

I. Emerson as a Poet of Beauty: An Introduction

Ralph Waldo Emerson is one of the most distinguished of the New England transcendentalists and one of the most brilliant American poets and thinker of the nineteenth century. Although transcendentalism as a mode of Romantic thought has been largely discredited by modern scientific theory, Emerson's essays and poems remain remarkably provocative- and much more tough-minded than they have frequently been given credit for being. Most historians acknowledge Ralph Waldo Emerson as a seminal figure in American literature. Those attracted to Emerson's style see in his loosely structured prose and poetry the inauguration of an American tradition of prophesies, leading from the exuberant affirmation of Walt Whitman to the measured meditations of such modern masters as Wallace Stevens and John Ashbery. Those less impressed have identified in his moral philosophy-especially his individualistic doctrine of self-reliance-- the beginning of American commercialism and political isolationism.

Emerson was born in Boston on May 25, 1803, the son of a Unitarian minister descended from an old Puritan Family. After his father's early death, his mother reared Emerson with help from an aunt, Mary Moody Emereson, whose sharp mind guided Emerson's own brand of thinking. He began writing early, keeping journals at Harvard University that would become the basis of his most famous essays and poems. Essayist, poet, and lecturer, Emerson was tremendously influential on American thought and literature. He influenced creative minds as various as Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and Alcotts. He was the leader of transcendentalism, an

intuitional, religious, aesthetic, philosophical, and ethical movement. A tributary of European romanticism, it proclaimed a theoretical and practical way of life and a new humanism based upon classical and oriental supernaturalism. He maintained the "infinitude" or spiritual expansiveness of the individual person when divinely awakened. His earlier philosophic roots were Plato, Plotinus, bishop George Berkeley, and the Scottish philosophers; later, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Thomas Carlyle, Emanuel Swedenborg, the Methodists, Quaker, and certain Anglican divines; and still later, the writers of China, Persia, and India.

As Sheldon W. Liebman views that Emerson's earlier works show his inclination towards Scottish common sense critics whose emphasis lay on the restrained thought rather than on the practice of wild imagination in poetry. These common sense critics believed that though the poet should be inspired by the sublime or the beautiful such inspiration should be directed by the poet's knowledge- that is based on the experience and reason. In other words, imagination according to these critics should be checked by the judgment or understanding (30). Moreover, they not merely stressed on clarity and precision but also were suspicious of the subjectivism and inspiration. But soon after his serious study of Coleridge, Carlyle, and German romanticist Emerson recognized the narrow scope and limitations of the mechanistic philosophy of common sense critics (23).

Emerson was not a highly systematic philosopher. His thought was an amalgam from a wide variety of sources: 1) New England religious thought and related English writings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; 2) Scottish realism which he absorbed principally while at Harvard; 3) French and English Skepticism, the lasting effect of which should not be underestimated; 4) Neo-

Platonism the dominant element in his thought especially as it was interrupted by the English Romantic poets and the German and French Idealists; 5) Oriental mystic writings, even though he never accepted their fatalism or their concept of transmigration; 6) Yankee pragmatism, which was latent in almost all his work and which muted his Romantic Idealism, especially in his essays on political and economic affairs

Within one great Unity, Emerson came to believe, there are two levels of reality, the supernatural and the natural. The supernatural is essence, spirit, or over-soul as Emerson most frequently called it. It is an impersonal force that is eternal, moral, harmonious, and beneficent in tendency. The individual soul is a part of the over-soul, and man has access to it through his intuition. One of the tendencies of the over-soul is to express itself in form, hence the world of nature as an emanation of the world of spirit. The individual has access to this secondary level of reality through the senses and the understanding. To explain the relation between the spiritual and physical levels of being, Emerson used such oppositions as One and Many, cause and effect, and diversity, object and symbol, reality and appearance, truth and hypothesis, being and becoming. Since the law of correspondence relates the two levels of being, the study of physical law can generate intuition of spiritual truths. In Emerson's thought we can find an echo of Coleridge's organic philosophy. In *Nature*, he writes:

There is one great Unity, - the Unity in Variety, - which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things makes a unique, an identical impression. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world. Not only resemblances exist in things

whose analogy is obvious... but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. (1055)

Emerson is mystic and pantheist in orientation and rejects the epistemological distinction between subject and object. He makes an interesting comment on those whose epistemology posits a dead objective nature. He further says that there is no lifeless nature; nature strives for shape just as man tries to shape nature in art. He views the artistic activity as analogous to the unconscious activity of nature. We can also trace out a profound influence of German Romanticism on Emerson when he holds the view that the will of the God pervades everything that exist in nature. Nature, he maintains, is nothing but a big I, World Spirit. Nature, he regards, is the externalization of the soul. Therefore, there is no distinction between mind and matter. According to Emerson, both human soul and physical reality is the expression of the will of the God. In precise terms, he means to say that nature is visible spirit and spirit is invisible nature.

In his earlier essays, Emerson particularly stressed the unlimited potential of the individual. The most notable of these *Nature*, argues that, although nature serves as commodity, beauty, language, and discipline, its most important function is to excite the intuition so that the individual, through a mystical experience, becomes aware of the power of the over-soul residing within him." Nature always speaks of spirit. It suggests the absolute" (1049). " The American Scholar" which called on Americans to have faith in their own creativity and not to rely so much on the age-old learning of Europe. Emerson's bracing creed helped to further the development of distinctly American literature. It also warns that book and scholarship can divert one from seeking the spiritual power within. His position grew more radical in his " Divinity School Address" at Harvard, in which he rejected traditional religion and

advocated the kind of intuitive spiritual experience that had led critics to attack the Romantics in England as aesthetes. Harvard, still very much a conservative institution, did not invite Emerson to speak again for another three decades." "Self-Reliance" is the capstone of American Romanticism. Emerson, of course, continued to question the values of conformity to society's rules and even consistency to one's own self-image. Later essays are more guarded in announcing the individual's limitless potentials.

Emerson's idealism is always mentioned in critical discussion of his thought. The equally important ethical aspect of his work is less often insisted upon. But Emerson's characteristically practical idealism can not be fully appreciated until one recognizes that he evaluated all literature, all philosophy, and all religion by a simple ethical test: How does it help me to live a better life. Matthew Arnold has defined the moral element in literature as that which teaches us how to live. All of Emerson's idealistic conceptions also meet this moral test, and those books, which have served successfully over time, as practical guides to conduct are the books Emerson values most highly. Emerson like Samuel Johnson maintains that the best ethical writers are those who write about certain feelings and faculties in us which are alike in all men and which no progress of art and no variety of institutions can alter, those writers, in short, who represent the general nature of man.

Emerson's aesthetic theory, to the extent that he had one, is a direct outgrowth of his Idealistic philosophy. As he conceived of it, the great work of art is not an imitation of nature but a symbolization of Truth realized intuitively. It is the result of resigning oneself to the "divine aura, which breathes through forms"(296) In his most quoted statement on the subject he put it this way, "it is not meters but a meter-making argument that makes a poem - a thought so passionate and alive that like the

spirit of a plant or animal it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing"(558). Thus the poet must first of all be the seer, intuitively experiencing the absolute of the over-soul, and secondly the Sayers, communicating those absolutes so compelling that readers are stimulated to have intuitions of their own. Emerson was realistic enough to realize that such a process is not easy. Even if Emerson draws an important distinction between poet and philosopher he discovers profound affinities between them. In *Nature*, he posits:

The poet delights us by animating nature like a creator, with his own thoughts, he differs from philosopher only herein, that one proposes Manjari as his main end; the other Truth. But, the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. The true philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both. (1059)

The opening chapters of *Nature* describe the different things nature furnishes to consciousness. Passing quickly through "Commodity," in which nature is shown to be useful to human beings in all short of material ways, Emerson comes, in chapter three, to "Beauty," in which he argues that our aesthetics are derived from nature. "Primary forms" such as the sky, the mountain, the tree, and the animal "*give us a delight in and for themselves*"(1044). Nature is a sea of beautiful forms, and the standard of beauty, our conception of beauty in the largest sense, is, says Emerson, "the entire circuit of natural forms, - the totality of nature" (1045). Nature, Emerson holds, is the model of beauty. He further says that in nature "everything is beautiful" (1042). Emerson's approach to aesthetics is intensely visual, and this visual quality is so closely tied to his emphasis on subjectivity and his affirmation of the importance

of the individual vision that a recent critic Kenneth Burke, equates Emerson's "I" with "eye" and "aye."

His conception of beauty to a greater extent rests on transcendental mysticism and Hindu Religion. Hindu religion nurtures the belief that we all either animate or inanimate are the creations of Brahma. The presence of Brahma is omnipresent in the entire universe; He pervades the Sky, the Earth, the Ocean, a tiny plant, a tiny insect as well as the giant things that are evident in nature. Therefore, Hinduism coupled with Mystical doctrine views that everything is holy and everything is beautiful for they all are the creations of Brahma. Since our soul can create an access to the Brahma, the idea of beauty that dwells in human mind comes directly from the divine mind (over-soul, Brahma). What we call beauty and truth are not, therefore separate entities but analogous to each other.

Emerson spread his ideas not only through essay writing and public lecturing but also through his own magazine, *The Dial*, which became the home publication for many transcendentalists. He was the chief figure in the American literary movement called transcendentalism, which was also a philosophical and religious movement. Transcendentalism is complex, drawing upon Platonic, Christian, Stoic and Hindu thought. Transcendentalists rejected Lock's materialistic philosophy in favor of the idealism of the German thinker Immanuel Kant who declared that the "transcendental" knowledge in the human mind is innate, or *a priori*. Assuming that intuition, therefore, surpassed reason as a guide to the truth, they evolved a theology in which the divine immanence of god coexisted with the Universe and the individual. They assert the doctrine of correspondence between the microcosm of the individual mind and the macrocosmic over-soul of the Universe. And from the idea of the One, they derived an enlarge conception of the sanctity of the individual and

of that individual's freedom to follow intuitional knowledge. Transcendentalists believed in insights rather than in ideas, intuitions rather than cold reason. To be precise, "transcendentalism tried to find truth through feeling and intuition rather than through logic and reason. They found God everywhere in man and in nature" (High 42). Ralph Waldo Emerson, the chief spokesman of American transcendentalism stresses on the essential unity of all things, which are ordered by the supreme mind, or the over-soul.

"Emerson believes in the oneness of the world" (Gorely 263). God or the over-soul is the life or essence in all things "swallowing up all relations, parts, and times within it" (Emerson 1090). It is the source of thought, the starting point of action. Moreover, it is immanent, pervasive. "God is, and all things but shadows of him" (1092). Both man and nature are parts of this great whole. Both are revelations from the over-soul with the distinction that nature is its expression in the unconscious and man in the conscious.

In like manner, Emerson develops his own theory of symbolism, not just linguistic symbolism, but natural symbolism. He claims that particular natural facts are symbol of particular spiritual facts... an enraged man is a lion. A lamb is innocence" (1048). Emerson believed, following Swedenborg especially, that "everything in nature has its correlative in mind, that nature is the externalization of the soul" (560). Our particular mood finds its resemblance with particular natural scenes. Poets use these natural facts as the emblems of our thoughts.

Emerson regards that it is not merely nature, which is symbolic, but it is also language that is equally symbolic of spiritual facts. In *Nature*, he says, "words are signs of natural facts and natural facts are symbol of spiritual facts" (1048).

According to Emerson, the world is the house of symbols whose "walls are covered

with emblems, pictures and commandments of the Deity” (561). He regards both world and words as emblematic. We can discern a strong undercurrent of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence in his writings as he says, " Parts of speech are metaphors because the whole of nature is the metaphor of human mind"(1049). The visible world is "the dial plate of the invisible world"(1051). This is the full, transcendental, Shellingian belief that nature and the human mind are in all things related, that mind is the subjective equivalent of the world, world the objective version of mind.

"Poets" says Emerson, "is the namer or language-maker naming things sometimes after their appearance, sometimes after their essence. (562)"Language is fossil poetry,"(562). Emerson explains as it is made up of images, or tropes, which are now in their secondary use. But after a long use, we tend to forget the origin of these words. In other words, they have become dead metaphors and have long ceased to remind us of their poetic origin. It is the poet who constantly refurbishes language and provides the possibility of mental liberation. Poets, Emerson views, therefore, are " the liberating gods" (564).

As Helen Hennessy has suggested, Emerson as a transcendentalist raises the poet to a higher status- to the level of semi-god who stands as a mediator between God and man (69). In view of this connection, poet takes on a priest like quality who is the highest creature in the scale of being- a divinely inspired man, as one who could express to mortals the inexpressible pure thought of God. Therefore, for Emerson, poets are the supermen because they are unaffected by "the idealistic schism between *noumena* and *phenomena* and can comprehend the transcendental reality what Kant calls "things in themselves"(Helen 69).

Emerson's notion of aesthetics was extremely religious and profoundly mystic drawing upon Swedenborg's Doctrine of Correspondence. Charles R. Metzger in his essay *Emerson's Religious Conception of Beauty* annotates:

Emerson conceived of as one of the "eternal trinity" of Goodness, Truth and Beauty, which when joined together, form *the One*; and, further, Emerson considered each of these in its perfection include the other two. This is to say, of course, that Beauty, or Goodness or Truth-- anyone of them--in its perfection approximates Deity. In view of this connection and in view of the fact that to Emerson's mind the terms Deity and nature existed very nearly as synonyms. (67)

This seems to contain a direct reference to Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences. Swedenborg (1688-1772) held the belief that the two worlds of nature and spirit were separate and distinct, but intimately related by analogous substances, laws and forces. According to him, the end of all things is in divine mind, the cause of all things in the spiritual world, and their effect in the natural world. In short, the physical world is purely the symbolic of the spiritual world, and the correspondence exists between thoughts and things.

Indeed, Emerson takes nature as both the medium and the model of beauty. He holds that correspondence exists between physical world and spiritual world, between mind and matter as both are the manifestations of the divine mind but yet since man is the revelations of god in conscious and nature in unconscious, man can best know the idea of divine beauty through the mystic union with the over-soul, or the Deity. Emerson does not claim that nature is incapable of revealing the ideal beauty or cosmic essence but enunciates that because there is the presence of matter or non-entity in nature it subdues

the pure manifestation of the Deity or the over-soul. Despite this, nature, of course, provides us with several beautiful forms that point to its relation to the primal mind and ultimately leads us to the realm of ideal beauty. The beautiful forms that the nature renders us are only the secondary beauty but yet when we see it our soul immediately captures it and ascends us to the divine beauty of God.

However, the realization of this divine beauty within oneself is not that much easy. It requires genuine intuition, adequate cultivation of taste, and refined perception. The best person to stand in this position according to Emerson, are the poets who can easily forge a mystic union with the over-soul. So their creation equates the divine beauty of Deity. Poets with virtue of their intuitions can discover an integral aspect of beauty-physical, moral as well as spiritual. Therefore, Emerson concludes that artistic creation is analogous to the creativity of the God.

The worshipper of beauty should not seek inspiration among the arts of the ancients, nor from the custodians of an established antiquarian aesthetic tradition, but rather, in seeking inspiration, he should look directly to nature. In his view, beauty, nature, and Deity were equivalent to each other.

In his essay on beauty, Emerson distributed the aspect of beauty in a three-fold manner: (1) the simple perception of natural forms bringing delight; (2) the presence of higher and spiritual being essential to its perfection;(3) beauty being viewed as it becomes an object of the intellect, or in other words, the creation of beauty in art, "for a work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world," an expression of nature in miniature" (1048).

In deed, Emerson argues for a different type of power and beauty created by excellent poetry. His poems show an implicit belief in organic form, wherein the poet's creative intuitive power, like nature's beauty-making power is a grace,

affluence from the universal power. The mind's creative process, like the tumult of snow in a snowstorm, is a dynamic agency of divine form making. Man, then, by virtue of intuition has access to truth, goodness and beauty.

Man-made art, therefore, is as beautiful as that of the beauty of nature, since the conception of beauty corresponds to the conception of Deity. In Emerson's theory of poetry, beauty in its perfection approximates Deity. Beauty and Deity exist very nearly as synonyms. Emerson asserts beauty to be not merely a major aspect of Deity but a major aspect of God's handiwork as well. This very conception of beauty, some how or the other, has been crystallized in his best-known poems such as "Brahma", "Hamatreya", "Each and All", "The Poet" " Woodnotes", "Rhodora", "Ode to Beauty," and "The Snow-Storm".

II. Emerson's Notion of Beauty: A Critique

Since we lack a universally agreed-upon definition of beauty, it has often been considered a mystifying term in the sphere of aesthetic criticism for its definition varies from person to person, from one age to another age. Some critics focus on the phenomenal and sensual aspect of beauty whereas some on the conceptual and religious aspect of beauty. In like manner, some critics emphasize on the static notion of beauty and some on the other, on the organic, transcendental, and dynamic conception of beauty.

Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary defines beauty as "a combination of qualities that give pleasure to the senses"(92). Here, the word "combination" carries special significance since it asserts beauty is not merely the product of a single feature. Rather it is the unified and coherent harmony of several qualities. This definition shares much with Pythagoras's notion of beauty as he posits that beauty is the reduction of many into one.

Neoclassical concept of beauty was static since they defined beauty in terms of outward embellishment and their notion of beauty was derived from their observations of inanimate, static objects like art, sculpture, and paintings. In other words, their notion of beauty did not imply growth or function. In contrary to this, romanticists proposed the organic conception of beauty as they thought the universe or a work of art not as a fixed entity rather as an organic whole like a living plant having change and growth of its own.

Immanuel Kant, in *Critique of Judgment*, argues that in order to find an object beautiful we need not have a prior concept of how it is to be used or what it ought to be.

Kant further says that the judgment of beauty rests on the disinterested contemplation of the perceiver (382).

Emerson's aesthetic conviction, to a greater extent, rests on his religious faith as he conceives beauty, Deity and nature as synonymous for he strongly holds that they all are the diverse manifestations of the over-soul. "Unity", the key term, in his definition of beauty, acquires central emphasis that is almost analogous to the Romantic theory of organicism. Furthermore, we can discover a strong influence of German idealism, transcendental oriental mysticism, romanticism, monism, pantheism, and neo-Platonism as well as the influence of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence in his conception of beauty.

Emerson's Religious Concept of Beauty

The discussion of Emersonian concept of beauty is indispensably intertwined with his overwhelmingly vast conception of Deity as he regards over-soul or Deity to be the ultimate source of beauty and wisdom. Since the conception of beauty is as much the basis of aesthetic conviction as a conception of Deity is that of religious faith, it is necessary to preface any evaluation of the main body of Emerson's aesthetic faith with some prior assessment of his conception of beauty.

His conception of beauty, like his conception of Deity, is expansive. It comes to possess proportions as vast, almost as those of his conception of Deity and nature. "Emerson conceives of beauty as one of the eternal trinity of goodness, truth, and beauty, which, when joined together, form *the One*; and, further, he considered each of these in its perfection include the other two" (Metzger 67). This is to say, of course, that beauty, or goodness, or truth--anyone of them--in its perfection approximates the Deity. In view

of this connection, and in view of the fact that to Emerson's mind the terms Deity and nature exist very nearly as synonyms, it is not surprising to discover that Emerson asserts beauty to be not only a major concept of Deity, but a major aspect of God's handiwork. "In nature," said Emerson "all is beautiful "(1045).

Charles R. Metzger holds that Emerson takes nature as both the author and the medium of beauty that indicates his orientation towards pantheism. He takes nature to be the author of beauty, using the term "Nature" in its deific sense--meaning God; and he takes nature, in addition, as the model of beauty, using the term in its phenomenal sense--meaning the object which constitutes the out - of- doors (67). The preachment, which follows directly from such an identification of beauty with nature, and with Deity is patently, that the worshipper of beauty should not seek inspiration among the arts of the ancients, nor from the custodians of an established antiquarian aesthetic tradition, but rather that, in seeking inspiration, he should look directly to nature.

But yet despite his enormous cult on nature, Emerson enunciates that beauty in nature is not ultimate. It is not the last and the highest expression of the final cause of nature. It merely represents secondary beauty. The moral and spiritual beauty is attained only through the mystic union of the individual soul to the cosmic soul. The higher Soul makes the Kosmos, which our senses can grasp through the intuition, and provides us with forms through which we can dialectically return to the One, the source of beings. In this respect, nature is a cosmic effect pointing to a divine cause. "Emerson's main purpose is to show how man by using nature can go beyond it in order to achieve the eternal and spiritual beauty"(Brodwin 474). The failure to see how the beautiful forms of

nature lead us upward towards eternal beauty constitutes one of man's most grievous defects, which Emerson tries to cure by his insistence that our perceptions be purified.

In deriving the major part of his total conception of beauty from his observation of phenomenal nature, Emerson came inevitably to see beauty in terms of the same flux, which characterizes the numberless phenomena, which constitute nature. Emerson came therefore to see nature, and hence beauty, not as fixed or static, but as dynamic or flowing." beauty," he said, " is the moment of transition, as if the form were just ready to flow into other forms"(1046).

To Emerson, as to nearly all men, the most fascinating feature of this natural flux appeared in relation to the phenomena of growth and apparent adaptation. These features he applied directly to his conception of beauty. "In nature," he says, " all is beautiful. It is therefore because it is alive, moving, reproductive"(1045).

Indeed, the upshot of Emerson's turning directly to phenomenal nature for aid in formulating his conception of beauty was his inclusion of this dynamic-economical assertion-as assertion which extends his aesthetic considerably beyond those essentially static conceptions of proportion and balance which characterized the neoclassical aesthetic. At no time, however, did Emerson deny the aesthetic validity of the neoclassic conception proportion and balance. These he expected and espoused. His argument with the neoclassicists took the form merely of an assertion that such conceptions alone were not enough. He asserted that not only proportion and balance, but also every necessary or organic action pleases the beholder. The general effect of such an assertion upon aesthetic

conception in Emerson's time was that of activating what previously been a static conception of beauty.

Thus, although Emerson's device of the expanded conception (his device of relating all the major terms of the vocabulary to Deity) tended to confound his opponents and perhaps to sooth his Christian conscience, it tended also to confuse his argument and thereby to obscure its great strength. For example, in expanding his conception of nature, Emerson gathered to that term a great number of essentially different meanings. Thus Emerson used the term nature, causing it to mean variously: man, not-man, not society, out-of-doors, essence, universe, and God.

Emerson clearest enunciation of this positive aspect of his aesthetic faith occurs, rightly enough, in his essay on "Beauty." But even in that essay, Emerson avoided actually defining the term beauty. "I am warned," he said, "by the ill fate of many philosophers not to attempt a definition of beauty"(1046). He was very much aware that to define his term is to limit its conception in the minds of his readers; and this, above all else, Emerson seeks to avoid doing, both in the interest of his protestant strategy and in the interest of literal accuracy. For Emerson's conception of beauty was too vast to be fitted conveniently within the limits of anyone definition. For purpose of discussion, however, Emerson is willing enough to enumerate a few of its qualities. Thus, he said, "we ascribe beauty to that which is simple; which has no superfluous parts; which exactly answers its end; which is standing in relations all things; which is the means of extremes"(1045).

Emerson's Three-Fold Manner of Beauty

It is important to note that Emerson is not describing things, which are beautiful, but rather, he is describing those characteristics, which the mind conceives as beautiful. This sort of aesthetic subjectivism shares much with Kantian notion of beauty since Kant also asserts that things are not beautiful in nature but they become beautiful to the perceiver only when s/he becomes disinterested. In other words, disinterested contemplation is a prerequisite for the aesthetic perception of beauty. In *Nature*, Emerson says:

" The beauty of nature which is seen and felt as beauty, is the least part...The presence of higher, namely, of spiritual element is essential to its perfection. The higher and divine beauty, which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will.
(1046)

Thus, these lines unveil Emerson's valorization of spiritual beauty perceived by human beings over the phenomenal beauty of nature. Emerson considers the artist as a creator of spiritual insight, who is capable of adding where the nature is lacking.

It is important to note, even further, that in describing these characteristics Emerson is actually enumerating psychological devices of aesthetic perception."He is saying in effect, that the mind conceives of beauty in terms of three kinds of unity of which is static, one dynamic, and the last, cosmic"(Metzger 73).

Emerson's Static Notion of Beauty

Emerson's own assertion that "we ascribe beauty to that, which is simple,"(1045) concerns these static conceptions of unity chiefly. His statement suggests that the mind takes pleasure in contemplating, for example, a perfectly smooth stone, perceived exclusively as such- and not in this case as a complex organization of surfaces and chemical elements, or in terms of vast nebulae of positive and negative electrical charges. In this same sense, the mind derives perhaps even greater pleasure from contemplating a perfect sphere formed by craft to an abstract simplicity actually beyond nature's own.

Emerson's Dynamic Conception of Beauty

The mind takes pleasure, however, in observing other unities than those of proportion and correspondence. Emerson's announcement, for example, that beauty pertains to that "which has no superfluous parts; which exactly answers its end" (1046) leads beyond this static conception of unity to one which is dynamic's a result of looking to nature for aid in developing his aesthetic conception, Emerson perceives there, among its organic forms, an apparent union of the form with its function which he admitted, entire, into the main body of his conception of unity and of beauty (Metzger 70). In so doing - in recognizing that every necessary of organic action pleases the beholder - Emerson adds a whole dynamic conception of unity and beauty to that static conception which he had derived from the neoclassic aesthetic tradition. In adding this new conception, Emerson introduced along with it a whole new era of consideration to be taken into account by both the artist and the critic. And, as will be seen presently, this new era of consideration came to involve an entire metaphysics of art - which is to say a

whole new assessment of the creative process: one which Emerson come to advance against what he consider the inferior creative processes espoused by the neoclassicist. Suffice it to say for, however, that the overall effect of Emerson's acceptance of this new dynamic-organic conception of unity was that of transferring critical judgment beyond the assessment of an art form in relation to the object or proportion which it imitates, to a larger assessment of that form in relation to the function it performs.

Emerson's Cosmic Conception of Beauty

Finally, in asserting that Beauty pertains to that which is "standing in relation to all things; which is the mean of many extremes"(1048)- Emerson arrives at what amounts to an even broader extension of his conception of unity, to a cosmic conception wherein each object fixed by the mind's focus of attention is seen, not only in terms of proportion and of purpose but also in relation to the ultimate unity- God." Every object, says Emerson, in this regard, has its root in central nature, and may of course be so exhibited to us to represent the world. This new virtue, which constitutes a thing beautiful, he says, is a certain comical quality, of a power to suggest relation to the whole world, and so to lift the object out of a pitiful individuality.

The immediate effect of such a threefold conception applied to the perception of "beautiful" objects is to require of the observer of beauty and the creator of art that they contemplate each beautiful object not only in regard to such matters as proportion and function likewise in regard to the entire universe. Its effect is to require of the artist and the critic an almost unreasonably broad approach to the subject of beauty and art- one approximately as vast as Emerson's.

But to Emerson, at least, this broad new conception of beauty has its advantage. By this latter conception of beauty and unity, Emerson is able, in subsequent argument, to join art with nature and with Deity, and to elevate the true artist and the true critic to the level of the priest and seer. Such a cosmic conception of unity consists of the further practical advantage- with regard specifically to art - that it release the artist from the bonds of literal conception of simplicity or unity. The artist, although committed to the task of simplifying human experience, is not, in view of this conception, required to remain upon the level of primitive art; he is allowed to generalize, to reveal entire network of relationships- all leading to the one. In deed, it appears that Emerson's inclusion of this cosmic conception of unity, his conception of beauty is due as much to his recognition of the danger of art descending to, or remaining at the level of primitive unities, as it is to his desire to see art related to Deity

Taken as a whole, Emerson's threefold conception of beauty-in terms of static unity, of dynamic or organic unity, and in terms of cosmic unity- equips him with an ability to perceive beauty for subtler than that which the art of his day was able to provide. For that art is derived from a conception of beauty, which includes, even at best, little more than a third of the qualities of unity by which Emerson judges a thing as beautiful. The unities of the neoclassic, antiquarian art of Emerson's day were, as has been suggested, the static unities of proportion and correspondence. The conception of dynamic union of form with function, although it had undoubtedly occurred even to the mind of neoclassical artist, was not held foremost therein. Among neoclassical artisans, proportion, not function, was the God. Even in its cosmic extension, the neoclassical conception design was static. Richard P. Adams opines that " the neoclassicist conceived

the universe in terms of the gigantic watch; and this conception, although it accounted adequately for motion among the cosmos- among the nature- did not account adequately for evolutionary growth and development; a watch runs but it does not grow"(125).

Even if Emerson's conception of beauty cannot be reduced to, or exactly equated with, his conception of unity (or simplicity), the fact remains that his conception of beauty is ordered by that conception. Indeed, a conception of unity, or simplicity, may be seen to underlie and to order nearly every aesthetic. Man's longing for order, for unity, for simplicity- his desire to live in an explicable universe- is perhaps the motivating force behind all intellect, whether it is concerned specifically with religion, with science, or with art. And perhaps the only the valid measure of intellectual attainment, wherein science, religion, or art, lies in the degree to which intellect has succeeded in resolving the mind's longing for simplicity with the observably diverse facts of life. Emerson's conception of beauty appears superior, in this regard, to that of the neoclassical aestheticians for the very reason that his is based upon a vaster, more flexible conception of unity - of beauty-than theirs: one which illuminate a greater number of diverse phenomena with the bright beam of interpretation.

The neoclassicist's conception of beauty was ordered primarily by his recognition of the static unities proportion and correspondence. These unities are exemplified on the one hand by the abstractions of Euclid, and upon the other by such imitation of nature or of ancient art as plainly show rather exact correspondence to their models. The application of art deriving from such conceptions of unity and beauty are vast, as the great variety and number of them among neoclassical art attest; but such applications are

limited nonetheless in comparison with those deriving from Emerson's transcendental conception of beauty.

Emerson's Beauty and Neo-Platonism

Emerson seems close to the neo-Platonic mystics when he equates nature with God, man, essence, truth, over-soul, and beauty. Notwithstanding diverse forms prevalent in phenomenal nature, he insists an underlying unity among them for they all are the manifestations of the over-soul. A neo-Platonic philosopher like Plotinus rejects the dualistic view of the universe claiming that everything emanates from the "One." (Truth, God) Therefore, there is no gulf between self and God, creation and creator since self can create an access to the God or over-soul. Idea does not exist independent of matter. Rather it is present in matter itself. In similar fashion, everything says Plotinus, is the emanation from the One and strives to return to it. beauty, he remarks in *On the Intellectual beauty*, is central to this system, since "the more beautiful a thing is the closer it is to the One"(Plotinus 104).

Stanley Brodwin views that Emerson has inherited much from Plotinian metaphysics. He finds strong similitude between Plotinian and Emersonian concept of beauty and aesthetics. Moreover, Emerson's philosophy of aesthetics draws much on Plotinus' texts. His expression goes as follows:

Many of Emerson's tensions and complexities derive from his immersion in neo-Platonic thought, dominated by the influence of Plotinus.

Therefore, it will be necessary to examine Emerson's version of Plotinus

in order to achieve a more adequate appreciation of Emerson's original angle of vision towards beauty. (465)

In the chapter on "Beauty" on *Nature*, Emerson's version of Plotinus' metaphysics of beauty comes into focus but the metaphysical framework to that chapter as with the others is reflected in the motto taken from Plotinus. Both Emerson and Plotinus postulate that the One or the over-soul is the source of all being that transcends all essence and existence. It makes itself manifest through the nature which our senses can grasp, and through which our intuitions can penetrate to the spiritual truths beyond sensory knowledge. Thus, nature offers us forms through which we can dialectically return to the One. Emerson says nature is a cosmic effect pointing to a divine cause. It is, of course, Emerson's purpose to show how man by using nature can fly to the realm of God. In this dialectics of return through nature to the over-soul, Plotinus and Emerson recognize the vital role beauty plays. "Emerson's chapter on beauty is not, however, a mere summary of Plotinus' idea on the subject" (Brodwin 467). Furthermore, the threefold beauty that Emerson presents - physical, moral, and spiritual corresponds generally to Plotinus' divisions. But where Plotinus' style is mixture of the abstract, analytical, and mystical, Emerson's by contrast is a mixture of the illustrative, metaphorical and, epigrammatically condensed, but yet he evokes the mystic mood of Plotinus.

Thus, we can discover a strong line of resemblance between Emerson and Plotinus's conception of beauty. Emersonian beauty is divine and he goes on to equate it with Deity as well as with truth. In like manner, Plotinus also equates beauty with the One (God). He, in "Intellectual beauty" says, "The One expresses itself in a triad, the Good, the Intellect, and the All-Soul"(104). With mystical air, he affirms that a beautiful

form that the artist imposes on his material comes ultimately from the One. So, beauty created by artist is analogous to the divine beauty of the god. In "Beauty", Emerson says, "a work of art is an abstract epitome of the world. It is the expression of nature in miniature.... Truth, Goodness and Beauty, are but different faces of the same All"(1048).

Emerson's Transcendental Aesthetics

It is universally believed that Emerson's philosophy does not lend itself to formal classification, for he had no code, system or creed .He was an intellectual mystic, he employed the language of transcendentalists, and in Mathew Arnold's view, he was a friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit. Beyond that it is difficult to make a blueprint. Yet there are critics who try to put a label on him, such as monist, dualist, pantheist, transcendentalist, Platonist, neo-Platonist; but he himself refused to be labeled.

Percy W. Brown, a renowned critic in *Emerson's Philosophy of Aesthetics*, asserts that Emerson's writing falls into three rather loose and broad categories. He held soul to be divine, that intuition and divine spark within everyman, whereby everyman is capable of infinite growth (350). He regarded nature as the lengthened shadow of God cast upon human sense, a kind of incarnation of some divine power here on earth. And he believed Deity ever near to man and every soul possessed an access of Deity, not continuously, but at least in moments of exaltation. This triple structure --the primacy of the soul, the immediacy of nature, and the divine Immanence--might be called the skeleton framework of his message. Thus it is fair to say that he dwelt on abstract ideas rather than on the forms of art and its methods of expression.

Emerson's philosophy of aesthetics has immensely been influenced and shaped by Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences. Swedenborg (1688-1772) held that the two

worlds of nature and spirit were separate and distinct, but intimately related by analogous substances, laws and forces. The end of all things are in divine mind, the cause of all things in the spiritual world, and their effect in the natural world. In short the physical world is purely the symbolic of the natural world, and the correspondence between thoughts and things as promulgated by the Swedish mystic found a sympathetic response in Emerson, as can readily be seen by reading of his essay on Swedenborg in *Representative Men*.

In his lecture in *Natural Religion*, Emerson held that there was nothing on earth which was not in the heavens on earthly form and nothing in the heavens which was not in the earth in an earthly form, that we were able to find symbols of our sentiments and thoughts in the object of nature, and that the whole of nature agreed with the whole of thought, all of which had been affirmed by Swedenborg. The correspondence of ideas and object, of word and thing, is inherent in the world and the universe. Nature is language and the artist must rely upon his own intuitions if he would interpret this language.

In his essay on beauty, Emerson distributed the aspect of beauty in a three-fold manner: (1) the simple perception of natural forms bringing delight; (2) the presence of higher and spiritual being essential to its perfection; (3) beauty being viewed as it becomes an object of the intellect, or in other words, the creation of beauty in art, "for a work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world, an expression of nature in miniature (1047). All high beauty he held to have a moral element in it, and the beauty of antique sculpture was ever in the proportion to the depth of thought expressed.

William Torrey Harris called Emerson's essay, "Poetry and Imagination," the greatest essay ever written on the philosophy of art. The entire essay is an enlargement and an application of Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence, wherein the beauties of nature and of man-devised works of art seem to mirror the divine or spiritual, thereby reflecting the "correspondence" between the creative spirit and the created world. As a result, the philosopher can see an immense unity that all things in nature have a mysterious relation to his thoughts and his life, birth, growth, maturity, and decay, and he is compelled to speak by means of them. The world of nature is an immense picture book of every thought and action in human life; and every correspondence in mind and matter suggest something older and deeper. Only the metaphysician and the poet can see each material form as an inevitable step in the path of creating mind.

All thinking is analogizing, and whenever you enunciate a natural law you are enunciating a law of the mind. Poetry is the endeavor to express the spirit of the thing, to overlook the brute body and seek the reason, which causes it to exist. Genius implies imagination, the use of symbol and figurative speech. The world exists for thought, and poetry, if perfected, is only the verity, as it is the speech of man after the real, and not after the apparent. The test of poetic genius is the fusion of circumstances of today into universal symbols; and the passing day with all its cares, fears and news, as the poet shares them, must be related to the eternal order of the world.

Only through symbol, metaphor and analogy, can the artist express his creative imagination; the concept of his inspiration, for this aesthetic representation is needed to translate the aesthetic experience from creator to observer.

Emerson and Neoclassical Beauty: A Contrast

According to Charles R. Metzger Emerson's concept of Beauty is superior to that of the neoclassicist as his conception of beauty is dynamic and cosmic implying growth and change whereas neoclassicist had a static concept of beauty (72).

Taking the forms of nature as his models, rather than the forms of antiquarian art, Emerson was required by their greater number to evolve a larger and hence a more widely valid conception of beauty than that advanced by the custodians of neoclassic aesthetic conception. In deed, Emerson's conception of beauty ought to have been superior to that of neoclassicist by the virtue of the fact that his approach to beauty through the forms of nature required him to contrive aesthetic principles that covered vastly greater number of specific cases. The worshipper of beauty should not seek inspiration among the arts of the ancients, nor from the custodians of an established antiquarian aesthetic tradition, but rather that, in seeking inspiration, should he look directly to nature.

Neoclassicists had tremendous attraction and reverence to the objects of ancient art such as painting, sculpture, and architecture and they developed their conception of beauty on the observations of those objects. In other words, their notion of beauty was static since it rests on inanimate objects. Contrary to this, Emerson's notion of beauty is inclusive and organic as he takes natural forms like plants and animals as the model of beauty. We can further illustrate their differences through the analogy of a man and an excellent statue of a man. The difference between observing the statue and man becomes

the difference between formulating an aesthetic conception, which is static, and formulating one, which is dynamic.

The unities of the neoclassic, antiquarian art of Emerson's day were, as has been suggested, the static unities of proportion and correspondence. The conception of dynamic union of form with function, although it had undoubtedly occurred even to the mind of neoclassical artist, was not held foremost therein. Among neoclassical artisans, proportion, not function, was God. Even in its cosmic extension, the neoclassical conception design was static. The neoclassicist conceived the universe in terms of the gigantic watch; and this conception, although it accounted adequately for motion among the cosmos- among the nature- did not account adequately for evolutionary growth and development; a watch runs but it does not grow.

Emerson and the Organic Metaphor

"The importance of the organic metaphor, one of the central concepts of romantic philosophy, has been increasingly recognized in recent years in Emerson's thinking and writing" (Adams 117). The conceptual framework of Emerson's notion of organicity is embedded in the epistemological monism of idealist romantic philosophers like Coleridge, Shelling, Goethe, and in neo-Platonic mysticism as well as in Swedenbourg's doctrine of correspondence.

Implicitly in the theory of organicity remains an echo of romantic idealism that strongly denies the epistemological distinction between subject and object claiming that both are the manifestations of Universal Spirit; one in conscious and another in unconscious.

Organic form has generally been defined in direct antithesis to mechanical form. Organic aesthetics, of course, involves manifold implications in literary criticisms but here we apply it with the view that organicism is a vehicle to recreate beauty and unity (in mystical sense) in a poem.

Numerous critics have tried to explore the romantic origins of Emerson's thought and art, and in which organic theories are increasingly used to explain his meanings and to evaluate his aesthetic achievements. Throughout his works we can see tremendous influence of Coleridge. Richard P. Adams envisions that Emerson as an organicist did not habitually think of the universe as a copy of ideal reality or form, in the Platonic manner, or as a vast self-regulating machine, in the manner of eighteenth-century scientific rationalists, but that he thought of it as if it were like a living plant or animal (119). Two crucial differences may be seen between this way of thinking and the others: first, that change, in the tradition of romantic organicism, is a good thing because it implies growth, or the quality of life, which is not inherent in the assumptions of either scientific mechanism or Platonic idealism; second, that organicism is more strongly synthetic than either of the others. A mechanist is inclined to feel that things can be best understood if they are separated into their component parts, and if each observed effect is assigned to its proper cause. A formist also is likely to insist on the importance of distinctions, because each prototypical idea, being eternally itself, is different from every other idea. An organicist, however, tends to concentrate, often with a rather mystic air, on the wholeness of the whole, reluctant to analyze at all, maintaining with Wordsworth's notion that to dissect is to murder.

In *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts*, Stephen C. Pepper posits his view on organicism as:

Organicism . . . is the world hypothesis that stresses the internal relatedness or coherence of things. It is impressed with the manner in which observations at first apparently unconnected turn out to be closely related, and with the fact that as knowledge progresses it becomes more systematized. (119)

In the sphere of knowledge, it is integration of judgments; in the sphere of ethics, it is integration of acts; in the sphere of art, it is integration of feelings. Finally, it conceives all of these as contained in a total integration of existence or reality.

Organicism, by this account, is not concerned with ideal forms or categorical distinctions, like formism, or with analysis of causes and effects, like mechanism. Its aim is to realize the ultimate organization of all things in a unity, which includes them as they are, a harmonious relationship of human experience with all the processes of nature, or the universe.

Coleridge is the major exponent of organicism as a metaphor in the theory of art. He opposes organic form to the mechanical form that results from the operation of fancy. The work of art, Coleridge says, must grow organically from within itself. Organic form is innate and it shapes itself from within. Its principles of order are finally internal and not imposed from outside. Coleridge, ahead, says that poets are endowed with secondary imagination, which is not different from primary imagination in kind but in degree. Poets empowered with creative imagination can forge reconciliation among all opposites: subject and object, sense and intellect, mind and matter, imagination and abstractions into

one great unity. So, Coleridge concludes that aesthetic activity is an act to experiencing oneness with the over-soul.

We can find profound similarities between Emerson and Coleridge's notion of organic aesthetics because Emerson himself was immensely influenced by Coleridgean epistemology. Emerson enunciates his conviction that art must be based organically on nature. In affirming that the duty of the artist is continually to renew elemental experience, Emerson also subscribed to Coleridge's conception of how the artist creates his forms. Coleridge's key passage on the organic principle, which arose from his discussion of Shakespeare in *Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to His Genius*, sums up the central idea as:

No work of true genius dares want it appropriate form, neither indeed is there any danger of this. As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless; for it is even this that constitutes it genius-- the power of acting creatively under laws of its own origination...The form is mechanic, when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out the properties of the material...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.... (409)

A similar train of thought has been developed by Schlegel, among other German leader of romanticism, into the principal that just as the inner force of a phenomenon in nature determines its external structure, so the vitality of poet's seminal idea or intuition determines its appropriate expression. F. O. Mattheson in *American Renaissance* views

that the manifest risks for such art in such a doctrine is that its exclusive emphasis on the inner urge rather than the created shape can quickly run to the formlessness, particularly when it insists on the same spontaneous growth for a poem as for a plant (134). In fact, it could be argued that the various degrees of formlessness in Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman were owing to the varying lengths to which they carried this analogy. On the other hand they themselves felt the greatest release for their creative impulses when they could believe their work integrally subordinated to natural force, and beating in harmony with it.

The terms that the three used to express this conviction are remarkably similar. In developing his proposition that “it is not meters, but meter-making argument that makes a poem” (559). Emerson holds that, the essential thought from which a poem rises must be “so passionate and alive that like the spirit of the plant or an animal it has architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing”(559).

Emerson rejoiced that in the strict reliance of art upon nature, the artist works not as he will but as he must: “We feel, in seeing a noble building, which rhymes well, as we do in hearing a perfect song, that it is spiritually organic; that is, had a necessity, in nature, for being; was one of the possible form in the divine mind, and is now only discovered and executed by the artist, not arbitrary composed by him” (138). As Emerson's thought follows there its normal course in neo-Platonism, we perceive how art is organic for him in a double sense: not merely is the appropriate form "an expressive growth from the poet's intuition, but that intuition in turn is an outwelling from the universal mind"(Matthessen 135) When Emerson shifted his attention to this second sense, he quickly passed to a realm beyond technical discussion. For he maintained that

since the universal mind is the sole creator of the both useful and the beautiful, the only way for individual is to partake in the creative act is by submitting himself entirely to this primal source beyond the understanding.

But before losing himself in his vaguely luminous doctrine of divine inspiration, Emerson enumerated many of the broad hints that material nature has given to the receptive mind and eye of the artist. By the time he wrote his first book he had already found verification for another phase of the organic principle- that beauty in art springs from man's response to forms in nature. He had noted that the formal decorative designs could be reduced to endlessly varied imitations of plants and animal life, such as the shapes of the lives, the white-ear, the pinecone, the seashell, and the lion's claw.

Notion of organic aesthetic has much to do with Coleridge and Emerson's conception of beauty. At the conclusion of *On the Principles of Genial Criticism*, Coleridge quotes approvingly a definition of beauty. By insisting with Pythagoras that beauty is ' the reduction of many into one' we are reminded of the monistic drive of his idealism, but perhaps not yet persuaded that he means anything more than that the art work ought to embrace and structure a heterogeneity of elements. But the word *reduction* has some powerful implication and our suspicions are borne out when Coleridge quotes Plotinus a few paragraphs later as an explication for *Dejection: An Ode*. Poetic imagination, according to Plotinus, discovers the immanent, spiritual unifying principle within a multiplicity of concrete objects, which appear diverse to ordinary eyes. Organic principle that brings reconciliation of all opposites and discordant entities has become a norm for beauty in Coleridgean epistemology. What Coleridge calls organicity is unity for Emerson.

Having been influenced by Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence, he came to believe that both human soul and physical reality are the manifestations of the same over-soul. Since the law of correspondence relates the two levels of being, the study of physical law can generate intuition of spiritual truths. Emerson, like Coleridge's organic philosophy, holds that in nature there exists a prominent harmony among things. In *Nature*, he writes:

There is one great Unity, - the Unity in Variety, - which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things makes a unique, an identical impression. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world. Each creature is the modification of the other. Not only resemblances exist in things whose analogy is obvious... but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. (1071)

Therefore, all diverse forms in nature are superficial. Beneath the surface remains one great spiritual unity. He holds that poets in extreme moments of exaltation can tear asunder all the superficial forms of nature and can lead us to the ideal unity making us aware of the interconnectedness between things apparently unlike. Emerson asserted that this unity is the norm for beauty. He believed, as he explained in *Value*, that "The standard of beauty is the entire circuit of natural forms, -the totality of nature. . . .Nothing is quite beautiful alone; nothing but is beautiful in the whole"(1048).

Moreover, like most of the romanticists who claimed that a work of art must come as naturally as the leaves to a tree, Emerson, too, employs the organic principle in terms of the psychology of poetic creation. His principal emphasis lies on inner urge of the poet

rather than on externally imposed forms and techniques. He held that the essential thought from which a poem rises must be "so passionate and alive that like the spirit of a plant or an animal it has of its own"(559. Thus, man can reconcile himself with nature. To conclude, organicism or the unity brings harmony among all discordant entities that becomes the norm of beauty for Emerson

To summarize, Emerson's theory of beauty rests primarily on his religious conviction that everything in nature is divine and beautiful as they all are the creations of the God. He posits that the source of all things is the divine mind. Since God has made man in his own image, man partakes also of the divine beauty. An artist or a poet, therefore, in a moment of exaltation gets revelation from the One and simultaneously can create an ideal beauty in art that is analogous to the divine beauty of God for the same spirit operates through matter and spirit Through the means of intuition, poets forge a mystic union with the over-soul. The conceptual framework of his aesthetic theory has largely been drawn upon transcendentalism, German idealism, neo-Platonism, pantheism, monism, and oriental mysticism as well as on Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence.

Emerson takes nature as both the model and a bridge to reach the realm of divine beauty. Nature, for him, is the incarnation of some divine power. But the phenomenal beauty of nature is only secondary for him. Emerson as an idealist thinks that because nature is partly a matter it can not represent the divine beauty in perfect manner, but yet he concedes the fact that it serves as a medium to ascend us to the idea of perfect beauty. In view of this connection he regards nature as equal to Deity. Since nature and human beings both are the revelations of the over-soul the idea of beauty that inhabits in human mind is also analogous to the idea of Deity, as Emerson believes nature to be the

externalization of the soul. Furthermore, Emerson's conception of beauty shares much with Plotinus conception of beauty as both of them compare beauty with the God and truth or the One. Emerson's notion of beauty, as compared to the neoclassicists, is superior as his theory is organic and dynamic, implying growth and change whereas the later had static notion of beauty.

Having been influenced by Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence, he affirms that there is one spiritual unity among the diverse forms of natural facts since they all are the manifold manifestations of the over-soul. He conceives that nature and human mind are in all things related that mind is the subjective equivalent of world and world objective version of mind According to Emerson, unity is a central aspect or, rather a fundamental prerequisite for beauty. All diverse forms in nature are the varied manifestation of the Deity. Therefore, they are finally structured and ordered by over-soul. Since unity is not an identifiable aspect of phenomenal nature it is the device of human mind (intuition) that sees things as beautiful Here, he valorizes the position of a human agent in perceiving something as beautiful. In similar fashion, he elevates poets to the level of seer or priest with the view that poets are the liberating gods who remind us of poetic origin, or essence of things. Therefore, an artist with the faculty of his intuition and inspiration can create an access to the over-soul and discover the divine beauty that is analogous to the beauty and creativity of nature. In other words, artistic activity is analogous to the creativity of God. For Emerson, art is the creation of organic beauty. When the poets are divinely inspired, supreme mind itself manifests through the mind of the poet. The forthcoming chapter is going to explore the treatment of beauty and over soul in some of Emerson's most representative poems.

III. Treatment of Beauty in Emerson's Poetry

Emerson, the poet of deep and mystic beauty, has composed several exuberant poems among which some of the most representative ones are going to be examined under the light of his theory of beauty. To begin with, his prime conception of beauty, to some large extent, has been shaped and ordered by his conception of over-soul or the supremacy of the primal mind. Moreover, the beauty, Emerson conceives, is not merely the phenomenal beauty of nature, but it is the divine beauty perceived through the intuitive mind of every individual. Therefore, the discussion of Emerson's treatment of beauty remains incomplete until or unless we take account of how he treats over-soul in his poetry. Emerson insists on the primacy of individual human soul, which he regards, incorporates, the whole universe within and can ultimately come in communion with the God. As a transcendentalist, he believes that man's soul is identical with the over-soul. An artist or a poet, therefore, in moments of revelation can recreate divine beauty in art. Meanwhile, it is worth discussing on how the poet maneuvers his notion of unity in his poetry - one of the fundamental aspects of dynamic as well as of cosmic conception of Emersonian beauty. Besides, my discussion also centers on how he practices his conception of organic and cosmic beauty in his poetry.

The structural framework of Emerson's notion of cosmic beauty has been ordered by his conception of primal unity or mystical oneness of the world. Emerson holds that despite diverse forms prevalent in phenomenal world, there exists one underlying unity among things, which appear varied on the surface. This conception of unity, according to

Emerson, becomes a norm of divine beauty. The same conception has been crystallized in some of his celebrated poems such as "Brahma," and "Each and All" where the theme of unity and oneness has been thoroughly foregrounded. This sort of mystic union of individual self with cosmic self suggests his inclination towards the organic and cosmic conception of beauty.

Brahma

The poem "Brahma," which first appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (November, 1857), is n one of Emerson's best poems that gives a concrete expression to his notion of cosmic beauty. Through the voice of the cosmic force, "Brahma" Emerson suggests the enclosure of all diversity in one great unity. *The Norton Anthology of American Poetry* envisions that most of Emerson's essays like "Over-soul" and "Compensation" which proposes a mystic unity "within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other"(249) and this conception finds its superb expression in his poems like "Brahma" and "Each and All." In "Brahma," Emerson seeks a reconciliation of all the opposites and contradictions: the individual self and cosmic self, finite and infinite, subject and object, thought and feelings, man and nature merging into Brahma, the absolute and eternal self:

If the red slayer thinks he slays,

Or if the slain thinks he is slain,

They know not the subtle ways

I keep, and pass, and turn again. (1161)

Here, the poet obliterates the distinctions between "slayer" and the "slain," the one who kills and the one who is killed. In reality, it is not soul that kills because it is immortal

and eternally in communion with the God. Emerson sees the immortality and supremacy not only of his own self, he sees it in every self of the world. With this vision of immortality, the poet realizes that all things of the world are alike in their eternal level. Thus, he affirms that each self subsumes the other for we all are the manifestations of "Brahma," the absolute and eternal self. All dualities and diversities are, thus, merely provisional. In spiritual level, these provisional dualities between "slayer" and "the slain" subject and object seek to reconcile into each other. In reality, one self is identical with another self. Critics like Frederick Carpenter claims, "the idea of unity of life came originally from the Hindu religion, and has found its most perfect American expression in Emerson's "Brahma" (234). Similarly, the poet in subsequent stanza intensifies his vision of mystical oneness among all opposites:

Far and forgot to me is near;

Shadow and sunlight are the same;

The vanished gods to me appear;

And one to me are shame and fame. (1162)

Thus, Emerson again emphasizes on the essential unity between these diverse facts of the world because each entity incorporates its opposites within itself. In Emerson's episteme, all these diversities are but the different faces of the same all. Therefore, he says "far" and "forgot," "shadow" and "sunlight" are the same for him. These oppositions and diversities are finally ordered by supreme law meaning the God. Emerson believes whole world is but the varied manifestations of Brahma who is identical with all things of the world. So, if anyone identifies himself distinct from other, that is one great illusion. In reality, it is impossible to think and speak one without considering its opposite. Such notion of eternal

unity is characteristic of his notion of beauty as he reckons that nothing is beautiful in isolation but only in the whole.

As Andrew M. Mclean has suggested, Emerson confuses and mixes together two different concepts: the first is that of Brahma, the creator, god of the universe who is the first member of the triad and after whom the poem assumes its title; the second concept is that of Brahman which is immutable, and independent of any cause but itself (118). Brahman is the omnipotent, omnipresent, supreme Deity who is the Absolute which mankind seeks to be united with. Brahma, if conceived of as personal, will be Creator (Brahma), Preserver (Vishnu), and Destroyer or Dissolver (Shiva or Rudra). Brahman is changeless, unknowable, timeless and sustainer of the universe. By Brahma, Emerson meant to designate what we call Brahman, and the subject of his poem is really the concept of Brahman (the Absolute) and not Brahma (the Creator). This becomes clear when we understand that the first stanza of "Brahma" that presents a confused mixture of Brahma and Brahman.

The basic idea of the poem has been derived from the Hindu oriental thought as Emerson himself was tremendously influenced by his reading of the English translation of Hindu scriptures like *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Upanishad*. According to Hindu religion, Brahma as the supreme God, the creator of all beings. Despite its supreme existence, Brahma is really identical with Atman, the individual self, but Atman under the influence of ignorance, imagines itself separate from Brahma, the supreme mind. Thus, the individual mind always is in quest of reconciliation with Brahma. In this act of reconciliation, the poet assumes a central role. When intuitive knowledge emerges in him, all the oppositions disappear. Firstly, the poet identifies individual self with their

opposites, and ultimately points towards their union with the cosmic force "Brahma." This harmony and unity with the primal mind brings into play the cosmic concept of Emersonian beauty as it posits each object fixed by the mind's focus of attention is seen, not only in terms of proportion and correspondence but also in relation to the ultimate unity-God. Every object, says Emerson, in this regard, has its root in central nature, and may of course be so exhibited to us to represent the world. This new virtue, which constitutes a thing beautiful, he says, is a certain comical quality, a power to suggest relation to the whole world, and so to lift the object out of a pitiful individuality.

Hamatreya

Similarly, the idea of "Brahma" relates itself to the idea of the poem "Hamatreya;" namely that the words *I* and *Mine* constitute ignorance. The poem is the expression of the speaker's disillusionment with distinctions between Me and Yours, between subject and object, between man and the Earth, and between man and the God. Emerson ridicules those who take these dualities for granted since his assertion is that these dualities are merely provisional. At underlying level, there is spiritual unity among all things of the universe. All diverse forms of nature are identical to each other as the same universal law operates through mind and as well as through matter. But man's desire of material possession has blocked them from having the revelation of this spiritual unity. According to Emerson, his ignorance in man results in the failure of gaining the presence of spiritual beauty.

Emerson postulates that man is divine and has access to the entire mind of the creator but this access is denied when the amount of matter in us override the power of the soul which he says is antithetical to the revelation of divine divinity in man. Closely

related to the idea of the over-soul is the unity and supremacy of the nature. When in communion with nature, man says to himself: "I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God" (1042). This idea of mystic union with nature or with the Earth is ignored by materialists who wish to take possession of earth as an object of their wealth. The poem, on the one hand, castigates the avarice of man to acquire real property, which at death must be relinquished to the earth, and it, on the other hand, celebrates the eternity and sovereignty of the Earth:

Mine and yours;
 Mine, not, yours;
 Earth endures;
 Stars abide-
 Shine down in the old sea;
 Old are the shores;
 But where are the old men? (1132)

In these lines, the poet tries to reconcile and unite two seemingly paradoxical themes: the individual and the cosmos, "mine" and "Yours," Me and "the Earth"(nature). The focus on the distinctions between the Me and Not Me, the soul and nature, thereby establishing the first of his provisional dualities. The Me is conscious, or that part of man which partakes of divinity, the Not Me is the objective of his consciousness, that with which the Me is in relation. But nature, or the Not Me also partakes of divinity because Emerson believes it is a projection of God in the unconsciousness. The value of this spiritual relationship lies not in absolute identity of Yours, the Earth, or Me, but in common

relationship of these factors. Because of this spiritual correspondence between mind and matter, man and god, man learns to worship God through the contemplation of nature. The stars, the flowers, the animals, the mountains reflect the wisdom of his best hour, first as that which is outside of his consciousness, then as that which shares with his consciousness a vision of original and eternal beauty, an awareness of a divine principle. Eventually, Emerson in "Hamtreya" obliterates all the opposites of the world through his own reasoning power and through the intuitive understanding of all things. This spiritual unity and oneness strengthens Emerson's notion of spiritual beauty since he believes that things are beautiful only in the whole when they suggest their relation to the primeval mind. In the concluding lines, Emerson celebrates eternity and the sovereignty of the Earth. He thus concludes:

They called me theirs,
 Who so controlled me;
 Yet every one
 Wished to stay, and is gone,
 How am I theirs,
 If they can not hold me,
 But I hold them? (1132-1133)

These lines scrutinize how worldly desires-the desire of material possession corrupts the spiritual power of the soul. In Emerson's view, the triumph of matter over the spirit constitutes evil, which blocks our ways to know the spiritual beauty and spiritual perfection in man. The personified Earth ridicules those who try to possess her as "theirs". The possessive pronoun "theirs" reflects peoples' extreme avarice for material

possession. These materialist people do not see the harmonious relationship existing between man and earth. They treat the sovereign Earth as their belongings and they do not accept her eternal life. To be precise, Emerson's position is that if our spirit and perceptions succumb to the demand of matter, it blinds our ways to the ideal as shown in above extract of the poem. As a result, we fail to achieve spiritual unity, and subsequently the aspiration to attain divine beauty proves a mere illusion. So, the poem reaffirms Emerson's allegiance to the pursuit of ideal beauty, which is gained only when we purify our taste by renouncing the desire of material possession.

Notwithstanding this, the poem amplifies the ultimate unity and harmony between land and landlords; between man and nature; between subject and object because both human being and nature, according to the poet, are the incarnations of the supreme mind. This idea of interdependence and interconnectedness of the individual mind with the primal mind highlights Emerson's notion of organic and cosmic beauty where each particle contributes to make an integrated whole.

Woodnotes

"Woodnotes," another poignant poem by Emerson, exposes Emerson's predominant inclination towards the ascending form of beauty- from the physical to the spiritual. This poem is typical of his belief that the beauty of nature serves as a means to float to the realm of divinity. In other words, the poem crystallizes Emerson's firm belief that man through the contemplation of nature can know the divine beauty of God. Besides, it valorizes poets to the level of seers who can experience the presence of divinity in everything existing in nature:

Thou metest him by centuries,
 And lo!he passes like the breeze;
 Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,
 He hides in pure transparency;
 Thou askest in fountain and in fires,
 He is the essence that inquires.
 He is the axis of the star;..
 He is the heart of the creature; (45)

Thus, the poem celebrates the omnipresence of the over-soul that pervades the entire universe. It manifests itself through the diverse forms of nature. God's immanence is felt in everything that exists in phenomenal world. Emerson says over-soul is the "axis of the star," "the essence" and it exists in "the heart of every creature." Therefore, the poet through the contemplation of these natural symbols can come in communion with God. In Emerson's theory of beauty, over-soul or God is the source of wisdom and perfect beauty. In other words, Deity is synonymous to beauty. To simplify it, know over-soul is to know the divine beauty of God. Therefore, through the mystic union with the divine mind poets can recreate divine beauty in art. Since nature is the divine creation of God, God is not isolated from nature. He is present in all beings-in matter as well as in spirit. He pervades the sky, the "mountain," "globe," and "Galaxies." So, all natural facts are symbols of spiritual facts. Poets are the best people to discover spiritual insights in natural symbols who receive natural symbols as the language of God that is intelligible only to the poets.

Thus, the poem shows how poets by using the nature as symbolic language of God can recreate divine beauty in art.

Each and All

“Each and All,” another poignant poem by Emerson, brings into play his notion of organic as well as the cosmic conception of beauty that focus on the interrelatedness of things on the one hand, and ultimately pointing their subtle movement towards transcendental unity; the merging of the individual into the over-soul. "Each" self in the poem subsumes "All" as a microcosmic self of the whole universe obliterating the dichotomy between him and the world.

The poem is the embodiment of Emerson's most quoted statement that "nothing is beautiful in nature alone; but beautiful only in the whole"(1048). Emerson's vision towards this cosmic beauty reflects his immersion in neo-Platonic thought dominated especially by the influence of Plotinus. In Plotinian metaphysics, divine beauty is grasped through the mystic union of the individual soul to the One where all contradictions resolve into one great whole. The One, here, refers to the divine mind, the cosmic spirit, or the God. In Emerson's term, the One is the over-soul – the final cause or the universe, the source of all being. Emerson, like Plotinus, holds the view that perfect beauty is achieved through the transcendental merging of individual self into the cosmic self. The poem stresses on unity among all diverse forms of nature:

Thy life to the neighbor's creed has lent

All are needed by each one;

Nothing is fair or good alone.(65)

Here, the poet affirms the contextual as well as organic conception of beauty that everything is beautiful in its relation to rest of the all things. This relation, in other word, can also be referred as 'context.' When this organic principle is violated, beauty no longer remains. The speaker discovers a "sparrow" that sings so beautifully from the bough of an alder tree. The speaker imagines the song of the bird as it comes from "heaven." He catches and brings it "home." The "sparrow" still sings but its song is no more beautiful and cannot even delight the hearer because it loses its proximity of natural surroundings of the "sky" and "river." More significantly, this is to say that things become beautiful only in certain contexts. One beautiful thing in one context cannot be beautiful in another context because several other elements present in that context contribute to enhance the beauty of all elements. This functional relation of parts to the whole is characteristic of Emerson's belief in dynamic beauty. This organic theory stands in direct antithesis to the mechanistic theory. Scientists often seek to analyze things through classifications and compartmentalization since they think that things are best understood when they are classified and divided into small parts so that they could be analyzed individually regardless of their relations to the whole. Emerson rejects such mechanistic philosophy because its method of classification and divisions murders the life of the object being observed. Instead, Emerson believes in organic aesthetics, which takes on synthetic approach along with the belief that things are best understood when they are viewed in organic associations with each other. As an organicist, he tends to concentrate, often with a rather mystical air, on the wholeness of the whole, maintaining with Wordsworth's notion that to dissect is to murder. The same aspect organic aesthetics has been repeated in the following stanza, too:

The delicate shells lay on the shore;
 The bubbles of the latest wave...
 I wiped away the weeds and foam,
 I fetched my sea-born treasures home;
 But the poor, unsightly, noisome things
 Had left their beauty on the shore
 With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar. (30)

The speaker collects beautiful "shells" that lay on the "seashore" which were in delicate harmony with the sea and "bubbles" produced by the waves that look like pearls. He goes on to collect and bring them home, but these "sea-born treasures" "left their beauty on the shore" as soon as they were removed from their organic association with natural environment. Therefore, beauty comes into being as long as its organic association is not violated.

Besides, the poem, in subtle way, records the movement of speaker's inclination from the organic-dynamic beauty to the cosmic beauty. In this final stage, the speaker identifies himself with the "perfect whole," namely the God, or the Brahma. It suggests the enclosure of all into the cosmic essence:

I inhaled the violet's breath;
 Around me stood the oaks and fires...
 Beauty through my senses stole;
 I yielded myself to the perfect whole. (31)

Thus, these lines witness the speaker's rising awareness to divine beauty from phenomenal beauty. The phrase "I inhaled the violet's breath" notes the moment of

sudden revelation - the speaker's self is going to merge into the cosmic self, the "perfect whole" thereby experiencing the cosmic beauty within. In addition, the poem also marks the speaker's deep yearnings for the attainment of spiritual and eternal beauty that is gained only when he abandons his infatuation with the beauty of "senses." According to Emerson, the beauty of "senses" or the physical beauty of nature is only the secondary beauty. The perfect beauty is achieved through the mystic union with God. But yet, the beauty of "senses," somehow or the other, serves as a medium to incite us to the idea of spiritual beauty. In other words, as soon as we see the physical beauty of nature, namely the beauty of "senses," our souls immediately capture it and take us to the realm of ideal beauty. But this task is not so easy. That is why adequate cultivation of taste and refinement of perceptions are so vital for Emerson. The best people to stand in this position, as Emerson reckons, are the poets.

Thus, the poem, along with the cloak of neo-Platonic philosophy, relates many to the many, then, proceeds to the relating of many to the one, and concludes with the one in which all objects in nature, all men's thoughts, and all men's insights are united. In addition, the poem also chronicles the poet's predominant inclination towards the ascending form of beauty - from the physical to the spiritual.

Rhodora

"The Rhodora", another highly acclaimed poem by Emerson, treats beauty as a central subject. Here, the poet celebrates the universality and value of beauty that surpasses man's philosophy and utility as the poet says, "Beauty is its own excuse of being"(1143). Besides, as in earlier poems, it superbly portrays the poet's ascension towards spiritual and cosmic beauty from the observation of the physical beauty of

"Rhodora." Furthermore, it also illustrates the doctrine of correspondence that mind and matter both are spiritual manifestations of the over-soul as the poet, at the closure of the poem, identifies himself with "Rhodora", and subsequently with the Creator. Besides, the poem also conceptualizes Emerson's notion of organic beauty.

The poem is half-Wordsworthian and half-Shelleyan in its content and mode.

"Rhodora" refers to a small pink colored flower that grows on a thorny shrub. It is a nature poem. To begin with, the poet, in the month of may, discovers a fresh "Rhodora" in the woods spreading its leafless flower in the damp corner of the brook. He says:

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitude,
I found a fresh Rhodora in the woods
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the sluggish brook. (1143)

In the middle section, he becomes aware of its organic beauty when he discovers each particle around Rhodora having a functional relationship to enhance the beauty of the flower. Here, it is worth quoting some lines from the poem:

The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their Beauty gay;
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,
And court the flower that cheapens his array. (1143)

Thus, these lines illuminate the very notion that a thing becomes beautiful only when it presumes a spiritual union with other things. Nothing acquires perfection in seclusion. Here too, in the poem the flower is so beautiful since it is in marvelous harmony with the entire natural things: with "the woods," "brook," and twittering "birds." It acquires

beauty not solely from its own individual existence but only through its association with other natural elements. Moreover, the "Rhodora," in return, adds the beauty of its neighboring elements. The "purple petals" of the flower fallen in "the pool" enhances the beauty of the gloomy brook. Even the "bird" cannot help enjoying its warm company with the flower. This notion is typical of organic principal that insist on the fact that each part in a whole influences other parts and be, in return, influenced by them. Moreover, this organic relation implies functional relation among various items present in an integrated whole.

Emerson as an organicist, does not think of the universe as an ephemeral copy of ideal reality or of eternal form, in the Platonic manner, or as a vast self-regulating machine, in the manner of eighteenth-century scientific rationalists but he thinks of it as if it as living plant. In this account, organic aesthetics is not concerned with ideal forms or categorical distinctions, or the analysis of cause and effects, like mechanism. Its aim is to realize the ultimate organizations of all things in a spiritual unity, which includes them, as they are in a harmonious relationship of human experience with all the processes of the nature, or the universe. The very notion of organic beauty has superbly been portrayed in the poem.

The poem also treats beauty as a central subject and celebrates the value and universality of beauty that surpasses man's philosophy and utility as the poet claims, "Beauty is its own excuse of being"(1143). This aesthetic creed of Emerson reminds us of the definition of Kantian beauty as Kant also, very paradoxically, defines beauty as an aesthetic contemplation having "purposiveness without purpose"(383). To simplify it, Kant seems to take the stance that things are not beautiful in nature; they become

beautiful for the perceiver only when s/he willingly suspends the utilitarian purpose or engages himself in disinterested contemplation. Then only we can perceive phenomena as beautiful. To be precise, beauty does not serve any external purpose. It exists for the sake of itself. Therefore, the utilitarian purpose is antithetical for the aesthetic judgment of beauty. Emerson introduces the same notion in the following lines:

Rhodora! If the sages ask thee why
 This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
 Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
 Then Beauty is its own excuse for being...

Thus, the above lines demonstrate Emerson's predominant inclination towards Kantian theory of beauty that stress on the disinterested contemplation as a prerequisite for the aesthetic judgment of beauty. "Beauty is its own excuse of being" epitomizes the very aesthetic notion of Emerson and Kant. The poet says beauty is an end in itself. If the perceiver cannot redeem himself from the temptation of utility, he cannot enjoy the perfect beauty of "Rhodora."

We can also unveil another line of similitude between Kant and Emerson- both of them valorize the position of human agent in term of perceiving something as aesthetically beautiful. Kant says things become beautiful only when the perceiver abandons personal interest; or when he becomes disinterested. So, for Kant, the role of the perceiver is so vital for the aesthetic judgment of beauty. In similar fashion, Emersonian aesthetics also highlight the position of human agent in terms of perceiving something as aesthetically beautiful. He insists that things are beautiful only when they are in whole- that is in transcendental unity with the cosmic essence. But this

transcendental unity is not identifiable aspect of nature. It is the faculty of human mind, namely, intuition that finds diverse facts of nature in spiritual unity with the divine mind. He further posits that the perfect and divine beauty is that which is found in combination with human will which is achieved only when man opens the inner eyes of intuition and discovers all diverse things of nature in identity with each other. In such a situation, all superficial distinctions between things disappear. Man becomes nature and vice versa. Firstly, each self subsumes another self. And finally, individual self merges into the cosmic self. The same notion has been highlighted in the following lines.

I never thought to ask, I never knew;

But in my simple ignorance suppose

The self-same Power that brought me there brought you. (1143)

Thus, the poet, finally, in trying to know the purpose of beauty, goes on to discover a transcendental union between himself, and the flower, and ultimately uniting both into the divine mind. "The self-same Power that brought me there brought you" is typical of his belief in metaphysical unity among things. Here, the term "self-same Power" refers to the God, the over-soul, or the cosmic essence. It is the same God who created "Rhodora" also created him. This marks the speaker's movement towards mystic union with the over-soul. Since the same force operates through the flower and the poet, he identifies himself with the being of the flower. In this stage, individuality and independent existence is collapsed, and everything is seen in spiritual relation with the Deity, or the cosmic essence. The value of this spiritual relationship lies not in absolute identity of Rhodora, or the speaker, but in common relationship of these factors. This

facet suggests Emerson's inclination towards cosmic beauty where every thing in nature presumes spiritual relation with Deity.

The entire poem is also an enlargement and an application on Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondence, wherein the beauties of nature and of man-devised works of art seem to mirror the divine or spiritual, thereby reflecting the "correspondence" between the creative spirit and the created world. Because of this correspondence man through the contemplation of nature can also come in communion with the God to know the spiritual law that pervades the entire universe. Furthermore, since the God is the sole creator of the entire universe, everything that exists in nature suggests some sorts of symbolic relation with the God. To put it another way, every natural fact is symbolic of some spiritual fact. Therefore, the speaker through the contemplation of "Rhodora" comes to understand the divine law, which operates through man as well as through nature. As a result, the prophetic poet can see an immense unity that all things in nature have a mysterious relation to his thoughts and his life, birth, growth, maturity, and decay. Thus, the poem crystallizes Emerson's notion of organic as well as dynamic beauty. It also practices his inclination towards the ascending form of beauty- from the physical to the spiritual since the speaker through the observation of physical beauty of "Rhodora" comes to understand the divine principle of God.

The Poet

"The Poet", another exuberant poem by Emerson, deals with the mystic nature of poets whom Emerson regards as seers and elevates them to a higher status- almost to the level of semi-god, a mediator between God and man. In view of this connection, poet takes on a priest like quality who is the highest creature in the scale of being- a divinely

inspired man, as one who could express to mortals the inexpressible pure thought of God. Through the mystic union with the over-soul the poet, according to, Emerson can unveil the secret laws and structure of nature and thereby represents divine beauty in art. Therefore, for Emerson, poets are the supermen. They can feel the presence of God in the entire universe:

The god talks in the breadth of woods,
 They talk in the shaken pine,
 And fill the long reach of the old seashore
 With dialogue divine. (48)

These above lines celebrate the omnipresence of the God as he pervades the entire universe. Since nature is the creation of God, he cannot remain detached from it. Therefore, the speaker says Gods converse "in the shaken pine," and fills the "old seashore" with his divinity. Every thing in nature, thus, suggests some sorts of deep spiritual nexus with the primal mind. That's why, Emerson says "Particular natural fact is the symbol of some particular spiritual facts... that nature is a temple whose house are covered with emblems, pictures and commandments of the Deity"(561). Because both man and nature are the manifestations of God, there underlies a deep correspondence between them. Because of this spiritual correspondence between mind and matter, man and god, man learns to worship God through the contemplation of nature. The stars, the flowers, the animals, the mountains reflect the wisdom of his best hour, first as that which is outside of his consciousness, then as that which shares with his consciousness a vision of original and eternal beauty, an awareness of a divine principle.

However, this correspondence is not so easily realized by common people. This spiritual link is more appropriately discovered by poets who they are capable of unraveling the entire mysteries of the world because they with higher intuition and imagination can participate in the divine mind of the creator. And they can employ adequate symbols and metaphor to communicate the divine truth to us:

And the poet who overhears
 Some random word they say
 Is the fated man of men
 Whom the ages must obey. (48)

Here, Emerson brings into fore his unbounded faith on the transcendental power of the poet. The language of God is intelligible more adequately to the poet, rather than to common people. That's why the speaker in above lines says that "the poet...overhears some random words they say." Because of their mystical quality Emerson places at the pinnacle of a great chain of being. He, thus, valorizes the position of the poet to the level of seers who can travel to the unknown world to make it known. Poets through the power of intuition and adequate cultivation of taste can come in direct communion with the over-soul; the source of universal law and divine beauty. Therefore, for Emerson, poets are the supermen. He calls them "the fated man of men whom the whole age must obey."

It is interesting to see the influence of Shelley on Emerson though that is not the focus of our attention. Both of them regard poetry to be divine and simultaneously attribute immense cultural and spiritual power to poets because they think that poets constantly refurbish language, thereby providing people with a chance of mental liberation. Shelley says, "poets participate in the eternal, the infinite, and the One"(517).

Emerson's most quoted phrase "poets are the fated man of men" shares much with Shelley's notion of poet that "poets are the unacknowledged legislator of the world" (529).

Emerson considers poets to be preeminently mystic who are interested in unveiling the divine laws of nature and can forge a mystic union with deity so as to receive influx of divine beauty from the One or the Over-soul. Likewise, he affirms the divinity in man, the Deity in me. So, all of us deserve to undergo a mystic union with the Infinite through the power of our intuitions. In this sense, we are not different from the poets in 'kind' but only in 'degree of sensibility' because poets are easily inspired by common influences of which we are not. The sense of inspiration in poets is stronger. Next, it is only the poet who can have adequate expression of the mystic union. The poet supplies from his intuition the true, rather than the apparent, natural images. The result is a beauty not of the senses but of the moral sentiments.

Ode to Beauty

The poetic treatment of beauty in "Ode to Beauty" is little bit different as compared to the rest of his poems. The poem, on the one hand, depicts Emerson's deep yearning for spiritual beauty, whereas, on the other hand, it deals with his skepticism on the prospect of how far we can achieve the divine beauty in real life. Since we are constantly threatened by biological and natural constraints the poem exposes the practical difficulties posed against the possibilities of gaining transcendence.

This pursuit of transcendence is the desire to be one with the over-soul or the absolute essence. Since we, according to Emerson, are the parts and parcels of god, our soul always desires to be one with the Absolute Self for our selves have long been

separated from its primordial union with the Primal Mind, and this separation is healed through the mystic union of the individual self to the cosmic self. In this dialectics of return from the individual self to the over-soul, beauty, Emerson says, plays a vital role. This mystic union, according to Hindu scriptures, is called “Samadhi” which is attained through meditation, and also through the abandonment of fleeting material desires. Then only man experiences the presence of Brahma, the Absolute Spirit within his self. That stage, according to Buddhist philosophy is called “Nirvana,” the state of absolute enlightenment.

It is obvious that Emerson basic intellectual concern and spiritual aspirations are towards transcendence, an escape from an earth-bound reality characterized by death, dissolution, and failure. According to Stanley Brodwin, the poem splendidly exposes the poet’s skepticism, predicament and despair he encounters in his flight to beauty (466). It also evokes the Romantic agony and yearnings for immortality as a subject commonly found in various odes of Shelly, Keats and Byron.

The poem, thematically, is divided into three parts. Part one deal with the poet’s primordial relationship with beauty:

Who gave thee, O Beauty?

The key of this breast,

Too credulous lover

Of blest and unblest

Say, when in lapsed ages

Thee knew I of old? (1131)

The poet knows the beauty “of old”; but paradoxically, he can be both “blest” by and “unblest” by it, “betrayed.” To be blest implies the gaining of immortality; to be unblest, the loss of immortality compounded by the agony of being betrayed. These two possibilities explain the poet’s paradoxical descriptions of beauty. Clearly, the phenomenal of beauty and the poet’s search for it create psychological and intellectual ambivalences. Here, we see tensions created by the paradox and the possibilities of the poet finding or losing the immortality. Ironically, the poet finds himself fated to be in the service of beauty, a condition that compels him to face his problem, however awful the consequences. For though the divine beauty may be “promised,” the secondary beauty of “a million painted forms,” which the divine beauty “warms,” may entrap him. In the second part of the poem, these themes are expanded and deepened:

Beauty glides
 Through the sea of form,
 Like the lightening through the storm,
 Somewhat no to be possessed,
 Somewhat not to be caressed. (1132)

Fate dominates poet’s quest but withholds the prize. The more the poet penetrates reality, the greater the sense of self-deception he feels. As a refuse, he turns to the world of art, a world Emerson calls “safe” from the terror of finite nature. The following lines epitomize the crisis of Emerson’s absorption with the idea and pursuit of beauty.

Queen of things! I dare no die
 In Being’s deeps past ear and eye;
 Least there I find the same deceiver

And be the sport of Fate forever

Dread Power, but dear! If god thou be

Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me! (1132)

Union or mystical immersion with beauty can only be achieved at the expense of the poet's loss of self-consciousness; it necessitates a kind of death, which frightens him. The death may be felt as real or regarded as just symbolic, but in any case does not bring a gratifying spiritual resolution. For the poet has no assurance that even being in a state "past ear and eye," he will be able to maintain his hold on beauty. Indeed, if he were to give up his self-consciousness or "die" for the sake of beauty, and then finds it still elusive, he would be "the sport of Fate forever." His situation would be tragically irrevocable since he could not return to a "normal" state again. Thus, the risk and consequences of being deceived are awesome. Unlike Plotinus, Emerson recognizes the terrible price to be paid in anxiety and fear if the questor is to mount the last step on the ladder to the One or divine. Only one "solution" seems possible. Either the poet must be cast into true oblivion—past all deceptions, all experience—or the "Dread Power" that is divine beauty must "give" itself up to him. Annihilation or immortality: the crisis can be resolved only by choosing one or the other. To achieve some control over fate through spiritual power seems to have been the major purpose of Emerson's life and art. In so far as this is true, we can understand his preoccupation with the idea of beauty.

The question arises why beauty should prove so evanescent to Emerson. It may be that Emerson had profound belief in oriental religion that all the appearances are but *Maya*-illusion; that man and nature are in constant state of *becoming*; and that the

overwhelming power of fate-that which limits-prevents us from completely escaping the biological and psychological determinants of experience, especially esthetic experience.

But since Emerson asserts that man is a divine creature, the fault, therefore, may lie in man himself, whose spirit and perception succumb to the demands of matter, blinding him to the ideal. To perceive the beauty emanating through physical forms-external beauty-demands a refinement of perception that few possess, though all might strive for such refinement. That is why the cultivation of esthetic taste and art is so vital to Emerson. In this respect, poets always play a vital role in making us realize the divine beauty which otherwise remains illusive to us. Emerson stresses on the need to purify our unclear vision to perceive beauty in art. As an aesthetic critic, Emerson holds that contemplation of beauty provides us with a possibility of transcendence. Art, which is the embodiment of beauty, is the safest way to overcome the terror of finite nature. Beauty for Emerson is not merely the end but also a means of immortality.

The Snow-Storm

“The Snow-Storm,” one of the most acclaimed poems by Emerson, is the epitome of his conception of organic metaphor, and it along with crystallizes his notion that art must be based organically on nature. Art is organic for Emerson in a double sense: not merely is the appropriate form an expressive growth from the poet’s intuition, but that poet’s intuition, in turn, is outwelling from the universal mind. The poem, on the other hand, is also the symbolic expression of his mystic conviction that "particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts. In other words, it implicitly portrays Emerson’s belief in organic form, wherein the poet’s creative intuitive power, like the nature’s beauty making power is received as a grace from the universal mind.

The opening stanza of the poem subtly paints a graphic picture of the creative power of nature. In literal level, the poem describes an ordinary New England overnight snowstorm augmented by drifting winds. "But Emerson's storm is no meteorological event; it is the arrival and passing by of a great impersonal artist, hidden and working with materials from an unseen quarry to possess and transfigure the landscape" His humming response to the snow's rhythm shaped itself into verse:

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,...
 The sled and travelers stopped, the courier's feet
 Delayed, all friends shout out...
 In a tumultuous privacy of storm (851)

These lines strive to capture the natural movement of the snow in accordance with the poet's belief that art must be based organically on nature. Artist, he asserts, must surrender himself to nature and observe the sounds of bird and waterfall in order to invent the natural rhythm and rhyme in his art. In this poem, Emerson aspires to match the movement of the verse with the movement of the snow. The onset of the poem conveys breathless speed, but then, as the snow itself delays actions, shuts out or encloses, the movement of the verse also slows down. But the exciting sound of the storm still remains uppermost, and in presenting it, Emerson's ear has been sensitive to his impression. The trumpets are high pitched: the thin vowel in the "sky" is dominant through the following lines, especially in the phrases "driving o'er the fields" and "the whited air hides hills."

And the echo of piercing wind, which is itself nowhere directly named, is still heard in the phrase "tumultuous privacy," where the full vowel-sounds again give way to the piercing notes. But, this is not, however, to mean that artist imitates form from the strict observation of nature. Endowed with mystical insight, he does not imitate but recreates natural rhythm in art.

Emerson further goes on to develop the doctrine of organic form in rest of the stanza:

Come see the north wind's masonry.
 Out of an unseen quarry evermore...
 ...the fierce artificer
 Curves his white bastions with projected roof
 Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
 Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
 So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
 For number of proportion. (852)

Here, the poet not merely celebrates the beautiful artistry of the snowstorm but also he develops an analogy between a work of a poet and beauty of nature as an artistic creation of divine mind. He addresses the God as "fierce artificer" whose art is organically beautiful as he liberates himself from the strict adherence of mere "proportion and numbers." Likewise, the poem may be read as a "symbolic statement on essential inspiration, or divinely sponsored creativity, or and an aesthetic statement of the Romantic concept of organic form." (Mario 278). The poem speaks of true poetry inspired by the original thoughts of the Creator. Thus, an artist who creates organically

must, in similar fashion, see and possess the world, not by a laborious adherence to “number or proportion” but by seer abandonment to the great fundamental laws of nature.

Emerson favors spontaneous expression of feelings rather than giving due attention to the external forms as his assertion is that the essential thought shapes itself from within. This notion is characteristic of his belief in organic aesthetics. Therefore, we cannot find regular rhyme pattern in his poems but yet the poem, because of its spontaneity, is able to capture the natural vibrating excitement wrought by the snow wind.

However, the poem, on the other hand, conveys another philosophical message, too; the snow that covers the ground hides objects from the spectator who watch it but, meanwhile, it creates new works of art. People who do not accept its power and choose not to participate in the snow are the victims of it. The snow, according to the poet is a creative force that leaves behind magnificent work of art for those who observe, but it is also a destructive force for those who are misled by its ability to disguise. Therefore, we need to be able go beyond the illusions the snowstorm creates in order to be illuminated rather than blinded. For Emerson, the person in the best position to do this is the poet.

In “The Snow-storm” Emerson is arguing for the best kind of poetry, that which the true poet adapts from observing and experiencing nature, not from merely copying it. The poem is read as a symbolic statement on essential inspiration, or divinely sponsored creativity, and an aesthetic statement on the Romantic concept of organic form. The poem speaks of true poetry inspired by the original thoughts of the Creator. Accordingly, the true poet aspires and holds pristine allegiance; for he is dependent on God for word and thought. Inspired thought in its poetic form belongs to its Creator and utterer, which

are the God and the poet. This notion is characteristic of Emerson's expression in "Over-soul": "True poets of prophetic and mystical insight speak from within and what they speak is a revelation from God intuited in privacy and withdrawal"(1097). The mind's creative process, like the tumult of the snowstorm, is a dynamic agency of divine form making. It knows no law, percept, or rule by which it creates except the organic principle. Emerson, here, not merely celebrates the beautiful artistry of the snowstorm but also he develops an analogy between a work of a poet and beauty of nature as an artistic creation of divine mind.

Finally, the poem shows an implicit belief in Emerson's idea of organic form, wherein the poet's creative intuitive power, like the nature's beauty making power is received as a grace, affluence from the universal mind. The mind's creative process, like the tumult of snowstorm, is a dynamic agency of divine-form making. It knows no law, percept, or rule by which it creates except the organic principle.

To summarize, Emerson's poems are the excellent embodiment of his conception of divine beauty as they superbly portray the fact that poetic activity is analogous to the creativity of God. Therefore, a work of art and nature both mirror the divine beauty of God. Besides, his poems also illuminate the fact that nothing in isolation is beautiful. Things become beautiful to human mind only when they are viewed in transcendental unity with Deity. And this transcendental unity is achieved through the mystic union of man with the over-soul. And it is the poet who can easily forge a mystic union with the divine mind and simultaneously represent divine beauty in art. In this respect, too, man-made beauty is as beautiful as the beauty of nature. Emerson posits that the beauty of nature that is seen and felt, as beauty is merely the least part. The higher and divine

beauty is grasped through man's mystic union with the Deity. But yet, since the correspondence exists between mind and matter, man through the contemplation and communion with nature can also arrive to the realm of spiritual beauty. In other words, Emerson has predominant inclination towards the ascending form of beauty- from the physical to the spiritual. To simplify it further, when we encounter the physical beauty of nature, our soul immediately captures it in order to lead us to the ideal beauty or to the beauty of 'divinity'. Thus, beauty, nature and Deity are synonymous for Emerson. Man as Emerson regards is divine and through the power of intuition can create an access to the mind of the Creator. Therefore, the beautiful form that the artist imposes on art is derived from the over-soul. To conclude, man-devised work of art is analogous to the creativity of nature since the same divine force operates through man and nature. A work of art and the creativity of nature both reflect the divine beauty of God. Thus, man-made beauty is as beautiful as the beauty of nature.

IV. Conclusion

To conclude, Emerson's poems, one way or the other, embody his mystical conception of divine beauty that is grasped through the intuitive minds of the of prophetic poets who, in moments of revelation or ecstasy, can come in direct communion with Deity, thereby representing ideal beauty in art. In Emersonian aesthetics, beauty in its perfection approximates the Deity. Art, for Emerson, is the emanation from the supreme mind and artistic activity is analogous to the creativity of nature since a work of a poet and beauty of nature both are divine creations of God. So, for Emerson man-devised work of art is as beautiful as the beauty of nature.

With neo-Platonic overtones, Emerson claims the beauty that exists in phenomenal world and the beauty that dwells in human mind both come ultimately from the One - the source of cosmic essence and divine beauty. Because man is divine, he through his intuitive knowledge can also know the divine beauty that inhabits in the mind of the Creator. Artist, in this sense, is the creator of valuable insights and is capable of adding where the nature is lacking. Therefore, as God created this beautiful nature, artist also creates a beautiful work of art that Emerson calls 'a nature in miniature.'

Next, Emerson's notion of unity that emphasizes on the oneness and harmony among all diverse facts of natural world is characteristic of his idealization of man-made beauty. According to this notion, things become beautiful only when they are seen in transcendental unity with Deity. But since unity is not an identifiable aspect of nature, it is the intuitive faculty of human mind that discovers spiritual unity behind all the

diversities of visible world. Therefore, it is the perceiver who plays a vital role in perceiving a phenomenon as divinely beautiful. In this act of perceiving ideal beauty, it is the poet who always comes first. He can go beyond the surface reality and is capable of discovering transcendental unity among things. Endowed with the power of intuition, they can create an access to the mind of the Creator, thereby externalizing the divine beauty in art without any distortion. Artistic activity, therefore, resembles the creativity of God because intuition itself is an outwelling from the universal mind. In this sense, art embodies organic as well as divine beauty that is synonymous to the organic beauty of nature. Thus, man-made art is as beautiful as the beauty of nature.

However, we encounter some contradictory implications in his theory of beauty. On the one hand, he accepts the dynamic and flowing nature as a model to develop his conception of organic beauty that is superior to the static notion of beauty conceived by neoclassicists. And, on the other hand, he affirms that the beautiful forms offered by nature are only the secondary beauty. The perfect and divine beauty is that which is found in combination with the human will. This is to say that the perfect beauty is grasped through man's mystic union with Deity- the ultimate source of divine beauty. Notwithstanding this, this contradiction is resolved when we take account of his strong belief in spiritual correspondence between mind and matter (nature) as he claims nature is visible spirit and spirit is invisible nature. Everything in nature has its correlative in mind since both are the revelations of the God and the same universal law operates through both of them. Man, thus, through the contemplation and communion with nature can go beyond it in order to know the divine beauty. In other words, Emerson's main concern is to show how nature serves as a medium to lead us to the divine principle. Likewise, for

Emerson, beauty is another name for Deity and he claims that to know Deity is to know the divine beauty.

To wind up, man devised work of art is analogous to the creativity of nature because the intuition of the artist itself is an outwelling from the divine mind. As a result, nature and man-made art both mirror the divine beauty of God. Artist with the virtue of his intuition can forge a mystic union with the Deity and thereby representing divine beauty in art. Thus, man-made art is as beautiful as the beauty of nature.

Works Cited

- Abrahms, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th ed. Banglore: Prism.Books, 2006
- Adams Richard P." Emerson and Organic Metaphor." *PMLA* 69.1 (Mar. 1954): 117-30.
- Baym, Nina." Ralph Waldo Emerson." *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*.6th ed. New York: Norton, 1999. 849-56.
- Brodwin, Stainley. "Emerson's Version of Plotinus: The Flight to Beauty." *Journal of the History of Ideas*35.3 (Jul.- Sep., 1974): 465-83.
- Brown, Percy W. "Emerson's Philosophy of Aesthetics." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.15.3 (Mar., 1957): 350-54.
- Carl F. Strauch, "Emerson's Sacred Science." *PLMA*.73.3 (Jun1958): 237-50.
- Carpenter Frederick. I. "Immortality From India." *American Literature* 1.3 (1929): 233-42.
- Coleridge, S .T. "Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to His Geniuses." *Critical Theory Since Plato*.ed Hazard Adams. New York: HBJ, 1992. 471-72.
- . "The Principle of Genial Criticism." *Critical Theory Since Plato*.ed Hazard Adams. New York: HBJ, 1992. 472.
- D' Avanzo, Mario L. "Onto the White Creator: The Snow of Dickinson and Emerson." *The New England Quarterly* 45.2 (Jun., 1972): 278-80.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, "Nature." *The Literature of the United States*.ed Blair, Walter, Hornberger, Theodore, Miller, James E., and Stewart Randall. New York: Forseman and Company, 1966.1040-68.

- . "The Poet." *Critical Theory Since Plato* .ed Hazard Adams. New York: HBJ, 1992. 560-63.
- . "The Rhodora." *The Literature of the United States*.ed Blair, Walter, Hornberger, Theodore, Miller, James E., and Stewart Randall. New York: Forseman and Company, 1966.1143.
- . "Hamatreya." *The Literature of the United States*.ed Blair, Walter, Hornberger, Theodore, Miller, James E., and Stewart Randall. New York: Forseman and Company, 1966. 1157-59.
- . "Brahma." *The Literature of the United States*.ed Blair, Walter, Hornberger, Theodore, Miller, James E., and Stewart Randall. New York: Forseman and Company, 1966. 1161-62.
- "Over-soul." *The American Tradition in Literature*.ed Bradley, Sculley, Bealty, Richmond Croom, &Long, Hudson E. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961.1088-103.
- . "Ode to Beauty." *The American Tradition in Literature*.ed Bradley, Sculley, Bealty, Richmond Croom, &Long, Hudson E. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961.1030-32.
- . "Selected Poems." Boston: Osgood, 1876. 23-54.
- Gorely, Jean. "Emerson's Theory Of Poetry." *Poetry Criticism*.18 (Jul-Aug., 1931): 263-73.
- Hennessy, Helen. "The Dial: Its Poetry and Poetic Criticism." *The New England Quarterly* 31.1 (Mar., 1958): 66-87.
- High, Peter B. *An Outline of American Literature*. New York: Longman, 1997. 42.

John, Zammaito H. *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. London: Chicago Press, 1992. 75.

Kant, Immanuel. "Critique of Judgment." *Critical Theory Since Plato* .ed Hazard Adams. New York: HBJ, 1992. 382.

Liebman, Sheldon W. "The Origins of Emerson's Early Poetics: His Reading in Scottish Common Sense Critics." *American Literature* 45.1 (Mar., 1973): 23-33.

Matthessen, F. O. "The Organic Principle." *American Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969. 133-39.

McClean, Andrew M. "Emerson's Brahma as an Expression of Brahman." *The New England Quarterly* 42.1. (Mar., 1969): 115-22.

Metzger Charles R. "Emerson's Religious Concept of Beauty." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*.11.1 (Sep., 1952): 67-74.

Pepper, Stpen C. *The Basis of Criticism in the Arts*. Cambridge: Mass, 1945. 119.

Plotinus. "On the Intellectual Beauty." *Critical Theory Since Plato* .ed Hazard Adams. New York: HBJ, 1992.100-6.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "A Defense of Poetry." *Critical Theory Since Plato* .ed Hazard Adams. New York: HBJ, 1992. 515-29.

The Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary.5th ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1998. 92.