TWAIN AND REALISM: 1.

"It was in the daylight of reality that Mark Twain portrayed the adventurous world of Huckeberry Finn? a world in which every detail was painted from obser--vation. Mark Twain wrote directly from nature, in an apparently effortless vernacular idiom, as though unconscious that nature had ever been sub--ject to philosophic controversy. He presented it not as the better alternative, but as an actuality, the omnipresent background of human life.

""All modern literature comes out of one book by Mark Twain," Earnest Hemingway has said. Hemingway's remark was, perhaps, an oversimplification which mis--took the flowering of a new tradition for the trad--ition itself. "How superior is the language of the street to that of the academy," Emerson himself had written. "The speech of the man in the street is in--variably strong. Cut these words and they would bleed; they are sinewy and alive; they walk and run." Today Hemingway and other contemporary American "realists"



have a tradition with which to work, a tradition of approaching their object totally unprejudiced, (?) of subjecting every proposition to the proving ground of experience, of working in the broad and simple day--light."

"The Broad And Simple Daylight"
LITERARY TRANSITION IN THE U.S.A.
(pamphlet...Embassy? Anony.)

Points towards the end of this quotation are interes--ting and revealing. Is he suggesting that one of the criteria of judgement in art is recourse to "the pro--ving ground of experience" ? The quotation is from Hawthorne: is this what Hawthorne meant?

FACT AND SYMBOL: EMERSON.

"It is not words only that are emb-
-lematic; it is things which are
emblematic. Every natural fact is a
symbol of some spiritual fact. Every
appearance in nature corresponds to
some state of the mind, and that state
of the mind can only be described by
presenting that natural appearance as its
picture."

"Nature"

Emerson: Nature, Addresses & Lectures

EMERSON: APPEARANCE AND REALITY

"The perception of real affinities between events (that is to say, ideal affinities, for these only are real), enabled the poets thus to make free with the most imposing forms and phenomena of the world, and to assert the predominance of the soul."

P59.

"Idealism"

Emerson: Nature

Riverside Ed., vol 1. Land 1883

EMERSON: APPEARANCE AND REALITY

"It is not only words that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that external appearance as its picture."
P32

"The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind." The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as

face to face in a glass. The visible world and relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible."

P38.

"This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of "garment", "scoriae", "mirror", etc., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler & more vital expositors to make it plain."

P40

"Language"

Emerson: Nature

Nature, Addresses & Lectures

Riverside Ed., vol 1. Lond., 1883

THEORY OF ART: EMERSON

"He is the healthy, the wise, the fundamental, the manly man, seer of the secret; against all the appearance, he sees and reports the truth, namely, that the soul generates matter, and poetry is the only verity, — the expression of a sound mind speaking after the ideal, not after the apparent. As a power it is a perception of the symbolic character of things, and the treating them as representative: as a talent it is a magnetic tendaciousness of image, and by the treatment demonstrating that this pigment of thought is as palpable and objective to the poet, as is the ground on which he stands

on the walls of houses about him."

P150

Emerson: Poetry and Imagination

Essays & Works, III

London 1882

[2712 c 713]

THEORY OF ART: 6: EMERSON

"The want of continuity of form in Emerson's form was a natural product of what we have seen, the confusing alternation in his experience. The reasons for the cleavage between his 'two lives' of the understanding, and of the soul, would require a book to establish, a book that could start with the breakdown after Edwards of the Puritan synthesis. Edwards had managed to reunite the two chief strains from the seventeenth century, its logic and its emotion, its hard grasp of fact and its deep capacity for mysticism, but after his death they split

apart. The mysticism was caught up into Methodism and the evangelical movement, and was pro-portionately discredited in the cool eyes of the rationalists, who were Emerson's forerunners in the Unitarianism which he grew to find so inadequate. But with his fresh insistence on Idealism, he no longer shared or wanted to share, in the older dogma. He was a symptom of his age's expansiveness, — but here would have to come another chapter, which would deal with the increasingly violent divergence between the world of transcendentalism and that of the industrial revolution."

P56

Matthiessen: American Renaissance

OUP., 1941

THEORY OF ART: 5: EMERSON AND HAWTHORNE

We cannot afford to take the relationship between Emerson + Hawthorne too straightforwardly. Matthiessen comments that Emerson "was incapable of being restrained within the hard actuality of experience, for he held that the deeper insight of the poet (who reattaches things to Nature and the whole ... disposes very easily of the disagreeable facts." Melville's comment on this was "So it would seem. In this sense Mr. E is a great poet." This remark should serve to show the kind of modification which

transcendentalism had to undergo in the hands of Hawthorne + Melville, before it could be put to real creative use.

passim, The American Renaissance
Matthiessen
OUP., 1941
P54.

THEORY OF ART : EMERSON

"Every noun is an image. Nature gives him, sometimes in a shattered likeness, sometimes in caricature, a copy of every humour and shade in his character and mind. The world is an immense picture-book of every passage in human life."

P142

R.W. Emerson: Poetry and Imagination

Works, III

Bell & Sons, London: 1883 [2712 e 713]

The poetics of a given species takes as its starting point the definition of the product, i.e. a statement of the nature of the whole composite produced by an art, and then proceeds by hypothetical reasoning to treat of the questions specific to that whole + its parts. Such analysis does not exhaust all aspects of the art; but any which it includes are referred to other sciences. Thus the consideration of art as a skill falls under ethics; that of art as a political + social instrument, under politics

EMERSON: THEORY OF ART 2:

Emerson was not insensitive to the needs of art to find an adequate form; as this passage quoted by Matthiessen shows:

"That a man can make a verse or have a poetic thought avails not, unless he has such a flow of these that he can construct a poem, a play a discourse. Symmetry, proportion we demand, and what are these but the facility in such intensity or amount as to avail to create some whole." [Emerson,] P24

But the whole emphasis of his thought was other: and often felt its inadequacy

it had to wait for a creative talents such as Hawthorne possessed before Transcendentalism - modified - was able to compass fiction.

Matthiessen: "Expression"
American Renaissance
OUP., 1941

THEORY OF ART: 3: EMERSON

.. "The syllables of genius are an emanation of that very thing or reality they tell of, and not merely an echo or picture of it" ...

Matthiessen, P40

"The poet accounts all productions + changes of Nature as the nouns of language, uses them representatively, too well pleased with their relation to value much their primary meaning". [Em: Poetry + Imagination: quoted, Matt., P40

P.T.O

Matthiessen comments:

"The representation he is thinking of is Swedenborg's, the correspondence between the physical world of appearance and the real world of the spirit."

P 40.

American Renaissance

OUP., 1941

THEORY OF ART: 4: EMERSON

"He does not often speak of this process as 'allegory'; indeed, he is generally explicit in his dislike of that device as being mechanical, and comes nearer to describing what he wants in saying, 'I like that poetry which, without aiming to be allegorical, is so, which, sticking close to its subject, and that perhaps trivial, can yet be applied to the life of man and the government of God and be found to hold!'" P41

Matthiessen: American Renaissance

OUP. 1941

THEORY OF ART: EMERSON

"Their value [external objects] to the intellect appears only when I hear their meaning made plain in the spiritual truth they cover. The mind, penetrated with its sentiment or its thoughts, projects it outwards on whatever it beholds." P.143

Emerson: Poetry and Imagination
Works, III. London, 1882

[Cf: coalescence of subject & object
Biographia Literaria The Friend
& Coleridge on Imagination, Richards

P.T.O.

[Emerson has a long passage in which he discusses the purposes which the mind makes of "similitude", and the function of the "symbol" and "analogy"]

[cf: Transcendental "criticism" with late Puritan "history", "biblical criticism".]

THEORY OF ART: EMERSON

"This belief that the higher use of the material world is to furnish us types or pictures to express the thoughts of the mind, is carried to its logical extreme by the Hindoos who, following Buddaha, have made it the central doctrine of their religion, that what we call Nature, the external world, has no real existence, — is only phenomenal." P. 44

Emerson: Poetry and Imagination

Works, III.

THEORY OF ART: EMERSON

"The primary use of a fact is low: the secondary use, as it is a figure or illustration of my thought, is the real worth. First the fact; second, its impression, or what I think of it."

Emerson: Poetry & Imagination P142

Works, III.

London, 1882.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY: THEORY OF ART: 1

- EMERSON.

"As could be expected, his doctrine asserts
the superiority both of nature over art,
and of content over its vehicle" P.4

[In this sense Hawthorne and Melville
overcame the Transcendental antipathy
to the formal aspects of creation.]

"His belief that the artist was simply the
mouthpiece of the soul, that he 'sought his
model ... in his own mind', led him to declare
that all performances should be extempore

that 'it seems not worth while to execute with too much pains some one intellectual or aesthetical, or civil feat, when presently the dream will scatter and we shall burst into universal power!"

P25

Matthiessen: "In The Optative Mood"

American Renaissance

OUP., '41.

THEORY OF ART: EMERSON

"Poetry is the perpetual endeavour to express the spirit of the Thing, to pass the brute body, and search the life and reason which cause it to exist – to see that the object is always flowing away, whilst the spirit or necessity which causes it subsists."

P145

Emerson: Poetry and Imagination

Works, III.

THEORY OF ART: EMERSON

"Thus Thompson's Seasons and the best parts of many old and many new poets are simply enumerations by a person who felt the beauty of the common sights and sounds, without any attempt to draw a moral or affix a meaning.

The poet discovers that what men value as substances have a higher value as symbols; that nature is the immense shadow of man."

P148

Emerson: Poetry and Imagination

Works, III. London, 1882