are shivers.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Hyatt Waggoner, Emerson as Poet (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), 153.

<sup>2</sup>Its title has received more attention than the poem itself: Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Emerson's Oriental Texts," Critic 12 (18 February 1888): 81; Richard Bridgman, "The Meaning of Emerson's Title, 'Hamatreya'," ESQ 27.2 (1962):16; Kiffin Ayres Rockwell, "Emerson's Hamatreya, Another Guess," ESQ 33.4 (1963): 24; Mohan Lal Sharma, "Emerson's HAMATREYA," Explicator 26 (April 1968): 63; Alice Hull Petry, "The Meeting of the Twain: Emerson's 'Hamatreya'," ELN 23 (March 1986): 48. Several extended studies of Emerson's poetry and poetics pay scant attention to "Hamatreya," and these quick glances reveal misreadings. Thus John Q. Anderson, The Liberating Gods: Emerson on Poets and Poetry (Coral Gables, Fla.: Univ. of Miami Press, 1971), includes only one reference to "Hamatreva," in which the ancestral landlords get curiously reincarnated: "In 'Hamatreya' Emerson saw his neighbors [sic]-Bulkeley, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Merriam, Flint-as examples of man's deception by illusion" (97), a "night of the living dead" reading more suggestive of Poe than of Emerson. R. A. Yoder, Emerson and the Orphic Poet in America (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978) provides three references to "Hamatreva": that the "Earth-Song" section imitates the metrical halfline of Anglo-Saxon verse (112); that "much of 'Hamatreya' and a poem like 'The Titmouse' are the essence of Frost" (168), a judgment that tempts the quibbler to proffer "The Snow Storm" or "Fable" as much closer previews of Frost; and that "['Berrying' 's] consistent first-person and precise balancing ... recall the landlord [sic] of 'Hamatreya'" (138), a reading that loses five of Emerson's six landowners.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Lopez, "De-Transcendentalizing Emerson," ESQ 34.1,2 (1988): 77-139; Lawrence Buell, "The Emerson Industry in the 1980's: A Survey of Trends and Achievements," ESO 30.2 (1984): 117-132; David Robinson, "A Theory of Wednesdays: Emerson's Later Ethic of the Ordinary," unpublished MLA paper, Chicago, 30 December 1990.

Robert E. Burkholder

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#### **EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS**

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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 tyupewritten 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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### Abstracts of San Diego ALA Papers

The following panels were presented by the Emerson Society at the third annual conference of the American Literature Association on 28 May in San Diego, California.

**SESSION 1:** Rereading Emerson. Chair, David M. Robinson, Oregon State University

### Emerson's 'Woman': Another View of Self-Reliance

IRENE WILLIAMS University of San Diego

As an expression of functional independence, objective intelligence, and spiritual purpose informed by power and will, Emerson's doctrine of Self-Reliance had no connection to traditional feminine spheres of domestic and social routine. By adapting themselves to the rigors of this discipline as they could, women identified vicariously with a masculine principle of behavior. For self-reliant individualism was masculine, not universal . . . and masculine, but not not male. The Self-Reliant Individual had no gender and no sex. It was a He Without Parts, a He extricated from ambivalence. The transparent eyeball, the Higher Platform . . . these may be read as metaphors of release from an inherently problematic social imperative, the necessity of managing one's body.

At the 1855 Women's Rights Convention in Boston, the entire focus was custom . . . not how to surpass it, but how to enlarge its scope. Here Emerson found himself dead center in the buzz and din, supporting the feminist platform issues while simultaneously assuring his audience that True Women do not need the vote. It was not possible for him to say to the predominantly female group gathered there to address grievances what he had many times expressed to his mixed lyceum audience of men and women identifying with the masculine principle of Self-Reliance: "I wish the man to please himself, then he will please me." Rather, "They are in their nature more relative," he said of women. Emerson's discomfort is explicit in this text. On this occasion he is more conventional and less literary than the exemplary Emerson; also more complex and interesting.

#### "The Laboratory and Workshop of the Student": Emerson, "Clubs," and the Examiner Club

#### **GUY LITTON** Virginia Military Institute

No

Many Emersonians may be unaware of the fact that in 1869 Emerson became a member of the Examiner Club, an organization begun in 1863 by Joseph Henry Allen, at least initially for the purpose of supporting the Christian Examiner. While it may seem odd that Emerson would join a club whose members consisted largely of editors and contributors to a magazine which some two decades earlier had been responsible for publishing

some of the most vehement condemnations of the writings of Transcendentalists such as he, an examination of the records of the Examiner Club as well as Emerson's published and unpublished writings on clubs and conversations offers a number of possible reasons why Emerson may have joined the club and why, after attending only three meetings in three years, his interest in the organization waned. Emerson's interest in joining the Examiner Club, like his desire to join the Radical Club in 1867, can largely be attributed to the fact that several of the members of both of those clubs were already members or frequent guests of the Saturday Club. But his interest also seems to have stemmed, at least in part, from a desire following the lukewarm reception of his 1863 lecture on "Clubs and Conversations" to gain a broader experience with such clubs. Though Emerson never overtly stated his reasons for discontinuing his active connection with the Club, an analysis of his journals and his essay on "Clubs" (Society and Solitude, 1870) indicates that his experiences with the organization did not live up to his emerging conception of the club as the "laboratory and workshop" of communication.

### The Anarchy of Material Culture: An Unspoken Side of Emerson's Nationalism

RONALD A. BOSCO University at Albany, SUNY

**SESSION 2:** Theodore Parker and Transcendentalism: A Sesquicentennial Celebration. Chair, Wesley T. Mott, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

### Theodore Parker and the "Divinity School Address"

**DEAN GRODZINS** Harvard University

Theodore Parker responded more to the tone and language of Emerson's "Divinity School Address" than to its content; his response influenced his development into a social critic (1838-40). After he heard the Address, he was stirred to write "The State of the Church" (Sermon #94, preached 5 August 1838, MSS Andover-Harvard Library), a sermon in which he echoes Emerson's language at several points, and indicates that he shares Emerson's view that the church must abandon the distinction between natural and revealed religion, and turn for religious guidance not to the authority of historical Christianity, but to the soul.

There were differences between Emerson's position and Parker's. Parker disagreed with what he believed to be (continued on page 4)

#### **ALA** Papers (continued from page 3)

Emerson's claim that people were God, and with his portraval of God as impersonal; for Parker, people were like God, whom he portrayed as a Father. Yet Parker admitted that no portraval of God is definitive, and that Emerson's language regarding God was deliberately ambiguous.

More significantly, Emerson in the Address attacks spiritual deadness in the clergy, while Parker in his sermon attacks it in the congregation. This difference is due not only to the two men addressing different audiences. Emerson wanted to justify his decision to leave the ministry, while Parker wanted to defend his Transcendentalism against what he perceived to be hostile "actualism" of his wife, Lydia Cabot Parker, and her family.

Parker's sermon shows its greatest debt to Emerson's Address in its urgent tone-new to Parker's preaching. Parker gives for the first time the sense that society is fundamentally flawed, because most people failed to act as if they had an immortal, infinitely perfectible soul. He soon began to preach sermons on social reform topics. In 1840, he published in the Dial a major manifesto, "The Christianity of Christ, of the Church, and of Society." This piece, usually described as inspired by Brownson's "Laboring Classes" articles, is in fact a reworking of the "State of the Church," with a new section, which echoes Emerson's critique of the clergy in the Address. But Parker goes beyond Emerson, and says ministers not only fail to preach the soul, they ignore the issues of the day.

#### Achievement, Crisis, and Change: Theodore Parker in 1842

#### GARY COLLISON Penn State University—York

In 1842, Theodore Parker's ambitions as a religious scholar culminated with the publication of his first book, A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion, and the completion of still another. However, 1842 was also a year of continuing conflict with the Unitarians over the ideas first expressed in his South Boston Sermon. In the crisis, Parker showed himself to be both more vulnerable and more thin-skinned than Emerson had been following the controversy over the "Divinity School Address" of 1838. Parker was particularly stung by the defection of several key friends, and in his journal and his letters he pictured himself as persecuted, alone, and friendless. Ironically, however, the controversy had already brought Parker a sustaining circle of new friends and a new, larger audience, though Parker himself was slow to acknowledge this. During the winter of 1841-42, he

drew large audiences to the lectures that were published as his Discourse. By the end of 1842, Parker's lectures and Discourse had given him the urban, sophisticated, un-churched audience that was to underwrite his work during the remainder of his life. The influence of this new audience and urban setting would push Parker even more firmly away from scholarship and toward social reform.

#### Caroline Dall on Theodore Parker

HELEN R. DEESE Tennessee Technological University

Though Theodore Parker sometimes expressed frustration at being almost constantly surrounded by members of the opposite sex, he was indeed a good friend to numerous women. One of the most loval of his cadre of female disciples was Caroline Healey Dall (1822-1912), a second-generation Transcendentalist who became a writer, lecturer, preacher, and reformer. It was Dall's early association with and her education by the Transcendentalists which set her life's course on a track of idealism and independence: among the Transcendentalists Theodore Parker was the male figure whose influence was most critical to her spiritual and intellectual development. Dall has preserved her impressions of Parker in the form of detailed summaries of his lectures and sermons and in other comments in her journals. A significant correspondence between them also survives. Through these manuscript journals and letters, a valuable resource for the student of Parker, it is possible to trace a particular instance of Parker's dealings with a woman and of the crucial and long-ranging influence which he had upon her. Dall became a convert to Parker's liberal theology as a teenager soon after hearing him preach and lecture in 1841. Then, having served as her spiritual mentor, Parker in the late 1840s and the 1850s led Dall through precept and example in the direction of social and political activism. In the decades after his death Dall's relationship with Parker became a touchstone by which she measured the dynamics of interaction between herself and other men. He was almost the only man who had treated her entirely as an equal, she noted. Clearly, Parker knew how to give support and nurture without condescension. Caroline Dall's was not an easy personality to deal with, and she left behind a considerable string of broken relationships, including those with almost all contemporary women reformers and with her own husband. That Parker could have maintained their relationship over two decades suggests considerable skill in interpersonal relations as well as an apparently genuine respect for and acceptance of a bright and earnest woman whom many others faulted for her egotism and need for control.

New editions and critical works from 1991, including items missed in the 1990 bibliography (ESP 2:5-6).

#### Editions.

The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume 3. Ed. Ronald A. Bosco. Missouri, 1991. [The third of a four-volume edition, covering sermons preached October 10, 1830 through November 20, 1831.]

The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Volume 8, 1845-1859. Ed. Eleanor M. Tilton. Columbia, 1991. [Tilton's second additional volume in continuation of Rusk's edition.]

#### Books.

Carafiol, Peter. The American Ideal: Literary History as a Worldly Activity. Oxford, 1991. [Surveys critically the search of Transcendentalist scholars for a uniquely American literary tradition.]

Edmundson, Mark. Towards Reading Freud: Self-Creation in Milton, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Sigmund Freud. Princeton, 1990. [The role of grief in Emerson's self-creation.]

Goodman, Russell B. American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition. Cambridge, 1991. [Finds Emerson part of a philosophical tradition that includes James and Dewey.]

Grusin, Richard A. Transcendentalist Hermeneutics: Institutional Authority and the Higher Criticism of the Bible. Duke, 1991. [Argues for a revision of the notion that Transcendentalism was anti-institutional.]

Horwitz, Howard. By the Law of Nature: Form and Value in Nineteenth-Century America. Oxford, 1991. [Emerson's part in a cultural trend establishing nature as a standard of value.]

Lasch, Christopher. The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics. Norton, 1991. [Reads Emerson as part of a dissenting political tradition.]

Oelschlaeger, Max. The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology. Yale, 1991. [Compares Emerson and Thoreau on the concept of wilderness.]

Oriard, Michael. Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Game in American Culture. Cambridge, 1991. [The interplay of concepts of play and work in Emerson and Thoreau.]

Porte, Joel. In Respect to Egotism: Studies in American Romantic Writing. Cambridge, 1991. [Emerson's move from orator to essayist.]

Railton, Stephen. Authorship and Audience: Literary Performance in the American Renaissance. Princeton, 1991. [Emerson's awareness of audience in The Divinity School Address.]

### An Emerson Bibliography, 1991

DAVID M. ROBINSON **Oregon State University** 

> Williams, John B. White Fire: The Influence of Emerson on Melville. California State University, Long Beach, 1991. [Emerson as a primary influence on Melville.]

#### Articles.

Bauer, Melanie L. "Emerson's Acquaintance with Abijah Metcalf Ide, Jr.: Six Unpublished Emerson Letters." RALS 17 (1991):258-62. [On Emerson's lecture schedule.]

Colacurcio, Michael J. "'Pleasing God': The Lucid Strife of Emerson's 'Address.'" ESQ 37 (1991):141-212. [The Divinity School Address in the light of Channing's influence.]

Dedmond, Francis B. "The Selected Letters of William Ellery Channing The Younger (Part Three)." SAR 1991, 257-343. [Contains references to Emerson.]

Harris, Kenneth Marc. "Emersonian Self-Reliance and the Self-Deception Theory." P&L 15 (1991):286-94. [Reads "Self-Reliance" in the light of the philosophical problem of the possibility of self-deception.]

Hicks, David. "'Seeker for He Knows Not What': Hawthorne's Criticism of Emerson in the Summer of 1842." NHR 17, i (1991):1, 3-4. [Personal context of Hawthorne's journal comments on Emerson in 1842.]

Hurth, Elisabeth. "The Uses of a Mystic Prophet: Emerson and Boehme." PQ 70 (1991):219-36. [Boehme's influence on Emerson.]

Jacobson, David. "Vision's Imperative: 'Self-Reliance' and the Command to See Things as They Are." SiR 29 (1990):555-70. [Emerson's treatment of skepticism in "Self-Reliance."]

Ljungquist, Kent P. "Emerson Responds to a Critic: An Uncollected Letter." AN&Q 4 (1991):125-29. [On the question of the "personality" of God.]

McNeeley, J. Trevor. "Beyond Deconstruction: America, Style, and the Romantic Synthesis in Emerson." CJAS 22 (1991):61-82. [On the reclamation of Emerson in contemporary criticism.]

Milder, Robert. "'The American Scholar' as Cultural Event." Prospects 16 (1991):119-47. [Emerson's revision of the figure of the man of letters as earlier articulated by Buckminster.]

Newfield, Christopher J. "Emerson's Corporate Individualism." ALH 3 (1991):657-84. [The relation of Emerson's concept of individualism to the concept of the corporation.]

------. "Loving Bondage: Emerson's Ideal Relationships." ATQ 5 (1991):183-93. [On Emerson's essays "Friendship" and "Love."]

(continued on page 6)

### Bibliography

(continued from page 5)

Reynolds, Larry J. "Hawthorne and Emerson in 'The Old Manse." SNNTS 23 (1991):60-81. [Hawthorne's struggle with Emerson's presence and example.]

Quigley, Peter. "Rethinking Resistance: Nature as Opposed to Power in Emerson and Melville." WVUPP 37 (1991):39-51. [Critique of Emerson on political grounds.]

Roberson, Susan L. "Young Emerson and the Mantle of Biography." ATQ 5 (1991):151-68. [Emerson's revision of his early concept of heroism.]

Stack, George J. "Emerson and Nietzsche: Fate and Existence." NCP 19 (1991):1-14. [Compares Emerson and Nietzsche on fate.]

20 (1991):109-33. [Compares Emerson and Nietzsche as moral philosophers.]

Trofimov, Alexander. "Emerson Studies in the USSR." ESP 2, no. 1 (1991):1-2. [The phases of the publication and commentary on Emerson in the USSR.]

-----. "The Impact of Emerson's Writings in Russia." ESP 1, no. 2 (1990):3-4. [Emerson's early reception in Russia.]

von Frank, Albert J. "On a Line in 'Boston." ESP 2, no. 2 (1991):1-2. [The sources for the phrase "file their mind" in the poem.]

Woodall, Guy. "The Record of a Friendship: The Letters of Convers Francis to Frederic Henry Hedge in Bangor and Providence, 1835-1850." SAR 1991, 1-57. [Francis's comments on the Divinity School controversy.]



## PROSPECTS.

#### Merton Sealts to Receive Hubbell Award

Merton M. Sealts, Jr., Henry Pochmann Professor of English Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Founding Member of the Emerson Society, will receive the prestigious Jay B. Hubbell Award for achievement in American literature. A leading authority on Herman Melville, Professor Sealts is a distinguished Emersonian as well, having edited volumes 5 and 10 of the Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson; his much anticipated Emerson on the Scholar was published this year by the University of Missouri Press. Presentation of the Hubbell Award will be at the annual luncheon of the American Literature Section of the Modern Language Association in New York on 28 December.

#### Emerson in Czechoslovakia

Emerson Society member Frantisek Kozisek of Prague writes of Emerson's continuing significance in Czechoslovakia. The "name of R. W. Emerson," he notes, "was repeatedly mentioned in various lectures that preceded and related to" the 12th International Transpersonal Conference held in Prague this June.

And a new edition of Emerson's essays has been translated into Slovak-the first book of Emerson's writings to be published in Czechoslovakia in sixty-five years. Translated with an afterword, "Emerson's Spiritual Message," by Dusan Slobodnik, the book is published by Slovensky spisovatel (Bratislava, 1991) and includes "Art," "The Poet," "Plato: or, the Philosopher,""Spiritual Laws,""Uses of Great Men,""Self-Reliance," "Character," and "Nature."

### In Emerson's Footsteps

After completing studies at Yale this spring, Yoshio Takanashi, a founding member of the Emerson Society, flew to Britain before returning home to Japan. "I followed the route of R. W. Emerson's trip in 1833," he writes, "from London to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries, Lake district, Manchester, Liverpool, and to London. From Dumfries by rent-a-car I visited Craigenputtock where Emerson saw T. Carlyle. I was deeply impressed with the lonely atmosphere of the place." Professor Takanashi, who teaches at Nagano Prefectural College, reports much interest in both Emerson and our society among his colleagues who teach American literature.

#### Encyclopedia Authors Sought

A one-volume Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism is being edited for Greenwood Press by Wes Mott. The book is designed as a comprehensive guide to the major persons, places, publications, and concepts of American Transcendentalism. Focus will be on the American Renaissance, but classical, European, Oriental, and native sources and influences will be included. Potential authors of entries should write Professor Mott at the Department of Humanities, Worcester Polytechnic Inst., Worcester, MA 01609, or call 508-831-5441.

## "Emerson and Concord"

"Emerson and Concord: A Sense of Place" was the title of the Emerson Society's second annual panel at the Concord Museum on 12 July. Held once again in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Thoreau Society, this session was designed to coordinate with the Museum's current special theme "Concord: A Sense of Place."

Members who have not yet visited the beautifully renovated Museum are in for a treat during their next visit to Concord. Before the session, forty members of the Society attended a special tour of the Emerson House hosted by director Nancy Shackford.

### Emerson and the Hancock Sunday School

JOEL MYERSON University of South Carolina

On 1 April 1832, Emerson wrote Ezra Ripley that "an unusual press of little engagements" had prevented him from writing.<sup>1</sup> One of these "engagements" is well known: on 29 March, he visited his first wife Ellen's "tomb & opened the coffin."<sup>2</sup> The other has gone unnoticed: on 31 March, he gave the prayer at a meeting of the teachers of the Hancock Sunday School prior to the school's removal to the vestry of the Second Church.<sup>3</sup>

The school had been granted permission to move to the vestry on 12 March.<sup>4</sup> On the 31st, Frederick T. Gray gave an address on "The Sunday School Teacher's Reward," Emerson gave the prayer, and Thomas Gray, Jr., wrote a hymn for the occasion. On Sunday, 1 April, the school and its nearly one hundred pupils moved to the Second Church. Emerson was no doubt glad to give the prayer, for, in addition to his formal connection to the Second Church, his post-ordination dinner had been held at the Hancock School.<sup>5</sup> The family connection continued with Charles Emerson, who spoke on "the sins of the tongue" on 23 September 1832, and on "the conscience, illustrated by the story of Rosamond and the Bracelet," which "much interested" the children, on 21 July 1833.6

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Ralph L. Rusk and Eleanor M. Tilton, 8 vols. to date (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1939; 1990-), 1:349.

<sup>2</sup>The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. William H. Gilman, Ralph H. Orth, et al., 16 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960-1982), 4:7.

<sup>3</sup>[Frederick T. Gray], 'The Sunday School Teacher's Reward.' An Address Delivered Before the Teachers of the Hancock Sunday School, on the Removal of That School to the Vestry of the Second Church, March 31, 1832 (Boston: Benjamin H. Greene-S. G. Simpkins, 1832), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Records of the Second Church, Massachusetts Historical Society. <sup>5</sup>Letters, 1:265n.

<sup>6</sup>Records of the Second Church.



Panelists, pictured, were (left to right) Wes Mott (respondent), Bob Burkholder, Joel Myerson (moderator), Dan Shealy, Bob Gross, and Jayne Gordon.

### 1992 Annual Meeting

President-Elect Joel Myerson presided over the 1992 Annual Meeting of the Emerson Society, held in San Diego, California. on 28 May. Helen Deese and Thomas Wortham were unanimously elected to the Advisory Board, replacing Joel Myerson and Barbara Packer, whose terms expire at the end of 1992. Secretary/Treasurer Wesley Mott reported that the Society ended 1991 with 139 dues-paying members, including six in Japan, four in India, two in Russia, two in Canada, and one each in Czechoslovakia and England. At the end of 1991, the Society's savings account had a balance of \$1,023.26; our fledgling Scholarship Fund, established by Founding President Ralph H. Orth, has a balance of \$271.16. Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for 1991 (which were distributed at the 1992 Annual Meeting) may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to secretary/treasurer Wesley Mott, Dept. of Humanities, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609.

### Scanning "Hamatreya" (continued from page 2)

<sup>4</sup>That Emerson was a lifelong reader, student, and lover of Milton needs no more evidence than his references to Milton throughout the Collected Works and the Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks, but of special relevance is the essay "Milton," first published in the North American Review in 1838, The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson. The Centenary Edition. 12 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903-04), XII, 247-271 (cited hereafter as W).

<sup>5</sup>W. IX, 35. <sup>6</sup>John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), 283.

<sup>7</sup>Milton, 247.

### LETTERS

#### To the Editor, ESP:

I have a personal project concerning Emerson and Russia which could be named the "Emerson to Russia Project."

Basically, I am trying to rally interest in getting assistance or cooperation in obtaining money, books, or other support, such as will help bring many copies of books by and/or about Emerson into Russia—from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok. The Russians certainly cannot afford to buy them; so we must graciously act, here in America, towards this end.

I have a rather complete list of appropriate addresses in Russia where books may be sent by mail, and am in contact with individuals traveling to Russia who would be able to personally deliver copies of Emerson to appropriate institutions there. But I could use some help—at least to buy books and pay for mailing costs.

Stephen L. Lapeyrouse P.O. Box 289 Santa Cruz, California 95061-0289

[Mr. Lapeyrouse's concerns will be taken up by the Advisory Board at the 1993 Annual Meeting.]

#### To the Editor, ESP:

I want to respond to Bob Burkholder's generally positive, perceptive, and gracious review. I'm glad to be corrected on the points of fact in which I have erred. I feel I should reply, however, for the record, to one of his caveats, lest I seem to have claimed credit unduly. He could not have known this, but at the time I wrote the work (for example the material on Hume), no one had published similar material. The two items Burkholder mentions appeared in 1987 and 1988 after my MS had been completed and submitted for publication but before it saw the light of day in late 1989. Such are the vagaries of publication. I wish I had had the benefit of the other work when I was writing, but I did not hear of it till long afterward. I congratulate Messrs. Milder and Michael on their accomplishments.

Evelyn Barish Professor of English The City University of New York

#### Call for Papers

The Emerson Society is organizing two panels on "Emerson and Pedagogy" for the 1993 conference of the American Literature Association, to be held in Baltimore on 27-31 May. Proposals for sessions or papers should be sent no later than 15 December to our Program Chair, Professor Ronald A. Bosco, Department of English, University at Albany, SUNY, Albany, NY 12222.