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**The Impact on Emersonism of Transcendentalism  
and Romanticism in Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle**

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**Submitted  
for the degree Ph.D. in the  
Department of English Literature  
at the University of Glasgow**

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## Abstract

Emerson, the New England Transcendentalist, made his European pilgrimage in 1832 during which he met his idols, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle. This trio's thoughts were eventually reflected in his writings. This is not to say that Emerson was a mere imitator. In fact, he was highly original in the sense that his writings reflect his own creative mode of expression and style, reworking and refashioning many ideas already found in the older and more complex culture — all this resulted in the formulation of Emersonism.

Emersonism refers to the philosophical and romantic components, especially the former, of Emerson's own particular brand of Transcendentalism. The essential characteristics of New England Transcendentalism only partly explain Emersonism. Emerson's achievement was <sup>to</sup> make a union of German Transcendentalism with traditional Christianity of a Unitarian cast, of Orientalism and Platonism, including some ideas probably of his own and to express it in terms purely Emersonian.

Therefore, to trace various sources of Emersonism would be a hard task. Of special concern for the present study is the British influence on Emersonism as exemplified in the works of the two English men, Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the Scotsman Carlyle.

The roots of Emersonism are of no small importance. It is one thing to acknowledge the English influence and quite another to demonstrate it in detail. The latter is the purpose of this study. Chapter I will provide an in-depth view of Transcendentalism, with an emphasis on its formal and philosophical roots, the New England transcendentalists, and, more

importantly, Emersonism. Chapter II will expand on the concept of Romanticism both in its European background and in particular as found in the British authors of major concern for Emersonism. Chapters III, IV, and V will detail the specific influences of these authors on Emersonism. Finally, a concluding Chapter, VI, will provide an overview and conclusions to the study.

## Abbreviations

- CC *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, 30 vols. Centenary Edition, edited by Henry Duff Traill (New York, 1896-1901)
- CE *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vols. 26-30 in *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, Centenary Edition.
- CEC Joseph Slater, *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle* (New York, 1964)
- CL *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 4 vols. (I, *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*), edited by Alfred R. Ferguson, et al (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), (II, *Essays: First Series*), edited by Joseph Slater, et al. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1979), (III, *Essays: Second Series*), edited by Slater, et al. (Cambridge and London, 1983), (IV, *Representative Men: Seven Lectures*), edited by Slater, et al. (Cambridge, and London, 1987)
- EJ *Emerson in His Journals*, edited by Joel Porte (London, 1982)
- EL *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 3 vols. (I, 1833-1836) edited by Stephen Whicher and Robert Spiller (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), (II, 1836-1838) edited by Whicher, Spiller, and Wallace E. Williams (1964), (III, 1838-1842) edited by Spiller and Williams (1972)
- J *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo E. Forbes, 10 vols. (Boston, 1909-1914)
- JMN *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 14 vols. edited by William H. Gilman, et al. (Cambridge, Mass., 1960-1982)
- L *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 6 vols. edited by Ralph L. Rusk (New York, 1939)
- SR Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* (Melbourne and London, 1984)
- W *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Centenary Edition, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson, 12 vols. (Boston and New York, 1903-1904)

## PROLEGOMENON

Ralph Waldo Emerson is generally recognized as the foremost member of that New England group of idealists known as Transcendentalists. Although Emerson was critical of society, it was not just for political and economic reasons. Much of his 'radicalism' lay in asserting the primacy of the individual. 'Emerson pushed the sovereign claim of the Self to the point where the individual alone had spiritual reality.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1832 Emerson left New England for Europe. His sojourn lasted a year, during which he met William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Thomas Carlyle. His friendship with Carlyle lasted a lifetime, and the thoughts of this trio were eventually reflected in his writings. The connecting link between Emerson and the three men, however, lay not so much in personal acquaintance or familiarity with their literary works, as in his identification with their romantic and transcendentalist themes.

Because they desperately needed forms and concepts in which to embody a passion that arose out of domestic pressures, the [New England] Transcendentalists appropriated with avidity the new literature of 'romanticism' that came to them through Wordsworth and Coleridge and the new philosophy of German idealism that came to them at secondhand through Cousin and Carlyle.<sup>2</sup>

American Transcendentalism, especially that of Emerson, underwent a process of deassimilation from the older European culture. Emerson — while highly original in the sense that his writings reflect a personal ('his own') creative mode of expression of fine literary merit and style — reworked and refashioned many ideas already found in the older and more complex culture, 'and all this is illustrated in the emergence and formulation

of Transcendentalism.' Miller (1971) noted that Emersonism has been erroneously identified as a purely literary and critical enterprise.

How the members [American Transcendentalists] took over their German, French, and English (and later their Oriental) literature, and how they used it or imitated it, and yet contrived, while masquerading as poets and critics, to rephrase the ancient religious preoccupations of New England seems to me the most striking theme to emerge (p. 10).

Of special concern for the present study is the British influence on Emerson as exemplified in the works of the two English men Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the Scotsman Carlyle. Romanticism and Transcendentalism have much in common. A brief overview of this is in order.

### Transcendentalism

Continental Rationalism in philosophy was accompanied by English Empiricism during the Enlightenment, starting with Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690 and culminating in Hume's complete skepticism. A major departure in the history of philosophy came with Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781, which signalled the end of the Enlightenment and initiated a new era of critical philosophy, German Idealism. Kantian Idealism, among other things was a synthesis of continental Rationalism and British Empiricism. 'Kant combined the Rationalists' thesis that truth is attainable through sheer reason with the opposing thesis of the British Empiricists that valid knowledge can be acquired through sense experience.'<sup>3</sup>

The Unitarians of early nineteenth century New England (non-

Emersonian years) based their philosophy on the sensationalism of John Locke and held that valid knowledge was only that which could be demonstrated to the senses. This 'cold intellectualism' repelled Emerson and his followers who found, instead, more philosophical sustenance in Immanuel Kant and the German Transcendentalists of the late eighteenth century, who were introduced to America largely through the translations and writings of Thomas Carlyle and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

In its early nineteenth century American setting, Transcendentalism referred essentially to the belief in the superiority of intuitive to sensory knowledge, and was not a strictly reasoned body of doctrine. Alexander, Dod, and Hodge indicated that Kant was more the critical than the constructive philosopher, one who did not necessarily attribute to Reason those divine active powers which some later philosophers assumed he had.

The genuine Kantians have always maintained, that, in what their master delivered concerning the absolute and the infinite, he meant to attribute to pure reason the power of directing the cognitive energy beyond its nearer objects, and to extend its research indefinitely; but by no means to challenge for this power the direct intuition of the absolute as the veritable object of infallible insight.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the Emersonian emphasis on the divine sufficiency of the individual was a contradiction of, and quite consistent with, Kantian Transcendentalism. Emersonian Transcendentalism was a philosophical dissent from Unitarianism, rejecting not only Locke's materialist psychology but also extreme concepts concerning the original depravity and the inherited guilt of man. Emersonism accepted Kant's belief that transcendental knowledge in the mind of man is innate. The Emersonians held that intuition is a correspondence between the microcosm of the individual spiritual body (an innate inner light or conscience) and the

macrocosmic Over-soul of the Universe. Knowledge for the Emersonians comes not from a direct revelation from God; rather the spiritual body perceives what is true, right, and beautiful. The Emersonians held that the innate worth of the individual is a logical spiritual extension of the political principles espoused in the American Declaration of Independence.

### Romanticism

Romanticism is still often understood as a reaction to Classicism. The Classicism derived from ancient Greece and Rome emphasized order and clarity of thought, simplicity, and the union of subject with appropriate form. Classicism emphasized the intellectual traits of objectivity, rationality, and moderation as opposed to subjective or emotional excesses.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, Romanticism was a renewal of Renaissance and Reformation individualism, a demand for fresh interpretation of man and nature. The romantic eleventh- and twelfth-century tales and ballads in southern France, for example, emphasized knights in pursuit of honor or religious devotion.<sup>6</sup> The Romantics turned away from the restrictions of Classicism in favor of a demand for personal, individual expression of infinite possibilities.

A fundamental feature of Romanticism is its focus on the self. The Romantic exalts the freedom of spirit and action, and the validity of personal experience. There is at the same time an instinctive preference for the sentimental over the rational, a concern with the heroic and the ideal.

Romanticism is not an organized system but, rather an attitude toward the realities of man, nature and society. It had its origins in Germany, France, and England. European in origin, in English literature it flourished earlier than in America, particularly among such writers as Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. Such romantics



preferred freedom to formalism and emphasized the individual rather than society. Most were optimists who believed in the possibility of progress and improvement for all humanity as well as for individuals. Whereas the writers of the Age of Reason tended to regard evil as a basic part of human nature, the Romantics generally portrayed humanity as naturally good, but corrupted by society. The nineteenth century poetry of the romantics was infused with such elements as belief in intuition, the emphasis on individual emotion rather than common experience, the humble life, and the belief in the healing power of the natural world.

Although Romantics are not necessarily Transcendentalists and vice versa, the common elements are obvious. To be truly Emersonian, one can hardly escape the touch of Romanticism. It is not surprising, therefore, that English Romanticism significantly impacted on the Transcendentalism of Emerson.

### An Overview of the English Influence

The most immediate force behind American Transcendentalism was the English poet, philosopher and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge, especially through his *Aids to Reflection* (see below pp. 150, and 152-160) which was published in 1825. Emerson shared Coleridge's post-Kantian war against the formalism of eighteenth century rationalists. A recurrent theme in Emersonism is Coleridge's emphasis on the 'all in each of human nature,' how a single man contains within himself, through his intuition, the whole range of experience. The act of knowing was for Emerson and Coleridge much the same. The latter saw knowledge as resting on the coincidence of object with subject; truth is the coincidence of thought with the thing, of the representation with the object represented. In the Over-Soul, according to Emerson, the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle,

the subject and the object are one. For both of them, Coleridge and Emerson, adequate expression in words would have to reflect an organic unity; nature and art are merely different aspects of the same underlying whole and can be reconciled. Rules derive from the dynamics of the organic whole, not from preset arbitrary dogma.

The English poet Wordsworth mentioned such an idea of coalescence in his reference to language. His view was that language should not be 'the dress of thoughts' but, instead, 'the incarnation of thoughts.' For Wordsworth, words of truth had no need for refinement in order to elevate nature. Such a view is fully present in Emerson, who held that when the poet is receptive to the divine, his mind becomes so attuned that his words embody the thing, as it were, in its true sense. Wordsworth saw all things as by nature equally fit subjects for poetry. Both Wordsworth and Emerson tended to view every man as a poet insofar as he has thoughts 'whereof the universe is the celebration.'<sup>7</sup>

The Scottish historian and social critic Thomas Carlyle reflected these same ideas. For him, poetic creation was but seeing the thing sufficiently and the words that follow will then truly reflect that thing in the clear intense sight of it. Carlyle was like Coleridge strongly influenced by German idealism and maintained that the material world is a kind of temporary clothing of a permanent spiritual reality. His romantic expressions were more in the area of social issues (for example, as expressed in his *Past and Present* published in 1834) rather than purely literary or poetic endeavors. A visionary mystic, he portrayed spiritual upheaval in the context of the social in which the individual was depicted in a struggle for becoming. While constructing *Past and Present*, Carlyle protested against Emerson's separating himself from the present universe, and wished to see Emerson return into his own 'poor nineteenth century.'

### Importance and Plan of Study

Transcendentalism had a considerable influence on the American scene. Walt Whitman admitted that Transcendentalism was the inspiration for *Leaves of Grass*.<sup>8</sup> When Emerson read this work for the first time, he remarked that his own portrait had come to life, that Whitman was simply following the transcendentalist's own doctrine of self-reliance. In *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman also presented many poetic themes which were influenced by Emersonism (see below pp. 214-216 ).

Emersonism was evident in the thought and works of Henry David Thoreau, whose poems and essays were published in *The Dial*, a literary journal edited by himself and Emerson. Emerson strongly approved of Thoreau's determination to follow his own genius, to be his own man, as it were. Thoreau adopted simplicity, as elaborated in his *Walden Pond*, avowedly for the purpose of being nearer to those common influences which Emerson taught the poet to delight in.

The list of benefactors includes Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science who was strongly influenced by the Transcendentalist Bronson Alcott. Educators, Charles William Eliot, who linked his elective system in collegiate education to Emersonism and John Dewey, who traced some basic ideas for his progressive education movement to Emersonism, were likewise influenced. Mohandis G. Ghandi, and Martin Luther King in the United States, not to mention some early British Labour Party members, were quite familiar with the philosophy of Thoreau, especially his essay on civil disobedience.

Accordingly, the roots to Emersonism are of no small importance. It is one thing, however, to acknowledge the English influence and quite another

to demonstrate it in detail. The latter is the purpose of this study. Chapter I will provide an in-depth view of Transcendentalism, with an emphasis on its formal and philosophical European roots, the New England transcendentalists, and, more importantly, Emersonism. Chapter II will expand on the concept of Romanticism both in its broader European background and in particular as found in the British writers of major concern for Emersonism. Chapters III, IV, and V will each detail the specific influences of these authors on Emersonism. Finally, a concluding Chapter VI will provide an overview and conclusions to the study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### TRANSCENDENTALISM

The events of Emerson's life both shaped and reflected his turn of thought. Accordingly, a brief summary of Emerson's personal history is in order. A detailed chronology may be found in Appendix A.<sup>1</sup> What follows will be a summary of important preliminary ideas and key writings — writings which are the focus of later discussion.

Within a year of his first wife's death, Ellen Tucker, Emerson resigned his pastorate, listing among his reasons an unwillingness to administer the sacrament of the Last Supper, a rite that he considered to be anachronistic. Even before assuming the pastorate, Emerson had already brought with him many doubts concerning traditional Christian beliefs. These doubts had begun to grow simultaneously with his readings of German transcendentalists and Eastern philosophy, Hindu and Buddhist thought in particular.

After resigning his pastorate he moved to Concord nearby and over the next few years spent time studying and travelling in Europe where he met, among others, the three English authors of concern to the present study. His visit to the Paris botanical exhibition turned his thoughts to naturalism, and probably inspired his first Boston lecture upon returning from Europe, which he titled 'The Uses of Natural History.'

I lately had an opportunity of visiting that celebrated repository of natural curiosities the Garden of Plants in Paris ... There is the richest collection in the world of natural curiosities arranged for the most inspiring effect ... whilst I stand there I am impressed with a singular conviction that not a form so grotesque, so savage or so beautiful, but is an expression of something in man the observer ... I am moved by strange sympathies. I say I will listen to this

invitation. I will be a naturalist (EL, I, pp. 7, 10).

In this and other lectures Emerson perfected nature as a kind of metaphor or image of the human mind.

In 1835 Emerson married Lydia Jackson and settled down in Concord where the couple lived the rest of their lives. The house became the regular meeting ground for some fifty years of the Channings, Amos Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, and others, the core of the Transcendentalists, the so-called 'Athens of America.'

During the late 1830s and early 1840s Emerson published most of his significant works in which he established himself as an idealist and optimist. His first book, *Nature*, appeared in 1836 and very much summarized his thought to date. It rejected materialism and conventional religion, viewed nature as the divine source of inspiration, and projected an optimistic view of humanity's possibilities for fulfillment. 'The American Scholar' was better received, a book in which he attacked American dependence on European thought, pushing for the development of a new literary heritage in America. In his 'Divinity School Address' in 1838 — he was not invited back to Harvard to speak for some 30 years as a consequence — he advocated the doctrine of intuitive personal revelation, renouncing the tenets of historical Christianity and presenting, instead, his Transcendental philosophy as the 'impersonality' of God. The ideas established in these three early works were the foundation of his *Essays*.

*The Dial*, a quarterly of literature, philosophy, and religion, was launched in 1840 with the help of Emerson and the Transcendentalist Club which often met at his home. He replaced Margaret Fuller as editor. In 1841 the first volume of his *Essays* appeared, in which 'Self-Reliance,' 'Compensation,' and 'The Over-Soul' are especially significant. Although

*The Dial* ceased publication in 1843, it had introduced the public to Emerson's first poems and the writings of a group which shared Emerson's philosophy, especially Alcott, Fuller, and Thoreau. Some important poems of Emerson published in *The Dial* include 'The Rhodora,' 'The Sphinx,' 'Brahma,' 'The Humble-Bee,' 'Threnody,' and 'The Concord Hymn,' the last named famous for 'the shot heard round the world.'

In 1847 Emerson lectured with success in England. He struck up his old friendship with Carlyle, as well as other well-known British authors, and gathered materials for *English Traits*. Thomas Carlyle was later to characterize this work as an accurate treatment of English ways in the mid-Victorian era. His *Addresses and Lectures* appeared in 1849, *Representative Men* in 1850, in which he discusses the men who most closely fit his ideal, and *Conduct of Life* in 1860, in which he expands on his earlier ideas but also reveals his acceptance of worldly circumstances. Emerson supported the anti-slavery movement and the Northern cause when the Civil War broke out. By 1870, with the publication of *Society and Solitude*, he was waning as an essayist, his intellectual vigor now ebbing. He spent his last years in Concord, not writing much, but by now well established in America as a major philosopher and writer, a Transcendentalist.

### Formal Philosophical Roots of Transcendentalism

According to Octavius Brooks Frothingham, the Transcendental philosophy of New England, to be understood need not rely on any extensive concern with other idealisms such as Platonism, Neo-Platonism, mystical speculation, the idealism of Berkeley in England, nor the psychology of John Locke. 'The Transcendental philosophy, so-called,' he writes, 'had a distinct origin in Immanuel Kant, whose *Critique of Pure*

*Reason* was published in 1781, and opened a new epoch in metaphysical thought.<sup>2</sup> In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant rejected the Lockean idea that the mind is a tabula rasa but it does impose particular forms on the raw material that comes through the senses to it from the external world; in other words, man's knowledge is partly shaped by the mind (ideal) and partly produced by the senses (empirical). Kant also affirmed that the mind consists of three divisions, Sensibility, Understanding, and Reason.<sup>3</sup>

In his *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant held that morality is reason in action. Man, he said, is a moral being who has the duty to follow moral law prescribed by reason; the moral law, prior to experience, is necessary and universal; and regardless of time and space, Practical Reason lays the following universal moral principles. First, act in a way to use humanity as an end, not ever merely as a means. Second, act only in conformity with what can be a universal law. And finally act as if you were a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends. From these categorical imperatives, three fundamental assumptions about the nature of things can be deduced. First of all, that individuals have endless time to carry out their struggle means immortality. Moreover, the individuals act rationally rather than mechanically, and this means freedom. And that the universe is designed in a way to make the individuals struggle meaningful means God (Boller, 1974, pp. 40-41). Kant's conception of intuition and reason influenced New England Transcendentalism.

While Emerson's Transcendentalism was not a strictly formed body of doctrine, it was nevertheless consistent with certain aspects of Kantian thought.<sup>4</sup> The transcendent was beyond the range of any possible human experience; the transcendental was within the range of human experience but a priori in that it could not come from sense perception. The self that is required before there can be a unified experience was referred to by Kant as



the transcendental ego.

Edmund Husserl viewed the transcendental ego as pure consciousness which is the basis of all meaning; for the transcendental ego every thing that exists is an object (Sahakian,1968, p.170). Giovanni Gentile viewed it as the self that becomes conscious when thoughts are expressed in language, the self arising out of pure act (p.170). Kant himself viewed the transcendental ego as that which synthesizes sensations according to the a priori categories of the understanding . In his view, nothing can be known of this self since it is a condition rather than an object of knowledge (p. 170).

There are, for Kant, both a priori elements or categories and a posteriori elements in knowledge which arise only from their united action. Kant held that ultimate reality, the noumenal world or thing-in-itself, can not be fully understood or perceived by limited categories of the human mind, and man can not transcend the bounds of his experience. Ultimate reality tries to unify concepts that are provided by the Understanding to produce religious or metaphysical ideas which explain the universe. Pure Reason always works with concept only but never with objects of experience, and therefore it can never achieve any real knowledge of the objective universe apart from the patterns of Sensibility and Understanding imposed on it. In short, Pure Reason never proves the truth of moral or religious ideas : as freedom, immortality, and God. On the other hand Practical Reason, says Kant, can find a valid concept to accept these ideas as 'necessary postulates for our moral life' (Boller,1974, p.40). Kant seemed to replace God with a 'moral postulate' and removed religion to make room for morality. Thus the ultimate reality or universe is inaccessible to the limited human mind :

In effect, Kant postulated three kinds of reality: (1) the world of phenomena, from which all our sense experience comes, the world we live in and perceive. (2) the world of understanding, in which we discern all our scientific

knowledge and the laws of science; and (3) the ultimately real world which transcends all our ability to sense it, a supersensible world which must remain unknowable to the human mind (Sahakian, p.173).

For Kant, the first kind of known reality is a construction by the mind. In the sense that the mind interprets and structures phenomenal experience, it is an ideal reconstruction. Although such reconstruction turns out to be inadequate, there is nevertheless the need to rely on pure reason, which is a priori and therefore not a product of experience, as a heuristic or regulatory principle in the effort to arrive at a systematic and unified body of knowledge. This may result in contradictions or antithetical ideas which Kant called antinomies, showing the difficulty in applying the categories of the understanding to the absolute or transcendent, categories which are applicable only to empirical experience.

For example, Kant identified four antinomies in the following categories: (1) quantity, (2) quality, (3) causal relations, and (4) modality, or whether an absolute being is necessary (Sahakian, p.174).

## THESIS

1) The world has a beginning in time and is enclosed within limited space.

2) Every composite substance in the world is made up of simple parts and nothing whatever exists but the simple, or that which is composed out of the simple.

3) Causality in conformity with laws of nature is not only the causality from which all the phenomena of the world can be derived. To explain those phenomena, it is necessary to suppose that there is also a free causality.

4) There exists an absolutely necessary being, each

belongs to the world either as part or as the cause of it.

## ANTITHESIS

1) The world has no beginning in time, and no limits in space, but is infinite with regard to both time and space.

2) No composite thing in the world is made up of simple parts, nor does anything simple exist anywhere in the world.

3) There is no freedom, but all that comes to be in the world takes place entirely in accordance with laws of nature.

4) There nowhere exists an absolutely necessary being, either in the world, or outside of the world<sup>as</sup> its cause.

Kant recognized three ideals of reason: the soul, the ultimate world of reality, and God. They arise out of the realization that sensory experience is limited. These ideals provide conceptions which are not obtainable from sense experience alone, and are the foundation of Kant's intuition and faith.

Emerson's 'intuition', though related to Kant, is not identical. He referred to Transcendentalism as Idealism,

What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us, is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialist and Idealist: the first class founding on experience, the second on consciousness; the first class beginning to think from the data of the senses, the second class perceive that the senses are not final, and say, the senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they can not tell. The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances, and the animal wants of man; the idealist, on the power of Thought and Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture. (CL,I,

p. 201).

but Moran<sup>5</sup> for example cautions that his kind of idealism must not be confused with the technical or epistemological idealism of post-Kantian philosophy, nor with the sense of the romantic aspirations found, for example, in Wordsworth. Emerson emphasized a priori or 'imperative forms' which were intuitions of the mind itself, or transcendental forms in the sense of Kant. Emerson consequently concluded that 'whatever belongs to the class of intuitive thought, is popularly called at present Transcendental.' The term 'intuitive' is used here by Emerson in a loose sense. For Emerson, the Transcendentalist was essentially one who respected his intuitions, one who trusted his own insights (self-reliance), and what was true for the individual, in his view, was generally true for all men.

Thus unity of consciousness was especially important for both Emerson and Kant:

There can be no item of knowledge, no connexion or unity of one item of knowledge without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data or intuitions and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception.<sup>6</sup>

Kant's ethics were formulated to be those necessary moral laws and universal objects of the human will which are valid for all. He posited categorical imperatives or moral commands which all must obey regardless of the particular circumstances (a priori), by a transcendental apperception that does not depend on want, desire, like, or love. Kant was an ethical intuitionist, and only human will, not actions and their consequences, may be good or evil. Kant's golden rule is: 'Act only on that maxim whereby you

can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.'<sup>7</sup>

The above considerations point to a parallel between Kant and Emerson, the former being reflected in the latter's belief in the individual and self-reliance, and in his belief that individual truth is what is true for all mankind. Emerson's distinction between nature and spirit parallels Kant's distinction between the world of phenomena and the supersensible or noumenal world. Just as Kant recognizes the limitation of human conceptualization within the bounds of the categories, Emerson recognizes that the human understanding produces limited creeds and theories. For Emerson, human understanding may easily be an illusion, whereas reason seeks to discover facts behind mere appearances (phenomenal world). Emerson values the reason as the discoverer of facts behind appearance, reflecting Kant's reliance on the three ideals of reason (the soul, the ultimate world of reality and God) and on purely speculative reason to push us forward deeper into higher realms of knowledge.

Emerson viewed the human mind as an imperfect reflection of the mind of God, with human spirit or soul part of and identical with the great 'oversoul.' In this respect Emerson is more evangelical, if that term may be used here, in his urging individuals to seek the divine spirit or oversoul which is in all of us; Kant is more the rational philosopher merely pointing to metaphysical possibilities logically derived within his schemata. Miller (1971) viewed the transcendental movement in America as a religious demonstration rather than a purely rational philosophy, a hunger for spiritual values denied it by the Unitarians.

It had, to all appearances irrevocably, codified into manageable and safe formularies appetites that hitherto in America had been glutted with literature be read as fundamentally an expression of a religious radicalism be understood; if it is so interpreted, then the deeper undertone can be heard ... a protest of the human spirit against

emotional starvation (p. 8).

Buell holds that transcendentalists can not be cast into particular intellectual philosophies, that 'their stature increases when one considers them as 'thinkers' or ' prophets.'<sup>8</sup>

Emerson himself read widely, selecting from whatever source he deemed appropriate for his thought, preferring in many instances metaphor to logical argument to carry forward any revelations of insight. He was conversant with the views of Unitarianism, Plato, the NeoPlatonists, Montaigne, Swedenborg,<sup>9</sup> and the sacred books of the East. The latter source may well have influenced his Transcendentalism as much, possibly more, than Kant and Western philosophy.

The religious component of Emersonism is easier to grasp in the context of the Eastern tradition which, unlike the Western tradition, makes no sharp distinction between rational philosophy and religious aspirations in its literature (see below pp. 39-41). The roots of Indian philosophy are the *Vedas* or sacred literature of the East. Formal philosophy is found in the Vedanta (literally, end of the Veda) which contains the *Upanishads*, or philosophical portion of the Vedas, and the great commentaries on them. Indian philosophy was historically taught and discussed not by classroom professors in secular universities but, rather by gurus or rishis deeply committed to a religious way of life. Regarding the Brahman or priestly caste of India, L. Adams Beck noted that 'So far as we know there has never been a people in all the world's history that in every class concerned itself so universally and profoundly with philosophy and the spiritual life.'<sup>10</sup>

About the turn of the nineteenth century the famous Hindu Swami Vivekananda lectured extensively in America and in Britain. In several of the lectures he discussed the *advaita* or monistic philosophy of India.

Vivekananda answered the difficult question regarding how the Infinite or Absolute becomes the finite by first establishing a three-fold cosmology consisting of the Absolute, the Universe, and time-space-causation. The underlying reality of the universe (material, mental, and spiritual, the heavens and earths, all that exists) is reflected through the agency of time-space-causation. 'The Absolute has become the universal by coming through time, space, causation. This is the central idea of *advaita*: Time, Space, and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen, and when it is seen on the lower side, it appears as the universal.'<sup>11</sup>

Vivekananda (1970a) makes it clear that the Absolute can have no qualities assigned to time, space, causation, and the phenomenal universe, although the latter may be reflections of the Absolute and dependent on it. God is the Absolute, the essence of our Self (p.113). He is the essence of this ego (p.114). The Hindu concept *maya* (sometimes translated 'illusion') is basically the sum total of time, space and causation (p.115), an illusion in the sense that the real (Absolute) is clouded by maya. According to Vivekananda, the Vedanta teaches the deification of the world, an 'idea' by the way of interesting observation, which is reminiscent of de Chardin's philosophical observations. Vivekananda notes that the commencement of one of the oldest of the Upanishads states: 'Whatever exists in this universe is to be covered with the Lord' (p.132).

The parallels here between Hindu advaita philosophy and Kant and Emerson are obvious. Kant's transcendent or noumena is parallel to the Hindu Absolute; his phenomena to the universe; his categories to the space-time-causation level. Emerson's *Nature* corresponds to the universe; his oversoul and spirit to the Absolute; and his understanding and reason to the level of space-time-causation. The Hindu maya, as so well delineated by Vivekananda but which can not be further gone into here due to lack of space, is very much the kind of problem found in Kant's antinomies and

Emerson's emphasis on reason as a means of cutting through the misconceptions (maya) of understanding.

Vivekananda (1970a) cited Buddha and Shakara (circa the ninth century) as two great examples of advaita philosophy, the former with respect to the emotional and moral aspects, the latter with respect to the working out of cosmology and metaphysics, the purely intellectual side. Emerson reflects this combined approach much more so than Kant, whose emphasis was on purely intellectual and systematic working out of formal philosophical schemata. Emerson especially sought the unity of things, as does Vedanta philosophy. This apparent separation between man and man, nation and nation, earth and moon, and the like is not real, but merely apparent.

In the heart of things there is unity still ... unity between man and man, between races and races, high and low, rich and poor, gods and men and animals ... all will be seen only variations of the one, and he who has attained to this conception of Oneness has no more delusion [maya] (Vivkananda 1970a, p.143).

The Hindu concept karma is highly related to the Kantian and Emersonian concept of ethics and morality. Karma has basically to do with action and the results of action,<sup>12</sup> the implication being, among others, that we are responsible for ourselves.<sup>13</sup> As will be seen later in the present chapter, Emerson's law of compensation is very akin to Karma, a kind of moral law of cause and effect which states that we can not escape our actions by seeking others to take the blame, and is consistent with his emphasis on self-reliance and responsibility. It is also consistent with the Buddhist doctrine that one should be a 'lamp unto thyself' and examine everything personally before accepting it. The Kantian 'categorical



imperatives' or 'ought' as the basis of ethical action is consistent with his placing ethics and morality on the basis of an inner independent decision rather than on external codes. It is especially consistent with Emerson's great emphasis on self-reliance, as will also be illustrated later in this chapter.

In advaita philosophy Brahman is the Absolute, atman is the Brahman in each individual. Emerson's view of our individual minds as imperfect copies of the mind of God, and that human spirit or soul is part of the great oversoul, reflects this basic Hindu doctrine concerning the atman and Brahman. Whatever the philosophical roots of Emersonism, there can be no doubt of his close connexions with preceding and contemporary New England Transcendentalism. Accordingly the next section of the chapter will deal with these influences.

### New England Transcendentalism

The New England Transcendentalism included writers, critics, philosophers, theologians, and social reformers who from about 1836 to 1860 were active in the area of Concord, Massachusetts. Their chief intellectual mentors were the German idealists, and Emerson was their local leader. Moran (1972) cites the epistemological writings of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel as of special interest to the New England Transcendentalists, but argues that they did not really master them.

It was the more personalized and poetic expressions of Goethe, Novalis, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle, together with the belletristic expositions of Mme de Stael's *De l'Allemagne* (New York, 1814) and Victor Cousin's *Introduction a l'histoire de la philosophie* (English translation, Boston, 1832) that provided Emerson and his disciples with whatever philosophical nourishment they

possessed (p. 479).

Moran concludes that the New England Transcendentalists were more a literary phenomenon than philosophers 'so intoxicated with the spirit of European Romanticisms that they could no longer tolerate the narrow rationalism, pietism, and conservatism of their fathers' (p. 479).

Buell (1973) noted the vagueness in the term 'transcendentalism' with respect to its New England setting. Thus, according to Buell, there was James Freeman Clarke who called himself a Transcendentalist merely because in his opinion man's senses can not tell him all he knows; George Ripley<sup>14</sup> who saw it as the supremacy of mind over matter; Christopher Cranch who saw it as a living and always new spirit of truth; and Emerson himself who denied there was such a thing as the 'pure transcendentalist' (p. 3).

Nevertheless, Transcendentalism of the New England variety may be characterized meaningfully. Buell (1973) included in its core of meaning elements of self-consciousness and religious expression, a liberal movement reflecting deep dissatisfaction with Unitarian epistemology; and its rejection of the Lockean emphasis on empiricism of the senses. 'The concept of a higher reason is the heart of what came to be called Transcendentalism' (p. 5). Reason was referred to by various names such as 'Spirit,' 'Mind,' or 'Soul,' for some meaning inner light or conscience and for others the voice of God himself immanent in man. It could be viewed as an impersonal cosmic force or, for others, as a purely anthropomorphic experience. 'In reaction against Calvinism, they praised reason and the moral sentiment' (p. 6). Buell includes in the ranks of transcendentalists during 1835-1845 period Bronson Alcott,<sup>15</sup> Cyrus Bartol, Orestes Brownson,<sup>16</sup> Ellery Channing, W. H. Channing, James F. Clarke,

Christopher Cranch,<sup>17</sup> John S. Dwight, R. W. Emerson, Margaret Fuller,<sup>18</sup> Frederick Henry Hedge, Theodore Parker,<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Peabody, George and Sophia Ripley, Henry David Thoreau,<sup>20</sup> and Jones Very; a host of ministers such as William Ellery Channing;<sup>21</sup> and harbingers such as Lydia Child, William Lloyd Garrison, and Walt Whitman.

Buell (1973) notes that the majority of the New England Transcendentalists were born and grew up in the area of Boston; at least half were trained for the Unitarian ministry, and almost all the men attended Harvard. Attending Harvard College and Harvard Divinity School, two Unitarian institutions, can be seen as significant because it provided a uniformity of influence. Transcendentalists were dissatisfied with the conservative Unitarians, the leaders of their church, and all of them were unhappy about this conservatism. Henry Adams, who was educated at Harvard in 1850s, had many conservative Unitarians as teachers: 'For them, [Unitarian teachers] difficulties might be ignored, doubts were waste of thought; nothing exacted solution. Boston had solved the universe; or had offered and realized the best solution yet tried.' Harvard College also functioned as a means of transforming, incorporating, and appropriating the Transcendentalists' ideas and served as a meeting ground for the prominent New England figures. Sydney E. Ahlstrom pointed to Kern's view that the Transcendental Club members shared some ideas: dissatisfaction with the New England ecclesiastical doctrine and life; the emphasis on the personal and symbolic forms of expression; a strong emphasis on intuition; and dissatisfaction with the relationship of man to nature.<sup>22</sup> Many were from wealthy families of old New England stock. Almost all backed the moral reforms of the time, including temperance, antislavery, and non-resistance movements, although not all were involved actively. At least half of them wrote considerable poetry and literary criticism (Buell, 1973, pp. 6-8 passim). According to Boller (1974), 'The American Transcendentalists were

enormously well read and extraordinarily articulate. They wrote letters, journals, lectures, essays, poems, sketches, and memoirs in abundance' (p. x).

Miller (1971) noted that the 'inherently religious character' of the New England Transcendentalists has been underestimated because their leading lights, such as Emerson and Thoreau especially, 'put their cause into language of philosophy and literature rather than of theology' (p. 9). Boller (1974) classifies transcendentalism as a 'religious, philosophical and literary movement and it is located in the history of American idealistic philosophy, and as Romantic and individualistic in literature' (pp. xix-xx).

Miller(1971) points to the need of the transcendentalists for new forms and concepts to carry their thoughts. They therefore 'approached with avidity the new literature of 'romanticism' that came to them at second-hand through Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the new philosophy of German idealism that came to them at second-hand through Cousin and Carlyle' (p. 10). He notes that the clash between the transcendentalists, often accused of arrogance, and others such as the Unitarians<sup>23</sup> and Calvinists was in many instances a rift between generations, the old and the newly emergent emancipation from old social, intellectual, and religious conventions. 'These insurgents had ideas about politics and economics, and about the relations between the sexes, as well as about woodchucks and sunsets' (p. 12).

It was the reading of European imports by students in the Divinity School and Harvard College that led to the rapid emergence of a transcendental point of view. This became a flood of articles in *The Christian Examiner* representing literate Unitarianism, and books of the articles mushroomed suddenly in 1836, 'a story of the triumph of the self-instilled education of the dormitory over the official tuition of the lecture room' (Miller, p. 12).

Frothingham as we have noted characterized New England

Transcendentalism as more a state of mind than systematic theory, 'an enthusiasm, a wave of sentiment, a breath of mind that caught up such as were prepared to receive it, elated them, transported them, and passed on \_\_\_ no man knowing whether it went' (quoted in Moran, 1972, p. 480). Moran identifies the transcendentalists as inheritors of sensibilities already found within the European romantic movement, which included:

... a vague yet exalting conception of the godlike nature of the human spirit and an insistence on the authority of individual conscience; a related respect for the significance and autonomy of every fact of human experience within the organic totality of life; a consequent eschewed of all forms of metaphysical dualism, reductivism, and positivism; nature received not as a vast machine demanding impersonal manipulation but as an organism, a symbol and analogue of mind, and a moral education for the poet who can read her hieroglyphic; a sophisticated understanding of the uses of history in self-culture; in general, the placing of imagination over reason, creativity above tendency to see the spontaneous activity of the creative artist as the ultimate achievement of civilization \_\_\_ these were the more pervasive principles shared by all thinkers of the New England school (p. 480).

It is evident from the preceding considerations that American Transcendentalism was not merely an imitation of European counterparts. American Transcendentalism grew out of a revolt from purely American institutions, Calvinism,<sup>24</sup> Unitarianism, and other social, political, and intellectual institutions. New England Transcendentalism, under the influence of romantic idealism, was also inclined toward radicalism of the kind that occurred in Europe but, instead, involved with the very different American scene.

The majority of transcendentalists never wavered in their

active opposition to slavery, imperialism, bureaucratization, and cultural philistinism; yet, partly because the United States had already achieved democracy and partly because Western expansion kept economic conditions relatively good, the transcendentalists were not incited to the more extreme forms of political protest, characteristic of such European inheritors of idealism as Marx and Proudhon (Moran, 1972, 480).

In any case, transcendentalists emphasized personal reform rather than social action, although many of them participated in the social reform movements of the day. Philip K. Tompkin noted that in Thoreau's view, social reform could be achieved only through individual reform. The transcendentalists were active in the lyceum in Concord, and in many more towns ranging from Maine to California, as well as in New England. Emerson's writings for the most part were 'tried out' on the lecture platform.<sup>25</sup>

Miller (1971) pointed out that transcendentalism took its toll on its early adherents.

Margaret Fuller fled to Europe, to violence and to death; Cranch took refuge in Florence and in cultivated dilettantism. Parker killed himself; Emerson dissolved into aphasia, Ripley subsided into disillusion, Hodge became a Harvard Professor, and Jones Very kept himself out of a lunatic asylum only by writing versified platitudes on the Atlantic cable. Bronson became a Catholic, as did Sophia Ripley, and Elizabeth Peabody became a 'character'; Bancroft became a politician, and the Sturgis girls got married; J. S. Dwight became the dean of Boston music critics, and Ellery Channing spent a life of futility. Bronson Alcott alone endured to the end as the irreducible and indestructible Transcendentalist, but he lived a life of meditative leisure shamelessly parasitic on the labors of his wife and daughters (p. 14).

Even so, cautions Miller, New England Transcendentalism must be

evaluated as a set of ideas rather than in terms of personal success or the social effectiveness of its advocates. Its contribution to the American Mind and spirit was decisive.

### Unitarianism<sup>26</sup> and Transcendentalism

Unitarians and transcendentalists shared three main ideas antipathetic to Calvinism: a) Both believed that there is only one God and Jesus is his messenger. Both denied Christ's divinity and its human hope of realizing the Christian Ideal. b) Both rejected Calvinism's emphasis on sin and punishment; the individual must rely on the conscience given by God. c) Both opposed the sectarian and the exclusive nature of Calvinism.<sup>27</sup>

Transcendentalism attempted to assert the nature of God and his manifestations in nature as well as in the soul of man. By doing so, it sometimes rejected and sometimes continued the religious ideas of Unitarian Christianity (Carpenter, 1973, p. 28). However it attracted many people in Boston; In his *American Notes*, Charles Dickens wrote, 'There sprang up in Boston a sect of philosophers known as Transcendentalists. ... Transcendentalism has its occasional vagaries (what school has not?), but it has good healthful qualities in spite of them....If I were a Bostonian, I think I would be a Transcendentalist.'<sup>28</sup>

Although most of the Transcendentalists were ministers, they began to preach scientific truth and human aspiration rather than the Bible and Christianity, and to tackle the issues of the time. Channing wrote in 1824:

Now, religion ought to be dispensed in accommodation to this spirit and character of our age. Men desire excitement, and religion must be communicated in a more exciting form. ... Much as the age requires intellectual culture in a minister,

it requires still more, that his actions of truth should be instinct with life and feeling<sup>29</sup>

Channing, also moved by romantic poetry and fiction, appreciated the new romantic art:

The poetry of the age ... has a deeper and more impressive tone than comes to us from what has been called the Augustan age of English literature. ... Men want and demand a more thrilling note, a poetry which pierces beneath the exterior of life to the depths of the soul, and which lays open its mysterious working, borrowing from the whole outward creation of fresh images and correspondences, with which to illuminate the secrets of the world within us. So keen is this appetite, that extravagances of imagination, and gross violation both of taste and moral sentiment, are forgiven, when conjoined with what awakens strong emotion (Channing, III, p.146, my emphasis).

This quotation referring to 'other thoughts' which 'thrill us' is clear evidence of a new revolutionary spirit in theology as well as in literature. The Transcendentalists adopted the Unitarian rational method and developed it into spiritual intuition.<sup>30</sup> Unitarians as well as transcendentalists held a lofty concept of man but believed that they could maintain religion without supernatural or miraculous assistance.<sup>31</sup> Despite its complicated interweaving of Oriental, European and American materials, Transcendentalism developed a particular American style of thought; 'It avoided the political conservatism of Wordsworth and Coleridge, the sexual overtones of Byron and Goethe, and the disdain of the masses and hero-worship of Carlyle.'<sup>32</sup>

For the Transcendentalists, Unitarianism is ambivalent in its attitude toward revelation and reason, church and society, and tradition and progress. Therefore, it is not surprising that they called for the freedom of the



individual from the Christian past. The most common criticism was that the Bible was produced by humans in the past, so was a historical document. By setting the Scriptures in the remote past, this diminished the authority of revelation and paved the path for new thinkers to discover the truth through intuition.<sup>33</sup>

### Emersonism

Emersonism refers to the philosophical and romantic components, especially the former, of Emerson's own particular brand of Transcendentalism. The essential characteristics of the New England Transcendentalists only partly explain Emersonism. Emerson's gift as a literary artist and his ability for expression were major distinguishing features that set him apart from most of his contemporaries. Commenting on Emerson's *Nature*, James Freeman Clarke described him as of original genius and independent thought, revealing 'a mind of extreme beauty and originality.'<sup>34</sup> Thomas Carlyle cited Emerson's *Essays* as an example of 'ennobling literature of the times; ... [and] which embodies the true heart of a man; which is the parent of all talent; which without much talent can not exist.'<sup>35</sup>

#### (1) Organicism in Emerson

Like most Romantics, Emerson relied on an organic rather than the formalistic theory. Richard Adams indicated that he did not habitually think of the universe as a copy of ideal reality or form, in the Platonic manner, or as vast self-regulating machine, in the manner, or of eighteenth century scientific rationalists, but that he thought of it as if it were like a living plant or

animal.<sup>36</sup> Adams (1954) explains this approach as one consistent with the tradition of romantic organicism which implies growth, or quality of life, missing in scientific mechanism which tends to dissect and analyze into dead parts. An organicist, such as Emerson, 'tends to concentrate often with a rather mystical air, on the wholeness of the whole, reluctant to analyze at all, maintaining with Wordsworth that 'we murder to dissect" (p. 118).

In his Phi Beta Kappa Address of 1837, Emerson emphasized the relatedness of things rather than causes or archetypal ideas, using the metaphor of the living plant to bring the concept of progressive relatedness and ultimate unity into prominence, a typical motif of many romantic writers.

To the young mind every thing is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand; and so, tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies, discovering roots running under ground whereby contrary and remote things cohere and flower out from one stem. ... Thus to him, to this schoolboy under the bending dome of day, is suggested that he and it proceed from one root; one is leaf and one is flower; relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. (CL, I, pp. 54-55).

For Emerson, the thread through all things is perceived through symbols.

Nature is a vehicle of thought in three ways:

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit (CL, I, p. 17).

The symbol for Emerson is a kind of sacrament of daily life. Through the uses of symbol, Emerson sees man as entering into a profound

"correspondence' with the invisible powers, with the world of spirit' (W,I, p. 104).

In his essay 'The Over-Soul' Emerson speaks of certain moments which are far more real than all other experiences. 'Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence ... I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine' (CL,II, p.159). 'Through such mystical moments come revelations of eternal truths.' The wisdom of humanity derives from God.

Within the same sentiment is the germ of intellectual growth, which obeys the same law. Those who are capable of humility, of justice, of love, or aspiration, stand already on a platform that commands the sciences and arts, speech and poetry, action and grace ... the heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works , and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers (CL,II, p. 164).

Even intellect is the product not of individual mind but the Universal Intellect, according to Emerson. To characterize further elements of 'Emersonism,' I shall briefly now look at some major works which I shall also treat under other topics later.

## (2) Nature

Emerson's book *Nature* is fundamental to the transcendental movement of the 1830s. Most of the ideas typically identified as Emersonian were explored in this book. It is what Carlyle called 'the Foundation and Ground-plan on which you may build whatsoever of great and true has been given to build' (CEC, p.123). Specifically it is consistent with his doctrine of self-reliance. Emerson begins by urging readers to come 'face to face' with God and nature directly rather than through tradition. Beauty in nature is an

expression of Truth and goodness, and words are symbols of spiritual facts. Experience in nature is educative, and leads to understanding, reason, and moral awareness. Nature is 'the apparition of God.' Matter is not a substance but a phenomenon. Emerson rejected the pantheist view, which sees 'the world in God.' *Nature* ends with a call for the assertion of self, freedom from established norms and the dictates of the understanding, and reliance on intuition as the means for perfecting the sought-after unity of experience.

Emerson's *Nature* provided a new direction for thought in his time. Emerson saw the whole universe within himself: 'I dreamed ... I saw the world floating ... diminished to a size of an apple ... an angel took it in his hand ... 'This thou must eat.' And I ate the world' (J,VIII, p. 525). For Carlyle, Emerson represented 'a new era, my man, in your huge country' (CEC, p. 296) whereas James Joyce later saw him as 'one of the giants of his age along with Rousseau and Carlyle' (CEC, p.172). It is significant that Emerson's ideas developed from the year of his graduation, 1821 to the year in which he published *Nature*, 1836.

Criticisms of *Nature* however are far from wanting in number. 'We never get from Emerson a systematically organized presentation of his philosophy, if his thinking can be called by that name.'<sup>37</sup> Adams (1954) found that it lacks unity and that it fails to assimilate the organic idea which it seeks to express. Francis Bowen found *Nature* bewildering, leading to results which are uncertain and obscure, often vague and mystical. However, Bowen does find value in the book as suggestive source, 'for no one can read it without tasking his faculties to the utmost, and relapsing into fits of severe meditation.'<sup>38</sup> Walt Whitman was to see Emerson not so much as poet, artist, or even teacher, but as critic and diagnostician, not taking sides but presenting all sides. 'His final influence is to make his students cease to

worship anything — almost cease to believe in anything outside themselves.<sup>39</sup> In short, what one learns through self-examination is the value of the text, not merely whether it conforms to some rigorous code of formal construction in philosophy.

Mathew Arnold echoed more specific criticism of *Nature* when he placed Emerson not among the great poets, writers, or great philosophical thinkers because he 'can not build; his arrangement of philosophical ideas has no progress in it, no evolution; he does not construct a philosophy.'<sup>40</sup> Arnold did admit, however that Emerson 'is the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit' (p.178). Arnold's conception of Emerson might be relevant to Hawthorne's: 'the mystic stretching his hand out of cloud-land, in vain search for something real.'<sup>41</sup>

One explanation of Emerson's method of writing and discourse in *Nature* lies in his link with Coleridge. Emerson's distinctions between Reason and Understanding parallel those of Coleridge, but even more influential may have been the latter's writing on dialectical method: 'By 1836 he [Emerson] had appropriated the method and turned it to use that went quite beyond anything Coleridge had imagined.'<sup>42</sup> Wood (1976) holds that *Nature's* argumentativeness and apparent disorganization was due to this influence.

Probably a better explanation of Emerson's style of writing in *Nature* however is given by Neufeldt's observation that Emerson relied on metaphoric use of language and tentativeness of statement, more suitable to the continuous act of perception and imagination than to the mind in the act of discovery, seeking clarification. He referred to this mode by various terms such as metamorphosis, mutation, transmutation, flowing law, the active soul, and poetry. Such a method 'keeps its distance from the 'thin and cold realm' of pure abstraction and resists the critic's attempts to define the

basic,'real' Emerson of the essays' (Neufeldt,1974, p. 21).

### (3) 'The American Scholar'

John Jay Chapman indicated that the body of Emerson's beliefs could be found in his essay 'The American Scholar,' the highly successful Phi Beta Kappa address of 1837.<sup>43</sup> Adams (1954) finds not only the essence of Emersonism in this essay, but a better organized presentation than found in *Nature*. In the former work, the central point worked out is that the organic wholeness of humanity and persons has been ruined by mechanical specialization. Emerson, in this essay, complained that 'Man is metamorphosed into a mere thing, into many things' and often the mere parrot of other men's thinking, failing to learn from nature, for every man is a student and all things are for the student's benefit:

The planter , who is Man set out into the field to gather food is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statue-book; the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship (CL,I, p. 53).

Oliver Wendell Holmes remarked that those who were lost or confused by *Nature* would find no such problem in 'The American Scholar.' 'It is a plea for generous culture; for the development of all the faculties, many of them tend to become atrophied by the exclusive pursuit of single objects of thought.'<sup>44</sup>

It was an oral piece intended as inspirational, putting in concise form the thought found in *Nature*. Its focus is on practical philosophy and national

challenge, a trust in the individual and patriotic fervor. A typical theme of Emersonism, self-reliance, is trumpeted, and the American Scholar is accused of being 'timid, imitative, tame.' Alfred A. Reid cites this work as an example of Emerson's enthusiasm, optimism, and artful and imaginative use of use of aphorisms. 'The tone of earnestness is all pervasive, but the dogmatism is muted by exuberance, by practical context of implied occasion, a gathering of young persons setting forth to be scholars in a new country where possibilities for literary and scholarly achievement seem limitless.'<sup>45</sup>

Adams(1954) finds the concept of organicism especially applicable to this essay, which put emphasis on the principle of change, progression, and originality. Thus the emphasis on living, contemporary truth rather than 'dead thoughts' of the past, knowledge as growing rather than static, and final unity is, for Adams, the source of the essay's great eloquence, reflecting a 'sense of creative activity resulting from original thinking in terms of the organic metaphor' (p. 123).

The organic unity sought by Emerson was, curiously, not reflected in the order and content of his writings. Some observers see the very opposite of growth and development in Emerson's seeking after divine, abstract truth, which might paradoxically suggest to the mundane mind a cold, fixed, and rigid affair. Thus Chapman (1898) contrasted Emerson to Browning who, presumably, regarded character as the result of experience and as an ever changing growth, whereas 'To Emerson, character is rather an entity complete and eternal from the beginning' (p. 43).

#### **(4)'The Divinity School Address'**

Emerson's 'The Divinity School Address,' delivered before the senior class in Divinity College, Cambridge, 15 July, 1838, castigates the church, contrasting the living spirit with the closed church which, in his opinion,

focuses too much on the person of Jesus and seemingly holds that revelation has ceased, 'as if God were dead.' He posits that 'one mind is everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool.' There is a sentiment which we call the religious sentiment and which makes our highest happiness. Jesus belongs to the 'true race of prophets,' one who 'saw with an open eye the mystery of the soul.' Historical Christianity stifles communication, for 'the soul knows no persons.' What is revealed by Jesus can transcend every single individuality and is the spiritual object of all individuals. Advocating 'faith in man' not 'in Christ' but 'like Christ's,' he admonishes his listeners to go alone and 'dare to love God without mediator or veil' (CL, pp. 81-88). Typical Emersonism, all this, but here applied to the clergy in particular.

In 'The Divinity School Address,' Emerson foreshadows his law of compensation with remarks about laws of the soul which execute themselves, about justice whose retributions ennoble, that he who does good is an intrinsic energy working everywhere, righting wrongs and correcting appearances (CL, I, pp. 77-78). In this law, justice assumes the status of a kind of natural law, as it were, not something dispensed by a personal god on Judgment Day.

#### (5) 'Compensation'

In his essay 'Compensation,' Emerson begins with the observation that in nature things are polar: action and reaction, darkness and light, heat and cold, ebb and flow of waters, male and female, inspiration and expirations in plants and animals, and so on. He cites the theory of mechanist forces in which when power is lost, we gain, are in a way compensated of time. A cold climate has the advantage that it invigorates; the barren soil 'does not



breed fevers, crocodiles, tigers, or scorpions.' These same dualisms, in principle, underly the nature and condition of man. 'Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet hath its sour, every evil its good.' Things do not go on forever and 'all things are moral' (CL,II, pp. 53-73 passim). Such a doctrine, fundamental to Emersonism, is consistent with, as noted earlier in the present chapter, the Eastern or Hindu concept of Karma, if not the classical doctrine of Nemesis itself.

The essay is filled with little aphoristic statements that give greater meaning and substance to the doctrine of compensation. Thus: 'Tit for tat, an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; measure for measure; love for love; Give and it shall be given to you; he that waterth shall be watered himself.' Again: 'You can not do wrong without suffering wrong.' Or again: 'All infractions of love and equality in our social relations are speedily punished.' All this without the interference with a meddling deity or the threat of Judgment Day. Compensation is also consistent with the *Tao Te Ching* of ancient China, (although Emerson may not necessarily have read this work) — possibly even more so than with karma — namely, the compensation in nature for inequalities or excesses of conditions. Thus the submissive and the weak often overcome the hard and the strong through the natural cycles of things, and it is the tall straight tree that is cut down first by the woodsman.<sup>46</sup>

#### (6) Eastern Influences<sup>47</sup>

A key concept of karma and much of Eastern thought is that the individual is ultimately responsible for his or her own destiny; that is, one creates one's own karma. Emerson says: 'Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but

by my own fault [a quote from St. Bernard]<sup>48</sup> ... In the nature of the soul is the compensation for the inequalities of condition' (CL,II, p. 71).

As will be explored in a later chapter, the influence of Coleridge's concept of polarity (thesis and antithesis), which came down from Victor, was yet another influence \_\_ or at least a consistent development \_\_ of thought relating<sup>to</sup> Emerson's Law of compensation. A paramount issue here is the extent to which one tradition moulds another, one author another, as opposed to merely absorbing for personal use ideas consistent with one's own, which were either prior or independent. Such issues of priority and influence will be taken up in greater detail later on.

Frederick Ives Carpenter (1930) indicated that Buddhist readings were the only Eastern works that clearly reflected Emerson's writing before 1845. Other Eastern literature read (in translation) by Emerson included *The Code of Manu*, the *Vedas*, *Vishnu Purana*, and perhaps the *Bhagavad Gita* (p. 108). After 1845, notes Carpenter, Emerson's poem 'Hamatreya' was inspired by *Vishnu Purana*, the latter also being an inspiration for his later poem 'Brahma.' Carpenter further notes that passages from the *Gita*, *Vedas*, and *Buddha* were to be found in Emerson's *Representative Men*. Hindu influence is clearly evident in Emerson's 'Over-Soul' essay, consistent with the Hindu concept of seeing God in everything, or deification of the world (Vivekananda, 1970a, pp. 132-42).

Joseph Warren Beach refers to a passage in 'The Over-Soul' which opens the possibility of man realizing oneness with the spirit of the universe.<sup>49</sup> 'And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one' (CL, I, p. 160).

After the 'Plato' essay, Hindu material becomes interwoven with much of Emerson's own thought. His poem 'Brahma' expresses the Hindu idea of

absolute unity, and stands at the end and as a kind of summation of a series of Emerson's poems and essays. According to Carpenter (1930), 'Emerson's poem 'Brahma' expresses the central idea of Hindu philosophy more clearly and concisely than any other writing in the English language — perhaps better than any writing in Hindu literature itself' (pp. 10-11).

By way of observation, Emerson's great interest in Eastern thought reflects his refusal to split thought into the purely 'emotional,' or the practical, as it were. Vivekananda (1970a) notes that dualist thought is the most natural to the mass mind, to the congregation in general (pp.124-26). Therefore, the advaita philosophy which so interested Emerson and was reflected in his own thought might tend to counter the simplest instincts and understandings of people, and earn him much confused criticism from his readers. Emerson's writings may perhaps be best understood as a kind of thought, a record of an evolving soul, from which the reader might gain in personal spiritual growth; Emersonian insights are transformational of the reader rather than offering a new formal system in philosophy. Clearly, Emerson borrowed whatever was consistent with his personal views. In many instances, a dualist rejection of the monist tendencies in Emersonism, which is only natural, is rationalized in various fault-finding expeditions in such areas as his lack of greatness as poet, lack of rigorous structure to his philosophy, and so on.

#### **(7) The Informal and Inspirational in Emerson's Writings**

Andrew Delbanco observed that Emerson was more interested in the movement of consciousness rather than formal resting places.<sup>50</sup> Delbanco cites Emerson's belief that 'it is the effect of conversation with the beauty of the soul [the conversation he thought closed to the fettered Christians of his

day] to beget a desire and need to impart to others the same knowledge and love' and stresses 'poetry' as the means of achieving the 'radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts,' and that the relation between the mind and matter is not 'fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men' (quoted in Delbanco, 1987, p. 28). Emerson was seeking to influence, communicate, to invent a new language, only 'trying to recover the natural language of God' (Delbanco, p. 28). Beach (1966) views Emerson as more widely read in philosophy than Wordsworth, his views sharply defined and enlarged from Platonic, Neoplatonic, Oriental, and German transcendentalist sources:

His opposition of mind and heart seems to be more explicitly grounded than Wordsworth's in the reason, or knowledge and faith. He gives more dramatic expression to the emotional craving for oneness with nature, and to the sufferings of man when divorced from her. His conception of the universal process, the eternal Pan, has been fortified with considerations drawn from modern evolutionary science (p. 367).

#### (8) Emerson's Poetry

James Russell Lowell noted that though Emerson writes in prose, 'he is essentially a poet.'<sup>51</sup> As a poet he can not be compared with the greatest, and perhaps lacks something in warmth. Chapman (1898) noted that his poems are authentic expressions of 'spiritual deliverance' and, though overshadowed by the greatness of his prose, are nevertheless genuine, despite Matthew Arnold's reservations about them, and indigenous to the New England scene. 'His poems do that most wonderful thing, make us feel that we are alone in the fields and with the trees, \_\_ not English fields nor French lanes, but New England meadows and uplands' (p. 84). In

Emerson's poems may be found liberal expressions of ideas developed elsewhere in his prose, so that Emersonism is only embroidered in his poetry, not found anew.

The 'parasitic' and conventional may be found in the verse of 'Boston Hymn,' 'Concord Ode,' and 'Voluntaries.' as well as in other poems. Poems such as 'The Snow Storm' and 'Sea-Shore' are mainly objective descriptions of nature, while out of doors experience may sometimes be the inspiration, for example 'Each and All,' 'The Rhodora,' and 'The Titmouse,' although in these latter poems 'there is little attempt to generalize or to enforce any doctrine.'<sup>52</sup> Perry (1931) identifies a number of Emerson's poems as 'wisdom verse,' such as 'Letters,' 'Merlin,' 'Days' 'Saadi,' 'The Problem,' 'Brahma,' and 'Hamatreya,' the last two, as already noted, especially involved with Eastern philosophy.

There are a number of poems \_\_ such as 'Ode to Beauty,' 'The Sphinx,' 'The World-Soul,' and 'Threnody' \_\_ that seem imbued with some endless mystical quest, of appearance as contrasted to reality, becoming deeply conscious of beauty perceived through the senses. Perry's summary of such poems shows sharp insight into Emersonism:

The chief miracles to Emerson's view, is that conscious law, the 'King of Kings,' which ranges throughout the universe of matter and the swiftly altering civilizations of men. He believes that there is no real and final dualism, only temporary and apparent oppositions between different manifestations and phases of the one Law. Every dancing atom obeys it (p. 95).

#### **(9) The Essays: First and Second Series**

James Truslow Adams held that the 'quintessence of Emersonianism' was to be found in his first and second series of Essays, 'the practice of

which will tax a man's strength and courage to the utmost.'<sup>53</sup> Matthew Arnold (1884) referred to Emerson's Essays as 'the most important work done in prose' (p. 195), during the nineteenth century. A sampling of his essays may speak as well as analyze and here provides material that will again be elaborated and discussed in later chapters in the context of the English influence. Here we are laying the ground work for what is going to be considered later.

For example:

From 'History':

Every reform was once a private opinion, and when it shall be a private opinion again it will solve the problem of the age.

The poet ... the universal man (who) wrote by his pen a confession true for one and true for all.

The path of science and of letters is not the way into nature. The idiot, the Indian, the child, and the unschooled farmer's boy, stand nearer to the light by which nature is to be read, than the dissector or the antiquary.

From 'Self-Reliance':

A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his, in every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majest... imitation is suicide.

Trust thyself.

Whosoever would be a man must be a nonconformist.

But do your work, and I shall know you.

If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument.

For nonconformity the world worships you with its displeasure.

I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching.

I must be myself. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be happier.

The bold sensualist of self-trust, new powers shall appear.

From 'Spiritual Laws':

All loss, all pain, is particular; the universe remains as the heart unhurt. Neither vexations or calamities abate our trust. For it is only the finite that has wrought and suffered; the infinite lies stretched in smiling repose.

No man need be perplexed in his speculations ... Let him do and say what strictly belongs to him and through very ignorant of books, his nature shall not yield him any intellectual obstructions and doubts ... original sin, origin of evil, predestination ... these never presented a practical difficulty to any man, never darkened across any man's road, who did not go out of his sway to seek them. A simple mind will not know these enemies.

We interfere with the optimism of nature... laws which execute themselves ... Place yourself in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom which animate all whom it impelled to truth to right and a perfect contentment.

What your heart thinks is great is great. The soul's emphasis is always right.

The man may teach by doing and not otherwise.

A public oration is an escapade, a non-committal.

From 'Love':

The delicious fancies of youth reject the least savor of a mature philosophy, as chilling with age and pedantry their purple bloom.

I have been told, that in some public discourses of mine, my reverence for the intellect has made me unjustly cold to personal relations.

Her existence makes the world rich ... relations of transcendent delicacy and sweetness ... when it suggests gleams and visions, and not earthly satisfactions.

... body being unable to fulfill the promise which beauty holds; but if; accepting the hint of these visions and suggestions which beauty makes to his mind, the soul passes through the body, and falls to admire strokes of character, and the lovers contemplate one another in their palace of beauty, more and more inflame their love of it, and by this love extinguishing the base affection, as the sun puts out the fire by shining on the hearth, they become pure and hallowed.

In the procession of the soul from within outward, it enlarges its circles ... Thus we are put in training for a love which knows not sex, nor person, for partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom.



That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on forever.

From 'Circles':

... There is no end in nature, but every end is a beginning; that there is always another dawn risen on mid-noon and under every deep a lower deep opens.

Our culture is the predominance of an idea which draws after it this train of cities and institutions.

And thus ever, behind the coarse effect, is a fine cause which, being narrowly seen, is itself the effect of a finer cause. ... Permanence is a word of degrees. Everthing is medial. (Note: This quote is consistent with the Hindu idea of finer and finer bodies making up the world and the person, reaching ultimately back to the immaterial universal and pure spirit (oversoul), or Brahman. Also Consistent with the Hindu characterization of Brahmin is Emerson's impersonality of God.)

The only sin is limitation.

Conversation is a game of circles.

Every man supposes himself not to be fully understood ... unknown ... unanalyzable. That is, every man believes that he has a greater possibility.

The thing we seek... is to draw a new circle. The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

### From 'Intellect':

Intellect lies behind genius, which is intellect constructive.

The intellect pierces the form, overlaps the wall, detects intrinsic likeness between remote things, and reduces all things into a few principles.

The movement we cease to report and attempt to correct and contrive, it is not truth.

Each mind has its own methods. A true man never acquires after college rules.

We are all wise. The difference in persons is not in wisdom but in art.

### From 'Art':

Thus in our fine arts, not imitation, but creation, is the aim. In landscapes, the painter should give the suggestion of fairer creation than we know.

The highest art ... is ... universally intelligible ... restores to us the simplest states of mind, and is religious. ... It should produce a similar impression to that made by natural objects.

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us, or we find it not.

As soon as beauty is sought, not from religion and love, but for pleasure, it degrades the seeker.

In nature all is useful, all is beautiful (CL,II, pp, 1-207).

From 'The Poet':

... esteemed inspires of taste are often persons who have acquired some knowledge of admired pictures or sculptures, and have an inclination for whatever is elegant; but if you inquire whether they are beautiful souls, and whether their own acts are like fair pictures, you learn that they are selfish and sensual.

... some ... write poems from the fancy, at a safe distance from their experience.

Adequate expression is rare... too feeble fall the impressions of nature on us to make us artists.

Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer (the father, Spirit, and the Son), these stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty.

Talent may frolic and juggle; genius realizes and adds.

... in order of genius, the thought is prior to the form... the dependence of form upon soul...

The poet, by an ulterior intellectual perception, puts eyes and tongue into every dumb and inanimate object... he uses forms which express life, and so his speech flows with the flowing of nature ... [Thus] the poet is the Namer, or Language-maker... But nature has a higher end, namely, the passage of the soul into higher forms (CL, III, pp. 1-24 passim).

#### (9) Overview

The foregoing taste of Emersonism emphasizes his effort to unite heart,

head, and self-reliance in the manner and style of common wisdom, not formal\_\_\_ or 'formula'\_\_\_ philosophy. The parallels to Eastern Buddhism, Hindu advaita philosophy, and Kantian Transcendentalism \_\_\_ and to Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle (as will be considered in detail in the present study) are evident. Just as a composer may create within a tradition, so does Emerson create within the context of sources he has chosen to study and adopt, or adopt as his own, but not necessarily merely as mimic, rather as one giving form to thoughts spring from his own soul. Kazin and Aaron believe that

The truth is that Emerson is one of the supreme examples of a kind of literary genius which is nearer the actual life of the mind, nearer to what really goes on inside of all of us all day long, as thinking, than to what is forcibly created, by an act of will, in dramas or novels.<sup>54</sup>

Henry David Thoreau stated the matter well:

He seeks to realize a divine life; his affections and intellect equally developed. Has advanced farther...There is no such general critic of men and things, no such trustworthy and faithful man ... The divine in man has had no more easy, methodically distinct expression. His personal influences upon young persons greater than any man's. In his world, every man would be a poet. Love would reign. Beauty would take place. Man and Nature would harmonize.<sup>55</sup>

The rugged individualism preached by Emerson has no necessary corollary or application to politics and socialism in particular. Emerson said in his essay 'Politics' that every state is corrupt, that good men must not obey the laws too well. He viewed parties of his time as parties of circumstance rather than principle. He was critical of conservatives with their vested

interest in property and, on the other hand, radicalism which is merely destructive and aimless rather than loving. Emerson believed, like Thoreau, the less government, the better. He felt that government of force results when men are selfish. Individual moral nature is in constant obvious conflict with the authority of laws.

Social and historical facts seem to have a way of nullifying Emerson the social thinker. Martin Bickman noted that Emerson was not politically naive by any means, but a 'man whose vision was rendered almost immediately obsolete by powerful forces — industrialism, Civil War, mass culture.'<sup>56</sup> Oddly, the conservative rallying cry of 'individualism' in modern America is directly contrary to thoughts of Emerson, especially to the thoughts just cited from his essay 'Politics.'<sup>57</sup> Marx (1987) further notes that socialist rhetoric has for a long time dismissed the rally cry of 'individualism' as a mere rationalizing of bourgeois politics.

Irving Howe points out that Thoreau's speaking out against the Mexican War is not parallel to speaking out against the Vietnam War. In the age of multinational corporations and PR rhetoric, individualism, of whatever kind, is not always adequate. Howe admires 'Thoreauvians' for their courage in antiwar movements of the 1960s; but feels they were too rigid in posture, chiding them for that and 'their occasional readiness to place declamations of rectitude above any shared need for the alliances, compromises and even retreats which a democratic politics entails.'<sup>58</sup> The answer to these and other criticisms is that Emerson's concern was with a broader concept of individualism than just the political and social, one that can not be evaluated in terms of socioeconomic structural analysis or expedient tactics. Emerson, properly understood, was actually anarchistic in his suspicion of laws and governmental forms, often based not on principle of right but on social and economic expediency, on mere force. Emerson would first look to the

inherent justice of a situation, independently of a right wing or left affiliation  
— something most social movements can not tolerate for a moment,  
especially in current social rhetoric.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ROMANTICISM

This Chapter necessarily turns first to the very general issues involved in the Romantic Movement, the specific focus of which will become obvious only later in the Chapter. In order to introduce these issues, it is however necessary to proceed initially in what might seem a rather superficial way and differentiate the particular influences on Emerson from England. Romanticism may be characterized as a revolt against science, authority, and tradition — even order and reason itself. The movement strongly influenced Western civilization at the end of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Although Romanticism had precursors in the back-to-nature philosophy of Jean-Jacques-Rousseau, its actual roots were in Germany and England.<sup>2</sup> Romanticism is a concept that is commonly used within the fields of literary studies and aesthetics. Essentially it arises out of the life activities and experiences of isolated individuals who valued the infinite above the finite, discounted the material for the spiritual, preferred the general to the particular, the organic to the mechanical; rejected order; favored chaos; and saw art not as a craftsmanship or imitation but a 'spontaneous overflow' of feelings.<sup>3</sup> Romanticism had much to do with the shaping of literary standards, perhaps less so in England than in France<sup>4</sup> and Germany.

The essential elements of Romanticism may be listed as commitment to the emotional, the individual, the natural, and the sensual; freedom of spirit and action; the rhapsodic, the whimsical, and allegorical; legend, folklore, even medievalism; heroism, idealism, agony, and ecstasy; damnation and redemption; and the sentimental as opposed to the rational.<sup>5</sup> High

involvement of self is typical. The Romantic believes in the validity of personal experience. Romanticism is optimistic in its belief in the possibility of progress and improvement. Romantics for most part view humanity as naturally good but corrupted by society. Romantic nineteenth century poetry in particular expressed its belief in the healing power of the natural world.<sup>6</sup>

The artists of the Romantic Movement celebrated the progress of formulating structures which encompassed 'ceaseless mental movement' more than an 'ideological vision.' Although the Romantic period included genres of sonnet, hymn, ode, epic, romance, and pastoral the essence of these genres did not change despite the different structures from which they are formed (Curran, 1986, p. 205).

Arthur Lovejoy suggested that Romanticism should be used in plural form in order to discriminate between different Romanticisms. He differentiated between three movements, one in Germany that began in 1790s, one in England in 1740s, and the third in France in 1801.<sup>7</sup> Furst (1979) noted that Lovejoy's use of the term referring to literature and art seems to identify the 'separate interconnected spheres'<sup>8</sup> of archetypal, historical, and aesthetic references (pp. 4-5). Rene' Wellek saw that there were certain features which characterized European Romanticism such as their conception of poetry, nature of the poetic imagination, nature's relation to man and poetic style.<sup>9</sup> Curran (1986) holds the same attitude as Wellek that Romanticism should be conceived as a European phenomenon but at the same time that it occurred in national phases.

Marilyn Butler referred to Romanticism as a movement related to theories of art, imagination, and language. The notion of the poet as a rebel was embodied in Byron who established himself through characters such as Childe Harolde, the Giaour, the Corsair, and Don Juan — all seen as self projections of Byronic character. But she does not see all Romantics as revolutionary. Not all the German Romantics, who called themselves



Romantics, were supporters of the French Revolution.<sup>10</sup> In England, Wordsworth and Coleridge, who were very enthusiastic at the outset of the French Revolution, changed their attitudes toward France and its Revolution in the later years. A new study made by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (1988) stressed that Romanticism is 'neither uniformly progressive nor reactionary, neither wholly liberal nor authoritarian, neither unequivocally republican nor monarchist,' it embraces diversity, takes many forms and has its 'synchronisms.' (p. 3). Not only might the Romantic reject his society but also the principle of living in society — dismissing political activity of any kind as external to the self. Moreover, the Romantic focuses upon reiteration of human values conveyed in painting, poetry and in the novel by stressing the importance of a single individual (Butler, 1981, p. 34).

The Romantic style forged out its own literary forms and valued expression more than completeness or symmetry, a style highly characteristic of Emersonian writings. For Emerson and the Romantics, things of the physical would become symbols of spiritual or intellectual truth, often remote in time and place. The European Romantics especially relied on myths for their stories, and history became a focus of their fiction. Poetic diction could give way to language of the common man, as when the heroic couplet, a favorite poetic form of eighteenth century England, found itself in competition with sometimes deliberately naive other forms.<sup>11</sup>

Patterns of Romanticism evolved differently in France, Germany, and England. To better understand these patterns and the special influence of the English Romantics, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge on Emersonism, an historical overview of these patterns and their origins will now be taken up. The Chapter will end with a delineation of Romantic strands in Emersonism.

## Romanticism in France

French Romanticism in literature did not blossom until quite late. This lag was due to the neo-classical tradition and the sway of political events, especially the Revolution of 1789. The absolute monarchy favored authoritarianism in literature as well as in government. The Reign of Terror helped stifle original thought. Napoleon represented system and order through his admiration for military virtues, and French patriotism led to a suspicion of all things, particularly romantic ideas.<sup>12</sup> Such conditions could hardly speed the development of Romanticism, the outcome of a struggle involving conservative and traditional ideology. The conservatives, often Royalists in politics and Catholics in religion, confronted 'the cosmopolitan progressives, who tended to be liberals in every fact of their views.'<sup>13</sup>

Victor Hugo was the foremost of the early and middle nineteenth century French Romantics. Before him, Francois de Chateaubriand, in Atala (1801) and Rene (1802), celebrated ennui, the exotic, and the nostalgic in lyrical prose. Stendhal, in his Neri Beyle (1816), linked his thoughts with Italian Romantic liberals like Manzoni and Vincenzo Monti for in Italy 'Romantic' was equated to political liberalism. Lamartine's Meditations Poetiques was published in 1820, probably the first collection of poems in the new Romantic genre.

Hugo's response to Lamartine's Premieres Meditations (1820) was: 'No important book this year, no strong pronouncement (*parole forte*); nothing that could teach, nothing that could arouse. Is it not time someone appeared out of the crowd, saying Here I am.'<sup>14</sup> Hugo's Romanticism was part of a reaction against the classicism of the previous century and part of a demand for a richer life in art, more freedom, and more variety.<sup>15</sup> His conception of the poet differs from the English Romantics. In his writings, Hugo

emphasizes that the poet is a '*parole forte*' ( a spokesman), an 'echo' implying more humility than the poet realizes: In the Preface to *Les Voix Interveures* (1837), he says:

*La Porcia de Shakespeare parle quelque part de cette musique que tout homme a en soi. — Malheur, dit-elle, a qui ne l'entend pas!- cette musique, la nature aussi l' a en elle. Si le livre qu'on va lire est quelque chose, il est l'echo, bien confus et bien affaibli sans doute, m'ois fidele, l' auteur le croit, de ce chant qui repond en nous an chant que nous entendous hors de nous (Victor Hugo, Oeuvres Poetiques, ed. Pierre Allbony. Bibliothèque de la Pleiade, 2 vols. Paris, 1964; I:919).*

(Shakespeare's Portia speaks that music which every man has in himself. Woe, she says, to the man who does not hear it! This music, nature too possesses. If the book you are about to read is anything at all, it is the echo, no doubt confused and weakened, but faithful, the author believes , to that song which answers within us to the song which we hear outside ourselves (Sabin's translation).<sup>16</sup>

Hugo<sup>17</sup> also says in the same Preface that the poet becomes a performer of an echo of the voices of man, of nature and of the public world of circumstance (I, p. 919). Sabin (1976) asks this question about Hugo's concept of the poet: Is there a distinction in his mind between 'echoing nature and echoing human response to nature?' (p. 43). It seems that Hugo's objective is to show that the poet combines nature and human response to nature in his composition of poetry where he speaks most to the heart, the soul and the mind.

Hartman (1970) argues that French Romanticism is both very early, as exemplified in Rousseau, and very late as exemplified in Mme de Stael<sup>18</sup> and Chateaubriand.<sup>19</sup> Mme de Stael's *De l' Allemagne* (1810), which appeared in English translation in (1813), is very significant because it

provided an impetus for a renewal of French poetry by showing new possibilities. It suggested that Germany could be a model for France, and it revealed that the new kind of writing is far from what they were accustomed to in the Neoclassical manner (Furst, 1979, p. 57). There were six complete French editions of this work published between 1814 and 1819 in addition to the views, extracts, and critical studies; and fifteen more reprints appeared between 1820 and 1870 (p. 58). Because of the political dimension of De l'Allemagne, it was confiscated and de Stael was barred from living in Paris. During this exile, she expressed her view on the conflict between the doctrine of individual liberty and the form of government that showed equality under a single master:

The Emperor Napoleon's greatest grievance against me, is the respect that I have felt for genuine liberty. These feelings were handed on to me as an inheritance; and I adopted them as soon as I was able to reflect upon the elevated thoughts from which they spring, and on the fine actions which they inspire. The cruel scenes which dishonored the French Revolution, being nothing but tyranny under popular forms, were quite unable, in my view, to do any harm to the cult of liberty. At the very most, you could become enough not to know how to possess the noblest of goods, there was no reason to proscribe it over the whole of the earth.<sup>20</sup>

According to Stephen Bann (1988), the French context was the outcome of French historical experience, and the rhetoric of individual liberty was a powerful and inseparable factor of French Romanticism during the 1820s (pp. 251, 250).

The theatre was influenced in 1830 with the appearance of Hernani by Victor Hugo. The play struck out at the restraints of classical drama, causing clashes in the theatre between the classicists and the Romantics, continuing for 'a hundred nights.'<sup>21</sup> Hugo was the guiding light as poet, playwright,

and novelist, particularly in his Notre-Dame de Paris (1831) and Les Misérables (1862). The preface to his play Cromwell (1827) was particularly eloquent in behalf of the Romanticism. Parallel and consistent with Hugo's Romantic declarations were those of George Sand, whose early novels cried out for personal and political freedom, and those of Alexander Dumas whose plays expressed deep passion and featured extravagant adventure.

Hugo took much of his inspiration from the political struggles of the July Revolution of 1830 and the Revolution of 1848. French Romanticism was especially reflected in Baudelaire's Fleurs du mal (1857) which sought to sum up in sinister tones the essence of ennui, remorse, and hunger for freedom; his was the first notable French prose poem in the Romantic mode. Romantic tendencies could be found in the symbolist poets such as Stephen Mallarme, Arthur Rimbaud, and Jules Laforgue, all of whom had strong links with the American Romantic Edgar Allen Poe.<sup>22</sup>

Like Hugo, Baudelaire tries not to grant nature a power to impress the beholder. Undoubtedly Baudelaire's poetry and criticism are the first French writing that influenced English poetry in the nineteenth century. Baudelaire's interest<sup>23</sup> in Poe<sup>24</sup> and his influence through a variety of both French and English writers showed his relationship to Romanticism. But according to T. S. Eliot, Baudelaire was 'the first counter romantic in poetry' since he created a modern poetic language of his common contemporary world.

It is not merely in the use of imagery of common life, not merely in the use of imagery of the sordid life of a great metropolis, but in the elevation of such imagery to the first intensity \_\_ presenting it as it is, and yet making it represent something much more than itself \_\_ that Baudelaire has created a mode of release and expansion for other men.<sup>25</sup>

Baudelaire, with other French Symbolists like Nerval and Wagoner, appreciated German High Romantic aesthetics. It was through the Symbolist Movement that the use of symbolic images to carry the meaning and the focus on the musical associative qualities of poetry came to France.

A fair summary of the French Romantics may draw attention to its emphasis on the role of feeling expressed spontaneously and passionately, a revolt against old artificial conventions in behalf of truth and naturalness in dramatic structure and speech. However, French Romanticism was indebted largely to Germany for philosophy and to England for literary forms and attitudes. The French Romantics were possibly not as original in new literary forms as they may have imagined, their concerns being much with the past, seeking reform in social and outer factors rather than in literary format. 'With the possible exception of Vigny, they had little genuine appreciation of the creative imagination so that their reforms amounted to a technical liberalization of verse and drama' (Furst, 1976, p. 51). Concern with form is itself un-Romantic; more important for the Romantics is the deep humanity and compassion of, say, Hugo's *Les Miserables*, or the importance of individual freedom in, say, Mme de Stael's *De L' Allemagne*.

### Romanticism in Germany<sup>26</sup>

Romanticism should not be linked solely to arts, letters, and political passions. It is intimately associated with philosophy, especially the kind which goes beyond rationalism. The German philosopher Schopenhauer was both formal philosopher and Romantic, rejecting the phenomenal world as unreal and, in typical Romantic style, opting for the Will and Unconsciousness as source of value. It was Immanuel Kant who resolved the

impasse between noumenal and phenomenal worlds by a kind of resolution through intuition or faith, a Romantic reliance on a human faculty or self which transcends logic and reason. Hegel's resolution of the spirit/matter dualism revealed a Romantic bias toward simplistic historicism as process and development, infusing a Romantic optimism through his belief in end or purpose.

John B. Halsted noted that much of Hegel, Shelling, and Schopenhauer is highly congruent with the attitudes and ideas of Romanticism.

Yet the fact remains that such men and their ideas operated in a relatively narrow world of formal academic discipline and that their ideas in the original form were, and are, comparatively inaccessible. It is in their common-currency form, as transported by interpreters or as general notions (for example, Hegel's evolutionary views of his ideal of the hero, Fichte's intense egoism, Schelling's pantheism), that they formed part of the Romantic attitudes.<sup>27</sup>

By 1789 there had emerged a full blown Romanticism in Germany. Wackenroder replaced neoclassical analysis by emotional response, as exemplified in his anecdotes about Renaissance painters. A. W. Schlegel and his brother Friederich offered new concepts of myth, symbol, irony, and imagination, arguing for a fusion in artistic creation of the rational and irrational aspects of the mind.

German Romanticism may be classified into the Early Romantics (Fruhromantik) and the High Romantics (Hochromantik). The Early Romantics, 1795 until the early nineteenth century, centred for a short time in Berlin and then at the small town of Jena where they began to be known as Jenaromantik. They were very conscious of their unity as a group, their chief exponents being the brothers Friederich Schlegel (1759\_1805), and August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767\_1845) ( Furst, 1976, p. 42 ). August Wilhelm Schlegel began to deliver a series of lectures, based on his brother's ideas,

in Berlin in 1801-1804. His lectures were discussed widely and four of them appeared in F. Schlegel's *Europa* (II,I [1803]: 3-95). In 1807 he began to promote his theories in articles written in French and addressed to the French. The most influential lectures were given in Vienna in 1808 'On Dramatic Art and Literature,' \_\_\_ published in German in 1809-1811; in Dutch in 1810; in French in 1813; in English in 1815; and in Italian in 1817 (Eichner, 1972, p.137). Schlegel influenced Mme de Stael \_\_\_ who was responsible for spreading his distinction between romantic and classical and other Schlegelian doctrine to England. The English translation of *De l'Allemagne*'s appeared in 1813. The significance of Schlegel's lectures lies in the area of practical criticism and differences between romantic and classical rather than in the field of theory (Eichner, 1972, p.137).

Friederich Schlegel saw the artist and writer as expressing the dialectics of becoming, torn between the ideal and the physical reality. For him the imagination acted to create in works of art a spiritual truth out of material actuality. With his literary work, free from the rules of genre, he mixed prose, poetry, criticism, and philosophy, a tendency also found in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. Goethe's works, the works of the Grimm Brothers, Friederich Holderlin's orphic poetry, Heine's lyrics and mock epics, and E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales of the terrifying and grotesque made German Romanticism a strong and self-conscious movement.<sup>28</sup>

The interests of the early German Romantics ranged from philosophy and poetry to religion, statesmanship, and the natural sciences. They stressed individualism and friendship through communal activities and togetherness. They embraced a kind of total existentialist motif intended to move outward from poetry in a transformation of the entire world. This group included Wackenroder, Tieck, Novalis, Schleiermacher, the natural philosophers Schelling and Baader, and the physicist Ritter.

The Early Romantics were not so much creative poets as they were



speculative. Schleiermacher in particular constantly absorbed himself in metaphysical abstraction. Speculations of the Early Romantics were published in their journal, Athenaum. Especially influential was the subjectivism of Fichte who held that the world, dependent on our perception, can be molded progressively through the force of idealism, a poeticization through the creative imagination of the artist. For such Romantics the literary world is a means of representing symbolically the artist's vision of the transcendental real, a kind of subtle esthetics of religious system. Furst (1976 ) complained that 'Quite apart from the ideas, words (such as 'poetry,' 'nature,' 'longing,' etc.) are frequently used in so esoteric a fashion as to enhance the difficulties of interpretation' (p. 44).

The Early Romantics were followed by the 'High Romantics' who gave greater emphasis and expression to the topics of the Pre-Romantics. The brothers Grimm in particular imbued their scholarly investigations of the German language with a nationalistic flavor; others did likewise through the compilation of Germanic folksongs and folktales. The High Romantics aimed at recapturing the naivety of folk utterances in an 'apparently artless art' (Furst, 1976, p. 47).

The strong link between Romanticism and Transcendentalism is evident in German sources, especially in those seeking a new vision in response to the failure of the high aspiration of the Enlightenment, the loss of meaning and identity. Therefore, as a coda to the survey of German Romanticism, it may be useful to introduce a distinction within Romanticism itself. Morse Peckham viewed existentialism (focusing on alienation, the act of commitment, the creation, realization and symbolization of the self) as a post-Nietzschean development that was the outcome of various stages in the history of Romanticism. The first of these, Analogism, was the initial stage of positive Romanticism which adopted to the natural world, but in two

modes, the sentimental on the one hand and the sublime on the other. The Romantics emphasized the sublime, nature being but a screen on which to project sense of value which is actually the sense of the self (personality). One saw through the natural into the ultimate reality that lay behind, releasing, at the same time, the noumenal Self from the bondage of the phenomenal self. The divine in the 'thing-in-itself of nature' and the self of the human being united to give value both to nature and to the purely human being: 'This was the vision of which Wordsworth in poetry ... [was] the purest example. Goethe, however, felt the difficulties and in Faust proposed a solution: the eternal postponement of value, the acceptance of the inadequacy of human beings to meet the demands of experience.'<sup>29</sup>

A major difficulty with Analogism was that it was perhaps too transcendental (at least psychologically) in that it posited no morality or guide to action. Romanticism, on the other hand, sought metaphysical systems more closely related to the needs of the individual, a closer encounter with experience, with pure facts. Negative Romantics could find no ground for value or imperatives to action; even Kant had no reason for action, no imperative to act other than one based on faith or 'good will.' Goethe, who saw the essential character of man as act, has Faust surrender again and again to the illusion of a final action. While Analogism provided a ground for value, it had no imperative to act. Without action, reality could not be met and the self or Self realized; its static nature ruled out history. 'Schopenhauer was the first to see the way out lay through the denial of the Analogist symmetry between Self and thing-in-itself, which threatened to abolish or reduce to meaningless everything in between' (Peckham, 1965, p. 26).

Hegel sought to set things aright by returning to a conservative Enlightenment view that whatever is, is right, and converted history into the

noumenal, the divine. Spirit became value. But can be the denying freedom of choice and the basis for action.

Analogism was succeeded by Transcendentalism, which deprived the world completely of value, rendering it once again a meaningless chaos, but holding on to the Self (or personality) and its drive for meaning, order, value, and identity in the context of divine authority: 'This is the heroic, world-redemptive stage of Romanticism' (Peckham, 1965, p. 27). The Transcendental hero<sup>30</sup> was expected to redeem the Self in redeeming the world, in the process creating a model for future action of mankind.

Romantics of the nineteenth century were to realize that the Transcendental hero cannot set up a morality and impose it upon others, that it is the search for truth that is more important than the particular objectification or creed; that literary forms, therefore, are means rather than ends, that metaphysics and moral systems are but human instruments (of the self) for realizing value and higher perception of Self, and provide no imperative to action or duty.

Emerson in particular reflected such Romantic perception. Like Goethe, Emerson did not seek salvation in the redemption of the world but, rather, in encounter of Self and world. Society and personality are natural products and unredeemable for Emerson. Unlike the positivists of the nineteenth century, unlike Darwin and Marx, and unlike the existentialists who limit all to purely self and its experience with the natural or objective, Emerson held on to an acceptance of the higher Reality or Transcendent Self underlying the objective world, his major concern being the search rather than the answer, be it purely rationalist or Transcendental.

The problems encountered in Analogism and Transcendentalism may explain Emerson's significant interest and involvement with Eastern philosophy. Hindu metaphysics in particular offered definite relationship between the Self (atman) and Brahman (the noumenal or thing-in-itself), one

that avoided the reductionism and mechanism implicit in Marx or Darwin. Although Romantic by inclination, Emerson's mystic proclivities found sustenance in the Hindu cosmology and metaphysics, the very same that caught the attention of German philosophers of that era, who are among the first to delve into Eastern philosophy.

### English Romanticism

By the mid-1700s, a new literary movement in England and Scotland arose, sympathetic to nature and to the past and less rigorous than tradition would have it. The new literature leaned toward traditional interests such as those found in Chaucer, Shakespeare, and in ballads and folk songs. There was little if any revolt against current systems such as had occurred in Germany and France, nor any especially great delving into the spiritual dimensions of the populace or high-flown philosophy as in Germany. It was rather a literary movement reflecting the developments in painting and Gothic architecture. During the following century, however, there was fundamental change in the area of philosophical thought, especially that of Coleridge and Carlyle under the influence of German philosophy.

At the turn of the century Wordsworth in his *Lyrical Ballads*, and later Coleridge (1817) in his *Biographia Literaria*, began the sharp break with the neoclassical tradition. Wordsworth projected his personal emotion in a language closely akin to common speech. Coleridge, a serious student of German transcendentalism, expanded on Wordsworth's poems, viewing them as a kind of supernaturalizing the natural; his own poetry he described as being the reverse — naturalizing the supernatural. Poetry was defined by Coleridge as the process of juggling and reconciling opposites, with imagination the primary source of transcendental truth — clearly a Romantic

approach to philosophy. Carlyle praised the hero in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841 ) and produced ornate and complex prose in *Sartor Resartus* (1834 ).

Other key actors in this literary scene included Byron, Keats, Scott, and Shelley. Byron projected the melancholy, brooding, even antisocial character into a heroic and Romantic mold. Keats, a superb lyricist, extolled beauty, however transient it might be in the cosmic scheme of things. Scott's historical novels (such as *Waverley* in 1814) used history to depict life and instruct the common man, offering a philosophy of history not very different from the one Hegel espoused a few years later on. Shelley put in Neo-Platonic form his concepts of freedom and beauty.

The Gothic novels of the late eighteenth century were highly popular throughout the English Romantic era, and it might even be argued they reached their peak in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1846). It was perhaps through the Gothic novel that Byron used and developed the 'Byronic hero,' a composite of the supernatural of intense feelings, the past, and remote settings.

For purpose of classification, the framework provided by Charles H. Herford is probably as useful as any.<sup>31</sup> Herford posits three groups of English Romantics as follows. (1) The Wordsworth group of 1798-1806 which consisted of Coleridge, Crabbe, and Clare who stressed the harmony between nature and man. (2) The Scott group of 1805-1810 which included Campbell, Moore, and Southey who focused on medievalism and the Borderlands, their chief interest being traditional narrative poetry. (3) The cosmopolitan Shelley group of 1818-1822, such as Byron, and Keats, who were in tune with both foreign and domestic Romantic themes, and intense in their literary endeavors on behalf of freedom and beauty.

Schools of English Romanticism may be identified. For example, the

'Lake School' or 'Lake Poets' including Wordsworth, Coleridge, De Quincey, and Southey; and the 'Cockney School' represented by Keats, Hunt, and Shelley. Writing a review on Southey's *Thalaba* in October 1802, Francis Jeffrey says of the 'Lake School':

The author [Southey] who is before us belong to a sect of poets, that has established itself in this country within these ten or twelve years, and is looked upon, we believe, as one of its chief champions and apostles ...

The disciples of this school boast much of its originality, and seem to value themselves very highly, for having broken loose from the bondage of ancient authority, and reasserted the independence of genius (*Edinburgh Review*, pp. 63-64).

Commenting on the 'Cockney School,' an anonymous contributor wrote to *Blackwood's* in October 1817:

While the whole critical world is occupied with balancing the merits, whether in theory or in execution, of what is commonly called The Lake School, it is strange that no one seem to think it at all necessary to say a single word about another school of poetry which has of late sprung among us ... *The Cockney School* (p. 83).

In general, nevertheless developments in English Romanticism may not be rigorously classified, according to official 'schools,' certainly much less so than the German or French schools. The English Romantics were very much individualists representing themselves rather than an organized movement with designated leaders. Northrop Frye identifies the guiding force in English Romanticism as historical and cultural, forces that induced and nurtured a change in the language of poetic mythology.<sup>32</sup> William J. Long felt that democracy was one of the social forces.

Just as we understand the tremendous energizing influence of Puritanism in the matter of English liberty by remembering that the common people had begun to read, and that their book was the Bible, so we may understand this age of popular government by remembering that the chief subject of romantic literature was the essential nobleness of common men and the value of the individual.<sup>33</sup>

Furst (1976) finds that the English Romantics were not driven into unity by external impetus such as, for example, the French struggle against neo-classicism or the German ambition to develop a great national literature. Rather, their Romanticism was a natural extension of developments begun late in the eighteenth century. In place of the unity of German or French Romantics, the English had a strong relationship with the native tradition and its restoration. 'In the poetry of Byron and Clare many earlier elements persisted, while the novels of Scott, Peacock, and Jane Austen bear witness to the flourishing current of realism during the early nineteenth century' (p. 48).

The English Romantics were pragmatic rather than systematic, had relatively few official journals, programmes, theories such as existed on the continent. Romanticism in England was therefore informal. In English Romanticism could be found simultaneously Shelley's idealistic, visionary transcendentalism and Wordsworth's identity with the natural. 'Because of its very freedom it produced a large number of suggestible critical ideas as well as a wealth of fine poetry' ( Furst,1976, p. 49 ). A kind of development, it might be noted, highly consistent with Romanticism in American life, Emerson's in particular.

### American Romanticism in Emerson

According to Morse Peckham (1971), neither Hawthorne nor Melville lived nor wrote from or for a truly European situation although they came to live to the highest level of European culture (p. 36). Hawthorne and Melville found themselves in a social environment dominated by the frontier values and in an exposure-situation to European culture. For the European, Romanticism involved social isolation and alienation whereas for the American the most attractive experience was to visit Europe (pp.160,161).. Like Hawthorne and Melville, although Emerson concerned himself with the problems of the United States, the techniques he employed were the same as those of European Romanticism. The Romanticist creates the self, the sense of value and identity. This does not mean that Emerson was a mere imitator or that his Emersonian Transcendentalism was not unique.

Emerson as well as other Transcendentalists could be distinguished from the English Romantics by the strictness of their application of critical principles not the principles themselves; they took the poet-priest more seriously than all English Romantics, of course, with the exception of Blake and Shelley (Buell,1973, p. 76). According to Hoxie Neale Fairchild, the Transcendentalism of the Romanticists is poetic rather than philosophical as the analogy is drawn between the transcendental faculty and the creative imagination of the artist.<sup>34</sup> The romantic vision differs from the transcendental belief that the poet is a 'liberating god' and the poem is a second creation metaphorically as well as metaphysically true. It is true that the Transcendentalist defines the poet not as a craftsman but in terms of his character and role as thinker, social animal, and observer of nature (Fairchild,1931, p.144). As Romantics, the Transcendentalists are inspired by nature to poetic expression. The romantic poet does not view nature as a set of events, objects, and conditions that are his final interest or subject



matter, but as a language to be read, to be a guide to the metaphysical places to which he wishes to go.<sup>35</sup> American landscape in general and New England in particular attracted Emerson to compose a large portion of his poetry. Likewise England inspired Wordsworth to produce an enormous part of his poems \_\_ nature is at the heart of Romanticism.

Like other Transcendentalists, Emerson distrusts Christianity which has led him to emphasize the theoretical value of nature as a proof and analogue of man's relation to God. This attitude is supported by the romantic view that nature is an organic universe. For the Transcendentalists, America is nature's nation; there is the movement from the supernaturalism of the Unitarians to the 'natural religion' and then to the 'religion of nature' (Buell, 1973, pp. 146-47). They accepted romantic vision that of the principle of organic form \_\_ any work of art should take shape like an organism of the thing expressed, not adopt an arbitrary pattern (p. 147). There is a correspondence, says Emerson, between nature and art \_\_ his thought consists of two elements, nature and the doctrine of correspondence; nature is the basic ground for religious and moral implications (Ahlstrom, 1985, p. 40). Since everything in nature has a spiritual significance, moral law and natural law are the same. Like Wordsworth in some of his works, a kind of mysticism underlies Emerson's writings.

### Wordsworth

In his poem 'The Recluse,' William Wordsworth rejects the mundane and embraces mystical experience in an effort to unite Subject and Object, society and individual. He reveals in this poem that he is concerned with nature much less so than with the mind, a kind of psychological poet as it

were. Nature for Wordsworth was a guide pointing beyond itself to something higher, not something to be worshiped but, rather, to be recognized as capable of giving motion and inspiration. Wordsworth may have initially thought of nature as his guide, but early came to the view that it was his imagination that was the mover, albeit through nature as the source of inspiration. Natural 'fact' thus became human and poetic fact, a Romantic mode of the imagination.

In America, Protestant scruples induced by Puritanism and Calvinism especially had trammelled the Romantic imagination. While Wordsworth's scruples were somewhat Puritan though also Anglican in nature, he was 'seeking to develop a new kind of romance, one that would chasten our imagination.'<sup>36</sup> While both Wordsworth and Emerson saw nature as a key experience in the development of the mind, the imagination was central for Wordsworth whereas Emerson went beyond both Unitarianism and Wordsworth to seek God in nature.

Poetry was for Wordsworth the outcome of an interaction between mind and nature. Through symbolism the poet, Wordsworth, brought into focus the universal power or noumenon in nature. Wordsworth viewed the objects of ordinary experience imaginatively; symbols are used to break through the obstacles of perception to reveal greater mysteries beyond ordinary human perception. In 'The Solitary Reaper,' for example, bird metaphors may well refer to 'the mystery of human existence' (Pottle, 1986, p. 81). Wordsworth, not a pantheist, found God not in nature but, rather, revealed through the imagination interacting with nature.

In the Preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth summarized some key conceptions regarding his own work, including the uplifting effect of nature, and the natural goodness of peasant expression. Despite slight traces of utilitarianism, Wordsworth upholds the superiority of the poet's genius and sensitivity and of poetry over mere science. Wordsworth is not above setting

aside rules of traditional poetry for the sake of 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.' Wordsworth was somewhat the revolutionary in favoring the natural, the emotional and the original, especially the imaginative. He was much concerned over the connexion of artist and reader, a role favored for Emerson also.

### Coleridge

Understanding Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Romanticism hinges on knowing something of his philosophy and psychology. His psychology is organically linked with his philosophy in which is posited an ultimate reality requiring explanation. The faculty of imagination is as important as reason and understanding and, like Emerson, Coleridge seeks unity as a principle of reality and stresses the importance of individuality. To reconcile the divergent world of facts with organic wholeness, Coleridge based his thought on 'reconciliation of opposites.' The imagination is the unifying agency, one which makes it possible to break through the limitations of understanding that perceives the world mechanistically.

The organic unity sought by Emerson was consistent with Coleridge's principle of organic unity, one which emphasized process of growth from a seed where the evolved organism is involved, fully contained as precursor, an inseparability of part from whole and form from content, a simultaneous existence of conscious and unconscious, willed and spontaneous elements. These opposites may be reconciled; nature and art, genius and judgment, according to Coleridge, are but different aspects of the same whole organic unity. For example, genius is ineffective without a guiding judgment, while judgment is sterile without genius.

The Romanticism of Coleridge cannot be separated from literary

mysticism or metaphysical position. Edwin M. Eigner characterized Coleridge, as well as Wordsworth and Carlyle, as heirs of both German and English Romanticism, holding intuition and imagination superior to any other dimension of the mind.<sup>37</sup> Coleridge, along with Wordsworth and Carlyle, are identified by M. H. Abrams as both bards and metaphysicians seeing themselves as representatives of Western tradition in time of cultural crisis:

They represented themselves in the traditional persona of the philosopher-seer or the poet-prophet ... and they set out, in various yet recognizably parallel ways, to reconstitute the grounds of hope and to announce the certainty, or at least the possibility, of a rebirth in which a renewed mankind will inhabit a renovated earth where he will find himself thoroughly at home.<sup>38</sup>

Thus in Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' there are numerous instances of the violation of the community, or alienation. But the poem depicts the discovery of value in the Self in such instances as the blessing of the water snakes, the releasing energy of the Spirit of the Pole (which is at the maximum distance from England, or community) and the marvelous activities of wind and angels, all of which are best interpreted as 'aspects of the nonsocial resources of the Self' (Peckham, 1965, p. 51).

Coleridge referred to his genre of poetry as 'the sublimer ode' in imitation of the oracular and visionary, a blending of the Bard and the Prophet, a deliberate effort, as Coleridge himself noted, for poetic realization of abstract and metaphysical truths. The paradox or problem of opposites, reconciled by Coleridge<sup>39</sup> through his principle of organic unity, was a method quite consistent with Vedanta (Hindu) philosophy, a philosophical source recognized by Emerson and, taken up by him in his involvement with Eastern cosmology. In the Hindu texts Emerson found convenient philosophical tools as already discussed in chapter two of the present study,

which helped him avoid the rather tortuous dialectical arguments which might otherwise become mere exercises in rational philosophy.

### Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle was one of Scotland's foremost historians, a social critic and moralizer. He became a major exponent in England of the new German Romanticism, especially with its stress on individual imagination, emotion, and transcendental idealism. He was no mere imitator, choosing to emphasize renunciation over liberalism and epicureanism, transforming Kant's categorical imperative into a sanction for the Calvinistic ethic of work and duty. He projected the hero as someone who understands the needs of his time and spreads his vision to society by persuasion or force. German thought helped him to attack rationalism and shallow empiricism, mechanism and materialism, and to urge the restoration of intuition, mystery, faith, and sacredness but without reinstituting orthodox Christianity.

In his *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), 'The Tailor Retailored', Carlyle views the Romantic process of loss and recovery of value. Man is the tailor, his ideas but clothes by which he organizes his relation to a chaotic universe. Like clothes, his ideas wear out, and a new set of ideas is needed. The phenomena of nature (matter) and society are clothes, the outer coverings of an unseen reality. The 'social clothing' has been patched over to the point of tatters. Three major themes here are the spiritual nature of the world, the inferiority of logic to spiritual insight, and the symbolism of matter. The work was published in the United States (1836) where it had a deep influence.

Bowden ( 1878 ) described Carlyle as 'mystic':

[Carlyle] ... is a mystic in the service of what is nobly positive and it is easy to see how his transcendental worship of humanity, together with his reverence for duty, might condense and materialize themselves for the needs of a generation adverse to transcendental ways of thought, into the ethical doctrines of Comte (p. 75 ).

In his *Past and Present* and *Chartism*, Carlyle attacked the evils (egoism and materialism) of an age that let the poor suffer, fusing in these works an essentially Romantic demand for a heroic faith in natural heroes and leaders, as well as for discipline and a work ethic to replace the moral decline he saw around him. In *Past and Present*, Carlyle was the historian as well as a severe social critic and moralist. From the 1820s on Carlyle insisted that poetry should be rooted in Reality and written in forms common to everyday experience.

Thus while Carlyle endeavored to substitute the visionary and intuitive for the material and mechanistic, he did not do so at the price of ignoring the material world. In his *Sartor Resatus*, for example, Carlyle starts with the finite world in which experience is mystically transformed until a new reality, a new horizon, is projected. For Carlyle, imagination was the most efficacious means of freeing mankind from the bonds of the world of material facts. Carlyle was the social reformer, but in the Romantic tradition of the bard. Carlyle's rootedness in the 'real' or social/natural world, his Romantic and Transcendental flairs, were anything but antithetical to the American mind of the nineteenth century, especially that of Emerson.

### Romanticism in Emersonism

Emerson is everywhere the Romantic. In his essay 'The Poet,' he affirms the dependence of form upon soul and looks down on those poets who write

from the fancy, 'at a safe distance from their own experience.' He there notes that adequate expression is rare, that we study to 'utter our painful secret,' being half our selves and 'the other half ... expression.' For Emerson, thought and genius are prior to form and more fundamental: 'Talent may frolic and juggle; genius realizes and adds.' Emerson views science as sensual and therefore superficial, the universe being 'the exterization of the soul.' Nature is a symbol of higher things, its end being the passage of the soul into higher forms.

Emerson's essay 'History' reflects the typical Romantic concern with historical process, a study of which helps the reader grasp 'the unattained but attainable self.' A study of history reveals a simplicity of cause at the centre, offers a clearer vision of causes. Men should refuse the dominion of facts by remaining true to their better instincts or sentiments in pursuit of principle, letting facts fall 'aptly and supple into their places.' Public facts are to be individualized and private facts generalized. History provides a means of communication over time and space, connecting the souls of Plato and Pindar with his: 'When I feel that we two meet in a perception, that our two souls are tinted with the same hue, and do, as it were run into one, why should I measure degrees of latitude, why should I count Egyptian years?'

Emerson, like so many of the English Romantic poets, saw the poet as prophet and seer, one who is free and makes free, an individual. In his poem 'Boston Hymn' in 1863, Emerson writes:

I break your bonds and masterships  
And I unchain the slave:  
Free be his heart and hand henceforth  
As wind and wandering wave (ll. 35-56).<sup>40</sup>

Individualism was for Emerson anything but isolation or separation from the world. Emerson rejected the formistic belief that facts are things in

themselves, opting instead for the basic metaphor of the living plant, a metaphor implying the progressive relatedness and ultimate unity accepted by many Romantics. In his sermon on 'Self and Others' in 1831, Emerson preached 'the perfection of that web of relations to all beings into which your own lot is woven,' that the relations were derived from the organic metaphor. 'We live in him [God], as the leaf lives in the tree ... We shall be parts of God, as the hand is part of the body; if only the hand had a will.'

Adams (1954) noted that the organic metaphor evidently came to America and to Emerson mainly by way of England and France. Adams is not certain of how strong the influence was, but that these 'origin seeds' were thoroughly at home in Emerson. 'Like anyone of independence spirit, he chose his influences; they were not thrust upon him. They helped him do what he wanted to do and would have done, though doubtless with greater effort and smaller success, without them (p.120).'

Despite his Romantic preachings and inclinations, Emerson was by no means an eccentric bard or behaviorally a model of some stereotypic image. A popular lecturer, he did not always inspire his audiences, many of whom considered his work difficult or obscure despite his commitment to the language and symbols of his time. His political economy was not antithetical to that of Adam Smith by any means, and he insisted that the foundation of political economy was non-interference, that wealth has its own checks and balances. In *The Conduct of Life* he expressed a very dim view of the 'masses' who were 'not to be flattered but to be schooled.' Concerning the inhabitants of Concord, the home of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Thoreau, Hawthorne wrote: 'Never was a poor little country village infested with such variety of queer, strangely dressed, oddly behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply bores of a very intense water.'<sup>41</sup> Emerson's answer may well have



been consistent with his notion that greatness has little or nothing to do with consistency.

John Burroughs was, judging by descriptions, an avid exponent of Emersonian thought. The romantic in Emerson is especially evident in the following description by Burroughs:

Emerson is the knight errant of the moral sentiment. He leads, in our time and country, one illustrious division, at least, in the holy crusade of the affections and the intuitions against the usurpations of tradition and the illogical dogma. He marks the flower, the culmination, under American conditions and in the finer air of the New World, of the reaction begun by the German philosophers, and passed along by later French and English thinkers, of man against circumstance, of spirit against form, of the present against the past. What glorious egoism, what inspiring audacity, impiety! There is an eclat about his words, and a brave challenging of immense odds, that is like an army with banners. It stirs the blood like a bugle-call: beauty, bravery, and a sacred cause — the three things that win with us always.<sup>42</sup>

John Greeleaf Whittier saw in Emerson a combination of talents that went beyond the philosophical (Transcendental), recognizing in addition 'his keen insight, wisdom, fine sense of humor, large tolerance, and love of nature in her simplest as well as grandest aspects — an inimitable combination of practical sagacity, profound reflection, and mystical intuition.'<sup>43</sup>

True, compared with Coleridge or Keats, Emerson is somewhat cold, but nevertheless the Romantic, as in his worship of the New England landscape, in which the emphasis lies on New England meadows and fields, not French or English. There is always the aura of nature present, even if for the purpose of a spiritual message. Typical of the Romantic style, there is in his poetry a looseness and formlessness, but always the individual spiritual

quest. Paul Elmer More saw in Emerson's works the 'shifting breath of inspiration like a rudderless boat' and defined Emersonianism as 'individualistic romanticism rooted in Puritan divinity.'<sup>44</sup>

D. H. Lawrence was somewhat leery of the modern relevance of Emerson, although he still saw in Emerson the great idealist and believer in continuous revelation, 'the continuous inrushes of inspirational energy from the Over-Soul.' Lawrence notes that while Emerson believed in having the courage to treat all men as equals (a Romantic urge), in the twentieth century it is difficult not to treat them so. Times have changed, says Lawrence, and the modern mood is hardly a Romantic one.<sup>45</sup> James Truslow Adams (1930) also finds fault with Emersonian Romanticism in that it is too easy; his high doctrine of self-reliance and individualism runs into pragmatic realities that are not so easily resolved by his insistence on intuition and spontaneity.

Intuition and spontaneity — fatal words for a civilization which is more and more coming to depend for its very existence on clear, hard, and long-sustained 'thinking-through.' It is this positive flaw in Emerson's reaching that has made the effect of his really noble doctrines of so little influence upon the boys who have worshiped him this side of idolatry at sixteen and then gone into world and found every invitation to retreat from the high ground rather than to advance (p. 489 ).

But Emerson is more concerned with the Transcendental than the mundane, and his Romanticism must be seen in that light. In his vast nature-poem 'Woodnotes,' Emerson runs the gamut of his feelings for nature, especially the relatedness between natural beauty and the wholesomeness of rustic life, and between the philosophical concept of universal nature and the religious concept of an 'eternal Pan.'

And God said, 'Throb!' and there was motion  
And the vast mass became Vast Ocean.  
Onward and on, the eternal Pan.  
Who layeth the world's incessant plan,  
Halteth never in one shape,  
But forever doth escape  
Like wave or flame, into new form  
Of gem, and air, of plants, and worms (II, 327-39: *Four Volumes in One*, p.43).

In connecting two complex sets of ideas, Emerson reflects the tradition of Wordsworth and the great Romantic poets. 'Like Wordsworth, Emerson assumes that innocence is the child of a retired life with nature; and there is an echo in the lines that follow of the English poet's ideal 'plain living and high thinking' (Beach, 1966, p. 348).

The typical Romantic idea of superior wholesomeness of life far away from cities and crowds who, removed from nature, lose innocence, is found in 'Woodnotes.' For one like Emerson who rejects simplistic dualism and anthropomorphisms of conventional religious doctrine, escaping loneliness and helplessness in the universe requires a sense of oneness with nature, equivalent to the oneness or sonship of God, so that nature and God become interchangeable for Emerson, beatitude accessible to man if he can realize his oneness with the spirit of the universe; the objective and subjective is more original and real. Emerson found in the external universe the same substance as the human soul, something not foreign to soul and beyond the reach of its intuitions, a view especially consistent with \_\_\_ if not derived from \_\_\_ his study of Eastern Vedantic philosophy.

Like Wordsworth, Emerson rejects 'mere reflection' as the way to perceive the spirit of nature. For both Emerson and Wordsworth the world of nature must be interpreted by the heart, the poetical equivalent of Faith

(religion) or Reason (metaphysics). Only when free of the world (through renunciation) is man at liberty to achieve his oneness with the spirit behind all things, to lose his self in the Self, or divine whole. Again, this is very much an Eastern view as expressed in various Vedanta sources.

Emerson's Transcendentalism undoubtedly gave his Romanticism a solid intellectual foundation, but at the same time reduced the role of naturalism, so important for Wordsworth. Wordsworth perhaps had the greater poetic imagination than Emerson, thereby giving his naturalism more strength. Beach (1966) concluded that 'Brilliant as Emerson's imagination is on the philosophical side, the relative defect in his sensibility prevents him from having the importance of Wordsworth as an exponent of nature' (p. 369).

If personal experience is the criterion, then one may question Emerson's stature as Romanticist. Yvors Winters asserted that Emerson's poetry reflected not so much the experience as his own theory of experience: 'He never experienced that which he recommended.'<sup>46</sup> Emerson's Transcendentalism, while giving his Romanticism a larger and solidier ground, had less of naturalism than Wordsworth for example. Even so, Emerson's *Nature* revealed him as somewhat the lyrical Romanticist: 'Never again was he to succeed so well in clothing his abstractions in the colors of the visible world, or to sustain for so long the art of the rhapsode' (Mathiessen, 1986, p. 67).

Emerson's moral earnestness and personal meditative expressions justify his classification as Romantic, much more so than any poetic fancy. He was more the prophet and the champion of social individualism than the nature poet or social revolutionary. Emerson's poet would be open to the simple or sensual delights of nature, but also to wisdom which, to Romanticists and Transcendentalists alike, lies hidden in nature, to be discovered by the poet.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The influence of Wordsworth on Emerson can be documented copiously in Emerson's journals, lectures, and letters, and in the writings of various other critical reviewers. While much exists to justify the topic 'Emerson's Thoughts on Wordsworth,' little is available for the reverse mode, that is, 'Wordsworth's Thoughts on Emerson.' This is not surprising in view of the fact that Emerson did not begin to publish his own major works until Wordsworth was nearly seventy years of age, and therefore Wordsworth could scarcely have had the opportunity to know much about Emerson other than what could be gleaned from their very brief encounters when Emerson visited the 63-year-old for the first time in England. A short sketch on the state of Wordsworth's mind during the 1833, when Emerson visited him, might be instructive before turning to his own literary output and thought.

Wordsworth suffered many losses during the 1830s. George MacLean Harper called the 1833-1837 the 'fatal years' in which Sir Walter Scott died in 1832, followed by the death of Coleridge and Lamb in 1834 and Sarah Hutchinson in 1837.<sup>1</sup> Mary Moorman saw the 1829-1835 as 'Years of Trouble.'<sup>2</sup> Dorothy's suffering from 'internal inflammation', supposedly caused by walking too long on a cold day, made Wordsworth tell Henry Crabb Robinson that she lay for 'forty-eight hours in excruciating torture' (*Wordsworth: Biography*, p. 488). In December 1831 Dorothy again continued to suffer from a less severe attack than the first one but became unable to recover her strength: 'Her recovery,' William wrote to his brother in May 1832, 'from each attack is slower and slower' although her mind remained 'rich in knowledge and pleasing remembrances and thoughts, as seems, just what they should be.'

Dorothy's continuous sickness had the greatest impact on Wordsworth. Again when she was desperately ill in January 1833, Wordsworth wrote, 'I shall not dwell upon her state which weighs incessantly on every thought of my heart.' She composed a number of verses reflecting her warmth of love to nature.

No prisoner in this lovely room  
I saw the green banks of Wyne,  
Recalling thy prophetic words,  
Bard, Brother, Friend from infancy (*Wordsworth: Biography*, p. 492).

In a letter on May 17, 1833 to Charles Lamb, Wordsworth wrote:

... her strength will never be restored ... I have been thus particular, knowing how much you and your dear sister value this excellent person, who in tenderness of heart I do not honestly believe was never exceeded by any of God's creatures. Her loving kindness has no bounds. God bless her for ever and ever.<sup>3</sup>

Wordsworth was silenced throughout the sad year of 1832 by public and private anxiety; he admitted that 'my mind has been kept this last year [1832] and more in such a state of anxiety that all harmonies appear to have been banished from it except those that reliance upon the goodness of God furnishes.' He turned to reading after Dorothy began to recover (*Wordsworth: Biography*, p. 493). Writing to Edward Quillinan in February 1833, he said:

A year has elapsed since I wrote any poetry but a few lines and I have rarely even read anything in verse till within the last week, when I have begun to accustom my ear to blank

verse in other authors with a hope they may put me in true time for my own (*Letters of Wordsworth: The Later Years*, p. 494).

Moorman (1965) noted that the reference to blank verse seems to point that Wordsworth hoped to return to *The Recluse*. A few lines from an unpublished poem titled 'Twilight by the Side of Grasmere Lake' dated 1832 might afterwards stand at the head of the series entitled 'Evening Voluntaries', published in the *The Yarrow Revisited* volume of 1835: 'The busy dor-hawk chases the white moth / With hurling note' — indicate the various presences of nature which are felt or heard rather than seen (p. 494), and 'A steam is heard - I see it not, but know / By its soft music whence the writers flow' (ll 25-26, *Wordsworth: Biography*, p. 494).

In his *The Old World and the New*, Orville Dewey, an American visitor, tells of a conversation he had with Wordsworth in 1833: 'I was so much disappointed in the appearance of Wordsworth, that I actually began to suspect that I had come to cottage of one of the neighbors.' Dewey remained doubtful about Wordsworth particularly when their talks dealt with commonplace subjects, but this changed; when politics was mentioned, the conversation became very interesting and 'a flood of words' came forth for one hour or two convincing Dewey that he was in the presence of the poet. 'He [Wordsworth] remarked afterwards that, although he was known to the world as only a poet, he had given twelve hours' thought to the condition and prospects of society for one to poetry' (*Wordsworth: His Life*, p. 385).

It seems that Wordsworth was still interested in politics. His reaction to the Reform Bill came in November 1833:

My opinion is that the people are bent upon the destruction of their ancient Institutions, and that nothing since. I will not

say the passing, but since the broaching of the Reform Bill would or can prevent it. I would bend my endeavours to strengthen to the utmost the rational portion of the Tory party, but from no other hope than this, that the march towards destruction may be less rapid by their interposing something of a check; and to social order, as dependent upon the present distribution of property which is the subject of Radicals (*Wordsworth: The Later Years*, V, p. 657).

Earlier Wordsworth declared that he was never an anti-reformer but he was anti-bill man, 'heart and soul' (p. 588). The question which arises is, is the 1833 political attitude of Wordsworth still even related to the view expressed to William Mathews in the previous century, in May 1794, that he belonged to 'that odious class of men called democrat, and of that class [would] forever continue.':

I disapprove of monarchical and aristocratical governments, however modified. Hereditary distinctions and privileged orders of every species I think must necessarily counteract the progress of human improvement: hence it follows that I am not amongst the admirers of the British Constitution.<sup>4</sup>

Wordsworth expressed his disapproval of monarchy, aristocracy, and the constitution. No matter whatever is done to improve these governments, Wordsworth considered these types of governments as hindrances to human progress and improvement.

Regarding Wordsworth's literary attitude in 1833, it could be furnished from comments, details, and opinions he made in his letters during this period. In a letter to Alexander Dyce on January 7, 1833, Wordsworth told of his admiration for Skelton and congratulated Dyce on making progress with such a writer as Skelton whose works deserved more attention



(*Wordsworth: The Later Years*, p. 579). In another letter on April 22, 1833, Wordsworth advised him to choose the 'best sonnets' in kind and in degree if he wanted to go on with his edition of *Specimens of English Sonnets*.

I should seem that the best rule to follow would be first, to pitch upon the sonnets which are best both in kind and perfectness of execution, and, next, those which although of a humbler quality, are admirable for the finish and happiness of the execution; taking care to exclude all those which have not one or other of these recommendations however striking they might be as characteristic of the age in which the author lived, or some peculiarity of his manner (*Wordsworth: The Later Years*, pp. 603-04).

Giving the best example, Wordsworth mentioned Donne's sonnet No. X, which begins 'Death be not proud.' Although Wordsworth composed many sonnets, he never thought of writing a preface upon how to construct a sonnet (p. 604). In another letter to Dyce on July 23, 1833,<sup>5</sup> Wordsworth expressed his intent of making a tour in Scotland mainly to visit Sir Walter Scott and probably Glasgow, Edinburgh, and the western Highlands.

According to Wordsworth, Byron and Scott were 'popular' or 'fashionable' writers. As poetical publications in Cumberland had not sold even one copy despite the fact that Cumberland was his native county (*Wordsworth: The Later Years*, p. 634). Wordsworth valued artistic integrity over popularity; in a letter to Hamilton he wrote that he wished writers to behave in the manner of men of science who themselves should not copy those in France 'by stepping too much out of their way for titles and baubles of that kind.' It would be much better for them to keep out of the political struggle and offices of state (p. 613).

### Ideas Common to Wordsworth and Emerson

To turn now to his productions, critical interest generally centres around Wordsworth's treatment of nature, his critical theories, and his new ideas on appropriate diction. Critics were more concerned with Wordsworth's poetic than poetical style. The New England Transcendentalists in general agreed with the Wordsworthian notion that the writer should use the language of common speech. Orestes Augustus Brownson (1839) went somewhat overboard in this respect by praising newspaper-writing style, making popularity a test of literary merit, although he himself did not use a colloquial style. Yet Emerson grew away from it. According to Buell (1973):

Walt Whitman had a point when he declared of Emerson's writing that 'no performance was ever more based on artificial scholarships and decorums at third or fourth removes' and compared Emerson's to porcelian statues ...Transcendentalist conversations and prose seem continuously to be striving to rise above colloquial to a more literary level (p. 94).

Any possible impact of Wordsworth on Emerson was not with respect to literary style. Emerson was more restless than Wordsworth in his poetry (Buell, p. 247). Yet, for both Emerson and Wordsworth, the tragedy of spiritual isolation is evident. Buell cites Emerson's letters in which he refers to Tennyson, after reading Wordsworth, as a 'godsend,' moving with a sense of relief from the latter to the former (p. 57). Emerson's fellow Transcendentalists found Wordsworth noble but dull, Tennyson lovely but facile (p. 68).

Beach (1966) described the influence of Wordsworth on Emerson as 'obvious,' but hardly to the extent of making Emerson a clone of Wordsworth.

Beach indicated that Wordsworth was primarily concerned with the way man has developed his spiritual life, with the inspirations of nature, and had a more human point of view than Emerson.

While he [Wordsworth] is equally insistent on the parmaountcy of the spirit, his view of nature is more realistic than Emerson's, much more down to the ground. While no breath of evolutionism has touched the earlier poet, he realises more effectively than his better-in-formed follower how man is a child of earth (p. 366).

Beach credits Emerson with a more philosophical cast of mind or imagination than Wordsworth. In particular, Emerson is more widely read in philosophy and his concept of universal nature is more sharply defined, enriched with platonic and neoplatonic overtones, as well as with oriental philosophy and German Transcendentalism. Beach feels that his opposition of mind and heart is more sharply grounded than Wordsworth's in the philosophical distinction between understanding and reason, or knowledge and faith. Emerson, says Beach, provides greater dramatic expression to the emotional craving for oneness with nature. 'His conception of the universal process, the eternal Pan, has been fortified with considerations drawn from classical philosophy and from modern evolutionary science' (p. 368).

Another difference lies in Emerson's romantic concept of nature, rooted more in pure philosophy than naturalism; naturalism was for Wordsworth fundamental in his approach to nature. Beach, contrary to some Transcendentalists such as Felton (1836) who found Wordsworth somewhat mechanical and artificial rather than inspired, feels that Wordsworth has greater imagination, his poetry more body and poignancy than that of

Emerson (p. 368).

Gilbert Dunklin likened Emerson and Wordsworth in their common concern with nature, 'impulses from a vernal wood,' much more so than with any formed theological concern over man as a fallen or a wholly sinful creature. 'One of the chief penalties that attend Wordsworth's kind of thought and feeling \_\_\_ as we see also in Emerson \_\_\_ is the loss of attention of the sense of evil, the tragic sense.'<sup>7</sup> Emerson and Wordsworth offer not solace but, rather, a realistic and sustained consciousness of the human predicament, such as Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.'

For Wordsworth, Nature implies both landscape and human nature. Although the 'Nature' he saw and experienced at the Lake District was far from being a humanized nature, it was nevertheless a landscape transferred into human activity by human settlement and technology through which forests were turned into land inhabited by 'sordid men,' 'And transient occupations and desires,/Ignoble and deprav'd.' Wordsworth saw himself as a lover of human nature. Elsewhere Wordsworth observed that nature is not a power external to man but a proof of this involvement of man with the environment more positively. In 'Tintern Abbey,' he wrote:

Therefore am I still  
A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
And mountains; and of all that we behold  
From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
Of eye and ear, both what we half-create  
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
In nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of any purest thought, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being ('Tintern Abbey,' my emphasis).

In this passage, nature refers to the world of sense-perception. Moreover, the speaker's attitude is coupled with a sense of participation; not only is he present but also he is an observing eye. Stephen Prickett asks, 'If nature is Wordsworth's own self-creation, how can it also be the 'soul of all his moral being?'<sup>8</sup> Wordsworth's relationship with nature, says Prickett, is not just one of part-creation but one that grows through creation (Prickett, 1981, p. 216).

For nature he [a Being] receives; nor so  
...  
Even as an agent of the one Great Mind,  
Creates, creator, and receiver both,  
Working but in alliance with the works-  
Which it beholds.- Such, verily, is the first  
Poetic spirit of our human life (*The Prelude*, II, II: 265, 272-76).

For Wordsworth, the process of growth is one of active interchange between the external world and the self.

According to Wordsworth, Nature for man is a symbol for eternity because it can not be the victim of death. It seems that the world's non-human creatures belong to an order that is different to man's order; for those creatures change brings no death and, in the human sense, they have no consciousness of death. What this means for man is that change brings no death at all. The way to learn from nature is to find a 'corresponding region' in one's own consciousness and to be conscious not only of things but of the relations of one thing to another that express changelessness and continuity (Ferry, 1978, p. 28). Like other Romantics, Wordsworth seems not be interested in the knowledge of things-in-themselves<sup>9</sup> but in confronting the things face to face.<sup>10</sup> When Wordsworth says, 'We see into the life of things,' ('Tintern Abbey'), he means by 'things' nothing less than 'all objects

of all thought,' (ll. 101) 'all that we behold / From this green earth,' (ll. 104-105) 'all the mighty world / Of eye, and ear' (ll.105-106). Fischer (1988) observed that Wordsworth's 'seeing' into the world's life, Emerson's being 'next' to it and Thoreau's 'neighboring' it — all reveal the Romantics<sup>11</sup> assurance in the existence of things (p.184).

Wordsworth's attitude toward the landscape<sup>12</sup> can be read in 'clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars / Ravage the world, tranquility is Here' (Sonnet, 'Composed by the Side of Grasmere Lake.' This tranquility, says Paul De Man, is not 'pantheistic oneness' with nature, not even an adjustment between mind and nature as in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. It is Pan who asserts that '... tranquility is Here,' but where is this 'Here'? The impact of 'Here' is based upon the changing relationship between the poet and the landscape that is developed in the sonnet.<sup>13</sup> The question is 'how can Pan promise that 'tranquility' is Here?' since harmony is disturbed by 'incessant wars.' The relationship between the landscape and the poet is that of the thing observed and of the observer (De Man, 1984, p.129). The observer can go beyond the surface and penetrate into the realm that is beyond the reach of earthly vision. It seems that there is tranquility on earth but only for those who are able to transcend and discover the depths of things (p.131). Emerson declared that the best discovery is the one the discoverer makes for himself: 'each man is by secret linking connected with some district of nature, whose agent and interpreter he is' (CL, IV, p. 6).

In Romantic poetry,<sup>14</sup> there might be much about discovery of the poetic self or place by attempting to move away from the self or the place: the subject of the poem perhaps is not the subject, and the poem's effect undermines its own apparent aims. The question that arises is 'Is the subject of a poem, for example, 'Tintern Abbey'<sup>15</sup> really Nature or is the poet

trying to posit himself in the poem?' Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' is not about a purposeful journey of discovery in the world but is an escape into the 'self' in which it is becoming impossible to distinguish the protagonist from the speaker.<sup>16</sup> Majorie Levinson suggested that 'Tintern Abbey' does not present natural values but it does present apolitical and undetermined ones and defines what she called a 'negative ideal': an 'escape from cultural values.'<sup>17</sup> Wordsworth presented a picture of rural England in 1798 including 'vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods' who are there as the result of socioeconomic conditions. Wordsworth uses various expressions connoting human evils: 'lonely rooms,' 'hours of weariness,' 'the din of towns and cities,' 'the fretful stir, / Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,' 'evil tongues, / Rash judgments ... the sneers of selfish men ... greetings where no kindness is ... / The dreary intercourse of daily life.' Was Wordsworth a political journalist or a revolutionary activist or a humanitarian messenger? May be he was a political journalist at one time, a revolutionary activist at another and finally a man who felt that he had a message for humanity: Let every human being know that the beggars are there as 'vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods.' This, then, will be a diversion from the description of the lovely landscape towards the authentic life of things.

According to Levinson (1986) nature in 'Tintern Abbey' is not extremely Romantic and does not enable material and self-transcendence or dramatize principles of self renewal — it is Mnemosyne, a conservative muse; a 'guardian of ground hollowed by private commemorative acts.' Wordsworth experiences a rededication to his own self-projections, to his country, and to his past (p. 23). It is the nostalgic feeling for the landscape of his childhood reflected in the 'socioeconomic forces allegorically and immediately inscribed in the town, along the river banks, and within the ruin itself' (p. 35). Levinson concludes that 'Tintern Abbey' represents mind

particularly memory, not as energy but as a an obstacle which resists violence of historical contradiction and change (p. 53). Wordsworth has faith in nature because 'Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her' (ll. 123-24), since he is a lover of nature.

John Michael<sup>18</sup> remarked that the opening lines of 'Tintern Abbey' 'a wild secluded scene' and of 'Thoughts of more deep seclusion' that 'connect / The landscape with the quiet of the sky' (ll. 6-8) are as the opening sentences of Emerson's *Nature*: 'To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars' (CL,I, p. 8).

Although these passages look similar in their view of seclusion, they are, in Michael's words, in 'different registers.' While Emerson writes in an imperative mood Wordsworth<sup>19</sup> begins his poem in the indicative. In addition, Emerson's search is for a vision that will grant him a source of being whereas Wordsworth's view of the landscape makes him feel in seclusion: Emerson desires the experience of seclusion but Wordsworth claims that he has such an experience (Michael, 1988, p.72). Wordsworth affirms his attachment to nature but the problem is that he is uncertain whether he plants this scene of relationship in the world or finds it deeply rooted there: 'And what perceive; well pleased to recognize / In nature and the language of sense' (ll. 107-08). The speaker is uncertain whether his senses perceive and do not create the landscape he beholds. He is confused in making a distinction between the language of senses and the significance of nature for the purpose of making nature as the base of his age and the grounding of his identity (Michael, p. 73).

Michael went on to say that Wordsworth uses the pronoun 'we' and



Emerson uses 'I.' Wordsworth's 'we' modifies the solitude that the poet celebrates and evokes comprehension and experience; thus 'we' functions as a preparation for the relation between speaker and listener. Wordsworth's speaker is:

With an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.

By contrast, Emerson's first chapter of *Nature* begins with the search for solitude and culminates in the 'I': 'I become a transparent eyeball: I am nothing: I see all; The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am a part of parcel of God' (CL, I, p.10). The first few sentences which praise nature serve as means of widening the relation between self and society (Michael, 1988, pp.79-80): 'To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man could be alone, let him look at the stars' (CL, I, p. 8). Therefore it is in *Nature* a search for a relation which moves back to the 'I' not toward the other, 'society' (Michael, p. 80).

Michael (1988) observed that the corpse in which Emerson referred to in *Nature*, although dead, contains a seed of life. One's means to the spiritual, one's salvation acts through the corpse, that is, through the body (CL, I, p.19). In these passages Emerson is referring to the death of his brother Charles: 'It was in Charles that Emerson cherished the forlorn hope of finding an answer to skepticism, essential and unique.' Emerson hopes to recover and authorize himself through his brother; like the speaker in 'Tintern Abbey' who encouraged his 'dear, dear Friend' to remember him (Michael, p. 89). Emerson could not deny and Wordsworth knew that the self is the self only if it speaks to others.

Kenneth R. Johnston considers 'Tintern Abbey' a 'social' or a 'moral' poem.<sup>20</sup> Wordsworth asserted that he has

learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times  
The still, sad music of humanity (ll. 88-91).

Most interpretations focus upon the 'transcendental sublime insights' or 'beauteous forms' they lead to, when, 'We see into the life of things' (l. 49). Theresa M. Kelley argued that for most of his career, Wordsworth was suspicious of the sublime; he realized that 'sublime transcendence might become little more than sublime egotism.' Wordsworth's aesthetics, which is composed of the sublime and the beautiful, was derived from an earlier aesthetic theory familiar to him.<sup>21</sup> W. J. B. Owen noted that Wordsworth's aesthetics were primarily Burkean.<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that Wordsworth's aesthetics were the same as his predecessors; Wordsworth's were distinctive in describing sublimity and beauty being first successive, then competing categories. More than any earlier writer, Wordsworth dramatized 'the rhetorical implications of aesthetic differences' (Kelley, 1988, p. 3). In other words, he made the distinction between sublimity and beauty.

In 'Tintern Abbey,' says Albert Weleck, Wordsworth's sublime is the 'sense sublime' while other aspects of the sublime are developed in other poems.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Weiskel viewed Wordsworth's sublime as a conflict whose contours are Burkean, Hegelian, Kantian, and Oedipal.<sup>24</sup> Kelley<sup>25</sup> (1988) saw that these critics have neglected Wordsworth's use of other contexts and figures to 'mediate sublime encounters,' and pointed that David Simpson's (1982) emphasis on Wordsworth's use of metaphors which refigure reality instead of dismissing it, — that is, figurings and refigurings

constitute the Wordsworthian beautiful (p. 6).

By contrast, Emerson's concern for the beautiful never detached his aesthetics from his religion or his ontology: 'God is <sup>the</sup> all-faire,' he said in *Nature*. 'Truth, and goodness, and beauty are but different faces of the same All.' 'Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue.' Wendell Glick (1969) maintained that the moral as well as the ethical was 'integral with the beautiful \_\_\_ in the life of the artist, in the materials of the artist, and in the effect of art upon reader, auditor, or beholder' (p.13). In *Nature*, Emerson said that 'the presence of a higher element, namely the spiritual, is not ultimate. It is the herald of inward and eternal beauty, and is not alone a solid and satisfactory good.' Lecturing on 'Art,' Emerson asserted that art should be influential and has not come to maturity yet if it is not moral and practical; If it is connected with the conscience; and 'with a voice of lofty cheer' (CL,II, p. 215). Thus Emerson's aesthetic experience of art and nature is: 'all other men and my own body.' This aesthetic experience incorporated truth and beauty in an integral whole.

For Emerson, there is an important relation between 'all other men' and 'I.' Every thing in the universe is meaningful: 'I am God in nature; I am a weed by the wall.' David Morse pointed out that the Emersonian ego links the highest with the lowest, and Emerson proclaimed his 'pantheistic mysticism'<sup>26</sup> in the passage of transparent eyeball. In this same passage, Emerson said that 'when I look abroad I receive directly from him these impressions of earth and sea and sun and stars and man and beast.'

Emerson believed in the universality of truth and regarded revelation as the confirmer and interpreter of natural religion.<sup>27</sup> Declaring that Jesus was perhaps no more divine than any man,<sup>28</sup> Emerson asserted that the source of man's spiritual insight 'is not man, it is God in the soul.' In 'Circles,' he said, 'I am God in nature' (CL, II, p. 182).

In *Nature*, Emerson announced his doctrine of self's divinity; 'We become immortal.' Then he emphasized, 'who shall define me an individual? ... I can even with mountainous aspiring say, I am God' (J, IV, p. 247, Emerson's emphasis). And again, 'Empedocles said bravely, 'I am God; I am immortal: I condemn human affairs': and all men hated him. Yet every one of the same men had his religious hours when he said the same thing' (J, III, pp. 467-68). This Emersonian belief could be seen as an echo of Wordsworthian mystical experience:

In Nature and the language of the sense  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being, ('Tintern Abbey').

Thus the speaker's revelation comes from nature which is the guide of all his moral being. Stephen Gill commented that when revelation flashes upon him, Wordsworth becomes conscious of God's presence within him.<sup>29</sup> Gill (1986) added that the highest mood of consciousness and of 'complete oneness with God is so overwhelming' that his other qualities as man seem to disappear and he only knows (p. xxxiii):

one interior life

In which all beings live with God, themselves  
And God, existing in the mighty whole,  
As indistinguishable as the cloudless cast  
Is from the cloudless west, when all  
The hemisphere is one cerulean blue (quoted in Gill, p. xxxiii).

Every being, who lives with God, is himself God. This is Wordsworth's philosophy and religion.<sup>30</sup> One might disagree particularly a theologian;

however, let the theologian explain in his own mystical and philosophical way what Wordsworth had in mind.

Writing to Dorothy in 1812, Wordsworth told her that he would gladly shed his blood for the church of England but confessed that he did not know when he had last been inside his local church: 'All our ministers are vile creatures' (*Wordsworth: Biography*, pp. 104-05). He announced

That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each  
Connected in a mighty scheme of truth  
Have each for his peculiar lower, a sense  
Something unseen before (*The Prelude* (1805), XII: 301-05).

Wordsworth speaks of himself as a prophet telling 'last inspiration,' one who hopes to teach people about their redemption; at the end of *The Prelude*, he calls on Coleridge to work together as 'poet-prophets' in the recent age, evangelists of a new redemption (De Man, 1984, p.117): 'this Age fall back to old idolatry.' He believes that the present world is the place for 'the highest bliss / That can be known.' Man's redemption rests on the development of love and imagination which are inseparable: 'By love subsists all lasting grandeur,' and man's completion is achieved when he rises 'to the height of feeling intellect.' Man's redemption could be gained through the imagination: the human mind, says Wordsworth, is potentially more divine and 'a thousand times more beautiful' than the earth on which he dwells. That is why the main region of his song, as F. B. Pinion says, is the mind of man.<sup>31</sup>

In his poetry, Wordsworth celebrated 'Man,' the common man:

A more Judicious knowledge of what makes  
The dignity of individual Man  
Of Man, as composition of thought,

Abstraction, Shadows, image, but the Man

...

Whom we behold

With our eyes (*The Prelude*, XIII, ll: 82-87).

And 'The mind of Man / My haunt, and the main region of my Song' (Prospectus to 'The Recluse'). Man works for himself and by his free choice, 'Man free, man making for himself, with choice / Of time, and place and object' (*The Prelude*, VIII, ll:152-53). It is the love of nature that leads to the love of mankind: 'And thus my heart at first was introduced / To an unconscious love and reverence of human nature' (ll: 412-14). Man becoming a desocialized individual made his moral judgments inadequate to form principles of human practice in England in the nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> However, Wordsworth believed in the common man who works for himself with free choice of time and place.

Like Wordsworth, Emerson considered the poet a prophet and a redeemer. In 'The Transcendentalist' delivered at the Masonic temple in Boston in 1842, Emerson suggested that his contemporaries are in need of another redeemer, one similar to Christ, who could grasp language, symbol, and divine truth. He would be, if not comparable to Christ, at least comparable to others among the greatest prophets of the world (W, I, p. 214). Throughout his essay 'The Poet,' Emerson made an equation between Christ and the poet; The poet, like Christ who sacrificed himself and freed the entire human race to the possibility of entering heaven again, is a liberator who 'unlocks our chains and admits us to a new thought.' When the poet expresses truth, men recognize how the use of symbols has a certain power of emancipation for the human race. Like the Saviour who called all unto him as children, the poet does speak to men and 'seem to be touched by a wand which makes [them] dance and run happily' like children.

'Poets,' declared Emerson, 'are thus liberating Gods' (W, III, pp. 5, 30).

According to Emerson, the world is put under the mind and the poet is the only one who can 'articulate it' and reveal the secrets of the universe:

For, through that better perception he stands one step nearer to things and sees the flowing or metamorphosis, perceives that thought is multiform ... within the form of every creature is a force impelling it to ascend into a higher form; and following with his eyes the life, uses the form which expresses that life, and so his speech flows with the flowings of nature (CL, III, p. 12).

Moreover, what the prophets utter is poetry; their objective is to inspire us, not to have authority over us. Emerson, in his 'Divinity School Address,' wanted the scriptures to be read as literature while at the same time he wanted better and new Bibles to be written by inspired men. In this address, the image of the poet-priest is like the preacher.

Furthermore, similar to Wordsworth, Emerson believed in the common man,<sup>33</sup> the individual: 'In all my lectures, I have taught on doctrine, namely, the infinitude of the private man' (JMN, VII, p. 342). Emerson has faith in man who 'must ride alternately on the horses of his private and his public nature ... he is to rally on his relation to the Universe, which ruin benefits. Leaving the daemon who suffers, he is to take sides with the Deity who secures universal beliefs by his pain' (W, VI, p. 47). For Emerson, the centre of the universe is a 'right and perfect man.' Man himself could be seen as an expression and embodiment of the perfect law of nature rooted in mind (p. 288). The life of all individuals is identical.

Both Wordsworth and Emerson showed their discontent with social institutions. Their breaking of certain established usages or 'laws' of poetry

focused upon ordinary people and events. Matthew Arnold in 1879 admitted an uneven quality in Wordsworth's poetry, yet he recognized him as perhaps the greatest English poet after Shakespeare and Milton, especially as evidenced in his shorter pieces dealing with nature. Arnold noted that Wordsworth was not fully recognized at all abroad, obviously a statement made in ignorance of Emerson's championing Wordsworth during the middle part of the nineteenth century.

Wordsworth has a certain wisdom that grew naturally out of his subject matter, and may be found throughout his works. The subject matter is man:

for Man

The common Creature of the Brotherhood

Differing but little from the Men elsewhere' (*The Prelude*, I, ll: 452-54).

Understanding Wordsworth requires understanding his doubly oriented approach to things. Beach (1966) described him as a Janus-thinker, facing in two opposite directions: 'In his naturalist phase, he looks toward the scientific rationalism associated with the names of Newton and Locke. In his 'transcendental' phase he looks toward religious rationalism' (p. 204).

Wordsworth's intuition tends to replace his naturalism, although in 'Tintern Abbey' the two tendencies are balanced, together giving impetus to his romantic concept of nature. The natural world notwithstanding, we are 'spirits trailing clouds of glory.' Beach (1966) sees Wordsworth as the English poet who gave the most impressive and emotionally satisfying account of our relation to universal nature. 'This is partly due to his peculiar imaginative endowments; and partly to the fact that his poetry held in solution more of the philosophic ideas implied in the 'worship of nature' than that of any other English poet, or held them more perfectly in solution' (p.



205).

It was in his poetry, not his philosophy, that Wordsworth made the transition from the 'scientific' view of man and nature to the idea that the mind is creative in perception and an integral part of an organically interested universe. Wordsworth may not have been highly conscious of how his ideas derived from religion and science, from the Romantic tradition and from metaphysical formalisms, a definite flaw in the eyes of the philosophically more erudite Emerson.

Lionel Trilling sensed the importance of seeing Wordsworth with 'double vision,' that is, as 'imperial' on the one hand and as he actually is in life on the other. 'Earth' and 'Earthly' for Wordsworth are used in the religious sense to refer to worldly things, and imperial preexistence was adumbrated by Adam's fall. In the pre-existence state, man enjoyed a way of knowing and seeing that is now almost wholly gone from him. In childhood and infancy, the recollection is strong but when one moves forward and grows up into earthly life, it fades away.<sup>34</sup> Maturity, with its cares, its habits, and its increase of distance from the celestial origin wears away the recollection; however, glory still lives in the child:

Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,  
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life ('Ode').

The child's recollection of his heavenly environment existed in the adult's (Trilling, 1951, p.142): 'And that imperial palace whence he came' ('Ode').

Wordsworth is credited with not having seen the earth as a locus in which imperial or celestial features can easily exist. He does not make Nature an equivalent to earth, for although man might be the child of nature, he is the 'foster-child' of Earth (Trilling, 1951, p.150). In Childhood the sympathy is

not so intense and pure as in maturity, but beside the relation of man to nature another relation grows up, the relation of man to his fellow men (p.151). Trilling holds that the two views, man's ideal nature versus his earthly activity, supplement rather than contradict one another (p. 150): 'The child hands on to the hampered adult the imperial nature, the 'primal sympathy / Which having been must ever be,' the mind fitted to the universe, the universe to the mind' (p.150). The resemblance to Emersonian thought is here evident.

Wordsworth (1805 Edition, reprint 1957) in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* affirmed that 'there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition' (p.119). Wordsworth spoke about men of 'humble' and rustic life 'whose speech is 'real' and 'natural' against 'artificial' and 'civilized,' rejecting that language is an object formed according to certain stylistic system or forms. Regarding style, Wordsworth insisted that it should be natural in the manner of speech: He saw words as functional that give objectivity and form to phenomena, whether a feeling or a thinking or both. Poetry, Wordsworth believed, is 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' and language merely a means to be used as seen fit by the poet in terms of his purpose. The mood and its communication rather than the niceties of poetic diction are for him primary, a view that earned him much criticism, but one which Emerson held not inconsistent with his own.

Pottle (1951) indicated that many of Wordsworth's poems, including several of his best, 'either have no basis in personal experience at all, or show autobiography so manipulated that the 'subject' corresponds to nothing Wordsworth ever saw with the bodily eye (p. 24). For example, in his subjective autobiography, characters may undergo change. An extreme case, the Annette affair in France is romanticized into the melodrama of a

fictitious Vaudracour and Julia.

It is important to note that Wordsworth often relied heavily on his sister's descriptions of nature and sometimes incorporated them into his poems. However, this is not to say that Wordsworth was insincere or artificial, for sincerity or 'truth' for Wordsworth were very much the inspiration of the moment, the Romantic outpouring of the imaginative soul, not necessarily the historical facts of personal autobiography. In any case, the greatness of Wordsworth lay in his imagination and inspiration, again, a view consistent with Emersonism.

Transcendentalists in the United States felt that their creative expressions were discouraged, especially in the arts. Boller (1974) cited Emerson's statement that between 1790 and 1820 'there was not a book, a speech, a conversation, or a thought' (p. 191) in Massachusetts. Boller finds it not at all surprising that Emerson would be grateful for the accomplishments of idiosyncratic talent, Wordsworth in particular.

Wordsworth's Ode, 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' reflected Platonic thought and, in the eyes of many Transcendentalists, was highly characteristic of his metaphysical leanings, the essence of his genius. Frothingham (1965) noted that Emerson, in his last discourse on immortality, called it 'the best modern essay on the subject [Platonism]' <sup>35</sup> (p. 101).

In *The Dial*, the official organ of Emerson and the Transcendentalists, Wordsworth was mentioned warmly. Frothingham (1965, pp. 99-100) cites the April, 1843 tribute to Wordsworth:

The capital merit of Wordsworth is that he has done more for the sanity of this generation than any other writer. Early

in life, at a crisis, it is said, in his private affairs, he made the election between assuming and defending some legal rights with the chances of wealth and a position in the world — and the inward promptings of his heavenly genius; he took his part; he accepted the call to be a poet, and sat down far from cities, with coarse clothing and plain fare to obey the heavenly vision. ... He once for all forsook the styles and standards and modes of thinking of London and Paris and the books read there. ... There was not the least attempt to reconcile these with the spirit of fashion and selfishness, nor to show, with great deference to the superior judgment of dukes and earls, that although London was the home for men of great parts. ... with a complete satisfaction he pitied and rebuked their false lives, and celebrated his own with the religion of a true priest. ... the conventional theories on the conduct of life were called in question on wholly new grounds, not from Platonism, nor from Christianity, but from its lessons which the country muse taught a stout pedestrian climbing a mountain, and following a river from its rill down to the sea. ... that which rose in him so high as to the lips, rose in many others as high as to the heart. What he said, they were prepared to hear and to confirm. The influence was in the air and was wafted up and down into lone and populous places, resisting change, and soon came to be felt in poetry, in criticism, in plans of life, and at last in legislation. In this country it very early found a stronghold, and its effect may be traced on all the poetry both of England and America.

Wordsworth is credited for his genius, for avoiding the city and living in nature, for obeying 'the heavenly vision,' for celebrating his own life. His influence could be traced in the poetry of England and America. Such influence is understandable in view of the new American mind, a Yankee independence that would throw off the yoke of dogmatic Protestantism, especially Calvinism. Any revival of religion would have to find new forms of expression rather than new formulations of doctrine, and these were

available in literature, especially the poetry of Wordsworth, and taken up eagerly by Emerson and the Transcendentalists. The New England Transcendentalist James Freeman Clarke referred to Wordsworth as one of their 'real professors of rhetoric.'<sup>36</sup>

But the Transcendentalists of New England by no means received Wordsworth uncritically. Cornelius C. Felton lauds Wordsworth and his attempts to undermine the artificial life he found around him, striving for the simplicity of primitive man, to express elemental feelings of the heart and view nature anew. Felton also admits that Wordsworth's poems of *Yarrow Revisited* 'will always be ranked among the most remarkable monuments of reflective genius, that our age has produced.' But Felton finds in Wordsworth, especially in the *Yarrow Revisited*, a 'duty to be poetical,' as if he must support the professional status of the poet, being ~~for~~ too conscious of this role.<sup>37</sup> Emerson himself found Wordsworth 'too involved in pantheism' and lacking in elegance. 'Not until 1831 — his study of Reed and Coleridge behind him — could Emerson perceive Wordsworth in the perspective expounded in *The Dial*, and resolve therefore to seek him out on his trip to Europe as one of the master spirits of the age' (Miller, 1971, p. 98).

Frothingham (1965) is of the opinion that soon after 1843, Transcendentalism was on the wane, and that *Dial* articles were beginning to pass from Wordsworth to others, such as Landor and Tennyson. Wordsworth began to have fewer admirers, while the admirers of Tennyson increased. Passion for music, colour, and external polish were on the rise, and Tennyson's elegance and subtlety, metrical skill, fanciful mastery of language, and predilection for the sumptuous and the gorgeous were becoming popular. The charm of Wordsworth was idyllic, mystical, and prophetic. Wordsworth's — and Emerson's it might be added — mystical

idealisms 'became unpopular along with the school of philosophy from which it sprang, and gave place to the realism of the Victorian bards, who expressed the sensuous spirit of a more external age' (Frothingham, 1965, p.104). Frothingham sees Transcendentalism as now merely lurking in corners of England. The 'high places of thought' are to be taken over by scientific naturalists who 'through matter feel after mind; by means of the senses attempt the heights of spirit' (p. 104).

The Transcendentalist, Orestes A. Brownson, accused Wordsworth of writing too much 'according to theory,' not as a genius who 'spurns all fetters, all systems of philosophy, and makes and follows his own rules.' 'Whenever he loses sight of his theory, and abandons himself to the workings of spontaneity, he sings a true song. Would that this were not so solemn.'<sup>38</sup> Brownson further notes those who admire Wordsworth admire him more for his material philosophy than for his poetry, a view certainly consistent with Emerson's 1840 comment (on Wordsworth) in *The Dial*, to be discussed shortly.

Emerson's lack of identification with political movements was unlike Wordsworth. Emerson at one point admired both parties, the Whigs and the Democrats.<sup>39</sup> In 'Politics,' Emerson said, 'Of the two parties which at this hour almost share the nation between them, I should say that one has the best cause and the other contains the best men' (W,II, p. 209). In 1841, he wrote, 'It is not the proposition, but the tone that signifies ... Universal Whiggery is tame and weak' (J, III, p. 404). Moreover, Emerson abandoned the Democrats because they 'are destructive not constructive, What hope, what end have they?' (J,VI, p. 311). Neither the Democrats nor the Whigs could satisfy Emerson because in his view both parties are conservative: 'However men please to style themselves. I see no other than a conservative party. You are not only identical with us in your needs, but also in your

methods and aims. You quarrel with my conservatism, but it is to build up one of your own' (W,I, p. 305).

Arthur Ladu noted that Emerson did not sacrifice his Transcendentalism to be a follower of the Whig Party because Emerson was a Transcendentalist and never ceased to be one. His major concern was the individual; if the Whig policy was against the development of the supreme good of the individual, he did not believe in it.<sup>40</sup>

Wordsworth, unlike Emerson, might be seen as Republican throughout his life. His political<sup>41</sup> theory is included in his Letter to Bishop Llandoff (1793). Wordsworth stated that government, a necessary evil existed for society, is created by the general will of society. Therefore, the acts of the government should correspond to the general will. To Wordsworth, the 'Parliament of Monsters' is London. His attitude toward France might be reflected in his 'Apology for the French Revolution' composed in a form of letter to Bishop Watson in 1793. Wordsworth accepted the French Revolution and defended France's right to choose her government; England had no right whatsoever to invade France and impose a government she rejected. But after 1800 Wordsworth begins to change his attitude toward France and to press on England to wage a war against France to overthrow Napoleon and the despotism which threatened the continent.

A. V. Dicey noted that modern admirers of Wordsworth seem not realize that although apparently a conservative, he was a Revolutionist to the end; as a defender of freedom, he never turned away from France.<sup>42</sup> F. M. Todd, however, held that despite his belief in such a revolutionary political system, to conquer poverty and human misery, Wordsworth was not involved in any political activity of a serious kind even though he became acquainted with many leaders of the Revolution.<sup>43</sup> When he returned to France in 1820 and

visited scenes of the Revolution, Wordsworth asserted his admiration for Republicanism: 'Let Empires fall, but ne'er shall ye disagree / ... / And purity of nature spread before your sight' ('Desultory Stanzas,' 1822). But what is more important for Wordsworth is: 'That are tutored thus should look into ... An individual worth?' (*The Prelude*, IX, ll: 238-42). While Transcendentalists went to Wordsworth for ideas, phrases, philosophy, and inspiration, they were, according to Miller (1971), politically naive in their lack of awareness that Wordsworth was concerned with politics: 'The Americans appeared incapable of recognizing a Tory when they saw one. It took Brownson to break the spell. While in the respects he appreciated Wordsworth, he would not let aesthetic prejudice blind him to the fact that Wordsworth was a black reactionary' (p. 434).

Thus Wordsworth and Emerson emphasized the importance of the individual in their politics although Wordsworth was more politically oriented than Emerson. Emerson had hoped to promulgate his doctrine of self-reliance through 'The Method of Nature.' Emerson wanted to awaken his age to a deeper apprehension of nature and self. Meyer (1987) characterizes Emerson as one intending to recapture the 'spirit of infancy' and cut through fears and anxieties essential to heal and free the ego, or self. In the woods one is, according to Emerson 'educated by a moment of sunshine' and can discover the simplicity of existing. Comparing Emerson and Wordsworth, Meyer notes, 'Here in all of this there is the compelling urge or hyperv verbal obsession to retranslate via endless strings of intertextuality and 'talking cures' the divine Word into what we have seen Wordsworth insist upon before \_ 'a man speaking to men,' speaking an infintum' (p. 379).

More importantly one finds a number of similarities in thought between Emerson and Wordsworth, a similarity which naturally sets the stage for



influence. Self-reliance and natural spontaneity, so important to both Emerson and Wordsworth, suggests the child-like. R. H. Blyth refers to 'complete dependence' of a kind which results in complete self-sufficiency. 'Just as 'the river glideth at its own sweet will,' so the child is perfect microcosm of the universe, in which there is not gain or loss, separation or union. ... the child is the master of the household, its strength made perfect in weakness.'<sup>44</sup>

In his essay 'Self-Reliance,' Emerson says of children, babies and animals:

That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look into their faces, we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody: all conform to it, so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it (CL,II, pp. 28-29).

The childlike power through weakness is sharply pronounced by Wordsworth in *The Prelude*:

Our childhood sits,  
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne  
That hath more power than all the elements (V,II, pp. 507-09).

This same power, notes Blyth, is shared by children with animals, birds, and objects of nature, a connexion found in the philosophical and poetical expressions of both Emerson and Wordsworth, especially the latter. Blyth cites Wordsworth's 'Green Linnet' as still another example of self-sufficiency

and bliss in solitude ('which is one of the tests of Zen' according to Blyth), a means of poetical union with the Universal Spirit:

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,  
Make all one band of paramours,  
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,  
Art sole in thy employment:  
A Life, a Presence lie the Air,  
Scattering thy gladness without care,  
Too blest with anyone to pair;  
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

The issue of sincerity has been raised occasionally with regard to both Wordsworth and Emerson. David Perkins<sup>45</sup> finds in both Emerson and Wordsworth a kind of sincerity which stems from self-reliance and self trust; they might agree with others, but only after independent thought, the ultimate truth of a matter preferably deriving freshly from one's own experience, to be grasped 'just as it is.' Interpretations from without are shunned by both men, even at the risk of turning on one's own culture, tradition, and consensus, in the hope of seeing things more directly 'with the clarity of innocence.' This desire to go back to a pure source has had, through both men, 'a large influence on modern poetry.'

Emerson admired his Romantic contemporaries and identified with many of their ideals. They represented a new age and were instrumental in contributing to his development as poet and philosopher. He discovered the Romantics at a time when he was asking the same questions they were. Emerson's favorite poets were the poets of the seventeenth century, especially those who combined a natural and simple style with the religious idealism which he favored. Although none of the contemporary English Romantics were among the greatest poets in Emerson's opinion, he was nevertheless interested in them as truth seekers, men such as himself

'caught between the rationalisms of the Age of Pope and the Age of Bentham against which Thomson and Young joined hands with Carlyle and Arnold through Coleridge and Wordsworth.'<sup>46</sup>

### Emerson on Wordsworth

Emerson's discovery and acceptance of the English Romantics was concerned with their moral and visionary stances, not necessarily as poets. During the 1818-1836 period he gradually developed an intellectual and spiritual affinity with Romantics such as Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth, viewing them as great men of the age.

John B. Moore notes that Emerson often reflected on the words of Wordsworth, but not as a disciple.<sup>47</sup> Emerson first mentioned Wordsworth in his journals.

At once then his poetry is the poetry of pigmies. It belittles the mind that is accustomed to the manly march of other muses. I am pleased with the prettiness ... of his verses and with their novelty as long as their novelty lasts but I am soon conscious of a disagreeable sensation which soon becomes intolerable at the dwarfish dimensions of all my entertainment and am like a man creeping about in palaces of Lilliput who maugre all the magnificence would fain on his legs again.

He is the poet of pismores. His inspirations are spent light. It is one of the greatest mistakes in the world to suppose that much abused virtue of nature in poetry consists in mere fidelity of representation (JMN,II, p. 162).

A few years later Emerson noted Wordsworth's 'glaring false taste,' and offensiveness, an 'obtrusive deformity: and 'noted vulgarity' among the 'occasional' beauties (JMN,II, pp. 282-83). Emerson's comparison of

Wordsworth with Shakespeare and Milton was anything but flattering.

A fault that strikes the readers of Mr. Wordsworth is the direct pragmatism of objects, in their nature poetic, but which all other poets touch incidentally. He mauls the moon and the waters and the bulrushes as his main business. Milton and Shakespeare touch them gently as illustration or ornament (JMN, III, p. 39).

Emerson feels that Wordsworth tried 'to extract by direct means the principle of life, the secret and substance of matter from material things. ... to distill the essence of poetry from poetic things instead of being satisfied to adorn common scenes with such lights from these sources of poetry as nature will always furnish to her true lovers' (JMN, III, pp. 39-40).

Emerson welcomed fresh, original thought. He declined to criticize Alcott because, different as Alcott was from Emerson in his way of writing, he represented, like Wordsworth in Emerson's opinion, 'a new mind and it was welcome to a new style' (JMN, V, p. 506). But as early as 1821 Emerson notes that there are dangers involved:

Mr. Wordsworth is a poet whom we read with caution, in whom the eye always is afraid lest it should meet with something offensive at every turn. It subtracts vastly from the pleasure of poetry if you read with this evil timidity. It is like faltering upon a mountain for fear of a precipice. In the midst of an eloquent strain of sentiment or description your admiration is brought up with a noted vulgarism or glaring false taste (JMN, I: 281-82).

In this journal entry Emerson further notes that Wordsworth's theory and literary experiments do not run counter to his own. He feels that the poetry of Wordsworth, as well as Coleridge, has earned them some measure of

ridicule because it lacks not genius but, rather nature. 'The affectation of simplicity was but too apparent; the poetry was too puerile for the taste of their northern countrymen'<sup>48</sup> (JMN,I, p. 282).

Emerson was well aware of Wordsworth's philosophy by 1827. In his discussions of traditional Christian views, Emerson notes that one of the peculiarities of his age was Transcendentalism: 'Metaphysics and ethics look inwards \_\_\_ and ... England [produces] Wordsworth' (EJ, p. 61). In December of 1828 he wrote of the 'pervading' ethereal poesy' of Herbert, Shakespeare, Marvell, Herrick, Milton , and Ben Jonson (JMN,III, p.148). He admits that the lives of Byron and Wordsworth have powerful genius 'whose amplest claims I cheerfully acknowledge \_\_\_ But 'tis a pale ineffectual fire' (p.148) compared to the earlier British poets in his opinion.

Emerson saw in Wordsworth an English representative of Transcendentalism but, according to Moore (1926) he 'could scarcely have said less about his striking pantheistic attitude' or have spoken less favorably of it. Emerson saw in James Montgomery's 'Pelican Island'<sup>49</sup> a far better instance of philosophical and poetic expression.

It is a poem worth ten 'Excursions,' being generally a complete contrast to Wordsworth's verses. These abounding in fact and Wordsworth wanting. These seizing coarse and tangible features for description or allusion and Wordsworth the metaphysical and evanescent. This treating body, and Wordsworth soul. This using a very large encyclopedical direction and Wordsworth affecting that which may be proper to the passions in common life (JMN, III, p. 41).

By 1829 Emerson had reread Wordsworth, including the two volumes of Wordsworth's poetical works at the Harvard Divinity School Library. Liebman (1974) feels that Emerson's reading of Carlyle's essays in the

*Edinburgh* and other reviews, and Coleridge's prose and poetry were catalysts in this revision. By 1831 Emerson was still cautious about Wordsworth who, in his opinion, still had to prove himself. In that same year he had positive things to say about Wordsworth's 'Ode to Duty,' 'Rob Roy,' 'Dion,' and 'The Happy Warrior' (JMN, III, p. 305). With respect to these poems, Emerson says:

His noble distinction is that he seeks the truth and shuns with brave self-denial every image and word that is from the purpose \_\_ means to stick close to his own thought and give it naked simplicity and so make it God's affair not his own whether it shall succeed. But he fails of executing his purpose fifty times for the sorry purpose of making a rhyme in which he has no skill, or from imbecility of mind losing sight of his thought, or from self surrender to custom in poetic diction (JMN, III, pp. 306-07).

By 1832 Emerson changed his mind about 'Tintern Abbey' and 'Ode to Duty,' now criticizing that which he had praised just a year earlier, claiming that he cannot read Wordsworth 'without chagrin.' Emerson sees in Wordsworth a man of great powers and ambition, but one who fails 'so manly in every attempt. ... a genius that hath epilepsy, a deranged archangel' (JMN, IV, p. 63).

This constant wavering of opinion continued even after his 1833 visit to Wordsworth. In 1835 he still complains that, though Wordsworth writes the verses of a great original bard, 'he writes ill, weakly concerning his poetry, talks ill of it, and even writes other poetry that is very poor' (JMN, V, p. 83). Because of Wordsworth's philosophic quest and shunning of the traditional 'prettiness' of words, Emerson was prepared to laud Wordsworth and look down on Tennyson as 'a Beautiful half of a poet' (JMN, VII, p. 83). But by 1835 this changed. In reaction to reading some Wordsworth, he says 'I find

dullness and flatness, but I shall not find meanness and error.' Yet, a few days earlier he writes: 'What platitudes I find in Wordsworth. 'I poet bestow my verse on this and this.' Scarce has he dropped the smallest piece of an egg, when he fills the barnyard with his cackle' (JMN, V, pp. 99-100).

### Emerson Visits Wordsworth

Emerson's views of Wordsworth grew more favorable with the passing of time. He visited Wordsworth in August of 1833 and described him as '... a plain, elderly, white-haired man, not prepossessing, who laid down the law on the subject of America, of which he knew little, and talked instead of listening. Lucretius he seems a far higher poet than Virgil, not in system, which is nothing, but in his power of illustration' (*Four Volumes in One*, p.12).

Emerson here goes on to note that Wordsworth thought Carlyle sometimes insane, and in response to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, of which he had not gone farther than the first part, 'so disgusted was he, that he threw the book across the room.' Wordsworth recited some of his poems, on which Emerson comments:

He had just returned from a visit to Staff, and within three days had made three sonnets on Fingl's Cave, and was composing a fourth when he was called in to see me. He said, 'If you are interested in my verses, perhaps you would like to hear these lines.' I gladly assented; and he recollected himself for a few moments, and then stood forth and repeated, one after the other, the three entire sonnets, with great animation. ... This recitation was so unlooked for and surprising \_\_\_ he, the old Wordsworth, standing apart and reciting to me in a garden-walk, like a schoolboy declaiming \_\_\_ that I at first was near to laughter; but

recollecting myself, that I had come thus far to see a poet, and he was chanting poems to me, I saw that he was right and I was wrong, and gladly gave myself up to hear (*Four Volumes in One*, p.14).

F. W. Bateson indicates that Emerson found this Rydal Mount ritual of recitation 'a little disconcerting.' Other American visitors, according to Bateson, found it difficult to adjust and 'the poet Bryant, for example, used to give amusing, if irreverent, imitations of the performance.'<sup>50</sup>

Some fifteen years later, Emerson (in *English Traits*) described Wordsworth favorably with respect to his common sense and courage (Emerson had long since accepted him as philosopher and, now, even poet):

His face sometimes lighted up, but his conversation was not marked by special force or elevation. Yet perhaps it is a high compliment to the cultivation of the English generally when we find such a man not distinguished. He had a healthy look, with a weather \_\_\_ beaten face, his face corrugated, especially the large nose. Miss Martineau, who lived near him, praised him to me not for his poetry, but for thrift and economy; for having afforded to his country neighbours an example of a modest household, where comfort and culture were secured without any display. She said that, in his early house-keeping at the cottage where he first lived, he was accustomed to offer his friends bread and plainest fare; if they wanted ~~any~~ thing more, they must pay him for their board. It was the rule of the house. I replied that it evinced English pluck more than any anecdote I knew (*Wordsworth: His Life*, p. 608).

Soon after the 1833 visit Emerson was to begin writing more positively of Wordsworth as a writer and as a man. 'His egotism was not at all displeasing \_\_\_ obtrusive \_\_\_ as I had heard. ... I spoke as I felt with great



respect of his genius' (JMN, IV, p. 225). Wordsworth was now referred to by Emerson as a 'divine man like Socrates and Columbus' (JMN, V, p. 22), and a 'divine savage' like Webster and Reed (p. 60), 'a philanthropist' like Fox and Montaigne (JMN, IV, p. 315), a 'true genius' like Carlyle and Allston (JMN, V, p. 22). Emerson found in the 1835 edition of Wordsworth's poems thoughts in harmony with 'the great frame of nature' (p. 99) and 'nothing vulgar in Wordsworth's idea of Man,' an idea which reflected Emerson's own view that 'To believe your own thought, that is Genius' (p. 163).

By now, Wordsworth was 'the great philosophical poet of the present day' (L, I, p. 140), who, along with Reed and Alcott, viewed the distinctions of fortune as frivolous, the voice of fame as unassuming, and the possibility of community with the spiritual world as a certainty (JMN, V, pp. 160-61). Emerson was 'thankful for Wordsworth; as in great darkness and perpetual skyrockets and coruscations, one were for the smallest clear burning farthing candle' (CEC, p. 133). Although this statement might be ambiguous in the sense that it is both compliment and criticism, it seems that Emerson was lauding Wordsworth who had a significant impact on him. Holmes (1885) claimed that 'No writer is more deeply imbued with the spirit of Wordsworth than Emerson'; Much of the language and imagery of the 'Prospects' in *Nature* and its titles owes to Wordsworth's 'Prospectus' (p. 93).

Even a few months after his August 1833 meeting with Wordsworth, Emerson is still ambivalent. His 1 December 1833 journal entry begins with the statement that 'I never read Wordsworth without chagrin. ... a man of such great powers and ambitions ... to fail so meanly in every attempt' (JMN, IV, p. 63). It is here that he refers to Wordsworth as a genius that has epilepsy:

... The Ode to Duty conceived and expressed in a certain high severe style does yet miss of greatness and of all effect

by such falisties or falses as 'And the most Ancient heavens through thee are free and strong' which is throwing dust in your eyes because they have no more to do with duty than a dung cart has. So that fine promising passage about 'the mountain winds being free to blow upon thee' and flats out into 'me and my benedictions.' If he had cut in his Dictionary for words he could hardly have got worse (p. 63).

It is evident from previous quotations in this chapter that Emerson's criticisms of Wordsworth are intermingled with praise, depending on what aspect of Wordsworth is being referred to. For example, in his 25 May 1837 journal entry he states that Wordsworth 'whom I read last night, is garrulous and weak often, but quite free from cant' (EJ, p.164). Even as late as 1840, when Emerson had for the most part 'come around' to a substantial recognition of Wordsworth, there is still a somewhat ambivalent position. In 30 May 1840 journal entry, Emerson states:

Wordsworth's Excursion awakened in every lover of nature the right feeling. We saw stars shine, we felt the awe of mountains, we heard the rustle of the wind in the grass, and knew again the sweet secret of solitude. It was a great joy. It was nearer to nature and verse that more commanded nature than thought we had before.

But the promise was not fulfilled. The whole book was dull (E J, p. 239).

In his meeting with Wordsworth, Emerson began to sense currents of thought with which he could identify as well as those he might reject. In their 28 August 1833 meeting at Rydal Mountain, Emerson especially noted Wordsworth's remark that America needed a civil war to teach the necessity of knitting the social ties strong, that America was a society enlightened by superficial tuition and not restrained by moral culture: 'Schools do no good.

Tuition is not education.' He thinks far more of the education of circumstances than of tuition (*Four Volumes in One*, p.12).

Emerson seems not at great odds with these views (at least they could be reconciled with many of his beliefs), and seeks in his journal to explain rather than refute them.

There may be in America some vulgarity of manner but that's nothing important; it comes out of the pioneer state of things; but I fear they are too much given to making of money and secondly to politics; that they make political distinction the end and not the means. And I fear they lack a class of men of leisure \_\_\_ in short, of gentlemen to give a tone of honor to the community (EJ, pp.113-14).

Emerson explicitly disagrees with Wordsworth about Carlyle, whom Wordsworth thinks insane at times, accusing him [Carlyle] of writing obscurely. Emerson reports, 'Even Mr. Coleridge wrote more clearly though he [Wordsworth] always wished Coleridge would write more to be understood ... I stoutly defended Carlyle' (EJ, p.114). Emerson certainly at this stage defended Carlyle because Carlyle's views and thoughts were in accord with his (see Chapter V).

With respect to deeper or philosophical thoughts, Emerson could find much to praise in Wordsworth. Emerson agreed with Wordsworth's emphasis on moral perfection, thereby indirectly accepting Wordsworth's criticism of America's lack of culture and moral restraint. In his 1833 meeting with Wordsworth, Emerson notes that 'sin, sin, is what he fears, and how society is to escape without greatest mischiefs from this source he cannot see' (EJ, p.113).

As the law of light is fit of easy transmission and reflexion such is also the soul's law. She is only superior at intervals

to pain, to fear, to temptation, only in ruptures unites herself to God and Wordsworth truly said, 'Tis the most difficult of tasks to keep / Heights which the soul is competent to gain' (pp. 117-18).

In 1834 Emerson compared Wordsworth to Milton favorably. For Emerson, Milton was 'too learned, though I hate to say it,' something that, in Emerson's opinion, wrecked his originality; Milton was more indebted to the Hebrew than even to the Greek. 'Wordsworth is more original poet than he [Milton]. That seems the poet's garland. He speaks by the right that he has somewhat yet unsaid to say' (JMN, IV, pp. 212-13). It seems that Wordsworth's greatness stems from being an innovator not merely an imitator as Milton.

Yet, Emerson can not avoid his perception of Wordsworth himself as somewhat conformist. 'To judge from a single conversation, he made the impression of a narrow and very English mind.' Emerson further remarks, 'It is not very rare to find persons, loving sympathy and ease, who expiate their departure from the common, in one direction, by their conformity in every other'; obviously referring to Wordsworth's conformity in religion and politics that had overtaken him by 1833 (*Wordsworth: His Life*, p. 596).

By 1835 there was ample indication that Emerson was beginning to identify with Wordsworth in various ways. Emerson wrote of transfusing 'into your own consciousness' the various books available for reading. A connecting of Wordsworth's thoughts and his own is indicated in a 20 June 1835 journal entry: 'The good of publishing one's thoughts is that of hooking to you like minded men, and of giving men whom you value, such as Wordsworth ... one hour of stimulated thought' (JMN, V, p. 51).

In 1837 Emerson identified his thought processes with Wordsworth's regarding the importance of optimism and mood. Emerson cites some

letters he had just read, finding them 'noble but sad,' their effect so painful that he withdrew himself from their influence. 'So much contrition, so much questioning, so little hope, so much sorrow, harrowed me.' Emerson finds that nothing useful or good can come out of 'such scriptures' which provide 'cramp and incapacity only.'

I shall never believe that any book is so good to read as that which sets the reader into a working mood, makes him feel his strength, and inspires hilarity.

Such are Plutarch, and Montaigne, and Wordsworth (JMN, V, p. 289).

Emerson links Wordsworth with 'good company,' noting that 'Wordsworth gives us the image of the truehearted man, as Milton, Chaucer, Herbert do; not ruffled fine gentlemen who condescend to write like Shaftsbury, Congreve, and greater far, Walter Scott' (JMN, V, p. 425). Emerson refers to Pope, Waller, Addison, and Gibbon as men 'with attributes' but 'too modish,' chiding them for being fashionable wits, not Men: '... Humanity which smiles in Homer, in Chaucer, in Shakespeare, in Milton, in Wordsworth ... Montaigne is a Man' (425).

Emerson was impressed by *The Prelude* for even though it was composed as autobiography Wordsworth's intention was epic. Herbert Lindenberger noted,

By the time it was published, the older generic distinctions \_\_\_ and particularly those relevant to the eighteenth century genres which Wordsworth brought together in the poem \_\_\_ were sufficiently forgotten that its early readers were baffled at what Wordsworth was really trying to do.<sup>51</sup>

Lord Macaulay characterized it as an 'endless wilderness of dull, flat, prosaic twaddle.'<sup>52</sup> Emerson's praise was emphatic but not un-qualified: 'Wordsworth's 'Prelude' is not quite solid enough in its texture; is rather a poetical experience; it is like Milton's *Aeropagitica*, an immortal pamphlet' (J, IX, pp. 151-52).

To conclude by looking at things from the other perspective, in 1841, Wordsworth made the following comment on Emerson:

... Essays of Mr. Emerson. Our Carlyle and he appear to be what the French used to call Spirits forts, though the French Idols shewed their spirit after a somewhat different fashion. Our two present philosophers, who have taken a language which they suppose to be English for their vehicle, are verily 'par noble Fratum,' and it is a pity that the weakness of our age has not left them exclusively to the appropriate reward, mutual admiration. Where is the thing which now passes for philosophy at Boston to stop?<sup>53</sup>

It is clear that Wordsworth finds Emerson and Carlyle much more strongly associated with each other other than he does either of them with himself. His view of Transcendentalism as 'the thing which now passes for philosophy at Boston' is evidently anything but one of admiration.

### Emerson's Lectures

Wordsworth is mentioned a number of times in the early (1836-1838) and the later (1838-1842) lectures. In his lecture on religion, Emerson muses over how spiritual being in man manifests itself in undefinable ways, as "first affections' of which a living poet [Wordsworth] sang':

High instincts, before which our mortal nature

Did tremble, like a guilty thing surprising!

...

Which, be they what they may,  
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
Are yet the master light of all our seeing;  
Upholds us \_\_\_ and has power to make  
Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake,  
To Perish never (Wordsworth, 'Intimations of Immortality  
Recollected from Early Childhood', ll. 150-60).

Emerson comments that 'these great thoughts' seldom come before us. 'For the most part a Lethean stream washes through us and bereaves us of ourselves. It is only a few moments in a lifetime that man is at the top of his being' (EL,II, pp. 85-86).

In a lecture on ethics, Emerson expounded naturalness as the sense of living the life of nature without becoming unnecessarily perplexed with speculations. In naturalness man would be doing and saying that which 'strictly belongs to him,' and even if ignorant of books 'his nature shall keep him free from any intellectual embarrassment.' He notes that the theological problems of original sin, the origin of evil, predestination and the like 'never presented a practical difficulty to any man ... never darkened across any man's road who did not go out of his way to seek them' (EL,II, p.145). 'Our progress is always concentric: the man may move now in his first and narrowest rings, and no ray shoot out to the far circumference he shall hereafter attain, yet the need be no obliquity or death is that which he is.' Emerson reaches out for support for these ideas to Wordsworth (*Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*, Part II, Sonnet XII) who asserts that 'a few strong instincts and few plain rules suffice us' (p. 145).

In a lecture on society, Emerson warns against approaching people at the level of base motive. Emerson warns that men should not be treated as

pawns and ninepins, one consequence being that 'you shall suffer as well as they.' By leaving out their heart 'you shall lose your own,' that one should 'let the soul speak to him \_\_\_ and from within him, the soul shall reply' (EL,II, p.107). Emerson again cites Wordsworth as his ally:

Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,  
Him, only him the shield of Jove defends,  
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends  
(Wordsworth, 'Dione,' ll. 122-24).

In a lecture on the philosophy of history ('The Present Age' in EL,II, p.168) Emerson compares the 'cultivated intellect' of his day which imitates and reflects rather than reacts instinctively.

Ours is distinguished from the Greek and Roman and Gothic ages and all the periods of childhood and youth by being the age of the second thought. The golden age is gone and the silver is gone \_\_\_ the blessed eras of unconscious life, of intuition, of genius. The men to whom Duty was not a yoke but a feeling, men of whom the poet [Wordsworth] in his Ode to Duty sang,

There are who ask not if thine eye  
Be on them, who, in love and truth  
Where no misgiving is, reply  
Upon the genial sense of youth,  
Glad hearts without reproach or blot,  
Who do thy work know it not  
(Wordsworth, 'Ode to Duty,' ll. 9-14).

In his lecture (Address) on education on 10 June 1837, Emerson ponders over one of his favorite topics, the 'Universal Soul dwelling within the soul of men.' He sees it as the fountain of all good and perfection, that, 'all particular truth that exists embodied in the world is only a drop scooped



from this mighty water.' It is the principle of replenishment, and out of which comes every reform in religion or melioration in manners, a source of 'inexhaustible hope' (EL,II, p.198). He uses the words of Wordsworth to reinforce his own thoughts: 'Hope is the paramount duty which Heaven lays / For its won honor, on man's suffering heart' (Wordsworth, *Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*, Part II, Sonnet XXXIII) to which Emerson comments, 'and out of that hope proceeds the effort for its own accomplishment.'

In the 'The Eye and Ear,' Emerson remarks that the reason life is prosaic is because man does not demand the culture of his nature and instead, is false and in violation of the laws of mind (EL,II, p. 273). Here he supports his ideas with Wordsworth's idea that with respect to a true life, 'Beauty would be an hourly neighbor, and will pitch her tents before us as we walk' (Wordsworth, *The Recluse*, quoted in Preface to the Edition of 1814 of *The Excursion*, ll. 42-47). Emerson continues, noting that Beauty fills and overflows nature, 'the song of a living poet':

Paradise and groves elysian  
Fortunate fields like those of old  
Sought in the Atlantic Main why should they be  
A history only of departed things  
Or a mere fiction of what never was?  
For discerning intellect of man  
When wedded to this goodly Universe  
In love and holy passion, shall find these  
A simple produce of the common day  
(Wordsworth, *The Recluse*, ll.47-55).

In the lecture on genius, Emerson begins by noting that an essential feature of genius is the self-reliance which believes its own thought, as it were, that 'in every work of genius, you recognize your own rejected

thoughts.' The poet seizes upon 'trifles so simple and fugitive' and 'hurls you instantly into the presence of his joys' (EL,II, p.77). Emerson chooses Wordsworth's 'picture of skating' as his mode, of 'the manner in which a poet seizes a circumstance so trivial that an inferior writer would not have trusted himself to detach and specify.'

So through the darkness and the cold we flew  
And not a voice was idle with the din.  
Meanwhile the pices rang aloud:  
The leafless trees and every icy crag  
Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills  
Into the tumult sent an alien sound  
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars  
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west  
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired  
Into a silent bay, \_\_\_ or sportively  
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng  
To cross the bright reflection of a star,  
Image that flying still before me gleamed  
Upon the glassy plain; and often times  
When we had given our bodies to the wind,  
And all the shadowy banks on either side  
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still  
The rapid line of motion, then at once  
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,  
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs  
Wheeled by me \_\_\_ even as if the earth had rolled  
With visible motion her diurnal round.  
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train  
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched  
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea  
(Wordsworth, 'Influence of Natural Objects,' 1824, 29).

The growing bond between Emersonism and Wordsworth's expressions was evident in the October, 1840 edition of *The Dial* which contained

Emerson's article, 'Thoughts on Modern Literature.'

The fame of Wordsworth is a leading fact in modern literature, when it is considered how hostile his genius at first seemed to the reigning taste, and ... his great and steadily growing dominion has been not his own, but that of the idea which he shared ... and which he has rarely succeeded in adequately expressing. The *Excursion* awakened in every lover of nature the right feeling. We saw the stars shine, we felt the awe of mountains, we heard the rustle of the wind in the grass, and knew again the ineffable secret of solitude. It was a great joy. It was nearer to nature than any thing we had before. But the interest of the poem ended almost with the narrative of the influences of nature on the mind of the Boy, in the first book. Obviously for that passage in the poem was written, and with the exception of this and few strains of like character in the sequel, the poem was dull. Here was no poem, but here was poetry, and a sure index where the subtle muse was about to pitch her tent and find the argument of her song. It was the human soul in these last ages striving for a just publication of itself. Add to this, however, the great praise of Wordsworth, that more than any other contemporary bard he is pervaded with a reverence of somewhat higher than (conscious) thought. There is in him that property common to all great poets — a wisdom of humanity, which is superior to any talents which they exert. It is the wisest part of Shakespeare and Milton, for they are poets by free course which they allow to the informing soul, which through their eyes beholdeth again and blesseth the things which it hath made. The soul is superior to its knowledge, wiser than any of its works.

Wordsworth, affirms Emerson, established his success through the ideas he presented and shared with the rest of the world. For every one who loves and is interested in nature, *The Excursion* awakens 'the right feeling.' It is Wordsworth's focus upon the human soul that contributed to his being the

greatest contemporary bard.

Thus Emerson found in Wordsworth not necessarily great poetic talent \_\_ a criticism often made of Emerson himself \_\_ but great philosophical insights, nearness to nature, and an adventuresome spirit willing to defy the traditional gods of culture. Wordsworth's is a wisdom of humanity which is 'superior to any talents which they exert,' an instance of soul which is, according to Emerson, 'superior to its knowledge, wiser than any of its works.'

### Emerson's Later Journal Entries

By 1840 Emerson was well 'converted' to Wordsworthian thought. In a 12 September, 1841 journal entry, Emerson notes that humans are very near to sublimity, yet not quite in touch: 'As one step freed Wordsworth's Recluse on the mountains from the blinding mist and brought him to the view of 'Glory beyond all glory ever seen,' so near are we all to a vision of which Homer and Shakespeare are only hints and types and yet cannot we take that one step' (J, VI, p. 50). Emerson thus sees in Wordsworth's *Recluse* a predicament that is a chief preoccupation of his very own thoughts. A year later (1 May, 1842) Emerson quotes two lines from Wordsworth: 'And the most difficult of tasks to keep / Heights which the soul is competent to gain,' lines which Emerson sees as a 'sort of elegy on these times,' (JMN, V, p. 285) again evidencing his increasing realization that Wordsworth's thoughts are very much like his own.

By 1850 Emerson's appraisal of Wordsworth had deepened. In his September/October entry of that year, Emerson dwells on what to him is a crucial distinction made by Schelling: 'Some minds speak about things, and some minds speak the things themselves.' For Emerson this means: 'What

does he [a poet] add and what is the state of mind he leaves me in?' Emerson cites Plato, Shakespeare, Plutarch, Montaigne, and Swedenborg as writers who have 'given me things.'

Goethe abounds in things, and Chaucer and Donne and Herbert and Bacon had much to communicate. But the majority of writers had only their style of rhetoric, their clauder lorraine glass. They were presentableness, Parliamentariness, Currency, Birmingham. Wordsworth almost alone in his time belongs to the giving, adding class, and Coleridge also has been a benefactor (JMN, XI, p. 273, my emphasis).

Six years later, Emerson in his June/July, 1856 journal entry refers to Wordsworth's Ode 'Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' as a high-water mark of the intellect in that age: 'A new step has been taken, new means have been employed. No courage has surpassed that, and a way made through the void by this finer Columbus' (JMN, XIV, p. 99).

In 1864 Emerson noted 'with delight' a 'casual notice of Wordsworth' in the *London Reader* in which

his highest merits were affirmed, and his unquestionable superiority to all English poets since Milton, and thought how long I travelled and talked to in England, and found no person, or none but one, and that one, Clough, sympathetic with him, admiring him aright in face of Tennyson's culminating talent and genius in melodious verse (EJ, p. 524).

Again Emerson observes the certainty with which 'the best opinion comes to be the established opinion,' and pays tribute to Wordsworth:

This rugged rough countryman walks and sits alone, assured of his sanity and his inspiration, and writes to no public \_\_\_ sneered at by Jeffrey and Brougham, branded by Byron, blacked by gossip of Barry Cornwall and DeQuincey, down to Browning \_\_\_ for they all had disparaging tales of him, yet himself no more doubling the fine oracles that visited him than if Apollo had brought them visibly in his hand: and here and there a solitary reader in country places had felt and owned them, and now, so few years after, it is lawful in that obese material England, whose vast strata of population are no wise converted or altered, yet to affirm unblamed, unresisted, that this is the genuine, and the impure metal (JMN, XV, p. 443).

In an August, 1865 journal entry, Emerson discussed the difficulty of treating the topic of the Future Life and Immortality of the Soul; Readers will generally be disappointed in any such undertaking. He notes that 'The real evidence is too subtle, or is higher, than we can write down in propositions, and therefore Wordsworth's Ode is the best modern Essay on the subject' (EJ, p. 529). Here again is an instance of Emerson's pointing to Wordsworth not so much as a source of influence \_\_\_ for Emerson was insistent on his own ideas \_\_\_ but as a model to study and admire, at least with respect to certain philosophical issues and inspirational motifs.

As late as the 1860s Emerson however still could not help occasionally finding fault with Wordsworth, something he had not been able to refrain from since his earliest college notebooks. Porte (1982) indicates that Emerson had accused Wordsworth of suffering from 'asthma of the mind,' still insisting on making Wordsworth the butt of his incisive wit. 'Yet this was clearly a love-hate relationship, and we see Emerson five years later reviewing and correcting his own criticisms. He would not, after all, reject his verdict that Wordsworth was (EJ, p. 534) 'the manliest poet of his age' (JMN, XVI, p.136).

This brief quote from Emerson merits further thought. In his 9 December 1868 journal entry, Emerson wrote that Wordsworth's poems record his actual thoughts and emotions, and he reports them because of their reality, rendering thereby a manly honesty:

He has great skill in rendering them into simple and sometimes happiest poetic forms, and is a brave thoughtful Englishman, exceeds Wordsworth a hundredfold in rhythmic power and variety, but far less manly compass; and Tennyson's main purpose is the rendering, whilst Wordsworth's is just value of the dignity of the thought (JMN, XVI, p. 136).

Several months earlier (August 16, 1868), Emerson recorded in his journal how he had taken a volume of Wordsworth and read carefully for the first time 'The White Doe of Rylstone.' It was 'a poem on a singularly simple and temperate key, without ornament or sparkle, but tender, wise, and religious, such as only a true poet could write, honoring the poet and the reader' (JMN, XVI, p. 105). Thus yet another instance of Emerson reaffirming his Wordsworth in the 'love' half of the relationship.

As late as 1876 Emerson still cannot tear himself from the 'hate' half of the ambivalence. His 20 December 1876 (EJ, p. 565) journal entry states that 'The vice of Wordsworth is that he is lame poet: he can rarely finish worthily a stanza begun well', with a reference to Wordsworth as suffering from 'asthma of the mind.' Yet, in the same entry we find the following image of Wordsworth:

'Tis one of the mysteries of our condition, that the poet seems sometimes to have a mere talent \_\_\_\_ a chamber in his brain into which an angel flies with divine messages, but the man, apart from this privilege, common-lace.

Wordsworth is an example ... Those who know and meet him day by day cannot reconcile the verses with their man.

Emerson defended Wordsworth's *Excursion* on the grounds that it was a philosophical poem proposing to 'treat of Man, Nature, and Society' (JMN, I, pp. 270-71). Critics had complained of its choice of 'low' personages and purely mundane concerns, seemingly inconsistent with the higher purposes of epic philosophical quests, such as found in *The Excursion* (Book I, 322):

An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,  
Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door.  
A vagrant merchant bent beneath his load!  
Yet do such travelers find their own delight;  
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,  
Gained merited respect in simpler times;  
When Squire, and Priest, and they who round them dwelt  
In rustic sequestration, all dependent  
Upon the Pedlar's toil, supplied their wants,  
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.

Emerson rebukes those who would lay Wordsworth open to ridicule because of his 'choice of persons':

He designed to take man where all mankind met, above the reach of the arbitrary distinctions of rank or fashion upon the open ground of naked human nature; and it would have been preposterous to have introduced for the purposes of his philosophical dialogue the personages of heraldry ... It were idle to tax a poet with the mean of external condition of his characters, whenever it suits his purposes as if nobles and princes, stars and coronets, were not as cheaply obtained in poetical creation as tattered raiment, the cottage, and the poor (JMN, I, p. 271).



## CHAPTER FOUR

### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) can be classified as poet, philosopher, or critic. In this triple capacity his influence was considerable. Coleridge the poet influenced contemporary Romantics such as Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. As a philosopher Coleridge sought to reconcile reason and religion, achieving some success in influencing nineteenth century English and American idealism as well as the Broad Church movement. He was widely recognized as a literary critic, especially in his view of literature as an organic unity attained through the reconciliation of opposites. A major figure in the English Romantic movement, he was most famous in his literary period for three poems: 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' 'Kubla Khan,' and 'Christabel,' and for his *Biographia Literaria*.

The influence of Coleridge on Emerson can be documented in Emerson's journals, lectures, and letters, and in the writings of various critics. As in the case of Wordsworth, there is little by way of personal commentary by Coleridge on Emerson. Some 30 years separating their birth. Emerson had scarcely begun to write at the time of Coleridge's death.

By the mid-30s, Emerson was reading avidly in Coleridge (CL,I, p. xxii). It is a safe generalization that Coleridge's influence upon Emerson was considerable, many critics asserting that Coleridge's influence motivated the rise of a new American literature. Kenneth Walter Cameron indicated that it was Coleridge who served as a vital catalyst in the emergence of Emerson's Transcendentalism.<sup>1</sup> 'But Emerson's attraction to Coleridge was slow in developing, and evidence suggests that Emerson depended a great deal upon what contemporary critics were saying about Coleridge, especially in

critical reviews on Coleridge's prose writings published in journals like the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, and *Fraser's*.<sup>2</sup>

In Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, Emerson first became acquainted with two key Coleridgean usages: Reason and Understanding. Dameron (1985) notes that 'As a reader of contemporary periodical literature, Emerson could have noted in the serials after 1829 a rising number of essays on Coleridge, particularly before and just after 1833 when Emerson visited Coleridge in London a few months before Coleridge's death' (p.15).

According to Ralph Rusk, Emerson was actively considering a number of Coleridge's philosophical ideas a year before he prepared *Nature* for the printer in June of 1836.<sup>3</sup> John Abraham Heraud<sup>4</sup> had contributed many articles on Coleridge during the 1830s, articles read by Emerson. 'In reading *Fraser's* from February 1830 through May 1836 ... Emerson had opportunity to examine fifteen of Heraud's composition on a variety of topics ranging from Coleridge to 'human perfectibility' \_\_ all ... a significant body of reading material' (Dameron, 1985, p.16).

Emerson's idealism resembles that of Coleridge, both being founded on the premise that ideas liberate the mind from the limits of sense experience. Both men saw ideas as the substance of Reason, a consciousness which rules over the senses and the rational understanding. Heraud's essays were an extended interpretative commentary on Coleridge's Transcendental views criticizing empiricism. 'Through Heraud, Emerson would have found in Coleridge a way to bridge the gap between eighteenth-century Empiricism and Transcendentalism by affirming that sense experiences are valid cognitive manifestations of a divinely ordained universe' (Dameron, 1985, p.16).

### Emerson Visits Coleridge

Emerson's 1833 European tour was especially motivated by his wish to see Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. He had no introduction to Coleridge, but knew that he lived somewhere in the northern London suburb of Highgate. On the morning of August 5 he went there, still not knowing exactly where Coleridge resided. Dr James Gillman \_\_ who had rescued Coleridge from his opium addiction \_\_ lived with Coleridge who was now in his sixty-first year. Coleridge indicated that he could not see Emerson, but that Emerson should return in the afternoon at an hour to be named by Emerson. Emerson returned promptly at one and recounts being met by 'a short thick old man with bright blue eyes, and fine clear complexion, leaning on his cane. He took snuff freely, which presently soiled his cravat and neat black suit' (*Four Volumes in One*, p. 6).

Coleridge started out by talking of the limitations of Unitarianism. 'When he stopped to take breath, I interposed that, 'whilst I highly valued all his explanations, I was bound to tell him that I was born and bred a Unitarian.'" Coleridge himself was at one time a Unitarian, but now a firm Trinitarian. Coleridge asked if Emerson knew Washington Allston, the American painter. Coleridge had known him in Rome and had one of his paintings. Dr William Ellery Channing, an American Transcendentalist, had visited Coleridge, but 'a man whom he looked at with so much interest, \_\_ embrace such views [of Unitarianism] and should have turned a Unitarian after all' (*Four Volumes in One*, p. 6). Emerson informed Coleridge that Unitarians in America who did not subscribe to his theology nevertheless read his books, but evidently this did not mollify Coleridge.

Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* had appeared in the United States in

1829 as a result of the efforts of James Marsh, but Coleridge said that he had not corresponded with him; actually Coleridge was ill at the time: a copy of Marsh's edition had arrived and he never acknowledged it.

Thus the interview went. Emerson had been warned not to stay more than half an hour to avoid tiring the poet, but it was over an hour before he could gracefully withdraw. The interview had been an exhibition rather than a conversation. Coleridge might have been \_\_\_ and perhaps was \_\_\_ reciting paragraphs from his books. All Emerson gained was some satisfaction of his curiosity (Allen, 1981, p. 212).

Emerson himself summed up the visit quite aptly: 'As I might have foreseen, the visit was rather a spectacle rather than a conversation, of no use beyond the satisfaction of my curiosity. He was old and preoccupied, and could not bend to a new companion and think with him' (W, V, p. 14).

### **Critics on the Coleridge/Emerson Connection**

Of special concern here are the various critical commentaries, other than those of Emerson and Coleridge themselves, which help establish the Coleridge/Emerson connexion.

#### **(i) Methodological and Philosophical Connexions**

Like Coleridge, Emerson sought an identity or correspondence of the natural and spiritual worlds, renewed daily in an experience of self-consciousness. Sherman Paul holds that Emerson found in Coleridge not only an exponent of Platonic ideas but a builder of 'the defense against Locke; and on Locke's home ground the psychological process.'<sup>5</sup> Paul (1952) notes that Emerson apprehended unity in the world through a kind of

moral sentiment; fusing subject and object with a religious warmth, uniting man and god, and with moral duty becoming a sanctified perception.

By showing the limits of the understanding, Kant, too, had dichotomized the universe into the realms of noumena and phenomena, and the impossibility of knowing the things-in-themselves had disturbed Emerson. He followed in the writings of Coleridge the line of Kant ... that developed from Kant's own discontent with the empirical analysis of knowing (pp. 35-36).

But Coleridge was mostly concerned with Kant's Practical Reason as he asserted his faith in the harmony between religion and philosophy. Differing from Kant, Coleridge rejected the subjection of his feelings to the rigor of logic, wanting to make his feelings actualize reason, and focus upon the value of feelings in morals (Pochmann, et al., 1978, p. 93). Coleridge's philosophy combined elements of Schelling, Fichte, and others imposed upon Kant's basic distinctions between Reason and Understanding; No matter whatever Coleridge discussed be it, morals, art, religion, or metaphysics, he based his judgments upon these distinctions and thought in terms of them. American Transcendentalists grasped neither the whole of Kant nor his distinction between Reason and Understanding. Even James Marsh who tried to explain Kant in his edition of *The Friend* and in his preliminary Essays and Notes to *Aids to Reflection* (1829) failed to transmute the distinction correctly (p. 92).

Emerson read Coleridge's *The Friend*<sup>6</sup> as early as 1829. In a letter dated 10 December 1829, Emerson told his Aunt: 'I am reading Coleridge's *The Friend* with great interest' (J,II, p. 277). With respect to this book, Emerson wrote that it was one of the few 'self-imprinting' books he had read.

I like to encounter these citizens of the universe, that believe mind was made to be spectator of all, inquisitor of all, and whose philosophy compares with others much as astronomy with the other sciences, taking post at the center and, as from a specular mount, sending sovereign glances to the circumference of things (J,II, pp. 278-79).

Emerson believed that the religious revolution was impelled by modern sciences. This, especially the Copernican system, took salvation out of the hands of dogmatic theology, leading to the establishment of moral laws, which 'disconcert and evaporate temporary systems,' a development Emerson felt was promoted by Coleridge's method (Paul,1952, p. 40). In following Coleridge, Emerson found a grander total perception than in Locke's contriving faculty, a knowing of the total man not merely the 'understanding.' In Coleridge's essays on method in *The Friend*, 'Emerson found joined with Kantian Reason a Platonic emphasis on ideas, and in the distinction between science and scheme, he found science transformed' (p. 39). William Charvat noted that just as Wordsworth was important for the preparation of the Transcendental soil, Coleridge established many of the necessary philosophic distinctions seized upon by Emerson.<sup>7</sup>

The circle was a basic figure in Emerson's geometry of morals, symbolizing the Unattainable and the steady rise over chaos and the dark, a 'primary figure' and 'highest emblem in the cipher of the world, representing also the unifying Idea as adapted from Coleridge' (J,I, p. 305). 'By joining the static and mechanist circle of Newtonian astronomy (his debt to eighteenth-century science) with the dynamic science of Ideas or dialectic of Coleridge, Emerson made his circle an organic symbol capable of representing both the unfolding mind and the ascending natural chain of being' (Paul,1952, p.101). Paul further notes that Emerson had found in the mind a power capable of resisting the 'contracting influences of so-called

science.' Such narrow science based on Lockean methods, lost sight, he had learned from Coleridge, 'of the indispensable help of ideas and did not pause in its search for facts to reflect on the mind's contribution in perception of unifying and life giving ideas' (p.208).

With regard to method of presentation, Wyne C. Anderson links Coleridge with Emerson, as well as with Carlyle, in their use of 'perpetual affirmations,' their 'rhetoric of reiteration.' Both writers, says Anderson, 'declare without proof their important beliefs and then devote a major portion of their discourse to reiterating these declarations in various forms.'<sup>8</sup> Emerson and Coleridge employed declaration and reiteration as forms of development. Emerson was able to develop and support his main propositions in conventionally expository ways; at times he asks an initial question and then devotes the paragraph to answering that question (Anderson, 1985, p.38).

Emerson also may ask a question, provide an implicit answer, then explain the answer in two parts, the first supported with a set of particulars and the second is added as a conclusion. Emerson tries to make the declaration of belief 'present' in the mind of the reader rather than to prove or explain his belief. In the act of interpretation, the speaker selects certain elements of the subject and presents them to the audience. By repeating the same thought in many figures, Emerson emphasizes a strong point — repetition of words; repetition of phrases, clauses and ideas; and repetition of sounds (Anderson, pp. 39, 40, 42).

Anderson explains the rhetorical device of reiteration as natural in view of the both writers' focus on religious and philosophical content where it is essential to 'express the indemonstrable premises of faith, imagination, and intuition, ideas that are by definition prior to syllogistic development', so that they must 'rely on declaration and reiteration much more often than orthodox speakers and writers' (Anderson, p.37). Put another way, their object of

expression is beyond discursive language.

... Coleridge, Carlyle, and Emerson have the advantage of being remarkably unified philosophically — Carlyle and Emerson consciously adopt Coleridge's philosophical system — and because their discourse is literary and imaginative as well as philosophical, the examples it provides are particularly rich and interesting. Their philosophical prose serves to clarify and reaffirm in a dramatic way the power of the rhetorical tradition over and against the pervasive claims of post-Cartesian logic and demonstration (p.37).

Emerson and Carlyle may be said to have adopted Coleridge's philosophical system, but since their discourse is imaginative, literary, and more importantly philosophical, they provided rich and interesting examples.

Emerson felt that the ability to come into contact with the Over-Soul or God was open to all men, not to a chosen few only, a view consistent with the democratic society of his times and particularly his doctrine of Self-Reliance — that the path to God was from within one's self. This direction of thought was 'confirmed by Coleridge's idea that God is to be found within.'<sup>9</sup>

George Miller Haynes makes a curious connexion between Emerson and Coleridge on the basis of their psychological needs as 'prophets' and of their special relationship to their audience.

Coleridge's and Emerson's similar needs to define a personal identity through the role of prophet guided their careers, their philosophies, and their dissimilar literary styles. Their prose works enacted a selfhood through their ambivalent dialogue with audience. Such a literature requires readers who can attend to its courage as well as its craft.<sup>10</sup>

Haynes (1984) indicates that Romantic prophets no longer had a God to



validate their calling, as was the case with their Old Testament forerunners; Emerson and Coleridge found that without recognizing external divine authority they had to look to a secular audience to confirm their purpose, almost impelled to solicit the approval of the very readers they were judging. Coleridge, according to Haynes, feared to trust his audience, resisting the very readers he wrote for, imagining that they would revile him, and especially the first person of his transcendent I AM.

In *Nature*, Emerson appropriated Coleridge's exile, not by imitating his dialectical theory but preserving his autonomy amidst the community he addressed. Maintaining a prophetic exile while courting a broad audience; this is the paradox of Emerson's rhetoric in *Nature* and the symbolic importance of the work in his career. Though he used the 'eye' of imagination as a code word for a god-like 'I,' he never could write the 'You' out of his prophecy — not even in 'Self-Reliance,' his most radical attack on society. His imagined readership gave form to his prose. Yet Emerson refused to surrender his Coleridgean message of the Spirit to the pragmatic spirit of America (p.I).

Coleridge, no mere armchair philosopher, was the actual founder of the Broad Church, which sought to justify creed and sacrament by substituting the ideas of spiritual philosophy for the formal authority of traditions which reason was abandoning. One is here reminded of Emerson's own experience in his early endeavors to hold an ecclesiastical post in New England. Frothingham (1965) indicated that 'The name of Coleridge was spoken with profound reverence, his books were studied industriously, and the terminology of Transcendentalism was as familiar as commonplace in the circles of divines and men of letters' (p. 89). Not the least of whom was, of course, Emerson himself.

Emerson however seems to employ a technique in his prose which

differs from Coleridge. Coleridge's prose is more discursive than Emerson's; it is similar to Kant's explanatory and demonstrative prose. Coleridge's discursive language moves from demonstrative to declaration [as in *Aids to Reflection*], (Anderson, 1985, p.45). Coleridge tries to keep his idea before his audience as long as possible in order to make it present in their minds. Moreover, he intensifies each clause by the use of capitalization and italics, (this capitalization owes something to Germanic practice) as if attempting to make each formulation stronger and more noticeable on the page (p.46). Like Coleridge, Emerson defines the orator as one who detaches and magnifies by making the idea at hand 'the tyrant of the hour.' Well known as a minister and public lecturer, Emerson gave lectures in various states and delivered others in Britain and his prose should perhaps be seen in this light. William Lyon Phelps saw Emerson as perhaps 'the greatest lecturer America has ever known.'<sup>11</sup> The question might be asked whether Emerson wrote a philosophy of Rhetoric? Roberta K. Ray answers, 'No,' but his comments on public speaking may be found in his lectures, letters, essays and journals. Therefore it is likely that a philosophy of rhetoric could be constructed from the abundance of materials he left.<sup>12</sup> Ray (1974) noted that in his various lectures, essays, and philosophy, Emerson tackled the issues of truth- how to communicate and how to perceive it (p.216). Ray went on to explain the various roles of the orator as an artist, a poet, an analogist, and provocator, supporting her ideas from Emerson's works (pp. 217-23).

According to Emerson, the orator or the speaker must have 'eloquence,' the faculty that addresses the common soul of all men (EL,II, p.109). The speaker and the audience are seen as a single entity that could be united through their sharing the common mind: 'An audience is not a simple addition of individuals that compose it. Their sympathy gives them a certain

social organism, which fills each member, in his own degree, and most of all the orator, as a jar in battery charged with the whole electricity of the battery.' The speaker is affected by his speech as well as the audience. When Emerson reads from a paper in front of himself, he is a talker at his best; Likewise when he writes an impromptu.

When I write a letter to any one whom I love, I have no lack of words or thoughts: I am wiser than myself and read my paper with pleasure of one who receives a letter, but what shall I write to fill up the gaps of a chapter is hard and cold, is grammar and logic; there is magic in it; I do not wish to see it again (JMN, VII, p. 405).

Michael (1988) observes that *Nature* is a dramatization of controversial conflicts between the author at one side and his audience at the other. Trying to overcome this dualism which separates him from his audience, Emerson thinks of 'perfect eloquence,' as he imagined it in his journals, 'In perfect eloquence, the hearer would lose the sense of dualism' (JMN, VII, p. 52). Michael sees that Emerson's trying to resolve the problem of dualism by placing his ideal theory in the context of ideas might be an indication of his struggle with fears of his audience (pp. 34-35).

Emerson, of course, had an ambivalent attitude toward his audience. In an entry in his journal on 15 December 1827, he wrote: 'Public opinion, I am sorry to say, will hear a great deal of nonsense' (JMN, III, p.100). Six months later, his opinion of the public has changed.

I am always made uneasy when the conversation turns in my presence upon popular ignorance and the duty of adopting our public harangues and writings to the ... minds of people. 'Tis all pedantry and ignorance. The people know as much and reason as well as we do. None so quick as to discern brilliant genius or solid parts. And I observe that all those who use this can most, are such as do not rise

above mediatory of understanding (JMN, III, p.136).

In this passage Emerson explicitly separated himself from the audience. Certainly Emerson believed in every individual, but he does not identify with the public: '... I believe myself to be a moral agent of an indestructible nature and designed to stand in sublime relations to God and to my fellow men' (JMN, III, p.72). Thus Emerson believed that he is 'a moral agent' \_\_\_ having a moral mission for his fellow men.

Although Coleridge has been criticized for example by Hedge for his lack of coherence, Emerson was impressed by Coleridge's 'living, leaping logos.'<sup>13</sup> As will be discussed later in this section in greater depth, a fundamental distinction for Coleridge was that between Reason and Understanding, the latter being the logical faculty of the Enlightenment and dealing with nature; the former having to do with the spirit. Emerson, in a letter to his brother, wrote that 'Reason is the highest faculty of the soul \_\_\_ what we mean by the soul itself; it never reasons, never proves, it simply perceives; it is vision' (L, I, p. 291). Sultana (1981) holds that what Emerson learned from Coleridge was decidedly different from Kant's notion that the Noumenon (Ding-an-sich) behind the phenomenon, was ultimately unknowable. Emerson, like Coleridge, insisted that the Reason could come into contact with the Over-Soul, a name for the Deity, because it was of the same kind. 'So for the Americans.' Transcendental knowledge, what was for Kant, became possible (p.119).

Wood (1976) held that Emerson's *Nature* was based on a Coleridgean dialectic found in his *Aids to Reflection*. The constant use of Reason and Understanding in *Nature* demonstrated Coleridge as his source. Emerson, who in his lectures and essays frequently connected the plane of nature with the plane of spirit, relied on, according to Sultana (1981), Coleridge's

elaborate dialectical schemes as the basis for the unfolding of his entire structured work. 'Here Emerson brilliantly used Coleridge's 'Noetic Pentad' to move from one section to another and even to solder or weld together the difficult transitions that finally brought him up to his lofty conclusion' (p.121).

All this is not to say that Emerson got all his philosophical ideas from Coleridge. He had already developed Compensation, and Correspondence he derived from Swedenborg.<sup>14</sup> Sultana indicates his many other readings of idealists and pantheists, including Plato, the Neo-Platonists, Thomas a Kempis, the Cambridge Platonists, Cudworth and More, and a series of mystics including the Hindus, Swedenborg, Boehme, and Oegger. 'Interestingly, Coleridge read most of these same mystical writers, before he turned from pantheism to Christian orthodoxy' (p.123).

Emerson is widely recognized to have been influenced by idealism, especially that of Bishop Berkeley (Allen, 1981). Emerson learned from the two Scottish philosophers, Duglad Stewart and Thomas Reid, that idealism has two different aspects, Hume's skeptical critique and Berkeley's ideal theory. Emerson linked Hume and Berkeley and was resistant to identify the idealism of *Nature* with any one of them (Michael, 1988, p. 39). In an entry in his journal, Emerson wrote: 'Religion does that for the uncultivated which philosophy does for Hume, Berkeley and Viasa; \_\_\_ makes the mountains dance, and smoke and disappear before the steadfast gaze of Reason' (JMN.V, p.123). Michael asserted that Emerson was completely aware that Hume's skepticism was based on idealism and as not an answer to it. This conflict appears in the centre of *Nature* (p. 37).

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself, \_\_\_ whether this end be not the Final cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly exists... God will teach a human mind and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the

authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in Heaven, or some God points the image in the ferment of the soul? ... whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may; it is ideal to me so long as I can not try the accuracy of my senses (CL,I, p. 29).

In answer to the skeptics, Emerson and Berkeley seem to introduce the 'unifying equation of 'being' with 'being perceived' instead of 'the duality of objective existence and subjective perception.' Berkeley introduced God as the only creative mind that 'projects the world into such separate consciousness' in order to avoid the confusion of object and subject (Michael,1988, p. 38). For Emerson, the 'ideal hypothesis,' however noble, seems 'unanswerable doubt' — not an answer to the skeptics (p. 38). As it appears from the quoted passage, Emerson's idealism is the result of his 'utter impotence' in testing the senses. Nature is ideal 'so long as I can not try the accuracy of my senses.' Berkeley combatted skepticism from a higher ground, advancing to idealism, but Emerson retreated to the ideal theory.

In 1834, Emerson 'breathlessly announced his discovery of idealism — both epistemological and ontological — and of the new distinction between 'Reason' and 'Understanding.'"<sup>15</sup> For Coleridge and Emerson, Understanding is the faculty of conceptual judgment based upon the perception of the senses. It takes the particulars given in sensory perception and subtracts from them similar traits in order to classify, arrange, and generalize. In this process, it formulates logical rules for natural phenomena. Since it depends upon the senses, the Understanding is restricted in its judgment to the spatial and temporal properties of sensible objects. In *Nature*, Emerson described the Understanding 'space, time,

society, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day ... Every property of matter is a school for the Understanding — its solidity, its figure, its divisibility. The Understanding adds, divides, measures, and finds nutriments and room for its activity in this worthy scene' (W,I, p. 36). Coleridge gives a somewhat similar description of the Understanding but with reference to Kant's categories:

The Understanding ... concerns itself exclusively with the quantities, and relations of particular in time and space; The Understanding therefore is the science of Phenomena, and of their subscriptions under distinct kinds and sorts (genera and species). Its possibility supplies the rules and constitutes the possibility of experience; but remain mere logical forms except as far as materials are given by the sense or sensations.<sup>16</sup>

Porte (1980) speculates that the fact that Kant had denied ontological idealism was probably unknown to Emerson, as was 'the fact that by 'Pure Reason' Kant really meant 'Pure Understanding,' denying to Emerson's 'Reason' an objective state of existence' (p. 85). For Emerson, what mattered was Coleridge's statement in *Aids to Reflection* that 'Reason is the Power of universal and necessary convictions, the Source and substance of Truths above sense, and having their evidence in themselves. Here was Price's 'understanding,' or intuition, in a new dress; and Emerson accepted Coleridge's vocabulary eagerly' (p. 85).

For Emerson, the path to God required answering the question of how the individual outgrows his present desperate condition by means of recovering his unconscious power.

Emerson's answer owes more to Coleridge than to Plotinus:  
'Now [at the present time] all man's power over nature is by

the understanding as by measure, steam, the economic use of the wind and water and needle, coal, filling teeth with gold, making wooden legs ...' ... What is wanted is 'an instantaneous in-streaming causing power.' This can be obtained by the use of Reason \_\_ that part, or faculty, of the human mind most God-like (Allen, 1981, p.281).

By way of commentary on Coleridge's understanding \_\_ or misunderstanding \_\_ of Kant, Porte (1980) notes that Coleridge, by claiming for 'speculative Reason' (Pure Reason) the field of what he called 'Formal (or abstract) truth,' opened the way to a mixture of 'Pure' and 'Practical' Reason, something quite consistent with Emerson's approach, as already noted earlier. 'Coleridge confused the two by using the [term] 'truth' in connexion with Pure Reason, [whereas Pure Reason] in Kant has only to do with the forms and categories of human perception, not with moral truth' (p. 86).

Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson even in 1983 could note that the theory of Idealism has frequently been carried to absurdity by individuals who do not understand it, and who make it not only useless but injurious to minds making their way through philosophy. 'To borrow two good compounds from Coleridge, the half Ideas of many would-be Idealist writers, have passed, perforce, into the no-Ideas or many would-be Idealist readers.'<sup>17</sup> Burkholder and Myerson feel that Emerson guarded his Idealism by 'rigorous and careful expression,' avoiding much haggling over words or thoughts, except perhaps for materialists and atheists whom he rejected summarily.

## (ii) Understanding Versus Reason

Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* was a compilation of passages from the



works of seventeenth-century British divines (themselves NeoPlatonists) along with his personal philosophy of Transcendentalism. It provided young American Unitarians with a view opposing the 'sensational' philosophy. It provided an epistemology through the dichotomy of Understanding and Reason.

This dichotomy was probably the most important contribution that Coleridge made to American Transcendentalism in its early stages of development ... It also helped other Transcendentalists who were in the process of thinking their way out of the Unitarian consensus, but perhaps no one more than Emerson. Emerson thought that a clear perception of the different ways in which Understanding and Reason worked was 'the key to all theology, and a theory of human life' (Boller, 1974, p. 49).

Coleridge's *Science of Method* proposed a way of avoiding the dead end of 'so-called science' through recognizing the distinction between Reason and Understanding, fundamentally different approaches of the mind to reality. The Imaginative Reason apprehended Reality, and through imaginative apprehension, the mind created its universe; that is, created and coalesced with the objects it perceived (J,I, p.99-100). Such moments of vision produced a consciousness of the growth of the mind, a development from within outward, a development of Reason.

Coleridge was describing from a logical rather than a psychological viewpoint the grounds of this progressive dialectic. Understanding, on the other hand, was characterized by being manipulative; it could not create nor obey the laws of association, and reassemble what the mind, in its imaginative aspect, had already created. Scheme was, therefore, as the logic of the Understanding, a secondary method, by which one arranged what was previously perceived; and Science, as the logic of the

Reason on which the Understanding depended, was a method of unity and progression, of the self's development in its interaction with nature (Paul,1952, p.41).

Reason for Coleridge apprehends truths unreachable by the ordinary senses, or 'sensation.' It is the starting point of thought, not explainable or demonstrable by argument. Reason furnishes us with our idea of God, of unity. The opposite of Reason is Understanding through which we sense phenomena. The Understanding organizes the sensory 'data' for practical use. Science grows out of the generalizing and abstracting power of the Understanding. The Understanding perceives the world as mechanism, having no insights beyond the limited mode, that is, of perception of phenomena by means of the ordinary senses.

In the *Biographia Literaria* and in the *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge stated that 'to establish this distinction [between Reason and Understanding] was one main object of *The Friend*' (I, p.110). At the conclusion of *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (1830), Coleridge wrote, 'Finally; what is Reason? You have often asked me; and this is my answer':

Whene'er the mist, that stands 'twixt God and there,  
Defaces to a pure transparency,  
That intercepts no light and adds no stain-  
There Reason is, and then begins her reign.<sup>18</sup>

For Coleridge, Reason divides into the 'speculative' and the 'practical.' 'The Practical Reason alone is Reason in the full substantive sense.'<sup>19</sup> Coleridge maintains that genuine Reason 'never acts by itself, but must clothe itself in the substance of individual Understanding and specific inclination.' Reason synthesizes will, emotion, conscience, and intellect representing the claims of the 'whole man. The conscience 'or effective Reason commands the design of conveying an adequate notion of the thing spoken of, when this is

Practicable.'<sup>20</sup> Coleridge's notion of Reason advances the claims of emotion. In one of his letters, Coleridge wrote that in his opinion 'deep Thinking is attainable only by a man of Feeling.'<sup>21</sup> It seems that Coleridge is referring feeling to abstract thought. '... a metaphysical Solution, that does not instantly tell for something in the Heart, is grievously to be suspected as apocryphal.' Thus Reason is a more human capacity of mind, and expression of the self in its complete range of activities in the world.

The Coleridgean distinction between Reason and Understanding influenced Emerson's first major publication, *Nature*, in 1836. According to Emerson, nature disciplines both the Understanding and the Reason. Emerson perhaps went much further than Coleridge in projecting ethical, moral character into nature, with Reason, for Emerson, seeing through the appearance of things to the basic unity underlying all natural phenomena and natural laws. For Emerson:

It [Nature] disciplines the Understanding (the 'hand of the Mind' which 'adds, divides, combines, measures') in intellectual truths: the lessons of common sense, the laws of science, and the techniques of agriculture and industry, which give human beings mastery over natural resources. Nature also educates Reason, which operates on a higher level of intellection than the Understanding, by stimulating it to moral, philosophical, and religious insight (Boller, 1974, p. 51).

The term 'Reason' for Coleridge and Emerson represents a capacity for apprehending spiritual truths which words cannot describe or explain. Reason 'bears the same relation to spiritual objects, the Universal, the Eternal, and the Necessary as the eye bears to material and contingent phenomena' (*The Friend*, I, p.156). It is the power of universal and necessary convictions, the source and substance of truths above sense

(p.157). Reason is a means of direct insight into the universal and transcendental reality beyond phenomena; purely spiritual. It dwells in every man potentially (pp. 193-94) because every man is born with the faculty of Reason (II, p. 125). There are various objects of Reason; the most important are the God, the Soul, and eternal Truth, which 'are themselves Reason' (I, p. 156). Reason is identified an organ identical to its 'appropriate objects.'

In Emerson's terms, Reason is 'the highest faculty of the soul, what we mean often by the soul itself: it never reasons, never proves, it simply perceives; it is vision.' In comparison, 'the Understanding toils all the time, compares, continues, adds, argues; nearsighted but strongsighted, dwelling in the present, the expedient, the customary' (Cabot, 1888, p. 218). Like Coleridge, Emerson views Reason not as a faculty per se but as a term for the whole activity of the mind: the Reason 'transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind' (CL, I, p. 23). Emerson declares that 'Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the nature, of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason' (CL, I, p. 18).

Emerson relied on the use of Coleridge's distinction between Reason and Understanding for many years after publishing *Nature*. He also relied on expressions like 'moral sentiment,' 'moral sense,' and 'sentiment of virtue' (approximately equivalent terms) 'which he had probably learned from the Scottish school at Harvard, as though they were closely related to Coleridgean Reason' (Boller, 1974, p. 51). For Coleridge, Reason was the power or faculty of the mind that has insight into the highest truths, moral and spiritual, about reality. Although Emerson never decided definitely on the relation between intellect (Understanding) and moral sentiment (Reason),

he tended to give primacy to Reason.

Edward Schamberger remarked that Emerson's concept of the Reason was also derived from Dugald Stewart<sup>22</sup> and Richard Price: on the basis of his reading at Harvard College, Emerson borrowed the theory of 'moral sense' after his study of Coleridge, and termed it 'Reason.'<sup>23</sup> Undoubtedly Emerson had read Price's *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals* (1769) upon his Aunt's advice. In an entry in his journal, Emerson wrote: 'I am reading Price on Morals and intend to read it with care and commentary ... He saith that the Understanding is his ultimate determiner' (JMN, I, p. 51). Throughout the early part of 1821, when he was preparing his essay on 'The Present State of Ethical Philosophy,' Emerson also made direct and indirect references to Stewart (JMN, I, pp. 253, 254, 331, 345). But some of this argues against the central importance of Coleridge.

Barbara L. Packer observed that Emerson took the terms, the Understanding and the Reason, from Coleridge whose *The Friend's* 'Essay on the Principles of Method' he began to study after his return from Europe.<sup>24</sup> Both Emerson and Coleridge thought of ideas as the very stuff of Reason — they prevail over the rational understanding and the senses. Emerson's idealism, like Coleridge's, is based upon the foundation that ideas free the mind from the limits of sense experience. In *Nature*, Emerson said:

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding belongs a sort of instructive belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of Reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses which binds us to nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency interceded, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces.

- When the eye of Reason opens, to outlive and surface are once added grace and expression (CL,I, p. 30).

Reason deals with the realm of ideas whereas the Understanding deals with the senses. In a letter written on 31 May 1834, Emerson explored the Coleridgean dichotomy for his brother Edward:

Philosophy affirms that the outward world is only phenomenal, the whole concern of dinners, of tailors, of gigs, of balls, whereof men make such account, an intricate dream, the exhalation of the present state of the soul, wherein the Understanding works incessantly as if it were real, but the eternal Reason, when now and then he is allowed to speak, declares it is an accident, a smoke, nowise related to his permanent attributes.

Emerson goes on in this letter to express his own interpretation of Coleridge's dichotomy:

Now that I have used the words, let me ask you, do you draw the distinction of Milton, Coleridge, and the Germans between Reason and Understanding? I think it a philosophy itself, and like all truth, very practical. Reason is the highest faculty of the soul, what we mean often by the soul itself; it never reasons, never proves; it simply perceives, it is vision. The Understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues; near-sighted but string-sighted, dwelling in the present, the expedient, the customary. Beasts have some understanding but no Reason. Reason is potentially perfect in every man — Understanding in very different degrees of strength ... Religion, Poetry, Honour belong to the Reason; to the real, the absolute ... (L,I, p. 291).

Despite Emerson's terminological imprecision which could about be a methodological 'borrowing' from Coleridge, Boller (1974) feels that

Emerson was firm in his belief that intellectual truths have emotional significance: 'we are filled with peace and joy when we have a new insight in science or mathematics and the appeal of a scientific formula may be aesthetic and moral as well as logical and rational' (p. 53). Compare this statement of Boller's with R. C. Waterston on Coleridge:

In his poetry we find perfect truth. Nature is represented as it really is; not dry and dead, but full of meaning. It not only has form but life. He never veils Nature, but unveils it, that we may see the light from within. Matter is to him full of spirit. It is an instrument in God's hand to develop the soul ... It is this, which gives such value to the writings of Coleridge.<sup>25</sup>

Clearly this parallel identifies Coleridge with Emerson — if Boller and Waterston may be taken at their word.

### **(iii) Coleridge's Dialectic**

Emerson's *Nature* is central to his thought and, according to Wood (1976), rests upon his discovery of a detailed dialectical method in the writings of Coleridge, a method which 'supplied Emerson with a strategy for the presentation of ideas developed well before 1836' (p. 386). Of special relevance are Emerson's doctrines of self-reliance and compensation.

For Emerson, self-reliance suggests a kind of balancing of the world by viewing it from a central inner point of view, an inner growth process. Emerson viewed compensation as a temporal balancing of events where the extremes of the present (good or bad) are equalized by events in the future. Balance for Emerson involved compensating polarities, resulting in an eventual balanced whole. Coleridge's 'reconciliation of opposites,' a characteristic method of his thought, is consistent with Emerson's Law of

Compensation. Coleridge's terminology is dialectical (or polar), viewing things as organic and part of an inseparable unity.

Coleridge was against writing according to the rules of a mechanical art. According to Curran (1986) his notion of organic form might be his 'best known and most influential contribution to critical discourse' (p. 23); organic form seems to oppose any generic construction valued by tradition; it is 'innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form.'<sup>26</sup>

Writing in his *Lay Sermons*, Coleridge said,

I feel an awe ... whether I contemplate a single tree or flower, or meditate on vegetation throughout the world, as one of the great organs of the life of nature Lo! -with the rising sun it commences its outward life and enters into open communion with all the elements ... Lo! -how upholding the ceaseless plastic motion of parts in the profoundest rest of the whole it becomes the visible organisms of the whole silent or elementary life of nature; therefore, in incorporating one extreme becomes the symbol of the other; the natural symbol of that higher life of reason, in which the whole series ... is perfected ... Thus finally the vegetable creation, in the simplicity and uniformity of its internal structure symbolizing the unity of nature.<sup>27</sup>

Thomas McFarland noted that through metaphors of organic growth organicism became the model for a Romantic rejection of Neoclassic literary forms defined by genre, decorum, imitation and by a general subscription to the imposed form.<sup>28</sup>

In 'On Poesy or Art,' Coleridge compares an organic and mechanical formal principle as 'the difference between form as proceeding, and shape as superinduced; \_\_the latter is either the death or imprisonment of the thing; \_\_the former is its self-witnessing and self-effected sphere of agency.'



Curran (1986) underlines the part that Coleridge emphasized on the organic form, and in his Shakespeare lectures 1811-1812 defended the conceptual separation in literature of form and content, function and essence (p. 23).

The spirit of poetry, like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty. It must embody in order to reveal itself; but a living body is of necessity an organized one, \_\_\_ and what is organization, but the connexion of parts to a whole, so that each part is at once end and means! This is no discovery of criticism; it is a necessity of the human mind (*Shakespeare Criticism*, I, p.197).

Coleridge stresses the importance of the relation of parts and whole, so that each part serves as a means and as an end simultaneously. Though Coleridge's reflections on organic form occurred late in the development of British Romanticism, borrowing heavily from German thinking, they 'accentuate the preoccupation of the period with the nature and function of artistic form' (Curran, p. 24).

Elsewhere Coleridge warned against 'confounding mechanical regularity with organic form':

The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessity arising out of the properties of the material, as when to a mass of wet clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate, it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such is the life, Such is the form (*Shakespeare Criticism*, I, p.198).

The principle of organic unity, important for both Coleridge and

Emerson, involves the process of growth, the inseparability but not the identity of form and content, the inseparability of part and whole, and the copresence of conscious and unconscious, willed and spontaneous elements.

Emerson's letters and journals suggested a renewed interest in Coleridge after their meeting in Europe: by May 1834, Emerson was immersed again not only in Coleridge's discussions of Reason and Understanding but also in his *Essays on Method*. Principally, what seems to have ordered Emerson's thinking was Coleridge's discussions of dialectical method, which were so clear and well exemplified that Emerson was led directly to method for the presentation of his own thought. By 1836 he had appropriated the method for quite beyond anything Coleridge had imagined. *Nature* was the first manifestation of it in Emerson's work (Wood, 1976, p. 399).

It was Emerson's special interest in compensation that led him to closely scrutinize Coleridge's discussion of polarity in *The Friend* and *Aids to Reflection*. Coleridge emphasized the connexion between polarity and development. In *The Friend*, Coleridge held that 'EVERY POWER IN NATURE AND IN SPIRIT must evolve an opposite, as the sole means and condition of its manifestation: AND ALL OPPOSITION IS A TENDENCY TO REUNION' (I, p. 94). Note how the terms 'evolve' and 'tendency' imply the dynamic (dialectical) processes suggested by Coleridge's 'the universal law of Polarity or essential Dualism.' Coleridge further describes this law of using terms typically associated with Hegel and Schelling:<sup>29</sup> 'The Principle may be thus expressed. The Identity of Thesis and antithesis is the substance of all Being; their Opposition the condition of all Existence, or Being manifested; and every Thing or Phaenomenon is the Exponent of a synthesis as long as the opposite energies are retained in that synthesis'

(*The Friend*, I, p. 94).

A similar dialectical method is evidenced in Emerson's journals before 1835. Thus in May 1834, Emerson discussed Coleridge's method (JMN, IV, p. 290). Another journal entry indicates that he metaphorically adopted a synthetic position: 'I should like to know if any one ever went up a mountain so high as that he overlooked right and wrong and ... saw their streams mix' (JMN, III, p. 310). Wood (1976) points to the following journal entry as reflecting the Archimedean point at the centre, the 'specular mount' from which the soul assimilates the world: 'Opposition of first thoughts and common opinion. God has the first word. The devil has the Second but God has the last word. We distrust the first thought because we can't give the reasons of it. Abide by it, there is a reason, and by and by long hence perhaps it will appear' (JMN, III, p. 311). Wood concludes that well before 1835, Emerson had explored a dialectical view of the world summarized in the latter's remark that 'Extremes meet' (JMN, IV, p. 383).

Emerson viewed nature as antithetical to soul, the synthesis occurring with the soul's perception of nature as the symbol of spirit. Words are signs of natural facts for Emerson, and a synthesis occurs when the thesis (the intellect) combined with the antithesis (straight, twisted, and so on) produces a meaning or synthesis (right, wrong, and so on). Particular natural facts are mere symbols of particular spiritual facts. Emerson holds that every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, a state which merely presents the natural appearance. For example, the mind (thesis), by presenting or describing a lamb (antithesis), conveys its own idea of innocence (synthesis).

Wood (1976) notes Emerson's constant use throughout *Nature* of ascending syntheses as a new beginning point, a fundamental technique in the dialectical method. At its highest level, dialectic views nature as a

symbol of spirit and, according to Emerson, 'the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it' (W,I, p. 22). Wood notes that for Emerson all parts of nature 'conspire against mind, thereby setting up the antithesis for argument — doubt.' Initially, Emerson expresses his faith in the assimilative power of the soul, its power to produce a transformation, to dispose of the 'abyss,' to vanquish the 'wilderness,' and convert experience into thought, the 'flux' in the universe. Using Coleridge's dialectical terminology, this 'miracle' of the mind reflected an antithetical doubt.

Thus, unable to posit his next antithesis according to logic of understanding, as he had done till now, Emerson found the antithesis to his faith thrust upon him in a doubt which 'suggests itself,' yet suggests itself within the context of 'unspeakable ... meaning' conveyed to man as 'the immortal pupil.' The meaning seems clear; the soul capable of assimilating a world produces faith; the world that can be completely assimilated produces doubt. From this polarity, impossible to reconcile on its own level, Emerson simply soars to a new synthesis (Wood, p. 394):

'It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations ... What difference does it make whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the same image in the firmament of the soul?' (CL,I, p. 129).

Wood turns to the final synthesis to which Emerson's thought leads — spirit; Emerson states:

... following the invisible steps of thought ... many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely is that for which

all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound, it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves; therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old (CL,I, p. 38).

Wood concludes here that the image of the tree 'suggests that Emerson understood the 'steps of thought' in terms of organic process, as Coleridge had before him' (p. 395).

Emerson exhorts the reader to 'build therefore your own world,' pointing to self-reliance. Wood (1976) cites Emerson's dialectical method as one which allows him to, paradoxically, reject the authority of the past while at the same time taking account of it. Emerson holds that if the present was just a terminus of the past, only the past could explain the present. 'Emerson, however, was able to synthesize a self-reliant present by adding the future as antithesis into his equation' (Wood, p. 395). The dialectic of Nature fluctuates between the poles of the past and future, and the present is a synthesis of them, a union of opposites in a higher third. In *Nature*, Emerson details the progressive uses of nature offered the soul, an outline of the possible growth of the soul through a methodical use of nature.

For Emerson, as for Coleridge, dialectical logic was organic logic, for it duplicated the process of the mind during its organic assimilation of the universe. From one point of view, then, nature is 'Not Me' standing in antithetical opposition for the soul, but from another point of view God puts nature 'forth through us' as the life of a tree is put forth through leaves and branches (p. 395).

Coleridge's dialectic, especially pertaining to the reconciliation of

opposites and organic unity, goes far towards reconciling seeming contradictories in style, such as genius vs. judgment or nature vs. art, these becoming merely different aspects of the same whole. Coleridge looked for an informing principle of the pervasive life of an organic body — the seed or germ out of which grows the form, as the acorn contains the oak. Thus Emerson's lack of literary form may be viewed, as indeed Emerson did view it, as a kind of metamorphosis, 'a succession of analogies, a continuous process of statement and restatement until the topic seems finally exhausted' (Buell, 1973, p. 157). Although Coleridge sees the imagination as a synthesizer and Emerson saw it as primarily a multiplier of images, it is for both men the mind's unifying agency, mediating between Reason and Understanding.

The poetic or spiritual quest therefore need not be consistent, perhaps nothing other than a romantic yearning after the infinite, for better or for worse. Thus for Coleridge, his quest for spirit underlying particular manifestations may lead to an 'Ode to Dejection' as well as to a 'Kablukhan.' There is certainly a Coleridgean spirit in Emerson's definition of poetry — with which the *Biographia Literaria* would hardly disagree — as 'the perpetual endeavor to express the spirit of the thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which causes it to exist; — to see that the object is always flowing away, whilst the spirit or necessity which causes it subsists' (J, VIII, p. 17). Poetry is, or should be, accordingly, a putting down in words and symbols a true depiction of the dynamics of the spiritual flow which was the contemplation of the object.

Poetry, says Emerson, is the essence of speech; all true speech is poetic and all men are potential poets. In *Nature*, Emerson asserts that 'the perception of symbols' enables man to see 'the poetic construction of things' and 'the primary relation of mind to matter.' Though 'the sensual man conforms thoughts to things,' the poet conforms things to thoughts' — in

'Brahma,' the slayer, the slaying, and the slain lose their individuality to form a unity. Coleridge before Emerson asserted that the poet 'diffuses a tone and spirit of unity that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have appropriated the name imagination,' a power revealing itself through many functions, among which two of the most important are the balancing or reconciling of opposite or discordant qualities and of sameness with difference.<sup>30</sup>

Like Coleridge, Emerson's idea of the poet is of 'a reconciler' who sees, speaks and acts 'with equal inspiration' (W,IV, p. 219). Emerson proclaims that 'the universe has three children, which reappear under different names in every system of thought, whether they be called cause, operation, and effect; or more poetically, Jove, Plato, Neptune; or, theologically, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son; but which we call here the Knower, the Doer, and the Sayer' (CL,III, p. 5). These three, Emerson goes on to say, 'stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty' and it is, reminding the listeners, the poet who is the 'Sayer, the Namer, and [who] represents beauty' (p. 5).

#### (iv) Poetry and Romanticism

Allen (1981) is of the opinion that the only modern poet who satisfied Emerson was Coleridge, who had introduced him to the distinctions between Reason and Understanding, fancy and imagination, and the nature of poetry. Allen holds that Coleridge inspired Emerson's exhortation: 'Nature stretcheth out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal grandeur ... A virtuous man is in keeping with the works of Nature and makes the central figure in the visible sphere' (Emerson in Allen, 1981, p. 262).

Donald Kuspit finds a strong link between Emerson and Coleridge in their treatment of the visionary image. Kuspit describes the 'authentic visionary ... incredible vital imagery,' which is vital as Coleridge says, 'because it seems to arise from the 'counteraction' of powerful forces.'<sup>31</sup> Such tension, indicates Kuspit (1985), can lead to the manipulation of association.

Fanciful imagery is based on the association of familiar sources; visionary imagery is based on the conflict of forces that are not conventionally communicable \_\_ that seems to necessitate the reinvention of language. The fanciful image resolves and aggregate into finite form; the limited synthesis invariably has a certain 'accent.' The imaginative image incompletely resolves profound tension, which is why its form seems 'infinite' and 'distressing,' strangely open and not together \_\_ merging on formlessness. Fanciful images are in the last analysis attractive but not urgently interesting \_\_ not binding on us \_\_ whereas imaginative images are difficult to create, hardly seductive, when created, but with profound power over us (p. 321).

Kuspit describes the contrasting visionary image:

To be visionary, an image must capture this ambivalence \_\_ the simultaneity of the illusion of control and the real threat of its collapse. The visionary image haunts with an illusion of great power almost out of control, struggling for self-control. It is the power of fantasy struggling for form by creating an illusory world \_\_ a world of limited, easily controllable interest giving shape to the primal interest or absorption fantasy has in all being ... Visionary images resemble what Emerson calls 'visions of the night' (p. 321).

Coleridge and Emerson both sought to express not fanciful imagery but the vital and revealing visionary image.

The visionary image was for Emerson to be found in the eye of the



beholder, shifting attention from environment to spectator, requiring a new eye to unify the world in a new way. Tony Tanner notes that in one way, Emerson was merely continuing the tradition of the Romantics when he wrote: 'Not in nature but in man is all the beauty and worth he sees,' \_\_ we hear echoes of Coleridge.<sup>32</sup> But Tanner (1983) finds that in Emerson's emphasis on the responsibilities and creative powers of the eye of the beholder, he had a motive which the European could not have had.

For, as long as the interest of a locale was considered to be inherent in the place rather than the viewer, then Americans would be forever looking to Europe. By denying a hierarchy of significance among external objects he not only eliminated the special prestige of Europe (since everywhere is equally significant), he confronts the eye with an enormous, if exciting, task (p. 311).

By the 1830s Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was well known in America as were through him, the German distinctions between Imagination and Fancy. This and that between Genius and Talent, soon became common expressions in American Transcendentalism.

Coleridge's impact on Romanticism and poetry in Emerson's America can best be understood in terms of the concepts of imagination and fancy as expounded in the following.

The IMAGINATION then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where the process is tendered impossible, yet

still at all events it struggles to idealize and unify. It is essentially vital, even (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The FANCY is indeed no other than mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready-made from the law of association (*Biographia Literaria*, I, pp. 304-05).

Sultana (1981) notes that Coleridge has combined abstract religious ideas with a searching introspection in defining the Primary Imagination. 'He links the I AM of German philosophy with the God of Moses (Exodus, 3:14 states 'And God said unto Moses, I Am THAT I AM.' Sultana points out that 'I AM,' transliterated into Jehaovah (Lord) as the creator God, 'is the concept which placed the Reason above the 'It is' of nature' and 'Having settled his religious problem, Coleridge rarely wrote again about the Primary Imagination' (p.129).

Sultana goes on to point out that the new idea here is the Secondary Imagination, 'the free, shaping, creative power of the poet.' It is this Imagination that Coleridge described and used in critical works, the Fancy being an inferior mode of memory akin to the psychology of Hobbes or Locke. 'Yet Imagination was not rigorously separated from Fancy, and Coleridge advocated the use of both to produce superior art' (p.129).

Sultana states that American Transcendentalists disregarded Coleridge's Secondary Imagination. For them, inspiration or intuitive insight was the most important element, 'and the shaping faculties were not given a theoretical place by the New England Transcendentalists' (p.129). Transcendentalists referred the moral power of literature to the act of creation rather than to the work's promotion or reinforcement of accepted

moral standards. Emerson, like Coleridge, saw the act of creation as a quasi-religious experience.<sup>33</sup> By dignifying the creative imagination as a source of quasi-divine authority, Romanticism granted the artist a crucial position in society and changed the view of the artist's being in seclusion and alienation in society to a positive value. The Romantic ethos as seen in Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle appealed to those who, 'like most antebellum New Englanders,' retained a keen sense of moral and social responsibility. Since Romanticism focused upon the ideal of the poet as keeper of the 'collective conscience' and prophet of a better society, it would seem to have been an ideological formation ideally suited to New England Culture (Buell, 1986, p.69).

Emerson's treatment of the relation between the creative artist and the appreciative observer differs from Coleridge's.<sup>34</sup> Emerson's interest lies in Coleridge's gradation of men according to their power to appreciate art, but Emerson has faith in the common man's ability to enjoy the beautiful in literature and art. Emerson likens the artist to the positive North Pole and the observer to the negative South Pole (Hopkins, 1958, p.150). For Emerson, the artist's action is a development of the organic contact which all men have in the world. 'A painter told me nobody could draw a tree without in some sort of becoming a tree; or draw a child by studying the outlines of its form merely \_\_ by watching for a time his actions and plays; the painter enters into his nature and can then draw him at will in every attitude' (W,I, p.16).

Emerson also believes that the observer's kinship to the artist is enforced by a feeling of identity with the creator. Because the artist's creation of 'too sense of oneness' he may abstract the attention from his work. In his second essay on 'Art,' Emerson says,

The artist who is to produce a work which is to be admired,  
not by his friends or his towns-people or his

contemporaries, but by all men, and which is more beautiful to the eye in proportion to its culture, must disindividualize himself, and be a man of no party and no manner and no eye, but one through whom the soul of all men circulates as the common air through his lungs (W,VII, p. 48).

It is the artist who receives intuition from God and passes it to lesser men (Hopkins, 1958, p.151). Once Emerson asked the question: why he should read Carlyle's *French Revolution*? 'The many himself is mine.' The observer takes part in the artist's vision of the Over-Soul, becoming an 'imaginative recreator' of the artist's intuition (Hopkins, p.152). Emerson indicated that his participation in reading *The French Revolution* as observer supports the idea of the artist-observer relation.

Emerson's theory is part of the Romantic rejection of neoclassical formalism. The poet is the one 'whose eye can integrate all the parts,' an observer of natural phenomenon. Seeing is through the eye not with it and it reveals to the imagination.<sup>35</sup> The New England Transcendentalists were very much interested in the imagination as well as in the poet. Flashes of Reason were vital, but they could not create the detailed action of a novel or drama, reasoned these Transcendentalists. Emerson and Thoreau in particular saw little use for the secondary imagination.<sup>36</sup> 'They Thought in terms of unitary symbols rather than of the complex symbol that is the entire work of art' (Sultana,1981, p.129).

Sultana feels that Coleridge's emphasis upon the symbol-making power of the imagination had deep influence on Emerson and Thoreau: 'Emerson, accepting Coleridge's religious connotations, insisted that there is 'no fact in nature which does not carry the whole sense of nature,' so that the base, even the obscene can become illustrious' (p.130). Sultana further notes that 'interestingly, Emerson's preference for traditional techniques prevented him from appreciating Wordsworth until he learned from Coleridge what was

contained in the symbols' (p.130). Both Wordsworth and Coleridge struggled to find 'appropriate voices' as they played their role to establish the new Romantic sensibility — meaning that they ought to be authentic in terms of their poetic individualities. At the same time they had to embody the 'distinct character of the cultural shift' and to expand the boundaries in considering proper subject matter and proper technique [proper technique includes mainly language].<sup>37</sup>

Emerson sees language as a system of metaphoric, symbolic, or analogical relationships that represent the correspondences between nature and mind. 'Man is an analogist,' says Emerson, and language analogically represents our conceptions of analogies (CL,I, p.19). Emerson believes that the law of correspondence constitutes mind, nature, and language. For Emerson, language is a system of signs of facts and symbols of spirit; since a word represents a natural fact of the order of flowers and trees, language is part spirit and part fact. Furthermore, Emerson claims that language, 'material only on one side,' is 'a demi-God' (W,VII, p. 43). As a medium, language brings together or unifies the mind and nature.

Moreover, Emerson holds that words being signs ensures the correspondence and the relationship between man's mind and the natural world. Emerson emphasizes the linkage between the world of matter and that of spirit: 'The use of natural history is to give us aid in supernatural history. Nature provides man with a vocabulary which explains his relationship to the spiritual realm. The use of outer creation [is] to give us language for the beings and changes of inward creation.' Man expresses his emotions and thoughts in a language that is only 'borrowed from sensible things' to raise his mind to higher thoughts. Therefore, man begins to be exposed to another world of experience, the spiritual world. This is described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture: 'An enraged

man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb innocence; a snake subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections' (CL,I, p.18).

By contrast, Coleridge's conception of language is that there is a natural relationship between things and words; In a letter to Godwin, Coleridge writes:

Is logic the Essence of Thinking? Is thinking impossible without arbitrary signs? And how far is the word 'arbitrary' a misnomer? Are not words, etc., parts and germinations of the plant? And what is the law of their Growth? In some thing of this order, I would endeavor to destroy the old antithesis of Words and Things, elevating as it were, words into Things, and living Things too (*Collected Letters*,I, pp. 352-53).

Words are parts and germinations that display the energy which is the thinking of the life of the whole. In another context, Coleridge affirms that Words are Things and

Words are the living products of the living mind and could not be a due medium between the thing and the mind unless they provoked both. The word does not only convey just what a certain thing is but the very passion and all the circumstances which were conceived as constituting the perception of the thing by person who use [s] the word.<sup>38</sup>

Language for Coleridge is a repetition in the finite mind of the 'divine energy.' He places language as energy alongside the supernatural not the natural: human language is the language of God not the language of nature. In his lecture on Shakespeare, Coleridge makes a distinction between the language of God and nature and human language — human language is composed of 'arbitrary signs.' 'The sound Sun or the figures S. U. N, are

purely arbitrary modes of recalling Object ... But the Language of Nature is a subordinate Logos that was in the beginning, and was with the Thing it represented, and it was the Thing represented' (*Lectures 1808-1819*, p. 429).

It is obvious that Coleridge was concerned with the relation between language and thought: 'Is logic the Essence of Thinking?' His critique of Wordsworth in Chapters 17-22 (II, pp. 40-159) of *Biographia Literaria* stemmed from a controversy over what makes a truly 'natural' poetic diction. According to Coleridge, the aim of writing poetry is 'to elevate the imagination and set the affections in right tune by the beauty of the inanimate impregnated, as with a living soul by the presence of Life ... I love fields and words and mountains with almost a visionary fondness' (*Collected Letters*, II, p. 238). The subject matter, says Coleridge, requires a new means of expression, the need for 'natural language.' Coleridge also uses symbol to express the connexion between natural appearances and divine presence.<sup>39</sup>

In his lectures of 1795, Coleridge focused upon God, nature, and language.

... to the pious man all Nature is thus beautiful because its very Feature is the Symbol and all its parts the written Language of infinite Goodness and all powerful Intelligence. But to a Sensualist and to the Atheist that alone can be beautiful which promises a gratification to the appetite \_\_\_ for the wisdom and benevolence the Atheist denies the very existence. The Wine is beautiful to him, when it sparkles in the Cup \_\_\_ and the Woman when she moves lasciviously in the Dance, But the Rose that bends on its stalk, the Clouds that imbibe the setting sun \_\_\_ these are not beautiful (*Lectures 1795*, p.158).

Coleridge here stressed that true beauty depends on more elevated notions

of benevolence and wisdom, as manifested in the appearances of nature. The various external signs of nature convey the existence of God, who is everywhere; the Universe, Nature, is his 'written Language' (*Lectures 1795*, p. 339). Throughout these lectures Coleridge hopes for more of the primary form of revelation from nature. Even the Bible is a secondary and derivative source.<sup>40</sup> In 'Frost at Midnight', Coleridge writes:

... so shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which thy God  
Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
Himself in all, and all things in himself  
Great Universal teacher (ll 58-63).

According to Ian Wylie, Coleridge seemed to be arguing a posteriori that 'Nature is harmonious'; that is, through observation of how the world is. Like most thinkers of his age, however, Coleridge's argument is really a priori: God is a perfect being by definition; by implication Nature is God's language.<sup>41</sup> H. W. Piper noted that Coleridge believes in God's presence in nature. Nature's beautiful forms are indications and symbols of a God whose qualities could be noticed in the emotional reaction to the landscape.<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, Emerson holds that nature gratifies all the mind's faculties, dreams, faith, Understanding, and Reason. Spirit, says Emerson, interprets nature as a mental phenomenon, 'a projection of God in the Unconscious' (CL, I, p. 38), the feeling of identity or communion with nature as opposed to Idealism, which depends on our conscious difference from the 'Not Me.' 'Idealism makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.' Julie Ellison noted that the term 'Idealism' and 'Spirit' refer to Emerson's moods rather than to mental



operations or faculties:<sup>43</sup> Nature stands like 'the figure of Jesus ... with bended head and hands folded upon the breast, a lesson of worship' (CL,I, p. 37).

### Views of the New England Transcendentalists on Coleridge

Any broad connexion between the New England Transcendentalists and Coleridge<sup>44</sup> helps set the stage for his more specific influence on Emerson. Writing in 1836, Margaret Fuller,<sup>45</sup> founding member of the New England Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*, considered Coleridge's dramas 'complete failures' and his poetry too lacking in published quantity to judge him, although she found much to praise in his smaller pieces such as 'Dejection', where 'indeed, no writer could excel him in depicting a single mood of mind' (p. 325). Fuller praises Coleridge for his searching, intellectual life, even though not impassioned or vehement; to Fuller he merely suggested and informed rather than reformed and renovated, a trait certainly not inconsistent with Emerson's own tendencies.

According to Boller (1974) neither Emerson nor Coleridge had an accurate grasp of Kant,<sup>46</sup> merely making general use of him 'as they did to other philosophers, for their own purposes' (p.36). Boller cites the New England Transcendentalist Frederik Hedge's comment that Kant and his followers had done much to explore the spiritual in man and the ideal in nature and 'Like Coleridge, Hedge knew his Kant, but like Coleridge he also bent him to his own wishes' (p. 78). Emerson referred to Hedge's essay on Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* with approval and that 'all unitarian liberals who were on the road to Transcendentalism read approvingly' (p. 48).

Frederic Henry Hedge (1805-1890), although frequently at odds with Emerson, was nevertheless a solid member of the Transcendental Club

which Emerson called 'the Hedge Club.' Hedge's essay on Coleridge received the highest praise from Emerson. Like Coleridge, Hedge had learned much from German metaphysics. Defending Coleridge against the charge of 'obscurity', Hedge remarked in the essay that 'To those only is he obscure who have no depths within themselves corresponding to his depth' (Hedge in Miller, 1971, p. 68). He felt that the Transcendentalists were the best equipped in America to understand. The essay is mostly in praise of the German philosophy to which Coleridge is heir.

A Philosophy which has given such an impulse to mental culture and scientific research, which has done so much to establish to extend the spiritual in man, and the ideal in nature, needs no apology; it commends itself by its fruits, it lives in its fruits, and must ever live, though the name of its founder be forgotten, and not one of its doctrines survive (Hedge in Miller, 1971, p. 72).

In his review of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* in 1833, Hedge praised the book for having 'sound and important ideas' (Boller, 1974, p. 49). Hedge's essay encouraged many Americans to read other Coleridgean works like the *Biographia Literaria* and *The Friend* (Boller, p. 49).

James Marsh (1794-1842) invoked Coleridge, whose philosophy was designed to support orthodox Christian conclusions, in the hope of making a new departure in American Christianity. Curiously, Marsh made available, through his expositions of Coleridge, ideas quite contrary to the doctrinaire Unitarianism and Calvinism to which Marsh subscribed. 'The rebels [Transcendentalists] disregarded Coleridge's and Marsh's doctrinal conclusions, but were excited by the method, particularly with the distinction between 'Reason' and 'Understanding' (Miller, 1971, p. 34).

Marsh, in his 'Preliminary Essay,' saw in Coleridge's work 'a philosophical statement and vindication of the distinctively spiritual and

peculiar doctrines of the Christian system' ( Marsh in Miller,1971, p. 35). Marsh explicitly states that the methods by which he accomplishes this goal will not be his main concern, but rather 'the key to his system' lies in the distinctions between nature and free-will, and between the understanding and reason. Thus Marsh was, according to Miller (1971), of great assistance to the emerging Transcendentalists in their Emersonian focus on reason and understanding.

When he proclaimed the empire of Locke at an end, he assured the youth of Boston and Cambridge that in revolting against the Understanding in the name of Reason they were launching upon the wave of the future. Within a matter of months, Margaret Fuller was putting into her journals her great veneration of Coleridge, 'a conviction that the benefits conferred by him on this and future ages are as yet incalculable.' Though it is significant of the entire tone of the Coleridgean cult that she had to add, 'to the unprepared he is nothing, to the prepared, everything' (Miller,1971, p. 35).

Other New England Transcendentalists were to sing the praises of Coleridge, but with some reservations. George Ripley (1802-1880) led the new Transcendental group in producing a respectable series of translations of the new literature of Europe. Ripley acknowledged 'signal defects and imperfections' in Coleridge's works, yet found him quite valuable to two classes of persons; those on whom 'the light of spiritual truth is beginning to dawn' and those who have on their own acquired 'a living system of spiritual faith.'

The former will find the elements of congenial truth profusely scattered over his pages; the latter will be able, from their own experience, to construct a systematic whole with the massive fragments which are almost buried

beneath the magnificent confusion of his style. But Mr. Coleridge cannot satisfy the mind whose primary want is that of philosophical clearness and precision. He is the inspired poet, the enthusiastic prophet of a spiritual philosophy; but the practical architect, by whose skill the temple of faith is to be restored, cannot be looked for in him (Ripley in Miller, 1971, p. 298).

Ripley undoubtedly looked to the Transcendentalists to remedy this lack, although some of his criticisms of Coleridge could be applied, to a new degree to Emerson, who was himself seldom the systematic, formal philosopher. This may have been all the more reason for Emerson to identify with Coleridgean philosophy.

The New England Transcendentalist Theodore Parker (1810-1860) likewise noted certain faults in Coleridge, including 'lack of both historic and philosophic accuracy ... the utter absence of all proportion in his writings ... his haste, his vanity, prejudice, sophistry, confusion, and opium.' Yet, 'he did great service in New England, helping to emancipate enthralled minds.' In particular, young Trinitarian ministers were 'incited .. to think,' and his *Aids to Reflection* in particular was 'brilliant with the scattered sparks of genius' (Parker in Miller, 1971, p. 487).

The 'signal defects and imperfections' noted by Ripley, and his Christian doctrinal conclusions did not stand in the way of accommodation through a process of selection, especially by Emerson, who took what he found useful, ignored the rest. According to Stephen Prickett (1980):

The essential unity of Coleridge's thought was dismembered by the Victorians, who tended to carry off only such portions as were easy to digest. While the 'faerie and dream' aspects of Coleridge influenced the poets, his philosophy and theology, disastrously severed from his poetry, had become the preserve of the 'Coleridgeans' — a small, if influential group of scholars such as F.D. Maurice

and his Oxford tutor, Julius Hare. Once this divorce between his poetry and philosophy had been achieved, for whatever reason, Coleridge's concept of the Imagination could then be set aside as no more than a dictum of estoric literary criticism (p. 3).

R. H. Blyth<sup>47</sup> accused Coleridge of being sanctimonious in religion, 'unable to free himself from the cruder interpretations of the Christian dogma; that is to say, everything is taken unpoetically and alternates in the most disagreeable and disconcerting manner with Platonism, Pantheism, and Wordsworthianism' (p. 228). Blyth (1942) holds that Wordsworth rarely wallowed in sentimentality or the sop of Coleridge's 'milk and water, wishy-washy' poetry, as illustrated in Wordsworth's:

And 'tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.  
The budding twigs spread out their fan,  
To catch the breezy air;  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there.

or in Coleridge's own:

He prayeth best who loveth best  
The things both great and small,  
For the good god who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

He chides Coleridge at yet another point, bringing up a distinction that further separated him in some ways from Emersonism (pp. 364-65). Wordsworth had expressed the idea that little children can see 'the Heaven which is just under our noses,' and Wordsworth apostrophizes the little child as:

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
thy Soul's immensity;  
Thou best Philosopher, who yet doth keep  
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind \_\_\_\_  
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!  
On whom those truths do rest,  
Which we are toiling all our lives to find!  
Thou, over whom thy immortality  
Broods like the day, a master o'er the slave  
At presence which is not to be put by!

Blyth notes that 'When Coleridge read this, he fairly danced with rage ... to compare him, Coleridge, the real Prophet, the real Seer, the real Philosopher, to a 'six years darling of pigmy size' ... was too absurd, too monstrous!' Such should not have been the case with respect to Emerson, who, like Wordsworth, could see great thoughts in the smallest of places, so to speak.

Returning to the New England Transcendentalists, this section would not be complete without a few words on Henry David Thoreau, who like Emerson, had absorbed Coleridge's dichotomy of Reason and Understanding. Sultana (1981) sees both similarities and influence.

Aware of the differences between fact and truth, necessity and freedom, he was constantly trying to bridge the gap. More mystical than either Emerson or Coleridge, he sought to gain and then to express in figurative language, contacts with the level of spirit. Some of his finest writing depends upon his attempts to convey these almost ineffable experiences in symbolic language (p.124).

Obviously Thoreau was influenced by both Emerson and Coleridge.

Sultana also points out that Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience' (1849) was

based upon the Coleridgean distinction between lower and higher levels of conduct and insight. In his *Aids to Reflection*, Coleridge attacked Paley's ethics in *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*. Thoreau also shared Coleridge's objection to the fact that Paley based his moral calculus on expediency rather than on moral insight (pp.124-25). Sultana sees more of the influence that Coleridge left on Thoreau.

Thoreau took from Coleridge ideas of the union of man and nature, empiricism and idealism, and of Reason as man's means for apprehending the spiritual. Coleridge was of major importance to Thoreau: 'As Beer says of Coleridge that his requirement was to be at a remove from himself to attain a double vision, so Miller and Cavell find this in Thoreau' (Sultana, p.125). In an early journal entry of 1839, Thoreau wrote of the poet:

Nature will not speak through him but along with him ... He then poeticizes when he takes a fact out of nature into spirit. He speaks without referring to time or place. His thought is one world, hers another. He is another Nature \_\_ Nature's brother ... Each publishes the other's truth (quoted in Sultana, p. 126).

Sultana (1981) remarks that the differences between Coleridge and Thoreau grew up from their transatlantic background. The American frontier, the half-settled continent, and the virgin land adopted different symbols and myths, and produced a different response to nature.

Thoreau's fine essay 'Walking' ... caught the mood of westering as of going to the old land. Thoreau was profoundly shocked by the inhuman power of brute nature at the top of Mt. Ktaadn. He sought a middle landscape, where instead of blowing his oaten stop, he hoed beans. While closer to Wordsworth than to Coleridge in attitudes toward Nature, still, the Americans saw their nature as national destiny (p.126).

### Emerson on Coleridge: Journals and Lectures

To better fill in the framework established in the preceding review of critical commentary on Emerson/Coleridge connexions, as well as broach new avenues of connexion, Emerson's own commentary in his journals and lectures is especially illuminating. The first mention of Coleridge came in 1820; Emerson was familiar with Coleridge from the *Edinburgh Review* articles: 'For a definition and description of poetry which is very good, see Edinburgh review LVI no. LXXVIII, [August 1817] on 'Coleridge's Literary Life and Opinions' (JMN,I, p. 225). At this time, Emerson seemed to be more interested in poetry as he was reading other articles dealing with modern poetry published in the *Edinburgh*. In the same year Emerson quoted lines from Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner':

'It fanned his cheek, it waved his hair  
Like a meadow gale in Spring  
It mingled strongly with his fear  
Yet it felt like a welcoming' [Coleridge,'The Rime of the  
Ancient Mariner,' V, 456-459] (JMN,I, p. 226).

Emerson was well aware of the attacks made in the *Edinburgh* on the Lake Poets; Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. 'Mr. Southey, Mr. Coleridge, and Mr. Wordsworth have gained less honour than ridicule by their poetry not because it wanted genius but it wanted nature ... the poetry was too puerile for the taste of their northern countrymen' (JMN,I, p. 282). In an entry in his journal later in February 1848, Emerson pointed to Wordsworth's dissatisfaction with what had been published in the *Edinburgh* as it 'wrote what would tell and what would sell.' Wordsworth had felt that the *Edinburgh* had changed 'its whole tone of literary criticism



from the time when a letter was written to the Editor by Coleridge. After that, the *Edinburgh* had greatly more breadth. Mr. Wordsworth had had the Editor's answer' (JMN,X, p. 227).

After the publication of James Marsh's edition of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* (Burlington, 1829), Emerson wrote, 'Quantum scimus sumus,' an alteration of Coleridge's 'quantum sumus scimus.' In the same year, Emerson mentioned the following in his journal:

v. John Smith contemporary of Jeremy Taylor-  
Huber on Bees and Ants  
Kirby and Spence \_\_ Introduction to Etymology  
'Works of Derham Niewentiet and Lyonet' Aids to R. p.147  
Bayle \_\_ Article. *Simonides*  
Prompnatius Treatise *De facto* A. to R. p.148  
H. More's Antidote to Atheism  
Dr Donne's Sermons \_\_ (JMN,III, pp.164-5)

Though Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* is mentioned twice, the whole list had its source in Coleridge.<sup>48</sup>

In an entry to his journal on 19 November 1830, Emerson seemed to adopt Coleridge's definition of Talent and Genius and he called on his contemporaries to take up the distinction.

'Tis a good definition Coleridge gives in the 'Friend,' of Talent, that it pursues by original and peculiar means vulgar conventional ends. Tis dexterity intellectual applied to the purpose of getting power and wealth. Genius on the contrary finds its end in the means. It concerns our peace to learn this distinction as quick as we can ' (EJ, p.74).

In his criticism, Emerson supported his views from Coleridge: 'I read Shakespeare ... His poetry never halts, but has what Coleridge defines Method, viz. progressive arrangement' (JMN,III, p.299). In another entry,

Emerson wrote: 'Coleridge regards the cultivated women to be the depositions and guardians of English undefiled, and Luther commends that accomplishment in his wife, in German' (JMN,VI, p.188). Writing also about women, Emerson quoted Coleridge's *Table Talk* 23 July 1827 [Works,1853,VI, p.294]: 'The Desire of the man is for the woman; the desire of the woman is rarely other than for the desire of the man' (JMN,VI, p.188).

On the idea of Genius, Emerson equated it with originality. When an individual exposed himself to the writings of men of genius, he reads his own rejected thoughts. 'Humanity characterizes the very highest class of men of genius' (JMN,VI, p.196). The man of genius inspires other men with an enormous confidence in their own powers (p.197). In the 'Genius' lecture delivered in January 1839, Emerson recalled Coleridge's praise of Shakespeare that he is 'unlike his contemporaries as he is unlike us' (EL,II, p. 80). In other words, Shakespeare is a genius. Referring to Coleridge's note in his *Biographia Literaria*, Emerson quoted Coleridge saying: 'profound sensibility is doubtless one of the components of Genius, but then a more than usual rapidity of association, more than usual power of passing from thought to thought and image to image is a component equally essential; and in the modification of each by the other, Genius itself consists' (JMN,VI, p.196; a reference to Chapter II, vol. I of the two volume Boston 1834 edition in Emerson's library).

Emerson's visit with Coleridge was as we have seen somewhat disappointing. Because of Coleridge's religious conservatism, he saw him as deficient in religious truth, as lacking in the first philosophy, something that Emerson was coming to realize he would find only in his own heart. This theme is emphasized in the following journal entry. Referring to Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth, Emerson says:

To be sure not one of these is a mind of the very first class,

but what the intercourse with each of these suggests is true of intercourse with better men, that they never fill the ear \_\_\_ fill the mind \_\_\_ no, it is an idealized portrait which always we draw of them ... Especially are they all deficient ... \_\_\_ in different degrees but all deficient \_\_\_ in insight into religious truth. They have no idea of that species of moral truth which I call the first philosophy (EJ, p.115).

Emerson believes that a writer appeared to be more advantageous 'in the pages of another man's book than in his own: Coleridge, Wordsworth, Schelling are conclusive when Channing or Carlyle or Everett quotes them, but if you take up their own books then instantly they become not lawgivers but modest peccable candidates for your appreciation' (JMN,V, p. 29). Emerson was aware of Coleridge's plagiarism when De Quincey made the charge in *Trait's Edinburgh* magazine on 1 September 1834 for including a translation from Schelling without acknowledgement of debt to Schelling (JMN,V, p. 59).

That Coleridge spoke ab intra not ab extra, Emerson thought distinguished him from others. It was of no use to preach to the individual simply ab extra because he could do it himself. Drawing examples from Christianity, Emerson alluded to Jesus who 'preaches always ab intra,' \_\_\_ that distinguishes him from others; 'the miracle lies in that and that includes the miracle' (JMN,VII, p.157). Moreover, Emerson admired Coleridge's 'individual peculiarities': 'Dr. Paffrey remarked at Cambridge when we talked of the manners of Wordsworth and Coleridge ... [they] lived in the best society yet each had the strongest individual peculiarities' (JMN,V, p.62).

It seems that one of these peculiarities is Coleridge's bravery when he talked \_\_\_ he was a believer in himself: 'Make much of your own place. The stars and celestial awning that overhang our simple Concord talks and discourses are as brave as those that were visible to Coleridge as he talked ... ' (JMN,V, p.83). It is the individual who seizes the opportunities wherever

he is and makes much from what is available to him in that particular place. Coleridge also set out 'to idealize the actual, to make an epopea out of English institutions ... replete with life' (JMN,V, p.106). More importantly, Coleridge 'appreciated Man and saw the nullity of circumstances' (p. 202).

Joel Porte indicates that despite the failure of Emerson's pilgrimage to Highgate in August of 1833, Coleridge's writings assumed great importance in the years immediately following his return from Europe. 'Emerson's notion about easting himself was, it seems, linked for him with the crucial Coleridgean distinction between fancy and imagination.'<sup>49</sup> Porte supports this with the following 1 August 1835 journal entry by Emerson: 'The Fancy aggregates; the Imagination animates. The Fancy takes the world as it stands and selects pleasing groups by apparent relations. The imagination is Vision.'

Coleridge appealed to Emerson's thoughts. Despite Coleridge's religious 'failings,' in the eyes of Emerson, the latter found that such views did not necessarily vitiate Coleridge's critical faculties.

I told Miss Peabody last night that Mr. Coleridge's churchmanship is thought to affect the value of his criticism. I do not feel it. It is a harmless freak and sometimes occurs in a wrong place, as when he refuses to translate some alleged blasphemy in Wallenstein. Some men are affected with hemorrhage of the nose; it is of no danger but unlucky when it befalls where it should not as at a wedding or in the rostrum. (EJ, p.155).

Emerson's high regard for Coleridge can be read in his aphorism that Coleridge's italics 'are italics of the mind' (JMN,VII, p. 252). According to Emerson, Coleridge speaks to the mind of the individual appealing to his reasoning; Coleridge's Friend is of the 'highest moral class' (p.129). This comment came on 3 November 1838, a few years after Coleridge's death

when Emerson returned to his writings to studying *The Friend* and the *Biographia Literaria*. Emerson also found Coleridge using metaphors changing 'the environmental images into metaphoric constructs.'<sup>50</sup> By accomplishing this, Coleridge reached towards a reconciliation between Verstand and Vernunft, individual and universal, parts and whole, and the objective and the subjective (Neufeldt, 1982, p.146).

In an entry in his journal in 1841, Emerson wrote: 'How solitary is Coleridge and how conspicuous, not so much from his force as from his solitude' (JMN,VII, p. 431). 'How much died with Coleridge' (p. 468). In the same year, Emerson linked Coleridge to Carlyle as two names who had 'independent criticism' (JMN,VIII, p. 38).

Obviously Emerson found Coleridge of such importance that he associated him with Shakespeare, Dante, and Spenser because each one had 'the unerring instinct with which like an arrow to its mark the new born genius always flies to the geniuses' (JMN,VIII, p.178). More significant is that one of the qualities that determine man's connexion and place is whether he reads Shakespeare, Goethe, Swedenborg, Coleridge, Wordsworth (JMN,VII, p.127). Not only did Emerson associate Coleridge with great poets but also linked him even sometimes with philosophers like Hume; 'What profits Coleridge or Hume?' (JMN,X, p.146). Though he praised Coleridge's genius as a poet, Emerson preferred not to write a poem like 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' and advised those who would like to write poetry to evade 'modern antiques' like Landor's 'Penicles' or Goethe's 'Iphigenia' or Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' because, in Emerson's words, they were 'paste jewels' (JMN,VIII, p. 400).

Addressing his audience at St. George's Society in Montreal on 23 April 1852, Emerson praised England for its being a good place and a good race. Emerson asked his audience to witness Scott, Coleridge, Byron and

Wordsworth (JMN,X, p. 508). Emerson observed Coleridge's capability of leaving an effective impact on his auditors and changing the mood of thinking from one state to another: 'Those eastern story tellers whose only tongues turn day into night, and night to day, who lap their hearers in a sweet drunkenness of fancy so that they forget the taste of meat. Coleridge too could dissipate the solar system to a thin transparency' (p.282).

Like other composers of poetry, says Emerson, Coleridge tried to 'prove' that he had written the verses after being published. His attempt to 'prove' that he had anything to do these verses seems inappropriate because they became 'so entirely the World's property' and 'the human race' took charge of it as they spread from one land to another (JMN,XI, p. 340). Emerson's criticism of Coleridge stemmed from the perspective in which he saw his present age. Emerson adopted Coleridge's view in his *Table Talk*: 'This is not a logical age. A Friend latently gave me some political pamphlets of the time of Charles I and Cromwellate. In them the premises are frequently wrong, but the deductions almost always legitimate; whereas in the writings of the present day the premises are commonly sound but the conclusions false. [Coleridge Table Talk,I p.40]' (JMN, XII, p. 39).

Emerson saw Coleridge's failure as coming from his being a devotedly 'Catholic' man of ideas. In an entry in his journal in 1855, Emerson wrote, 'The very failure of Coleridge, a man of vast Catholic mind all related with a hunger for his ideas with vast attempts, but most inadequate performings, failing to accomplish any one masterpiece, seems to mark the closing of an era' (JMN,XIII, pp. 392-93). Furthermore, Coleridge's philosophy did not spring from English origins but was imported from Germany; therefore, it had an esoteric impact on the national level: 'She [England] occasionally produces an artist, like Turner, or a philosopher like Coleridge, nor a naturalist like Brown, or Owen, but they breathe not the English atmosphere,

but are strangers there, and import their thoughts from Germany: nor do they exert any adequate influence on the national spirit' (JMN,XIV, p.68). Nevertheless there is a positive inclination in England in which she surpasses all, that is, the application of means to ends. In the case of Coleridge, his original power was accompanied with 'assimilating power.' Emerson valued Coleridge's learning and quotations as much, or possibly more than his 'original suggestions.' If he had been given 'inspiring lessons, imaginative poetry' he would possess them and would be guided by them (JMN, XVI, p. 67).

Emerson answered his own question, what is the difference between originality and quotation? We 'all quote' whether by delight, by proclivity, or by necessity, there is an enormous amount of debt to the predecessors. Quotations are made from arts, books, sciences, customs, laws and religions. When 'one quotes so well that the person quoted is a gainer', it is an honour and celebration of the author. Emerson gave Coleridge an example (JMN,XVI, p. 82). But by late 1872, Coleridge's transcendental mind 'is not only ungenial but unintelligible' (JMN, XVI, p. 272).

### Coleridge in Early Lectures

#### 1833-1838 Lectures

Emerson's lectures reflect the various sources from which he prepared them and reveal his general reading in Plutarch and other classical authors, English writers such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Pope, and his favorite 'new lights' such as Goethe, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the local Swedenborgians; but above all, Coleridge (EL,I, p.4).

In one of his early lectures Emerson noted that Coleridge, only recently deceased, was not popular in his lifetime, yet, in Emerson's opinion, 'a man

whose memory may comfort the philanthropist as he showed genius and depth of thought to be still possible which but for this solitary scholar we might think not genial and native to our age' (EL,I, p. 377). Though Coleridge's learning was 'not of the robust and universal character as that of the famous scholars of England, such as Bentley and Gibbon,' Emerson finds Coleridge to have been 'a person of great reading and a passion for learning that made him a profound scholar in books of a philosophical character' (EL,I, p.377).

In 'The Uses of Natural History' delivered before the Natural History Society at the Masonic Temple on 4 November 1833, Emerson explained the distinction between thought and matter. The idea that thought and speech exist supposes a nature totally distinct from the material world. On the basis of this, direct and literal modes of speech, substance and form, wrong and right, dishonest and honest, are found to be metaphors; because Nature is an image or a metaphor of the human mind, 'The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter face to face in a glass. 'The Visible world,' it has been said, 'and the relations of its parts is the dial plate of the invisible one.' Trying to make his explanation clearer, Emerson quoted from Coleridge's 'The Destiny of Nations: A Vision':

For all that meets, the bodily sense I deem  
Symbolical, one mighty alphabet  
For infant minds (EL,I, p. 25).

In 'Michael Angelo Buonaroti' on 5 February 1835, Emerson raised the question, 'What is Beauty?' 'Like Truth,' he answers, 'it is an ultimate aim of the human being.' It never lay within the limits of the Understanding. Emerson emphasised that Beauty might be produced or felt but never defined. Quoting from Coleridge's *Table Talk*, Emerson asserted that



Beauty, 'il pui nell' uno' \_\_ meaning 'the many in one or Multitude in Unity' (EL,I, p.101). Addressing the same topic on beauty in 'The Eye and Ear' on 27 December 1837, Emerson accused those who think that they know what is beautiful of being only 'superficial judges' (EL,II, p. 262). Elaborating on his topic, Emerson referred to Spenser's Ode to beauty where he announced that the 'Soul makes the body' not the popular doctrine of the day that 'the body makes the Soul.' Then Emerson reached out for Coleridge's *Table Talk* II to support his idea:

So every spirit as it is most pure  
And hath in it the more of heavenly light  
So it the fairer body doth procure  
To habit in and it more fairly sight  
With cheerful grace and amiable sight  
For of the soul the body form doth take  
For soul is form and doth the body make (EL,II, p.264).

In 'Martin Luther' given on 12 February 1835, one finds Emerson citing and quoting passages from Coleridge's *The Friend*, I, pp.300-01;(EI,I, p.133) and from *Table Talk* (EL,I, pp.133, 134,135, 136,137, 139,141). Emerson praises Coleridge for his interest in all science, for being a Platonist, that is, 'of the most Universal school,' for taking 'the most enlarged and reverent views of man's nature.' Emerson praises him for his regard for every man as sacred, a Temple of Deity:

An aristocrat in his politics, this most republican of all principles secured his unaffected interest in lowly and despised men the moment a religious sentiment or philosophical principle appeared. Witness his referential remembrance of George Fox; Behem; De Thoyras; of his poor miner; his private soldier of the Parliament, from who, drew the sublime passage in the *Friend*; and of so many of his poetic persons (EL,I, p. 378).

Emerson finds Coleridge's 'true merit' not in the role of poet or philosopher but as critic, one possessing 'extreme subtlety of discrimination,' a 'living dictionary surpassing all men in the fineness of distinctions' (p. 378). The most valuable work of Coleridge lies, according to Emerson, in his 'survey of the moral, intellectual, and social world as it interests us at this day, and has selected a great number of conspicuous points therein and has set himself to find their true position and bearings' (p. 378). Emerson praises Coleridge especially for his fine distinctions 'the all-important distinction between Reason and Understanding, the distinction of an Idea and Conception; between Genius and Talent; between Fancy and Imagination; of the nature and end of Poetry; of the Idea of a State' (EJ,I, p. 379).

These are not mere academic distinctions for out of them 'comes light and heat' as they 'light the road of common duty' and 'arm the working hand with skill', filling the mind with 'emotions of awe and delight at perception of its own depth' (EL, I, p. 379). Emerson finds in Coleridge's Reason a 'sublime confidence in Man.' *Biographia Literaria*, said Emerson, had a unique characteristic in 'the importance and variety of questions treated.'

Though he was acquainted with Coleridge's view of the types of Reason, Emerson fabricated a new type, 'Divine Reason' — which made Coleridge, says Emerson, regard every man as 'the most sacred object in the Universe, the Temple of Deity.' If that was a criticism or a commentary by Emerson, it was one consistent with his own view.

Emerson finds Coleridge's book *Biographia Literaria* to be 'the best body of criticism in the English language,' praising it for 'the clearness with which the truth is pointed and the beauty that adorns the whole road' (EL,I, p.379). Emerson views Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* as a useful book but, in his own opinion, the least valuable. Emerson sees special merit in *The Friend*, *Essay on Method*, *Church and State*, and a few of his poems.

Emerson takes Coleridge to task for his stooping to show censure and contempt 'at the low state of philosophical and ethical studies in England' on the grounds that he should be concerned with the future and for the wise, not for the unenlightened rabble. Emerson finds Coleridge's 'excessive bigotry to the Constitution of the Church of England' separate from 'the general tendency and texture of his philosophy,' so that it will 'never disturb the student who is accustomed to watch his moods of thought and will skip the unnecessary pages' (EJ,I, p. 380). After his death, Emerson writes: 'But death hath now set his seal upon him, and already his true character and greatness begin to be felt. Already he quits the throng of his contemporaries and takes his lofty station in that circle of sages whom he loved: Heraclitus, Hermes, Plato, Giordano Bruno, St. Augustine' (EL,I, p. 380).

According to Emerson, Coleridge's unpopularity was attributed to 'the abstrusness of the speculations in which he delighted and which tasked the intellect too solely ...' (EL,I, p. 380). In addition, Coleridge indulged much in expressions of contempt at the low state of philosophical and ethical studies in England; and especially 'at the arrogance and unscrupulousness of the periodical critical journals.' Emerson concluded his evaluation of Coleridge by stating that 'the kindling eloquence with which both in speech and in writing this old man eloquently masters our minds and hearts, promises him an enduring dominion' (p. 380). This last statement is a clear acknowledgement of Coleridge's enormous impact.

Emerson praised Coleridge for his pursuit of higher philosophy and meaning. Emerson describes a class of writers concerned mainly with the discoveries of economists 'in the apparent world' who aim chiefly at the 'reign of Common Sense,' in contrast to those such as Coleridge who seek to 'reinstall Man in the Real' and 'the reign of Reason.' While the former class aim at nothing higher than vulgar Utilitarianism, which Emerson

describes as political or external freedom and helping the poor man to ways of earning a living, 'a small class of writers of which Coleridge was one, sought to get man inward freedom also, and the bread of life ... and their spirit has now diffused itself more or less over pulpits, parliaments, magazines, and newspapers' (EL,II, p. 67).

Even in brief encounters and disagreements Coleridge stimulated. Emerson, in 1838-1842 lecture, praises Coleridge's 'excellent Essay on Wit' in which he cites Aristotle's definition of the ridiculous as 'what is out of time and place, without danger.' Emerson takes exception to this definition, leading him to his own impressions on the subject, eventually to philosophical dimensions involving 'Man in nature' and 'Reason,' two of his favorite themes (EL, III, p.123). Coleridge here and elsewhere acts as a catalyst.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THOMAS CARLYLE

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Scottish historian and social critic, was especially influential as a philosophical moralist of the early Victorian age. He wrote against a background of the Industrial Revolution, attacking such abuses as Corn Laws which kept grain prices up and out of the reach of the poor, and the Poor Laws which confined the poor to workhouses or, in the words of Carlyle, 'Bastilles.' His *French Revolution* (1837) and other historical works featured polemics and drama as means of attacking various social evils. Carlyle dramatically portrayed the world as if it needed a rebellion against materialism on every level — the individual should worship gods instead of seeking after money and sex. Carlyle himself said, 'The Book is one of the savagest written for several centuries, it is a book written by wild man, a man disunited from the fellowship of the world he lives in.'<sup>1</sup> The use of the present tense added to the dramatization of events.

Carlyle's Calvinistic background and his training in German Idealism underlay his attack on materialistic philosophy, social decay, and the attendant weakening of social ties and religious faith. More a visionary moralist than a practical reformer or leader of social movements, he espoused the importance of duty, work, reverence, even renunciation. His *Sartor Resartus* (1833) viewed the material world as a temporary mask of a permanent spiritual reality, a view obviously consistent with that of Emersonism. It should however be noted that Carlyle early lost interest in his Transcendental concerns and focused more on the 'practical,' or social evils.

Thus Carlyle excoriated the privileged classes in England in his *Past*

*and Present* (1843). The industrial bourgeoisie naturally did not take kindly to his depiction of them as 'Mammons' out to protect their own special interests, driven mainly by profit and uncontrolled competition. According to the industrialists, an engagement in the materialistic progress means an increase in the wealth which consequently would result in the spread of the Christian morality. In Carlyle's opinion, the poor, brutalized and starving, would eventually vent their uncontrollable rage on the oppressors, as happened in the French Revolution. Although very much concerned with socioeconomic conditions, he was at the same time a visionary mystic who viewed causal roots as spiritual and moral, unlike the economic doctrine of Marx or the socioanthropological mechanisms of modern professional sociology. For this reason he is little read today in academic curricula which favor the formal technical analysis found in economics, anthropology, sociology, and the like.

Emerson met Carlyle for the first time in 1833 when neither of them was well known. The two men corresponded frequently during their lifetimes. They met a second time in 1847 and 1848, and a third time in 1872 and 1873, when Emerson was lecturing in England. Because their chronologies run very much concurrently (see Appendix B), they had a far greater opportunity to influence and communicate with each other than the other authors we have discussed. In particular, correspondence between the two men was voluminous and had been preserved for posterity. It indicates that, in spite of grave differences in temperament and even ideology, they were nevertheless strongly attached to one another, each serving as spokesman for the other in England and America, respectively.

Carlyle was known in America by 1829 when he published his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in Boston. Emerson had begun to read Carlyle's anonymous essays at least as early as 1827. Whether anonymously or otherwise, Carlyle moved Emerson's friends to study

German literature and language, and Emerson commented in one of his journals: 'I am cheered and instructed by this paper on Corn Law Rhymes in the *Edinburgh* by my Germanick new-light writer whoever he might be. He gives us confidence in our principles. He assures the truthlover everywhere of sympathy' (JMN, IV, p. 45).

Carlyle was in fact unknown to Emerson by name until late 1832. As early as 14 November 1832, Emerson admired Carlyle's use of the clothes metaphor: 'I go to the Atheneum and read that 'man is not a clothes-horse,' [a reference to Carlyle's 'Goethe's Works' *Foreign Quarterly Review*, x (August 6, 1832)] and come out and meet in pearl St. my young friend who, I understand, cuts his own clothes, and who little imagines that he points a paragraph to Thomas Carlyle' (JMN, IV, pp.59-60). In 1835 Emerson wrote Benjamin P. Hunt about Carlyle: 'My friends think I exaggerate his merit but he seems to me one of the best, and since Coleridge is dead, I think, the best thinker of the age' (L, I, p. 432).

After reading Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, Emerson wrote:

I propose to myself to read Schiller of whom I bear much. What shall I read? His Robbers? Oh no, ... what then, his aesthetics? Oh no, that is only his struggle with Kantian metaphysics. His poetry? Oh no, for he was a poet only by study. His histories? and so with all his productions, they were fermentations by which his mind was working itself clear, they were the experiments by which he got his skill and the fruit, the bright gold of all was \_\_\_ Schiller himself (JMN, IV, pp. 54-55).

Then Emerson quoted Carlyle's commentary on Schiller: 'His [Schiller's] work has on the whole furnished nourishment to the more exalted powers of our nature; the sentiments and images which he has shaped and uttered, tend in spite of their alloy to elevate the soul to a nobler pitch ... Life of

Schiller; pp. 35-36' (JMN, IV, p. 55).

When Emerson sailed for Europe on Christmas Day in 1832, he had already read Carlyle's 'Signs of the Times,' 'Characteristics,' and a number of Carlyle's essays on German writers. He intended to meet the man who had brought to England and America a comprehensive and inspired view of this new literature and philosophy. When he visited the Carlyles at Craigenputtock, he found Carlyle 'good and wise and pleasant and ... never saw more amiableness than in his countenance' (JMN, IV, pp. 219-20).

Emerson noted that Carlyle dwelt with peace, faith and truth — these 'beautify him.' He admired Carlyle's stories as well as his philosophic phrases (JMN, IV, p. 220). Yet he felt that Carlyle had little 'insight into religious truth' (L,I, pp. 394-95). Waiting at Liverpool and being informed that no sailing was expected on 2 September 1833, Emerson expressed his deep emotion at parting with Carlyle: 'Ah me. Mr. Thomas Carlyle I would give a gold pound for your wise company ... Ah we would spend the hour. Ah I would rise above myself' (JMN, IV, p. 82). On that gloomy night at Liverpool he found himself longing for Carlyle's conversation and regretted having left 'his idol' whom he considered a genius (p. 82).

Recalling Carlyle's company, Emerson jotted down Carlyle's view on man and on Unitarianism. According to Carlyle, Emerson wrote, man should worship and revere anybody who could show him more truth. Regarding Unitarians, Carlyle believed that they 'were a tame liminary people who were satisfied with their sociolistic system and never made great attainments — incapable of depth of sentiment' (JMN, IV, p. 83). Trying to elaborate on Carlyle's view, Emerson called Calvinism, Unitarianism, as well as every form of paganism an 'imperfect version of the moral law' (p. 83). Emerson believed that the 'virtue of the intellect consists in preferring work to trade'. Making a distinction between those who try to monopolize and convert their



genius in order to be popular and 'sell' their trade, such as Everett, and Brougham, Emerson associated Carlyle with Allston and Wordsworth: 'Allston, Wordsworth, Carlyle, are smit with the divine desire of Creation, and scorn the auctioneers' (JMN, V, p. 22).

In an entry in his journal in April 1834, Emerson pointed to some rules of rhetoric that he will include in a chapter in his book, which 'Carlyle should read' (JMN, IV, p. 273). "In good prose (said Schlegel?) every word should be understood.' Its place in the sentence should make its emphasis. Write solid sentences and you can even spare punctuation' (p. 273).

By late 1834 Emerson had read *Sartor Resartus* in *Fraser's Magazine*. He viewed it as a philosophical poem and thanked Carlyle for writing it in his first letter (May 1834) to the 'divinely self-centered' scholar. Emerson now put Carlyle among his own idols. Like Milton and Shakespeare, Carlyle inspired and taught him that his, Emerson's, inspirations were his own, and consistent with his theme of self-reliance (JMN, IV, p. 274). Like Goethe and Swedenborg, Carlyle taught him to obey his own instincts (JMN, V, p. 292) and consistent with Goethe and Plato suggested that the secret of writing lay in 'what we call the unfolding an idea' (JMN, IV, p. 289). Emerson hoped that Carlyle would come to America and speak. 'Come and found a new Academy that shall be church and school and parnassus, as a true Poet's house should be' (CEC, p. 110). Emerson praised Carlyle's unifying philosophy and poetry: 'As to Carlyle, he is an exemplification of Novalis's maxim concerning the union of Poetry and Philosophy. He has married them, and both are the gainers, who has done so before as truly and as well? *Sartor Resartus* is a philosophical poem' (JMN, IV, p. 302).

Emerson reacted against Alexander Everett who criticized Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* in his review which appeared in the *North American Review*, (XLI [Oct. 1835]: p. 454): 'Charles says to read Carlyle in the North American Review is like seeing your brother in jail and Alexander Everett is

the sheriff that put him in' (JMN,V, p. 97). Moreover, Emerson praised Carlyle for his criticism:

Carlyle's talent I think lies more in his beautiful criticism in seizing the idea of the man or the time ... He seems to me most limited in his chapter, or speculation in which they regard him as most original and profound \_\_ I mean in his Religion and Immortality from the removal of Time and Space. He seems merely to work with a foreign thought not to live in himself(JMN,V, p. 111-12).

Emerson also thinks that Carlyle, like other intellectual writers, focuses upon the truth itself. A man devoted to his work, Carlyle tried to communicate what he really knows: 'I am afraid that the brilliant writers very rarely feel the deepest interest in truth itself ... He [Carlyle] is certainly dedicated to his book; to the communication and the form of that he knows' (JMN,V, pp.173-74).

Emerson noted further that not every one is capable of reading Carlyle: 'It needs a well read, variously-informed man, to read Carlyle from his infinite allusion.' Carlyle has the novelty of critical analysis in English literature; first, 'his ready appeal to the unalterable laws of Nature' ought to be recognized and second, 'the scope of his mind which is like nothing but the cap of an observatory commanding an entire horizon \_\_ the earth below, the heaven above \_\_' (JMN, XII, p. 169).

Emerson also called Carlyle 'a fruit of the 19th century in London,' a man 'cultured by Germany,' 'Delighting in strength,' and had 'Humor and Poetic Skill.' Regarding his style, Emerson remarked that Carlyle became antagonistic to the existing conventions; 'The vice is that the parts are not duly subordinated to the aid and effect of the whole' (JMN, XII, p. 170). In an exemplary metaphor, Emerson expressed his opinion of Carlyle's style: 'We

travel on an errand of weight through a South American Grove, where serpents interweave acres into solid mats of vegetation' (p. 171). But there are places where the reader is 'cloyed with richness and where the plainest statement would be worth more than all commentary.' No writer could show an equal acquaintance with Carlyle of all the sources of the English tongue (p. 171) and none has ever equalled his use of English. He has the power to make 'an irresistible statement, which stands, and which every body remembers and repeats. It is like the new Parrot guns' [Robert P. Parrot invented a new gun which has the advantage of not bursting] (JMN, XV, p. 363).

But Emerson was not entirely content with Carlyle. In December of 1835 he noted in his journal that Carlyle was better at discussion of the ideas of others than 'original speculation' (JMN,V, pp.11-12). A year later, a journal entry statement indicates that Carlyle might not feel 'the deepest interest in truth itself' (JMN,V, p.173). In one of his letters to Carlyle he complained of Carlyle's diction, syntax, and tone, but nevertheless was grateful for Carlyle's stand for Spiritualism.

Men are waiting to hear your Epical Song; and so be pleased to skip those excursive involved glees, and give us the simple air, without the volley of variations. At least in some of your prefaces you should give us theory of your rhetoric. I comprehend not why you should lavish in that spendthrift style of your Celestial truths (CEC, pp. 98-99).

Commenting on the 'Diamond Necklace' published in *Fraser's Magazine*, [XV (Jan.-Feb. 1837): 1-9; 172-89], Emerson pointed to the vagueness in Carlyle's writing: 'The 'Diamond Necklace' too, I doubt not, is the sifted story, the veritable fact, as it fell out, yet so strangely told by a series of pictures, cloud upon cloud ...' but Carlyle himself is related to the whole world, a microcosm for the macrocosm (JMN,V, pp. 290-91). Neither

does Carlyle use the 'written dialect' of the time, which is the means of the scholar, the clergy, and the pamphleteers, nor the 'parliamentary dialect,' which is written by the statesman, the lawyer, and the better newspaper. What Carlyle does employ is the poetic use of the spoken vocabulary, the language of 'splendid conversation' (p. 291). Like other men who have wit and great rhetorical power, Carlyle states the paradox well, 'and overstates it, because he is himself trying how far it will bear him. But the novelty and lustre of his language makes the hearer remember his opinion, and hold him to it long after he has forgotten it' (JMN, X, p. 521). In an entry in his journal in October 1851, Emerson wrote of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* that 'the best service C.[arlyle] has rendered is to Rhetoric, or the Art of Writing' (JMN, XI, p. 448). According to Emerson, Carlyle dropped all the conventions of writing in this book. In every page the reader could feel that there is no barrier that interposes between him and the writer's mind as he talks flexibly high, low, or with emphasis. Sometimes he talks in undertones, then laughs loudly or calmly, then narrates calmly, then hints and so that all the narration becomes lively. Moreover, the reader feels that 'all this living narration is daguerrotyped for you in his page' (JMN, XI, p. 448-49).

Emerson's disappointment with Carlyle was matched by his disappointment with Wordsworth's language and with Coleridge's alliance with orthodox church and state. Although Emerson felt that 'not one of these is a mind of the very first class' (JMN, IV, pp. 78-79), he still ranked them along with the prophets of the age (p. 326). In his lecture 'Aspects of Letters,' Emerson praised Coleridge and referred to Carlyle and Wordsworth as 'men of genius who obey their genius: who write what they know and feel, and who therefore know that their Record is true' (EL, I, p. 381).

Though on opposite sides of the Atlantic, Emerson felt that Carlyle was a very close companion: 'A letter received today from Carlyle rejoiced me.

Pleasant would life be with such companions' (JMN,V, p. 346). When Emerson received a letter from Carlyle, he disclosed his feelings.

Carlyle: how the sight of his handwriting warms my heart at the little post window. How noble it seems to me that his words run out of Nitherdale or London over land and sea, to Weimer, to Rome, to America, to Watertown, to Concord, to Louisville, that they cheer and delight and invigorate me ... how noble that he should trust his eye and ear above London and know that in all England is no man that can see so far behind or forward. ... How noble that alone and unpraised he should still write for he knew not who, and find at last his readers in the valley of the Mississippi, and they should brood on the pictures he had painted and unwind the many colored meanings which he had spun and woven into so rich a web of sentences and domesticate in so many and remote heads the humor, the learning, the philosophy which year by year in summer and in frost this lonely man had lived in the moors of Scotland (JMN, V, p. 358; my emphasis).

Carlyle's impact seems noticeable as he removes the exuberances of the plants and even uproots the 'wooden post' replacing it with 'one of stone' — an allusion to deep and strongly-based principles: Not only does Carlyle 'cleanse' men but also 'knows and loves the heavenly stars and sees fields below with trees and animals; he sees towered cities; royal houses; and poor men's chambers and reports the good; he sees God thro' him telling his generation also that he has beholden his work and sees that it is good. He discharges his duty as one of the World's Scholars' (JMN, V, p. 359).

Thus Carlyle's influence appeared to be all over the world, in Germany, in Italy, in Britain, and in America. It might be seen through his belief in himself, in the intuition coming from God, and in the mission he had as a prophet. Emerson believed he had much in common with Carlyle as 'We shall be children in heart and men in counsel and in act' (JMN, V, p. 454). At

this time, by 1838, Emerson saw Carlyle in himself. However this did not make them identical.

According to Emerson, writing history must follow Carlyle's method, that is, to write 'mystically' not 'precisely' (JMN, IX, p. 172). Emerson noted that an idea always conquers and in history, victory always falls on the right side: '(a doctrine which Carlyle has, as usual, found a fine idiom for, that Right and might go together)' (p. 360). The best thing Carlyle has ever seen is the French Revolution because it has proved that 'there is a God's justice in the Universe' (JMN, X, p. 231). When Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great* was published in America, Emerson wrote:

History of Frederick, infinitely the wittiest book that ever was written, a book that one would think the English people would rise up in mass to thank him for ... and on its own account reading \_\_\_ America would make new treaty extraordinary of joyful grateful delight with England, in acknowledgment of such a book with so many memorable and heroic facts, working directly, too, to practice, \_\_\_ with new heroes, things envoiced before, with a range of thought and wisdom, the largest and most colloquially elastic, that ever was, not so much applying as insculcating to every need and sensibility of a man, so that I do not so much read a stereotype page, I see the eyes of the writer looking into my eyes; ... and with a book that is a Jugment Day, too, for its moral verdict on the men and nations and manners of modern times (JMN, XIV, p. 273) ...

And this book makes no noise. I have hardly seen a notice of it in any newspaper or journal, and you would think there was not such book; but the interior wits and hearts of men take note of it, not the less surely. They have said nothing lately in praise of the air, or of fire, or of the blessing of love, and yet, I suppose, they are sensible of these, and not less of this Book, which is like these (p. 274).

Emerson called Carlyle's book 'the best of all histories' (JMN, XIV, p. 284).

When he reads Frederick, Emerson forgets all Carlyle's faults and forgives him even his stand against Americanism (JMN,XVI, p. 82). Carlyle 'communicates his information always in measure' and plays with his heroes and heroines as if they were puppets — all this presented in such a way that the reader could get the impression that Carlyle is in possession of the entire history (JMN, XV, p. 260).

In his Journal London of 1848, Emerson attributed 'thorough' realism to Carlyle. In his speculation on societies and government, Carlyle is armed with realism (JMN, XIII, p. 468). Carlyle has indicated to Emerson that bad times are coming and 'it would not come in his time. But now it is coming, and the only good he sees in it, is the visible appearance of the gods (JMN, X, p. 249). Unsurprisingly, 'the young people are so eager to see Carlyle. It is like being hot to see the Mathematical or the Greek professor before you have got your lesson' (p. 259). It seems ironic that Emerson was one of the young who was eager to see Carlyle.

In one occasion, Carlyle complained to Emerson that those who read his writings and saw his thought did not put them into practice and follow his teachings. When Carlyle said, 'No man speaks truth to me.' Emerson responded, 'see what a crowd of friends listen to and admire you.' Carlyle said, 'Yes, they come to hear me, and they read what I write, but none of them has the smallest intention of doing these things' (JMN, X, p. 545, my emphasis). Emerson mentioned to Carlyle that he had such followers surrounding him as Richard M. Milnes, Thomas Spedding, George Stovin Venables (1810-1888), Dr Erasmus Alvery Darwin (1804-1881), Frederick Lucas (1812-1855), and others. Nevertheless Carlyle was almost skeptical when he replied, 'May the beneficent gods defend me from ever sympathizing with the like of them!' (p. 546).

Exploring the Emerson/Carlyle connexion is best expedited through

primary sources such as their own letters, journals, and public writings. However, the various expositions of critics on the connexion may prove not only valuable in themselves but serve as guidelines for extracting essential themes from the primary sources. Accordingly, some New England Transcendentalists and modern critics will be looked at preliminary to reviewing the Emerson/Carlyle primary sources.

### New England Transcendentalists and Carlyle

German Transcendentalism was a fountainhead of New England Transcendentalism at a time when few New Englanders read German and when few copies of Kant, Fichte, or Schelling had appeared in the United States. This influence was made possible by Carlyle who in 1827 wrote, in the *Edinburgh Review*, his famous articles on Richter and the state of German literature, followed in 1828 by his essay on Goethe. Emerson presented these and other works as 'Carlyle's Miscellanies' to the American readership (Frothingham, 1965, p.116). Kant became the major source of New England Transcendentalism through the translations provided by the Scottish Romantic Carlyle.

The concept of a higher Reason — a higher mental faculty which enables one to perceive spiritual truth intuitively — was at the core of New England Transcendentalism. Stimulated by post-Kantian philosophy as interpreted by Carlyle and Coleridge, among others, Transcendentalists contended that 'understanding' or the capacity for empirical reasoning was superseded by this higher faculty of Reason.

The Transcendentalists were weak in the genres favored today (poetry, drama, prose fiction), and it is for this reason that *Sartor Resartus* attracted, with its novel-like approach. Buell (1973) points out that Transcendentalists and Carlyle relied, instead, on the conversation, the essay, the sermon, the



literary travelogue or excursion, the catalogue, the diary, and the autobiography. It is this generic problem that kept Carlyle and Emerson in the literary shadow, a literary-political problem in the sense that essay and lecture have only a provisional but hence inevitably an anti-establishment status. Emerson wrote to Carlyle that in the lecture room, 'You may laugh, weep, reason, sing, sneer, or pray, according to your genius' (CEC, p.171).

The liberties in discourse taken by Transcendentalists were their trademark, so to speak. Emerson's reliance on metaphor, paradox, and antithesis rather than on deliberate or well defined exposition, was a style irritating to conservatives. According to Buell (1973), Unitarians 'regarded him as one with Carlyle, rather than with themselves, and the distrust was reciprocated' (p. 113).

Transcendentalists of New England readily admitted the influence of Carlyle. The Transcendentalist James Freeman Clark (1810-1888) cited the influence of Carlyle on the generation of 1830, making for it 'a new heaven and a new earth, a new religion and a new life' (quoted in Buell, p. 43). Theodore Parker (1810-1860) noted that Carlyle's works got reprinted in Boston, diffusing a strong, 'and then also, a healthy influence on old and young' (cited in Miller, 1971, p. 487). Andrew Norton (1786-1853), although hostile to Emerson's commencement address at the Harvard Divinity School, admitted that Carlyle was 'the great object of admiration and model of style,' an idol 'to be publicly worshipped ... for his philosophy' (cited in Miller, p.193).

Carlyle gave the New England Transcendentalists 'morale, self-confidence, and the strength of their developing convictions' (Boller, 1974, p. 54). In fact, *Sartor Resartus* appeared in America (1836) before it did in England through the influence of Emerson. Thoreau viewed Carlyle's writings as 'a gospel' to the young generation.

There is good reason to believe that Carlyle's writings were known in certain quarters long before the American appearance of *Sartor Resartus*. The *Edinburgh Review* was widely read by the American literati from 1820 to 1830. and therefore Carlyle's early essays were read then, and not without interest. Among the essays favorably received at this time were 'Richter,' 'State of German Literature,' and 'Signs of the Times'.<sup>2</sup> Andrew D. Hook stressed that Carlyle was known in America before *Sartor Resartus*.

No periodical, probably not even the native *North American Review*, carried more weight in the American literary and intellectual world than the *Edinburgh Review*. Through his essays in the *Edinburgh*, Carlyle gained as it were immediate entree into the cultural establishment of America. There was, of course, no problem over availability; the *Edinburgh Review* had been reprinted entire in America probably from as early as 1810 or 11.<sup>3</sup>

James Freeman Clarke, a Unitarian minister in Boston, pointed to Carlyle's impact on the young in New England before *Sartor Resartus* (Vance, 1935, p. 375).

Carlyle's focus on social evil fits in well with the reform-minded views of New Englanders of the time. Emerson wrote Carlyle about the 'numberless projects of social reform' and that 'Not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his waistcoat pocket' (Emerson in Boller, 1974, p.100). Carlyle, however, was somewhat dismayed at Emerson's optimism and cheerfulness. An anecdote relates how Carlyle took Emerson through the London slums. Upon concluding their tour, Carlyle turned to Emerson to ask if he still did not believe in a devil. For all that according to Emerson that Carlyle ignored the reforms of Owen, Carlyle was the more down-to-earth of the two.

Edgar Allan Poe<sup>4</sup> was among those who thought that the

Transcendentalists, especially Emerson, were too deeply involved in the transcendent and not conversant enough with the social and other evils of the day. Carlyle expressed an admiration for the *Dial* but felt a 'shudder' at its ignoring of the ugly side of things:

Well, I do believe, for one thing, a man has no right to say to his own generation, turning quite away from it 'Be damned!' It is the whole Past and the whole Future, this same cotton-spinning, dollar-hunting, canting and shrieking, very wretched generation of ours. Come back into it, I tell you (Carlyle in Boller, 1974, p.140).

While somewhat overshadowed by her illustrious contemporary feminist and Transcendentalist Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child was a prolific writer who moved in a circle of Boston intellectuals including Emerson, William Ellery Channing, and Fuller herself. In her 'An Appeal on Behalf of that Class of Americans Called Africans' (1833), Child presented the first significant published attack against slavery in America. It was through Emerson that she came into contact with Carlyle. While not in complete agreement with the mystical qualities of Transcendentalism \_\_ she wished that Emerson would 'descend from his mental stilts' \_\_ Child openly espoused the more practical bent of Carlyle, whom she felt had more universal appeal. In her letter to Carlyle, her comments on *Sartor Resartus* and *The French Revolution* are a fair representation of the reputation Carlyle held among Boston intellectuals and New England Transcendentalists in general.

Last summer, when I was alone in a remote country town, struggling with worldly discouragements, craving sympathy and spiritual food, which none had to bestow \_\_ a friend sent me your Sartor Resartus; which thenceforth was to my soul as sunshine, flowers, and the pure, strengthening breeze ...

I cannot express to you with what delight I have read that unrhymed, unmeasured poem, called the French Revolution. Ralph Waldo Emerson tells me you have little faith in its being recognized by others as a work of genius — that you even doubted whether he would admire it. Yet you, of all men, should have faith that what comes from the free soul speaks to the free; that what comes from the true is at once seen by the true; that when the oracine, in clear calmness, translates the voice of the God, it commands our reverence, and we cannot but yield to it. Assuredly, that French Revolution is a glorious work of art, 'cast silently into everlasting time.' Like those productions of genius, which are the property of universal man, it will be continually reproduced in after ages, weaving itself, like threads of gold, into the fabric of other men's thought.<sup>5</sup>

#### Modern Critics on the Emerson/Carlyle Connexion

In 1828, Carlyle and his wife Jane moved from Whitsuntide to an isolated farm at Craigenputtock in the moorland hills of Dumfriesshire near Templand. From 1828 to 1834 the couple lived in near seclusion, with just occasional trips to Edinburgh. Here at Craigenputtock he received Emerson for the first time.

Carlyle submitted 'Thoughts on Clothes,' a long article, to *Fraser's Magazine*, recalled it, and in 1831 expanded it into *Sartor Resartus*. He could not get it published in England. Emerson thought it a magnificent book, and in the winter of 1835 asked Carlyle for fifty to one hundred copies of the bound serial version, and a Boston publisher agreed to an edition of 500 copies, which were sold out by April 1836. Emerson wrote a glowing preface. Thus the American public was reading Carlyle: 'Carlyle's American friends had done for him what his English friends could not do.'<sup>6</sup>

Carlyle left his impact of ideas and personality on various figures ranging from the Unitarian radical John Stuart Mill to the Coleridgean John

Sterling and even on Tories like Southey and Lockhart. Thackeray once said, 'Tom Carlyle lives in perfect dignity in a little house in Chelsea with a snuffy Scotch maid to open the door, and the best company in England ringing out it.'<sup>7</sup> His disciples and friends, apart from Emerson, in the early 1840s include: Mill, Charles Butler, a fellow radical, Harriet Martineau, publicist and populizer, Thackeray, Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Tennyson, Browning, and Edward Fitzgerald, Arnold, Charles Kingsley, and Guiseppe Mazzini, Goderfo, and Caraignac [prominent political reformers from the continent] (Le Quesne, 1982, p. 56).

H. D. Traill asserted that 'Carlyle is neither political prophet nor ethical doctor but simply a master of literature who lives ... by the art which he despised' (CC,I, p. viii). G. B. Tennyson noted that Carlyle 'survives a staple of the study of Victorian life and literature and as the creator of the most and inventive and dynamic of English prose styles' in our times.<sup>8</sup> Carlyle became not only a public figure but also a sage, a prophet in nineteenth century Victorian society. Earlier reviews of Carlyle are of importance. It was charged that Carlyle was a 'wild Romantic Phoenix out of place in the atmosphere of rational sobriety'.<sup>9</sup> George Saintbury reacted to the 1850 edition of the *Pamphlets* as 'the very gospel of English politics ... a sort of modern Politics in the spirit and tone of which every Englishman should strive to soak and saturate himself'.<sup>10</sup> By the 1880s, says Saintbury, Carlyle reached 'the fossil stage of intellectual existence' (p. 209). Leslie Stephen regarded Carlyle as a teacher who 'belonged to a past generation' and whose opinions had "passed into the domain of history".<sup>11</sup> W. B. Yeats expressed his attitude by declaring that 'To-day he [Carlyle] is as dead as Macpherson's Ossian'.<sup>12</sup> Gerard Hopkins remarked that 'I hate his principles, I burn most that he worships and worship most that he burns'.<sup>13</sup> Just three months after Carlyle's death, Henry James said in the *Atlantic*

*Monthly*: 'Thomas Carlyle is incontestably dead at last, by the acknowledgment of all newspapers. I had ... the pleasure of an intimate intercourse with him when he was an infinitely deader than he is now.'<sup>14</sup> James (1881) viewed Carlyle as a 'man of ideas,' an 'amateur prophet,' exclusively a harlequin in the guise of Jeremiah, a writer who 'valued truth and good as a painter does his pigments, not for what they are in themselves, but for the effects they lend themselves to.' Such gifts as he had for 'scenic effect and color would not have pushed him to his melancholy 'latter-day drivell' had it not been for those disciples who stimulated his vanity and made him feel himself as god' (pp. 596, 600, 603, 608). These disciples looked to Carlyle's ideas, which were influenced by German thinking, with great enthusiasm.

Carlyle began his study of German in 1819 and his next ten years were largely literary.<sup>15</sup> *Sartor Resartus* was the capstone of this effort. Henry James (1883) linked Emerson and Carlyle as two historical figures whose 'emotions, ... discussions, ... interests, ... illusions belong to a past which is already remote.'<sup>16</sup> Carlyle expressed his admiration for the great genius and spirit of his American friend; in a letter in December 1837, Carlyle wrote:

My friend! you know not what you have done for me there [in 'The American Scholar' address]. It was long decades of years that I had heard nothing but the infinite jingling and jabbering, and inarticulate battering and searching, and my soul had sunk down sorrowful and said there is no articulate speaking than any more, and thou art solitary among stranger creatures; and to, out of the West comes a clear utterance, already recognizable as a man's voice, and I have a kinsman and brother; God be thanked for it! I could have wept to read that speech; the clear high melody of it went tingling through my heart; I said to my wife, 'There, woman!' ... My brave Emerson (CEC, pp. 173-74).

Earlier in February, Carlyle told Emerson that he is 'the only man in America'

who has set himself down 'to follow his own path, and do the work with his own will prescribes for him' — an indication of Emerson's self-reliance. Carlyle's attitude toward Emerson was, as James (1883) put it, 'an eminently hospitable one.' In another letter written in 1850, Carlyle said, 'The rock-strata, miles deep, unite again; and the two poor souls are at one.' Then he went on to say: 'Not for seven years and more I got hold of such a Book [*English Traits*]; — Book by a real man, with eyes in his head; nobleness, wisdom, human, and many other things in the heart of him. Such Books do not turn up often in the decade, in the century.' Commenting on *English Traits*, Carlyle wrote: 'In fact, I believe it to be worth all the Books ever written by New England upon old.'

Carlyle and Emerson were both men of poetic quality. Carlyle was committed to the German doctrine of poetry and art. In 1830 Carlyle insisted that the highest poetry demanded 'a certain Infinitude, and spiritual Freedom, that elevation above the Fate and Clay of this Earth, in which alone, and virtue of which, Poetry, soul-Music, is possible'.<sup>17</sup> It may take centuries to produce the poet or the seer (CC, 28, pp. 49-50). Carlyle knew that he would not be a poet; 'To imagine; bilden! That is an unfathomable thing. As yet I have never risen into the region of creation' (p. 50). Carlyle's view is 'that all Art is but a remiscence now, that for us in these Prophecy (well understood) not Poetry is the thing wanted; how can we sing and paint when we do not yet believe and see?' As he told Mill, 'melodious Art fled away from us, far away, not in Poetry, but only if so might be in Prophecy, in stern Old-Hebrew Denunciation, can one speak of the accursed Realities that now, and for generations, lie round us, weigh heavy on us'.<sup>18</sup>

Emerson was a poet<sup>19</sup> who, according to Mutlu Blasing, combined the idea that forms are conventional and universal.<sup>20</sup> Emerson thought that poets in their freedom were able to discover conventional poetic forms. 'The

thought and the form are equal in order of time, but in the order of genesis the thought is prior to the form' (W,III, p.10). Despite the use of traditional devices, the poem does not originate from them. Blasing (1985) pointed out that this rediscovery of traditional forms explains Emerson's ambiguous relation to English forms (p.16). Edwin Fussell observed that Emerson attempted to sound like an American poet but he did not have an 'adequate idea or auditory sense' of what should an American poet sound like.<sup>21</sup> No one has ever shown the poetic forms which Emerson discovered. He believed that his form is Form and his fate, Fate. To comprehend Emerson's work as a whole and save him from the responsibility for American modernism, and American poetry from the burden of Emersonism, one should stop reading the essays and the poetry in isolation from each other and begin to see the interplay of rhetoric of both forms as they mirror and sustain each other in his discourse (Blasing,1985, p. 22). To best understand Emerson's rediscovery of English forms is to consider what Hyatt Waggoner commented on as 'unconventional handling of conventional forms'.<sup>22</sup>

According to Emerson, literature proceeds from a state<sup>of</sup> vision. Like the Romantics, Emerson identifies this state of vision with the early stage of human history, the prelapsarian condition, the youth of every individual, which existed once and could exist again. In this kind of state, all people live by intuition; and therefore every experience and expression is spontaneous: Thus every one is an artist.<sup>23</sup> 'Why should a man spend years in carving an Apollo, who looked Apollos into the landscape with every glance he knew?' (EL, III, p. 93). But Carlyle presented 'the higher literature of Germany' as 'the beginning of a new relation of the God like' and as a literature which permits 'a faith in Religion' (*Carlyle's Unfinished History*, p.11).

Carlyle and Emerson believed in the sanctity of poetry. Carlyle spoke of



religion and poetry as if they were the same thing. Man finds himself everywhere 'encompassed with Symbols, recognized as such or not recognized.' At times, Carlyle spoke of God using, as he says, the 'ancient dialect' (*Past and Present* in CC,10, p.136). Ruth ApRoberts noted that Carlyle seemed to be saying that he had borrowed 'the metaphorical mode of the early mythmaker' — that is, he did not mean a literal God, although the early man did.<sup>24</sup> In his essay 'The State of German Literature', Carlyle defended the Germans.

To the charge of Irreligion ... the Germans will plead not guilty. On the contrary, they will not scruple to assert that their literature is, in a positive sense, religious; say, perhaps to maintain, that if ever neighbouring nations are to recover that pure and high spirit of devotion ... it must be by travelling, if not on the same path, at least in the same direction in which the Germans have already begun to travel (*Carlyle's Unfinished History*, p. 3).

In his 'Characteristics' essay (1831), Carlyle said that 'literature is but a branch of Religion, and always participates in its character; however, in our time, it is the only branch that still shows any greenness; and, as some think, must one day become the main stem' (CE, 28, p. 23).

Writing to Goethe, Carlyle said that 'Literature is now nearly all in all to us; not our speech only, but our Worship and Lawgiving; one best Priest must henceforth be our Poet; the Vates will in future be practically all that he ever was in theory.'<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Emerson believed in this Romantic image of the poet as priest. Like Christ who freed the human race to the possibility of entering heaven again, the poet is a liberator who 'unlocks our chains and admits us to a new thought.' When the poet expresses truth, men recognize how the use of symbols has a power of emancipation for the human race. Like the Savior who called all unto him as children; when the poet speaks,

men 'seem to be touched by a wand which makes [them] dance and run happily, like children.' 'Poets,' Emerson declares, 'are thus liberating gods' (CL, III, pp. 5, 30).

It is the poet who is the only one who can 'articulate' the universe and reveal its secret. For the poet, the world becomes 'a temple whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures and commandments of the Deity,' and it becomes his job to convey the meaning behind those emblems. Carlyle, like Emerson, held a high esteem for the poet: he praised the poet who 'transports us into [a] holier and higher world than our own'; his 'enchantments are strong enough to silence our scepticism' (*Life of Schiller*, in CE, 25, p. 78). In the high poetry of the past, Carlyle saw 'the forms of the Spirit mingled and dwelt ... in trustful sisterhood with the forms of Sense' (*German Romance* in CE, 21, p. 266) and in 1832: 'The Whole Creation seems more and more Divine ..., the Natural more and more Supernatural' (*Carlyle, 1834-1881*, II, p. 319).

Emerson praised Shakespeare as he achieved the poet's task in his 'converting the solid globe, the land, the sea, the air, the sun, the animals into symbols of thought' (EL, I, p. 290). Carlyle also praised Shakespeare as one of a small group of 'high' poets of the past whom people should look to as the vehicle, since the church is no longer 'a moral emotional synthesis in the collapse of the older intellectual scaffolding.'<sup>26</sup>

In 'Biography', Carlyle insisted that the Poet or Seer who could discern the 'Godlike' was still 'utterly wanting, or all but utterly' and he himself turned from Fiction to the Fact of history and biography. Carlyle held the view that is modern poetry would have to wait perhaps for two centuries, until Religion could be discriminated from the 'New and Old Light forms of Religion' ('Burns,' in CE, 26, p. 313). Emerson proclaimed that 'the Universe has three children, born at one time, which reappear under different names, in every system of thought, whether they be called cause, operation, and

effect; or more poetically, Jove, Plato, Neptune; or theologically, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son; but which we will call here the Knower, the Doer, the Sayer' (CL, III, p.5). These three, Emerson asserted, 'stand respectively for the love of truth, for the love of good, and for the love of beauty' and it is, he reminded his listeners, the poet who is the 'Sayer, the Namer, and [who] represents beauty' (p. 6).

ApRoberts (1988) remarked that Carlyle was concerned with the literature of the Bible and for him, the Psalms and the Book of Job were 'quintessential poetry' (p. 5). In his review of William Taylor's three-volume *Historic Survey of German Poetry* in 1831 (CE, 27, pp. 333-70), Carlyle stated that 'the true Poet ... is the inspired Thinker ... is still an Orpheus ... Literature is fast becoming all in all to us; our Church, our Senate, our whole Social Constitution' (p. 369). In the history of German literature Carlyle quoted Goethe to similar effect, 'who but the Poet was it that first formed gods for us; that exalted us to them, and brought them down to us' (*Carlyle's Unfinished History*, p. 3).

Though Carlyle was not a poet and Emerson was not known as a poet, both seemed to have adopted the same ideas about the poet. In 'The Transcendentalist' (1841), Emerson suggested to his contemporaries that they are in need of another redeemer, 'one similar to Christ, who could grasp language, symbol, and divine truth. This one if not comparable to Christ, be it at least to others among the greatest prophets of the world' (CL,I, pp. 201-16). Throughout his essay 'The Poet', Emerson made an equation between Christ and the poet. The poet, like Christ who sacrificed himself for the entire human race is 'representative' and 'stands among partial men for the meaning behind the emblems' (CL, III, pp. 5-6). Emerson shared with Carlyle the belief in man's capability of inspiration, of his divinity. The poet is a demigod who assumes God's role and reenacts the creation. Emerson

declared that Jesus and the prophets are poets, not figures of authority; Jesus had no disrespect for the earlier poet, he was a true man and self-reliant. Therefore, the individual should not worship his person but respect himself.

According to Carlyle, nature is divine; it is a goddess.

Nature, like the Sphinx, is of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness; the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness. There is in her a celestial beauty, \_ which means celestial order, pliancy to wisdom; but there is also a darkness, a ferocity, fatality, which are infernal. She is a goddess, but one not yet disimprisoned; one still half-imprisoned, \_ the articulation lovely, still encased in the inarticulate Chaotic (CC,10, p.7).

The universe is like the Sphinx, beautiful, wise, and celestial. Carlyle looks for salvation to man not to God. He once wrote: 'Surely, surely, there is a Life beyond Death; and that gloomy Portal leads to a purer and an abiding Mansion' (*Carlyle's Letters*, IV, p. 351).

Eloise B. Behnken observes that when Carlyle is writing letters of consolation not to the family, he sounds much like the 'doubting Thomas.' Carlyle gave up his study to be a clergyman because of his refusal to accept traditional doctrines; also he did not attend church except on some rare occasions.<sup>27</sup> In a letter to his friend, Henry Inglis, Carlyle wrote, 'It is a solitary kind of world; yet it is a world; and I imagine had a Maker' (*Carlyle's Letters*, VIII, p. 235). In another letter on 20 January, 1834 to John Stuart Mill, Carlyle told him:

All that of Natural Theology, and Demiourgors sitting outside the world, and exhibiting 'marks of design' is as deplorable to me as it is to you. Immortality also still of late years I never could so much as see the possibility of: till now in some sense certainty and philosophic necessity of it

became manifest. And so I live in a kind of Christian Islam (which signifies 'submission to God') and say at all turns of Fortune, 'God is great' and also 'God is good,' and know not ought else that I could say (*Carlyle's Letters*, V, p. 95).<sup>13</sup>

In his own words, 'One has got two eyes to look with; also a mind capable of knowing, of believing; that is all the creed I will at this time insist on' (p.194). Looking with one's eyes and insisting on the individual's mind capability in knowing and believing is not only Carlylean but it is also Emersonian. Carlyle asserted that religious conceptions might change from age to age. 'The divinities and demons, the witches, spectres and fairies, are vanished from the world, never again to be recalled: but the Imagination, which created these, still lives, and will forever live, in man's soul; and can again pour its wizard light over the Universe, and summon forth enchantments as lovely or impressive, and which its sister faculties will not contradict' ('Goethe' in CE, 26, p. 251). Religion, work, and poetry have a source in human imagination.

At his first meeting with Emerson, Carlyle remarked that 'Christ died on the tree that built Dunscore kirk yonder; that brought us together.' Emerson and Carlyle rejected Christ's divinity and his church as they were looking for a credible gospel, for belief in themselves and in the supremacy of spirit over matter in a disbelieving world. It was the 'sacred covenant that exists between us two to the end ...' (CEC, p. 58). For Carlyle, the new gospel is natural supernaturalism and he is a John Baptist. Writing to his brother John in 1833, Carlyle said, 'The very sound of my voice has got something savage-prophetic. I am as a John Baptist, girt about with a lenthern girdle, and whose food is locusts and wild honey' (*Carlyle's Letters*, VI, p. 320). Two weeks later, Carlyle told a young disciple in London that he might soon leave Craigenputtock and appear 'in Cockney land, like some John Baptist

... proclaiming anew with fierce Annandale intonation: 'Repent ye, ye cursed scoundrels, for and c and c ...' (*Carlyle's Letters*, VI, p. 334). Undoubtedly Carlyle became a leading prophetic figure of his age, a Jeremiah of nineteenth century Britain (Le Quesne, 1982, p. 2). Carlyle told a story of how at age of fourteen he shocked his mother by asking skeptically, 'Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop.'<sup>28</sup>

Despite that Emerson and Carlyle rejected the Christian orthodoxy, they remained theists: they held reverence for the eternal, invisible, inconceivable and infinite world, and had a passion to conceive it with the imagination.<sup>29</sup> For Carlyle and his generation, the imaginative force, the compelling force, as either 'Mysticism' or 'Natural Supernaturalism.' Carlyle believed in the existence of a transcendent spiritual order that underlies the apparent world and gives it whatever reality it might possess — all this was related to his encounter with the German Renaissance (Le Quesne, 1982, p. 10). According to Carlyle and Emerson, the divine truth gives man his 'soul self': It is the soul which man is. Emerson wrote: 'What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend' (W,I, pp. 270-71, my emphasis). Carlyle seems to have put this thought in his own words:

[The] Dead are all holy, even they that were base and wicked while alive. Their baseness and wickedness was not They, was but the heavy and unmanageable Environment that lay round them, with which they fought unprevailing; they (the eternal god-given Force that dwelt in them, and was their Self have now shuffled off that heavy Environment, and are free and pure ('Biography' in CE, 28, pp.17-18).

John D. Rosenberg noted that Carlyle seems to be split into his doubting and believing selves through his 'God-intoxicated' Teufelsdröckh: Carlyle managed to be both himself and to mock himself.<sup>30</sup>

Carlyle maintained that priests betrayed the ideals of Christianity. Unmoved by the cause of truth and unconscious of responsibility, the Anglican clergy, behind the disguise of wornout rituals and creeds, sought to continue its power and comfort. For worse, Christianity did not exert a living influence upon society and would not meet man's need to realize the finite as a symbol of the infinite. Christianity lost the open and great secret that animates all reality: the divine is in every man; every thing reveals 'the Divine Idea of the World' (Berger, 1965, p. 88). Emerson also opposed the clergy of the type Carlyle mentioned: 'How little love is at the bottom of these great religious shows; congregations and temples and sermons, — how much sham! Love built them passed away, things went downward, and the forms remain, but the soul is well nigh gone' (J, II: p. 424). And again Emerson thought of exposing 'the ugliness and unprofitableness of theology and churches' during his time: 'I ought to sit and think, and then write a discourse to the American Clergy, showing them the ugliness and unprofitableness of theology and churches at this day, and the glory and sweetness of the moral nature out of whose pale they are almost wholly shut' (J, IV, p.413).

Moreover, Carlyle believes that God stands above all; He is absent from this world; He is not the things in the created order but He has left an orderly universe. 'I should say, if we do not now reckon a Great Man literally divine, it is that our notions of God, of the supreme unattainable Fountain of Splendour, Wisdom, and Heroism, are ever being rising higher; not altogether that our reverence for these (divine qualities, as manifested in our life, is getting lower' (*Heroes and Hero-Worship* in CC, 5, p. 84). Carlyle

also announces that man is transcendent and has the freedom to choose ('Everlasting Yea,' chapter 11 in *Sartor Resartus*). According to Carlyle, man can change societal patterns so that these patterns become closer to matching the cosmic pattern of justice (Behnken, 1978, p. 28). Each individual has his own soul. 'What is Man himself, and his whole terrestrial life, but an Emblem; or clothing or visible Garment for that divine Me of his' (SR, p. 54).

In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle tells that the supernatural is in the natural.

Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou ever standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom, and working, believe, live, be free. Tool, the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment is in thyself: thy Condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: What matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the Form thou give it be heroic, be poetic? O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual, and cries bitterly to the God for kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, 'here or nowhere,' couldst thou only see! (SR, p.148, my emphasis).

Someone who is unfamiliar with Carlyle might say that this passage in its texture of ideas is Emersonian. God becomes present; the ideal is in the actual, although the present God is absent. Carlyle calls for work to weave the garments by which the divine presence can be manifested.

### *Sartor Resartus*

In his *Sartor Resartus* ('The Tailor Retailored'), Carlyle also likens nature and society to clothes, the outward trappings of an unseen spiritual reality. The material world is but the covering of the spiritual world, with



social institutions being old clothes to be discarded as they wear out. With tragic irony and mild humor, Carlyle depicts social clothes in tatters in need of rejection rather than repatching. One may apply this metaphor to religious institutions which neither Emerson nor Carlyle viewed with special favor, both men being cut from a different cloth, as it were, than that of orthodox institutionalized ritual, yet both religious in their own way. Michael Goldberg cites Carlyle's claim that *Sartor Resartus* had led him 'to know that deep sense of religion was compatible with the entire absence of theology.'<sup>31</sup>

The protagonist Teufelsdröckh (devil's dung) in this work initially views the world as purposeless, a machine of which he is the passive victim ('The Everlasting No') and then, in reaction, regains contact with the outside world ('The Centre of Indifference'), followed by a renunciation of all expectation of personal happiness, regaining his soul through work and human fellowship ('The Everlasting Yea'). The morality here resembles the conventional Christian emphasis on self-sacrifice and duty over body and pleasure. God is replaced by the abstract of transcendence, and the 'hero's' salvation is through moral rather than religious conversion (Tennyson, 1965).

According to Carlyle, no allegiance should be given to a religion and a church that is other-worldly not this-worldly.

To the core of our heart we feel that this divine thing, which you call Mother Church, does fill the whole world hitherto known, and is and shall be all our salvation and all our desire. And yet \_\_\_ and yet Behold, though it is an unspoken secret, the world is wider than any of us think. Right Reverend! Behold, there are yet immeasurable sacredness in this that you call Hethenism, Secularity! On the whole I in an obscure most manner, feel that I cannot comply with you ... I am, so to speak, in the family-way; with child, of I know not what, \_\_\_ certainly of something far different from this! I have \_\_\_ per os Dei, I have Manchester cottontrades, Bromwicham Iron-trades, American

Commonwealths, Indian Empire, Stream Mechanisms, and Shakespeare Dramas, in my belly; and cannot do it (worship the church as the Tibetans worship the Dali Lama, Right Reverend (CC, 10, pp 248-49).

Carlyle seemed to fuse the secular and the sacred; the church must function socially. Although Teufelsdröckh experiences a religious conversion, it is unChristian: 'I am strong, of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a god.' Carlyle felt that God could not be found in the Anglican or Evangelical church or in the text of ancient books.

Church-Clothes have gone sorrowfully out-at-elbows; nay, for worse, many of them have become mere hollow Shapes, or Masks, under which no living Figure or Spirit any longer dwells; but only spiders and unclean beetles, in horrid accumulation, drive their trade; and the mask still glares on you with its glass-eyes, in ghastly affectation of Life — some generation-and-half-after Religion has quite withdrawn from it (SR, p. 163).

Carlyle, like Emerson, responded to the same social issues and pressures of psychological adjustment that other artists faced: God certainly exists, but there is no longer evidence that He does; He has disappeared or died in the sense that He is out of reach.

### Transcendentalism

Robert N. Hertz described Emerson and Carlyle as two young philosophers on separate continents almost simultaneously spreading the idea of the immortally divine nature of the spirit of man. They both rejected the trappings of conventional sectarian dogma in their provocative and inspired writings, but did so with religious urgency.<sup>32</sup> It is a 'shared

intellectual background, a shared Puritan consciousness, and finally a shared symbolic vision' that explains the 'extraordinary American receptiveness to Carlyle' (Hook, 1970, p. 21). In both *Sartor Resartus* and *Nature*, one finds the message, stated in different ways, 'believe in yourselves.' For both Emerson and Carlyle it was only natural to believe in the self, given that the Divine essence is in oneself and the surrounding world. Intuition and struggle of the will is necessary to gain a redeeming insight into the spiritual reality underlying the world.

In Boston Emerson was quietly affirming the freedom of the human soul at about the same time Thomas Carlyle was proclaiming to England his Everlasting Yea ... Emerson and Carlyle, each with his own unique language and emphasis, tell us that the very ability of man to conceive of and express the concept of soul as well as man's faculty for memory, hope, delina, and affirmation \_\_\_ assert the truth of all that can be imagined, of eternity and the soul. What the sage of Concord and Professor Teufelsdröckh hope for us is to see the breeches of habit, convention, logic, and mundane events as outer garments only, and to enjoy a faith, a positive liberation in the near mystical insight into that which lies 'a little beyond' (Hertz, 1964, p. 60).

The 'little beyond' is of course Transcendentalism. Hertz sees Emerson/Carlyle Transcendentalism as consisting of just a bit of Calvinism, some German Romanticism, some Eastern mysticism, and vision. But these are only general labels, as Hertz admits. More to the point, Hertz feels, is Emerson and Carlyle telling us that we think our way into a spiritual vision of ourselves and the world, despite what our limited senses and intellect tell us. The two men reject the naturalistic or mechanistic view of mind and see it, instead, as the substance of soul, divinely gifted with intuitive knowledge of God. But is not even this comparison entirely too philosophical, and perhaps oblivious of the true feelings that sustain them? Yes, says Hertz. 'It

is striking how very different, in fact, these yeas are. The difference is perhaps this, that for Emerson life represents a victory; for Carlyle it is far more the consciousness of battle' (p. 62).

This victory for Emerson is possible because nature is symbolic of the world of spirit. For Emerson nature becomes good through man's goodness and will; wholeness and perfection is achieved by a man through awareness of his own spirituality. Words represent both the external facts of nature as well as human thought. Emerson's victory, his joyfulness, is poetic and of artistic origin. *Nature* tells of the progress from the world to spirit. Both Emerson and Carlyle appreciate human labor, but Emerson much more than Carlyle values work and endeavor, a moral development. Nature thus becomes, for Emerson, a background against which individuals of character, genius, and high-mindedness perform.

Emerson was perhaps reflecting the cultural optimism peculiar to mid-nineteenth century America, seeing hope, pleasure, beauty, and happiness in nature. Perhaps if Emerson had experienced the London slums as did Carlyle, his optimism might have been somewhat tempered. 'Emerson presents his material with quiet, poetically licensed 'logic' that clashes brilliantly with the chaotic prose and emotional fire of 'the Everlasting Yea' (Hertz, 1964, p. 65).

Who is more of the idealist, Carlyle or Emerson? Carlyle demonstrated a close connexion between Transcendentalism and Idealism. In an essay on 'Novalis' (1829), Carlyle described an idealist as one who 'boasts that Philosophy is Transcendental, that is, 'ascending beyond the senses". All 'philosophy, properly so-called, by its nature' must be" transcendentalist. To a Transcendentalist, 'Matter has an existence, but only as a Phenomenon: were we not there, neither would it be there' (CC, 27, pp. 24-25). Early in *Sartor Resartus*, the Editor spoke of Teufelsdröckh's

'Transcendental Philosophies, and humour of looking at all Matters and Material things as Spirit.' In 'The Transcendentalist', Emerson equated Transcendentalism with Idealism. With his Emersonian Idealism, he divided all thinkers into 'two sects, Materialists and Idealists.' To establish a religious belief, it was necessary for Transcendentalism to denounce materialism according to Emerson. For Carlyle, the nineteenth century is not an age of religion because people do believe only in the material. In his 'Signs of the Times', Carlyle wrote, 'The truth is men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe only in the Visible; or, to speak it in other word. This is not a Religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us' (CE, 27, p. 74).

Neither Emerson nor Carlyle was an extreme idealist; each one believed in the existence of an external reality. In the 'Idealism' chapter of *Nature*, Emerson insisted that it is more important to have the possibility of idealism than to be sure of its validity: 'In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in Heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul?' (CL, I, p. 29). Comparatively speaking, Carlyle, like Teufelsdröckh, seemed to endorse idealism. Carlyle described Matter as being symbolic. Even in the passage of *Sartor Resartus*, where it is shifted into the language of clothes philosophy: 'What is Man himself? ... a clothing or visible Garment for that divine Me of his' (p. 54). 'The thing Visible is a Garment, a clothing of the higher, celestial Invisible.' Teufelsdröckh never denied material reality but he claimed spiritual reality was both revealed and concealed by the material in the manner of a garment having an invisible form (Harris, 1978, p. 18).

In his 'Novalis' essay (1829), Carlyle argued that since time and space are mere 'forms' of the mind, matter is annihilated.

If Time and Space have no absolute existence ... no existence out of our minds, it removes the stumbling-block from the very threshold of our Theology. For on this ground when we say that Deity is omnipresent and eternal, that is with Him it is a Universal Here and Now, we say nothing wonderful; nothing that He also created Time and Space, that Time and Space are not enough, the whole question of the origin and existence of Nature is at an end, for Matter is itself annihilated; and the block Spectre, Atheism, 'with all its nicely dews,' melts into nothingness forever (CE, 27, pp. 26-7).

Emerson also described nature as the symbol of spirit and spoke of a 'necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms' (CL,I, pp.17, 22). In an entry in his notebook, Carlyle revealed his attitude: 'I think I have got rid of Materialism' and he continued, 'Matter no longer seems to me so ancient, so unsubduable, so certain and palpable as Mind. I am Mind's whether matter or not I know not \_\_\_ and care not' (*Carlyle's Two Notebooks*, p. 151).

Nature, then, is for Emerson useful, beautiful and spiritual, a veritable vehicle for thought. Emerson sees in his words signs of natural facts which, likewise, are spiritual facts. Words help us define our divine essence, which we share with the whole universe and which is symbolized by every object in nature. Thus for Emerson the world becomes joyous to him who opens his heart to the spiritual affinity he has with the universe.

Not so for Carlyle, who is very conscious of battle. Whereas Emerson focuses on pleasure, hope, and happiness, Carlyle gives us irony, sorrow, and despair.

Compare Professor Teufelsdröckh's self-annihilation and hatred of vanity with Emerson's inspired self realization and deific individuality. In *Sartor Resartus* the World is ugly, a snare and a delusion; in *Nature* the world is beautiful and

conforms to the will of man. Emerson's men work to realize the perfect universe — a projection of the Ideal. Carlyle's men labor as a kind of anodyne against the pain of thought, until night comes when they do not have to work any longer (Hertz, 1964, p. 66).

Evidently Carlyle finds meaning in the transcendental because his social world is meaningless, thereby escaping from the material into the spiritual, a far cry from Emerson's finding of spirit in matter, as it were. Emerson's is more purposive and optimistic than Carlyle with his escapist tendencies. In other words, Emerson believed in the spiritual taking the responsibility in the determination of the actual whereas Carlyle became more and more aware of the actual and began to look for solutions to outward problems. In fact, Carlyle lived in the midst of nineteenth century evils and therefore he seemed to confront these evils perhaps more realistically than Emerson who did not deny the existence of such evils, though he still carried an optimistic view. Even so, both Emerson and Carlyle move in the Transcendentalist direction, each in his own way. 'If Emerson's message of victory is one of fairly sustained optimism, Carlyle's battle cry is a progression from abject despondency to what might be called dynamic unhappiness' (Hertz, 1964, p. 68).

Hertz explains these differences in terms of Emerson's New World setting. America had not yet experienced such complex industrial and economic civilization, with its attendant disillusionment, and literary forms, often borrowed or naive, where things might seem benevolent in themselves. It was easier for Emerson to find symbols of order and spirit that reconciled, somehow, chaos, making verbal abstraction and concepts evidence of Spirit in spite of any material appearances. This approach undoubtedly led to the likes of L. M. Child and even Carlyle wincing somewhat at Emerson's seeming intellectualism.

Carlyle praised Emerson most when the latter turned his sights on industrial society and social reform. With reference to Emerson's lecture 'Man the Reformer,' Carlyle reported that 'certain radicals' had reprinted it in Lanc<sup>a</sup>shire and that he himself thought it 'a truly excellent utterance; one of the best words you have ever spoke' (CEC, p. 334). As a consequence of such praise, 'The binoculars of Emerson's vision had been turned at least a 45° degree angle toward the dry land of contemporary social reform, and he never again lost sight of the pragmatic inherent in his idealism' (CL, I, p.144). Reform for Carlyle was tinged by his Calvinistic renunciation of the flesh, a passive acceptance of suffering, pain, humility, and sorrow. Carlyle finds salvation through performance of duty, the Everlasting Yea, despite the fact that the world dashes men to pieces. Carlyle does not see material objects as symbols of spiritual reality, but as real obstacles to the attainment of spiritual reality, merciless facts. Whatever the exact influence of Eastern philosophy on Emerson may have been, his view of the world as symbol and reflection of underlying spiritual reality is consistent with such a philosophy, one with which Carlyle was not nearly so conversant, his transcendental thoughts shaped by or consistent with German philosophy instead. On the other hand, Schlegel provided Carlyle through his writings with some glimpse of Eastern mysticism.

Carlyle finds that, deprived of our 'clothes,' we are not so much spiritual as insubstantial. The spiritual domain lies somewhere farther beyond the material world. Carlyle rejects limitation, is pessimistic about past and present, finding it necessary to submit to fate and bury the self in work. Victory for Carlyle would be a kind of non-existence, at least in this world, and not to be found in any kind of communion with nature such as described by Emerson. Even so, it is worth repeating that many of the differences between Carlyle and Emerson are in tone, emphasis, and language.



Philosophically, the two were of like mind circa 1830, finding matter to be a reflection of mind, man and the world essentially spiritual, and that in place of our worldly illusions we should embrace visions of wonder rather than attitudes of despair.

Emerson fully appreciated Carlyle's fervor, daring freedom, adventurous and rebellious tone, his drollery and humor in literary endeavors. He appreciated Carlyle's sensitivity to urbanization, new ways of living, the dynamics of machinery, veiled the new possibilities of selfhood emerging from wrestling with the complexities of the modern world. At the same time, however, Carlyle had an acute sense of social uprootedness, the loss of tradition and certainties, the atomization of the individual lost in the city, alienation from work and fuller self, the impact of rapid social and technological change, the destruction of the classes, and the triumph of greed in a reckless pursuit of money. He expressed a sense of crisis and doom which threatens both self and society with ruin . All these are not without modern parallels.

### The Hero

Carlyle tried to resolve this duality, this optimism and pessimism, through mythmaking, and especially through the right of the hero. Albert J. LaValley notes two kinds of mythmaking in Carlyle. The first, and of lesser importance is the more salient concern with the need to make a tradition (often at any price), to redefine the stable characteristics of the past and make them available to the times. The second, of greater importance, is the act of mythmaking, the development of both new kinds of artist and self.

Carlyle's highly selective and individual approach to medievalism, his philosophy of history, tenets of heroic vitalism, and pantheon of heroes are all a part of this lesser

sort of mythmaking, but of greater importance is the central act of mythmaking itself, the development of a new kind of artist and a new kind of self. What have usually been considered the basic 'tenets' of Carlyle must be merged with the drives and concerns I have been investigating and united under the urge to define a total self and a new society.<sup>33</sup>

It is Carlyle's treatment of the hero that reveals his affinity with Emerson. In the last of four series of public lectures, *On Heroes* (1841), Carlyle presented in a relatively colloquial and straightforward style the hero as divinity (the Teutonic god Odin), as prophet (Mohamet), as poet (Dante and Shakespeare), as priest (Luther and Knox), as man of letters (Johnson, Rousseau, and Burns), and as king (Cromwell and Napoleon). His poetic and colorful narratives of the heroes is accompanied by his idea of the hero. They have, first, an intellectual capacity to see through the false images that make up most ordinary life, to see through to the underlying significance. The hero-writer exposes social reality, and the hero as man of action the historical necessity for change. Great men, or heroes, create the values others live by and, thereby, deserve to be obeyed. The hero, or great man, is a direct representative of the Divine Will, his words and deeds tantamount to revelation. The ultimate source of authority is always spiritual.

Carlyle's treatment of the hero fits in naturally with Emerson's: 'Thomas Carlyle, with his natural taste for what is manly and daring in character, has suffered no heroic trait in his favorites to drop from his biographical and historical pictures' (W, II, p.147). What Carlyle named veracity Emerson called harmony with the universe. Emerson, as noted earlier, was an optimist whereas Carlyle was 'a pessimist of pessimists' (James, 1883, p. 269). Emerson held the conception of the good without having a vivid conception of evil. On the contrary, Carlyle had a definite idea of evil without

a corresponding conception of good (p. 269). A major difference between the two is in their attitude toward man: Emerson believed in the importance of the individual; each individual has his own kingdom within himself. Carlyle defended the hero, the one who could master the masses.

In a letter to Emerson, Carlyle announced their differences: 'Though I see well enough what a great cleft divides us in our ways of practically looking at the world' (CEC, p. 20). The conflict between them led to serious clashes. Each one of them proclaimed his belief in the hero or the great man; and inevitably, they suppose that they mean the same thing. Emerson complained to Carlyle of Andrew Jackson; 'A most unfit person in the Presidency has been doing the most things and the worse he grew the more popular' (CEC, p. 100). This seems a longing for the great man who would set all aright.<sup>34</sup> 'Yet man has not hope that the majority be suddenly unseated' (CEC, p. 100). Carlyle thinks that he and Emerson share this longing and distaste for the masses. Emerson seems to think in the same way as Carlyle when he tells him: 'I meant to tell them among other things that man was still alive. Nature not dead or like to die; that all men continued true to this hour ... ' (CEC, p. 274).

In his portrayal of them, Emerson's heroes do not contain and focus upon the divine force; they represent qualities; therefore, they do not demand our total obedience or worship. The hero goes onward to a region beyond himself.

For a time, our teachers serve us personally as metres of milestones of progress. Once they were angles of knowledge, and their figures touched the sky. Then we drew near, saw their means, culture, and limits; and they yielded their place to other geniuses. But at last we shall cease to look in men for completeness, and shall content ourselves with their social and delegated quality ... We never come at the true and best benefit of any genius so long as we believe him an original force. In the moment

when he ceases to help us as a cause, he begins to help us more as an effect. Then he appears as an exponent of a waster mind and will. The opaque self becomes transparent with the light of the First Cause (CL, IV, pp. 19-20).

Thus the hero is never perfect. People should content themselves with his 'social and delegated quality.' For Carlyle, the heroic is in man and is divine and worshipful.

In the first chapter of *Representative Men*, 'Uses of Great Men,' Emerson asks about the value of great men as opposed to the common man. 'Why are the masses from the dawn of history down, food for knives and powder? The idea dignifies a few leaders ... but what for the wretches whom they hire and kill?' His answer is that there are no such inferior men: 'there are no common men. All men are at least of a size ... Ask the great man if there be none greater. His companions are' (CL, IV, pp.18-19) Unlike Carlyle, Emerson regards history as 'democratic'; the collective achievement of all people not the accomplishments of a few great ones. Carlyle's attitude is that 'Universal History is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.' The heroes are the leaders of the masses and 'in a wide sense creators of what soever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain' (CC, 5, p.1). However, Carlyle proposes a definition of history in his article 'On History' (1830) which parallels Emerson's view: 'Social life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute society' (CE, 27, p. 86).

Carlyle worships the hero whereas Emerson glorifies heroism. The great man, for Emerson, is not worthy of being worshipped since he possesses a power like every one else: 'all mental and moral force [great men] ... goes out from you, whether you will or not, and profits me whom you never thought of' (W,IV, pp.113-14). When people have great actions, they are not

attributed to a particular man: 'The power which they communicate is not theirs. When we are exalted by ideas, we do not owe this to Plato, but to the idea to which Plato was debtor' (p. 19). For Carlyle, the hero acquires power from his will because he is not a product of the circumstances or time: critics say that 'the Time called him forth, the Time did every thing, he nothing \_\_ but what we the little critic could have done too' (CC, 5, p.121). Carlyle rejected Emerson's idea that the times produce the hero. He describes the image of the times as 'dry dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of Heaven but shall kindle it. The great man, with the free force direct of God's own hand, is the lightning' (p.13). The lightning strikes and lights up the hero-worshipper that he captures the power of the hero.

Furthermore, Carlyle describes the great man as a 'Force of Nature, whatsoever is truly great in him springs-up from the inarticulate deeps' (CC, 5, p.112). In 'The Hero as Priest,' Carlyle or at least the speaker, identifies himself with and becomes very enthusiastic about Luther: 'I, for one, pardon Luther for now altogether revolting against the Pope. The elegant Pagan, by this fire-decree of his, had kindled into noble just wrath the bravest heart then living in this world.' Luther is made to see the Pope as diabolic: 'You are not God's Vicegerent; you are another's than his, I think! I take you Bull, as an emparchmented Lie, and burn it. You will do what you see good next this is what I do' (p.133). Carlyle used pagan gods mythologically and described the child Luther as 'a Christian Odin \_\_ or right Thor once more, with his thunder, hammer, to smite asunder ugly enough Jotuns and Giant-monster' (p.128). For Emerson too, Luther is the man who 'expressed a more perfect self-reliance. His Words are more than brave, they threaten and thunder. They indicate a Will on which a nation might lean not liable to sullen sallies or swoons, but progressive as the motion of the earth' (EL, I, p.136).

Carlyle and Emerson saw Goethe from different angles. In his second letter to Goethe, Carlyle admitted, 'It is you more than any other man that I should always thank and reverence with the feeling of a Disciple to his Master, nay of a Son to his spiritual Father.' Goethe was a man who had the world's submission; a hero to be worshipped: 'We see this above all things: A mind working itself into clearer and clearer freedom; gaining a more and more perfect dominion of its world' (CE, 28, p.145). Carlyle chose Goethe as a hero. 'One chosen specimen of the Hero as Literary Man would be this Goethe' and considered him as 'a true Hero': 'It were a very pleasant plan for me here to discourse of his heroism: for I consider him to be a true Hero; heroic in what he said and did not do; to me a noble spectacle: a great heroic ancient Hero, in the 'guise' of most modern, high-bred, high-cultivated Man of Letters' (CC, 5, pp.157-58). For Emerson, Goethe is 'the Poet of the Actual, not of the Ideal; the poet of limitation, not of possibility; of this world, and not of religion and hope; ... the poet of prose, and not of poetry ... [He] accepts the base doctrine of Fate, and gleans what straggling joys may yet remain out of its ban ... dares not break from slavery and lead a man's life in a man's relation to Nature' (W,XII, p. 331). Emerson's statement, which appeared in 'Thoughts on Modern Literature' (1840), was published in *The Dial*. At this point Carlyle seemed to agree with Emerson's view. This was 'incomparably the worthiest thing hitherto' in *The Dial*.

In *Representative Men*, Emerson's Goethe was the last representative man. This time, Emerson's criticism of Goethe comes into shape<sup>y</sup> forms. He classified him as 'The Writer' rather than 'The Poet' (although he did not deny Goethe the name of a poet and admired Goethe's interest in natural science: Goethe 'has said the best things about nature that ever were said' [W,IV, p. 276]). Moreover, Goethe lacks self-reliance, for he has not 'worshipped the highest unity; he is incapable of a self-surrender to the

moral sentiment.' What Goethe pursues is self-cultivation not self-reliance. '[Goethe] can never be dear to men. His [talent] is not even the devotion to pure truth; but to truth for the sake of culture' (p. 284).

Regarding Napoleon, Carlyle said that Napoleon betrayed his heroism; his Heroism is 'Self and false ambition' which 'becomes his god: self-deception once yielded to all other deceptions follow naturally more and more.' Besides, Napoleon believes 'too much in the Duperability of men,' and sees 'no fact deeper in man than Hunger and this!' Napoleon has lost every thing because he failed to embody in himself and inspire in others self-denial: 'Like a man that should build upon cloud; his house and he fall down in confused wreck, and depart out of the world' CC,5, p. 241). Compared with Carlyle, Emerson's 'Napoleon or the Man of the World', who 'respected the power of nature and fortune, and ascribed to it his superiority, instead of valuing himself, like inferior men, on his opinionativeness, and waging war with nature.' Emerson as well as Carlyle agree on the source of Napoleon's greatness: 'He pleased himself, as well as people, when he styled himself the 'Child of Destiny" (W,IV, p. 231).

Emerson and Carlyle admired Napoleon's anti-democratic spirit although Emerson stressed the democratic and bourgeois nature in Napoleon's reforms. Emerson's conclusions about Napoleon's downfall were highly Emersonian: what has been done is not Napoleon's fault, but it was the responsibility of destiny and nature. 'It was not Bonaparte's fault. He did all that in him lay to live and thrive without moral principle. It was the nature of things, the eternal law of man and of the world which baulked and rained him ... Every experiment, by multitudes or by individuals, that has a sensual and selfish aim, will fail' (W, IV, p. 258).

In his 'Heroism' essay, Emerson has his own Emersonian version of the hero who displays this heroism.

[Heroism] is a self-trust which slights the restraints of prudence, in the plentitude of its energy and powder to repair the harms it may suffer ... it has pride, it is the extreme of individual nature ... [It] feels and never removes, and therefore is always right; and although a different breeding different religion and greater intellectual activity would have modified or even reversed the particular action. Yet the hero that thing is the highest deed, and is not open to the censure of philosophers or divines. It is the avowal of the unschooled man that he finds a quality in him that is negligent of expense, of health, of life, of dangers, of hatred, of reproach, and knows that his will is higher and more excellent than the actual and all possible antagonists (W,I, p. 326).

Thus the hero is a powerful man of action who holds himself, like ultimate authority, beyond censure. 'Heroism is an obedience', not to any voice whether it is the voice of the majority or minority of 'just and wise men' but 'to a secret impulse of an individual's character' (W,I, p. 236), an aspect of Emersonism. Moreover, the hero finds a common voice but not the voice of the herd: 'The heroic can not be the common, nor the common the heroic.' Obviously, the hero's voice contradicts and it is contradicted by the common voice of the majority; those people whose concern is with making money and achieving 'sensual prosperity.' 'The action [of the hero] is clear contrary to sensual prosperity,' so contrary that 'heroism ... is almost ashamed of its body.' In brief, the hero is ascetic 'opposing the materialism of the day and refusing to identify with it' (W, II, pp. 237, 245, 237).

B. H. Lehman is convinced that Emerson derived his notion of the hero from Carlyle. Lehman quoted Emerson from his 'America Scholar' wherein the scholar is the hero who uplifts and guides men by showing them facts among appearances, uniting and animating all men, both great and small. 'This is Carlylean, and this continues to mark later studies.'<sup>35</sup> Herman Grimm found hero worship in both Emerson and Carlyle.<sup>36</sup>



Yet there are differences. Lehman (1966) finds in Emerson's *Representative Men* a criticism of the Carlylean Hero, albeit a constructive one. The great man, for Emerson, is one in whom average men find their own representative, their own dreams. The genius as well as the man of talent is great only because of this general acceptance or consensus, a kind of 'idea' whose time has come. Thus the times are partly responsible for the likes of Napoleon. For Emerson, 'the great man representing the things and the ideas (which he sees in their true light and relations) is therefore not, like the Hero, the greater if the times are the worse' (p. 182). Greatness for Emerson is based on those qualities and conditions which make the few more efficient than the man, a combination of various qualities. The ordinary man is not necessarily stupid, but merely one whose talents do not increase the efficiency of other men. The great man promotes programmes by helping others to live, but downplays the Carlylean tendency to see great men as Heroes whose personality is the decisive factor; for Emerson, the time and place count.

It should be noted that Carlyle and Emerson held two views of the hero because of their different political context; Carlyle's hero fits a European context whereas Emerson's fits more with the American democratic context. For Emerson, the hero is a man of intellect possessing Christian conscience. For Carlyle, the great man is right in an absolute sense and his privileges go beyond the conception of good and evil; If there is a conflict between him and society, the answer lies in force.

Carlyle, à la suite de beaucoup et autres esprits de son temps, se met en colère, soulève les tempte et se met à crier *justice* et *défense* avec une telle force, que ces mots ressemblent presque aux mots d'injustice et de vengeance.

[Following the spirit of his time, which made Carlyle angry

and thoroughly affected by the passion for defense and justice with great force, became such words almost a resemblance of the words concerning injustice and vengeance.]

Emerson, au contraire, est plein de calme et de tranquillité; il est presque naïf à force d'indifférence; il exprime en 1848 idées comme il les aurait expérimentées en 1846, avec la même imperturbable confiance.<sup>37</sup>

[On the contrary, Emerson was full of tranquility and quietness; He is almost naïve; for he expressed these similar ideas [concerning defense and justice] in 1848 as if he has expressed them in 1846, with the same complete confidence] (my translation).

### Stylistic Similarities and Differences

Like Emerson, Carlyle relies on repetition. Both men strove to make the listener or reader more aware of an idea through repetition: the recurrence of certain images or characterization signals the presence of underlying thematic relationships. Anderson (1985) indicates that the essence of Carlyle's style is an outpouring of energy, enthusiasm, hyperbole, and inventive: 'Carlyle charges each idea he proposes with increasingly emphatic affirmations. Each repetition, each italics, each additional adjective or adverb increases the volume of the original proposition' (p. 45).

Emerson's discourse is often accretive, the 'ands' connecting a number of clauses at the same level of conceptualization, a kind of piling of declarations, an accumulation of strong and emphatic affirmations of belief, forceful and direct, compact of phrases, all substituting for conventional development. Both Emerson and Carlyle project a vigorous and perpetual affirmation through a rhetoric of reiteration, or better yet, a rhetoric of reaffirmation.

Form and content go hand in hand. For both Emerson and Carlyle,

stylistic form is determined by similarity of content. Both sought to justify their subjectivism through metaphor: 'German thought supported Carlyle's tendency to see things through metaphor.'<sup>38</sup> Waring (1978) further notes that 'Carlyle's style has [a] relatively slow synthesis of Calvinistic dogma and German idealism, achieved painfully, only after bitter self-evaluation' (p. 63). But the 'bitter self-evaluation' was not merely psychological; it was spiritual and prophetic. 'He wrote less as an artist than as a prophet.'<sup>39</sup>

Carlyle's stylistic tone is aggressive. Although Emerson was not aggressive by nature, whether in language or action, he was nevertheless 'attracted by wealth and bodily strength and even fanatic determination when he saw these qualities in other people' (Bishop, 1964, p. 130) — including Carlyle. Emerson himself said that 'the greatest power of Carlyle, like that of Burke, seems to me to reside rather in the form ... each has a splendid rhetoric to clothe the truth' (Emerson in Cabot, 1887, p. 198). Carlyle's strongest critics admitted that his style, along with his moral fervor, was the main source of his influence.<sup>40</sup> Carlyle's American audience could easily identify with the boldness of his prose, their own country being experimental and prophetic, exaggerated and ambitious: 'His style seemed to correspond with their own fascination with ruggedness, individuality, biblical prophecy, and journalistic extravaganza; it seemed to echo both their grand condemnation of the corruption of the old world and their grand expectation that America was the hope of the future' (Kaplan, 1983, p. 369).

Carlyle's emotional style reflected his Romantic independence. B. Evans Lippincott noted that Carlyle created something of a sensation in his day. 'We suggest that this was due to no small extent to the fact that the more general qualities of his style were Romantic in character and answered the basic literary demand of his age'.<sup>41</sup>

Kaplan (1983) writes that Emerson and Carlyle had strikingly different

lecture styles: 'Carlyle spoke extemporaneously, striving to create the effect of inspired talk; Emerson read in monochromatic voice from texts that had been written out in advance' (p. 324). Porte (1982) points out that Carlyle, despite all his identification with Emerson's aims and principles, criticized him for refusing to stress experience in his writing. He chided Emerson for his preoccupation with abstractions:

All theory becomes more and more confessedly inadequate, untrue, unsatisfactory, almost a kind of mockery to me! I will have all things condense themselves, take shape and body, if they are to have my sympathy. I have a body myself; in the brown leaf, sport of the Autumn wind, I find what mocks all prophesying, even Hebrew ones (Carlyle in Porte, p. 195).

### Conflicting Views

Len Gougeon cited a conflict between Emerson and Carlyle that went further than just style — the Civil War.<sup>42</sup> Gougeon (1989) asserts that while Emerson believed that 'Human freedom and equality ... were the foundation stones for social reform,' Carlyle held that 'some men were born to lead and others to follow ... that natural hierarchy should dictate social organization' (p. 403). The British in general were not especially sympathetic to the Northern cause, and Carlyle's writings were popular in the American South.

A major difference between Emerson and Carlyle is their attitude toward democracy and slavery. Kenneth Marc Harris claimed that despite their differences, the underlying philosophy from which their attitude springs seems not to be far apart.<sup>43</sup> In 'The Young American' lecture delivered one year before 'The American Scholar' and which Emerson did not tell Carlyle about, Emerson spoke with sarcasm of 'our pitiful and most unworthy politics, which stake every gravest national question and hold the purse'

(CL, I, p. 241).

Emerson's opinion of democracy is expressed in his 'Politics.' 'Democracy', says Emerson, 'is better for us, because religious sentiment of the present time accords better with it' (W, III, p. 207). In *Chartism*, Carlyle similarly acknowledged that democracy may 'subsist' in America because so little government is needed there, 'save that of the parish-constable' (CE, 29, p.158). Nevertheless democracy means more than a ballot box to Emerson. In 'Self-Reliance,' he wrote, 'The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them' (W, II, p. 87). Rulers may come to power through election, succession, or revolution but the society is little affected since it proceeds under a different authority. In 'Politics,' he explained, 'Nature is not democratic, nor limited-monarchical, but despotic and will not be fooled or abated of any jot of her authority by the protest of her sons' (W, III, p. 200). It is essential that one should cooperate with nature not to oppose it — Democracy is to let nature take its course.

Carlyle was never a democrat. He sympathizes deeply with the poor but he was contemptuous of the French Revolution of 1791 and the democratic one of 1793 seeing them as both irrelevant to the political and social realities of France at the time. Carlyle had not faith in the Chartists (Le Quesne, 1982, p. 45). According to Carlyle, the true relation between ruler and ruled is mutually dependent: the ruler is recognized by the ruled as their natural leaders; mutual responsibility binds them together. 'Surely of all 'rights of man,' this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, held in the true cause by him, is the indisputablest ... If Freedom have any meaning, it means enjoyment of this right, wherein all other rights are enjoyed. It is a sacred right and duty, on both sides; and the summation of all social duties whatsoever between the two' (CE, 29,

pp.157-58).

Le Quesne (1982) observed that 'Democracy' to Carlyle 'was a Utopian creed which had failed in the French Revolution because of its neglect of the realities of power; its proponents, the Girandins, had gone down before the Jacobins, who knew and respected those realities; and it would always fail for the same reasons' (p. 51). In Chapter three of *Past and Present*, Carlyle argued that democracy was the extension into politics of the economic Liberalism that had for its end product the St. Ives Workhouses. Raymond Williams holds that Carlyle saw democracy as merely a 'negative solution'.<sup>44</sup> Carlyle stated that life has always been a struggle against injustice and hunger.

And yet I will venture to believe that in no time, since the beginning of society, was a lot of those same dumb millions of toilers so entirely unbearable as it is even in the days now passing over us. It is not to die of hunger, that makes a man wretched; many men have died; all men must die, \_\_\_ the last exit of us all is in a Fire-Christ of Pain. But it is to live miserable we know not why; to work sore and yet gain nothing; to be heart-worn, weary, yet isolated, unrelated, girt in \_\_\_ with a cold universal Laissez-faire it is to die slowly all our life long, imprisoned in a deaf, dead, Infinite Injustice, a in the accursed iron belly of a Phalaris 'Bull'! This is and remains forever intolerable to all men whom God has made. Do we wonder at French Revolution, Chartisms, Revolts of Three Days? (CC,10, pp. 210-11).

John Clive remarked that Carlyle knew that 'Democracy is everywhere the inexorable of these ages, swiftly fulfilling itself'.<sup>45</sup> Clive (1969) distinguished Carlyle from his contemporaries, who opposed and feared the 'advent of democracy,' in his 'profound awareness of the ineluctability of the historical process which was bringing about that advent' (p. 8). For Carlyle, democracy was a 'spurious liberty' that had been secured at the expense of

community — one could go hungry in a free market (Rosenberg, 1988, p.133). Carlyle wrote:

Gurth, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, has been greatly pitied by Cryasdust and others. Gurth, with the hero collar round his neck, tending Cedric's pigs in the glades of the wood, is not what I call an exemplar of human felicity: but Gurth, with the sky above him, with the free air and tinted boselage and unbrage round him, and in him at least the certainty of super and social lodging when he came home; Gurth to me seems happy ... Cedric deserved to be his master. The pigs were Cedric's, but Gurth too would get his parings of them. Gurth had the inexpressible satisfaction of feeling himself related indissolubly, though in a rude brass-collar way, to his fellow-mortals in this Earth. He had superiors, inferiors, equals. — Gurth is now 'emancipated' long since; has what we call 'Liberty.' Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty when it becomes the 'Liberty to die by starvation' is not so divine!

... That I have been called by all the newspapers a 'freeman' will avail me little, if my pilgrimage have ended in death and wreck. O that the Newspapers had called me slave, coward, fool, or what it pleased their sweet voices to name me, and I had attained not death, but life! — Liberty requires new definitions (CC, 10, pp. 211-13).

For Carlyle, the new definition is that democracy 'means despair of finding any heroes to govern you' (CC,10, p. 215). The monks of St Edmundsbury, wrote Carlyle, 'contrived to accomplish the most important social feat a body of men can do, to winnow-out the man that is to govern them' (p. 82). Carlyle had little interest in political institutions, and described all attempts at political reform a mere 'Morrison's Pills,' (an advertised remedy, [CC,10, p. 23], and dismissed Parliament as 'our National Palaver' p. 219).

To Carlyle, leadership should be according to the will of the hero; to Emerson, it was 'the will of the wise man' ('Politics'), who understands the

higher sources of wisdom and power. Society 'makes awkward but earnest efforts to secure his government by contrivance.' Voting is an example of such an awkward effort, for the wise man can not be traced by such mechanical means. 'The less government we have the better — the fewer laws, and the less confided power' (CL, III, pp. 213-15). Government should 'leave the individual ... to the rewards and penalties of his own constitution' (p. 219). Government must not discourage individuality; everyone must feel free so that he can fulfill his nature. Emerson wanted the government not to interfere with the individual but he also did not agree with laissez-faire. He maintained the inevitability of class and order. It seems that the analysis is similar to Carlyle but the solution is different.

Just as in nature, there are hierarchies in society. Carlyle and Emerson agreed, although the latter did not entirely agree, that might makes right; Emerson admitted that the strong get their way. During the American Civil War, he supported an enlarged central government.<sup>46</sup> The main duties of government, says Emerson in 'The Young American,' are 'the duty to instruct the ignorant, to supply the poor with work and with good guidance' (CL, III, p. 235). That is also Carlyle's opinion of a government. Like Carlyle, Emerson felt that cannibalism is a characteristic of human particularly when civilization is absent, as was supposedly the case among the blacks. In his speech given at Concord in 1837, Emerson says, 'The brute instinct rallies and centers in the black man. He is created on a lower plane than the white, and eats men, and kidnaps and tortures if he can' (Cabot, II, pp. 428-30).

Emerson began to believe that obtaining their freedom had improved the blacks, after the emancipation in the West Indies. From that time on, Emerson became an active abolitionist. Carlyle, on the other hand, thought that the emancipation in the West Indies had failed and it was an incentive for him to write 'Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question' in 1849. In the closing pages of *Past and Present*, Carlyle argued that English



Christians had nothing to do with freeing West Indies Blacks at the same time tolerating the wage-slavery of their white brothers at home: 'In one of these Lancashire Weavers, dying of hunger, there is more thought and heart, a greater arithmetical amount of misery and desperation, than in the whole gangs of Quashees' (CC,10, p. 278). In his *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (Harris, 1978, p. 155), Carlyle believed not in hierarchy but in just hierarchy. In his later years, he also approved of aristocracy as he disapproved of democracy, which was in his view another way of saying mob rule.

Was Carlyle a follower of a particular political party? No, he was neither Whig nor Tory. He believed that England's salvation lay in the middle-class, 'captains of industry', and their redirecting the energy of the proletariat — this makes him at the very outside a radical, and indeed he sounds Marxian in his call to the masses to regenerate England.

Awake, ye noble Workers ... Let God's justice, let pity, nobleness and manly valour, with more gold purses or will fewer, testify themselves in this year brief Life — transit to all Eternities, the Gods and Silences. It is to you I call, for ye are not dead, ye are already half-alive: there is in you a sleepless dauntless energy, the prime-matter of all nobleness in man. Honour to you in your kind. It is to you I call: Ye know at least this, That the mandate of God to His Creature man is: Work! (CC,10, p. 275).

Carlyle dissociated himself from any political party. 'In thought, I am the deepest Radical alive in this Island, but allow it to rest there, (not getting politically involved having other to do)' (*Carlyle's Letters*, 6, p. 292).

In the 'New Downing Street' pamphlet, Carlyle attacked the government's bureaucracy and described the Home Office as a mountain of dung in which human cattle spread in 'insalubrious horror and abomination' (CC, 20, p.146). In the 'Hudson Statue' pamphlet, he argued that the

famous 'Railway King', George Hudson was a bloated scoundrel and that the British citizens, who contributed towards the £25,000 to erect a statue honouring him, Mammonites and phallus-worshippers. In very comic language, Carlyle says that if the government outlaws the piling up of excrement in the streets, then why does it not prohibit 'prurient stupidity' from erecting columns honouring gamblers 'swollen to the age of bursting ... huge and abominable!' (p. 287).

Regarding the issue of slavery,<sup>47</sup> Emerson's journal entries in the thirties showed that he believed the institution of slavery to be morally wrong. Emerson resisted involvement in any organization which might limit some of his freedom to act in his own way and he was reluctant to support efforts aimed at social reform since he emphasized individual moral reform.<sup>48</sup> When Emerson spoke publicly at the Second Church in Concord in November 1837, his theme was not slavery but freedom of expression. At the outset, he said: 'I regret to hear that all the Churches but one, and almost all the public halls in Boston, are closed against discussion of this question [slavery]. Even the platform of the Lyceum, hitherto the freest of all organs, is so bonded and muffled that it threatens to be silent' ( Cabot, II, p. 425).

In his speech, 'Emancipation in the British West Indies' on 1 August 1844, Emerson called for 'the abolition of the old indecent nonsense about the nature of the negro' (W, XI, p.140). In the same speech, he mentioned black leaders such as Toussaint and the Haitian heroes exclaiming 'here is the anti-slave; here is man; and if you have man, black or white is an insignificance' (p.144). Emerson added: 'I say to you, you must save yourself, black or white, man or woman' (p. 145). During the fifties, Emerson became more active after the Fugitive Slave Law (1851): 'This filthy enactment was made in the nineteenth century, by people who could read and write. I will not obey it, by God' (JMN, XI, p. 412).

Unlike Emerson and other American Transcendentalists, Carlyle valued the community over the individual. Once he described Alcott as one whose 'aim is, it would seem, to be something, and become a universal blessing thereby; my fixed long-growing conviction is that man had better not attempts to be anything, but struggle with the whole soul of him to do something ... I do not want another Simon Stylites, however, cunning his pillar may be' (CEC, p. 326). When Emerson called at Chelsea and met Carlyle, Carlyle told him, '... as for your war, it seems to me simply this: that the South said to the nigger, 'God bless you, and be a slave;' and the North said, 'G..d .. you, and be a free man.'"<sup>49</sup> In a letter to Emerson, Carlyle wrote, 'How perfect it would be could Mungo once get his stupid case rectified, and eat his squash as a stupid Apprentice instead of a stupid Slave' (CEC, p.165). These remarks are different to evaluate. Though seeming to disagree, Carlyle can praise Emerson.

In reaction to Emerson's *Essays*, which he read in 1841, Carlyle wrote him that 'I felt as if in the wide world there were still but this one voice that responded intelligently to my own' (CEC, p. 295). But he did not specify in his letter the specific points of agreement with Emerson. Perhaps he found special agreement in 'Self-Reliance,' and his feeling that Emerson was at least not the typical American Yankee stereotype. Carlyle, in his preface to the English edition of the *Essays*, expressed the hope that Emerson some day might produce something of value: 'What Emerson's talent is, we will not altogether estimate by this Book. The utterance is abrupt, fitful; the great idea not yet embodied struggles towards an embodiment' (*Recognition*, p.19). That Emerson did not mention this preface in his letter thanking Carlyle for it was probably due to his displeasure (CEC, p. 308).

Some writers have oversimplified the contrasts between Emerson and Carlyle on philosophy. For example, Gougeon (1989) referred to Emerson as 'a transcendental idealist' and to Carlyle as 'more practical than idealist.'

Hardly adequate in view of the transcendental *Sartor Resartus*. A better appraisal is Harris' (1978) view that Emerson's essays were largely involved with matters that Carlyle had lost interest in and abandoned some ten years earlier. 'Carlyle never categorically renounced the Transcendentalism of *Sartor Resartus* and his early periodical pieces, but the glow had already begun to fade by the time of Emerson's visit to Craigenputtock' (p. 48). Carlyle's cool to Emerson's *Nature* was further evidence of this transition. Carlyle's reaction to Emerson's 'Divinity School Address' was still further indication:

You tell us with piercing emphasis that man's soul is great; show us a great soul of a man, on some work symbolic of such; this is the seal of such a message, and you will feel by and by that you are called to this. I long to see some concrete thing, some Event. Man's Life, American Forest, or piece of Creation, which this Emerson loves and wonders at, well Emersonized: depicted by Emerson, filled with the life of Emerson, and cast forth from him then to live by itself. If these Orations baulk me of this, how profitable soever they be for others, I will not love them (CEC, p. 215).

Emerson declined Carlyle's suggestion that he Emersonizes some American heroes. In a letter to Carlyle he stated that 'I incline to write philosophy, poetry, possibility, \_\_\_ anything but history' (CEC, p. 277). He acknowledged the need for an American Carlyle while refusing to assume that role himself. Emerson invited Carlyle to lecture in America a number of times. But he was loathe to assume discipleship, any 'Boswellism,' and 'every suffrage you get here is fairly your own.'

In response to Carlyle's 'assault against his [Emerson's] mountaintop solitude and rainbow painting' (Harris, 1978, p. 50), Emerson told Carlyle he had written much about Napoleon and was working on other biographical

subjects. Carlyle was pleased, and assumed that his own *Heroes* book would serve as Emerson's model, and proposed that Emerson use an American subject. Emerson provided Carlyle with a list of subjects for his lecture series on 'Representative Men,' encouraging Carlyle to think that he was finally coming down from the mountaintop.

Emerson's published writings through the 1840s did not, however, dispel Carlyle's impression of the former as a soliloquizer 'on the eternal mountaintops.' But Carlyle was judging the range of Emerson's interests mainly on the basis of published materials, knowing little of the voluminous journals and note books which contained Emerson's thoughts upon aspects of the world about him. Harris (1978) feels that Emerson deliberately underplayed his lectures in his correspondence with Carlyle, the reason being to establish an independent identity both in Carlyle's eyes and those of others: 'Many of his [Emerson's] friends, as well as enemies like Andrews Norton, already regarded him merely as a disciple of the earlier 'Kantian' Carlyle, and it may have occurred to him that Carlyle,<sup>50</sup> too, thought of him in the same way' (p. 56).

Carlyle's Romanticism  
and  
'Emerson's Apprenticeship to Carlyle'

The Americans believed that British Romantics, who showed their special interest in the language of common life, had not done enough to incorporate popular idioms into literary texts. Moreover, they argued that British literature was too often spoiled by a caste culture.<sup>51</sup> Unsurprisingly, the British made no effort to explore what Emerson called 'the near, the low, the common.' What the Americans sought was to enrich their American style by allowing it to respond and include larger themes derived from their native

heritage as well as from European and Oriental sources (Reynolds, 1988, p. 495). Emerson was very much concerned about the common touch, including into his discourse, 'pictures of vulgar life, ... the under as well as the upper vulgar.' Emerson, says Alcott, managed to use images of 'beasts, nesmin, the rabid mob, the courtesan' and then moved easily to the 'refined and elegant' (*Journals of Alcott*, pp. 81, 82).

Writing in 1949, Basil Willey asserted that Carlyle's work might be seen as a 'vigorous continuation of the [Romantic] movement.'<sup>52</sup> Willey also said that Carlyle was a man with a message, if ever there was one, and the message was 'essentially that of the great Romantic poets and thinkers, applied to the condition of England in the days of Chartism and the dismal science' (p.102).

In common with the Romantics, Carlyle believed in the 'benevolent deity' in nature particularly in his writings until 1848, and he implied that the internal contradictions in matter tend inevitably to work themselves out; all things tend to unify with the totality (Behnker, 1978, p. 12). In his 'Biography' essay, Carlyle says that things become memorable because man discovers and creates meaning for what he perceives: 'Often a slight circumstance contributes to the result (of remembering) some little, and perhaps to appearance accidental, feature is presented; a light-gleam, which instantly excites the mind, and urges it to complete the picture, and evolve the meaning thereof for itself' (CE, 28, pp. 57). Behnker remarked that the implication here is that union with all is both a natural and irresistible impulse. There is something in the universe attracting all the fragments around it; and 'the human mind, which is sensitive to this persuasive element in the world, is spontaneously drawn to clarity and resolution.' There is also another implication — the activity of the human mind which imposes meaning upon the fragments has been emphasized. During the

1830s Carlyle seemed to trust nature; but after 1848 nature becomes full of trickery and deceit; and man must be on his guard against temptation and seduction (p. 12). The active mind evolves meanings for itself.

Moreover, Carlyle, like other Romantics, believed in the 'spontaneous artistic creation.' In his earlier works, he described work a natural and an expression of the individual's instinct to make things: 'He that works, whatsoever be his work, he bodies forth the form of Things Unseen; a small Poet every Worker is' (CC,10, p. 205). Carlyle also wrote, 'The world of Nature, for every man, is the Phantasy of Himself; this world is the multiple Image of his own Dream!' In *Sartor Resartus*, he presents the 'good-born' in man and nature; in *The French Revolution*, he portrays the diabolic in man and society. In the former work, Carlyle attempts to build a sacred world out of eighteenth century materialism; in the latter, 'the promised millenium of revolutionary justice and fraternity ends in the backing to pieces of the Swip Guard in Paris and in mass murder at Lyons and Nantes' (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 11).

Carlyle emphasized the necessity of 'cultivating the unconscious mind' in an attempt to recover the past, just as Wordsworth who made its cultivation essential for the recovery of the individual past (Rosenberg, 1985, p. 19). 'A like unconscious talent of remembering and of forgetting again,' says Carlyle, 'is indispensable to the writing of autobiography and of history' (CE, 28, p.173). For Wordsworth, the self keeps its sanity and continuity through a return to the early experiences in nature — the self becomes open to such experiences through a 'wise passiveness' that puts the conscious mind to rest. For Carlyle, it is 'wise oblivion' when he says that the historian becomes a sacred poet as much by virtue of 'wise oblivion' as by 'wise memory' (Prologue to *Cromwell*). Rosenberg (1985) argued that 'The epic journey inward into autobiographical time that Wordsworth began in *The Prelude* finds its analogue in the epic journey backward into historical time

that Carlyle began in *The French Revolution*' (p. 19).

According to Carlyle, nature is hostile (*Past and Present*, 1843) and work becomes a 'trial'; it is a battle. Earlier in 'Characteristics' essay [CE, 28, pp. 46-92] (1831): 'Our being is made up of Light and Darkness, resting on the Darkness, and balancing it; everywhere there is Dualism, Equipoise; a perpetual Contradiction dwells in us: 'Where shall I place myself to escape from any own shadow" (p. 57). As he grows older, Carlyle's idea of nature's hostility increases (Behnken, 1978, p. 15). 'O Heavens, if we saw an army ninety-thousand strong, maintained and fully equipt, in continual reaction and battle against Human Starvation, against Chaos, Necessity, Stupidity, and our real 'natural enemies' What a business were it! Fighting and molesting not 'The French ...' but fighting and incessantly the Devil and his Angles' (CC, 10, p. 263).

Bufano (1972) is dubious that Emerson was ever a disciple of Carlyle and describes their correspondence as a mere exchange of monologues. This correspondence occurred over the period 1834-1872. In the early correspondence, Emerson's role was as apprentice, Carlyle as master. 'But after they had risen to fame in the forties, the subordination of Emerson to Carlyle grew impossible, and their second meeting, at the end of the decade, simply confirmed the disparities in outlook and images of one another that prolonged obscurity and separation had previously disguised' (p. 17).

As early as 1827 Emerson had already spoken highly of Carlyle's writings, but he ceased to derive any inspiration from Carlyle some two decades before the correspondence ceased. The period from 1827 to 1848 is therefore the most revealing of their interaction. After their initial meeting, the two felt each to be of like mind and spirit. But the friendship itself almost ended in 1847. 'The rent which the events of that year made in the bond



between the two men was not healed until 1850, and then not completely. Thereafter the friendship stayed at a courteous level but never regained the former depth of trust and hope' (Bufano, 1972, p. 17).

But an apprenticeship is easy to understand, since it was during Emerson's formative time, when he was reading the *Edinburgh Review*, that Carlyle was contributing his best essays to that journal, and Emerson had read five of these articles in 1832. In Carlyle's anonymous 'The Signs of the Times,' Emerson confirmed his own view.

the Age of Machinery was upon the world; that the spirit of man was sunk in meetings, committees, prospectuses and public dinners; that worship was now 'mechanically explained into Fear of pain or Hope of pleasure;' that thought was become 'not Meditation but Argument;' that poetry was being reduced to 'a product of the smaller intestines;' and that morality had turned into a 'calculation of the profitable' (Bufano, 1972, p. 17).

By 1830, Carlyle's name appeared in an Emerson journal entry, and Emerson admitted being 'cheered and instructed' by Carlyle.

Feeling deep discontent with his faith, Emerson sailed for Europe on Christmas day in 1832, a major aim being to meet Carlyle. While the positive and charming particulars of their first meeting in 1833 are well known, there is a tendency to overlook the seeds of discontent already sown. Emerson privately felt that he could hope for 'better things' of Carlyle and, in contrast to his views of Wordsworth and Coleridge, he saw in Carlyle 'an uncertain, erratic future,' while at the same time Carlyle might have 'resented his austere visitor, a provincial, afterall, with no name' (Bufano, 1972, p. 18). On the other hand, it is possible that Carlyle saw in Emerson a fellow provincial.

The two expressed certain common themes which tended to fuse their

mere acquaintance into friendship, including their mutual antagonism toward Unitarianism and the rigid requirements of the pulpit; Emerson's heterodoxy was stimulated by Carlyle, especially timely in that he was soon to quit the pulpit. Emerson wrote in his journal: 'Carlyle is so amiable that I love him' (JMN, IV, p. 45).

From 1834 until 1847, when personal friction nearly ended their correspondence, Emerson was a financial boost to Carlyle, performing 'feats of sales arrangement' (Bufano, 1972, p. 19) which kept their friendship alive. But there were of course other bonds, both started out as school teachers, changed in college to the study of divinity. Emerson felt that Carlyle shared his desire to 'prosestylize', especially on higher spiritual matters: 'When Carlyle praised *Nature* and passed the volume among his friends, lauding the 'glad serenity of soul' with which Emerson looked out 'on the wondrous Dwelling-place of yours and mine,' Emerson felt doubly certain that his master no less than he was a Transcendentalist' (Bufano, 1972, p. 19).

But even when Carlyle<sup>53</sup> shared Emerson's Transcendentalism, their views were different. Carlyle was more interested in resurrecting or vitalizing the past, in making historicism religious. Emerson was more interested in the future, a millenium, and was a prophet of sorts. Carlyle early announced his differences with Emerson, and the latter was not confident that Carlyle would actually accept his invitation to lecture in America. As early as 1835 Emerson found Carlyle's ideas on Religion and immortality 'limited,' and he feared that Carlyle was 'more interested in exhibiting his acquired knowledge than in learning more' (JMN, V, pp. 173-74). The disappointment was repeated in 1845 when Emerson published his *Poems*, knowing Carlyle's aversion to modern poetry. Carlyle wanted more concreteness than he could find in the poems, and the former's lyricism now seemed unrelated to the latter's. Carlyle found in Emerson's

poems 'a grand view of the Universe' but thought that Emerson was 'very perverse; and thro' this perplexed undiaphanous element, you do not fall on me like radiant summer rainbows, like floods of sunlight, but with thin piercing radiances which affect me like the light of the stars' (CEC, p. 416).

By way of speculation, one may wonder about the extent to which health may have played a part in Carlyle's occasional outbursts over Emerson. Harris (1978) contrasted Emerson's good nature (at seventy Emerson said he did not know what it was like to be ill for a whole day) with Carlyle who admitted that he never felt well. He told Emerson, 'I am older than you; but in Humour I am older by centuries' (CEC, p. 204). Ill temper may have led to harsh language which turned Emerson away from Carlyle: 'His sneers and scoffs are thrown in every direction. He breaks every sentence with scoffing laugh, — 'windbag,' 'monkey,' 'donkey,' 'bladder,' and let him describe whom he will, it is always 'poor fellow.' I said, 'What a fine fellow you are to bespatter the world with this oil of vitriol!' (JMN, VII, pp. 347-48).

Perhaps some would have preferred Carlyle's lashing out against society to Emerson's 'fanning imaginary wings,' demanding more body and less soul from Emerson. Emerson thought that perhaps the two would be more compatible on a personal basis rather than on the basis of their literary productions. He thought that a repeat visit to Craigenputtock would reconcile the two.

Carlyle was afraid of lecturing in America for fear of trampling on the Transcendentalists. According to Bufano (1972), '... if the philistinism of London rendered him miserable the devoteeism of Concord would render him mad' (p. 21). Emerson realized that Carlyle was more at home with 'the Great Metropolis,' such as London, regardless of how ugly it might have been. Emerson tried sending emissaries of sorts to help fill the breach, but they too reminded Carlyle of their vast differences, other than just philosophical. Emerson had inherited \$20,000 whereas Carlyle labelled

himself 'the poorest man in London.' Emerson walked serenely on his forty acres at Walden Pond with his daughter and thought half the inhabitants of Concord to be geniuses, in sharp contrast to Carlyle's view of Londoners as vicious imbeciles, members of a depraved humanity in general.

### In Their Own Words

The Emerson/Carlyle connexion has been elaborated in the foregoing mainly through the analytic eyes of others. It is appropriate to fill this out with the substance of the two men's own words, particularly in journals and correspondence. Upon the occasion of their first meeting, Emerson's journal provided the following commentary.

September 1, 1833. Liverpool. I thank the great God who has led me through this European scene, this last schoolroom in which he has pleased to instruct me from Malta's isle, thro' Sicily, thro' Italy, thro' Switzerland, thro' France, thro' England, thro' Scotland, in safety and pleasure and has now brought me to the shore and the ship that steers westward. He has shown me the men I wished to see \_\_ Landor, Coleridge, Carlyle, Wordsworth \_\_ he has thereby comforted and confirmed me in my convictions. Many things I owe to the sight of these men. I shall judge more justly, less timidly, of wise men forevermore. To be sure not one of these is a mind of the very first class, but what the intercourse with each of these suggests is true of intercourse with better men, that they never fill the ear \_\_ fill the mind \_\_ no, it is an idealized portrait which always we draw of them (EJ, p. 115).

Though Emerson was a stranger to them, these men made a great impression in their conversations, he would remember them as 'sensible well read earnest men.' One quality that the four men shared, Emerson

thought, was their 'insight into religious truth' in different degrees \_\_ that is, 'moral truth' which Emerson calls 'the first philosophy.' Emerson found comfort in meeting these 'geniuses' who talked sincerely and told him of the knowledge that puzzled them. One of them, Carlyle, was different and 'so amiable' (EJ, p.115).

Thus even at their first meeting, Emerson shows already the signs of reaction that would dampen his early enthusiasm of the twenties for Carlyle. Even so, Emerson still loves Carlyle, especially for his amiability. His second meeting with Carlyle in 1847 reveals a far different kind of evaluation, one concerned far less with formal philosophy.

October, 1847. Carlyle. I found at Liverpool, after a couple of days, a letter which had been seeking me, from Carlyle, addressed to 'R. W. E. \_\_ on the instant when he lands in England,' conveying the heartiest welcome and urgent invitation to house and hearth. And finding that I should not be wanted for a week in the Lecture-rooms I came down to London, on Monday, and at 10 at night, the door was opened to me by Jane Carlyle, and the man himself was behind her with a lamp in the hall. They were very little changed from their old selves of fourteen years ago (in August) when I left them at Craigenputocck. 'Well,' said Carlyle, 'here <sup>we</sup> are shovelled together again!' The floodgates of his talk were quickly opened, and the river is a plentiful stream. We had a wide talk that night, until nearly 1 o'clock, and at breakfast next morning, again. At noon or later we walked forth to Hyde Park, and the palaces, about two miles from here to the National Gallery, and to the Strand ... (EJ, pp. 379-80).

Emerson believed in Carlyle's real range and vigor and how much he might do could not be discovered unless one had the opportunity of seeing him. Calling him a 'trip-hammer, with an Aeolian attachment,' Emerson went on to say:

He [Carlyle] has, the strong religious tinge, in the way you find it in people of that burly temperament. That, and all his qualities have certain virulence, coupled, thro' it be, in his case, with the utmost impatience of Christendom and Jewdom, and all existing presentments of good old story. He talks like a very unhappy man, profoundly solitary, displeased and hindered by all men and things about him, and plainly binding his time and mediating how to undermine and explode the whole world of nonsense that torments him. He is respected here by all sorts of people \_\_\_ understands his own value quite as well as Webster \_\_\_ of whom, his behaviour sometimes reminds me, especially when he is with fine people \_\_\_ and can see society on his own terms (EJ, pp. 380).

Emerson here spends little time on Transcendental themes, over which they had long since parted company, but emphasizes his character, as if Carlyle somehow reminds him of the self-reliant Yankee individualist. Emerson seemingly takes pride in being able to identify Carlyle as 'not mainly a scholar' but, rather 'a very practical Scotchman' such as may be found in 'any saddler's or iron-dealer's shop.' Emerson describes, it seems, with pleasure Carlyle's 'virulence' and 'impatience' and his desire to 'explode the whole world of nonsense that torments him,' just as would Hugh Whelan, Emerson's 'burly gardener,' who would talk scornfully of books 'in the tone and talk and laughter of Carlyle.' Emerson looks not into Carlyle's actual philosophical formulations but, instead, into his 'religious tinge' which Emerson feels typical of people of 'that burly temperament.' Emerson notes that Carlyle's behaviour reminds him of the highly regarded Webster \_\_\_ no cultural pansy by any means \_\_\_ back in America. In short, here we find Emerson identifying with Carlyle on the basis of temperament and style, with his moral outrage which undoubtedly must remind him, admittedly or not, of his own native American Yankee heritage.

After Carlyle's death, the Massachusetts Historical Society invited

Emerson to speak at a meeting in Boston in February of 1881. Emerson was then well on years and failing mentally and unable to prepare an address. But he read the following short paper, most of which he took from a letter written in 1848 after his second visit to Carlyle.<sup>54</sup>

Emerson believes that Carlyle was an 'immense talker,' and an extraordinary in his conversation as in his writing. Carlyle was a 'practical Scotchman' but not mainly a scholar.

Such as you would find in any saddler's iron-dealer's shop, and then only accidentally and by a surprising addition, the admirable scholar and writer he is [Here Emerson repeats almost word for word his likening of Carlyle to Hugh Whelan in his formal entry of September 1, 1833] ... And though no mortal in America could pretend to talk with Carlyle, who is also as remarkable in England as the Tower of London, yet neither would he in any manner satisfy us (Americans) or begin to answer the questions which we ask.

In Britain, Emerson says, Carlyle was a 'national' character of whom the public are always reminded. When Carlyle's name is mentioned, the inquiry and the effect are great. Emerson, of course, admires Carlyle's personality: Forster Rawdon reported to Emerson an incident which happened to Carlyle in his presence when they were attending a dinner at one of the famous hotels. Forster told Emerson that when Carlyle talked to the waiters and the managers and even to a priest, they were all frightened of his manner.

Emerson points out that many young disciples of liberal opinions were anxious to meet Carlyle. Carlyle treated these young men with contempt. For Emerson, there is a big gap between Carlyle and these young men: Carlyle favoured slavery, they stand for freedom; he preferred the Russian Czar; they like republics.

... they admire Cobden and free trade and he is a protectionist in political economy; they will eat vegetables and drink water, and he is a Scotchman who thinks English national character has a pure enthusiasm for beef and mutton \_\_ describes with gusto the crowds of people who gaze at the sirloins in the dealer's shop-window, and even likes the Scotch nightcap; they praise moral suasion, he goes for murder, money, capital punishment and other pretty abominations of English law. They wish freedom of the press, and he thinks the first thing he would do, if he got into Parliament, would be to turn out to reporters, and stop all manner of mischievous speaking to Buncobe, and windbags.

Then Emerson goes on to explain Carlyle's attitude toward government. Emerson stresses the disparity between the Parliament's ideas and Carlyle's opinions. Carlyle attacked Parliament because, as Emerson put it, 'They go for free institutions; for letting things alone, only giving opportunity and motive to everyman; he for a stringent government, that shows people what they must do, and makes them do it.' Carlyle also says: 'Here the Parliament gathers up six millions of pounds every year to give to the poor, and yet the people starve. I think if they would give it to me, to provide the poor with labour, and with authority to make them work or shoot them \_\_ and I to be hanged if I did not do it \_\_ I could find them in plenty of Indian meal.'

According to Emerson, Carlyle stood against free trade and considered every labourer a monopolist. For Carlyle, the English navigation laws make England's commerce. 'If a tory takes heart at his hatred of stump-oratory and model republics, he replies, 'Yes, the idea of pig-headed soldier, who will obey orders, and fire on his father at the command of his officer, is a great comfort to the aristocratic mind.' What Carlyle does care for is the source of all strength, that is, the 'genuineness' in his companions. No matter whether he be, a literary, a fashionable, or a political man, he comes to see Carlyle and to enjoy his company, whose 'talk often reminds you of what was said of



Johnson: 'If his pistol missed fire, he would knock you down with the butt-end.'

Emerson sees Carlyle as wholly committed to his own cause, to what he speaks for.

Great his reference for realities \_\_\_ for all such traits as spring from the intrinsic nature of the actor. He humours this into the idolatry of strength. A strong nature has a chasm for him, previous, it would seem, to all inquiry whether the force be divine or diabolic. He preaches, as by cannonade, the doctrine that every noble nature was made by God, and contains, if savage passions, also fit checks and grand impulses, and, however extravagant, will keep its orbit and return from far.

Carlyle is characterized by the 'severity of his moral sentiment' and he worships fortitude, enthusiasm or any sign of good nature in man despite his use of satire. When he looks at any object in existence, Carlyle is 'considerate, condescending good nature' is deeper than his humour.

Carlyle stressed the downfall and decay of all religions:

His guiding genius is his moral sense, his perception of the sole importance of truth and justice; but that is a truth of character, not of catechisms. He says, 'There is properly no religion in England. These idle nobles at Tattersall's \_\_\_ there is lying Church; and life is a humbug.' He prefers Cambridge to Oxford, but he thinks Oxford and Cambridge education indurates the young men, as the Styx hardened Achilles, so that when they come forth of them, they say, 'Now we are proof; we have gone through all the degrees, and are case-hardened against the veracities of the Universe; nor men nor God can penetrate us.'

He thought that the only religious act nowadays which man can perform securely is 'to wash himself well.'

Carlyle also prophesied according to Emerson that evil is coming in bad times but it would not come in his own time. He sees it coming and there is one good about it: it is the 'visible appearance of gods.' Carlyle called for wise men to address themselves to society's problems and not to such things as art or poetry. In reality, Carlyle stood for the scholars, for the Chartists, for the pauper, and for the people.

His errors of opinions are nothing in comparison with his merit, in my judgment. This aplomb can not be mimicked, it is the speaking to the heart of the thing. And in England, where the morgue of aristocracy has very slowly admitted scholars into society — a very few houses only in the high circles being ever opened to them — he had carried himself erect, made himself a power confessed by all men, and taught scholars their lofty duty. He never feared the face of a man.

This paper serves as a kind of final estimate of Carlyle by Emerson. Most prominently absent from it is any concern with German Idealism or Transcendentalism. Emerson returns to his emphasis on the character of Carlyle, but in a far deeper sense than just his independence and honesty, be it ever so important to Emerson. Emerson begins inconspicuously by praising Carlyle as a great conversationalist, uncompromising and a style that could frighten 'a whole company.' Emerson lists many of Carlyle's stands on contemporary issues — most of which Emerson himself opposed — and then Carlyle's flexibility, his ability to see both sides. Emerson chooses to interpret this as a virtue, that Carlyle liked 'genuineness (the source of all strength)' rather than mere ideological consistency. He justifies Carlyle's brusqueness on grounds that he thereby exposes falseness in men, that Carlyle is a lover of honest strength rather than effete drawing room niceties, a man of severe moral sentiment seeking only the good in

man, harsh but yet with humour, a man of 'considerate, condescending good nature.' Thus Carlyle's guiding genius is his moral sense, his 'perception of the sole importance of truth and justice.' Any 'errors' in Carlyle's opinions Emerson finds as nothing 'in comparison with this merit.' Social lies and tottering institutions receive the brunt of his hostilities — all for the better in the eyes of Emerson. Wise men should be more concerned with the problem of society than with 'art and fine fancies and poetry and such things,' a category in which Emerson, at times, himself fitted according to Carlyle.

Carlyle was by no means antagonistic to whatever Emerson did, even though he found him wanting in many ways, as already described earlier in this chapter. From a letter of 2 December 1856<sup>55</sup> one reads of his positive reception of Emerson's *English Traits*.

The great reading public entering Mr. Fraser's and other shops in quest of daily provender, it may be as well to state, on the very threshold, that this little Reprint of an American Book of Essays is in no wise the thing stupid for them; that not the great reading public, but only the small thinking public, and perhaps only a portion of these, have any question to ask concerning it. No Editor or Reprinter can expect such a Book ever to become popular here. But, thank Heaven, the small thinking public has now also a visible existence among us, is visibly enlarging itself.

Carlyle focused upon those of 'small thinking public' who could understand Emerson's work.

He could praise Emerson's speakings and writings. In his opinion, Emerson is more notable for what he has not spoken and has forborne to do than for what he has spoken or done. Emerson's invaluable talent is still stored.

That an educated man of good gifts and opportunities, after looking at the public arena, and even trying, not with ill success, what its task and its prizes might mount to, should retire for long years into rustic obscurity; and amid the all-pervading jingle of dollars and loud chattering of ambitions and promotions, should quietly, with cheerful deliberateness, sit down to spend his life not in Mammon-Worship, or the hunt for reputation, if hence, place or any outward advantage whatsoever; this when we get notice of it, is a thing really worth nothing. [Here Carlyle goes into a rather lengthy diatribe of his own on the various forms of Mammon he finds in society.]

Carlyle credited Emerson for his lectures at various times and places to special audiences. He reminded his readers of Emerson's *Nature* and noted that 'a great meaning lies in these pieces, which as yet finds not adequate expression for itself.'

This present little volume of Essays [*English Traits*], printed in Boston few months ago, is Emerson's first Book. An unpretending little Book, composed probably, in good part, from mere Lectures which already lay written. It affords us, on several sides, in such manner as it can, a direct glimpse into the man and that spiritual world of his.

Then he moves to talk about Emerson's theology. Emerson's way of thought bears traces of his theological background, in an 'enigmatic way' as he speaks of the 'universal soul.' Advising his British readers, Carlyle tells them not to worry about Emerson's creed because whether he was a 'pantheist' or a 'Theist' could not be decided. One of its greatest merits is that Emerson's Book follows no system and even 'points or stretches for beyond all systems.' Carlyle preferred to call it 'the soliloquy of a true soul, alone under the stars, in this day.'

In these *Essays*, Carlyle said, every reader may gradually find 'What

degree of mere literary talent lies' in them, since Emerson's talent would not be estimated by this Book. In every utterance, the true Emersonian heart makes his readers meet New England country.

... the authentic green Earth is there, with her mountains, rivers, with her mills and farms. Sharp gleams of insight arrest us by their pure intellectuality; here and there, in heroic rusticism, atone of modest manfulness, of mild invincibility, low-voiced but lion-strong, makes us too thrilled with a noble pride. Talent? Such ideas as dwell in this man, how can they ever speak themselves with enough of talent? The talent is not the chief question. The idea, that is the chief question.

Carlyle concluded his view of Emerson's *English Traits* by recommending the Book as 'the Book of any original veridical man, worthy the acquaintance of those who delight in such; and so, Welcome to it whom it may concern.'

Like Emerson's acceptance of Carlyle, Carlyle's acceptance of Emerson in the above preface is qualified considerably, but in similar mode. Whereas Emerson did not consider Carlyle a first rate mind, Carlyle was not entirely sure of how big a literary or intellectual 'acorn' Emerson represented, but surely one that was, in Carlyle's opinion, capable of growth, especially in New England rather than in England. He finds that Emerson is at least not the mean type of literary or social pygmy whom Carlyle was wont to find so abundantly around him. Carlyle praises Emerson's character rather than his literary style or intellectual output: 'What Emerson's talent is, we will not altogether estimate by this Book.' Much of the Preface is filled with Carlyle's commentary on subject matter suggested to Carlyle by the *Essays*. In any case, he found them inspirational, although, as noted by Allen (1981), 'he did not understand their Neoplatonic background' (p. 380). Such philosophical understanding, however, seemed quite secondary to the

dominant themes around which Emerson and Carlyle estimated each other, themes such as character, genuineness as source of inspiration, moral tone and earnestness, social and institutional criticism, independence of spirit, great moral sense and uplifting concern for society, conversational impact (in the case of Carlyle), religious sentiment rather than mere formal acceptance of dogma or ritual, and hatred of false manners, pretense, and social lies.

Despite their disagreements on certain issues, both Carlyle and Emerson felt that they are close to each other. Emerson wrote;

Why, I say, should read this book [*Past and Present*]? The man himself is mine: he can sit under trees of Paradise and tell me a hundred histories deeper, truer, dearer than this, all the eternal days of God ... The pages which to others look so rich and abhorring, to me have a frigid and marrowless air for the warm hand and heart I have an estate in and the living eye of which I can almost discern across the sea some sparkles. I think my affection to that man really incapacitates me from reading his book (J, V, pp. 454-55).

In the same year of 1838, Carlyle significantly wrote that 'steam and iron are making all the planet into one Village' (CEC, p. 209). In his journal, Carlyle also wrote: 'There is no likeness of the face of Emerson that I know of. ... It lies among his liabilities to be engraved yet, to become a Sect Founder, and go partially to the devil in several ways; all which may the kind heaven forbid!' (*Carlyle, 1834-1881*, I, p. 220).

Whatever its foundation, a congruence between the two drew them together as they matured. In response to a reading of Emerson's last important book, *The Conduct of Life*, Carlyle showed sympathy and acceptance. 'You have grown older, more pungent, piercing. I never read from you before such lightning gleams of meaning as are to be found here'

(CEC, pp. 533-34). Actually, Emerson had not changed ideologically, whereas Carlyle's acceptance of him had.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

Emersonism refers to the philosophical and romantic components, especially the former, of Emerson's own brand of Transcendentalism. Emerson's gift as a specifically literary artist was a major distinguishing feature that set him apart from most of his contemporaries. In dealing with the influences that shaped Emerson's art and philosophy, I have considered the impact of Transcendentalism and Romanticism in the three British writers, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle on Emersonism.

Though Emerson evinced his interest in the three writers early in life and though he continued to be interested in them to his death, yet one can not say that his interest in any one of them remained at the same level throughout his career. Each one of the three writers had a province in Emerson's mind not encroached upon by the others.

Emerson, born some 33 years after Wordsworth, found the similarities between his and Wordsworth's thoughts a natural affinity rather than an imitation, a profitable experience in which he absorbed that which was natural to him, rejecting the rest. The similarities in thought reflected both Transcendental and Romantic themes. Emerson, being the more philosophically erudite of the two, was more concerned with the Transcendental roots of things through formal philosophical elaborations, whether of European or Oriental flavor or his own. Wordsworth was more identified with nature and pantheism.

Philosophically, Emerson and Wordsworth both related to a Universal Reality, or Spirit. Immortality was for them far more important than mere words; metaphors could only inspire the ultimate metaphysical quest for Reality. Emerson and Wordsworth rejected conventional religion, although



increasingly and ultimately dramatically less so in Wordsworth's later life. Dogma or formal philosophy is rejected by both men in their search for organic truth in which the mind is fitted to the Universe and the Universe to the mind.

Romantically, the mood and its communication, not the niceties of poetic diction, is foremost for both Emerson and Wordsworth. Also primary for both is the key role of personal experience, the child-like and natural, of being 'your own man' rather than a mere consumer of other's ideas, a seeking after elemental feelings of the heart.

The American experience and the emergence of the American mind was characterized by a rejection of aristocratic culture, a 'Yankee' spirit which although not especially gentlemanly, of an independent turn of mind. Accordingly, not at all surprising is Emerson's eventual acceptance of the literary maverick in Wordsworth, the nonconformist and independent, at least in his literary endeavors something of a Yankee spirit after all.

Emerson was ambivalent about Wordsworth to the very end, but decreasingly so as the years wore on, during which Emerson increasingly identified his own thought with that of Wordsworth, frequently citing him in his lectures and journals as a stimulant for his thought, an inspiration, a creator in himself of optimistic moods. Emerson at one time or another, especially in his early years, found Wordsworth dull and vulgar, of false taste, having no skill for making a rhyme, surrendering to traditional poetic stylistic norms, using overdone poetic imagery, not sufficiently elegant, and forcing poetical objects. Yet, Emerson valued him for his moments of spontaneity and nature verse. While Emerson saw Wordsworth as failing to adequately express his 'gift wisdom', not in part necessarily a great poetic talent, he nevertheless lauds him for his philosophical insights, as a receiver of 'divine messages', one who brings us nearer to nature and to the secrets

of solitude, and joy, a man who has the wisdom of humanity, and who is superior to circumstance.

In his early years, Emerson cared little for the poetry of Wordsworth, but he was attracted to Coleridge's philosophy. Indeed Emerson thought of him as the greatest philosopher of his era. He owed much to Coleridge in regard to Kant and the distinction between the Understanding and the Reason, a distinction which is at the core of New England Transcendentalism.

Coleridge's idealism resembles that of Emerson, both being founded on the premise that ideas are the substance of Reason and that they could liberate the mind from the senses. Emerson was interested more in Coleridge's statement that 'Reason is the Power of universal and necessary convictions, the Source of substance of Truths above sense, and having their evidence in themselves' (*Aids to Reflection*). Emerson did not bother to distinguish between Practical Reason and Pure Reason as did Coleridge. In his terms, Reason is 'the highest faculty of the soul.' The concept of a higher Reason, a mental faculty which enables the individual to perceive spiritual truth intuitively, stimulated by Post-Kantian philosophy as interpreted by Carlyle and Coleridge, among others, was essential to Emersonism. Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists contended that 'understanding' or the capacity for empirical reasoning was superseded by this higher faculty of Reason. In following Coleridge, Emerson found a grander total perception than in Locke's contriving faculty, knowing of the total man not merely of the 'Understanding.'

Undoubtedly Emerson relied for many years on the use of Coleridge's distinction between Reason and Understanding after publishing *Nature*. Coleridge's dialectical 'reconciliation of opposites', a characteristic method of his thought, is relevant to and perhaps consistent with Emerson's doctrines of self-reliance and compensation. While Coleridge stressed the connexion between polarity and development, 'every Power in nature and in

Spirit must evolve an opposite, as the sole means and condition of its manifestation; and all opposition is a tendency to Reunion' (*The Friend*, I, p. 94), Emerson showed a similar dialectical method, 'I should like to know if any one ever went up a mountain so high as that he overlooked right and wrong and ... saw their streams mix' (JMN, III, p. 310).

Moreover, Emerson valued Coleridge's theological speculations. Like Coleridge, Emerson believed in the ever-present Universal Essence or Supreme Being, who acted upon the soul of man, not from without, 'that is, in space, time, but spiritually, or through ourselves.' While Coleridge was most at home in society, Emerson strongly emphasised the individual. For the one, the woods provided the best atmosphere for contemplation, for the other, that atmosphere was, doubtless, congregational worship in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Emerson, like other Romantics, saw the poet as a 'reconciler,' 'inspirer,' 'representative,' 'virtuous man' who keeps close to the works of nature. Coleridge's impact on Romanticism and poetry in America can best be understood in terms of the concept of imagination and fancy. The principle of organic unity was also important for both Coleridge and Emerson since it involves the process of growth, the inseparability but not the identity of form and content, the inseparability of part and whole, and the presence of conscious and unconscious, willed and spontaneous elements.

Emerson, Coleridge, and Carlyle seemed to have adopted the same rhetorical method of presentation. They announce their beliefs and then reiterate these beliefs in various forms whether by developing and supporting their main propositions in conventional expository ways, or asking a question and devoting a paragraph to answering, as in Emerson's case. Emerson is everywhere the preacher. When the Concord School of Philosophy convened to eulogize Emerson in 1884, Elizabeth Peabody,

who was acquainted with him for sixty years, praised his orthodoxy: 'In reading and comparing Mr. Emerson's two discourses ['Divinity School Address' and 'The Preacher'], I preached at forty years 'internal', ... it may be plainly seen that he was always a preacher of the Christ whose 'glory was with the Father before the world was,' 'the same yesterday, to-day, and forever' (p.155).

Emerson and Carlyle relied on repetition. Both men strove to make the listener more aware of an idea through repetition. For both, form and content go hand in hand; stylistic form is determined by similarity of content. Emerson sees language as a system of metaphoric, symbolic, analogical relationship that represent the correspondences between nature and mind. Carlyle emphasised that there is concealment as well as revelation in the symbol. There is however 'distinctly or directly' some embodiment of the infinite in the symbol. The 'Universe is but one vast Symbol of God' (SR).

Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* viewed the material world as a temporary mask of a permanent spiritual reality, a view, as we have seen, consistent with that of Emersonism. Despite their differences whether in ideology or in temperament, Carlyle and Emerson were attached to each another. Emerson seems to reflect his own cultural optimism peculiar to the mid-nineteenth century American scene, seeing hope, beauty, pleasure, and happiness in nature. For Emerson, the world becomes joyous to him who opens his heart to the spiritual affinity he has with the universe. Not so for Carlyle. Whereas Emerson focuses on hope and pleasure, Carlyle gives us despair and sorrow. Evidently, Carlyle finds meaning in the transcendental because his social life is meaningless, thereby escaping from the material into the spiritual, a far cry from Emerson's finding spirit in matter, as it were. Emerson sees material objects as symbols of spiritual reality while Carlyle sees them as real obstacles to the attainment of spiritual reality, merciless

facts.

It is Carlyle's treatment of the hero that reveals his affinity with Emerson. Carlyle (1841) presented in a relatively colloquial style the hero as divinity, as prophet, as poet, as priest, as man of letters, and as king. His treatment of the hero fits in with Emerson's: The Scholar in 'The American Scholar', is the hero who guides and uplifts men by showing them facts among appearances, uniting and animating all men, both great and small. The great man for Emerson is one in whom average men find their own representative, their own dreams. The times are partly responsible for the life of Napoleon. Greatness for Emerson is based on the qualities and conditions which make the few more efficient than the many, a combination of various qualities. The great man promotes programmes by helping others to live, but in an artificial world that is not of his own making. Emerson downplays the Carlylean tendency to see great men as heroes whose personality is the decisive factor; for Emerson, the time and place also count.

Though Emerson shares Carlyle's Transcendentalism, his views are different. Emerson was more interested in the future. He was a prophet of sorts. Carlyle was more interested in resurrecting a vitalizing past, in making historicism religious. Such differences are basically related to their respective cultures. Carlyle's doctrines fit into European culture while Emerson's fit into his Yankee spirit. Moreover, these differences are found in their attitudes toward slavery and democracy as well as in their style. Carlyle's stylistic tone is aggressive. Although Emerson was not aggressive by nature, whether in language or action, he was attracted to the power in writing of other people.

Emerson's achievement was to make a union of German Transcendentalism with a traditional Christianity of Unitarian cast, of Orientalism and Platonism, including some ideas probably his own, and to express it in terms purely Emersonian. All of Emerson's conceptions are

inspired with his conviction of the Over-Soul doctrine of self reliance. Emersonism is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, Emerson was a revolutionary who assaulted in word and thought tradition and complacency, but on the other hand, he was morally a traditionalist who drew on the established body of Unitarianism to call his contemporaries back to right reason.

Emersonism calls for religion and rejects all existing churches. It seeks social justice and emphasises that conservatism and reform have abuses. It left an enormous impact on American literature. When Emerson read Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* for the first time, he remarked that his own portrait had come to life, that Whitman was following the Emersonian doctrine of self-reliance. In his *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman also presented many poetic themes which are influenced by Emersonism.

Emerson, of course, we have seen, was not an accurate transmitter of the romantic and transcendental ideas of his British mentors; he repeatedly distorted and coarsened their definitions and distinctions in the interest of deriving and composing an Emersonian message fit for his fellow Americans.

The political activism of organized groups working on a national scale to effect social change in America in the late 1980s is not altogether different from 1840s. The environmental groups in America and the Green Peace Party in Europe, working against acid rain for the protection of nature, may be seen as new experiments that would not have surprised Emerson. Moreover, demonstrations dominated America and Europe in the mid-1980s against the deployment of Nato's Pershing missiles, while the uprisings in Eastern European countries in 1988-1989 could be interpreted as a kind of transcendental rejection and refusal of the social and political system imposed on the individual. Whether or not people need writers like Emerson

in 1990s, it seems they can at least profit by his example. For Emerson as well as for other followers of Emersonism, one cannot legislate for morality, only will that it come from the individual acting morally.

## Appendix A

### Chronology: Ralph Waldo Emerson

- 1803 May 25, born in Boston.  
1811 May 12, father's death.  
1812-17 Student at Boston Public Latin School.  
1817-21 Student at Harvard College.  
1821-26 Teaching School.  
1826-27  
October 10, approbated to preach; November 25, goes south for health, returns in June; December 26, meets Ellen Tucker.  
1828 December 17, engagement to Ellen.  
1829  
March 11, ordination as pastor of Second Church, Boston; September 30, marriage to Ellen.  
1831 February 8, death of Ellen.  
1832-33  
October 28, resigned pastorate; December-October, traveled in Europe; met Landor, Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth.  
1834  
January 6, first public lecture \_\_ beginning a new career, October 1, death of brother Edward.  
1835  
August 15, bought house in Concord; September 14, married Lydia ('Lydian') Jackson.  
1836  
May 9, death of brother Charles; September 9, publication of *Nature*; September 19, first meeting of Hedge ('Transcendental') Club; October 30, birth of son Waldo.  
1837 August 31, 'The American Scholar' address at Harvard.  
1837-38  
December-February, lectures on 'Human Culture'; July 15, 'Divinity School Address.'  
1838-39 Lectures on 'Human Life.'  
1838 February 24, birth of daughter Ellen.  
1839-40 December-February, lectures on 'The Present Age.'  
1840-44  
July-April, *The Dial*, edited by Margaret Fuller, Emerson, Thoreau.  
1841  
March 20, publication of *Essays (First Series)*; November 22, birth of daughter Edith.



- 1841-42 December-January, lectures on 'The Times.'  
 1842 January 27, death of son Waldo.  
 1844 July 10, birth of son Edward; October 19, publication of *Essays* (Second Series).  
 1845-46 December-January, lectures on 'Representative Men.'  
 1846 December 25, publication of *Poems*.  
 1847-48 October-July, lectured in England; visited Paris.  
 1849 September 11, publication of *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*.  
 1850 January 1, publication of *Representative Men*.  
 1851 Lectures on 'The Conduct of Life.'  
 1853 November 16, mother's death.  
 1854 Extensive lecturing in Midwest.  
 1855 July 21, 'greeting' letter to Walt Whitman; lectures to antislavery societies.  
 1856 August 6, publication of *English Traits*.  
 1859 May 27, death of brother Bulkeley.  
 1860 December 8, publication of *The Conduct of Life*.  
 1862 January 31, address on 'American Civilization,' Washington D.C.; talks with President Lincoln.  
 1863 May 1, death of Mary Moody Emerson ('Aunt Mary')  
 1867 April 28, publication of *May-Day and Other Poems*.  
 1868 September 13, death of brother William.  
 1870 February, publication of *Society and Solitude*; April 26, beginning of lectures at Harvard on 'The Natural History of the Intellect,' partially repeated in 1871.  
 1871 April-May, trip to California.  
 1872 July 24, house burned.  
 1872-73 October-May, trip to Egypt, with stops in London, Rome, and Paris.  
 1875 December, publication of *Letters and Social Aims* (dated 1876), edited by James Eliot Cabot.  
 1882 April 27, death and burial in Concord.

(From Gay Wilson Allen, 1981, pp. xxiii-xxiv).

## APPENDIX B

### Chronology

#### Carlyle

1795 Born in Ecclefechan, Scotland

1809-14 Attends Edinburgh University

1814-20 Abandons plans to enter ministry  
studies law, tutors, teaches school

1822 (21?) Leith Walk 'conversion'  
(described in 'Everlasting No')

1825 *Life of Schiller*

1826 Marries Jane Welsh

1828 Moves to Craigenputtock

1829-31 'Signs of the Times,'

'Novalis' 'Characteristics',

*Sartor Resartus* completed

1832 Death of Father

1833 meets Emerson,

August 25

1833-34 *Sartor* appears in  
*Fraser's Magazine*; moves to  
London

1836 American edition of  
*Sartor* (first English edition  
1838)

1837 The French Revolution

1837-40 Lectures on 'German  
Literature,' 'Revolutions of  
Modern Europe,' 'Heroes and

#### Emerson

1803 Born in Boston,  
Massachusetts

1811 Death of father

1821 Graduates Harvard  
College, 1821-24 Teaches  
at girls' school

1825 begins training for  
ministry

1829 Ordained as Unit-  
arian minister; marries  
Ellen Tucker

1831-32 Death of Ellen;  
resigns from Second  
Church

1832-33 Travels to  
Europe, meets Landor,  
Coleridge, Carlyle

1833-34 Lectures on  
'Natural History';  
moves to Concord

1835 Marries Lydia  
(('Lydian') Jackson

1836 *Nature*

1836-37 Lectures on  
'The Philosophy of  
History'

Hero-Worship' (pub. 1841)

1839 Chartism

1843 *Past and Present*

1844 Death of John Sterling

1845 *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*

1848 Visits Stonehenge with Emerson

1849 'Niggeer Question'

1850 *Latter-Day Pamphlets*

1851 *Life of John Sterling*

1852-65 *Frederick the Great*,  
in six volumes (pub. 1859-65)

1866 Death of Jane Carlye;  
Eyre Controversy

1876 'Shooting Niagara'

1872-73 Sees Emerson

1881 Dies; buried in Ecclefechan

(From Kenneth Marc Harris, 1978, pp. 175-76).

1839-40 Lectures on

'The Present Age'

1841 Lecture on 'Man

the Reformer'; *Essays*

1842 Death of son

Waldo

1844 'The Young

American' address on

'Emancipation in the

British West Indies';

*Essays, Second Series*

1845-46 Lectures on

'Representative Men' (pub.

1850); *Poems*

1847-48 Lecture tour in

Britain; visits France

1850 Death of Margaret  
Fuller

1851-52 Lectures on 'The

Conduct of Life' (pub.

1860)

1852 *Memoirs of Margaret*

*Fuller Ossoli*

1856 *English Traits*

1858 meets John Brown

1862 Address on 'Thoreau'

1872-73 House burns;  
travels in Britain, Europe,  
and Near East

1881 Address on 'Carlye'

1882 Dies; buried in  
Concord

## NOTES

### Abbreviations Used in Notes

- CC *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, 30 vols. Centenary Edition, edited by Henry Duff Traill (New York, 1896-1901)
- CE *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vols. 26-30 in *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, Centenary Edition.
- CEC Joseph Slater, *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle* (New York, 1964)
- CL *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 4 vols. (*I, Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*), edited by Alfred R. Ferguson, et al (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), (*II, Essays: First Series*), edited by Joseph Slater, et al. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1979), (*III, Essays: Second Series*), edited by Slater, et al. (Cambridge and London, 1983), (*IV, Representative Men: Seven Lectures*), edited by Slater, et al. (Cambridge, and London, 1987)
- EJ *Emerson in His Journals*, edited by Joel Porte (London, 1982)
- EL *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 3 vols. (*I, 1833-1836*) edited by Stephen Whicher and Robert Spiller (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), (*II, 1836-1838*) edited by Whicher, Spiller, and Wallace E. Williams (1964), (*III, 1838-1842*) edited by Spiller and Williams (1972)
- J *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo E. Forbes, 10 vols. (Boston, 1909-1914)
- JMN *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 14 vols. edited by William H. Gilman, et al. (Cambridge, Mass., 1960-1982)
- L *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 6 vols. edited by Ralph L. Rusk (New York, 1939)
- SR Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* (Melbourne and London, 1984)
- W *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Centenary Edition, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson, 12 vols. (Boston and New York, 1903-1904)

## Prolegomenon

1. *The Recognition of Emerson: Selected Criticism Since 1837*, edited by Milton R. Knovitz, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1972), p. x. Hereafter cited as *Recognition*.
2. *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology*, edited by Perry Miller, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p.10. Hereafter cited as *Transcendentalists*.
3. William S. Sahakian, *History of Philosophy* (New York, 1968), p. 169.
4. Charles Hedge, Albert Dod, and J. W. Alexander, 'Transcendentalism of the Germans and of Cousin and of Its Influence on Opinions of This Century', in *Transcendentalists*, 231-240 (p. 234).
5. Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (New York, 1957).
6. H. A. Beers, *A History of English Romanticism in the 18th Century* (New York, 1899).
7. *The Portable Emerson*, edited by Carl Bode, (New York, 1981), p. 245.
8. *Transcendentalism and Its Legacy*, edited by Myran Simon and Thornton Parsons, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969).

## CHAPTER ONE

### TRANSCENDENTALISM

1. Gay Wilson Allen, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1981), p. xxiii-xxiv.
2. Octavious Brooks Frothingham, *Transcendentalism in New England* (New York, 1876), rpt. (Gloucester, Mass. 1965), p. 1
3. Paul F. Boller, *American Transcendentalism 1830-1860* (New York, 1974), pp. 37-40.
4. Kant's transcendental idealism, his belief that the individual's experience of the universe is molded by transcendental forms inherent in the mind, has impressed the Americans; but what made the greatest impact on

them was his moral philosophy — the emphasis on duty, moral law, and the inferiority of mere utilitarian values (see Boller, 1974, p. 42).

5. Michael Moran, 'New England Transcendentalism', in *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (New York, 1972), V, pp. 479-80.

6. Immanuel Kant in *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (1972), V, p. 312.

7. Immanuel Kant in Sahakian, *History of Philosophy*, p. 177.

8. Lawrence Buell, *Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance* (Ithaca and London, 1973) p. 2.

9. Emerson was impressed by the writings of Swedenborg, translated by Sampson Reid, such as *Observations on the Growth of the Mind* in 1829 (Alexander Kern, 'The Rise of Transcendentalism', in *American Literary History*, edited by Hary Hyden (Durham, 1954) 247-313 (p. 272), from which he probably formed the romantic idea that in the infant lies the nucleus which unifies the individual with divinity. Emerson's use of notes and extracts in his journals from various works reveals this interest in writers such as Montaigne and Swedenborg.

10. L. Adams Beck, *Oriental Philosophy* (New York, 1943), p. 41.

11. Swami Vivekananda, *Jnana-Yoga* (Calcutta, India, 1970), pp. 108-109. This reference will be referred to as Vivekananda, 1970a.

12. Edward Albertson, *Spiritual Yoga* (Los Angeles, California, 1969), p. 150.

13. Swami Vivekananda, *Karma-Yoga* (Calcutta, India, 1970). This reference will be referred to as Vivekanada, 1970b.

14. When Andrew Norton wrote *The Latest Form of Infidelity* as a response to Emerson's 'Divinity School Address' charging him as well as the German Transcendentalists such as Spinoza and De Wette of atheism and irreligion, George Ripley defended Emerson (*German Culture in America 1600-1900*, edited by Henry Pochmann et al. (Madison, Wisconsin, 1978). Hereafter cited as *German Culture*. In 1838 Ripley edited two significant influential series of fourteen volume: *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature* (reprinted in Edinburgh in 1857). The first two volumes were called *Philosophical Miscellanies* consisting of various topics including translations from Cousin and Jouffroy (See H.C. Goddard, 'Unitarianism and Transcendentalism' in Brian Barbour's *American*

*Transcendentalism*, (Notre Dame, Indiana, and London, 1973), pp. 159-78 (p.172). Hereafter cited as *American Transcendentalism*.

15. Bronson Alcott, who admitted influence from Wordsworth and Coleridge, wrote on April 29, 1834 in his journal:

Coleridge assisted me in the beginning, Wordsworth too exerted a genial influence, and by these and my own innate tendency to pure reality and a life of intellectual pursuits. I was led to full view of things. Herder, Schiller, Richter, Goethe, \_\_ and even Bulwer and Carlyle through English men yet German in education and in spirit \_\_ were understood and believed. Before this, however, Channing has spoken intelligently to me, and I had sympathized with the spirit of Plato, perused Plotinus, and found the depths of Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, and Kant. With these last, I was satisfied (*The Journals of Bronson Alcott*, selected and edited by Odell Shepard, (Boston, 1938) p. 39. Hereafter cited as *Journals of Alcott*.

According to Taylor Stoehr, the journals of the Transcendentalists were not merely the record of their experiments but of the experimenter itself \_\_ the subject of these journals, 'a set of occasions for thought', was a mere circumstance: *Walden* not *Walden* was Thoreau's journal. See his *Nay-Saying in Concord: Emerson, Alcott, And Thoreau* (Hamden, Conn. 1979).

16. Orestes Augustus Brownson, who published *New Views of Christianity, Society, and the Church* (1836), called for faith in individualism and harmony between spirituality and the Catholic doctrine; and liberality and the American democratic faith (*German Culture* pp. 231-34. For a valuable individual study of Brownson, see Theodore Maynard, *Orestes Brownson: Yankee Radical Catholic*, (New York, 1943).

17. Christopher Pearse Cranch defined true Transcendentalism as the 'living and always new spirit of truth, which is ever going forth on its conquests into the world, and leading all captivity captive: but which at times arms itself as with new splendors of victory, \_\_ which is thus in the only sense transcendental, when it labors to transcend itself, and soar ever higher and nearer the great source of Truth. Himself' (Christopher Cranch, 'Transcendentalism', *Western Messenger*, 8 (January 1841) pp. 405-09.

For more on the Transcendentalists' views, see Tony Tanner, 'Saints Behold: The Transcendentalist Point of View', in *American Transcendentalism*, pp. 53-59.

18. For many critics, Hawthorne's self-reliant Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance* was identified with Margaret Fuller although Hawthorne himself denied that he included any portraits of actual characters of the Brook Farm Community in his romance (See Lloyd Morris, *The Rebellious Puritan: Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne*, (New York, 1928), p. 254). Hawthorne's idea of Margaret Fuller was of a dangerous woman, self-confident, and rude (p.161). It is Hawthorne's association with the apostles of Transcendentalism and his contact with them that provided him with criticism of their ideas which he embodied in his romances. Once he told his wife Sophia, 'I was invited to dine at Mr. Bancroft's yesterday with Miss Margaret Fuller but Providence has given me some other business to do, for which I was thankful' (Morris, p.109). For a discussion of the characters of *The Blithedale Romance*, see John P. McWilliams Jr., *Hawthorne, Melville, and the American Character*, (London and New York, 1984) pp. 115-23.

Margaret Fuller's attitude toward Christianity was that: 'We want a life more complete and various than that of Christ. We have had a messiah to teach and reconcile; Let us now have a man to live out all the symbolical forms of human life, with the calm beauty of a Greek God, with the deep consciousness of a Moses, with the holy love and purity of Jesus' (quoted in Boller, 1974, p. 28).

19. Theodore Parker, who delivered a lecture on 26 December, 1844 in Boston, stated the possibility that not only Jesus might have taught some errors along with truths but also that God who inspired Jesus might have additional and greater Christs for mankind (Boller, 1974, p.19).

Parker introduced the Transcendentalists' position:

Their connexion with Christianity appears accidental; for if Jesus had taught at Athens, and not at Jerusalem; if he had taught no miracle, and none but the human nature had ever been ascribed to him; if the Old Testament had forever perished at his birth — Christianity would still have been the word of God; it would have lost none of its truths. ... So if



it could be proved as it can not \_\_\_ in opposition to the greatest amount of historical evidence ever collected on any single point, that the Gospels were the fabrication of designing and artful men, that Jesus of Nazareth never lived, still Christianity could stand firm, and fear no evil (Theodore Parker quoted in *American Transcendentalists in Dictionary of Literary Biography Series*, edited by Joel Myerson, (Detroit, Michigan, 1988), V (pp. viii-ix).

For a collection of Parker's writings see H. Steele Commager, *Theodore Parker: Yankee Crusader* (Boston, 1949). About Parker's Theology, see J. Edward Dirks, *The Critical Theology of Theodore Parker*, (New York, 1948).

20. Henry David Thoreau was another transcendentalist who preferred the sound of cow bells on Sunday to that of Church bells and believed that the churches are the highest buildings in villages, but such temples 'deform the landscape.' When one walks on Sabbath in the streets of a village, Thoreau said, it is the shouting preacher who 'harshly profaneing the quiet atmosphere of the day.' He once asked, 'What is religion?' 'That which is never spoken' (Boller, p. 30).

21. William Ellery Channing, who was dissatisfied with Unitarianism, rejected the Calvinistic view that human nature is deprived and adopted the idea that man is divine.

I wish to see among Unitarians a development of imagination and poetical enthusiasm<sup>95</sup> as well as of the rational and critical power... Unitarianism has suffered also from a two exclusive application of its advocates to Biblical criticism and theological controversy, in other words, from two partial culture of mind. I fear we must look to other schools for the thoughts which thrill us, which touch our most inward springs, and disclose to us the depth of our souls (William Henry Channing, *The life of William Ellery Channing*, (Boston, 1899) p. 276.

Channing declared that a rational reading of the Bible confirms the oneness of God and the 'moral perfection of God': It asserts neither the divinity nor the deity of Christ but the imminence of God in human nature. He also seemed to side with reason if it appeared in conflict with

revelation: 'Nothing but the approving sentence of reason binds to receive and obey revelation' (John W. Chadwick, *William Ellery Channing: Minister of Religion*, (Boston,1903) p. 221.

22. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, 'Ralph Waldo Emerson and the American Transcendentalists', in *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, edited by Ninian Smart, et al. (Cambridge, Mass. 1985), II, pp. 29-67 (p. 32).

23. For a discussion on Unitarianism, see Richard Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America*, (Boston,1955) covering the period 1735-1805. Wright attempted to show that the rival theology of Unitarianism has a tradition in America since Jonathan Edwards.

24. Calvinism was taken to America by the Scots, the Dutch \_\_\_ who established Presbyterian and Reformed churches \_\_\_ and the early settlers from England whose so-called 'modified Calvinism' had its effect in the constitution and life forms of America. It was to be expected that (although the background thought remained the same) there would be considerable modifications in the application of Calvinistic ideas. It was estimated that during the War of Independence about 2 million of the three million inhabitants of the 13 states were Calvinistic \_\_\_ meaning that they were descendents of early settlers of Calvinistic type (A. Dakin, *Calvinism*, (London,1940), p.172. The American institutions were 'purely American.' For example, Jonathan Edwards founded a school of theology which exerted an enormous impact for some time in American life despite the fact that he remained essentially Calvinist; the best representation of Calvinism in the United States could be seen in the Presbyterian church and in branches of the Reformed Church developing an influence on national life (Dakin,1940, p.175). Both British and American Unitarianism grew out of Calvinism. British Unitarianism was strong on social reform and in Parliament. American Unitarianism developed from New England Congregational Churches which rejected the eighteenth century revival movement and emphasized reason, moderation and morals over spiritual revivalism. For more details on Calvinism, see John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, (New York,1954); Francois Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of His Religion*, translated by Philip Mariet, (New York,1963); Edward A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's*

*Theology*, (New York, 1952); For a thorough bibliography of American religion, see Nelson R. Burr, *A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America*, 2 volumes, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1961).

25. Philip K. Tompkin, 'On Paradoxes in the Rhetoric of the New England Transcendentalist', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 62 (1976) 40-48 (p. 45).

26. William A Clesch's *American Religious Thought: A History* (Chicago & London, 1973) in fact is not a history but a treatment of three main figures, Jonathan Edwards, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and William James. The author tries to convey the idea that these three \_\_\_ with other thinkers \_\_\_ rejected what he called 'moralistic spirituality' and adopted 'aesthetic spirituality.' For more details on Unitarianism see Daniel W. Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy 1805-1861*, (Cambridge, Mass. 1970); see also George Hochfield, 'An Introduction to Transcendentalism' in *American Transcendentalism*, pp. 36-59.

27. Frederick Ives Carpenter, 'Transcendentalism', in *American Transcendentalism*, 23-34 (p. 27).

28. Charles Dickens, *American Notes*, edited by John Foster, (London, 1932), p. 119.

29. *The Works of William Ellery Channing*, 6 vols. (Boston, 1841-1843), III, p. 146.

30. H. C. Goddard, 'Unitarianism and Transcendentalism', in *American Transcendentalism*, 159-178 (p. 169).

31. *American Transcendentalists*, in *Dictionary of Literary Biography Series*, edited by Joel Myerson, V, (Detroit, Michigan, 1988), p. viii

32. Alexander Kern, 'The Rise of Transcendentalism', in *American Literary History*, edited by Harry Hayden, (Durham, North Carolina, 1954), 247-313 (p. 252).

33. Anne C. Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement 1830-1850* (New Haven, Conn, 1981).

34. James Freeman Clarke, 'Ralph Waldo Emerson and the New England School', *Western Messenger*, 6 (1838), 37-47 (p. 37).

35. Thoman Carlyle, 'Preface to 'Essays, First Series'', in *Recognition*, p. 19.

36. Richard P. Adams, 'Emerson and the Organic Metaphor', *PMLA*, 69, (1954), 117-30 (p. 118).
37. Leonard N. Neufeldt, 'The Laws of Permutation — Emerson's Mode', *American Transcendental Quarterly*, 21 (1974), 20-30 (p. 21).
38. Francis Bowen, 'Emerson's Nature' in *Recognition*, pp.1-9 (p. 3).
39. Walt Whitman, 'Emerson's Books (the Shadows of Them)', *The Literary World*, II (1880), 177-178 (p.177).
40. Matthew Arnold, 'Emerson', *McMillan's Magazine*, 50 (1884), 138-208 (p.163).
41. Hawthorne in Randel Stewart, *The American Notes* (New York, 1932), p.157.
42. Barry Wood, 'The Growth of the Soul: Coleridge's Dialectical Method and Strategy of Emerson's Nature', *PMLA*, 91 (1976), 385-387 (p. 385).
43. John Jay Chapman, *Emerson and Other Essays* (New York, 1898).
44. Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (New York, 1885), p.119.
45. Alfred A. Reid, 'Emerson's Prose Style: An Edge to Goodness', in *The American Renaissance*, edited by F. Strauch (New York, 1970), p. 40.
46. *Tao Te Ching*, edited by D. C. Lau, (New York, 1971).
47. In 1785 Charles Wilkins translated and published the *Bhagvad Gita*, a part of the Mahabarta, a book important to Emerson who read it and recommended reading it to others (Robert D. Richardson, Jr., *Myth and Literature in the American Renaissance*, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1978) p. 29. The transcendental quarterly, *The Dial*, which included translations from ancient oriental scriptures, seemed to have influenced Emerson's ideas about the Orient.

Emerson produced a list of books which are considered the most important containing the best history, philosophy, biography and poetry in the Greek and Hebrew scriptures. Then he named the sacred books of India, China, and Persia (Harriet Zink, 'Emerson's Use of the Bible', *University of Nebraska Studies in Language, Literature, and Criticism*, 14 (1935) 1-60 (p. 8). He had a 'particular fondness' and attraction for the Bhagvad Gita for its 'fusion of action and contemplation' (F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (New

York, 1941, rpt.1986) p.102. Mathiesssen noted that Emerson copied passages from the Vishnu Purana and the Bhagvad Gita. Undoubtedly the structure of Emerson's poem 'Hamatreya' corresponds point for point to a particular passage from the Vishnu Purana (p. 47). (For a close and deep examination of the sources of 'Brahma,' and 'Hamatreya', see F. I. Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia*, (New York,1930).

According to Arthur H. Quinn there is a similarity between Emerson's expression 'I am a transparent eyeball' and some ideas in the Hindu Vedanta (*The Literature of the American People* [New York, 1951] p. 285). In an entry in his Journals in 1845, we learn that Emerson inherited from Thoreau some Oriental books which had been left by an Englishman, Thomas Cholmondeley. For the list of these books see J, IX, pp. 429-20; for translation of 'On the Vedas' from Vishnu Purana, see J, VII, pp.127-28). Alexander Kern (1954) stated that Emerson's emphasis upon Asia in *Representative Men* and in works like 'Hamatreya,' 'Brahma,' and 'Illusions' proved the extent and depth of the influence of the Bhagavad Gita (p. 272).

Arthur Christy's *The Orient in American Transcendentalism: A Study of Emerson, Thoreau, and Alcott*, (New York,1932, Reissued in 1963) discussed the Oriental reading of the Transcendentalists. In the appendix there are four or five entries relating to Emerson and Buddhism. For a list of Emerson's reading, see Kenneth Cameron, *Ralph Waldo Emerson's Reading* (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1941). Max Mueller's *Lectures on the Science of Religion*, containing a section on Nirvana and Buddhism, appeared in 1872 and was too late to influence Emerson's writings. Robert Detweiller argued that Emerson was attracted to Buddhism and once identified the Bhagavad Gita as 'the much renowned book of Buddhism.' For a valuable discussion of the resemblance between the historical development of Zen and Emerson's version of New England Transcendentalism, see Robert Detweiller, 'Emerson and Zen,' *American Quarterly*,14 (1962), 423-45.

48. The fact that the quotation is from the Christian tradition does not mean that it must contradict the Eastern tradition. Morality in one religion can be found in another. A good deal of Christian thought in the New

Testament is consistent with the Karmaic law of morality (such as 'live by the sword, die by the sword'). This is both karma and Emerson's compensation. It is thus a quotation from St. Bernard that verifies karma — Karma and compensation are universal moral laws according to their adherents, not just doctrinal elements having nothing to do with any other doctrine. (For more details on Karma-Yoga system, see *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Memorial Edition, I (Calcutta, India, 1957), and for details on Jnana-Yoga see III (Calcutta, 1959).

49. Joseph Warren Beach, *The Concept of Nature in the Nineteenth Century English Poetry* (New York, 1966) p. 354.

50. Andrew Delbanco, 'The Renewal of Literature: Emersonian Reflections by Richard Poirier', *The New Republic*, 27 April 1987 (28-32) p. 28.

51. James Russell Lowell, *My Study of Wisdom* (New York, 1871), p. 376.

52. Bliss Perry, *Emerson Today* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1931), p. 89.

53. James Truslow Adams, 'Emerson Re-Read', *Atlantic Monthly*, 146 (1930), 484-492 (p. 487).

54. Alfred Kazin and Daniel Aaron, eds., *Emerson: A Modern Anthology* (Boston, 1959), p. 11.

55. *The Heart of Thoreau's Journals*, edited by Odell Shepard, (New York, 1964), pp. 45-46 [A journal entry in 1847].

56. Martin Bickman, 'A Review of Irving Howe's *The American Newness: Culture and Politics in the Age of Emerson*', *Liberary Journal*, 15 April 1986, p. 82.

57. Leo Marx, 'Comments on Howe's *The American Newness: Culture and Politics in the Age of Emerson*', *The Yale Review*, 12 March 1987, p. 36.

58. Irving Howe, 'Emerson and Socialism: An Exchange', *New York Review of Books*, 28 May 1987, 34-36 (p. 35).

## CHAPTER TWO

### ROMANTICISM

1. Hans Eichner divided the history of the adjective 'romantisch' and its cognates into four periods. First, from the first introduction in Germany in

1689 until 1798, the founding of the German periodical *Athenaum*; during which the word is connected with meanings like: 'reminiscent of romances,' 'romance-like,' or relating to Romance languages (p. 98). Second, from 1798 onwards; the word becomes to mean 'romantic poetry,' ('romantische poesie,') as contrasted with the classical poetry of the ancients. Third, in 1807-1808, opponents of the current literary trends — 'romanticism' — began to use the terms 'romantische,' 'Romantik,' and 'Romantiker' pejoratively. Finally, the terms 'romantische,' 'Romantik,' and 'Romantiker' became non-evaluative when the quarrel between the classicists and the romantics heated up. See '*Romantic*' and its Cognates/ *The European History of a Word*, edited by Hans Eichner, (Manchester, 1972). Hereafter cited as '*Romantic*' and Its Cognates.

2. *European Romanticism; Self Definition: An Anthology*, compiled by Lilian R. Furst, (London, 1980).

3. *Romanticism in National Context*, edited by Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 1.

4. Over a span of more than forty years, the word 'romantic' occurred only ten times in Wordsworth's poems; 'romantic' used as an adjective of romance; as the colour of joy and hope; and as a quality of landscape — most of these references were to the landscape. (See George Whalley, 'England, Romantic — Romanticism' in '*Romantic*' and Its Cognates, pp.157-92). In France, Romanticism blossomed quite late — elsewhere it was a protest against classical and revolutionary French cultural imperialism. French Romanticism of the early nineteenth century was associated with a traditional nostalgia for the past, wishing to delete the idea of irreligion of the Enlightenment. From the late 1820s onwards, it was fused with the hopes of liberalism. (See Porter and Mikulas, 1988).

5. Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (New York, 1986).

6. Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (London, 1983).

7. Arthur Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticism', *PMLA*, 39 (1924), 229-53 (pp. 234-35).

8. For more discussion on 'archetypal Romanticism' and Lovejoy's

theory, see Lilian Furst, *The Contours of European Romanticism* (London, 1979: Chapter One, pp. 1-16. Lovejoy sees that when talking about Romanticism, one needs to know what ideas or tendencies to talk about, when they are finished, or in whom they are exemplified. Lovejoy views Romanticism through his attempts at discrimination and division; Wellek tries for synthesis; and Morse Peckham sees it as a 'revolution in the European mind against thinking in terms of static mechanism and the redirection of the mind to thinking in terms of dynamic organicism.' (See Morse Peckham, 'Toward a Theory of Romanticism', in *The Triumph of Romanticism* by Peckham (Columbia, South Carolina, 1971), pp. 3-35.

'Romantic' appears in the English language for the first time during the 17th century, meaning 'like old romances' — giving certain characteristics to pastoral romances. Like other terms such as 'gothic' and 'baroque,' 'romantic' indicates at the stage of development such words as 'bombast,' 'ridiculous,' 'chimerical,' and 'unnatural.' One might come across 'romantic absurdities and incredible fictions,' 'childish and romantic poems' and so on. The word 'Romantic' referred to something produced by the imagination; Romances reveal falsity while nature tells the truth. Samuel Johnson uses the word 'romantic' in two different contexts; first, he writes 'When night overshadows a romantic scene, all is stillness, silence and quiet,' in another context, he speaks of 'ridiculous and romantic,' 'romantic and superfluous,' and 'romantic absurdities and incredible fictions' (see Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, translated by Angus Davidson, [Oxford, 1950], pp. 11-13). For more on Romanticism, see Jacques Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (Boston, 1944).

Morse Peckham (1976) views Romantic literature as a literature of the wanderers — those who are isolated from contact with their fellow human being. They are searchers for a new integration, and a new mode of redemption (p. 21): See his *Romanticism and Behavior: Collected Essays* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1976). J. Robert Barth noted that Romantic poetry is a 'Poetry of encounter.' See his *The Symbolic Imagination: Coleridge and the Romantic Tradition* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1977). John Ellis (1974) believed that Romantic poetry deals with universals rather than with particulars. See *The Theory of Literary Criticism: A Logical Analysis*,



(Berkeley, California, 1974). Ann Mellor (1980) values Romanticism for its spirituality, M. A. Abrams for its 'creative process.'

9. Rene' Wellek, 'The Concept of Romanticism in Literary Scholarship', *Comparative Literature*, 1(1949), 147-72; rpt. in *Concepts of Criticism*, (New Haven, Conn., 1963), 128-98 (pp. 160-61).

10. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics: Rebels and Revolutionaries* (Oxford, 1981) pp. 1, 2.

11. Linda Kelly, *The Young Romantics* (New York, 1976).

12. Pierre Trahard, *Le Romanticisme defini par Le Globe* (Paris, 1924).

13. Lilian R. Furst, *Romanticism* (London, 1976), p. 51.

14. Geoffrey Hartman, 'Reflections on Romanticism in France', *Studies in Romanticism* 9 (1970) 233-48 (p. 236).

15. Edward Bowden, *Studies in Literature* (London, 1878), p. 5.

16. Margery Sabin, *English Romanticism and the French Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p. 142.

17. Victorian critics viewed Hugo as inferior to his contemporaries because he failed to create an 'effective French vision of Wordsworthian sublimity' (Sabin, 1976, p. 129). Obviously the English Romantic values are significantly different from the French. Hugo put more emphasis on poetic devices that are both different and in opposition to the idea of imaginative vision in English Romanticism. All this, says Sabin, resulted in French poetry influencing English by opposing the 'old lyric afflatus.' (For a detailed comparison between Hugo and Wordsworth, see Sabin, pp. 127-241).

18. For more discussion on Mme de Stael's *De l' Allemagne*, see Lilian Furst, 1979. Mme de Stael claims that among the Germans poetry was trying to approach a state of music (Howard Mumford Jones, *Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge, 1974) p. 401. In Germany de Stael was recognized even by Goethe:

als ein mächtiges Rutzeug ... das in die chinesische Mauer antiker Vorurteile, die uns von Frankreich trennte, sogleich eine breite Lucke durchbrach, so dass man über den Rhein und, in Gefolge dessen, über den Kanal endlich von uns nahere Kenntnis nahm (Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Samtliche Werke* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1903), Vol. xxx, p. 134.

(as a mighty weapon ... which immediately made a wide breach in the Chinese wall of antiquated prejudices that separated us from France, so that across the Rhine and thence across the channel Germany at last came to be better known (translated by Furst, 1979, p. 56).

For *De l'Allemagne* as a guide for the Romantics, see Claude Pichois, *L'Image de Jean Paul Richter dans les lettres francaises* (Paris, 1963), p. 58. For Mme de Stael, as an inspiration, see J. A. Bede, *Mme De Stael et l'Europe* (Paris, 1970), p. 375. J. C. Harold devoted his study to de Stael in *Mistress to an Age* (London, 1959).

Regarding the influence of Germany on French Romanticism, particularly German art in *De l'Allemagne*, see William Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art* (London, 1979) pp. 44-45. For some German translations into English, see W. Witte, 'German Romance and German Romanticism: a Case of Carlylean Ambivalence', *The Carlyle Society*, Thomas Green Lectures, No. 5, (Dec. 7, 1974) 4-5. The influence of Romanticism can not be confined to the writers of the nineteenth century. For a study of diverse critical approaches with references to specific works, see *Echoes and Influences of German Romanticism*, edited by Michael S. Batts, et al. (New York, Paris, and Frankfurt, 1987). Returning to the 19th century, B. Q. Morgan, *A Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation 1814-1927* (New York and London, 1965; a reprint of 1938), listed fifty-eight authors who appeared regularly in translation, with five or more titles between 1815-1860. According to this list, Schiller has been published 377 times and Goethe 770 times. The popular Monitz Retzche's Faust published in Germany in 1816 became available in English translation in 1820 (Vaughan, p. 109).

19. Chateaubriand was called the 'poet-laureate of Christianity' (Edward Bowden, 1787, p. 21). He tried to make a parallel between Byron and himself (p. 122).

20. *Memoires de Mme Stael, Dix Annees d'exil* (p. 204), quoted in Stephen Bann, 'Romanticism in France', in *Romanticism in National Context* 240-59 (p. 249).

21. Charles Affron, *A Stage for Poets: Studies in the Theatre of Hugo and Musset* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1971).

22. Guy Michaud and Philippe van Teigham, *Le Romantisme* (Paris, 1952).

23. See an analysis of one of his famous sonnets in Sabin, 1976, p. 173. For a comparison between Baudelaire and Wordsworth, see Sabin, pp. 168-78.

24. For the influence of Edgar Allen Poe on Baudelaire, see Patrick F. Quinn, *The French Face of Edgar Allen Poe* (Carbondale, Ill, 1957).

25. T. S. Eliot, 'Baudelaire' in *Selected Essays: 1917-1932* (New York, 1932; rpt, 1986) 381-92 (p. 341). That Baudelaire tried to discover Christianity for himself was an attempt to assert Christianity's necessity not to practice it. Neither could he escape suffering nor transcend it — In his suffering, says T. S. Eliot, there is a kind of superhuman and supernatural presence (pp. 384-85).

26. Romanticism in Germany refers to literature, history, music, science, religion, and life; it is 'personalized, comprehensive knowledge, or individualized universality' (Engelhardt, 1988, p. 125). For example, the philosopher-critic Friedrich Schlegel wrote the novel *Lucinde*; Friedrich Schleiermacher, a theologian and philosopher, concerned himself with medical and mathematical studies; E. T. A. Hoffmann painted, wrote and composed music; and Novalis incorporated samples from each field and integrated them into his life (p. 126). See Dietrich Von Engelhardt, 'Romanticism in Germany,' in *Romanticism and National Contexts*, pp. 109-33.

Romanticism in Germany can be seen as a trial of combination of Schleiermacher's *Reden über die Religion*, of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. See Robert M. Wernier, *Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany* (New York, 1966). For more discussion on German Romantic attitudes towards art, see Wernier, p. 67. Regarding Friedrich Schlegel's theory of the Romantic poetry, see Hans Eichner, *Friedrich Schlegel* (New York, 1970), Chapter 3, pp. 44-83.

Writing about the Poet, Novalis believes that it is not the imagination but

'cold technical processes of reasoning and a calm moral sense' which brings the poet to a better knowledge of things. See *Novalis Works*, edited by Carl Meissner, (Florence and Leipzig, 1898), III, p. 211. In another context, Novalis emphasizes that the nature of poetry should be an art: 'As pleasure it ceases to be poetry. A poet must not roam idly the live long day in search of images and sentiments. This is the wrong way of doing things' (*Novalis Works*, II, p. 149 ).

27. John B. Halsted, *Romanticism* (New York, 1969), p. 42.

28. M. C. Magill, *German Literature* (New York, 1974).

29. Morse Peckham, *Romanticism and the Culture of the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1965) pp. 25-26.

30. The pioneers of Transcendentalism were different from each other as Emerson was different from them. Each major figure and almost every minor one discovers, examines, and proposes solutions to the problems in his own Transcendental manner (Peckham, 1971, p. 161). The writings of these major figures reveal their treatment of Romantic themes \_\_ such as of guilt, alienation, and history \_\_ and Romantic problems such as identity and the immanence of value in the universe or its transcendence. Hawthorne's effort to understand the nature of guilt and to devise a strategy to be free from it can be done only by postulating a self independent from social role. Alienation can be interpreted as the opportunity for achieving an independent self, not a punishment for guilt, and a self then can transcend society and culture (pp. 164-65). Other Romantic issues are looking up through nature to nature's God; the melting together of subject and object; the loss of identity; and the Romantic insight of accepting death as the confirmation of the self \_\_ Ahab in *Moby-Dick* is something of an Emersonian Transcendentalist; he is engaged on a hunt which, if successful, would be world redeeming. Melville's style in *Moby-Dick* is in a high transcendentalist manner like Carlyle's. His style comes from the same cultural values as Emerson's *Essays* and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (Peckham, pp. 172-73 ).

31. Charles H. Herford, *The Age of Wordsworth* (London, 1914).

32. Northrop Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York, 1968).

33. William J. Long, *English Literature* (Boston, 1945) p. 369.

34. Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *The Romantic Quest* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1931) p. 326.

35. David Ferry, *The Limits of Mortality: An Essay of Wordsworth's Major Poems* (Westport, Conn. 1978) p. 10.

36. Frederick A. Pottle, 'The Eye and the Object in the Poetry of Wordsworth', in *English Romantic Poets*, edited by Harold Bloom, (New Haven, 1986) 79-97 (p. 91).

37. Edwin M. Eigner, *The Metaphysical Novel in England and America* (London, 1978).

38. M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (London, 1971) p. 12.

39. In 'Kubla Khan', Coleridge writes:

The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves;  
It was a miracle of rare device  
A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice.

According to Benoit (1973), much of the poet's 'exotic nature' is derived from Eastern quality, the site of Xandu. In Chinese philosophy, there are two principles, the yang and the yin; in the movement and in the content of his verse, Coleridge captures these two principles. Yang represents the masculine force which was bright; yin represents the feminine one which was dark. These two sides are the bright and the dark related to one source. In the transformation of these two, dark and bright, woman and man, earth and heaven, the truth of the Tao emerges (p. 34): 'It was a miracle of rare device/ A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice.' For a discussion of the Tao of 'Kubla Khan', see Raymond Benoit, *Single Nature's Double Name: The Collectedness of the Conflicting in British and American Romanticism* (Mouton, the Hague, and Paris, 1973) pp. 29-40.

For more discussion on the prophetic aspect of the poem, see Graham Davidson, *Coleridge's Career* (London, 1990). The poem, says Davidson, speaks 'of the ideal order of our humanity, and of the method by which we

must seek to reorder what has mysteriously fallen into disorder' (p. 90).

40. *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Four Volumes in One* (New York, 1985) pp. 258-59. Hereafter cited as *Four Volumes in One*.

41. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* (Columbus, Ohio, 1974) pp. 31-32.

42. John Burroughs, 'Emerson', in *Birds and Poets with Other Papers* (Boston, 1877), p. 181.

43. John Greenleaf Whittier, 'Tribute', *The Literary World*, II (1880), p. 183.

44. Paul Elmer More, 'Emerson', in *A New England Group and Others: Shelburne Essays*, Eleventh Series (New York, 1921) p. 181.

45. D. H. Lawrence, 'Americans', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Edward D. McDonald (New York, 1936) 314-21 (p. 317).

46. Yvor Winters, 'Jones Very and Ralph Waldo Emerson: Aspects of New England Mysticism', in *Defence of Reason* by Yvor Winters, (New York, 1947) 262-82 p. 270.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### WORDSWORTH

1. George Maclean Harper, *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence*, 2 vols. (New York, 1916, rpt. 1929 in one volume), II, p. 384. Hereafter cited as *Wordsworth: His Life*. The most recent biography of Wordsworth is Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford, 1989).

2. Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography The Later Years 1803-1830* (Oxford, 1965), p. 488. (Hereafter cited as *Wordsworth: Biography*).

3. *The Letters of William Wordsworth; The Later Years, 1829-1834*, second edition, edited by Alan G. Hill, (Oxford, 1979), V, p. 621 (Hereafter cited as *Letters of Wordsworth: The Later Years*).

4. *The Letters of William Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1787-1805*,

edited by Ernest De Selincourt, (Oxford, 1967), pp. 119, 123-24.

5. *The Letters of the Wordsworth Family From 1787-1855*, vol. III, edited by William Knight, (Boston and London, 1907), p. 5.

6. William E. Meyer, 'Emerson Vs. Freud: Redefining the New England Mind', *Thought* 26 (1987), 387-89.

7. *Wordsworth: Centenary Studies Presented at Cornell and Princeton Universities*, edited by Gilbert T. Dunklin, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1951), p. 16.

8. *The Romantics*, edited by Stephen Prickett, (London, 1981), p. 213.

9. Stanley Cavell, 'In the Quest of the Ordinary', in *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, edited by Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer, (Ithaca, New York, 1986), pp. 183-213 (p.185).

10. Michael Fischer, 'Accepting the Romantics as Philosophers', *Philosophy and Literature* 12 (1988), 179-189 (p.180).

11. See Michael Fischer, (1988), 179-89; and Stanley Cavell, (1986). Cavell also analysed Thoreau's *Walden* from a philosophical point of view and stated that 'Walden provides a transcendental deduction of the category of thing-in-itself' (p.106); see *The Senses of Walden*, (San Francisco, 1981).

12. Although Wordsworth read the eighteenth century poetry of nature as an expression of the picturesque and the sublime, what most attracted him was its power to 'imagine the brooding mind in the act of hearing a scene-haunting voice and making it into poetry' (Stein, 1988, p. 53). For Wordsworth, to write out of the mind's direct contact with nature was to find an authentic voice. Edwin Stein made an extensive study of Wordsworth's allusions: the majority of authors from whom Wordsworth drew on belonged to Neo-classicism, and the majority of the echoes belonged to English Renaissance. Most allusions were to Milton, and then to Shakespeare. Other major sources were Spencer, Thomson, Gray, Collins, Burns, and Cowper. See Edwin Stein, *Wordsworth's Art of Allusions*, (London, 1988).

13. Paul De Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, (New York, 1984), pp.127-28.

14. See Karl Kroeber, *Romantic Landscape Vision*, (Madison, 1975); Michael Cooke, *Acts of Inclusion: Studies Bearing on an Elementary Theory of Romanticism*, (New Haven, Conn. 1979; and James Turner, *Politics of Landscape Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry 1630-1860*, (Oxford, 1979).

15. On the rhetorical structure of 'Tintern Abbey,' Richard Matlak (1986) observes that the poem has a form that becomes 'the principal shaping mechanism' which follows Ciceronian rhetorical structural pattern of organization (p. 101). The pattern consists of a) introduction b) view to be maintained containing division of proposition c) presentation of experiences and facts d) confirmation of the proposition through arguments of reason and emotion e) extortion to the audience to adopt the speaker's position f) and the pathetic appeal which is sometimes excluded (p.101). See Richard Matlak, 'Classical Argument and Romantic Persuasion in 'Tintern Abbey'' *Studies in Romanticism*, 25 (1986), pp.79-129.

On the use of language and voice in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, see J. Douglas Kneale, 'Wordsworth's Images of Language and Letter in The Prelude,' *PMLA*, 101 (1986), pp. 351-61; Geoffrey Hartman (1971) observed that Wordsworth employs a 'unique style' in which metaphor is a 'generalized structure' rather than a special 'verbal figure' (p. xxiii). Hartman also emphasizes the theory which links 'verbal figures and structures of consciousness' (p. xvii). The theory presupposes that a 'self's consciousness would be found in some relation to figural language rather than structures of language'; see *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814*, (New Haven, Conn., 1971); Geoffrey Hartman, *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, (London, 1987), Chapter 7: 90-119; and Paul De Man, 'The Rhetoric of Temporality' in *Interpretation: Theory and Practice*, edited by C. S. Singleton, (Baltimore, 1969) pp.173-209. See also David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination* (London, 1987).

16. G. B. Bank, 'Wordsworth's Styles of Poetic Problems', *The Wordsworth Circle* 16 (1985) 35-47 (p. 41).

17. Majorie Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems* (Cambridge, 1986), p.16.

18. John Michael, *Emerson and Skepticism: The Cipher of the World*



(Baltimore and London, 1988).

19. Although Emerson and Wordsworth held similar views about Nature, there is a difference; each arrived separately at his view. In Emerson, it is God or the Over-Soul that penetrated and interprets Nature (Moore, 1926, p. 209). In *Nature*, Emerson affirmed that nature should be of use to man; therefore it is not the last or the deepest source of religious truth. Revelations come from God, the Over-Soul, who is in us and through nature to help us. Wordsworth viewed nature as the Master of man and the habitation of God. Both Wordsworth and Emerson were revolutionists in the sense that each one saw God in a new perspective.

20. Kenneth R. Johnston, 'The Politics of 'Tintern Abbey'', *The Wordsworth Circle* 14 (1983), 6-14 (p. 6).

21. Theresa M. Kelley, *Wordsworth's Revisionary Aesthetics* (Cambridge, 1988) p. 2.

22. W. J. B. Owen, 'The Sublime and the Beautiful in *The Prelude*', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 4 (1973) 67-86.

23. Albert Weleck, *Wordsworth and the Sublime* (Berkeley, California, 1973).

24. Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore, 1976).

25. Kelley also asserted the difference between Wordsworthian sublime and the Kantian model by studying Wordsworth's aesthetics through his prose commentaries on aesthetic and landscape. Furthermore, Kelley described Wordsworth's conception of aesthetic progress in the mind as well as in nature; see Theresa M. Kelley, 1988; W. J. B. Owen, (1973) pp. 67-86; Albert Welcke, 1973; Thomas Weiskel, 1976; David Simpson, *Wordsworth and the Figurings of the Real* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1982; David Pirie, *William Wordsworth: The Poetry of Grandeur and of Tenderness* (London, 1982); and Wendell Glick, 'The Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Emerson's Aesthetics,' *Emerson Society Quarterly*, 55 (1969) pp. 11-18. To create permanent beauty through art, one must be ethical. The artist must use universal materials which are reflected through nature's symbols.

26. David Morse, *American Romanticism: From Melville to James*, 2 volumes (London, 1987), I, p. 10.

27. Wesley J. De Mott, 'From Natural Religion to Transcendentalism: Emerson's Sermon No. 43', *Studies in the American Renaissance*, (1985), 1-27 (p. 5).

28. Elizabeth Peabody said of Emerson as 'always the preacher of the eternal life, entirely emancipated from the 'letter which killeth,' and minister of the Spirit which maketh alive' (Peabody, 'Emerson as Preacher' Lecture in 1884, in *The Genius and Character of Emerson*, edited by F. B. Sanborn, (Boston, Mass. 1898), p.154. On the nature of God, Emerson wrote in a journal entry in 1832: 'What is God but the name of the Soul at the centre by which all things are what they are, and so our existence is proof of his. We cannot think of ourselves and how our being is intertwined with his without awe and amazement' (JMN, IV, p. 33).

This is an assertion of the identity of God and man. Earlier in 1830, Emerson asked, 'What is God?' 'The most elevated conception of character that can be formed in the mind. It is, the individual's own soul carried out to perfection' (JMN,III, p. 82). A few years later and after his completion of *Nature* in 1836, he asked the same question, 'And what is God? We cannot say but we see clearly enough. We cannot say, because he is the unspeakable, the immeasurable, the perfect \_\_\_ but we see plain enough in what direction it lies' (JMN,V, p. 229). According to Emerson, God is a direction of the mind; for more on Emerson's beliefs see Wesley J. Mott,1982, pp. 1-27.

29. *Wordsworth: The Prelude or the Growth of the Poet's Mind*, edited by Stephen Gill, (London, 1986), p. xxviii.

30. Wordsworth's attitude toward religion was different in the 1830s. Robert Perceval Graves (1834) was said to have written that Coleridge's death was announced to a group, including himself, by Wordsworth who read a letter which he had received from Henry Nelson Coleridge conveying the manner and the tidings of his great relation's death.

The most interesting part of the letter was ... that the last use he [Coleridge] made of his faculties was to call his children and other relatives and friends around him, to give them his blessing, and to express his hope to them that the manner at his end might manifest the depth of his trust in his

Saviour Christ; As I heard this, I was deeply glad at the substance and deeply affected by Wordsworth's emotion in reading it (quoted in Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, (London, 1851), p. 290, my emphasis).

Wordsworth at this time was a man moved by trust in Christ. Coleridge's trust in the Saviour had influenced Wordsworth at least emotionally when he read the letter and this left an impact on his listeners. See *William Wordsworth: the Later Years*.

Willard L. Sperry (1951) noted that some critics view Wordsworth's religion as pantheistic (p.153). This pantheistic view is reflected in the last two lines of the Lucy poem: 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,/ With rocks ,and stars, and trees.' Since pantheism is amoral and does not believe in the existence of evil, therefore, it does not have to struggle with the problem of evil. Sperry argued that Wordsworth's beliefs were far from pantheism: Wordsworth recognized the mystery of the universe and felt the sadness and sorrow of humanity; in particular, he was aware of man's inhumanity to man, man's unkindness to man. These observations, said Sperry, could not be applied to pantheism (p.135); see Willard L. Sperry, 'Wordsworth's Religion' in *Centenary Studies Presented at Cornell and Princeton Universities*, pp. 153-63.

31. F. B. Pinion, *A Wordsworth Companion: A Study and Assessment* (London, 1984).

32. *Romanticism and Ideology: Studies in English Writing 1765-1830*, edited by David Aers, et al. (Boston and London, 1981), p. 77.

33. For more discussion on man and his fate, see Richard Lee Francis, 'Necessitated Freedom: Emerson's *Conduct of Life*,' *Studies in American Renaissance* (1980), pp. 73-89; for a discussion of Wordsworth's poem dealing with man who has a capacity to apprehend the 'mystical reality' and possesses power of 'symbol-reading' and 'symbol-making' \_\_\_ that is, poetic imagination, see David Ferry, 1978, p. 52. On Emerson's theory of language and his idea of the poet, see Mutlu Konuk Blasing, 'Essaying the Poet: Emerson's Poetic Theory Practice,' *Modern Language Studies*, 15 (1985), 9-23. Blasing noted that Emerson's attitude toward the poet seems

ambivalent; he proposed the poet in order to desire him. For Emerson, 'Poetry is our way of discovering Fate in ourselves and ourselves in Fate — which is why we need it.' Prose, no matter how it is musical, is not music. Blasing concluded his article by suggesting that perhaps Emerson was a minor poet but a major essayist.

34. Lionel Trilling, 'The Immortality Ode', in *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* by Lionel Trilling, (New York, 1951), 129-59 (p. 141).

35. Stuart Gerry Brown (1943) attempted to elaborate on Emerson's inconsistency and relate it to Platonism: citing some excerpts from Emerson's various works and referring these statements to Platonism; presenting the idea of the Good as the primary source from which every thing emanates. This Good possesses creative power where other things proceed from and depend upon it (p. 337). Emerson, said Brown, like Plato, treats experience dualistically: to report truth as you see it and that some truth is evil, or to show that all truth is part of the good (p. 340). Brown noted that 'the primary source of his [Emerson's] philosophic statement, is certainly Platonism' (p. 344). Even Emerson's theory of inspiration, added Brown, is an illustration of his Platonic means of handling the problems which were of interest to him (p. 344). It seems that Brown is too presumptuous; As a matter of fact, Emerson's ideas are not purely Platonic, or German, or Oriental, or Unitarian, they are all of these collectively put together. On Brown's argument, see 'Emerson's Platonism,' *New England Quarterly*, 18 (1943), pp. 325-45.

36. James Freeman Clarke, *Autobiography, Diary, and Correspondence*, (Boston, 1891), p. 38.

37. Cornelius Felton, 'Wordsworth's Yarrow Revisited', *The Christian Examiner*, 19 (January 1839) 375-83 ( p. 375).

38. Orestes A. Brownson, 'Wordsworth', *The Boston Quarterly Review*, 2 (April 1839) pp. 137-168.

39. The name 'Whig,' borrowed from the British Party opposing royal prerogatives, was first used during the year 1833 as an expression of the alarm raised against President Andrew Jackson after his defiance of the Senate and dismissal of two secretaries of the Treasury. Jackson removed

government deposits from the Bank of the United States and rejected nullification of South Carolina. Consequently, Henry Clay brought southern States rights' proponents and fiscal conservatives in a coalition with those who still believed in the National Republican programme of federally financed internal improvements and protective tariff.

The Whigs Party nominee for presidency in 1844, Henry Clay lost the election when he opposed annexation of Texas and more importantly, despite the opposition to Jackson and his policies, the Party never formed a definitive programme. By late 1840s, the Whig coalition began to become factions of 'Conscience' (antislavery ) Whigs and 'Cotton' (proslavery) Whigs. By 1854, a newly formed Republican Party emerged which most of the Whigs joined; many of the remaining Whigs backed the Constitutional Union Party as the country split apart in 1860.

The Democratic Party can be traced to 1792, a national group of voters supported Thomas Jefferson with the name Democratic Republican emphasizing their anti-monarchic sentiments. The Party was known by various designations until the 1830s during the Presidency of Andrew Jackson, when the party adopted its present name. It was not until 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, that the Party split into Northern and Southern factions over the slavery issue.

The Democrats triumphed temporarily in 1884 and 1894 when Grover Cleveland won the Presidency, but in 1896 they split again over the issue of the coinage of silver. In 1912 and 1916, the Democrats gained power under Woodrow Wilson who introduced major legislation for federal regulation of banking and industry. See William R. Brock, *Parties and Political Conscience: American Dilemmas 1840-1850*. (Millwood, New York, 1979).

40. Arthur Ladu, 'Emerson: Whig or Democrat?' *New England Quarterly*, 13 (1940), 419-41 (p. 430).

41. On Wordsworth's politics, see John Turner, *Wordsworth: Play and Politics: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1800* (London, 1986). Turner discussed all political ideas in Wordsworth's A Letter to Bishop Llandoff (1793); 'Salisbury Plain,' 1793-1794, a historical power in which the experience of social inequality is expressed in stanza three through the poet's identification of social inequality with the poor of civilization, the

traveller, the vagrant, and others (p. 46); and 'Peter Bell,' a history of reintegration, of the recovery of lost goodness, grounded in Wordsworth's faith (in the words of the old Cumberland Beggar) there is 'a spirit' of goodness that is associated with 'every mode of being' (p.151); see also David Ferry, 1978; Crane Briton, *The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists* (Oxford, 1926); David Simpson, 'Criticism, Politics, and Style in Wordsworth's Poetry,' *Critical Inquiry*, 11(1984), pp. 52-81; Kenneth R. Johnston,(1983) pp. 6-14; On analyzing Wordsworth's 'Michael,' Majorie Levinson (1985) noted that the poem referred to the contemporary social, economic, and political conditions: It was an attack on the attachment of property as a cause lying behind psychological and social disorder; see Majorie Levinson, 'Spiritual Economics: A Reading of Wordsworth's 'Michael'', *ELH* (1985), pp. 707-731. See also John Barrel, *Poetry, Language, and Politics* (Manchester,1988); Paul Sheats, *Making Tales: The Politics of Wordsworth's Narrative Experiments* (Chicago, 1984); David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination* (London, 1987); and Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford, 1988)

42. A. V. Dicey, *The Statemanship of Wordsworth: An Essay* (Oxford,1917), p. 24.

43. F. M. Todd, *Politics and the Poet: A Study of Wordsworth* (London, 1957), p. 45.

44. R. H. Blyth, *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics* (Tokyo, 1942) pp. 265-66.

45. David Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity* (Cambridge, Mass. 1964).

46. Sheldon W. Liebman, 'Emerson's Discovery of the English Romantics, 1818-1836', *American Transcendental Quarterly*,21 (1974) 36-45 (p. 36).

47. John B. Moore, 'Emerson on Wordsworth', *PMLA*, 62 (1926) 169-76.

48. By referring to 'their northern contrymen,' Emerson seems to have in mind the attacks on Wordsworth which were published in the *Edinburgh Review*.

49. James Montgomery was imprisoned twice for libel because of his

newspaper. He was a lecturer on poetry in 1835 to the Royal Institution and a contributor to the *Cabinet Enclyopaedia*. As a critic, he was so impartial that he hardly had any opinions at all. Although his poems, dealing with many philanthropies, earned him high public praise during his life time, they were rhetorical and dull; however, over a hundred of his hymns are still in use in various churches.

Montgomery's 'Pelican Island' consists of nine cantos of poetry. In his Preface, Montgomery wrote that the subject of the poem was suggested to him from a passage by Captain Flinders's voyage to Terra Australis in which he described one of these gulfs that indents the New Holland Coast full with small islands. According to the narrative, flocks of birds were sitting upon the beaches. The islands were filled with a number of scattered bones and skeletons used by the Pelicans as their breeding place. There was one island that seemed to be free from disturbance, situated upon an 'unknown coast, near the antipodes of Europe.' Montgomery went on to say that Captain Flinders was struck by the appearance of one of these islands on the surface surrounded by scattered relics of great number of trees.

In the Preface, Montgomery also pointed out that he preferred not to 'encumber his volume with notes' but instead he would offer an illustration of the nature of the coral reef — extracted from Captain Basil Hall's voyage to the Loo Choo island in the Chinese Sea. He requested the reader to bear in mind that the narrative is supposedly delivered by the imaginary being who had witnessed the happenings. See Montgomery, *The Pelican Island and Other Poems* (London, 1828).

Emerson's reference to 'Pelican Island' might not be serious in tone. It seems that Emerson uses Montgomery's poem as a kind of pun of insignificance.

50. F. W. Bateson, *Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation* (London, 1951), p.188.

51. Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's Prelude* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1963) pp. 14-15.

52. *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, edited by Sir George Otto Trevelyan, (Leipzig, 1876), IV, p. 45.

53. Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth* (London, 1851), II, p. 384

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1. Kenneth W. Cameron, *Emerson the Essayist* (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1945).

2. J. Lashley Dameron, 'Emerson and *Fraser's* on Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*', *American Transcendental Quarterly* 57 (1985), 15-19 (p. 15).

3. Ralph L. Rusk, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1949), p. 240.

4. John Abraham Heraud (1799-1887) was an eminent editor in the first half of the nineteenth century. He edited *Sunbeam* during 1838-1839 and the *Monthly Magazine* during 1839-1842. He also contributed to the *Quarterly Review*, *Athenaeum*, *Fraser's Magazine* and others. His other writings includes *The Legend of St. Loy*, with other poems, 1820; *The Descent into Hell*, 1830; revised and other poems added in 1835; 'An Oration on the Death of Coleridge' in 1834; 'The Substance of a Lecture on Poetic Genius' in 1837; *Shakespeare: His Inner Life* in 1865; and 'The Present Position of the Dramatic Poet' in 1841.

5. Sherman Paul, *Emerson's Angle of Vision* (Cambridge, Mass. 1952), p. 29.

6. Emerson read Coleridge's *Statesman's Manual* in 1830 (see J,II, p. 282); *Aids to Reflection* in 1829 (see J,II, p.268). References to Coleridge and his philosophy are made in Emerson's Journals, (see J,III, pp. 225, 235, 237, 310, 337-38, 467-68, 522, 525, 529, and 539).

In another letter to his aunt, Emerson mentioned what he liked about Coleridge: 'His [Coleridge's] theological speculations are, at least, God viewed from one position; and no wise man would neglect that one element in concentrating the rays of human thought to a true and comprehensive conclusion. Then I love him that he is no utilitarian, nor necessarian, nor scoffer' (J,II, p.279).

On Emerson's book borrowings, see Kenneth W. Cameron, 1941, pp.152-64; and *The Transcendentalists and Minerva* (Hartford, Conn.1958), I, pp. 43-46; and II, pp. 415-20.



7. William Charvat, *The Origins of American Critical Thought, 1810-1835* (Philadelphia, Penn. 1936), pp. 91-92.

8. Wayne C. Anderson, 'Perpetual Affirmations Unexplained: The Rhetoric of Reiteration in Coleridge, Carlyle, and Emerson', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985) 37-51 (p. 37).

9. Jonathan Bishop, *Emerson on the Soul* (Cambridge, Mass. 1964), p. 132.

10. George Miller Haynes, 'Coleridge, Emerson, and the Prophet's Vocation', (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1984), p.1.

11. William Lyon Phelps, 'Ralph Waldo Emerson's Philosophy', *Ladies Home Journal* (1923) 22-24 (p. 23).

12. Roberta K. Ray, 'The Role of the Orator in the Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson', *Speech Monographs* 41 (1974), 215-25 (p. 215).

13. *New Approaches to Coleridge: Biographia and Critical Essays*, edited by Donald Sultana, (New York, 1981), p. 119.

14. The Transcendentalists believed that nature displays the will of God more than the Bible. Some European Romantics stressed that man had to respond to nature and to the scripture with his intuition. See Philip Gura, *The Wisdom of Words: Theology and Literature in the New England Renaissance* (Middletown, Conn. 1981), p.75. Debates over scriptural exegesis often became secularized and even applied to imaginative literature. For some Americans, nature comes to function as a mediator between earth and heaven (p.76).

Kenneth Walter Cameron (1945) stressed that Swedenborg believed in 'the microcosm and the macrocosm [i.e. 'all in each' and 'each in all'], the centrality of man in nature, in the unity running through all things, in the gravitation of like towards like ... in the ... doctrine that anyone builds his own spiritual state or house' (II, p. 230). See also Marguerite Block, *The New Church in the New World* (New York, 1932), an account of Swedenborgism in America.

James Marsh adopted Swedenborgism which was popularized by Coleridge. A basic component of Swedenborgism is that the world is composed of matter and spirit — their actual and symbolic connexion needs

more exploration if man wants to understand divine law. This is another way to understand the distinction between Reason and Understanding (Gura, 1981, p. 80).

According to Perry Miller (1971), Swedenborg's view maintains that the 'organic principle, if piously observed, cannot fail to achieve coherence by the method of surrender and receptivity, because the correspondence of idea and object, of word and thing, is inherent in the universe' (p. 49). Swedenborg sees a double meaning for words: 'in the mosaic account of the creation ... there is everywhere a double meaning of words.' He also says:

... Whatever originated in the ultimate parts of nature, on account of receiving its origin from heaven, involves something celestial in what is terrestrial, or something spiritual in what is natural; and it does so on this ground, that something that is represented in the divine mind cannot be carried out in reality to the idea of Heaven. There results then a correspondence of all things, which with divine permission we shall follow out in its proper series (quoted in Block, p. 21).

Thus for everything natural, there is something spiritual. Whatever is represented in the divine mind, there is a counterpart in reality, in nature.

In *Representative Men* (1850), Emerson criticized Swedenborg's perception of nature as being 'mystical and hebraic' but 'not human and universal.' In short, Emerson complained that with Swedenborg, we seem 'always in a church' (W, IV, pp. 121-22). According to Swedenborg: 'If we choose to express any natural truth in physical and definite vocal terms, and to convert these terms only into the corresponding and spiritual terms, we shall by this means elicit a spiritual truth, or theological dogma, in place of the physical truth or precept' (quoted in Emerson's *Representative Men*, W, IV, p. 215; from Swedenborg, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*).

15. Joel Porte, *Emerson and Thoreau: Transcendentalists in Conflict* (Middletown, Conn., 1966, rpt., 1980), p. 84.

16. *The Statesman's Manual*, Appendix B, vol. I, (p. 456), in *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 7 vols. edited by G. T. Shedd,

(New York, 1835; rpt. 1907).

17. *Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Robert Burkholder and Joel Myerson, (Boston, Mass. 1983), p. 73. Hereafter cited as *Critical Essays*.

18. *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, vol. 10, (p. 184) in *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by Kathleen Coburn, (New York, Princeton, and London, 1957-1976).

19. *Aids to Reflection*, second edition (London, 1831), p. 407.

20. *The Friend: A Series of Essays*, 2 vols. edited by Barbara E. Roake, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, (Princeton, new Jersey, 1969), II, pp. 43, 127. All subsequent quotations refer to this edition.

21. *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, edited by Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (New York and Oxford, 1956-1971), III, p. 388. Hereafter cited as *Collected Letters* followed by volume number and page.

22. Kant became more known in America after Dugald Stewart published his *General views of the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical, and Practical Philosophy Since the Revival of Letters in Europe* in Two Dissertations (two parts, London, 1815, 1822; Boston, 1822). Stewart devoted twenty pages to Kant in which he seemed to misinterpret him (Pochmann, et al., 1978, p. 87). In an entry in his journal in 1833, Emerson wrote: '[Stewart] ... saves you a world of reading ... it is a beautiful and instructive abridgement of the thousand volumes of Locke, Leibnitz, Voltaire, Bayle, Kant, and the rest' (J, I, pp. 289-90). By 1830s the works of Coleridge, De Quincey, and Carlyle made Kant known and popular (Pochmann, et al., eds., p. 88).

23. Edward Schamberger, 'The Influence of Dugald Stewart and Richard Price on Emerson's Concept of 'Reason': A Reassessment', *ESQ: A Journal of American Renaissance*, 18 (1972), 179-83, (p. 179).

24. Barbara L. Packer, *Emerson's Fall: A New Interpretation of the Major Essays* (New York, 1982) p. 44.

25. R. C. Waterston, 'Coleridge's Poems', *The North American Review*, 39 (1834) 437-58 (p. 458).

26. *Shakespeare Criticism*, edited by T. M. Raysor, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, (London, 1960), I, p. 197. All

subsequent quotations refer to this edition.

27. *The Lay Sermons*, edited by R. W. White, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1972), VI, pp. 72-73.

28. Thoman McFarland, *Romantic Cruxes: The English Essayists and the Spirit of the Age* (Oxford, 1987), p.121.

29. Schelling views God as both the essence and the power of self. There is a difference between each one of them and neither is derived from the other: 'There are two principles even in what is necessary in God! the outflowing, outspreading, self giving essence, and an equal power of selfhood, of return unto self, of being-in-self, Without his further deed, God is in himself both of these, that essence and this power.' These two opposites are original and necessary:

It is not enough to see the antithesis; it must also be recognized.that these contraries are equally essential and original. The power by which the essence confines itself, denies itself, is in its kind as real as the contrary principles; each has its own root, and neither is to be derived from the other. For if this were to be the case, then the antithesis would again immediately cease. But it is in itself impossible that exact opposites be derived from each other.

Therefore the antithesis is already there; it is the doubleness of things which has existed since old time:

The presence of such an eternal antithesis could not escape the first man who felt and perceived intimately. Already finding this duality in the priordial beginnings of nature, but nowhere finding its sources in the visible, he would soon have to say to himself that the basis of the antithesis is as old as, indeed even older than, the world;that, as in all that is living, so already in the primal life there is doubleness which, descended through many steps, has determined itself as that which appears to us as light and darkness, the male and the female, the spiritual and the corpreal. Therefore precisely the most ancient doctrines represented the first nature as an essence with two modes

of action which clash with each other.

Yet it not enough merely to discern the antithesis ; if the unity of essence is not recognized at the same time, or if it is not seen that it is indeed one and the same which is the affirmation and negation, the outspreading and the restraining (Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, translated and edited by Frederick de Wolfe Bolman, Jr., (New York, 1942) pp. 97-99; in Benoit, 1973, p.10).

Thus we find that the first nature is of itself in contradiction, or one in which it would be placed from without (for there is nothing outside of it), but in a necessary contradiction, posited together with its nature, and which therefore, strictly speaking, is its nature (p. 9).

Coleridge wrote, 'We proceed from the SELF, in order to lose and find all self in God.'

30. *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols. edited by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton, 1983), I, pp. 16-17. All subsequent references are to this edition.

31. Donald Kuspit, 'In Search of the Visionary Image', *Art Journal*, 45 (1985), 319-22 (p. 321).

32. Tony Tanner, 'Emerson: The Unconquered Eye and the Unchanged Circle', in *Critical Essays on Ralph Waldo Emerson*, pp. 310-26 (p. 311).

33. Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture from Revolution Through Renaissance* (Cambridge and London, 1986) p. 65.

34. Vivian C. Hopkins, *Spires of Form* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 149.

35. Albert Gelpi, 'Emerson: The Paradox of Organic Form', *English Institute Essays*, 10 (1975), 149-70 (p. 151).

36. To Coleridge, the imagination is the power to experience the reconciliation of contradiction without emptying them of their differences and disparities. To Wordsworth, the imagination is the faculty whose theme is growth, how it is itself destroyed and how it is restored. Notwithstanding Coleridge's distinction of Fancy and Imagination, both Coleridge and

Wordsworth view Fancy as the faculty of the mind which creates something real out of the thing in natural reality. (See Morse Peckham, 1981, p. 112; and Thomas McFarland, *Originality and Imagination*, (Baltimore, 1985).

37. Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1981), p. 228.

38. *Lectures 1808-1819 on Literature*, edited by R. A. Foakes, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1987), I, p. 273. Hereafter cited as *Lectures 1808-1819*.

39. *Lectures 1795 on Politics and Religion*, edited by Lewis Patton and Peter Mann, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1971), I, 93-94. Hereafter cited as *Lectures 1795*.

40. James C. McKusick, *Coleridge's Philosophy of Language* (New Haven, 1986), p. 26.

41. Ian Wylie, *Young Coleridge and the Philosophers of Nature* (Oxford, 1989), p. 87.

42. H. W. Piper, *The Singing of Mount Abora* (Tornato and London, 1987), p. 10.

43. Julie Ellison, *Emerson's Romantic Style* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1984), p. 94.

44. Coleridge declared that every thing emanates from one source of power, and this power is good. The universe as a whole operates like a 'beneficent machine' which may be worshipped as a 'God of love' (Fairchild, 1931, p. 333).

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,  
Omnific. His most holy name is Love  
Truth of sublimity imports! with the which  
Who feels and saturates his constant soul,  
...  
Views all creation, and he loves it all,  
And bless it, and calls it very good!  
...  
Tis the sublime of man,  
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves  
Parts and proportions of one wonderful whole!  
This fraternises man, this constitutes  
Our charities and bearings, but 'tis God

Diffused through all, that doth make whole one

Coleridge was a lover of nature and a believer in its power to guide, to inspire, and to heal \_\_ this is represented, says Fairchild, by such poems as 'The Nightingale,' 'Frost at Midnight,' 'This Lime Tree Bower my Prison,' and 'Fears in Solitude' (p. 335). Coleridge's love of nature makes natural objects contribute to the unity of all things; his faith that 'all things counterfeit "infinity" (p. 336).

According to Coleridge, there are three divisions of mentality arranged in ascending order. The lowest of all is sense. In *The Friend*, Coleridge says: 'Under the term SENSE, I comprise whatever is passive in our being ..., all that Man is in common with animals, in kind at least \_\_ his sensation and impressions whether of his outward senses, or the inner sense' (II, p.104). Understanding, called by unenlightened ones as Reason, comes above sense (Verstand). Above the Understanding is Reason (Vernunft) which is the Transcendental faculty or the creative imagination.

45. In her writings and in her career, Margaret Fuller proved to be eminent in her application of transcendental principles to justifying the natural rights of women (Carolyn Hlus, 'Margaret Fuller, Transcendentalist: A Reassessment' *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 16 (1985), pp.1-13).

Bronson Alcott described her teaching style while she was working at his Temple School: 'If I might characterize her in a word I should say she was a diviner \_\_ one of the Sibylline souls who read instructively the mysteries of life and thought, and translate these in shining symbols to those competent to apprehend them' (*Journals of Alcott*, (p. 409).

As a member of the Transcendentalist Club, W.H. Channing described her style:

The style of her eloquence was sententious, free from pettiness, direct, vigorous, charged with vitality ... Her statements, however, rapid, showed breadth of comprehensive, ready memory, impartial judgement, nice analysis of different power of penetrating through surfaces to reality, fixed regard to central laws and habitual

communion with the Life of life ... (*Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, ed. Emerson, Channing, and Clarke, (Boston, 1884), 2 vols. II, pp. 20-21).

As a Transcendentalist, Fuller used intuition and imagination. Fuller's use of imagination and intuition parallels the Transcendentalists' belief in 'the divinity of nature, the glory of human aspirations and freedom, the power of intuition as opposed to reason and the creative energy of poetic imagination' (George Hotchfield, 'An Introduction to Transcendentalism', in *American Transcendentalism*, pp. 35-52 (p. 36). Like Emerson, Fuller believed in Swedenborg's theory of correspondence:

This philosophy [Transcendentalism] teaches the unity of the world in God and the imminence of God in the world. Because of this indwelling of divinity, every part of the world, however small, is a microcosm, comprehending within itself ... all the laws and meaning of existence. The soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world, and contains latently, all which it contains (Goddard, 1973, [159-78] p. 161).

According to Hlus (1985), Fuller developed the theory of correspondence in her three essays: 'Yaca Filamentosa,' 'Leila,' and 'The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrian.' In a kind of allegory, Fuller stated that correspondence exists between Nature and spirit; Nature affects spirit and spirit affects Nature. God is always present in all things (p. 5).

While Emerson called for personal freedom, Fuller uttered her call for women. Both joined their attack upon institutions, particularly those which suppressed women as individuals — Reform is essential (Hlus, p. 9). According to Fuller, marriage is based upon 'units' and then upon 'unity': 'We must have units before we can have union' (Margret Fuller, p.101). Fuller also stressed whether directly or indirectly the importance of self-reliant individuals in society [an Emersonian idea] (Hlus, p.10). See Marie Mitchell Oleson Urbanski, *Margaret Fuller's 'Women in the Nineteenth*



*Century'* (New York, 1978); and Margaret Fuller, *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1968).

Emerson's influence on American writers continues. Tom Outland in Willa Cather's novel, *The Professor's House* (1925) represents a character-type related to American Transcendentalism; a composite of various qualities Emerson ascribed to his American intellectual ideal man. Tom Outland can be seen as an Emersonian man (Dillman, 1984, p. 375).

As an Emersonian character, Tom appears in New Mexico without any historical connexion to the arc, a man without a past and without any burden of convention and traditions. As a scholar, he reads Virgil and Caesar in Latin; he knows Spanish (p. 376). Cather noted that 'His [Tom's] story reveals the fate of Emersonian idealism in conflict with pragmatism and materialism, the same conflict Thoreau develops in *Walden*. In *The Professor's House*, Pragmatism wins' (p. 383). There is a conflict in this 'tragic story': 'It is the tragic story of the fate of Emerson's ideal intellectual in a materialistic society far removed from the basically agrarian culture of Emerson's Massachusetts ... Tom's heroic Emersonian self would have been at least as frustrated as Godfrey St. Peter in conflict with a culture opposed to his own values' (pp. 384-85). See Richard Dillman, 'Tom Outland: Emerson's American Scholar in *The Professor's House*' *Midwest Journal: A Journal of Contemporary Thought*, 25 (1984), pp. 375-85.

Another American musician, a believer in an Emersonian idea of independence, is Charles Ives who launched a campaign in 1920 for the amendment of the U.S. Constitution; see Ellen Hunnicutt, 'The Practical Uses of Emerson: Charles Ives' *Sounding: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 70 (1987), pp.189-198.

46. Emerson knew that Kant and his philosophy had left its impact on Germany.

This came deepest and loudest out of Germany, where it is not the word of few, but of all the wise. The Professors of Germany, a secluded race, free to think, but not invited to action, poor and crowded, went back into the recesses of consciousness with Kant, and whilst his philosophy was popular, and by its striking nomenclature had imprinted itself on the memory, as that of phrenology does now, they

analyzed in its light the history of past and present times which their encyclopaediacal study had explored. All geography, all statistics, all philology was read with Reason and Understanding in view, and hence the reflective and penetrating sight of their research. Neibuhr, Humboldt, Muller, Herder, Schiller, Fichte, Shlegel (J,IV, pp. 93-94).

Not only did Kant influence his fellow countrymen but the whole group of American Transcendentalists.

It is well known to most of my audience that Idealism of the present day acquired the name of Transcendental from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant; of Konitgsberg, who replied to the skeptical philosophy of Locke, which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself; and he dominated their Transcendental forms (W, XII, pp. 367-69).

47. R. H. Blyth, *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942) pp. 246-47.

48. Each item was used in *Aids to Reflection* (1829) as follows: John Smith's Posthumous Tracts (1660), pp.65, 323; Huber on Bees and Ants, pp.138-41; Kirby and Spence, p.138; Denham, Niewentiet and Lyonet as cited, p.147; Bayle, p.148; Pomponatius, Treatise De Facto as cited, p.148; Henry More's Antidote against Atheism, pp.43, 280, 317-20; Donne's sermons, pp.6, 254-55 (See Editors note in JMN, III, p.165).

49. Joel Porte, *Representative Man: Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1979), p. 50.

50. Leonard Neufeldt, *The House of Emerson* (London, 1982) p. 146.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THOMAS CARLYLE

1. James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in*

London, 1834-1881, 2 vols. (New York, 1884), I, p. 96. Hereafter cited as *Carlyle, 1834-1881*.

2. William Silas Vance, 'Carlyle in America Before *Sartor Resartus*', *American Literature*, 7 (1935-1936), 363-75 (p. 368).

3. Andrew D. Hook, 'Carlyle and America', *The Carlyle Society*, 3 (1970), 1-27. (p. 6).

4. In an essay published in 1843, Edgar Allan Poe claimed that if Carlyle meant 'to be understood,' he took 'all possible pains to prevent us from understanding ... we can only say he is an ass \_\_\_ and this, to be brief, is our private opinion of Mr. Carlyle, which we now took liberty of making public' (*Thomas Carlyle: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Jules Paul Siegel, [New York, 1971] p. 302). Three years later, Poe confessed not the slightest faith in Carlyle: 'In ten years \_\_\_ possibly in five \_\_\_ he [Carlyle] will be remembered only as a butt for sarcasm,' since the only 'important service' he can be credited with is his having pushed 'rant and cant to the degree of excess' that must create a negative reaction to the absurdity of hero worship. Three years later, Poe attacked Carlyle: 'The next work of Carlyle will be entitled Bow-Wow, and the title-page will have a motto from the opening chapter of the Koran: 'There is no error in this Book" (Siegel, p. 303).

5. Lydia M. Child's letter on 7 April, 1838, cited in Rodger L. Tarr, 'Emerson's Transcendentalism in L. M. Child's Letter to Carlyle', *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, 58 (1970), 112-15.

6. Fred Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle* (Ithaca, New York, 1983), p. 232.

7. A. L. Le Quesne, *Carlyle* (Oxford and Toronto, 1982), p. 53.

8. *A Carlyle Reader: Selections from the Writings of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by G. B. Tennyson, (New York and London, 1984), p. xiii.

9. Michael Goldberg, 'A Universal 'howl of excretion': Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and their Critical Reception', in *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*, edited by John Clubbe, (Durham, North Carolina, 1976), 129-47 (p. 145). Hereafter cited as *Carlyle and His Contemporaries*.

10. George Saintsbury, *Corrected Impressions*, p. 212.

11. Leslie Stephen, *Hours in the Library* (New York, 1899), III, p. 254.

12. *The Letters of William Butler Yeats*, edited by Allen Wade, (New York, 1955), p. 209.

13. *The Correspondence of Gerard Manly Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, edited by Claude Collier Abbot, (Oxford, 1935), p. 59.

14. Henry James, 'Carlyle', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 74, (1881), 590-615 (p. 593).

15. G. B. Tennyson, *Sartor Called Resartus*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1965).

16. Henry James, 'The Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson', *The Century*, 26 (1883), 265-72 (p.265).

17. *Carlyle's Unfinished History of German Literature*, edited by Hill Shine, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1951), p. 87. Hereafter cited as *Carlyle's Unfinished History*.

18. *The Letters of Thomas Carlyle to John Stuart Mill, John Sterling, and Robert Browning*, edited by Alexander Carlyle, (New York, 1923, p. 48.

19. When Emerson speaks about the poet as a 'Representative Man,' he exactly knows that he is describing an ideal character.

Of course, when we describe man as poet, and credit him with the triumphs of art, we speak of the potential or ideal man, \_\_ not found now in any one person. You must go through a city or a nation, and find one faculty here, one there, to build the true poet withal. Yet all men know the portrait when it is drawn, and it is part of religion to believe its possible incarnation (W , VIII, p. 26).

In 'Poetry and Imagination,' Emerson wrote, 'Poetry is the gin science. The trait and test of the poet is that he builds, adds and affirms.' The critic destroys (W, VIII, p. 37). The poet is fated and he makes fated; For the poet, inspired by 'some random word' of the gods, becomes 'the fated man of men/ Whom the ages must obey' ('W, IX, p. 32). In his essay, 'The Poet,' poets 'are free and make free' (III, p. 32). Poets begin with the 'argument' not with metres, although metres are what they end with: 'metre-making argument.'

Leonard Neufeldt (1982) noted that in 'The Sphinx,' the Sphinx, nature, the poet, and the poem are linked in a mutual purpose and order that the Sphinx will embody in the life of nature and he (the Poet) must enact in he

nature of his words \_\_\_ a fusion of mode and achievement relating to a single law (p.159).

According to Emerson, the true poet performs certain duties.

[He] shows us all things in their right series and procession. For that better perception, he stands one step nearer to things and sees the flowing of the metamorphosis; perceives that thought is multiform: that within the form of every creature is a face impelling it to ascend into higher form; and flowing with the flowing of nature (W, III, pp. 20-21).

In an entry in his journal, Emerson wrote, 'The poetic eye sees in Man the Brother of the River ... Heroes ... invent a resource for every moment' (JMN, VII, pp. 539-40). The only stability and continuity in all the metamorphoses is the 'I': 'Through all the running sea of forms, I am the truth; I am love and immutable; I transcend form as I do time and space' (JMN, VII, p. 429).

According to Wordsworth, poetry can function 'to throw ... a certain colouring of imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way' ('Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1802). Wordsworth sees nature and the mind of man as adapted to one another; Carlyle, in comparison, sees the mind of man as inadequate to comprehend nature.

Coleridge, the other Romantic, sees the power of genius carry 'on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood; to combine the child's sense of words and novelty with the appearances, which every day for perhaps fifty years had rendered familiar ..., to awaken the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom' (*Biographia Literaria*). According to Carlyle, Professor Teufelsdröckh says that custom 'doth make dotards of us all ... Philosophy complains that Custom has hoodwinked us, from the first; that we do everything by custom, even believe by it; ... what is Philosophy throughout but continual battle against Custom; an ever-renewed effort to transcend the sphere of blind Custom, and so become Transcendental?' (SR, p.194).

Carlyle thought in history one could find 'the sole Poetry possible' in the disbelieving modern world (CE, 28, p. 45). The historian is the true heir of the epic poet, a prophet-in-reverse who reconstructs the still-unfolding epic of the past. In a notebook entry on 14 February 1831, Carlyle wrote: 'The old Epics are great because they (musically) show us the whole world of those old days ... and for us far more admirable. But where is the genius that can write it? Patience! Patience! he will be here one of these centuries' (*Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by Charles Eliot Norton, [New York, 1898], p. 187). Carlyle asks, Is 'true History the true Epic Poem? \_\_\_ I partly begin to surmise so \_\_\_ What after all is the true proportion of St. Mathew to Homer, of the crucifixion to the Fall of Troy' (p.188). Carlyle also says: '...that divine BOOK OF REVELATIONS, whereof a chapter is contemplated from epoch to epoch, and by some named HISTORY; to which inspired Texts your numerous talented men and your innumerable untalented men ... are the better or worse exegetic Commentaries ...' (CC,1, p.142).

In one of his essays on Richter (1830), Carlyle cited his assertion that through Nature and History 'the Infinite Spirit ... as with letters, legibly writes to us. He who finds a God in the physical world will also find one in the moral, which is History. Nature force on our heart a Creator; History a Providence' (CE, 27, p.113). Carlyle attempted to exalt the natural to the level of the supernatural and the human to the level of the divine. 'We are the miracle of miracles' (CC, 5, p. 10).

20. Mutlu Konuk Blasing, 'Essaying the Poet: Emerson's Poetic Theory and Practice', *Modern Language Studies*, 15, (1985), 9-23 (p. 16).

21. Edwin Fussell, *Lucifer in Harness: American Metre, Metaphor, and Diction* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1973), p. 28.

22. Hyatt Waggoner, *Emerson as Poet* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1974), p. 30.

23. Glen M. Johnson, 'Emerson on 'Making' in Literature: His Problem of Professionalism, 1836-1841', in *Emerson Centenary Essays*, edited by Joel Myerson, (Carbondale, Illinois, 1982) pp. 65-73 (p.66).

24. Ruth ApRoberts, *The Ancient Dialect: Thomas Carlyle and Comparative Religion* (Los Angeles, California, 1988), p. 4.

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edited by C. R. Sanders, Kenneth J. Fielding, et al. (Durham, North Carolina, 1970-1985), 5, p. 220. Hereafter cited as *Carlyle's Letters* followed by volume and page numbers.

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27. Eloise M. Behnken, *Thomas Carlyle: 'Calvinist Without Theology'*, (Columbia, Missouri, and London, 1978), p. 122.

28. D. A. Wilson, *Carlyle Till Marriage* (London, 1923), p. 78.

29. Harold L. Berger, 'Emerson and Carlyle: Dissenting Believers', *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, 38 (1965), 112-15 (p. 113).

30. John D. Rosenberg, *Carlyle and the Burden of History* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 10.

31. Quoted in Michael Goldberg, *Carlyle and Dickens* (Athens, Georgia, 1932), p. 3.

32. Robert N. Hertz, 'Victory and the Consciousness of Battle: Emerson and Carlyle', *Personalities: An International Review of Philosophy, Religion, and Literature*, 45 (1964), 60-71 (p. 60).

33. Albert J. La Valley, *Carlyle and the Idea of the Modern* (London, 1968), p.5.

34. Randolph J. Bufano, 'Emerson's Apprenticeship to Carlyle, 1827-1848', *American Transcendental Quarterly*, 13 (1972), 17-43 (p. 21).

35. B. H. Lehman, *Carlyle's Theory of the Hero* (New York, 1966), p. 179.

36. Herman Grimm, 'Raph Waldo Emerson', *Literature*, (Boston, 1886).

37. Emile Montigut, 'Du Culte de Heros. Carlyle et Emerson', *Revue de Deux Mondes*, 3 (1850), 725-26 (p. 725).

38. Walter Waring, *Thomas Carlyle* (Boston, 1978), p. 60.

39. Richard Garnett, *Life of Thomas Carlyle* (London, 1887), p. 83.

40. John M. Robertson, *Modern Humanities Reconsidered* (London, 1927), p. 24.

41. B. Evans Lippincott, *Victorian Critics of Democracy* (New York, 1964), p.15.

42. Len Gougeon, 'Emerson, Carlyle, and The Civil War', *The New England Quarterly*, 62 (1989), 403-23.

43. Kenneth Marc Harris, *Carlyle and Emerson: Their Long Debate*

(London, 1978), p. 150

44. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (New York, 1966), p. 79.

45. John Clive, 'Scott, Carlyle, and Emerson: A Centenary Lecture', *Carlyle Pamphlets*, 3 (1969), 1-12 (p. 8).

46. Daniel Aaron, *The Unwritten War* (New York, 1973), pp. 34-38.

47. See Louis Ruchames, 'Two Forgotten Addresses by Ralph Waldo Emerson', *American Literature*, 28 (1956), p. 425. The violent affairs in Kansas and the execution of John Brown had led Emerson to make his 'Speech on Affairs in Kansas' which was delivered on 19 September 1856. 'The hour is coming when the strongest will not be strong enough. A harder task will the new revolution of the nineteenth century be than was the revolution of the eighteenth century' (W, XI, p. 262). In 1859 and 1860, Emerson delivered two speeches on John Brown describing active opposition to slavery as being as natural as 'gravity, or the ebb of the tide' (p. 281), and he looked forward to the eradication of the institution.

It is important to note that Emerson's fight against slavery is a fight for a moral law, a moral principle. Emerson called for the abolition of slavery. In a short speech at the Concord City Hall entitled 'The Assault upon Mr. Sumner, Speech at a meeting of the Citizens in the Town Hall in Concord, 26 May 1856' [Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, a senator, who was beaten savagely in May 1856 because of his anti-slavery attitude], Emerson said, 'I do not see how a barbarous community and a civilized community can constitute one state. I think we must get rid of slavery, or we must get rid of freedom. Life has not polarity of value in the free state and in the slave state' (W, II, p. 247).

On the controversy over slavery, see 'Letter to Martin Van Buren' in 1838; 'Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies' in 1844; 'The Fugitive Slave Law' in 1854; 'The Assault upon Mr. Sumner' in 1856; 'Relief of the Family of John Brown' in 1859; 'John Brown' in 1860; 'Theodore Parker' in 1860; 'The Emancipation Proclamation' in 1862; 'Abraham Lincoln' in 1865; and 'George L. Stearns' in 1867 — all these appear in W. On Emerson's reservations about the slavery issue, see J, V, pp. 460-61; VI, 532-33; VII, p. 255; see also W, I, pp. 347-48; II, pp. 156, 158; X, p. 63; and



John Abbee, *Remembrances of Emerson* (New York, 1901), p. 85. See also L,III, p. 260; John Jay Chapman, *Emerson, and Other Essays* (New York, 1898), pp. 48-51; Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1885), pp. 141-42; and Edward Waldo Emerson, *Emerson in Concord: A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1890), pp.175-76; and Rusk, *Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1949), pp. 260, 293.

On the same issue, see, 'Emerson the Citizen', *Nation* (28 May, 1903), p. 429; George M. Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War: North Intellectuals and the Crisis of The Union* (New York,1968), pp.11,12. Regarding Emerson's ideas on reform, see: W,I, pp. 214, 269-76; 279-81; 347-48; 345; 355; 378; II: pp. 51, 52; J, II, pp. 320, 402-03; 416-17; III, pp. 276, 350; IV, pp. 268-69; 301; 370-71; 430-31; 459-60; 465; 487-88; 491; V, pp. 4-5; 68; 97; 122; 206; 210; 212-13; 215; 229; 235; 302-03; VI, pp. 24; 107; 119-20; 403; 405-06; 558-59; 523; 534-36; VII, p. 192; 203; 205; 221-23; 425; 430; VIII, p. 78; IX, pp. 116-17.

For more discussion on the issue of slavery and the American church, see: Stephen S. Foster, 'The Brotherhood of Thieves; or, A True Picture of the American Church and Clergy', *Boston: Anti-Slavery Society*, 1844; Samuel May made a summation of the abolitionists' opinions on the Unitarian denomination, *Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict* (Boston,1869); James C. Burney, *The American Churches: The Bulworks of American Slavery* (London,1840); on the history of anti-slavery debate among the Unitarians, see Douglas C. Stange, *Patterns of Anti-Slavery Among American Unitarians 1821-1860* (Rutherford, New Jersey,1977), pp.171-227.

Emerson would not accept himself to be called a reformer of the institutions but he undoubtedly thought that his reforms would be directed toward the individual himself. Barbara L. Packer (1982) was right when she noted that Emerson was very far from thinking himself a Luther: 'If he ever thought of himself as a reformer, it was only in the sense implied by the remark he once made that the logical conclusion of the Reformation would

be a state in which there were as many churches as there were believers: a church apiece' (p.127). See Leonard Neufeldt, 'Emerson and the Civil War', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 71(1972), pp. 502-13; Wendell Jackson, 'Emerson and the Burden of Slavery', *College Language Association Journal*, 25 (1982), pp. 48-56; Philip Russell, *Emerson: The Wisest American* (New York, 1929; and Maurice Gonnaud, *An Uneasy Solitude: Individual and Society in the Work of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, translated by Lawrence Rosenwald, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1987), Chapter Two.

48. Len Gougeon, 'Emerson and Furness: Two Gentlemen of Abolition', *American Transcendental Quarterly*, 41 (1982), 17-31 (p. 19).

49. Quoted in Edwin P. Whipple, 'Emerson and Carlyle', *North American Review*, 136 (1883), p. 444.

50. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* seemed to have made an enormous impact on Herman Melville's writings. Leon Howard said:

Like Thomas Carlyle, Melville could take romantic moodiness seriously but not the entire solemnity ... Carlyle's manner was to become particularly evident in Melville's use of Scoresby's *History and Description of the Northern Whale Fishery*, which he obtained soon after reading *Sartor Resartus*, for he dipped into it and brought humour that Carlyle exercised upon various paper bags which he extracted the autobiographical and philosophical writings of Professor Teufelsdröckh of Weisnichtwo (*Melville: A Biography* [London, 1976], p. 164).

Howard made a connexion between Melville's Ahab of *Moby-Dick* and Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh of *Sartor Resartus* as the two believed that 'all visible things are emblems ... Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some Idea and body it forth.' Like Teufelsdröckh, Ahab had heard the words: 'Behold, thou art the Universe, outcast, and the Universe in mind (the Devil's)' and had replied with his 'Whole Me,' 'I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!' Both Teufelsdröckh and Ahab were Transcendentalists who did not achieve the Everlasting Yea of optimism. (See Howard, 1976, pp.164-80).

Melville also imitated Carlyle's language particularly in his use of exaggerated repetition in Chapter 16 in the paragraph describing the Pequod and in Chapter 57 talking about the virtue of patient industry in men (see Warner Berthoff, *The Example of Melville* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962). In his novel, *Pierre* (1852), Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* was still a great influence. Edward Rosenberg (1979) noted that 'one way of assessing the philosophic disaster at the bottom of Melville's book [*Pierre*] is to observe its implicit reversal of Carlyle's familiar formula for the education of the soul: after his Centre of Indifference, Melville moved not to an Everlasting Yea, but to an Everlasting Nay' (see Melville (London and Boston, 1979), p. 99).

In his *Mardi* (1849), Melville also demonstrated hilariously what fools are these mortals to whom Taji and his companions pay a visit in imaginary islands of Maramma (Chapters, 105-17), representing the organized church in society, and of Primminee (Chapters, 127-31), where the clothes philosophy of Carlyle is used — the visits are aimed at searching for Yillah, a theme of the vanity of human wishes (see Rosenberg, 1979, p. 49).

51. David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (New York, 1988), p. 484.

52. Basil Willey, *Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Mathew Arnold* (London, 1949), p. 107.

53. History, Carlyle says, is the true revelation of the divine and the historian is the prophet inspired by the divine; for Carlyle, history is not only the prophecy but the poetry of the modern age. The function of poetry is to take a portion of the Real, by the use of imagination, make the Ideal appear through the Real. Writing history represents the highest form of poetry (Le Quesne, 1982, p. 34). For the Romantics, the imagination is the supreme faculty; Carlyle believed that the greatest faculty is the imagination that dominated his thinking. The Romantic imagination found its natural expression in poetry and in the novel, which were tried by Carlyle in his youth. It is Carlyle's love for the actual, the concrete as opposed to the fictional, that led him to the writing of history (p. 34).

Carlyle's theory of history is deterministic; it is a 'Bible,' a 'revelation,'

which implies a divine plan. History is 'the Letter of Instructions, which the old generations write and posthumously transit to the new; nay, it may be called, to every man' (CE, 27, p.167). Emerson, on the other hand, sees history as a veil or a shroud — an opaque, corpse's eyeball that blocked out or distorted the message. Emerson feels that what is important is the present and that one should not be obsessed with the past. In an entry in his journal in 1842, he wrote: 'A new day, a new harvest, new duties, new men, new fields of thought, new powers call you, and an eye fastened on the past unsuns nature, bereaves me of hope and ruins me with a squalid indigence which nothing but death can adequately symbolize' (J, III, p. 229). In the 'Circles' essay, Emerson called himself 'an endless seeker with no past at my back.' What was he seeking? From what was he running? Emerson provides no answer.

In 'Jesuitism' Carlyle said that 'All History is an inarticulate Bible; and in a dim intricate manner reveals the Divine Appearances in this world. For God did make this world, and does forever govern it; the loud-roaring Loom of Time, With all its French revolutions, Jewish revelations, 'weaken the vesture thou seest Him by" (CE, 26, pp. 325-26). In *The French Revolution*, Carlyle argued that all history is sacred, the unfolding of God's Providence in time.

Carlyle distinguished between the aspects of history, political and ecclesiastical, which concern too much 'the outward mechanism, the mere lulls' (CE, 27, p. 90). Carlyle also suggested universal comparative history of religion. The artists in history, said Carlyle, are those who keep the eye for the whole, 'the idea of the Whole, and habitually know that only in the Whole is [the] Partial to be truly discerned' (p. 90) in *Universal History*.

In 'On History Again' written for *Fraser's Magazine* (1833), Carlyle asserted that Universal History is 'the true Epic Poem, and universal Divine Scripture.' Emerson, on the other hand, preferred flat town chronicles to the histories of Carlyle:

I was so ungrateful in reading and finishing Carlyle's History yesterday as to say But Philosophes must not write history for me. They know too much. I read some Plutarch or even dull Belknap or Williamson and in their dry dread annals I get thought which they never put there ... [Carlyle]

exhausts his topic; there is no more to be said when he has ended. He is not suggestive (JMN, VII: p. 265).

Wordsworth and Carlyle distinguished themselves in a century that was obsessed with history — the former portrays a continuity of the self in nature and the latter presents a continuity of human society in time. In 'My Heart Leaps Up,' the last three lines of which Wordsworth used as the epigraph to the 'Immortality Ode':

The Child is the Father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety

What holds the self together for Wordsworth is 'natural piety'; for Carlyle, it is in Rosenberg's phrase (1988) 'historical piety' (p. 20).

In 'On History,' Carlyle writes: 'Well may we say that our History the more important part is lost without recovery' and, — as thanksgiving were once want to be offered 'for recognized mercies,' — look with 'reverence into the dark untenanted places of the Past, where, in formless oblivion, our chief benefactors ... like entombed' (CE, 27, p. 87). 'Poetry', in Carlyle's Prologue to Cromwell, means a love of the past; a backward search by those who 'struggle piously, passionately, to behold, if but in glimpses, the faces of our vanished Fathers.' Writing to Emerson on 19 July, 1842, Carlyle said, 'There is no use in writing of things past, unless they can be made in fact things present ... the dead ought to bury their dead, ought they not?' (CEC, p. 325). For Wordsworth, it is a search of his vanished self reflected in the past where he can glimpse 'The Child [who] is the Father of the Man.'

Hill Shine (1971) noted that Carlyle's idea of 'historical periodicity' (p. 3), [history is an alteration of epochs of belief and doubt], was influenced by Coleridge, who like Carlyle in *The Friend*, stated his notion of progress in terms of 'historical periodicity.'

The progress of the species neither is nor can be like that of a Roman road in a right line. It may be more justly compared to that of a river ... frequently forced back towards

its fountains ... yet with an accompanying impulse that will ensue its advancement hereafter ... something is unremittingly gaining, either in secret preparation or in open and triumphant progress ... A whole generation may appear even to sleep ... [but] scattered and solitary minds are always laboring somewhere in the service of truth and virtue (p. 488).

Up to the mid-1830s Carlyle's usage of the concept of historical periodicity had some resemblance to Coleridge's. In early 1830 Carlyle called his epoch by the terms 'poetic' and 'didactic.' His contrast between Milton's era of belief and Voltaire's of unbelief\_ Carlyle's moral philosophy \_ was rationalized first in his mind by the distinction between Vernunft and Verstand. His contrast between the dynamic and the mechanic in 'Signs' is bound up and congruent with the psychological distinction between Reason and Understanding.

54. *The Correspondence of Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834-1872*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass. 1883), II; The extracts are from *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Brooks Atkinson, (New York, 1950), pp. 925-30.

55. Carlyle quoted in *Critical Essays*, pp. 66-70.

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