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Emerson as Poet

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Abstract – The Americans, who achieved political independence, desired of independence in their national culture and literature. The 1820s produced such great writers as Washington Irving, James Penimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant. Irving and Cooper wrote the best kind of fiction, but it was all modeled upon European literature. So was the case with Bryant, the Poet. But Edgar Allan Poe though from the South, wrote the original kind of poetry, achieving a measure of beauty. Emerson was just his another contemporary from the north, writing the original kind of poetry. He is known for the use of symbolism. Emerson's originality is as profound as that of Poe, and the theories of the two supplement each other. Poe sought an aesthetic base for poetry; Emerson, a moral. Poe explored mainly the possibilities of rhythm; Emerson, of symbol. The two together directed the course of American poetry since their time by turning from borrowed conventions.

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Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson were further to exploit these breaks with the past. Great American poets of the future like Robert Frost and Robert Lowell were to follow Emerson. Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa Society's annual address "The American Scholar" at Harvard on 31 August 1837 was groundbreaking. When the address was concluded James Russell Lowell declared it 'an event without any former parallel in our literary annals,' and Oliver Wendel Holmes pronounced it as Intellectual Declaration of American Independence. Emerson's hearers realized the depth and force of his revolt against his times.

Emerson is basically a poet as much as an orator and essayist. Though he speaks of the poet as sage, and poetry as pictorial music, his poetry does not sound like Wordsworth or Keats's, nor can it be set to music. It is prosoic, rugged and at times dull. But it is experimental and original. Lewis Leary adds, "Emerson's poetry often derided in his time as rough and unintelligible, has come to be regarded as genuinly innovative." (Leary 305)

Emerson began writing poetry early in the 1830s. When in 1836 Waldo, his son from the second wife Lidian was born, he wrote,

Boy who made dear his father's home,

In whose deep eyes

Men read the welfare of the times to come- (*Complete Writings* 780)

But this self-same boy Waldo died five years later and Emerson's essay later poem "Threnody" and essay "Experience" are nothing but the elegies to him. This Waldo survived in Emerson's another child later as much as his first wife Ellen.

Concord, the town which Emerson's ancestor Peter Bulkelly founded in 1630 grew over the years. Emerson himself settled down in the town in 1834. He called his house as "Old Manse" and because of his too many friends and acquaintances, it became an extended family. The Thoreaus, Hoars, and Ripleys were native citizens, but Alcott, Ellery Channing, and Hawthorne were later comers. Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, the mystic Jones Very, many others of the transcendental set were never than visitors. The social circle which met frequently at the Emerson home on Tuesday evenings consisted of twenty-five of the citizens: doctor, lawyer, farmer, trader, miller, mechanic and others. A very different group had formed the habit of gathering at one another's houses for an afternoon of serious conversation, whether in Boston or Concord, and so the 'Transcendental Club' came into being without deliberate intention. There were conversations and community experiments like the Fruitland.

Emerson wrote poetry often. His poetry is characteristic of spiritualism, theology and man's original relationship with God. Emerson's poetry was produced in the decade 1844 to 1854. The first book *Poems* appeared in 1847. His next collection *May-Day and Other Poems* appeared twenty years later in 1867.

Emerson had the habit of writing epigrammatic verses for his numerous essays published in 1841 and 1844. His epigrams appeared in essays / chapters in his books *Representative Men* (1850), *English Traits* (1854), *The Conduct of Life* (1860) and elsewhere. Not to speak of Emerson's prose is full of poetic insights. By all means Emerson believed in documenting. He said,

The art of writing is the highest of those permitted to man as drawing directly from the Soul, and the means or material it uses are also of the Soul. . . . Classic art is the art of necessity, organic; modern or romantic bears the stamp of caprice or chance. (Emerson qt Spiller 377)

Like Thomas Hardy or D.R. Lawrence, Emerson preferred poetry to prose. Poetry was his first love. He made it clear in his lecture in New York in March 1842.

Emerson believed that poet is a seer. The old English people call him a bard. We describe Bede as venerable, and Shakespeare as 'Bard of Avon.' The poet is a beholder of ideas. Emerson thinks the poet is the sayer, the namer and representer of beauty. He is sovereign and stands on the centre. He writes, 'His office is that of announcement and affirming.' He does not make his poem, "for poetry was all written before time was…. The men of more delicate ear write down these cadences."(Emerson qt Spiller 378). The poet is an Aeolian harp that he trembles to the cosmic breath. He is a Merlin, the traditional bard, the wise man, the magician, and whose blows are strokes of fate. In this sense, Emerson seems to say that all the epic poets and even Plato, Michelangelo and Sir Thomas Browne are great poets. By 'poet,' Emerson did not mean exclusively a writer of verse, but instead a person whose energy was fundamentally both iconoclastic and – as he emphasizes in his lecture and essay "The Poet" – affirmative, creative, and imaginative. Emerson believes that the poet records the celestial music. Like Melville's philosopher in *Mardi*, the poet philosophizes. Emerson readily hailed Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as such a thing. This poet whether he writes prose or philosophy, writes like Soloman, or Christ on the Mount.

Emerson believes that literature itself is a great art. Words are actions there. Poetry is pictorial music. It is an edifying thing. The function of poetry is to make manifest and specific the correspondence between the human and the divine. Emerson learnt it from the English metaphysical poets. Emerson, at the same time, believed that poetry must go with the science. Emerson used the appropriations of the symbol. He believed that the mystic and the scientist must become one, and the symbol is the only means for the accomplishment of the union. This Emerson fully appreciated, and it is his gift to modern poetry. Both Frances Bacon and Swedenborg inspired him in understanding these two plains – the literary going with the scientific and the human with the divine. Emerson, particularly valued man's imagination and intuition for the realization of this.

In his essay "The Poet," Emerson expresses his belief that poetry, like any art, should be organic rather than simply metrically or musically beautiful.

"For it is not metres, but a metre making argument, that makes a poem, - a thought so passionate and alive, that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing….The poet has a new thought; he has a whole new experience to unfold; he will tell us how it was with him, and all men will be the richer in his fortune" (Poet 231).

Finally, Emerson believes that poetry should be of a specific thematic nature; ideally, a poem should show the unity in nature. Beauty, to Emerson, is that quality of likeness in all of nature's objects; consequently, in order for a poem to be truly beautiful it must demonstrate the unity which exists in the diverse objects in nature. Emerson views the poem, the poet, and the creative process as being integral parts. The poet must be of a certain character, in effect a philosophical mystic who intuits truth. He must be able to place this truth on paper with strict economy.

Emerson loved music though his own poetry was rarely prosodic. Even in his poem on "Music," the images are almost all visual, and "Merlin's Song" is 'of keenest eye' before it is 'truest tongue.' Emerson's dissonant rhymes and limping rhythms are part of a deliberate effort to achieve freedom of movement, and they receive at least some authority from their models. Samuel Butler used 'slanted' or imperfect rhymes, Milton incomplete lines, and Shakespeare, in his later plays, a roving accent. Emerson asked for all these freedoms together.

Emerson uses imageries. His poems like 'Mottoes,' 'Days,' 'The Sphinx,' 'Hamatreya,' 'Uriel,' 'Brahma,' 'The Snow-Storm' and 'Merlin' evince it richly. Robert Spiller thinks the poet exerted his full prerogatives with volatile nature, using the evidences of the pines, the sea, the stars to its own purposes and revealing the correspondence of the law of things to the law of God.

Poems like "Woodnotes," "Threnody," his odes and "The Rhodora" speak of his message and effect. Emerson's use of visual image reminds us Dickinson's use of imagery. In "Days," his intricate and climbing images merge into a single symbol of revelation.

The poet completes his extraordinary enterprise. He becomes mystically at one with Nature. He vanishes into the world, but simultaneously takes the whole world into himself. R. J. Wilson writes,

The figure of 'Emerson' that emerged from *Nature* was a radical one. His poet was willing to ask fundamental questions about the three essential institutions of middle-class culture as Emerson knew it: family, church, and property. The poet in the narrative breaks free of every conventional obligation of family – and with it, other forms of 'acquaintance.' He subverts churches and ministries by becoming himself part and particle of God. And he casts doubt on the meaning of property by trivializing ordinary men's claims to real estate. (Wilson 86)

1. POEMS (1847):

Emerson began writing poems too early, keeping a notebook. We have 200 of his finished poems and translations. Many of his poems appeared in magazines like *Dial* and *Atlantic Monthly.* His first book *Poems* (1847) contained 56 poems. Some of these poems, for example, "The Sphinx," "The Rhodora," "Uriel," "The Snow-Storm," "Bacchus," "Hamatreya," "Threnody" and "Concord Hymn" are world-famous. Most of these poems were written in the 1840s when Emerson edited *Dial*. In fact, his first poem appeared in it.

Sphinx (1841): Originally published in the third issue of the *Dial* (January 1841), the 132-line, 17-stanza narrative is quite literally a 'metre-making argument' between a contemptuous Sphinx and an indomitably cheerful poet. At the beginning of the poem, the 'drowsy' and brooding Sphinx calls for a 'seer' to answer her 'secret,' and thereby bring her health and animation. When she goes on to taunt humanity for its ineptitude and impotence, a mysterious 'great mother' joins in to lament the condition of her juvenilized 'boy' (humankind). As though to refute their claims, a cheerful and confident poet appears, who praises and blesses the Sphinx. In response, the Sphinx utters an enigmatic pronouncement and soars away, evanescing into the universe.

Critics call "The Sphinx" a threshold poem. The 19th century American writers used Sphinx as a provocative and commencing sign. Melville's chapter "The Sphinx" in *Moby-Dick* depicts the sperm whale's head as a Sphinx; in Poe's riddling short story "The Sphinx," the conundrum is an inscrutable and deadly disease; and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps employs the image of the Sphinx to represent women's struggle for self-expression in her novel *The Story of Avis*. Emerson's poem "Sphinx" opens provocatively. The poet affirms her ('Say on, sweet Sphinx! Thy dirges / Are pleasant songs to me'). He identifies her as idealism, the 'love of the Best' that paradoxically can silence with castigation, but that is also the only impetus for self-improvement.

The Sphinx nonetheless leaves the readers and the poet amid uncertainty with her final enigmatic utterance, now spoken through an equally obscure 'universal dame' with 'a thousand voices.' Emerson, in other words, closes this poem – itself a riddle about a riddle – with yet another puzzle, one that echoes the paradigmatic conundrum of the Hebrew God's self-identification, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14):

Thorough a thousand voices

Spoke the universal dame:

"Who telleth one of my meanings,

Is master of all I am.

The rest of the volume *Poems* represents Emerson's reply to his own questions, doubts and fears. Saundra Morris observes,

"The Sphinx" performs multiple tasks. It provides riddling instructions about how to approach the rest of Emerson's verse. It raises in theme and form issues crucial to the poetry. It offers an intriguing figure for Emerson's life and writings. (Morris 223)

The Rhodora and **The Snow Storm:** "The Rhodora" speaks of art and sexuality. The poem is replete with the language of Romance, the Power that motivates the blossom and the observer (God). The poem is in three parts.

The poem "The Snow-Storm" very Wordsworthian in its perspective begins thus:

ANNOUNCED by all the trumpets of the sky,

Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,

Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air

Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,

And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.

The sled and traveler stopped, the courier's feet

Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit

In a tumultuous privacy of storm. (*Complete Writings*768)

In "The Snow-Storm," the identity of the sculptor is also more vague and threatening than readers often acknowledge.

Fable and **Hamatreya: "**Fable" has lines of humour. "Fable," composed of a quarrel between a mountain and a squirrel, reveals its comic nature through a submerged closing pun. Asserting its own equal value to the mountain, the squirrel ends the poem by claiming, 'If I cannot carry forests on my back, / Neither can you crack a nut.' The real wit here turns subtly on the adage about a question or riddle being a 'hard nut to crack.' Accordingly, the otherwise unfortunate line in "Hamatreya" about a dog – 'I fancy these pure waters and the flags / Know me, as does my dog: we sympathize' – is of course meant to be funny. It is spoken as it is by a farmer who is fundamentally ridiculous in thinking that he 'owns' the earth. Saundra Morris observes,

"Hamatreya" represents a literally bipartite rendition of an argument between farmers and the earth over who is more powerful – over, finally, who owns whom.

The Problem: "The Problem" whose title is synonymous with "The Sphinx" represents a 'metre-making argument.' It speaks of the poet-preacher's doubts and fears over the established religion. The last part of the poem has insights about Emerson's revolt against the Bible too. The poem speaks of Emerson's confrontation with his earlier calling – the ministry.

Uriel: The poet Emerson was a rebel. Unlike Bryant and Longfellow, Emerson wrote the rough kind of symbolic verse and "Uriel" is an exampole for that. Here he describes his treason to the conventions when he writes,

The young deities discussed

Laws or form, and meters just

Orb, quintessence, and sunbeams,

What subsistth and what seems. (*Complete Writings* 808)

Robert Spiller thinks the balance beam of fate was bent by such fearless questioning of the 'stern old war gods.' A narrative of a rebellious angel who is essentially a poet figure, this text represents a sort of indirectly autobiographical apologia for the poet. With rhetorical similarities both to "The Sphinx" and "The Problem," it not only contains the imbedded voice of Uriel in a riddling quatrain, but also involves an argument between Uriel and the gods, speaks of Uriel as 'solving,' and closes with an emphasis on riddling and mystery.

Merlin: "Merlin's Song" begins with a prophetic note as follows:

OF Merlin wise I learned a song,–

Sing it low or sing it loud,

It is mightier than the strong,

And punishes the proud (*Complete Writings* 808)

The two halves of "Merlin," one of the best and most frequently read poems of Emerson's, together exemplify the recurrence of figures, structures, rhetorical forms, and concerns.

The Concord Hymn: This is one of the best and most anthologised poems by Emerson. Robert Frost thinks but if Emerson had left us nothing else he would be remembered longer than the Washington Monument for the monument at Concord that he glorified with lines surpassing any other ever written about soldiers. The poem is better celebrated than both Thermopylae and Lafayett Park in America.

Equally as uncomplicated in theme and presentation are Emerson's occasional poems such as "Concord Hymn," which was composed for the dedication of a monument to those who fought at the Battle of Concord,

By the rude bridge that arched the flood.

Their flag of April's breeze unfurled,

Here once the embattled farmers stood,

And fired the shot heard round the world.

Each and All: The most significant of Emerson's poems, however, are those in which he attempts to present his ideas of the organic unity in nature. One of the best known of these poems is "Each and All," a well organized work concerning the interdependence of all created objects. Emerson begins with the general statement that,

All are needed by each one;

Nothing is fair or good alone.

Emerson wrote his first poem at the age of ten, was chosen class poet at Harvard and published only three volumes of poetry during his lifetime. Although he had a wide range of knowledge extending from Oriental mysticism to Plato, and though he knew what he wanted to write and how it should be written, nevertheless he could not become the free spirited poet he describes nor could he break with the traditions which he fought.

Many critics believe that Emerson's primary ability was as a poet, not as a prose writer. Certainly his poems are more concise than his prose and lack the slow development of thought, while containing the essence of his ideas. Like his essays, however, his poems are poorly organized and are lacking in the organic quality which he speaks of so frequently. Actually, his descriptions of what poetry should be serve as an excellent preface to a study of Whitman's poetry.

Whatever else may be said, Emerson showed the desire of American writers to express themselves in a truly creative fashion rather than through the traditional modes. Still Emerson tried to express the new and to express the difficult. He was a good poet. His theory of organic poetry is valuable.

Threnody: This is an elegy written on the death of Waldo Jr. in 1840. As he does so, problems traditionally associated with Greek and Egyptian Sphinxes – inscrutability, death, time, family, guilt, and art – converge. "The Sphinx" and "Threnody" begin with humanity in similar conditions of need, both looking for someone to answer questions about offspring and fate. Saundra Morris says,

The most frequently commented upon, and criticized, feature of "Threnody" is its tonal bifurcation. The first 175 lines and seven stanzas represent a heartfelt

lamentation for young Waldo – virtually an outpouring of emotion in the voice of the grieving father. The following 114 lines appear as two stanzas of direct quotation in the voice of the 'deep Heart' as it responds to the grieving father. (Morris 229)

Emerson's poem "Threnody" and two essays written at the time "Poet' and "Experience" can best be read fruitfully.

2. MAY-DAY (1867):

This book is less popular than the earlier *Poems*, for it contains less number of Emerson's great poems. Some of the important poems of the volume are "Brahma," "Days," "Voluntaries," and "Terminus," Of the 30-some poems, excluding translations, that Emerson published but did not collect in these two books, eight appear in the 1876 *Selected Poems* that he prepared with his daughter Ellen and his friend James Elliot Cabot, and 15 more are printed as epigraphs to his essays. The volume contains seven parts: two long poems, "May-Day" and "The Adirondacs," each of which forms its own section (together about one-fourth of the total volume); three substantial sections of midlength poems, "Occasional and Miscellaneous Pieces," "Nature and Life" (with a posthumously published poem by Emerson's brother Edward), and "Elements"; and two short sections of mostly very brief poems, "Quatrains" and "Translations."

The book represents Emerson's answer to his own doubts and fears. Emerson published *May Day* at the end of Civil War as Whitman published *Drum-Taps* and Melville published *Battle Pieces*. A few of the poems in Emerson's volume – "Freedom," "Ode Sung in Town Hall," "Boston Hymn," and "Voluntaries" – treat the Civil War conflict directly.

Len Gougeon has pointed out that Emerson's first answer to the passage of the 1850 Missouri Compromise and its Fugitive Slave Law was in the form of poems he sent to the antislavery annual *The Liberty Bell* at the request of its editor. Emerson's poems, however, translate philosophical Persian texts about poetry and rebirth. The connection of May and springtime with postwar healing (which we find in Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Blom'd") is Emersonian.

May-Day: Emerson wrote this poem for several years, finally publishing it in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857.

The book *May Day* was published in May 1867. The title poem "May Day" celebrates spring. It has 500 loosely constructed lines. There are a series of odes in it, that celebrate fertility much like classic Renaissance songs to Hymen, the Greek deity. Its subject also makes Emerson's longest single poem a reverdie, a verse that welcomes the springtime regreening of the earth. It reminds the long tradition of such poems as the Middle English "Cuckoo Song," the prologue to *Canterbury Tales*, Shakespeare's "When Daisies Pied," Herrick's "Corinna," many of Dickinson's spring songs, and, in modern times, E. E. Cummings's "in just." "May-Day" as the most dominating poem of the volume has notions of regeneration and recuperation.

The Adirondacs: As a counterpart to "May-Day," "The Adirondacs," in blank verse, concerns the importance of natural renewal. "The Adirondacs" tells of a summer camping trip Emerson took with a group of friends, among them the author and *Atlantic Monthly* editor James Russell Lowell and the naturalist Louis Aggasiz in 1858.

Though "The Adirondacs" devotes itself mostly to the tale of the explorers' energizing journey, it closes with the one direct mention of the Sphinx. As the men leave the woods to return home, Emerson writes:

And Nature, the inscrutable and mute,

Permitted on her infinite repose

Almost a smile to steal to cheer her sons,

As if one riddle of the Sphinx were guessed. (*Complete Writings* 807)

The next section of *May-Day*, "Occasional and Miscellaneous Pieces," treats the Civil War and emancipation directly in four of its poems. Emerson composed the first of these political poems, "Freedom," at the request of Julia Griffiths for the December 1853 *Autographs for Freedom,* an antislavery volume to benefit the Rochester (New York) Anti-slavery Society. "Freedom" expresses Emerson's apology to have not taken part in the Civil War. great poet Whitman, the novelists Melville and Mark Twain, and the Brahmin poets Rowell, Longfellow and Holmes took part in the Civil War.

In the following poem, the "Ode Sung in the Town Hall, Concord, July 4, 1857," written to help raise money for Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Emerson exhorts America to "bid the broad Atlantic roll,/ A ferry of the free," and assure that "henceforth, there shall be no chain." The third of these "freedom" poems, "Boston Hymn, Read in Music Hall, January 1, 1863," is even more explicit. Emerson composed it when another friend, John Sullivan Dwight, asked him to read a poem to begin the celebration for the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Voluntaries : In 1863, Emerson wrote his most frequently anthologized political poem, "Voluntaries," to honor the slain members of the Massachusetts 54th Coloured Infantry and their white commander, Col. Robert Gould Shaw. This illustrious group of soldiers is commemorated by a statue that now stands on Boston Common. Robert Lowell's "For the Union Dead" is a similar elegy.

"Voluntaries" begins in a mood of reverence by invoking the 'Low and mournful' tones of a slave, then goes on to celebrate freedom's new cohabitation with the heroic black race. Saundra Morris says,

These war poems indicate that Emerson's concerns in *May-Day* had shifted somewhat from the time of the earlier volume. In addition, these poems are on the whole less riddling in both form and subject than their predecessors.(Morris 234**)**

Brahma: One Indian scholar, Mozoomdar, has written that "the character of Emerson shines upon India serene as the evening star. He seems to some of us to have been a geographical mistake. He ought to have been born in India." But this is not to see Emerson whole. Emerson was as much Yankee as he was mystic prophet or seer. In a way Asia means the Illimitable, while Europe (the Occident) asserts, "Yet things are knowable."

Emerson, as well as the other Transcendentalists, had a great interest in the Easternlore like the Sufi poetry, Confucious and the ancient Hindu literature. Emerson studied a few texts of the Vedic literature in translations. So did Thoreau. Finally, two of the most famous poems in the second collection, "Brahma" and "Terminus," illustrate the evolution of Emerson's continuing concerns for mankind. "Brahma" most often compared to "The Sphinx," in both sympathetic analyses and parodies. Fundamentally a riddle, with an implicit "What am I" as its undertone, the poem assumes the voice of what may loosely be identified as the soul or the oversoul. It begins:

If the red slayer think he slays,

Or if the slain think he is slain,

They know not well the subtle ways

I keep, and pass, and turn again

Once more, then, readers receive the voice of a mysterious entity in enigmatic, oracular quatrains. The voice in "Brahma" again wants to know its own identity, and again Emerson presents his clues in opposites and paradox: Brahma asserts that "I am the doubter and the doubt," for "When me they fly, I am the wings." And the answer to this riddle is also linguistic, even poetic – Brahma's most direct statement of identity is "I (am) the hymn the Brahmin sings."

Both Mark Twain and Robert Frost read this poem with admiration.

Hamatreya and **Bacchus**: Like Whitman, Emerson was a true innovator of poetry. These two poems speak of his passion for poesy. In "Bacchus," he calls for a wine that will inspire him to write down original and archetypal ideas

… with the pen

Which one the first day drew,

Upon the tablets blue,

The dancing Pleiads and eternal men.

Of his earlier poems, perhaps the best known is the Conord Hymn, beginning "By the rude bridge that arched the flood." Emerson's Oreintalism was prompoted, to some extent, by his belief that Asia was spiritually more vigorous than Europe.

In regard to the Indian impact on Emerson Natheniel Hawthorne's son Manning Hawthorne has this to say,

As he tramped the darkened streets of his town on moonlit nights for the thrifty New Englanders of Concord did not light the street lamps the night the moon shore Emerson repeated lines aloud from the Bhagavad Gita, the poets of the Vedas, Zoroaster, and the Vishnu Purnaa. During his college years at Harvard he had discovered these poets and sages of the East, and judged all other poets in the light of these commanding oracles. He, with Thoreau, was among the first of the Americans to read and know the poets of India.(Hawthorne 3)

Terminus: "Terminus," Emerson's meditative poem on the individual's aging process, along with the three elegiac poems that accompany it, balances "Brahma" and "May-Day" in the structure of *May-Day*'s central sections.

Translations: The book *May-Day* has translations at the end of it. The quatrains and translations, by virtue of their length, subject matter, and very existence, are quite sphingine, gnomic utterances. In addition, the translations reveal a method of composition quintessentially Emersonian, for in them Emerson blends the Persian, its German rendition, and his own revisions to create poems that disrupt boundaries between origin and elaboration.

Epigraphs: Emerson began each of many of his prose pieces with an appealing epigraph though it was not conventional. As original, often lengthy, and sometimes independently printed verse 'mottoes,' Emerson's epigraphs are genetically distinct, significant modifications of both epigraphic and poetic convention.

The epigraph and others play an important role in our understanding of the relationship between Emerson's various texts and voices, and, most importantly, between his poetry and his prose. The minor poems of the second volume are "Mymns," "Walden" and "Self-Relience."

The 20th century American poet Robert Frost was heavily influenced by Emerson. He later received Emerson-Thoreau Gold Medal for his poetry and in that connection.

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