

Sailing the Zig-Zag Course of a Hundred Tacks:

R. W. Emerson's "Each and All"

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

---

Master of Arts

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of American Studies

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

---

by

Christopher Daniel Felker

1988

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

*Christopher D. Felker*

Christopher Daniel Felker

Approved, May 1988

*Scott Donaldson*

Scott Donaldson, Ph.D.

*Thomas Heacox*

Thomas Heacox, Ph.D.

*Bruce A. McConachie*

Bruce McConachie, Ph.D.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer expresses his appreciation to Professor Scott Donaldson, who directed this study proving the assertion "a soaring thought is only a point more, a station whence you draw triangles for the survey of the illimitable field." The author is also indebted to Professor Bruce McConachie and Professor Thomas Heacox for their reading and criticism of the manuscript. I also express my gratitude to Christopher Wilson and John McAleer for their inspiration and encouragement over the years.

## ABSTRACT

This study examines Ralph Waldo Emerson's use of poetic diction to structure his poem "Each and All." Emerson's strict and demanding use of language creates a form which reflects the intersection of literature with criticism. This diction, which illuminates a central perplexity, carries Emerson's meaning in the poem.

Emerson cannot, with accuracy, be classified as a poet who uses strict logical or dialectical methods in constructing his poems. "Each and All" questions the relation between individuals and their attempts to comprehend the world. Emerson creates dichotomous categories to frame his arguments. These categories eventually do not function as stable, mutually exclusive oppositions, and therefore life is cast as a perplexity combining two necessary meanings.

I begin with an analysis of twentieth-century critical opinions on Emerson's poetry; criticism which, for the most part, depends on a New Critical paradigm and aims at prescriptive judgments of the verse. In this study, no prescriptive judgments are forwarded, and the critical paradigm restricts itself to the use of language in a single poem.

Next is a discussion of "Each and All," which analyses various aspects of--rhyme, meter, verse forms, voice, imagery, and diction--in order to explicate the meaning of the poem. Then I suggest that Emerson's poetry draws on the particular rather than the general in conveying form and meaning. Emphasis is placed on some theories which help to define more closely Emerson's views towards the writing of poetry.

The crux of the paper suggests that the particularity of his poetry stems from a theory of composition which advocates demanding and strict use of language to carry a double meaning. Language is his vessel, which is used to illustrate the ability of the poet and to provide a homily for his readers. I conclude that in an effort to employ language for the ordering of categories, Emerson creates unstable oppositions. This distinctive use of poetic language shifts between two modes of understanding, illuminating tensions that accompany the search for meaningful insights relating the individual to the social fabric.

...That so moving and moved on thoughts and verses, gathered in different parts of a long life, you sail no straight line, but are perpetually distracted by new and counter-currents, and go a little way north, then a little way northeast, then a little northwest, then a little north again. Be it so is any motion different? The curve is not a curve, but an infinite polygon. The voyage of the best ships is a zig-zag line of a hundred tacks.  
(J, 5;224)

Burly, dozing humble-bee,  
Where thou art is clime for me.  
Let them sail for Porto Rique,  
Far-off heats through seas to seek;  
I will follow thee alone,  
Thou animated torrid-zone!  
Zigzag steerer, desert cheerer,  
Let me chase thy waving lines.

("The Humble-Bee")

SAILING THE ZIG-ZAG COURSE OF A HUNDRED TACKS:

R. W. EMERSON'S "EACH AND ALL"

In 1835, Emerson wrote in a letter to his future wife Lydia Jackson--

I am born a poet,--of a low class without doubt, yet a poet. That is my nature and vocation. My singing, be sure, is very husky, and is for the most part in prose. Still I am a poet in the sense of perceiver and dear lover of the harmonies that are in the soul and in matter, and specially of the correspondence between these and those (L, 1: 435)

Emerson took seriously the notion that he was a poet; the identity it conferred became essential to the fulfillment of his life's work. Though twelve years would pass until he published his first volume of poetry in 1847, Emerson had in fact begun to write verses as early as nine or ten, impressing his family, friends, and teachers with his precocious talents. Always the introspective critic, Emerson reassessed his poetry in a journal entry for 1862:

I am a bard least of bards. I cannot, like them, make lofty arguments in stately, continuous verse, constraining the rocks, trees, animals, and periodic stars to say my thoughts,--for that is the gift of great poets; but I am a bard because I stand near them, and apprehend all they utter, and with pure joy hear that which I also would say, and, moreover, I speak interruptedly words and half stanzas which have the like scope and aim:--what I cannot declare, yet cannot withhold. (J, 9: 472)

Penitently commenting on his own status as a poet, Emerson was anticipating the almost continuous critical debate which has accompanied his reputation for one hundred and forty years. In both statements, Emerson cites certain poetical concerns--his ability to sustain a musical voice, to maintain continuous verse, to construct a coherent stanza form--that have remained at the center of the various critical debates surrounding his poetry. In fact, critical evaluations have tended to disparage Emerson's ability as a poet.

## I

As early as 1915, O. W. Firkins located "frequent and flagrant badness" in Emerson's versification (Firkins, 274, 276). Finding very little to praise in the work, Firkins thought that the main difficulties stemmed from a serious want of organization and imagination. Ultimately, Firkins retreated altogether from the poetry in the face of the "hopelessness and the obviousness of his prosodic faults" (Firkins, 286).

Paul More continued this same criticism with more compassion in his section on Emerson in the Cambridge History of American Literature (1917). More lamented the failures of Emerson's rhetorical style: "Emerson often missed what he might have learned from Plato's *Phaedrus* was the essence of good rhetoric, that is to say the consciousness of his hearer's mind as well as his own. We hear him, as it were, talking to himself, with no attempt to convince by argument of enlighten by analysis" (More, 352). More acknowledged, however, that Emerson did create occasional poems of great beauty, poems in which he overcame his "general tendency toward looseness and formless spontaneity of style" (More, 358). One of the more important contributions More made to



twentieth-century interpretations of the poetry was to recognize the primacy of spontaneous sentiment in Emerson's poetics. "In literary form and style the privilege of spontaneous sentiment showed itself with Emerson not in that fluency which meant longwindedness, but in the habit of waiting for the momentary inspiration to the neglect of meditated construction and regularity" (More, 358).

Stuart Sherman paid particular attention to Emerson's extremely concentrated style. Citing several parallels to the modern poetry of his own time in a volume on the poems and essays, Sherman produced an apology of sorts for Emerson: "His verse, which is strikingly modern, has offended readers by its unconventionalities, but it is time the critics stopped harping on its defects and saw it for what it is, strong wine" (Sherman, 115). As might be expected, Sherman spoke from the perspective of a creative artist, and attributed Emerson's lack of reputation to critical shortsightedness: "he has been underrated as a poet because he did not understand, or would not practice, dilution" (Sherman, 115)

In 1929, Alfred Kreymborg was willing to call Emerson an influence "in the blood of every American original," yet unwilling to bestow on him the stature of an American original himself. Kreymborg did recognize the passionate quality of Emerson's verse, however, "there is excitement, fire in his work though the

passion belongs to the soul rather than the body" (Kreymborg, 67-83).

Kreymborg admitted the faults of Emerson's poetic technique, but concluded they did not matter "As for the always enumerated technical faults that so trouble grammarians, rhetoricians, and prosodists, they were, to be sure, apparent on every page but finally unimportant in view of what the best poems accomplish" (Kreymborg, 83).

Two years later in 1931, Bliss Perry argued that Emerson should have written in prose only, since "most of the fine things the poems say could just as well have been said in prose; brilliant fragments do not make a whole; and the prosody is often harsh and sometimes even grotesque" (Perry, 81-93)

In fact, Emerson's value as a literary figure in the early part of this century was usually equated with his prose essays and not with his poetry. Ludwig Lewisohn suggested that Emerson's poetry reflected gold and dross combined. The dross in Emerson's verse was the formless argumentation, not the prosody. He was among the minority of critics who thought Emerson's deviation from a critical standard might be justified, or at least unimportant, to the poetry's final effect for readers. Readers at the time were troubled with a lack of argumentation and a too infrequent use of ironic implications. "Turning to the poems, we are back with the more familiar Emerson, with his gold and dross. By dross I do not mean the defective measures, the gritty rimes, the sediments

of blank and conventional diction in the earlier poems. In the mass of his better work in verse these things are wholly negligible" (Lewisohn, 136).

Each of these critics faulted Emerson because in their view, poetry had a definite prescribed form and certain accepted rules of construction. The New Critical theory, in the vanguard of academic criticism during the years 1930-1955, judged poetry according to its various verbal, symbolic, and rhetorical features. As Waggoner's Emerson as a Poet points out:

The New Critics found Emerson's poetry inferior by their standard, which demanded that the rhetoric of good poetry reflect the ironies, ambiguities, and discontinuities of life itself as they saw it. Thus Yvor Winters, classicist and rationalistic moralist by conviction, was true to his principles when, detecting the dionysian and ecstatic elements in Emerson, he condemned the man as a dangerous sentimentalist and consigned the works to oblivion. (Waggoner, 7)

In the years since the poetry was first published, a variety of critics have attempted to categorize Emerson's verse. Edward Waldo Emerson, Ralph's brother, discovers three styles in the verse--that which is "juvenile" and tends to imitate eighteenth-century examples, that belonging to a "middle period," which Ralph "hammered while hot," and that of the "later period" which is polished and musical. Thomas G. Henney saw two periods, the early verse drawing on the eighteenth century, and the post-1832 verse characterised by complex and original metaphors. Strauch, the first critic to produce a variorum edition of the poetry, divided the work into those poems with organic form and

those dealing with symbolic imagination. Stephen Whicher differentiates between regular and free verse poems. Finally, Josephine Miles split the poetry into those with metaphysical succinctness and with freer contemporary materials (Waggoner, 45-46).

Attempting to reopen the debate over the status of Emerson's poetry, Hyatt Waggoner's study of Emerson as a Poet has done much to address the problems cited by various critics. In redirecting the attention of critics from sources to a study of the verse itself, Waggoner's study parsed the assumptions of two critical approaches. The first theory contends that Emerson was indoctrinated in a particular philosophy. This theory, promulgated by Sheldon Liebman, finds the origins of Emerson's early poetics in the Common Sense School of Scottish philosophy which dominated the academic community of Harvard:

Like Longfellow and Bryant, Emerson first learned his poetics from the Common Sense School. He was taught that in order to create, the poet must strike a balance between reason and imagination, between judgment and genius. He was taught that poetry must be intelligible and in some sense true to life, though it must also be idealized. And he learned that poetry must be didactic, that the poet's function is to provide moral instruction for his readers. (Liebman, 32)

A second theory regarding the source of Emerson's poetics is Strauch's Platonic/Romantic synthesis. Largely because it treats Emerson as a poet of ideas, this theory has gained great currency among those who explicate Emerson's poetry. Strauch suggests that in Emerson's work,

Man copies nature by employing words as things: but words in their image-making capacity redouble and intensify nature, first as linguistic

acts of the folk mind and, secondly as projections of the poet's imagination. Emerson simultaneously held two contradictory views of art--1. A laborious mimicking of nature's spontaneous and effortless creations (Plato) and 2. Organic filaments relating him to the cosmos, thus producing his own idiosyncratic versions of the world (Romantic). (Strauch, 50)

Waggoner's view of Emerson's poetic origins addresses several common-sense aspects of Emerson's poetry which are not fully accounted for in Strauch's (the dominant) view of Emerson's poetry. To begin with, Emerson's poetry is remarkably un-philosophic if one defines philosophy according to commonly accepted usage. Of course Emerson treated subjects with philosophic content, but not in any systematic way. As Waggoner states the problem, "How could a man who despised logic and disdained to argue, except by the anti-rationalist method of paradoxical assertion, contribute to the clarification, to say nothing of the solution, of the classic problems of philosophy" (Waggoner, 60). Both of the foregoing theories, and even at last Waggoner's own linguistic/genre theory of Emerson's poetics, do exactly what Emerson would never have done; build a system for its own internal consistency. Norman Miller, in an article about the philosophic concept reflected in "Each and All" which equates philosophy with Emerson's intent as a writer, argues that "Emerson, by his own admission, was not a system builder, at least not in the ordinary sense of the word 'system'--a unified and internally consistent set of tenets built upon a basic premise or fact" (Miller, 381). Miller asserts that a

search for Emerson's intent must focus not on logical or philosophical constructs but on less categorical but fully evident characteristics of the poetry (Miller, 318). In this study, it will become readily apparent that Emerson develops in his poetry a situation where disorder manifested in a form of impossible logic becomes in itself a loosely defined arrangement of sorts. While not easily grasped by strict literary concepts, Emerson does manage to develop a vocabulary that embodies a vacillating relation between broad categories.<sup>1</sup>

Waggoner's exceptional contribution to the study of Emerson's poetry lies in his focus on problems of linguistics and genre. Waggoner finds diversity in the language used to create an idea of the poet, illustrating that Emerson could have drawn upon many possible examples for defining his various roles as a poet (Waggoner, 68). Comparing the various meanings cultures attach to their words for poet, Waggoner convincingly points to the ambiguity inherent in much of the poetry as a rich resource for enlightened scholarship. In the end, Waggoner sees Emerson as essentially a vatic poet, one who divines and also speaks prophetically without recognizing a division between the act of divination and pronouncement.<sup>2</sup> Waggoner's thesis is intriguing, since it suggests that much of Emerson's diction may be explained in terms of the mutability inherent in meaning.

Unfortunately, Waggoner proceeds to analyse the poetry largely in terms of

the prose, thus abandoning the very material most in need of reappraisal. The problem with Waggoner's analysis is that it still focuses on Emerson as a poet of ideas, a label which oversimplifies or at least seems to deny Emerson any real acuity with structuring language in verse. Waggoner sees Emerson as "attempting to put into practice ideas--changing ideas at that, which made his problem all the greater--about a different kind of poetry from the 'pretty magazine verses' his age so much admired and he tended to despise" (Waggoner, 194). Valuable as this conclusion might be, it fails to escape many of the assumptions about Emerson's poetry which read the verse mainly in terms of its sources and contexts.

Roy Harvey Pearce, using much the same technique of critically analyzing the assumptions regarding Emerson and "philosophy" or "theology" says of the vatic nature of the poetry: "He [Emerson] may conceive of poetry as vatic; yet his poems do not work vatically, they are too much his poems: their effect is one of creation, not of revelation. The poet works too hard as poet to function as priestly ontologist and mystagogue" (Pearce, 159). Pearce's observation, which I take to be accurate, shows that Waggoner places too much stress on the vatic nature of poetry, forcing it to account for more than it really does. Assigning labels, as he points out, only obscures the underlying processes of poetic creation. It is in this process, which links stylistic and compositional concerns,

that new insight might be gained into Emerson's abilities as a poet.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Waggoner's assertions that vatic poetry is often expressed in paradoxical or gnomic utterances serves to properly focus attention on the effects that Emerson's language creates in the verse. Such an approach redirects attention away from the "vatic-ness" and towards the specifics of language.

While Waggoner does not provide the definitive work on Emerson as a poet, he does suggest many of the problems in the critical interpretations, interpretations which do not approach Emerson on the grounds suggested by the poet in his scattered writings--the mechanics of language manipulation. As Waggoner succinctly asserts, "Both the Victorians and the new critics judged Emerson's verse by inappropriate paradigms, paradigms calculated to reveal its weaknesses, some real some imaginary--and to obscure its characteristic strength" (Waggoner, 66).

Waggoner identifies the central problem to be encountered by any new critic who seeks to explore Emerson's poetry.

Since [Stephen] Whicher's somewhat embarrassed and heavily qualified defence in 1957, the poetry has been so thoroughly out of fashion that attempts to arrive at critical evaluations of it, or even to take it seriously enough in critical terms to attempt to describe its features and place it in our poetic development, have become rare almost to the vanishing point.



The reason for this dramatic decline in interest is not hard to understand: the paradigm or model of 'good poetry' which has guided the thinking and work of scholars and critics alike has very inadequate room for, and provides no really appropriate way of dealing with, the kind of poetry Emerson chiefly wrote. (Waggoner, 48-49)

I will attempt in this paper to stay in bounds of the vanishing point of criticism, treating Emerson's verse by extending the analytic possibilities of linguistic hermeneutics discussed only briefly in Waggoner's study. To do so requires that the standards of judgment be severely restricted. I will do this by purposely engaging in non-prescriptive criticism; that is to say I am not trying to demonstrate that Emerson's poetics are inherently "good" or "bad," as much of the earlier criticism has done. Secondly, I intend to alter the paradigms according to which Emerson is commonly judged by considering his rhetorical use of language in a single poem, the 1834 "Each and All." Emerson himself did not construct logical or even dialectical systems for executing his poetry therefore; any approach grounded in the assumptions of these concepts is bound to miss the mark. The various aspects of Emerson's poem "Each and All," especially as they relate to the form the poem takes and the compositional devices employed, are used to illustrate a conjunction of literature and criticism. Emerson's composition depends on the use of language which suggests that over-arching notions about man's relation to the world are carefully circumscribed. The particularity of Emerson's diction ultimately is a function of the poet's stringent and demanding use of language in the poem; it is the vessel

which must "sail the zig-zag course of a hundred tacks."

II

EACH AND ALL

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown  
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;  
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,  
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;  
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,                   5  
Deems not that great Napoleon  
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,  
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;  
Nor knowest thou what argument  
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.           10  
All are needed by each one;  
Nothing is fair or good alone.  
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,  
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;  
I brought him home, in his nest, at even;           15  
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,  
For I did not bring home the river and sky;--  
He sang to my ear,--they sang to my eye.  
The delicate shells lay on the shore;  
The bubbles of the latest wave                   20  
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,  
And the bellowing of the savage sea  
Greeted their safe escape to me.  
I wiped away the weeds and foam,  
I fetched my sea-born treasures home;           25  
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things  
Had left their beauty on the shore  
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.  
The lover watched his graceful maid,

As 'mid the virgin train she strayed,                    30  
 Nor knew her beauty's best attire  
 Was woven still by the snow-white choir.  
 At last she came to his hermitage,  
 Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage;--  
 The gay enchantment was undone,                    35  
 A gentle wife, but fairy none.  
 Then I said, "I covet truth;  
 Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;  
 I leave it behind with the games of youth:"--  
 As I spoke, beneath my feet                            40  
 The ground-pine curled its pretty wreath,  
 Running over the club-moss burrs;  
 I inhaled the violet's breath;  
 Around me stood the oaks and firs;  
 Pine-cones and acorns lay on the ground;        45  
 Over me soared the eternal sky,  
 Full of light and of deity;  
 Again I saw, again I heard,  
 The rolling river, the morning bird;--  
 Beauty through my senses stole;                    50  
 I yielded myself to the perfect whole.  
 (*Poems*, 1847, 14-16)

Originally composed in 1834, "Each and All" was first published in the *Western Messenger* on the 6th of February 1839. Later, in the year 1845, Longfellow published the poem in a collection titled *The Waif: A Collection of Poems* (Cambridge, 1845), but omitted lines 29-38. Emerson's poems, collated from thirteen typical twentieth-century anthologies revealed that "Each and All" was represented ten times, giving the poem third place among all the poems in the frequency of publication.

"Each and All" is a good choice for analysis here because of its place in the chronology of Emerson's poetic development, and because it presents an ostensibly philosophical idea which relies on defined categories.

Carl Strauch cites 1834 as the year of Emerson's poetic maturity.<sup>4</sup> Before 1834, Strauch believes Emerson "developed slowly both as a prose writer" and a poet, because of "the kind of talent he possessed and the kinds of material that brought the talent into focus" (Strauch, 353). The talent Strauch refers to is Emerson's ability to stockpile in his journal various far-flung sources and then to integrate them into his various writings. It took a number of years to gather a considerable quantity, and the number of entries in his various journals increased dramatically following his first excursion to Europe during the years 1832-1833. As we have already seen, 1834 was the year that Emerson admitted to Ellen Tucker that he had a calling for poetry. "Each and All" initiates that claim, along with other poems published that year.

The poem's title draws on the Coleridgean idea of the poet as he employs the contemplative imagination to discern and reinterpret the "round corporeal world animated." The theme of harmonious composition is portrayed through an interest in variable phenomena. In Coleridge's original formulation, the idea accents the "poet's power of imagination proceeding upon the all in each of

human nature." The title emphasizes the relationship between a fragmented reality and some consideration of unity. As Miller writes, "the doctrine purports to explain and illuminate the essential relationship between the part and the whole, between the particular and the universal" (Miller, 381). Like Coleridge, Emerson frequently used linguistic opposites to classify his subject matter: Each and All, Reason and Understanding, Nature and Religion, Unity and Multiety, and Nature and the Self, all appear commonly as dichotomous subjects in his writings.<sup>5</sup>

There is evidence, provided by Lawrence Buell, that Emerson may have realized the poetic possibilities of this doctrine where Coleridge himself could not. "Emerson's peculiar combination of sensitivity and insouciance enabled him to get much better results from the correspondential theory than one would expect from Coleridge, even if Coleridge had taken the trouble to develop it in detail" (Buell,153). Buell attributes this ability to Emerson's willingness to construct his poem according to a deviant methodology. The use of the poem's language assisted Emerson greatly in this regard since it preserves a flexibility in the rendering of the categorical propositions stated in the title. Today we might speak of religion and science as being nearly opposite propositions, yet in Emerson's world the two disciplines existed symbiotically. The mixture of meaning between these sets of words is like a mobius strip; to attempt to

discern the inner and outer surfaces will only result in the conclusion that they are the same surface constituted from opposite directions. As Buell explains the issue, "Coleridge wanted to see correspondence as a metaphysic, which would have removed a great deal of its poetic suppleness. Precisely because Emerson did not care about methodological rigor, he was better suited to pursue the poetic implications of correspondence" (Buell, 153).

If Emerson was loose with his methodology, he used vocabulary rigorously. His view on the importance of poetic language reflects the very specific demands he placed on words. Emerson the poet taps the inherent power to distinguish meaning. Writing in his Encyclopedia, Emerson records, "No man can write well who thinks there is any choice of words for him. In writing there is always a right word and every other than that is wrong (J, 6:81)." Emerson uses this clear directive to select key rhetorical terms in "Each and All" that have a double reference or intermixture.<sup>4</sup> Some of these terms are the comparisons between argument and neighbor's creed, the ear and the eye, beauty and gentleness, truth and beauty, and youth and experience.

Additionally, Emerson relied on words integrating specific things and approaches to convey a sense of the total message intended by a poet. In this manner he drew upon a nineteenth-century notion of "winged-words," those words strung together to create message bearing verses. Emerson's

understanding of language expressing many-layered meanings is prominent in "Nature":

Language is a third use which Nature subserves to man. Nature is the vehicle of thought, and in a simple, double, and threefold degree.

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit. (N, 20)

Carl Strauch observes that "words and phrases acted powerfully upon Emerson, and for the student who is conscious of this magnetic attraction, the deductions to be made from the use of a single word or phrase are often as compelling as those based on whole passages embracing explicit references" (Strauch,359). That Emerson was exceptionally word-centric is evident in his statement that "bare lists of words are found suggestive to an imaginative and excited mind. It does not need that a poem be long. Every word was once a poem (J 4: 75)."

Emerson's language operates on the level of rhetoric, not logic or dialectic.<sup>6</sup> He posited an essential equivalence between words and things. From Sampson Reed's Observations on the Growth of the Mind in 1826, Emerson recorded the following passage in his journal,--"Each separate existence in the universe, each thing, has its own unique language, its peculium, that which it is better suited to perform than any other existence (J, 4:43)." This notion is a natura in minimus argument, one that is reflected in the poem "Each and All." The sparrow's song is associated with heavenly music, the virgin's beauty is sung by the

snow-white choir, all are needed by each, and each reveals the presence of all. Emerson concluded: "Every word which is used to express a moral or intellectual fact, if traced to its root, is found to be borrowed from some material appearance...most of the process by which this transformation is made, is hidden from us in the remote time when language was framed" (N, 20).

Emerson stated that language must change with a changing world. Consequently, the correspondence conveyed by language should reflect the nineteenth-century notions of the world as process from a fluctuating perspective. "Old Scoriae" had to yield to new images reflecting a transcendental awareness that lay within the skillful interplay of language. At the present time, it is enough to show that Emerson has a concern revealed in the title for depicting details and that it is the particular (the each) that guides this poem. Through the presentation of particular insights, the poem gains its momentum. Unity in this poem is implied, resting beneath the surface. The poem opens with accounts of individual's and concludes with an individual awareness. Linking the individuality is a spirit of animating unity that is suggestive of connections, but such consanguinity remains elusively defined.

The general plan of the poem rests on these three related incidents, where particular events and objects describe experiences of a loss. Summarizing the general plan, Miller writes that "the poem moves through a series of three



related cases in which particulars--a sparrow, seashells, a virgin--are removed from their proper setting and 'brought home.' Each loses its charm and beauty when isolated from its natural environment" (Miller,384). Emerson placed a variety of images in the poem to stand alone so as to enable the reader to draw his/her own conclusions. We have already seen how the use of distinct episodes tends to disassociate the structure of the poem into parts. One explanation for Emerson's adopting of such a technique has been offered by Frederic Carpenter, "Emerson's philosophy of individualism logically justified this atomic literary method. If the isolated flash of insight is all important, 'conscious' form is unimportant" (Carpenter, 74). Just as Emerson espoused a nation of self-made men, he believed that each should arrive at his own interpretation. Emerson wanted the rhetoric of this poem to suggest open interpretations. Through careful composition he sought to leave open many of the questions regarding the final message conveyed by the verses.

The poem's first section (lines 1-10) relates in four clauses the value of each to each. The first clause, considering the thinking of a "red-cloaked clown" in a field in relation to a shepherd standing on a hill, opens the poem with a physical separation of two figures in a rural, pastoral setting. The "red-cloaked clown" of line 1 is probably a reference to North Italian peasants. Emerson on 6 June 1833 entered the following into his journal, "Italy is the country of beauty but I

think specially in the northern part. Everything is ornamented. A peasant wears a scarlet cloak" (J, 4:58). Closer to the date of composition, in Journal A of 1834 he writes, "The shepherd or the beggar in his red cloak little knows what a charm he gives to the wide landscape that charms you on the mountain top and whereof he makes the most agreeable feature and I no more the part my individuality plays in All (J, 6:109)." Apart from identifying the source of the poetic image, the entry also illustrates Emerson's focus on particulars. The shepherd, his location in reference to another, the quality of the landscape, and the notion of individual worth (as it contributes to the surrounding beauty) are specified directly in the first two lines. By contrast, the "All" referred to in the journal entry is not treated in any overt fashion, instead remaining a silent linkage.

The next couplet elaborates the pastoral setting by introducing a lowing heifer, the first sound introduced. Sounds resonate throughout this poem; they are mentioned no fewer than twelve times. Besides the lowing of the heifer (4), the sounds include the tolling of a bell (5), the singing of a sparrow (13), the "wild uproar" of the sea (28), and the speech of the poet (40). Each reference is a particularized utterance forming a chorus in the verse. It might also be added that each of the five senses is described at various times in the poem. The sensual appreciation of the variety contained in the world climaxes in the final

twelve lines, where the poet apprehends the yielding of himself to a perfect whole through each of his senses. This passage, in its use of all the senses, is synesthetic in its treatment of perception.

The lowing of a heifer and the tolling of the noonday bell suggest that each particular sound has an effect on others, though that effect may be unknown or unintended by the person creating the noise. The curious reference to Napoleon is documented in Journal A's entry for 12 July 1834 where the poet echoes his concern for the linkages between particularities:--"I have some 'Lincoln bell'--heard with joy in my ordinary movements...so will I find my Lincolnshire in the next pasture and the bell in the first thrush that sings. Napoleon sat back on his horse in the midst of the march to catch the fine tone of a bell...he who has mastered the tongue sees nothing behind him but simple addition of particulars (J, 6:63-64)." The first section ends with an appreciation of hidden messages; the often unconscious influences people hold for each other.

Emerson disapprovingly presents a social view of the world. He is highly critical of the network that society imposes on the individual since it limits the possibilities of the lone individual. In the juxtaposition of mountains, Napoleon, and the movement of his armies, Emerson launches an indictment of the social order. In a lecture delivered at the Masonic Temple in Boston four years after writing his poem, Emerson sought to celebrate the importance of individual

experience at the expense of society.

And this is the way that man the pilgrim travels in this world. "Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise." Society when it has done all, when it has exhausted its ministrations, when it has agitated his bosom with honor and shame, with hope and rapture, introduces him to Solitude, and leaves him on the vestibule of a grander temple than its own. Life has moments of awe and majesty when perchance in speeding away from some trifle to chase some other trifle we meet ourselves and know instantly that we had eaten lotos and been strangers from our home all this time. (E, 3: 380)

He may have had "Each and All" in mind when he spoke, as the poem juxtaposes social beings in the first section with the singular identity of the poet in the last. In between,, are the three episodes of self-delusion which exclude man from an awareness of final solitude.

Lines 11 and 12 act as a summary of the relationship that unites each to each, "All are needed by each one;/Nothing is good or fair alone" (lines 11-12). Consequently, all the particularities of the scene draw a form of identity from each other, and none of them has an intrinsic value when separated from the rest. This first section sets the pattern for the next three episodes where one particularity is removed from its connection and placed in a setting that rareifies its meaning. 5

Each of these three sub-passages (lines 13-39) relies on a imagistic technique, using a single image to relate a message. In each, the objects of beauty--a sparrow, seashells, and a virgin maid--possess a magical form of

attraction in their natural setting. The bird requires its tree (14), the mussels require the surrounding sea (20), and the virgin requires the virgin train (30) to locate and specify their individual attractiveness. The incident about gathering sea-shells at the shore is yet another episode documented in the journals. "I remember when I was a boy going upon the beach and being charmed with the colors and forms of the shells. I picked up many and put them in my pocket. When I got home I could find nothing that I gathered--nothing but some old dry ugly mussel and snail shells. Thence I learned that Composition was more important than the beauty of individual forms to effect. On the shore they lay wet and social by the sea and under the sky (J, 6:49)." This passage also introduces the connection between the dramatic action of the poem and Emerson's thinking about the process of writing. The speaker of the poem reflects on his disappointment that the childhood experience does not yield the preservation of natural beauty. The search for truth involves the observation that individual forms cannot be made into wholes by the hands of man. The attempt to preserve beauty often results in its destruction.

The coda to the poem comes in the final twelve lines which reflect an interiorization of the panorama established in the first ten lines. Rejecting the earlier false claims of the understanding, these final lines focus on the

spontaneity of true insight where the poet recaptures that which he has recently acted out. The difference here, which is absent from the first ten lines, is that the poet's personal sense of the scene makes obvious those interconnections that previously went undetected. Re-establishing a sense of identification by placing himself within the spectrum of particulars, the poet blends into the mosaic of the forested glen. He transports himself back into nature where he can smell the violet, feel the burrs, see the sky, hear the birds. These final lines bear out the contention that the essence of beauty lies in composition. As Firkins observes, "the fascination of life for Emerson lay in the disclosure of identity in variety, that is in the concurrence, the running together of several distinct images or ideas" (Firkins, 237). In these last lines there is a running together of the three previous encounters with beauty. Further, this blending together utilizes all of the senses, bringing together the whole in a kind of synesthetic rush. "Nature [in Emerson] is the paradox of orderless order, the discordia concors exemplified in figures like patchwork, mosaic, or the kaleidoscope it is always in Hawthorne's key word an intermixture" (Yoder, 720).

While most critics cite Emerson's irregularity in prosody, he was capable of technical technically correct construction. However, he frequently sought to undercut perfection in his verses as a part of his aesthetic program. Criticized

at times for being ametrical, he was in fact disrupting a unifying pattern in his verse which served to focus attention on the content of his poem through irregularity in form. "Each and All" is chiefly composed of exactly rhymed couplets. When Emerson deviates from perfect rhymes, he does so using three variants. Occasionally in Emerson's poetry we can detect the rhyming of voiced and unvoiced consonants as in the example of "restores" and "remorse." There is only one example of this in the poem in lines 46 and 47 with the words "sky" and "deity." Another variant, the slant rhyme, is exemplified in "heaven" and "even" in lines 13 and 15. There are examples of this in "Each and All," each associated with a skip in the rhyme scheme. The first is found in lines 11-12, "one" in line 11 rhymes with "alone" in line 12. The rhyme scheme which is generally "aabb" shifts to "abbccaa."

According to McEuen, Emerson was fully capable of adhering to convention when a consistent rhyming pattern was appropriate. "Emerson was not incapable of composing regular stanzas, of maintaining regular rhythms, and of keeping to a regular rhyme scheme" (McEuen, 34) she points out, but in his poetry he attempted to create free and cadenced verses to separate certain passages from a constraining whole. This observation suggests that Emerson's rhyming, switching as it does between couplets and alternately rhyming lines, serves to further undercut a unified coherent pattern which might indicate an

emphasis on the "all" of the title in the poem. The word "shore" (19) is unrhymed, suggesting its alienation from the couplets it accompanies. With their isolated couplets, the fifty-one lines tend to underscore the "each" that predominates until the poem's concluding word: "whole."

In Emerson's poetry it is not uncommon to witness irregularities in rhyme and meter occurring together; such is the case in "Each and All." He often wrote in octosyllabic couplets, for example. Much of "Each and All" reveals this preference for the octosyllabic form, but there are notable variations. In "Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown/ Of thee from the hill-top looking down" (1-2) Emerson establishes an irregular metrical pattern shifting from a ten syllable line to a nine syllable line, further complicated by inversion and enjambment. He undercuts regular rhythm in the poem, placing lines of seven (11), nine (2) and ten syllables (1) in a poem organized principally around octosyllabic couplets. The Miltonic catalogue line is used in other blank verse poems such as the poem "Blight." Still in "Each and All" the catalogue persists, as in lines 42-46, but the catalogued items are fixed within the octosyllabic couplet form. "With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar" (39) and "...Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage, (45)" use an anapestic beat at variance with the iambic pattern. From Coleridge again, Emerson drew an appreciation of the short runic line from Anglo-Saxon verse. The use of the runic line is



often associated with the traditional bardic personality, a role which Emerson sought to emulate in his verse. Such lines are usually separated by a comma as in "He sang to my ear,--they sang to my eye (28)."

Emerson placed high value on bringing ideas, symbols, and imaginative words together in his verse. This ideal of a "metre-making argument" is discernible in "Each and All." As he said in his journal, "it is not metres, but a metre making argument that makes a poem,--a thought so passionate and alive that like the spirit of a plant or animal, it has an architecture of its own." Waggoner asserts that in crafting his metres, Emerson defined his role as a poet and that metre helped him to manipulate his material more effectively: "Emerson was distinguished by a talent for a special kind of metrical composition in words, giving him the ability to discern and then point to, to pronounce solemnly as one with authority, and to give a token of what existed waiting to be named or said" (Waggoner, 69). Buell concurs as to the strength of Emerson's meters, contending that they reinforce a general principle of variety noticeable throughout his verse.

Emerson's verse tends to stress compact insights. Emerson's gnomic utterances--"All are needed by each one;/ Nothing is fair or good alone"-- draw upon the maxim. Maxims are traceable to Aristotle, but in Emerson's case, their use was more likely learned from Puritan sources. Aristotle commented that

"one great advantage of maxims to a speaker is due to the want of intelligence in his hearers, who love to hear him succeed in expressing as a universal truth the opinions which they hold themselves about particular cases" (Aristotle, 137). The maxim had its appeal to Emerson who trained to become a Unitarian minister, but still more to the poet seeking to convey in compact form a still greater truth. The maxims of "Each and All" exhibit his optimistic views on the interconnectedness of persons in a social setting, a point celebrated simultaneously with his insistence on self-reliance.

The voice in "Each and All" argues for an openness in the ways that truth is exchanged and perceived. Like the voice employed in poems like "Berrying," this one does not pontificate or prophesy. "It ponders, it entertains questions, and it does not have the last word" (Scheick, 7). Such a voice is a radical departure from those poems, regarded as "failures of the imagination, where an orphic or messianic voice is speaking" (Yoder, 154).

Emerson structures images in sharply focused vignettes. In this regard, his manipulation of images bears remarkable similarity to the use of images by such metaphysical poets as Herbert and Donne, as well as predicting the work of imagistes like Williams and Pound. Instead of relating a poem through the exclusive use of a single metaphor, Emerson resorts to multiple images, yet he retains a sense of compact neatness common to the poetic practice of the

metaphysicals. Emerson's images reflect the spontaneity of insight that is often possible when a person is sensitive to his surroundings. Sudden revelations bearing some lesson or clarifying a previously ambiguous relationship suggests Emerson's romantic spirit. This is a spirit where categories are collapsed, and new potential is created out of challenging paradox. Man's efforts and abilities take on an increased importance; Emerson invites us to participate in shaping our individual lives. To assist in this effort, he will provide an example drawn from his own experience.

Combined with the perspective provided by his journals, the manuscript development of "Each and "All" traces Emerson's tendency to idealize certain visual aspects detailed in his prose experience. In July 1836, Emerson directed himself to "Make your own bible. Select and collect all those words and sentences that in all your reading have been to you like the blast of a trumpet." Gathering the material for the manuscript of this poem from various entries in his journals, Emerson obviously used this method himself. The structure of imagery in the poem, depending as it does on a series of incidents, illustrates that truth can sometimes be conveyed through non-discursive means. Strauch finds in the creation of vignettes a synthesis of many of Emerson's poetical concerns--"Emerson's poetic purpose [was a distillation] in deletions, additions, transpositions,--all the changes that were to insure metrical cadence, a

sharpening of imagery, and purity of tone and mood" (Strauch, 275). Strauch's comment serves to underscore the fact that in this poem Emerson sought to create his primary poetic statement through the particular. Further, Emerson's imagery balances the experiences of the poem into two neat categories.

The dramatic action in "Each and All" is closely linked with Emerson's compositional theories. The poem, with a scattering of color and heights, is almost impressionistic in its combination of elements. Like the colors of an impressionistic painting, they appear to be isolated blotches on the canvas. However, when a minimal perspectival distance is reached, the pattern they form becomes apparent. Emerson's poetic style parallels a series of artistic concerns. He relies on the commonplace image to convey a sense of hidden connectedness. Assuming the speaker of the poem to be analogous to Emerson himself, the poet seeks to identify with the world of nature and then, in the final passage, to add himself to it, creating through that addition a new sense of perfection. While this perfecting sensibility is deeply attracting, we should not forget that the poet remains an individual, standing apart and isolated from those persons he describes in the hills and valley of the first ten lines. It is true that Emerson ends his poem with the speaker finding compensation in nature around him, but this notion is carefully circumscribed.

Emerson's poetry, often seen as a form of American Romanticism, is

decidedly pessimistic in "Each and All." Truth and Beauty are pursued, but do not prove to be attainable. Apprehending his experiences as examples of failure, he is made aware that life is not easily explained in terms of indivisible wholes. Consequently, the speaker comes to realize that the perfection implied in the maiden, mussels, and birds is in fact fettered by their enclosure in "woven attire," shells, and cages. The terms by which persons frame a sense of understanding often fail, creating limitations for the individual.

### III

Responding to those who criticize his unconventional verse, Emerson might assert that the poem is simply an approximation of life. Those seeking simple explanations for man's interconnectedness are thwarted in his poetry, just as they are likely to be thwarted in life. The experience of the speaker continually points up the futility of defining the self through external things. Far from being comforting, the truths man gains by trying to acquire objects outside his purview only cloud and frustrates his aspirations. Instead, man's attempts at drawing closer to that which he covets leads him to a false logic; one that views the economy of the world as one in which man can take what he wants without payment. In Emerson's economy of expenditure, it is not God or society but individual character that constitutes a fundamental fact. Emerson encourages man to be self-reliant, and make no attachments to ideology which would

diminish his individual importance. One suspects that the reason why Napoleon "lists with delight" at the sound of the church bell is because he is a political man who does not answer to the constraining peal of the church. All our efforts at constructing systems, poetic or otherwise, is an over-reaching activity. Institutions imposed by social relations like marriage bleed dry individual sentiments of idealistic love. Because man is a creature capable of creative input and shifting perspectives, marriage ought to be informed by a recognition of mutual selfhood between two partners, not airy ideals. Emerson's poem is directed towards the satisfaction of his readers and is not intended for the benefit of the poet. Aiming to elevate the potential for self-realization, Emerson asks that his readers pay the price by not accepting prescribed forms but rather by engaging in his example. If we are to accept the epiphany the poet-speaker attains at the poem's conclusion, then his readers must recognize that such a truth can only come for them by adopting a inward focus on life's experiences, varied though they may be.

Emerson's adoption of a form accomplishes a literary task--the presentation of his subject matter in verse. It also serves as a comment upon itself, a commentary aimed at focussing the readers attention towards Emerson's homiletic purpose for writing the poem. Combining two objectives in this manner would not have been an unusual idea for him. New England primers of

Puritan days relied on the use of instructional couplets followed by pictures. Emerson self-consciously crafts his verse both to reflect his notions as to the artistic function of poems and with an eye towards establishing an invitation to view the world according to the principles of that construction. The intersection of these concerns Emerson describes in terms of sailing, a voyage of a hundred tacks. This analogy rests upon a understanding of a central paradox in human life. As humans try to interpret their world, they are confronted by the relationship of the individual to larger, more intimidating wholes.

Society, theology, science all suggest a world of external categories. Membership in these categories serves to define the identity of a person. Emerson sees problems in these divisions and shows that their relation to individuals is often as paradoxical as it is convoluted. To conceive of man apart from certain elements of nature, as taxonomic biology asserts, does violence to the idea that man and nature are indivisibly connected. Emerson understands, however, that it is far easier to prove that a man is different from a plant. Consequently, he finds in life that men are often seen as isolated. That Emerson was well prepared to accept a fractional basis to life capable of supplementation is a point underscored in the epigram to the journal used to collect the materials for "Each and All:" "This book is my savings bank. I grow richer because I have somewhere to deposit my earnings; and fractions are worth

more to me because corresponding fractions are waiting here that shall be made integers by their addition" (J, 6:2). Accordingly, Emerson adapted this understanding into a formal statement concerning his writing of poetry.

I cannot myself use that systematic form which is reckoned essential in treating the science of the mind [logic and philosophy]. But if one can say so without arrogance, I might suggest that he who contents himself with dotting a fragmentary curve, recording only what facts he has observed, without attempting to arrange them within one outline, follows a system also--a system as grand as any other, though he does not interfere with its vast curves by prematurely forcing them into a circle or an ellipse, but only draws that arc which he clearly sees, or perhaps at a later observation a remote curve of the same orbit, and waits for a new opportunity, well assured that these observed arcs will consist with each other (W, 11: 11-12).

One aspect of his poetic program depends on the presentation of fragments; things presented without a supporting context. Fragmentary reality places very obvious limitations on doctrines that aim for transcendental unity.

I know better than to claim any completeness for my picture, I am a fragment, and this a fragment of me. I can very confidently announce one or another law, which throws itself into relief and form, but I am too young yet by some ages to compile a code, I gossip for my hour concerning the eternal politics (J, 3 47)

Emerson obviously felt threatened by the recent advances in technology and science. Fearing that the comforting and necessary reinforcement people gained with an understanding of connectedness, Emerson sought to encourage them to become self-reliant, and to leave the vexing problems of ultimate connectedness behind. The poet-speaker reflects the inability of the poet to construct a convincing code: "Nor knowest thou what argument/Thy life to thy neighbor's



creed has lent (9-10)."

Even as he understands the limitations imposed on unitary concepts, Emerson realizes that human life is marked by an insatiable striving for evidence that a purpose exists within the universe. At times this impulse can be equally assertative, requiring an implicit recognition of the whole in Emerson's poetic theory. In Emerson's view it is entirely appropriate and necessary to operate within the extremes of atomistic identity and total unity. Further it is a function of the creative genius to be able to combine the two perspectives in a single poem. Seeing poetry as a process akin to sailing, Emerson is suggesting that a poet can self-consciously create images and manipulate technique in order to depict the world as a fragmentary assemblage. That so moving and moved on thoughts and verses, gathered in different parts of a long life, you sail no straight line, but are perpetually distracted by new and counter currents, and go a little way north, then a little way northeast, then a little northwest, then a little north again. Be it so is any motion different? The curve of a line is not a curve, but an infinite polygon. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line on a hundred tacks...all these verses and thoughts were as spontaneous at some time to that man as any one was. Being so, they were not his own, but above him the voice of simple, necessary, aboriginal nature, and, coming from so narrow an experience as one mortal, they must be strictly related, even the farthest ends of his life, and seen at the perspective of a few ages, will appear harmonious and univocal (J, 5: 224-225).

Additionally, the poet may rely on diction to convey a sense of the dimly illuminated sensation that a supporting unity surrounds that world like an

envelope. The mastery of sailing draws upon the demonstrable skills of the sailor as well as rapid intuitive responses to unpredictable situations that are often rapidly changing. A poem too is carefully constructed, but steers the mind towards deeper meanings, a task which is not always successful but still important. The winds which propel a boat are fluid and variable. The sail captures the wind and shapes it so that it is able to drive the craft forward. As minute changes in speed and direction are manifest in the luffing of its folds, it communicates by altering its own shape. A poem must trap language and give it a form. As the structure builds, the words and phrases seek their separate relations, helping to provide commentary on its own form. In its defining arrangement of parts, the poem asks serious questions of a world that is overly burdened by organization. Like the sail, the poem is a tentative structure holding meaning for a moment but then allowing the wind to spill out, away from its clutches. The captain of a boat is sometimes aware of hidden dangers but seldom able to calculate their immediate relation to him. Unsure of his exact position, his piloting of the boat re-emphasizes the role of the individual and accents his spontaneity as he corrects his course. So too, Emerson the poet asserts that the corrections drawn in life might conform to an overall pattern. But if they should not, it will be of little consequence in a world that stresses the importance of the individual above all else. Should a ultimate truth not be

proved, one can say that truth is to be defined individually. Those truths that do not respond to a personal sense must inevitably be false truths, drawing us astray towards some illusory point on the shore. The poet must be responsive to the concurrent force of the wind; in his navigation he must be patient. To go faster than the wind allows is to outpace his understanding, and in the restless activity that follows, he creates problems for himself.

Despite critical commentary to the contrary, perhaps Emerson's world is not so unlike ours after all. Emerson's programmatic attempts to structure language did indeed meld the interests of the writer and the literary meditator as well as the personalities of all those he encountered and drew inspiration from. As John Updike has written, "writing criticism is to writing fiction and poetry as hugging the shore is to sailing in the open sea. At sea, we have that beautiful blackness all around, a cold bright wind, and the occasional thrill of of a gleaming dolphin-back or the synchronized leap of silverfish; hugging the shore, one can always come about and draw even closer to land with another nine-point quotation" (Updike, xv). One might only add that the journey might also involve the course of a hundred tacks, the necessity of a upwind effort. In the case of Emerson, he is not a poet of each or all, but speaks firmly for each and all.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout the text:

- E: The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edited by Robert E. Spiller and Wallace E. Williams, Cambridge, 1972. 3v.
- J: Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edited by E. W. Emerson. Boston, 1909-1914. 10v.
- L: The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Edited by Ralph L. Rusk. New York, 1939. 6v.
- N: "Nature," in Essays and Lectures. Edited by Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1983.
- P: Poems 1847 (Boston)
- W: The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edited by E. W. Emerson, Boston, 1903-1904. 12v.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Another way of viewing such language is to see it as supplemental. Jacques Derrida defines supplement as "a word that can mean both that which supplements something already complete in itself, and that which supplies what is missing from something incomplete in an important respect" (Derrida, 144). This is typical of Emerson's writings, especially when he undertakes a classification of things into two separate categories. Derrida's term stresses the rhetorical usage of language, and is not concerned with a comprehensive theory. Emphasis on rhetoric and narrative strategy allows one to speak in broader terms, and to suggest that there may be an importance hidden in collapsed and incomplete language. In his monograph *On Grammatology*, Derrida calls the supplemental word "that combination of two meanings whose cohabitation is as strange as it is necessary.(Derrida, 144). The reason this paradoxical meaning surfaces is often a result of the rhetorical strategy employed by the poet. Derrida relates this process of writing in a manner which is applicable to the language found in "Each and All." Under this view, Emerson is to be seen as a writer who "writes in a language and in a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system. And the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language he uses" (Derrida, 158).

<sup>2</sup> Waggoner draws distinctions between several views of the poet based on etymologies of the word poet articulated in several languages. From Greek he draws the sense of the poet as a maker/composer, from sanskrit he takes the meaning "to pile up," and from Slavic he takes "arrange." Additionally, he refers to the German word "Dichter", meaning a writer of fiction and distinguishes that from "Dichtung" which is a condensed or otherwise memorable imaginative articulation of wisdom. Finally, he traces the Latin root word "vates," and associates this to Emerson. Vates is a diviner, but also a prophetic speaker. In his view, Emerson is a poet without any distinction being insisted on between the divining and the speaking. Waggoner covers a lot of ground in this area and sometimes does not treat this linguistic approach with enough care. Broderick, in reviewing the book, stated that Waggoner should have "more fully

developed distinctions among vates, dichter, poet, bard, and soothsayer, in pages 66-73." Broderick is also the source of the comment that the definitive work on Emerson as a poet remains to be written.

3 Roy Harvey Pearce describes this technique as a descriptive-participatory action involving the poet with the form and content of his poetry. The poet and his poetic creation are self-reflexive of each other. "In the end, objectivity and dialectic both are postulates of the all-suffusing subjectivity which marks Emerson's carrying through of the poetic act. In the poet's sense of himself lies his sole guarantee that there are other selves to be sensed. Acting on the basis of that guarantee, he somehow is enabled to discover the world for us--and, to our delight, to discover himself in it" (Pearce, 157).

4 This article, is helpful regarding textual problems and dating; its research has been used to arrange the poems in Emerson's poetry notebooks recently released in 1986. While it is certainly dated in its analysis of the poems, it does cover several explicit references to the intellectual backgrounds of Coleridge, Cudworth, Goethe, and Hericlitus in Emerson.

5 For solving hermenutic difficulties, these categories do little to assist the mind in processing logical assumptions because in Emerson's imaginative view, all categories are capable of interpenetrating. Just as obvious is the fact that these are not dialectical in the proper sense of that word. The interaction between Each and All is not an opportunity to effect a higher synthesis, because everything and all things comprise a totality defined by two paradoxical but interrelated terms. In a Hegelian sense, no synthesis can occur which rises above these terms; there is no new concept that can possibly supplant the older terms. And in reality there may be no essential evolutionary conflict between the terms. As a consequence, the meaning of both terms is allowed to co-exist without apparent contradiction. The contradiction, if it surfaces at all, originates in the readers perception, not the poet's. Because Emerson presents these various dialogues without asserting the ultimate superiority of any one, he is allowing for the preservation and proliferation of viewpoints; an idea that parallels M. M. Bakhtin's dialogical approach to language.

6 For an argument which closely parallels my own, see Derek Attridge

---

"Puttenham's Perplexity: Nature, Art, and the Supplement in Renaissance Poetic Theory," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. This study is extremely illuminating as a model of applying deconstructionist criticism to poetry. The value of such an exercise lies in the "establishment of some distance from the associations, distinctions, limits, metaphorical habits, and other systematic features that condition our discursive practices, whether in the criticism of literature or across much wider cultural domains. Attridge also makes the important point that "universal assent as to the dichotomous character of experience, the appropriateness of these terms to label the divisions, and their absolute mutual dependence was attended by widespread disagreement as to the division and meanings of the terms themselves. This phenomenon is made even more curious by the fact that contradictory positions are often to be found within a single author" (Attridge, 259). Though Derek Attridge has focused on this problem in a different poetical context its thesis is applicable to almost any poetical strategy where two opposites are crucial to the meaning of a poem. Attridge points out that dualisms "do not and cannot function as stable, given mutually exclusive oppositions, of which one member is simply primary and self-sufficient, and the other secondary, exterior, and dependent" (Attridge 259).

---

# Works Cited

- Aristotle, The Rhetoric and Poetics. Trans. by Ingram Bywater and W. Rhys Roberts. New York: Modern Library, 1954.
- Attridge, Derek. "Puttenham's Perplexity," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts. Ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986.
- Buell, Lawrence I. "Reading Emerson for the Structures: The Coherence of the Essays," in Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. by Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.
- Buell, Lawrence, Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Voice in the American Renaissance. Ithica: Cornell UP, 1973.
- Carpenter, Frederick Ives, Emerson Handbook. New York: Hendricks House, 1953.
- Derrida, Jacques, Of Grammatology. Trans. Gayatri Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. by W.H. Gilman, et al., 14v., Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960-1977.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. by E.W. Emerson, 12v., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903-1904. Reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1968.
- Firkins, O. W., Ralph Waldo Emerson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914, 1915.
- Kreymborg, Alfred, A History of American Poetry: Our Singing Strength. New York: Coward McCann, 1929.
- Lewisohn, Ludwig, Expression in America. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932.
- Liebman, Sheldon, W. "The Origins of Emerson's Early Poetics: His Reading in the Scottish Common Sense Critics," American Literature (March 1973), 22-33.
- McEuen, Kathryn Anderson. "Emerson's Rhymes," American Literature 20 (1948), 31-42.
- Miller, Norman, "Emerson's Each and All Concept: A Reexamination," in Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. by Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.
- More, Paul Elmer, "Emerson," in Cambridge History of American Literature. Ed. William P. Trent. New York: Cambridge UP, 1917.
- Pearce, Roy Harvey, On the Continuity of American Poetry. Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1987.
- Perry, Bliss, Emerson Today. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1931.



Scheick, William J. The Slender Human Word, Knoxville: University of Tennessee P, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Emerson the Poet: A Twenty-Year Retrospective," American Poetry, 1:3.

Sherman, Stewart, Essays and Poems of Emerson. New York: Scribner's, 1921.

Strauch, Carl F. "The Year of Emerson's Poetic Maturity: 1834," Philological Quarterly 34 (October, 1955), 353-377.

Strauch, Carl F. "The Mind's Voice: Emerson's Poetic Styles," Emerson Society Quarterly 60 (Summer 1970), 43-59.

Strauch, Carl F. "Emerson as a Creator of Vignettes," Modern Language Notes 70 (April, 1955), 274-278.

Updike, John., Hugging the Shore. New York: Vintage, 1984.

Waggoner, Hyatt H., Emerson as a Poet. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974

Yoder, R.A., Emerson and the Orphic Poet in America. Berkeley: UC Berkeley P, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Towards the Titmouse Dimension in The Development of Emerson's Poetic Style," PMLA, 87: 268.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Equilibrist Perspective," Studies in Romanticism 12 (1973), 705-740.

# Bibliography

- Adams, Richard P. "Emerson and the Organic Metaphor." PMLA 69 (March 1954), 117-130.
- Allen, "A New Look at Emerson and Science," in Literature and Ideas in America: Essays in Memory of Harry Hayden Clark. Ed. Robert Falk. Athens: University of Georgia P, 1975.
- Aristotle, The Rhetoric and Poetics. Trans. by Bywater and Roberts. New York: Modern Library 1954.
- Attridge, Derek. "Puttenham's Perplexity," in Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts. Ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986, 257-279.
- Bartol, C.A. "Emerson's Religion" in The Genius and Character of Emerson. Ed. F.B. Sanborn. Port Washington: 1885.
- Beach. "Emerson and Evolution," University of Toronto Quarterly 3 (July, 1934), 474-497.
- Blair, Walter and Faust, Clarence. "Emerson's Literary Method." Modern Philology 42 (1944), 79-95.
- Brittin, Norman A. "Emerson and the Metaphysical Poets." American Literature 8 (March, 1936), 1-16.
- Brown, Stuart, G. "Emerson's Platonism." New England Quarterly 18 (September 1945), 325-345.
- Buell, Lawrence I. "Reading Emerson for the Structures: The Coherence of the Essays." in Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Voice in the American Renaissance. Ithica: Cornell UP, 1973.
- Carpenter, Frederick Ives, Emerson Handbook. New York: Hendricks House 1953.
- Cavell, "The Thinking of Emerson." New Literary History 11 (Autumn 1979), 167-176.
- Clark. "Emerson and Science." Philological Quarterly 10 (July 1931), 225-260.
- Derrida, Jacques, Of Grammatology. Trans. Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.
- Duncan, The Power and Form of Emerson's Thought. Charlottesville: University of Virginia P, 1973.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. by W.H. Gilman, et al., 14v., Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960-1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. E.W. Emerson, 12v., Boston, 1903-1904.

- Fenstermaker. "Emerson's Lexicon in 'The Poet'." American Transcendental Quarterly 31 (Summer 1976) supp. 42-45.
- Firkins, O. W., Ralph Waldo Emerson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914, 1915.
- Francis. "Completing the Sphere: Emerson's Revision of the Mottoes of Nature." Studies in the American Renaissance 1979, 231-237.
- Gelpi. "Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Eye of the Seer." in The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1975.
- Gilman, W. H. et al. (eds.), The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 14 v. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960-1977.
- Grusin, Richard A. "Emerson's Economy of Expenditure." PMLA 103:1 (January 1988) 35-44.
- Harding. "Metamorphic Imagery in Emerson's Later Essays." American Transcendental Quarterly 31 (Summer 1976).
- Harris. "The Dialectic Unity in Emerson's Prose." Journal of Speculative Philosophy 18 (April 1984), 195-202.
- Howe, The American Newness. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986.
- Hughes, Gertrude Reif, Emerson's Demanding Optimism. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1984.
- Keller, Karl, The Only Kangaroo Among the Beauty. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Up, 1979).
- Kreymborg, Alfred, A History of American Poetry: Our Singing Strength. New York: Coward McCann, 1929.
- Lewisohn, Ludwig, Expression in America. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932.
- Liebman, Sheldon, W. "The Origins of Emerson's Early Poetics: His Reading in the Scottish Common Sense Critics." American Literature (March 1973), 22-33.
- Loving, Jerome, Emerson, Whitman, and The American Muse, Chapel Hill: U North Carolina P, 1982.
- McAlier, John J., Ralph Waldo Emerson: Days of Encounter. Boston: Little Brown, 1984.
- McEuen, Kathryn Anderson. "Emerson's Rhymes." American Literature 20 (1948), 31-42.
- Mignon. "Starsown Poet, Absternius Muse." American Transcendental Quarterly 25 (Winter 1975), 33-41.
- Miller, Norman. "Emerson's Each and All Concept: A Reexamination." Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson, Boston, 1983.
- Moran. "Circle and Dialectic." Nassau Review 1:5 (Spring 1969), 32-42.
- More, Paul Elmer, "Emerson," in Cambridge History of American Literature, New York: Putnam's Sons 1917.

- \_\_\_\_\_, Paul Elmer, Shelburne Essays, 69 Reprint of "Emerson," in Cambridge History of American Literature,. New York, 1917.
- Packer, B. L., Emerson's Fall. New York: 1982.
- Paul, Sherman, Emerson's Angle of Vision. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1952.
- Pearce, Roy Harvey, On the Continuity of American Poetry. Middletown: Wesleyan UP, 1987.
- Perry, Bliss, Emerson Today. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1931.
- Pommer, Henry F. "The Contents and Basis of Emerson's Belief in Compensation." Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson, Boston, 1983.
- Porte, Joel. (ed.), Emerson in His Journals. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Porter, David, Emerson and Literary Change. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978.
- Robinson, David. "The Method of Nature and Emerson's Perios of Crisis." in Centenary Essays. Ed. by Joel Myerson. Carbondale: U of Illinois P, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Emerson and Science." Journal of the History of Ideas 41 (Jan-Mar. 1980).
- Scheick, William J., The Slender Human Word, Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Emerson the Poet: A Twenty-Year Retrospective." American Poetry, 1:3.
- Sealts, et al. Emerson's 'Nature': Origin, Growth, Meaning. Carbondale: U of Illinois P, 1979.
- Sewall, Richard, The Life of Emily Dickinson, New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux 1980.
- Silver., Mildred. "Emerson and the Idea of Progress" American Literature 12 (March 1940), 1-19.
- Sherman, Stewart, Essays and Poems of Emerson. New York: Scribner's 1921.
- Strauch, Carl F. "The Year of Emerson's Poetic Maturity: 1834." Philological Quarterly 4 (October, 1955), 353.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Mind's Voice: Emerson's Poetic Styles." Emerson Society Quarterly 60 (Summer 1970), 43-59.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Emerson as a Creator of Vignettes." Modern Language Notes 70 (1955), 274-278.
- Sutcliffe, Emerson, Grant, Emerson's Theories of Literary Expression. U of Illinois Studies in Literature 8 (1923), 9-152.
- Updike, John, Hugging the Shore. New York: Vintage, 1984.
- Vogel, German Literary Influences on American Transcendentalism, New Haven: Yale UP, 1955.
- Von Crophout. "Emerson and the Dialectics of History." PMLA 91 (May

1976), 54-65.

Waggoner, Hyatt H., Emerson as a Poet. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1974.

Wellek, Rene. "Emerson on German Philosophy." New England Quarterly 16 (March 1943), 41-62.

Yoder, R.A., Emerson and the Orphic Poet in America. Berkeley: UC Berkley P, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Towards the Titmouse Dimension in The Development of Emerson's Poetic Style." PMLA 87: 268.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Equilibrist Perspective." Studies in Romanticism 12 (1973), 705-740.