

Emerson: the poet and The Poet

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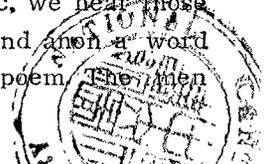
In many ways, American literature starts with Emerson. Emerson was the central figure in the first flowering of American poetry and prose worthy of comparison to European literature; his strong influence can be traced in the works of Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, and Hawthorne, who together with him were the major authors of the so-called "American Renaissance."¹ Yet today, because of changes in attitudes toward literature during this century, Emerson often repels his readers, so that he needs to be interpreted in order not to be ousted from his nineteenth-century position of respect. The purpose of this paper is to discuss his poetry and his criticism of poetry, which in particular are now apt to be misunderstood and condemned without a fair trial. Today it has become hard to imagine that the province of poetry, as distinguished from other forms of writing, extends much farther than its special use of language and rhythm. Emerson, on the contrary, considered that "mastery of language" was a "secondary power" for a poet,² and maintained: "It is not meters, but a meter-making argument that makes a poem."³

When the late R. P. Blackmur, analyzing the verse of Hardy, Yeats, Yeats, and Eliot, separated their argument from the style in which the argument is presented, and called the latter a "mechanics" for the poetry,⁴ he thus devalued what would have been most important to Emerson. Yet Blackmur's is a representative modern view. Is Emerson wrong, then? Is Blackmur wrong? Or can the two views be reconciled?

I

Though his reputation is based on his essays and the influence of his ideas, Emerson always regarded himself as a poet. His own verse he considered second-rate, but he made great claims for poetry in general. Philosophy, he announces, "will one day be taught by poets."⁵ "The rhyme of the poet/ Modulates the king's affairs," he exclaims in one poem.⁶ In his essay on "The Poet," Emerson affirms that "the melodies of the poet ascend and leap and pierce into the depths of infinite time;" and as for the poet himself, he is a "liberating god," "the true and only doctor," and his birth "is the principal event in chronology."⁷

One does not find such encomiums in the criticism of today. Let us see on what they are based. First, the idea that the source of poetry is divine. "Poetry," Emerson says in "The Poet," "was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word or a verse and substitute something of our own, and thus miswrite the poem."⁸



of more delicate ear write down these cadences more faithfully, and these transcripts, though imperfect, become the songs of nations."⁸ Poetry, to use Emerson's figure of speech, is then a divine melody which is copied down according to the skill of the listener. True poetry is the music of the spheres.⁹ The poet himself is a kind of medium, not so much a creator as a "sayer," as Emerson calls him later in the essay.

No one is a perfect medium. "I look in vain for the poet whom I describe," Emerson says toward the end of the same article. Yet every man can hear some of the song. The value of a great poet is to stimulate the listening faculty in other men. "The great poet makes us feel our own wealth," and then, paradoxically, "we think less of his compositions. His greatest communication to our mind is to teach us to despise all he has done."¹⁰ The second notion upon which Emerson's claims for poetry are based is therefore that it improves the reader, by pointing him toward the ideal. In fact, "the arts, as we know them, are but initial. Our best praise is given to what they aimed and promised, not to the actual result."¹¹

The quotations above should show that for Emerson there are two poetries: the ideal and the actual, just as there is The Poet and actual poets. And the ideal is of greater importance to him. Furthermore, we can infer correctly that for Emerson there are no divisions except formal ones among the arts, nor, in fact, between the arts and philosophy and religion. The end of them all is similar: to point toward the ideal.

For example, according to Emerson the province of the poet is beauty. He calls The Poet "the man of Beauty."¹² Indeed, he often regards Beauty (sometimes capitalized, sometimes not) as a criterion for all art: "everything lasts in proportion to its beauty."¹³ But what is beauty? we quickly learn that it is "what is most real,"¹⁴ or "the flowering of virtue,"¹⁵ and so on. Beauty is truth, but truth is not, as for Keats, "what the imagination seizes as beauty." Emerson's beauty is more strictly Platonic. "All form is an effect of character... The beautiful rests on the foundations of the necessary. The soul makes the body."¹⁶ Poetry, therefore, cannot be the mere arrangement of beautiful words, because aesthetic beauty is also the outward face of hidden truth. As the heart shows the man more truly than the face, so in poetry the thought exceeds the meter in importance and language is secondary to the truth expressed.

For such reasons Emerson can claim that poetry will replace philosophy, a statement which no writer would make today without considerable indirection. Modern critics have been quick to point out, however, that Emerson's theory of poetry is confined in its own way. Generalizing about Romantic poetry in his famous essay "Classicism and Romanticism," T.E. Hulme says:

Particularly in Germany... the romantic aesthetes collated all beauty to an impression of the infinite involved in the identification of our being in absolute spirit. In the least element of beauty we have a total intuition of the whole world...

Now it is quite obvious to anyone who holds this kind of theory that any poetry which confines itself to the finite can never be of the highest kind.

During the course of his essay, Hulme objects several times to poetry which is always straining to fly above the world, to capture the infinite. As we shall see, a major

limitation of Emerson's verse is its tendency to soar into abstract vagueness.

Emerson's idea of beauty should suggest his notions of proper poetic method, adumbrated in "The Poet" and other essays. Since the true goal of the poet is hidden in "that region where the air is music," Emerson holds inspiration rather than skill in prosody to be the first requirement for a poet. Just as it is Poetry, not poetry, for which Emerson's large claims are made, it is not "men of poetical talents"¹⁷ but "Kingly bards"¹⁸ whom Emerson admires. The latter do not write by juggling with words but by "resigning [themselves] to the divine *aura* which breathes through all forms, and accompanying that."¹⁹ Not by concentration, but inspiration. The writer must "keep down talent in its place" and "enthroned the instinct," or intuition,²⁰ and hope that the latter will awaken. Though this would seem a too haphazard method of creating, Emerson believes that at moments of inspiration--one can never tell when they will come--one feels "a great public power on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him; then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally intelligible as the plants and animals."²¹

Emerson's idea here follows closely Coleridge and the rest of the Romantics. A poem should take form spontaneously, as a natural growth, from "a thought so passionate and alive that like the spirit of a plant or animal it has an architecture of its own and adorns nature with a new thing."²² Inspiration comes naturally to the poet, so the poem should come naturally too. Moreover, Emerson assumes that by truly writing to himself the poet "writes to an eternal public."²³ It is a false subjectiveness which leads the reader only "to the person of the writer;" true subjectiveness "leads us to Nature."²⁴

To Nature. In this case, Emerson's meaning is simply that the poem must present a truth and not merely a personal observation; he uses a capital "N" probably to give the idea of essence or spirit of nature. He does not mean simply physical nature. However, Emerson uses the latter as the way to the former so often that we should explain his opinion of the proper poetic use of nature.

"Take thy quest through nature,"²⁵ the sphinx advises the poet in one of Emerson's important poems. Emerson lists physical nature as the most important factor in the education of a scholar.²⁶ Elsewhere he asserts that all poems are "a corrupt version of some text in nature with which they ought to be made to tally."²⁷ By study of and contact with nature the poet progresses in his art.

As usual, this theory has an ideal base, for Emerson believed that "nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part."²⁸ Therefore, to study nature is to learn oneself better. The poet's job is to read the vast riddle which nature's surface presents, because his findings will lead to a fuller realization of himself, and of all mankind as well, since for Emerson all men are one in spirit. Emerson's own most important work, *Nature*, is at bottom an inquiry into how to perceive the spirit or essence or aura or divine melody or "world-soul" which lies beyond the face of things. His constant faith is that if only we are patient and watch closely the secret will re-

veal itself, even though he himself is never fully successful.

Emerson, as his contemporary Orestes Brownson wrote, sought all his life "the real, the universal... and the permanent in the events of life and the objects of experience."²⁹ In just the way Hulme complains of, Emerson's works are constantly urging the reader to inspect the smallest objects for hidden gods. "Nature offers all her creatures... as a picture-language... Things admit of being used as symbols because nature is a symbol, in the whole, and in every part."³⁰

II

Emerson foreshadows the introspective trend in modern verse, in that many of his poems are about the problems of the poet. Therefore, as we now turn to discuss Emerson's verse itself, we will see that the ideas explained in the last section are important to it not only as background but as subject matter as well.

Perhaps the main subject of Emerson's poetry, taken as a whole, is the poet's search for Poetry--for example, the poet in the grip of inspiration, the poet reporting the insights got from inspiration, portraits of ideal poets such as Merlin and Saadi, and, most frequently, the poet in despondency waiting for inspiration or the improvement of mankind in general. The discrepancy between the real and ideal art and artist is always in Emerson's mind. Chiefly, he is worried by the difference between the intense power of the too rare moments when he sees meaning in nature and the flaccid normality that he is unable to escape. When in either mood, he tends to deny the other.

"The Sphinx," which Emerson put by choice at the head of his collected poems, introduces this dilemma in fable form. The sphinx symbolizes the spirit of nature. Emerson seems to have got the idea from his friend Carlyle, who uses the sphinx symbolically in a similar way.³¹ In Emerson's poem, the sphinx complains that no one can understand her secret, "the meaning of man." To this a poet answers cheerfully that the sphinx need not fear, because ambitious man always seeks "vision profounder;" that "his soul sees the perfect,/ Which his eyes seek in vain;" and that love is at the center of the changing world. Finally, he dares to insult the sphinx for her stupidity. But at this point she gets angry and replies:

"I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow,
Of thine eye I am eyebeam.
"Thou art the unanswered question;
Couldst see thy proper eye,
Always it asketh, asketh;
And each answer is a lie.
So take thy quest through nature,
It through thousand natures ply:
Ask on, thou clothed eternity;
Time is the false reply." (ll. 111-120)

With this the sphinx rises up and melts into nature:

She silvered in the moon;
She spired into a yellow flame...

Thorough [sic] a thousand voices
 Spoke the universal dame;
 "Who telleth one of my meanings,
 Is master of all I am." (11 124-5, 129-32)

This poem has confused readers who cannot understand why the sphinx evades the poet after he has repeated "correct" Emersonian doctrine to her. The point of the poem, I think, is that the poet's optimism misleads him. He thinks he understands the riddle, but he shows that he does not when he insults the sphinx. As the sphinx points out, she is his "eye-beam:" through her alone he can see, because she is the spirit of nature. Mere words and speculations are not enough; the poet must "take his quest through nature" by reading its meanings.

The poem puts together very neatly the two opposing moods of Emerson's poetry: assurance and frustration. On the one hand, especially in poems like "Saadi," "Merlin," "The Poet," and others, where Emerson speaks at least partly through masks of an ideal poet, he is full of confidence. At such times he announces the power, dignity, and influence of mankind in general or poets and poetry in particular. He prophesies of heroic ages to come and represents his image of the Poet:

His eyes detect the gods concealed
 In the hummock of the field.³²

At such times he often gives himself up to abstractions on the ideal. On the other hand, there is the despondent Emerson, of "Days," "Blight," and other poems. Here it is the individual poet speaking, conscious of his and other men's limitations, sure that he is missing something. Often the two moods occur in a single poem, such as "The World-Soul," which for the most part reflects the second mood:

Alas! the Sprite that haunts us
 Deceives our rash desire;
 It whispers of the glorious gods,
 And leaves us in the mire. (11. 41-44)

but ends, like many of his poems, on a hopeful note:

Over the winter glaciers
 I see the summer glow,
 And through the wild-piled snow-drift
 The warm rosebuds below. (11. 109-112)

In between we can find a variety of combinations. But almost always the issue is the same: hope or frustration about the possibilities of man and particularly the poet to find the ideal in the here and now. Moreover, when assurance is the mood, it is always because the poet feels able to see spirit beyond confusing surfaces, and when frustration is the mood, it is always because the surfaces are too confusing.

It is essential to understand Emerson's flirtation between these two moods in order to read his poetry, and, indeed, his essays. "I write anecdotes of the Intellect; a sort of Farmer's Almanac of mental moods," he once said.³³ Not by chance is "The Sphinx" Emerson's most difficult poem, for, if my reading is correct, it is a self-portrait of a man who knows his questions have answers but that the answers he gives to them and believes

at the time as sincerely (as the poet in "The Sphinx" seems to believe what he says) are yet wrong and that he must always be starting again from the beginning.

III

Few critics, least of all Emerson himself, have taken him for a Poet, or even a major poet. The two most persistent criticisms made of his verse are that it is awkward and careless. His lack of talent and his theory that the "passionate thought" is the most important feature of a poem have been blamed for spoiling his verse. In the quotations above, "Of thine eye I am eye-beam" and "It through thousand natures ply" are indeed downright ugly in the way they twist the meter and the tongue. Above all, in his longer poems particularly, Emerson often hypnotizes himself into a childish simplicity by fitting his syntax to an easy metrical pattern. Here is an example from an unfinished poem, "The Poet," where the speaker tells how many a time an "idle word" from the muse

Was the symphony of spheres,
And proverb of a thousand years,
The light wherewith all planets shone,
The livery all events put on,
It fell in rain, it grew in grain,
It put in flesh in friendly form,
Frowned in my foe and growled in storm,
It spoke in Tullius Cicero,
In Milton and in Angelo... (from section IV)

This passage is little more than a list fitted into rhyme. There is no original diction or imagery except for "growled;" the same grammatical pattern is repeated again and again; all is subordinate to the iambic tetrameter and the idea that the word grew like a plant and became flesh. The idea is potentially a poetic one, but it fails to become so through flatness of style. Emerson's notion of the poem as "meter-making argument," combined with the belief he expressed from time to time that the couplet is the most natural of verse-forms,³⁴ seems to have short-circuited him here.

Yet it is a mistake to assume that Emerson's poetry was spoiled because of his notion of what poetry should be. Were it not for the argument, he might not have written anything at all. In particular, the main theme running throughout Emerson's poetry--the individual's search in nature for the world-soul--is itself poetic, because it requires that truth be found through metaphor. Emerson's method, at its truest, is the same as William Blake's in

To see a world in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower...

Accordingly, Emerson's best verse is packed with symbolic images. The danger comes when, as in the fragment from "The Poet," he shortshriffs his image and tries to soar to heaven without passing through the flower. The strength and the weakness can be seen in the following lines from "The World-Soul:"

Yet there in the parlor sits
 Some figure of noble guise,—
 Our angel, in a stranger's form,
 Or woman's pleading eyes;
 Or only a flashing sunbeam
 In at the window-pane;
 Or Music pours on mortals
 Its beautiful disdain. (11.25—32)

The stanza improves as it goes along. "Noble guise" is trite; line three is also sentimental; but especially in the last two lines the effect becomes striking, as Emerson stops talking about the angel and gives us images of her alone. To be sure, these are not images of her alone. To be sure, these are not images of particular things—it could be any woman, any sunbeam, many kinds of music, and "disdain" is an abstract word striking not for its preciseness but for the unfamiliar association of it with music—yet the last half of the stanza is on a considerably lower order of generalization than the first. The special pleasure which the last two lines give is not only in the language but in the way our minds jump, a little baffled, from the image to the idea and back again; also in the contrast among all the images. The language makes everything else possible, but it is only a tool to present image and idea.

Significantly, in his students' edition of Emerson, Stephen Whicher concludes a defense of Emerson's poetry against critical attack by quoting five passages "which will survive all criticism."³⁶ Three are two-line images, including the last two lines quoted above. Whicher's tactics might suggest that Emerson's poetry is most notable for having brilliant fragments rather than whole poems. This is partly true; and in his essays we can find much the same situation. Emerson himself once wrote: "I sit and read and write, with very little system, and, as far as regards composition, with the most fragmentary result: paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle."³⁷ Emerson's essays are infinitely quotable, but very hard to hold in the mind from beginning to end.

In the foregoing passage, Emerson may be showing something of the pride Fitzwilliam Darcy detected in Mr. Bingley, when that gentleman declared that he wrote in a careless hand.³⁸ In a later essay, "Art and Criticism," Emerson lists as the three principal "weapons" of rhetoric: skill in the language of the common people, compactness, and "metonymy." This essay, one of the few in which Emerson discusses at any length the "secondary services of literature"³⁹--that is, craftsmanship--gives us some valuable insights into Emerson's method. It shows that Emerson's roughness is in part a studied roughness: "Ought not the scholar to convey his meaning in terms as short and strong as the smith and the drover use to convey theirs?" he asks.⁴⁰ Furthermore "metonymy," as Emerson defines the term, is nothing other than the symbolic image. Metonymy, says Emerson,

is a low idealism. Idealism regards the world as symbolic and all these symbols or forms as fugitive and convertible expressions. The power of the poet is in controlling these

symbols; in using every fact in Nature, however great and stable, as a fluent symbol, and in measuring his strength by the facility with which he makes the mood of his mind give its color to things. The world, history, the power of Nature,—he can make them speak what sense he will. (p. 300)

The importance of this discussion is that it shows Emerson considers the symbolic view of nature not only as a way of thinking but also as an aspect of style. The passage above is especially illuminating because of the emphasis put, for once, on control rather than inspiration, and the assertion that controlling the symbolic images of nature is the basis of poetic power.

Many critics, especially Romantic critics, would agree that the image is the basis of poetry. However, individual images alone often do not make a poem,⁴¹ as Emerson perhaps discovered himself: we can find among his poetical works a great number of short fragmentary pieces, consisting of a single idea or image. On the other hand, Emerson used the epigrammatic quatrain frequently and with considerable success, while his best-known poems are often built around a central expanded image, such as "The Snow Storm;" a main idea which is reflected by several parallel images, such as "Each and All;" or a dominant metaphor which suggests the main idea, such as "Bacchus." Emerson most frequently fails when he allows image or metaphor to become too subordinate to meter or abstraction. The passage from "The Poet" quoted above is an example of such failure. "Forerunners" also has as its subject the idea that we can never catch more than hints of nature's meaning and yet those intimations are the most important things in our lives; but it is a much better poem than "The Poet," largely because rather than stating his ideas rather baldly in the first person, Emerson makes them into a symbolic narrative, with the poet pursuing the "happy guides," which are the intimations of immortality personified. This approach is not only more "poetic" because of its indirection, but also represents more accurately the kind of experience which gave rise to Emerson's idea. Thus when Emerson is truly faithful to his ideas, he does "take his quest through nature" and writes a better poem.

One of Emerson's interesting techniques is his use of myth in order to represent some aspect of nature's meaning as it is or should be perceived by the poet. "The Sphinx," "Bacchus," "Merlin," and "Brahma" are examples. All such poems show Emerson's contention, in "The American Scholar," "History," and other essays, that tradition or "the mind of the past" is of importance to the present to the extent that we can relate it to ourselves. The past can be used by the poet in the same way as nature. In this view, Emerson belongs in the camp of Yeats, Eliot, Pound, and Joyce, who seek to relate myth to contemporary life, rather than with romancers like Scott, Tennyson, and E. A. Robinson.

For example, "Bacchus" owes a good portion of its success to the way Emerson uses the old idea that wine gives poetic inspiration. The poet, he says, is inspired, as if by wine, but wine "which never grew/ In the belly if the grape."⁴² Emerson's Bacchus is not the god of drunkenness, but of poetic inspiration:

Pour, Bacchus! The remembering wine;
Retrieve the loss of me and mine! (51-52)

We would expect the familiar Bacchus to do the reverse. Yet there is a similarity between the old god and the new:

Reason in Nature's lotus drenched,
The memory of ages quenched... (56-57)

The juxtaposition of the conventional and the new myth is a clever start for poetic elaboration. "Bacchus" may be less successful than "Sweeney and the Nightingales," but their beginnings are similar.

IV

In summary, Emerson's theory that a poem is a meter-making argument which grows from a passionate thought can be justified as a valid theory if one understands his additional belief that all thoughts worth the name of poetry are pursued through nature. Such thoughts, Emerson meant, are seen through images which suggest them; and the image, even T. E. Hulme would admit, is the basis--or at least a basis--for poetry, though one need not, as Emerson does, make the image a symbol of the infinite. Language--the precise expression of the thought-bearing image--is then a secondary power, and in genesis the form comes after the thought.

The weakness of the theory is that it is incomplete. It applies mainly to the origin and growth of a poem in the poet's mind, which the reader cannot see, rather than to the finished work itself. For the modern critic, idea and even image are justifiably secondary to the language and the prosody in which they are couched, for they are the only way image and idea are communicated to him. Emerson's is a poet-centered theory; the twentieth century's is poem-centered.

Emerson's point of view led him to some bad lapses of taste: witness his notion that Milton's great soul made him superior to Shakespeare,⁴³ an opinion widely held until the twentieth century. However, the poem-centered theory severs the head from the body. If we throw out Emerson and Coleridge, we will not have Romantic poetry; we will be left with Poe's philosophy of composition, "The Raven" by mathematics, which is chilling if not insincere.⁴⁴

V

During the last three sections, by discussing Emerson as a poet in the limited sense of "one who writes verses" I have run the risk of giving a wrong impression of the way Emerson meant his readers to understand the ideas explained in section one. We have seen him call his ideal Poet the sayer, the man of beauty. In fact, Emerson's Poet is no more necessarily a versifier than Sidney's in "The Defense of Poesy." "For we do not speak now of men of poetical talents, or of industry and skill in meter," Emerson warns, "but of the true poet."⁴⁵ The Poet, like Emerson's Scholar, is really an abstraction, of a quality which all men share. As Emerson's sometime disciple, Whitman, says, "The poetic quality is not marshalled in rhyme or uniformity or abstract address-

ses to things nor in melancholy complaints or good precepts, but is the life of these and is in the soul."⁴⁶ For both men, and for a strain of critics in English literature starting at least with Sidney, the great justification for poetry, in this wide sense, is that it is relevant and of value to all people. As Whitman puts it: "the others are as good as he[the greatest poet,] only he sees it and they do not... folks expect of the poet to indicate more than the beauty and dignity which always attach to dumb objects... they expect him to indicate the path between reality and their souls."⁴⁷

What is designated today as poetry would have been regarded by Emerson as the rhetoric of poetry. By limiting the definition we have made some valuable discoveries about the craft of versification, but perhaps at the sacrifice of ends for means. Had Emerson shared our point of view, he might have been a better craftsman. But it is doubtful if he could ever have produced anything memorable if he had not listened to whatever voices seemed to be calling from beyond the face of nature.

NOTES

1. The most reliable and thorough study of this period is F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (London, Toronto, New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), which shows quite convincingly Emerson's central role.

2. "Milton," *Natural History of the Intellect, The Complete Works of Emerson*, 12 vols., ed. E. W. Emerson (Cambridge, Mass., 1891), XII, 261. All subsequent references to Emerson's works are to this edition.

3. "The Poet," *Essays, Second Series*, III, 9.

4. see "W. B. Yeats: Between Myth and Philosophy," *Form and Value in Modern Poetry* (New York, 1957), p. 59 and *passim*.

5. "Powers and Laws of Thought," XII, 14.

6. "Merlin," *Poems*, IX, 109.

7. "The Poet," III, 24, 32, 8, 11, respectively. By "doctor" Emerson means "teacher."

8. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

9. This term was originally invented by Pythagoras and since has been taken over by Christianity; it denotes the harmony of the universe.

10 "The Over-Soul," *Essays, First Series*, II, 289.

11 "Art," II, 362.

12 "The Poet," III, 4.

13 "Reflections on Modern Literature," XII, 466n.

14 "Michael Angelo," XII, 216-217.

15 "Love," II, 179.

16 "The Poet," III, 13-14.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

18 "Merlin," IX, 109.

19 "The Poet," III, 26.

20 "Powers and Laws of Thought," XII, 58.

21 "The Poet," III, 26-27.

- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 10
- 23 "Spiritual Laws," II, 153.
- 24 "Reflections on Modern Literature," XII, 314.
- 25 "The Sphinx," IX, 13.
- 26 "The American Scholar," *Nature, Addresses and Lectures*, I, 86-88.
- 27 "The Poet," III, 25.
- 28 "The American Scholar," I, 88. See also "The Poet," III, 13.
- 29 *The Brownson Reader*, ed. Alvan S. Rowan (New York: P. I. Kennedy, c. 1955), p.175.
- 30 "The Poet," III, 13.
- 31 For example, in "The Sphinx," *Past and Present*, chapter ii.
- 32 *Poems*, IX, 276.
- 33 "Powers and Laws of Thought," XII, 11.
- 34 See "Merlin II," IX, 109: "Balance-loving Nature/ Made all things in pairs," and ff. Matthiessen, p. 137, also remarks on Emerson's theory of the couplet.
- 35 "Auguries of Innocence," 11. 1-2.
- 36 *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. S. E. Whicher (Boston, 1960), p. 41.
- 37 Letter to Carlyle, May 10, 1838, quoted in Whicher, p. 124.
- 38 Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, chapter x.
- 39 "Art and Criticism," XII, 283.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 285.
- 41 Cf. C. Day Lewis' discussion of the role of the image in poetry, in *The Poetic Image* (London, 1958), pp. 17-20 and *passim*.
- 42 "Bacchus," in metaphor and language, is quite similar to a passage in "The Poet," III, 27-28. Both Jay Leyda and Charles Anderson have noted that Emily Dickinson's "I Taste a Liquor" may be a parody of Emerson's style, but one traces the parody to the poem and the other to the essay!
- 43 "Milton," XII, 253-254 and 277.
- 44 See Poe's essay, "The Philosophy of Composition."
- 45 "The Poet," III, 9.
- 46 Preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, incl. ed., ed. Emory Holloway (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1957), p. 494.
- 47 *Ibid.*, pp. 493-494.

愛默生詩人的兩面

畢樂純

我們現在把語言當做詩的根本，但是愛默生以為詩的根本是啓發性的思想，對他而言，詩的重要性是在其啓發思想的程度；他又認為自然能表現理想的。因此他詩的精華也就建立於意象上。最近代的評論家也認為意像是詩的一種確實的根本。

