EMERSON AS A PROCESS PHILOSOPHER

by

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B.A., University of Toronto, 1963

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department
of

ENGLISH

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1968
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Short Title: PROCESS IN EMERSON
Abstract

Philosophers and literary critics have recognized for many years the profound recalcitrance of Emerson's thought to any kind of systematic formulation. It is the contention of this thesis that this recalcitrance is one of the main pointers to the nature of his philosophy, which is here described as "process" philosophy. All attempts to reduce Emerson's thought to a static system with definable terms is doomed from the beginning, since Emerson's universe was dynamic, fluid, processive, and therefore fundamentally indefinable.

Chapter I ("Emerson's Quarrel with the Eighteenth Century") seeks to place Emerson within the Romantic tradition, emphasizing his reaction against the mechanical philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment. The image of the Great Chain of Being is seen as typical of this philosophy, and Swedenborg's theory of "correspondence" is seen as workable only within this context. Emerson's philosophy, however, was organic and processive, and therefore beyond the explanatory power of "correspondence."

Chapter II ("Nature as Process") works out Emerson's understanding of Nature as dynamic and processive. Nature, for him was a system of interaction, a processive flow of objects into and out of themselves. Moreover, Emerson saw material reality as an "emanation" of the Divine, a process of spirit manifesting itself in material
forms. At the same time, he saw Nature as "evolving" from material forms towards higher levels of spirit. Emerson managed to hold both views at once, seeing "emanation" and "evolution" as reciprocal transactions, so that the de-velopment (or un-folding) of the universe was simultaneously evolution and emanation.

Chapter III ("The Process of the Soul") concentrates on Emerson's unifying center, the Soul. He thought that the Soul was the center of a web of interaction, a process or activity in which the world became unified through the mind and eye of man. Moreover, the Soul for Emerson was both a transaction with the divine Over-Soul and a dynamic process by which the seer and the thing seen, the subjective self and the objective world, are unified in a bilateral transaction.

Chapter IV ("The Process of Art") applies Emerson's philosophy of process to one (of several) fields of human activity, artistic creation. Emerson understood art as activated initially by in-spiration, a flowing of the Divine into man; and he understood art to be a kind of incarnation, an embodiment of spirit in matter, idea in form. Moreover, he maintained that beauty consisted of dynamic form, that is, form capturing the processive or fluid quality of life and nature. Furthermore, the appreciative process consisted of an observer investing artistic form with his own imaginative spirit.

The final chapter ("Emerson and the Twentieth Century") attempts to relate Emerson's philosophy specifically and Romantic
thought generally to such twentieth-century developments as relativity, emergent evolution, biological ecology, and transactional psychology. It becomes apparent that Emerson has numerous analogues in modern thought and that he was very close indeed to processive, non-categorical, descriptive approaches to reality and man's place in it.

Because Emerson substituted a descriptive, transactional approach to reality rather than an explanatory, static approach, he ultimately moved beyond abstract philosophical speculation into pragmatic humanism. His transcendentalism was meaningful in terms of life and activity in the concrete situation. His processive descriptions ultimately invested the universe with life and incarnated man with the divine, allowing man to assume his central place in the universe.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: EMERSON'S QUARREL
WITH THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Swedenborg's system of the world wants central spontaneity; it is dynamic, not vital, and lacks power to generate life. There is no individual in it. The universe is a gigantic crystal, all whose atoms and laminae lie in uninterrupted order and with unbroken unity, but cold and still.

Emerson, "Swedenborg."

On the Sunday evening of July 15th, 1838, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered his famous "Divinity School Address" before the senior class of the divinity college of Harvard University. Although this address, at a distance of one hundred and thirty years, strikes us as mild and calm of tone, it effectively aroused a storm in Boston during the following weeks, and ultimately kept Emerson off the Harvard lecture platform for nearly three decades. Much more than his farewell sermon to the Unitarian Church of Boston, in which he advocated the dropping of the Lord's Supper from Unitarian practice, the "Divinity School Address" has come to be recognized as the official statement of Emerson's disagreement with the Church. It stands at the turning point of his career, marking his disengagement with the traditions of his past and his launching into a new career and a new religious stance. As such, the "Address" is of prime importance in any examination of Emerson's ideas.
Emerson managed to convey his own rebellion so mildly that it is easy to miss it. The "Divinity School Address" was addressed to a class of aspiring preachers; consequently the main thrust of it appears to rest in his attack on the soullessness of preaching in America in the 1830's, and his exhortation to them to "acquaint men at first hand with Deity."\footnote{Emerson's Works, 12 volumes (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside, 1903), I, 143. All further references to this edition are documented internally as \textit{W}.} It is easy to miss his earlier attack, which summarily demolishes the so-called divinity of Christ and the importance of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. And it was, of course, these more fundamental issues, skirted over in a few paragraphs in the Address, which caused Andrews Norton to speak of the "latest form of infidelity" in a pamphlet published a few days later.\footnote{"A discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity," Selected Writings of the American Transcendentalists (Toronto: New American Library, 1966), 203-209.}

Emerson's whole affirmation, from 1838 forward, was essentially the affirmation of that non-verbal, non-traditional, intuitive reality which comes with "the influx of the all-knowing spirit" (\textit{W}, I, 145), and which has nothing to do with a past which is fixed and dead. Emerson's criticism and rejection of historical Christianity was not the simple rejection of rites such as the
Lord's Supper and creeds such as the divinity of Christ. These are mere cases of a much more fundamental problem, and Emerson came close to it when he said "The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes" (W, I, 129). Unitarianism, in Emerson's eyes, had sold itself to "tropes" rather than "principles", and the distinction is an important one which is basic to Emerson's philosophy. The "tropes" which Emerson rejected throughout his career were those statements of the nature of reality which boiled down to mere words, verbal formulas, or materialistic summations. Those "principles" which he affirmed repeatedly were beyond the power of words to express; they could not be captured in simple formulations or materialistic laws. "An answer in words is delusive," he wrote; "it is really no answer to the questions you ask. . . . Men ask . . . . They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in their patois" (W, II, 265-266). The only language which could capture these principles was the language of poetic metaphor and image; thus Emerson criticized the Christian idea of Miracle by saying "it is a Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain" (W, I, 129).

The distinction between "tropes" and "principles" laid the groundwork for Emerson's incisive criticism of current preaching. "Tradition characterizes the preaching of this country; . . . it comes out of the memory, and not out of the soul; . . . it aims at
what is usual, and not at what is necessary and eternal" (W, I, 139).

Andrews Norton, the preeminent theologian of Boston Unitarianism, in his "Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity" (1839), attacked Emerson's denial of the miracles of Christ. He went as far as to say that "the argument is founded on atheism. The denial of the possibility of miracles must involve the denial of the existence of God," since God, by definition, is capable of breaking his own laws. The stand taken by Norton and the Harvard divinity school was full of the highest irony, for, as Henry David Gray has pointed out, "it was mere blindness in the Unitarians not to see that ... the abolishment of creed [was] inherent in the very creed to which they clung. Unitarianism was essentially an assertion of the divinity of human nature, and hence of the ability of the soul to recognize religious truths independently of authority." Emerson's reaction against Unitarianism was a reaction against their "patois" of words--creedal statements about the past to which they clung; and Norton's rationalistic, "historical" approach to doctrine--as exemplified in his magnum opus, The Evidence of the Genuineness of the Four Gospels (1838)--serves to emphasize Emerson's complaints.

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3 Ibid., p. 203.

Emerson's rebellion against the Church was only one aspect of a rebellion against the whole eighteenth century which was, in his opinion, responsible for "our sterile and linear logic" (W, IV, 101). As Sherman Paul has put it, "Although the focus of contention was religion, what was really at stake were the philosophy and psychology--the entire structure of thought about man's nature and his relation to the universe--that underlay the faith."5 "We dwell amidst surfaces;" Emerson wrote in The Dial, "and surface laps so closely on surface that we cannot easily pierce to see the interior organism."6 The chief butt of Emerson's criticism of the eighteenth century was John Locke (1632-1704); Emerson believed it was "quite certain . . . that the dull men will be Lockists" (W, V, 228).

Reminiscing over the "richness of genius" of the Elizabethan age, Emerson added that "these heights were followed by a meanness and a descent of the mind into lower levels; the loss of wings; no high speculation. Locke, to whom the meaning of ideas was unknown, became the type of philosophy, . . . the measure, in all nations, of the English intellect" (W, V, 231).

Emerson's quarrel with Locke centered on his Essay on Human Understanding (1689) which set forth the sensationalist doctrine of the mind as a tabula rasa. The mind at birth, Locke contended, was


6"The Senses and the Soul," The Dial, II, 374 (January, 1842).
a "blank slate" which was subsequently engraved by the impact of sensory data; his conclusion was that "there is nothing in the mind except what was first in the senses." According to Emerson, the man who lived according to this philosophy "lives in a sty of sensualism... The world is all outside; it has no inside" (W, II, 57, 66). Locke, and a number of other materialistic philosophers--Paley, MacKintosh, and Stewart--"speak from without, as spectators merely," whereas Spinoza, Kant and Coleridge, with whom Emerson was in sympathy, "speak from within, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact... from within the veil, where the word is one with what it tells of" (W, II, 269-270).

For Emerson, Unitarian theology had become mechanical, deterministic, and coldly logical, like the "enlightenment" science which it accepted so uncritically. As Sherman Paul puts it:

Unitarianism had not only lost a vigorous emotional piety in its passage from Calvinism, it had found itself defending the sovereignty of reason and free will at the same time that it strengthened itself on the determinism of Lockeian psychology and the mechanism of Newtonian physics; and while claiming to be a rational faith, with nothing but natural law for its guide, it had irrationally insisted on the historicity of miracles.8

Just as Lockean and Enlightenment science dealt with empirical data moving in the visible world of time and space, New England religion had sold itself to rational creeds and sterile statements


8Paul, The Shores, p. 4.
on the one-dimensional plane of history. Both parties treated the universe from the outside, as surface; Emerson's reaction was to insist on the treatment of the universe from within, working outwards always from "the soul of the whole" (W, II, 253).

To set forth this internal approach to man and reality Emerson required a philosophic distinction which did not exist in either Unitarian theology or Lockean sensationalism. Between 1832, when he broke with the Unitarian Church, and 1836, the year he published Nature, Emerson became progressively acquainted with the work of Carlyle, Coleridge, and Kant. In the so-called "transcendentalism" of these thinkers Emerson found the necessary distinction. Emerson became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle during his European tour of 1832-1833; and was immensely affected by Carlyle's powerful transcendentalism in which the whole material universe was an emblem, or, in the central metaphor of Sartor Resartus (1836), the "garment of the spirit." To this was added a reading of Coleridge's Aids to Reflection in James Marsh's edition of 1832, in which he discovered the crucial distinction between "Understanding" and "Reason." Coleridge described the Understanding as a perceiving mechanism, in the Lockean sense, and Reason as the transcendent, intuitive faculty which moulds, coordinates, and organizes the incoming flux of sensations into ideas. Emerson later traced the idea to its source in Immanuel Kant where Coleridge and Carlyle had found it. Kant's distinction had been worked out in opposition to
Lockean sensationalism and its continuation in David Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* (1775), the reading of which, Kant said, roused him from the "dogmatic slumber" of his time to write perhaps the most important work of modern philosophy, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Kant proposed the theory that man's "Reason" contains *a priori* forms--designated "transcendental" forms--which organize the chaos of incoming sensations according to the categories of time, space, and causality.

It was in this distinction between Understanding and Reason that Emerson found the key, not only for an "internal" approach to reality, but also for an escape from the "linear logic" of the Enlightenment and the "tropes" of Unitarianism. Kant's distinction between Understanding and Reason became, therefore, the starting point for Emerson's philosophy (in *Nature*, 1836) and, indeed, for the whole of American transcendentalism. It is important to note that Kant did not make any supernatural claims for the faculty he called Reason; he simply attributed to it the power of organizing the data of the Understanding. Many of the Post-Kantian Romantic philosophers, however, and the American transcendentalists attributed it with the power of directly intuiting the Absolute; and Emerson

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9Durant, p. 192.

10By 1839 this extension of the powers of Reason had been criticized by opponents of the transcendentalists. Rev. James Waddel Alexander noted that Kant "simply meant to attribute to pure reason the power of directing the cognitive energy beyond its nearer objects, and to extend its research indefinitely; but by no means to challenge for this power the direct intuition of the absolute, as the veritable object of infallible insight," as has been done "by some of our American imitators." (Princeton Review, XI, 49).
himself raised it to the status of the Absolute. "Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men" (W, I, 33). Reason, for Emerson, was man's divine faculty, linking him with the Universal Spirit of the universe.

In developing his Idealism in the sixth chapter of Nature, Emerson carefully avoided any kind of philosophic reductionism. John Locke, in his sensationalist theory, had reduced the mental to the material, so that the universe resembled Hobbes' universe of "matter in motion." Reacting against Locke, Bishop Berkeley (1684-1753) had performed the opposite kind of reduction, developing a monism in which the material world dissolved into the mental. External reality had its existence according to the famous formula, esse est percipi, "to be is to be perceived." Thus the material universe existed only as ideas in the mind, and man existed as an idea in the mind of God. Both of these reductionisms resulted from attempting to produce a unified system at all costs. In reacting against the sterile, materialistic logic of the eighteenth century and adopting the idealist position, Emerson might easily have fallen into a similar reduction. Yet despite his overriding desire to see reality as a whole rather than a dualism Emerson refused to limit reality or man to either a material or a spiritual level: his intuition would not allow it. At the outset he did record his
"noble doubt . . . whether nature outwardly exists," but refused to decide one way or the other.

In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? . . . Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses. (W, I, 52-53)

Emerson's insistence on the dualistic structure of the mind not only placed him in the mainstream of modern philosophy deriving from Kant, but also defined his total task as a philosopher, epistemologist, and literary artist. By distinguishing between Understanding and Reason, he implicitly set up a cosmological dualism of Nature and Spirit—Nature being observed by the Understanding, Spirit being intuitively "seen" by the Reason. Henceforth his philosophic problem would be that of discovering and expressing the relationship or underlying unity between these dualisms. The unity of spirit and nature, mind and body had been the perennial philosophic problem ever since Plato attempted to derive the changing world of the Real from the unchanging world of the Ideal. The whole corpus of Emerson's published writings focus explicitly or implicitly on this central problem of unity; and before he was done he had evolved a complete cosmology,

11Emerson's absolute refusal to adopt the Berkleyan reduction of the material to the mental is made clear in a much later essay, "Poetry and Imagination": "The common-sense which does not meddle with the absolute but takes things at their word,—things as they appear,—believes in the existence of matter, not because we can touch it or conceive of it, but because it agrees with ourselves, and the universe does not jest with us, but is in earnest, is the house of health and life" (W, VIII, 9). For a complete discussion of Emerson's idealistic position see Joel Porte, "Nature as Symbol: Emerson's Noble Doubt," NEQ, XXXVII (1964), 453-476.
a relatively complete epistemology, and an aesthetic theory which has borne well the test of time.

How precisely did Emerson develop this unity? Sherman Paul has argued persuasively that "Emerson created a structure of thought, of which 'correspondence' was the most essential part." The idea of correspondence was not new with Emerson: the idea had existed with the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, specifically in the philosophy of Plato from which, said Emerson, "come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought" (W, IV, 41).

For Plato, the real world with its mutability and imperfection was a "shadow" of a higher, ideal world which was eternal and perfect. This idea was set forth in the famous "Allegory of the Cave" in which man was imaged as sitting in a cave watching shadows on the wall, unable to turn his head to look at the sun. The shadows he sees are the objects of his "real" world, and they are caused by the passage of the objects of the "ideal" world beyond the mouth of the cave. The point of the allegory is that the shadows on the wall, no

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13 This is comparable to the view of the great twentieth century philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, who commented that Western thought was merely the footnoting of Plato's philosophy. For a detailed study of Emerson's relationship to Whitehead, see Harry Modean Campbell, "Emerson and Whitehead," *PMLA*, LXXV (1960), 577-582. On the relationship of Emerson to Plato, see Stewart Gerry Brown, "Emerson's Platonism," *NEQ*, XVIII (1945), 325-345.

matter how distorted, vague, or opaque, still bear some relationship—or "correspondence"—to the ideal objects beyond. Because of this correspondence, the things of the ideal world "are knowable . . . There is a scale; and the correspondence of heaven to earth, of matter to mind, of the part to the whole, is our guide" (W, IV, 62).

The idea of "correspondence" was linked in Emerson's mind with Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), who ranked as one of his "representative men." In his essay on Swedenborg (W, IV, 91-139), Emerson devoted considerable attention to a sympathetic treatment of "correspondence.""Nature," in Swedenborg's philosophy, "iterates her means perpetually on successive planes;" thus the universe was like a layered musical composition, "repeating a simple air or theme, now high, now low, in solo, in chorus, ten thousand times reverberated, till it fill earth and heaven with the chant" (W, IV, 104, 106).

A similar correspondence was in evidence between the body and the mind—"The mind is a finer body, and resumes its functions of feeding, digesting, absorbing, excluding and generating, in a new and ethereal element. Here in the brain is all the process of alimentation repeated, in the acquiring, comparing, digesting and assimilating of experience" (W, IV, 105); and between the working of man's body and the working of the universe at large—"The globule of blood gyrates around its own axis in the human veins, as the planet in the sky; and the circles of intellect relate to those of the heavens" (W, IV, 107).
The theory of "correspondence" had found perhaps its fullest expression in Swedenborg's eight-volume theological work, *Arcana Coelestia* (1749-1756), which constituted an extensive interpretation of symbolic correspondences in the books of Genesis and Exodus. Swedenborg followed this up by further works which extended the theory to much of the New Testament, and specifically to the book of Revelation. In the following half-century the theory became a potent force in Calvinistic theology and was subsequently absorbed by the Unitarian Church. By Emerson's time, correspondence was part of the theological climate; his adaptation of it was therefore not particularly Swedenborgian--indeed, the theory went through an extensive transformation in his hands.\(^{15}\)

Evidence of the appropriation of the theory of correspondence is apparent throughout Emerson's work. For him "the world is a temple

\(^{15}\)Sherman Paul describes Emerson's adaptation of "Swedenborg's theory of correspondence as "typical of Emerson's transformation of ideas . . . . The fundamental difference, of course, lay in Swedenborg's theological and static conception of its use. Emerson's universe was organic and dynamic; its fluidity demanded a flexible and secular adaptation of the idea. Not content to limit correspondence to a mechanical doctrine of symbol-making, Emerson appropriated the word and adjusted it to cover the metaphysical and psychological needs of relatedness in a universe of evolutionary flux" (*Emerson's Angle of Vision*, p. 62). It is the contention of this thesis that the theory of correspondence is simply inadequate to deal with Emerson's organic, dynamic universe; and that the concept of "process" is necessary for a full understanding of it.
whose walls are covered with emblems, pictures, and commandments of the Deity" (W, III, 21-22); "the world is emblematic . . . The visible world, and relation of its parts, is the dial plate of the invisible" (W, I, 38); "day and night, river and storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, preexist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affectations in the world of spirit" (W, I, 40). "The laws of material nature run up into the invisible world of the mind, and hereby we acquire a key to those sublimities which skulk and hide in the caverns of human consciousness" (W, X, 74). Emerson used the idea of correspondence in the development of his early theory of language. Because of the necessary correspondence between the natural and the moral realms, it is possible to convey moral truths through natural facts—as "the memorable words of history and the proverbs of nations" prove: "A rolling stone gathers no moss; A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; A cripple in the right way will beat a racer in the wrong; Make hay while the sun shines; 'T is hard to carry a full cup even; Vinegar is the son of wine; The last ounce broke the camel's back" (W, I, 38-39). Moreover, Emerson observed, because of the correspondence between ideas and concrete facts, "a man conversing in earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image more or less luminous arises in his mind, contemporaneous with every thought, which furnishes the vestment of the thought" (W, I, 36).

It is worthwhile examining the philosophic and metaphysical
basis of the theory of correspondence, for it is in its basic assumptions about reality that we discover its limitations for an interpretation of Emerson. The idea of correspondence rests on a particular cosmology which reached a peak of popularity around 1750—a cosmology which is summarized in the metaphor of the Great Chain of Being. The origins of the Chain of Being go back to Plato, as Arthur O. Lovejoy has demonstrated, and this antiquity explains some of the peculiar problems of the theory of correspondence based on it, particularly after 1750 and the rise of evolutionary theory.

As an image for, and classification of, the whole universe of observable things—mineral, vegetable, animal, and human—the Great Chain of Being is logical enough, even for the tough-minded of the twentieth century. All "beings" fit into the Chain, from the "lowest" inanimate things to the "highest" living form—man. Man himself is a mixture of matter and spirit, so that, if we wish to give the Chain a theological cast, we may project the Chain above the human realm to those "beings" which are pure Spirit, and even to God himself. The important feature of the Great Chain of Being, however, is its source and, subsequently, its direction of generation. Plato saw the real or material world as a reflection of the ideal or Spiritual world; and the later neo-Platonists saw the material world as an emanation of the spiritual. From the beginning, the Chain of

Being was generated from the top down, and the incorporation of the image into the Christian universe in medieval times reinforced this direction of generation. God, a pure Spirit, had created the whole world of material things.

Because of this direction of generation--from spirit to matter--the Great Chain of Being became what Lovejoy calls a plenum formarum, a "plenitude of forms." Since it is, in Plato's system for example, the nature of ideas to manifest themselves (There seems to be little point in an Ideal world containing Ideas which do not have corresponding forms in the Real world!), the Great Chain of Being was thought to contain all possible forms of being. Eighteenth century philosophers, for example, developed numerous arguments for, and cited many "reports" of, mermen and mermaids based on the notion that they must exist since we have an "idea" of them. Forms which did not exist on earth must, it was argued, exist somewhere, perhaps on other worlds. The end result of this kind of reasoning was a Chain of Being which fulfilled the aesthetic ideal of absolute completeness or plenitude.

17 Ibid., p. 52.

18 This argument is most well-known in Anselm's "ontological" argument for the existence of God. Anselm argued that the "perfect being" called God must exist since our idea of "perfection" includes existence. If God did not exist, he would not be "perfect"; man's idea of the "perfect being" would then surpass God, which, Anselm reasoned, was impossible.
A very interesting result follows from the theory of plenitude. In both the neo-Platonic idea of "emanation" and the Christian idea of "creation" the Chain of Being apparently existed in completion from the beginning. Moreover, this completion included the idea that every possible form existed, that there were, so to speak, no missing "links" in the chain. Movement within the Chain could therefore serve no possible purpose; indeed, any striving upwards from level to level was likely to upset the delicate balance of the whole system since it would crowd some parts of the Chain and leave others vacant. The theory of plenitude ultimately leads to a metaphor which is highly static; a vast hierarchy of levels of being frozen in place, incapable of increase, movement, or modification within the total design. The universe becomes a vast machine, completed at the beginning by the Divine Mechanic. It is marvellous to behold, but ultimately lifeless.

Around 1750 a complete reversal took place in the Chain of Being concept. It began with what Lovejoy has called "the temporalizing of the Chain of Being." The impulse came from scientific discoveries initially; it became obvious that many parts of the Chain did not exist, although many of them had in the distant past, as the fossil record revealed. The generation of the Chain of Being, it was realized, must have taken place over vast stretches of time rather than in a once-for-all act of "emanation" or "creation." Not only did the Chain indicate a progressive enrichment through time,

19 Lovejoy, pp. 242-287.
but it also suggested an upward movement. The possible forms below man were finite in number, but those above man were infinite; thus the possibility of the generation of the Chain of Being from the bottom upwards suggested itself, and a theory of "evolution" was born. The cosmos suddenly ceased to be a static hierarchy of forms and became a dynamic, evolving process, aspiring towards spirit. A silent revolution in thinking occurred and out of it emerged a "new conception of an organic universe—evolutionary, vitalistic, immanent with spirit . . . . The universe was no longer a mechanism set in motion by the Great Watchmaker, it was a growing universe, alive with the presence and purpose of deity; and man could know that spirit."

The problem with the theory of correspondence in explaining Emerson should now be clear. Correspondence worked in a static Chain of Being in which there was no upward or downward movement, in which relationships had to be found in terms of analogy, emblematic parallels, or resemblances. Had Emerson worked entirely with a Chain-of-Being cosmology, correspondence would have been the logical key to his thought. However evolution became a part of intellectual awareness during the early nineteenth century, and many of Emerson's essays, most notably "The Natural History of Intellect" (W, XII, 1-60) assume it as a basis.

The problem is compounded by the fact that Emerson never

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20 Paul, The Shores, p. 5.
really gave up the Platonic and neo-platonic idea of emanation, but rather continued to hold it alongside the newly emerging idea of evolution. But just as evolution transformed the rigid, static cosmos of the Chain of Being into a fluid universe of process towards spirit, it similarly transformed the idea of emanation itself into a similar process moving in the opposite direction. The end result was a universe in which emanation and evolution were reciprocal processes. Spirit emanated into matter, which in turn evolved toward spirit; the mind moved out into the universe in every act of seeing and found Mind emerging from that universe in reciprocity. Emerson understood it as the principle of compensation, a principle which operated at every level of existence.

It was because of this processive view of reality that Emerson ultimately transcended Swedenborg's theory of correspondence. Toward the end of his essay, "Swedenborg", he writes:

Swedenborg's system of the world wants central spontaneity; it is . . . not vital, and lacks power to generate life. . . . The universe is a gigantic crystal, all whose atoms and laminae lie in uninterrupted order and with unbroken unity, but cold and still. There is an immense chain of intermediation, extending from center to extremes, which bereaves every agency of all freedom and character. The universe, in his poem, suffers under a magnetic sleep, and only reflects the mind of the magnetizer. . . . There is no lustre in that eye which gazes from the center and which should vivify the immense dependency of beings. (W, IV. 128-129).

In seeing the lack of spontaneity in Swedenborg's correspondences, Emerson indicates a deeper vision, a vision which I believe moves into a living, dynamic awareness of the process of the universe.
This was the vision which Emerson strived to express; this was the "key-note" to which he referred when he wrote that "melodious poets shall be hoarse as street ballads when once the penetrating key-note of nature and spirit is sounded,—the earth-beat, sea-beat, heart-beat, which makes the tune to which the sun rolls, and the globule of blood, and the sap of trees" (W, IV, 135).
CHAPTER II

NATURE AS PROCESS

That rushing stream will not stop
to be observed. We can never surprise
nature in a corner; never find the
end of a thread.

"The Method of Nature"

We now and then detect in nature slight
dislocations which apprise us that
this surface on which we now stand is
not fixed, but sliding.

"Circles"

The universe exists only in transit,
or we behold it shooting the gulf
from the past to the future.

"Natural History of Intellect"

In his book *Emerson on the Soul*, Jonathan Bishop has pointed
out that "there is something at the heart of Emerson's message pro-
foundly recalcitrant to the formulations of discursive intelligence."

This fact is at once a problem for critics and a pointer to
Emerson's position in the history of ideas. The step he made in the
course of his career was a step out of the main philosophic tradition
which had dominated European thought since the time of Aristotle. If
Emerson was sometimes obscure and inexact, if he went against the

tradition of rigid intellectual formulation which was part of the European landscape, it was because he was replacing a long-established thought structure with one as yet unformulated. Emerson's emphasis on intuitive thinking was more than a rebellion against the sterile logic of the eighteenth century; it signalled an emerging awareness of reality for which the philosophic tools had not yet been invented. Those tools have only emerged in the twentieth century with the development of field and systems theory, biological ecology, Albert Einstein's relativity, A. N. Whitehead's process philosophy, Bergson's emergent evolution, and the "transactional" theory of mind associated with John Dewey and Arthur Bentley.

Since Einstein developed his theory of relativity early in the twentieth century there has been a widespread application of its general principles to other areas of thought. Anthropologists have brought the awareness of cultural relativity to our attention; and moral philosophers are now willing to throw out legalistic morality and replace it with "situation ethics." One of the most interesting developments of general relativity is "linguistic relativity"--a hypothesis which began with Edward Sapir but which is usually associated with a follower of this thought, Benjamin Lee Whorf. It is through a brief consideration of the Whorfian hypothesis that I believe we can discover the key to the philosophic tradition which Emerson rejected.

The key to linguistic relativity is found in Whorf's discovery that "each language performs the artificial chopping up of
the continuous spread and flow of existence in a different way.\textsuperscript{2} Whorf observed that the entire thought-structure of certain American Indian tribes was intimately related to their rather unusual language structure. It became apparent that the arbitrary divisions and word classes which constituted the grammar of these languages were regarded also as divisions of external reality: not only the way these Indians spoke about the world, but also the way in which they perceived it, was apparently determined by the grammatical structure of language.

Whorf immediately turned back to his own Indo-European tradition, armed with one of the most potent tools of analysis devised in modern times. He noted immediately that all of the rival philosophies of the European tradition rest on certain basic assumptions which are part of the Indo-European language structure. All Indo-European languages are noun-centered. The noun is the basic part of speech and comprises the "subject" of every proposition; adjectives are "qualifiers" of nouns; verbs are "predicated" to nouns. If a proposition is made about an event, that event is first made into a noun--such as the noun "event"--which effectively hypostatizes it. The result of this hypostatization is that the basic analyses of reality have been accomplished by division: by the systematic fragmentation of reality into distinct parts and pieces which are labelled with nouns.

The central fact about the noun is that it attributes substantiality and permanence to everything to which it is applied. Consequently, it is given definite location in space and definite boundaries. The noun "soul" for example has been given permanence, so that it is believed to survive death; it has been given substantiality, so that attempts have been made to weigh it by noting the change in weight of a man at death; and some have tried to locate it "in" the heart. The possibility that the "soul" is a static abstraction from what may be a dynamic process has never gained philosophic respectability—suggesting that thought patterns are largely determined by grammatical structure.

European philosophy has, as a result, been mainly concerned with the permanent rather than the changing. Indeed, the whole structure of Platonic thought—the abstraction of a permanent, eternal world of Ideas from the changing, mortal world of the Real—has been made possible by the noun-orientation of Western language. 3 And, although Plato's world of Ideas was an immaterial world, it nevertheless

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3 Whorf also suggested that the Democritan idea of reality as made up of "atoms and the void"—atoms consisting of "indivisible particles"—was made possible by the noun-structure of the Greek language. Furthermore, he suggested that Aristotelian logic and Newtonian physics are built upon the noun-verb structure of Indo-European propositions. The traditional separation of reality into "matter" and "energy"—into "things" and "actions" done by things—turns out therefore to be an extension of the "noun" and "verb" dichotomy of reality: and the modern discovery that matter and energy are different forms of one reality—that matter is "energy mattering"—reveals the fallacy of this arbitrary division.

The Whorfian hypothesis, of course, contains an implicit criticism of the theological separation of the "Creator" from his action of "creating," and the psychological separation of the "mind" from its actions of "minding."
carried all the qualities of concrete nouns with it—static permanence, definition, isolation from the whole. Moreover, the "perfection" of the world of Ideas came ultimately to rest in that very permanence which the Real world does not have, the flux of the Real world being always associated with its imperfection. Lancelot Law Whyte, whose writings constitute a systematic exposition of this phenomenon, traces this tendency to the eighteenth century:

It came about that during the period after 1600, when the basis of rationalism was being laid, all the most powerful ideas were static. They did not involve any element of fundamental transformation and could be defined without using the conception of one-way temporal succession. The relation of later than played no part in ideas such as an eternal God, persisting atoms or other material entities, and the soul of the subject....Thus all the basic ideas of self-conscious man around 1600-1700 were abstractions achieved by emphasizing permanent entities and neglecting their changing relationships. In this manner transformation was apparently reduced to permanence.  

This approach to the main philosophical tradition of Europe is highly revealing in any consideration of the Romantic movement, and more specifically, of Emerson's thought. The image of reality as a Chain of Being--including not only the lower levels of animal, vegetable, and mineral realms, but also the upper levels of spirit--was a classification of static "things"--catégories or divisions of

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the world which were incapable of change or movement within the scale. The Kantian distinction between Reason and Understanding, although it was a corrective to Lockean sensationalism and materialism, merely added (or re-emphasized) the higher levels of permanence. It asserted the reality of the life-giving spirit but merely ossified it into another "piece" or "level" of the whole, separate or transcendent. Thus the levels of reality which were apprehended by the Reason and Understanding were mutually exclusive. The end result was a dualistic structure; as Whitehead termed it, philosophy was saddled with a "bifurcation" into spirit and nature, mind and matter. Because the relationships between the various levels of reality were somewhat obscured by this bifurcation, a number of exotic theories were developed to explain the unity of the Chain. In medieval theology, the relationships between the static links of the Chain of Being were conveyed through elaborate systems of allegory and typology; in philosophy these relationships were conveyed through emblematic relationships, or the parallelism of the theory of correspondence.

Although the main tendency in eighteenth century thinking was toward the static, categorical understanding of reality (and in many philosophies, even in the twentieth century, this tendency continues), the first glimmerings of processive thinking began

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to appear about mid-century. The idea of process has never gained philosophical respectability, even in modern times, since it goes against the grain of language, perception, and most Western cultural structures. Nevertheless, the emergence of this new way of thinking was inevitable as new ways of historical, scientific, and psychological studies developed. In the study of human history, Vico introduced the ideas of recurrence and development through time, concepts that were matured by Voltaire, Lessing, Herder, Schiller, and Gibbon. By the early nineteenth century these ideas had become the standard features in historical studies. In philosophy and psychology Leibniz developed his philosophy with the concept of change fully incorporated, and he was followed by a progressively refined notion of growth and creativity in the work of Rousseau, Goethe, Fichte, and Schelling. These developments resulted in a completely new view of reality, a view which is apparent in the Romantic movement in English poetry. Morse Peckam, in his essay on Romanticism, has characterized the Romantic movement according to this changed view of reality:

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6 Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) suggested this approach to historical studies in his first published work, "On the Method of the Studies of Our Time" (1709), and later developed it in his three volume "Universal Law" (1720-1722). His development of what he termed the "new science of the common nature of nations" is closely related to the modern discipline of the history of civilization as pursued by Arnold Toynbee.
Literary romanticism was the manifestation of a change in the way of thinking of European man.... Briefly, the shift in European thought was a shift from conceiving the cosmos as a static mechanism to conceiving it as a dynamic organism.... [The] mighty static mechanism which had perilously governed the thoughts of men since the time of Plato, collapsed of its own internal inconsistencies in the late eighteenth century--or collapsed for some people.\(^7\)

The new view of the universe as an organism resulted in a breakdown of the static concept of reality, the idea that permanence constitutes perfection. As Peckam puts it:

An organism has the quality of life. It does not develop additively; it grows organically. The universe is alive. It is not something made, a perfect machine; it grows. Therefore change becomes a positive value, not a negative value; change is not man's punishment, it is his opportunity.\(^8\)

This view of reality was aided by a growing interest from about 1740 in the growth and history of organisms. Evolutionary ideas appeared in the writings of Buffon, Diderot, Herder and Lamarck. By the time Ralph Waldo Emerson came to write his _Nature_ in 1836 there was a widespread intellectual awareness of change and development as essential features of experience; and Emerson became one of the most influential figures in the popularization of this awareness.

Ostensibly, the purpose of _Nature_ would appear to be the development of an idealistic position which established for Emerson

\(^7\) "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," _PMLA_, LXVI (1951), 8-10. Peckam has added to his theory in "Toward a Theory of Romanticism: II. Reconsiderations," _Studies in Romanticism_, I (1961), 1-8; however, his additions do not constitute a retraction of his earlier views on this particular point.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 10.
a viable starting point for his whole philosophy. From this point of view *Nature* is not an original thesis by any means; it borrows the Kantian distinction of Reason and Understanding; it asserts the reality of Spirit behind Nature, as Wordsworth and Carlyle had done; and it develops a theory of language based on Swedenborg's theory of correspondence. However, by the time Emerson had published his *Essays: First Series* (1841), he had moved to a philosophic position which was a considerable advance on the idealistic position assumed in *Nature* five years earlier. The difficulty in explicating this new position, however, is largely due to the fact that Emerson never really defined his philosophic position or method after 1836. Without laying any apparent groundwork, Emerson simply describes a new and deeper vision, and the reader is left to work out the philosophical structure himself.

Yet to treat this new vision of reality as a completely new development occurring after 1836 is somewhat misleading. A careful look at the *Nature* essay reveals an awareness of reality which, even in the midst of his discussion of Reason and Understanding, transcends the Kantian dichotomy altogether. Consider, for example, the following evocative description of the "Commodity" of Nature:

> All the parts incessantly work into each other's hands for the profit of man. The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man. (W, I, 19)
Or consider the description in "The American Scholar" of "that great principle of Undulation in Nature," which Emerson says shows itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, yet more deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid . . . . (W, I, 99)

It is easy to miss the metaphysical implications of these passages because of the powerful poetic quality of Emerson's language. Yet these passages essentially treat of Nature as a system of interaction, a structure in which the important feature is not a classification into parts or categories but rather the movements that occur between the parts, the dynamic process which are, today, the subject matter of ecological science.

Nature, for Emerson, was a completely unified whole, and the unity rested in the interrelations that occurred through natural process. "Not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one" (W, II, 275-276). When Emerson uses the phrase "one blood," he is implying that the parts of nature are related as the parts of an organism. Organic nature is complete as a living being is complete; there are no loose ends to nature but only a single seamless robe. "There is never a beginning, there is never an end, to the inexplicable continuity of this web . . . but always circular power returning into itself." (W, I, 86-87).
Emerson, of course, is aware of the static "things" of the world, but his organic vision allows him to see that "nothing stands still in nature but death ... the creation is on wheels, in transit, always passing into something else, streaming into something higher ... matter is not what it appears" (W, VIII, 10). The permanence of things is only an appearance; ultimately all things are merely phases of a larger process:

An individual body is the momentary arrest or fixation of certain atoms, which, after performing compulsory duty to this enchanted statue, are released again to flow in the currents of the world. (W, XII, 25)

This vision of nature requires a vast awareness of history, an apprehension that every object is a product of untold forces stretching backwards to the beginning of time. Thus Emerson writes that "the lightning fell and the storm raged and strata were deposited and uptorn and bent back, and Chaos moved from beneath, to create and flavor the fruit of your table to-day" (W, X, 72-73). Yet even to say that every object is a "product" of forces is to fail to grasp the meaning of process. It is to imply that there are categories of "things" called effects which relate to other categories of "things" called causes; that is, it implies a static, dualistic, fragmented vision in which those "things" called causes gradually lose their power to produce effects. Emerson counters this notion when he writes "the sun has lost no beams, the earth no elements; gravity is as adhesive, heat as expansive; light as joyful, air as
virtuous, water as medicinal as on the first day." The structure of process implies something quite different from the dualistic, cause-effect structure of mechanistic physics. Emerson therefore concludes: "There is no loss, only transference" (W, X, 73).

Emerson reflects, then, the shift in attention which took place in and around the early nineteenth century—a shift from nature classified to nature moving and living. His word "transference," which Whitehead calls "transition,"\textsuperscript{9} signals his awareness of process as fundamental to a unified vision of the universe.

Emerson's Nature also shows an awareness of reality as processive in quite a different sense from the ecological process described above. This awareness involves not so much the sense of change through time, which is readily apprehended by the Understanding, as a perception of process which takes place in the present moment. This awareness is above the Understanding; it comes through "Reason's momentary grasp of the sceptre" which transcends time. Emerson describes this as "the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous in-streaming causing power" (W, I, 76). Reason intuits Spirit, but Spirit is not a static, separated "thing" or entity belonging to a distinct realm above or beyond; it is processive—"in-streaming." In this sense Emerson returns to the original meaning of "spirit": the ruach Adonai, or "breath of life"\textsuperscript{10} which

\textsuperscript{9}For a detailed discussion, see "Forms of Process" in Whitehead's Modes of Thought, pp. 117-142. A more detailed and much more complex discussion may be found in his Process and Reality.

\textsuperscript{10}The Ruach Adonai is, literally, the "breath of the Lord," but is translated "breath of life" in the AV of 1611, and most subsequent translations.
was breathed into man at the creation (Gen. 2:7), the *pneuma*, or "wind" which came in a mighty rush on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2), the *spiritus*, which Christ "breathed" into his disciples at the Resurrection (John 20:22). Spirit for Emerson was the life-force or *splan vital* working organically within the world, creating and sustaining the whole universe and in-spiring man.

Again and again Emerson describes the world as created by "the influx of the all-knowing Spirit" (W, I, 145). Moreover, since man is a part of the universe, he too feels this influx, in "the life that rushes into us ... continually ejaculating its torrent into every artery and vein and veinlet of humanity" (W, XII, 15, 26). The operative words in these descriptions are always those of change, process, fluidity. Emerson's imagery is therefore drawn from the most dynamic aspects of nature, particularly from water and streams. Thus "man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence" (W, II, 252). The apprehension of the Reason is always the awareness of an indescribable reality which man finds "flowing perpetually outward from an invisible, unsounded center" (W, I, 315). Man is therefore "a channel through which heaven floweth" (W, III, 230); he finds the whole world of earth and heaven "passing into his mind" so that he is "drinking forever the soul of God" (W, I, 135).

The result of this processive view of reality is a total fusion of opposites. "All the universe over," Emerson writes, "there
is but one thing, this old Two-Face, creator-creature, mind-matter" (W, III, 233); and this "Two-Face" flows together in fluid process, into "one thing." Creator and creature find their unity in the creating; matter "minds," and, at the same time, is mind "mattering." Emerson calls it "all-creating nature" (W, II, 18), or "Efficient Nature, natura naturans" (W, III, 172).

Emerson's continual use of the terms "nature" and "spirit" appears to suggest another dualistic vision of reality. The problem, however, is that of attempting to convey the "verbal" concept of process in a language which is basically noun-structured. What we see is a continual usage of the old dualities of spirit-nature, heaven-earth, mind-matter, alongside an emerging concept of process. Ultimately, the processive awareness dissolves the dualism. Nevertheless, there are times when Emerson appears to return to an almost naive dualism, particularly when he uses mythological names to stand for the spiritual reality. Perhaps the most famous of these is his statement in "The Over-Soul": "I feel the same truth how often in my trivial conversation with my neighbors, that somewhat higher in each of us overlooks this by-play, and Jove nods to Jove from behind each of us" (W, II, 261). It is possible, in fact it is quite likely, that Emerson is here influenced by the Hindu vision of the universe as a drama or dance performed by Brahma-Shiva. It has been conclusively

11 The incidental pun here is not inappropriate to the discussion.
demonstrated that Emerson had read widely in Indian philosophy by 1841, when his *Essays: First Series* appeared.\textsuperscript{12} But it should be noted that the Hindu vision of the world is not really dualistic, for Brahman-Shiva becomes the world by acting it, by dancing it. There is no One apart from the Many: there is no way to tell the dancer from the dance, for both fuse in the dancing. This fusion of the One and the Many is conveyed, in mythological terms, most adequately in the "endless mutations" of Proteus (W, II, 35). Ultimately, all is fused; as "there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause begins. The walls are taken away" (W, II, 255).

Emerson's whole idea of God as cause and man as effect—an influx of God—reflects his early philosophy of Idealism. The idealistic theory always risks the reduction of the material world to the mental, as happened in the absolute idealism of Bishop Berkeley. Emerson, as noted, neatly sidestepped the issue of whether the external world exists (W, I, 52-53). Nevertheless, his almost mystical experience of being "nothing ... part or parcel of God" (W, I, 16), and his description of nature as "a perpetual effect ... a great shadow pointing also to the sun behind us" (W, I, 65) led him inevitably

toward mentalism. In the section of *Nature* on "Idealism" he describes how "the least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air" so that the men and women begin to look like a "puppet-show ... apparent, no substantial beings" (W, I, 55).

This view of the world as a puppet-show, a shadow, a phenomenon, is typical of the understanding of the world as an emanation of God; and Emerson felt some affinity with Plotinus and the neoplatonists from which the idea of the world as an emanation derives. Moreover, it explains his interest in Hindu mysticism which understands the world as the *maya*, or "illusion," of God. Emerson's main originality lies in his emphasis on the continuing process of this emanation whereby every moment of existence radiates from an "unsounded center" (W, I, 315). Yet the Emanation theory, although there is evidence for it all through Emerson's writing, caused him continual problems. Because the individual tended to be swallowed up by the Universal Spirit, because the Many tended to dissolve into the One, the idealistic position and the idea of emanation were ultimately incompatible with Emerson's emphasis on the integrity of the individual man. In "Self-Reliance," for example, he says that "to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius.... Trust thyself ... nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind" (W, II, 47, 29, 52). And much later he was to stress this individuality in even stronger terms: "Man is always throwing his praise or blame on events, and does not see that he only is real, and
the world his mirror and echo" (W, X, 185).

Emerson's affirmation of the value and integrity of the individual self, while incompatible with absolute idealism, was nevertheless completely compatible with the whole Western emphasis on individual values. What Emerson lacked however was a theory of reality which would preserve the individual while asserting the overriding importance of spirit. In the years immediately following the publication of *Nature*, Emerson gradually appropriated for himself an evolutionary theory of nature—a theory that was very much "in the air" in the early years of the nineteenth century. By 1841, an awareness of evolution begins to appear in his published writings. "The Method of Nature," an Oration delivered that year before the Society of the Adelphi contains the following passage:

> We can point nowhere to anything final; but tendency appears on all hands: planet, system, constellation, total nature is growing like a field of maize in July; is becoming somewhat else; is in rapid metamorphosis. The embryo does not more strive to be a man, than yonder burr of light we call a nebula tends to be a ring, a comet, a globe, and parent of new stars. (W, I, 194)

By 1844, the year of the publication of his *Essays: Second Series*, evolution was firmly established in his philosophy. In his *Nature* essay published in that volume he wrote of "Efficient Nature ... [which] publishes itself in creatures, reaching from particles and spiculae through transformation on transformation to the highest symmetries, arriving at consummate results without a shock or leap" (W, III, 172); and in 1851, in *The Conduct of Life*, he wrote that
"in the endless striving and ascents, the metamorphosis is entire"
(W, VI, 303).

Emerson's theory of evolution should not be thought of in connection with Darwin's theory proposed a few years later in *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). Darwinian evolution was essentially mechanistic, and therefore sparked little interest in Emerson; there is no mention of Darwin in any of Emerson's published Essays. Emerson's evolutionism is vitalistic, as the inscription to his *Nature* suggests:

And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form. 13
(W, I, 8)

This is even clearer in the inscription to his 1844 "Nature" essay when he speaks of "the secret of its laboring heart":

Spirit that lurks each form within
Beckons to spirit of its kin;
Self-kindled every atom glows,
And hints the future which it owes.
(W, III, 161)

The impulsive force of evolution was, for Emerson, the "self-evolving power of spirit, endless, generator of new ends" (W, IV, 83). If there is a parallel to scientific evolution, it is to the later "emergent evolution" of Bergson, the impelling force of which was

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13 It should be noted that this inscription, printed at the head of "Nature" in the Complete Works, was added in 1849, after the idea of evolution had taken firm hold in Emerson's mind. The original motto from Plotinus--"Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom"--was an expression of neo-Platonic emanationism.
the "elan vital."

Emerson realized that if the universe developed by the "self-evolving power of spirit" then nature itself must be studied to discover that "laboring heart" which is spirit. This is what Emerson meant when he wrote that "in the impenetrable mystery which hides--and hides through absolute transparency--the mental nature, I await the insight which our advancing knowledge of material laws shall furnish" (W, X, 74; and XII, 5). And when he wrote that "our metaphysic should be able to follow the flying force through all transformations" (W, XII, 5), he once again turned spirit into process, but a process that cannot be understood apart from the evolutionary process.

Emerson's understanding of evolution eventually led him to a position directly opposite to his early theory of emanation. Nature, according to the emanation theory, was a "perpetual effect" (W, I, 65), "the end or last issue of spirit" (W, I, 40)--suggesting that Spirit existed in absolute completion and perfection before the emanation of the world. But the evolutionary theory led him ultimately to see that spirit, too, evolves. As early as 1836 he wrote that "the world ... is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious" (W, I, 68). Nature is the form God takes before attaining consciousness, and this accounts for the "tendency" of nature towards spirit, the "striving" of the lower forms to move upward to higher forms, to become man. Thus he speaks of the "deeper cause, as yet far from being conscious, [which] knows not its own
"tendency" (W, III, 72); "all things continually ascend. The gases gather to the solid firmament: the chemic lump arrives at the plant, and grows; arrives at the quadruped, and walks; arrives at the man, and thinks" (W, IV, 16-17). In man, spirit reaches consciousness; the Universe becomes aware of itself. And, in this understanding of man, Emerson justified the individual man who, as has been shown, was always in danger of dissolving into Universal Spirit in the earlier emanation theory. In pointing to his "heros," his representative men--Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe--Emerson was pointing to the highest manifestation that Spirit had yet reached. By being totally transparent to the influx of Spirit these men were not examples of mystical dissolution into God; they were examples of the divine at its peak of conscious perfection. Their words attained a divine ring because they were, in fact, the most complete manifestation of the divine that had yet emerged.

The process of Emerson's universe must be understood, then, as reciprocal. It is not simply the emanation of Spirit into matter, Creator into creation; it is also the evolution of the whole creation back to spirit. Spirit is both cause and goal; yet it is as true to say that matter is also both cause and goal. The result is a total fusion of spirit and matter, of God and the world, in a single, dynamic, reciprocal process. "Cause and effect are two sides of one fact" (W, II, 293). Reality is made up of "endless circulations" and the circle image is perhaps the only image which can cap-
ture the world-process as Emerson sees it. Spirit and matter are poles, opposite points on the circle of the Whole, but the points may be anywhere, and are in fact everywhere. In this sense, there is no way of dividing reality into a dualism, or "chain" of being. We perceive the universe as "all for each and each for all" (W, VII, 138), a One which is All. Ultimately Emerson had to say that "the universe exists only in transit, or we behold it shooting the gulf from the past to the future" (W, XII, 54).

If the universe "exists only in transit," if it was in fact an absolute fusion of all things in a single process, then the mind itself was involved in this process. To isolate the mind from the world, as did Locke, or to divide the mind into Reason and Understanding, as did Kant, was to hypostatize that mind. But in a world of process where all dualities are dissolved, no divided mind is possible. Man's perception of the world must also involve process, a process that involves the whole mind and joins the seer to the seen. Thus it was that Emerson evolved his concept of that "all-dissolving Unity" (W, VIII, 212)--the Soul--which moved him far beyond both the Lockian tabula rasa and the Kantian dichotomy of Reason and Understanding.
CHAPTER III

THE ALL-DISSOLVING UNITY:

THE PROCESS OF THE SOUL

In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin.

"Self-Reliance"

I--this thought which is called I--is the mould into which the world is poured like melted wax.

"The Transcendentalist"

Emerson began his first published work with the criticism, "Our age is retrospective." The intellects of his time he said, "groped among the dry bones of the past" (W, I, 9); "tradition characterizes the preaching of this country" (W, I, 139), with the result that the past dominates the present. For Emerson this was "Idolatry" (W, IV, 23), a disease of his age which he later analysed in his *Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England*. A "schism runs under the world"; there is "a crack in nature" caused by the "reflective and intellectual" tendencies of the time (W, X, 307-308). The eighteenth century had left New England with a cult of the individual which cut the whole society, the whole universe into bits. "It divides and detaches bone and marrow, soul and body, yea, almost the man from himself. It is the age of severance, of dis-
sociation, of freedom, of analysis, of detachment" (W, X, 308).

That retrospective tendency which worshipped the past, which clung to "the narrow and dead classification" of science (W, X, 318), placed man under the oppressive power of "the morgue of conventions" (W, IV, 275). Emerson's conclusion was that "the world lacks unity, and lies broken in heaps ... man is disunited with himself" (W, I, 77).

This idolatrous worship of the past was evident to Emerson in numerous "examples of oppression. The dominion of Aristotle, the Ptolemaic astronomy, the credit of Luther, of Bacon, of Locke;--in religion and history of hierarchies, of saints, and the sects which have taken the name of each founder, are in point" (W, IV, 23). And in America the same love of systems was in evidence: "The ambitious and mercenary bring their last new mumbo-jumbo, whether tariff, Texas, railroad, Romanism, mersmerism, or California" (W, IV, 253). The chief "disease of the intellect" was to be found in the "creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism" (W, II, 78). Emerson saw the worship of the past, and of systems, as isolating, fragmenting--a divisive view of reality by men who were in themselves divided, "underlings and intellectual suicides" (W, IV, 31).

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¹Emerson was probably influenced by Thomas Carlyle's magnificent essay, "Characteristics," which was published in the Edinburgh in 1831, and which made essentially the same points about early nineteenth century thought in England.
Emerson's affirmation against the fragmentation of his age was that "there have been sane men, who enjoyed a rich and related existence" (W, IV, 25). Plato, one of Emerson's "representative men," was one of those who "delighted ... in discovering connection, continuity and representation everywhere, hating insulation" (W, IV, 83). Emerson called him "the Euclid of holiness" who found "the circles of the visible heaven" reflected in the "circles in the rational soul." Plato unified the cosmos by marrying "the two parts of nature" (W, IV, 85). Goethe, too, had "the comprehensive eye" (W, IV, 253); "he had a power to unite the detached atoms again by their own law" (W, IV, 260). And despite Emerson's criticism of the sterile, isolative, fragmentary science of Locke and the eighteenth century empiricists, he saw that science, properly conceived, aimed at a dynamic view of reality, a vision of the cosmos as a whole. "The motive of science," he wrote, "was the extension of man, on all sides, into Nature, till his hands should touch the stars, his eyes see through the earth, his ears understand the language of beast and bird, and the sense of the wind; and, through his sympathy, heaven and earth should talk with him" (W, VI, 269-270).

From the beginning, Emerson sought the "rich and related existence," and "the extension of man, on all sides, into Nature." "Why," he asked in Nature, "should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?" (W, I, 9). And there is evidence that Emerson at times enjoyed just such an original relation:
In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. . . . In the woods we return to reason and faith. . . . Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. (W, I, 15-16)

Properly understood, this almost "mystical" experience provides a key to the heart of Emerson's thought. The whole corpus of his writing involves an exploration of the original relation with the universe, to which this experience bears witness. It is worth examining this experience, then, in some detail.

The "original" relation as Emerson here describes it does not consist of anything which can be intellectually formulated. The details, no matter how closely they are examined, will not conform to any kind of scientific or philosophical explanation. In this sense the original relation escapes from the "narrow and dead classification" of theology and metaphysics. In this sense too, it escapes from the realm of intellect into the area of pure feeling—a feeling of being "uplifted," of being "nothing," of seeing "all," of being "part or parcel of God." The "transparent eyeball" of Emerson is virtually identical to Goethe's "comprehensive eye," and the "part or parcel of God"-feeling, is precisely that "extension of man on all sides, into Nature, till his hands should touch the stars. . . ." What emerges from this experience is a unity of man, in nature, with "Universal Being"—a
unity which operates through an interaction with the "all." And this interaction takes place through the process of experience, a process which is here focussed in seeing ("I see all"), and in feeling ("The currents of Universal Being circulate through me"). In this experience man achieves more than an "original" relation with nature, in the sense of a "new" relation; he returns to a relationship which man once had before the Fall; and he becomes one with the "Originator" of Nature. In unity with the universe man becomes the Creator himself. Man and God fuse in that "all-dissolving unity" (W, VIII, 212) which Emerson called the Soul. And it is to this experiential process that he refers when he writes in "The American Scholar" that "the one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul" (W, I, 91).

The study of Emerson's "original relation with nature"--his all-dissolving unity--is, then, a study of the process of the Soul. Yet, if the experience Emerson describes in *Nature* is any indication, his concept of the Soul is formidable indeed. Most modern notions of the soul are totally inadequate to Emerson's idea. In current thinking the soul is usually thought of as an essence or vital force which gives life to man and which leaves at death. Emerson's idea involves not only the vital essence of man but also the relationship

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2In his essay on "Experience" (W, III, 49-86) Emerson interpreted the Fall of Man as his coming to the level of conscious awareness. "Once we lived in what we saw;" he wrote, describing man's original relation (in the Garden); "now, the rapaciousness of this new power, which threatens to absorb all things, engages us" (W, III, 77). Man lost his original relation when man became an egotistic rather than a spiritual being: "The blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of itself" (W, II, 255).
of this essence with "Universal Being." In popular religion, the soul as a life force has the added quality of being some sort of permanent "thing" which survives death and achieves immortality. Emerson might have concurred with the idea of immortality, but not because man has a permanent soul; for Emerson the soul was never a "thing" but always a process, a relationship which united "things."

Even the etymological meaning of the soul (or psyche) suggests that it is merely one facet of the mind--a facet which is superceded in Greek philosophy and in Pauline theology by the pneuma, or "spirit." The psyche in this sense amounts to the sum total of ideas, habits, and mental traits which have since come under the domain of psych-ology. The soul-as-psyche is virtually identical to Kant's Understanding, whereas Emerson's Soul is closer to Kant's Reason. Yet ultimately Emerson's Soul supercedes the transcendental Reason: it is more than simply the unifying power of the mind; it is also the unifying of total experience--and ultimately, of the whole cosmos. The categories of traditional theology, philosophy, and psychology simply cannot contain Emerson's Soul; whatever it is, it involves the whole man in active relationship with total reality.

Just as Nature is not a classification of static "things," but a dynamic web of interaction, so too is the mind a process. In "The Natural History of Intellect" Emerson wrote that "An individual mind ... is a fixation or momentary eddy in which certain services and powers are taken up and minister in petty niches and localities,
and then, being released, return to the unbounded soul of the
world" (W, XII, 25). For Emerson, the "fixation" of the mind had
to be seen in the larger context of the total flux. Fixation implies
limits, but "who has found the boundaries of human intelligence?"
(W, XII, 15). And Emerson's theory of mind, like his theory of
nature, was not an abstract idea but a product of his own
experience. He describes this experience in a passage which sounds
very similar to his description of the original relation in Nature;
indeed, his experience of the mind as process in another facet of
that original relation:

In my thought I seem to stand on the bank of a river
and watch the endless flow of the stream, floating
objects of all shapes, colors and natures; nor
can I much detain them as they pass, except by
running beside them a little way along the bank.
But whence they come or whither they go is not
told me. Only I have a suspicion that, as
geologists say every river makes its own valley, so
does this mystic stream. It makes its valley, makes
its banks and makes perhaps the observer too.
(W, XII, 15)

In saying that "whence they come or whither they go is not told
me," Emerson repudiates both Lockean sensationalism, which would
make the mind merely an effect, and Berkleyan idealism which would
make it merely a cause. For Emerson, cause and effect are two poles
of a process, and the poles are beyond man's comprehension.

In developing his processive description of the mind Emerson
resorted again and again to water imagery--streams, rivers, oceans,
inlets--to suggest the movement, the transactional fluidity of thought.
But the fluid process he observed was not only the flow of thoughts with the passage of time—a flow which he could observe within the Understanding. It was also a flow which occurred in the present moment, an upwelling of the Universal Intellect into the mind of man. Intellect, he wrote, was "an ethereal sea, which ebbs and flows, which surges and washes hither and thither, carrying its whole virtue into every creek and inlet which it bathes. To this sea every human house has a water front" (W, XII, 14). This process, of which man is the terminal, or visible pole, was continual, recurring in each instant of time: "Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence" (W, II, 252). At times Emerson resorted to the organic metaphor to describe this ever-flowing process; the Supreme Being, he said, "puts it [nature] forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old" (W, I 68). "All our progress is an unfolding, like the vegetable bud. You have first an instinct, then an opinion, then a knowledge, as the plant has root, bud and fruit" (W, II, 307). And again, in emphasizing the ultimate wisdom of the Supreme Being, he adopted the metaphor of light: "From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all" (W, II, 254). Yet despite the names Emerson gives to the Source—Intellect, the Supreme Being, God, Wisdom, Jove—it is ultimately "the last fact beyond which analysis cannot go"
it is the Divine Spring which is known by its flowing stream, the Supreme Light revealed in its own illumination. By the process only is it to be known.

Because Emerson saw the divine influx as a continuing process he was opposed to the doctrines of the Church which religated the action of the spirit to the dust heap of history. For him, revelation was a constant "influx of the Divine mind into our mind" (W, II, 263). "In how many churches," he asked, "by how many prophets, tell me, is man made sensible that he is an infinite Soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; that he is drinking forever the soul of God?" (W, I, 135). For him the incarnation was not a single event of the distant past; "Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise" (W, I, 74). And this was the secret of Jesus who "saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. ... Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man.... He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his World" (W, I, 127-228).

The process of the Soul, however, is not to be summed in the transference of the Divine to the human, the Intellect to the mind, of God into every man. The operation of the inspired man is not a having and a holding; it is not merely that passive acceptance of Universal Wisdom which Emerson termed "intellect receptive." There was also that activity which he called "intellect constructive"
"I can dive to it in myself," he wrote, "as well as
grope for it with researching fingers in catacombs, libraries, and
the broken reliefs and torsos of ruined villas" (W, II, 27). This
was the message of "The American Scholar" who Emerson defined as "Man
Thinking." He is to utter "the oracles of the human heart"; he is
the man with the active soul who "learns that going down into the
secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all
minds" (W, I, 102-103). Ultimately, the action of the Soul was a
reciprocal process—an "instreaming" of the Universal into man and
a "diving" of man into the Universal. Emerson likened it to "the
law of undulation. So now you must labor with your brains, and now
you must forbear your activity and see what the great Soul showeth"
(W, II, 309). The mind of man is both cause and goal: a manifesta-
tion of the Supreme Wisdom, manifesting Supreme Wisdom. The Divine
Spirit and the mind of man are fused in a single reciprocal transaction,
an endless circulation of Spirit into man, through man, and out of
man. This complete fusion—a fusion which occurs in the active process
of thought—is what Emerson meant by the Soul: as "there is no screen
or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there
no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect, ceases, and God,
the cause, begins" (W, II, 255).

Because the Soul exists only as active process it is to be
found in the present moment, it "dwells in the hour that now is, in
the earnest experience of the common day" (W, II, 272). Yet because
it is the transaction of the finite mind with the Infinite Mind it
is not confined to the present; it "circumscribes all things..."
it abolishes time and space" (W, II, 256): it contains Eternity in itself. This is the message of Emerson’s "History" in which he writes, "I believe in Eternity. I can find Greece, Asia, Italy, Spain, and the Islands,—the genius and creative principle of each and of all eras, in my own mind!" (W, II, 15). In the Soul of man all things come to a focus; the Soul of man creates a web of identity which takes in the whole history of Mind. Thus Emerson can say, "When a thought of Plato becomes a thought to me,—when a truth that fired the soul of Pindar fires mine, time is no more . . . we two meet in a perception . . . run into one" (W, II, 30); "the biography of the one foolish person we know is, in reality, nothing less than the miniature paraphrase of the hundred volumes of the Universal History" (W, II, 312).

Because the Soul could encompass Eternity and the whole of "Universal History," because it was Emerson's over-riding term for the whole man in action, it became the key to his entire philosophy. "The entire public work of Emerson" wrote Jonathan Bishop, "... may be organized in one's mind as a display of the whole Soul in its several distinguishable manifestations—that is Nature writ large."

Every faculty and function of man was, for Emerson, a further manifestation of the Soul. And because the thinking man was man exercising the highest faculty, Reason (in the Kantian sense)—an exercise that related

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man through circular process with that Larger Wisdom which Emerson called God, Supreme Being, or Universal Spirit—the study of man thinking becomes a major key to his concept of the Soul. But since the Soul involved also the transactional process of man with his environment, the Me with the Not-Me, it is perhaps most easily approached through a study of Emerson's theory of perception. And for Emerson, the main organ of perception was always the eye.

As is well known, Emerson experienced difficulty with his vision during his college days; he suffered from visual deficiency throughout his life; and by the time he wrote *Nature*, he could imagine no greater calamity than the loss of his eyes. Seeing was, then, of supreme importance to him, being the active process by which man is related to his world. In an essay entitled "Behavior," Emerson treated the eyes at some length; they were the chief evidence in man of "the whole economy of nature" which he said, "is bent on expression." "The face and eyes reveal what the spirit is doing, how old it is, what aims it has. The eyes indicate the antiquity of the soul, or through how many forms it has already ascended" (*W*, VI, 170). Because the eye figured prominently in his understanding of the Soul, Emerson looked continually at the eyes of men to intuit the larger workings of the Soul. "The eye," he said, "obeys exactly the action of the mind. When a thought strikes us, the eyes fix and remain gazing at a distance; in enumerating the names of persons or of countries, as France, Germany, Spain, Turkey,
the eyes wink at each new name" (W, VI, 171). The eyes "speak all languages . . . . What inundation of life and thought is discharged from one soul into another through them!" (W, VI, 172). "If a man is off his center, the eyes show it" (W, VI, 173); and "the reason why men do not obey us is because they see the mud at the bottom of our eye" (W, VI, 174).

The centrality of vision in the organic relationship of the Soul is indicated in the "transparent eyeball" passage of Nature. When the eye is "transparent" the inner world flows into the outer world, the external world illuminates the inner world, and a total fusion takes place. Man becomes "part or parcel of God." It is not surprising, then, that the cultivation of the Soul was largely a matter for Emerson of the cultivation of the eye.

Emerson used vision as a metaphor for the working of the Soul. Different ways of seeing reality corresponded to different actions of the soul. He was aware in his own perception of the paradox presented by the world--the paradox of "unity in variety" (W, I, 48). Sometimes he could perceive nothing but a multitude of disparate things, "piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree" (W, II, 253); at other times he could see that "the huge heaven and earth are but a web" (W, VIII, 30). And this power to see the web was a metaphor for the power of the imagination which can grasp the "central identity, . . . is sensible of the sweep of the celestial stream, from which nothing is exempt" (W, VIII, 25). For Emerson,
the world seen as a fragmented collection of disparate things was a product of narrow vision; the world of the unified whole was the world seen by distant vision. Emerson would have felt that the atomized world of the Great Chain of Being was simply the world of narrow vision classified, whereas the organic world of transactional process was the world of vision from afar. The world could be seen as a heap of broken fragments if the spotlight of awareness was too narrow, but the floodlight of the Soul—expanding into the immensity of time and space—could unify this flinty vision into a fluid relatedness. It was for this reason that Emerson preferred the rural landscape to the confinements of the city. He needed the wide panorama of the horizon and the sky, not only to stretch his vision to its uttermost but also to synthesize the world into a spheral whole. "If we look wider," he wrote, "things are all alike" (W, II, 130); "the imaginative faculty must be fed with objects immense and eternal" (W, I, 205). Without the vast panoramic vision of the whole man becomes a victim of "the cramp and pettiness of human performances" (W, VII, 280).

In the visual metaphor the symbol for the relatedness of distant vision was the circle. "The eye is the first circle; the horizon which it forms is the second, and throughout nature this primary figure is repeated without end." Translated into spiritual terms this symbol revealed "God [Emerson is here quoting Augustine] as a circle whose center was everywhere and its circumference nowhere"
The circle became in his hands an emblem for the cyclical process of nature, "the flying Perfect" (W, II, 281), and ultimately for the expansive encompassing process of the Soul: "The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which, from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end" (W, II, 283-284). And because "there is no outside, no inclosing wall, no circumference to us" and "the only sin is limitation" (W, II, 284, 287), Emerson demanded a continual expansion of the Soul until it encompassed the whole universe.

As the primary faculty of the Soul, the eye was of central importance as a metaphor for the relationship of the Soul to the whole universe. Emerson could say that "the universe is the property of every individual in it" (W, I, 25), a possession of "the informing soul" (W, I, 60), because he saw that "nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print" (W, I, 88). Man "is placed in the center of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor these objects without man" (W, I, 33). Ultimately, the world was "the shadow of the soul" (W, I, 96); "the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form" (W, I, 105); it is "a mere illustration and fable of his mind" (W, I, 120). And this vision of the world was possible by the unifying process of seeing which occurs when "the angle of vision" (W, XII, 9) lies parallel to the axis of the universe; it is then
that the world ceases to be an opaque boundary and becomes transparent to the outward expansion of the Soul (W, I, 77). Emerson's conclusion was, then, that truth is to be found "in seeing and in no tradition" (W, XII, 6).

"The progress of the intellect," wrote Emerson, "is to the clearer vision of causes, which neglects surface differences" (W, II, 17), a piercing insight which "far back in the womb of things sees the rays parting from one orb" (W, II, 18). And with this vision, this insight, comes a transparency of Soul which causes infinite expansion outwards; man becomes "a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world" (W, II, 39). The world becomes, in this metaphor, the terminal of a process which begins with the eye, just as illuminated objects are the terminal of a radiating light. "Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light" (W, II, 66-7). Just as "the ray of light passes invisible through space and only when it falls on an object is it seen" (W, II, 312), so too does the transparent soul expand into the world, becoming visible only in the things of the world: "thought only appears in the objects it classifies" (W, I, 311). And in this process of expansion, it becomes apparent that the Soul of man is known by the things it knows, is seen in the things it sees, is felt through the things it feels. Thus Emerson concludes:

His thought,—that is the Universe. His experience inclines him to behold the procession of facts you call the world,
as flowing perpetually outward from an invisible, unsounded center in himself, centre alike of him and of them, and necessitating him to regard all things as having a subjective or relative existence, relative to that aforesaid Unknown Centre of him. (W, I, 315)

And again:

What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star . . . the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct? In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. (W, II, 64)

Yet the process is by no means a unilateral movement, an investing of the whole cosmos by the Soul. True, "the world is mind precipitated" (W, III, 188), "the Universe is the externalization of the soul" (W, III, 19), but the mind and soul is a creation of the universe itself, a precipitation of the chaotic world of objects into a unified web of perception. Refusing to see nature either as mere sensory impacts on the retina of the mind or as a projection of the mind into the external world; and similarly refusing to see the mind as either a tabula rasa or as the solipsistic "cause" of the world; Emerson created a unity of the seer and the seen, the experiencer and the experience. His whole literary output comprises, therefore, not an analytic philosophy of the different aspects of the universe and of the mind, but rather a synthetic description of the "ebb and flow," of the transactional process that occurs in every thought, experience,
or act. The external world was related to the internal world as circle and center, where the center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. "Old Two-Face, creator-creature, mind-matter . . . the end and the means, the gamester and the game" (W, III, 233) marry in the "endless circulations" of transactional process.

Emerson's "all-dissolving unity," then, was the Soul, or as he called it in one essay, "that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other" (W, II, 252). Words cannot describe the unity because words depend upon variety, upon classifications, divisions, and contrasts. To descend to creedal statements about the central identity of all things is to substitute "tropes" for "principles"; it is to limit the vision to the clutter of immediate things and fail to expand the mind to the infinite circle of the All. It is to create a static world of distinct things arranged in a pattern rather than to see the eternal undulation that dissolves the pattern in process. Perhaps Emerson reaches his most perfect expression of the process of the Soul in "The Over-soul" when he writes:

We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist and whose geatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which
these are the shining parts, is the soul. . . . I dare not speak for it. . . . All goes to show that the soul is not an organ, but animates all the organs; is not a function . . . is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie,—an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. . . . Language cannot paint it with his colors. It is too subtle. It is indefinable, unmeasurable; but we know that it prevades and contains us. . . . It contradicts all experience. . . . It abolishes time and space. . . . The soul knows only the soul; the web of events is the flowing robe in which she is clothed. (W, II, 253-257)

The Soul was, for Emerson, the radiating center on which his whole thought was founded. Because he could affirm that "I--this thought which is called I--is the mould into which the world is poured like melted wax" (W, I, 316), he was able to affirm the principles of "Self-Reliance" and "Compensation" which ring throughout his work. Moreover, he was able to evolve a dynamic concept of "Art," or "Beauty," and of artistic creation, of which his own essays, orations, and poems are the supreme examples. It is to this dynamic theory of art and artistic creation that we must now turn.
CHAPTER IV
THE PROCESS OF ART

Beauty is the moment of transition, as if the form were just ready to flow into other forms. Any fixed-ness, heaping, or concentration on one feature, ... is the reverse of the flowing, and therefore deformed. "Beauty"

Emerson's concept of the Soul as process provided the groundwork for a total philosophy of man embracing every field of human activity. Not only was Nature, and man's relationship to it, trans-actional, but "society is fluid; there are no such roots and centers, but any particle may suddenly become the center of the movement and compel the system to gyrate round it" (W, III, 191). Emerson's processive philosophy is therefore one key to the position of man in that non-stratified, transactional society were every man can become an expression of the Divine. This in essence is the basis of humanistic democracy. And, in this view, man himself is the creative key to the whole; he is that center of a creative culture which was the aim of American civilization.

A study of Emerson's concept of man as the creative center could be conducted from numerous points of view--from the standpoint of social action, political rule, or democratic freedom. But this
study is most easily and most aptly approached through his theory of
artistic creation, since Emerson, beginning with "The American
Scholar," continually sought to define man's total being from the stand­
point of the creative act of artistic production. "The soul active," he wrote, "sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In
this action it is genius" (W, I, 91). In creative activity man not
only partakes of divine creativity; he himself becomes the Creator.
Understanding the Soul to be not only a process of the Universal Mind
flowing into man's mind, but also that transaction in which man is
fused with the external world, it was inevitable that Emerson would
see the artistic process itself as part of this flowing and fusion.
Concerned all his life with communication--first, in his Unitarian
sermons, later, in his lectures and public speeches--and constantly
engaged in setting down his moments of inspiration in journals,
letters, and poetry, the process of creation became one of Emerson's
key themes. More than a dozen essays--including "The Poet" (W, III,
7-46), "Beauty" (W, VI, 265-290), "Poetry and Imagination" (W, VIII,
9-76), "Inspiration" (W, VIII, 255-282), and "The Preacher" (W, X,
207-228)--concern themselves with various kinds of artistic production.
Moreover, every effort to make sense of the process of art seeks to
place the artistic process in the wider context of the processes of
Nature and the Soul. What happened in art was, therefore, the key
to, and proof of, what happened in every facet of life.

The nature of art has been a concern of philosophers and poets
ever since the time of Plato. In the tenth book of Plato's Republic Socrates proposes a theory of art based on the Platonic notion of the Real world as a shadow of the Ideal world. Socrates uses a painting of a bed as his example. In the Ideal world there exists the ideal "bed"; in the real world there are many beds which are imitations of the Ideal bed. Because of this imitation, of course, it is possible for men to recognize many different four-legged pieces of furniture—whether wooden or metal, wide or narrow, ornate or plain—as beds. A painting of a bed, points out Socrates, is an imitation of one of these beds in the Real world, and is therefore an "imitation of an imitation." By this piece of philosophical reasoning, Socrates was able to show that art imitates the world of appearance rather than of essence; hence art takes on a rather unimportant status in Platonic philosophy. Whether or not we agree with the philosophic structure underlying this Platonic definition of art, one thing is clear: Plato established a definition of art-as-imitation—which dominated critical theory until near the end of the eighteenth century.

Aristotle, too, defined art as imitation. In his Poetics he defined poetry of various kinds—epic, tragedy, comedy—as "modes of imitation," adding that "the objects of imitation are men in action."\(^1\)

Because Aristotle did not hold Plato's notion of the Real world as an imitation of the Ideal, he did not place artistic imitation in the lowly position afforded it by Plato. Nevertheless, the emphasis on art-as-imitation in these two key thinkers was responsible for the domination of the idea for the next two thousand years. The idea of art as imitation reached a peak in the neo-classical period of the early eighteenth century. Thus Pope, writing in 1711, gave the following advice to critics:

First follow Nature, and your judgement frame By her just standard, which is still the same: Unerring Nature! still divinely bright, One:.- clear, unchang'd and universal light, Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart, At once the source, and end, and test of art.²

And in defining the Rules of Art, he added:

Those Rules of old discover'd, not devis'd, Are Nature still, but Nature methodized.³

As M. H. Abrams has pointed out in his book, The Mirror and the Lamp, "In any period, the theory of mind and the theory of art tend to be integrally related and to turn upon similar analogues, explicit or submerged."⁴ The art-as-imitation idea was based on the notion of

²Essay on Criticism, 11. 68-73.
³Ibid., 11. 88-89.
the mind as a "mirror," that is, a passive reflector of external reality. This idea, as emphasized earlier, reached its logical conclusion in John Locke's theory of the mind as a tabula rasa--a stereotyped image of the mind which dominated poetic theory throughout most of the eighteenth century. The resulting view of this metaphor was the idea that artistic creation was largely a matter of reassembling ideas and images which were an exact "reflection" of external reality; and art itself was judged by the degree to which it "mirrored" the world.

When William Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," he introduced a new role for the poetic mind. Artistic creation was no longer simply a matter of using the mind as a reflector of the external world; the poet contributed something in the process--in this case, "feelings." A whole cluster of new metaphors developed which replaced the Lockean mirror idea. Coleridge, in his poem "The Eolian Harp," introduced the idea of the mind as a wind-harp on the window ledge, suggesting that the mind is both acted upon and acting. And again, in The Stateman's Manual, he spoke of the mind as a kind of plant, growing out of its perception, assimilating the elements of experience, and bringing forth its own peculiar kind of fruit. But the most important and suggestive metaphors of the romantic period were those which derived ultimately

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from the Plotinian idea of creation as emanation, so that the mind was likened to a radiating sun, an overflowing fountain of light, or—in the key metaphor of Abram's title—the lamp.

In terms of his artistic theory, Emerson is fully one of the romantics. He adopted the metaphors of the fountain, the sun, the growing plant, and the lamp to describe the mind: and, like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, he intended them as correctives to the sterile Lockean view of the mind as a mirror. Because of these new metaphors for the mind, the artistic process ceased to be "imitation"; it became instead "expression"—in the literal sense of ex-pressus (from ex-premere, "to press out")—or "utterance"—in its etymological meaning of "outer-ance." Furthermore, because the mind actively worked on the images of the external world which it received, thereby adding to them, the concept of the work of art also changed. It's value no longer resided in its correspondence or resemblance to external reality; its unity no longer imitated the unity of nature. And finally, because the mind of the viewer (or reader, or listener) was itself more than a mere receiver, the concept of artistic reception and appreciation likewise changed. The total result was that the work of art bore an entirely different set of relationships to the world, the artist, and the audience.

For Emerson, the source of the artistic creation was to be found neither in the stimulus of external reality on the mind nor in

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the subjective effort of the mind itself. Emerson therefore disagreed with the idea of art as pure "craft," an idea which was popular in neo-classical artistic theory and which is still found in the twentieth century in the work of William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot. For Emerson, the source of the artistic impulse was largely beyond the control of the artist: it came through inspiration. In an essay called "Inspiration," Emerson laid out numerous ways in which inspiration could be aided or promoted. Health is important, and, Emerson thought, good food—"wine, no doubt, and all fine food, as of delicate fruits, furnish some elemental wisdom" (W, VIII, 266). The writing of letters, too, could provide a "daily renovation of sensibility" (W, VIII, 267), and sometimes the sheer exercise of the will. Emerson found the morning to be a particularly potent period for inspiration, and "solitary converse with nature" (W, VIII, 271) a particularly potent situation. "Solitude of habit" (W, VIII, 272), the lonely vigil of the artist in "certain localities, as mountain-tops; the sea-side, the shores of rivers and rapid brooks, natural parks of oak and pine, where the ground is smooth and unencumbered, are excitants of the muse" (W, VIII, 275). Emerson also found conversation to be "a series of intoxications" (W, VIII, 276), as well

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as the reading of poetry new to the reader. But ultimately, inspiration is beyond the real control of the artist. "Man's insight and power are interrupted and occasional; he can see and do this or that cheap task, at will, but it steads him not beyond. He is fain to make the ulterior step by mechanical means. It cannot so be done" (W, VIII, 257). For inspiration is "with us a flash of light, then a long darkness, then a flash again. . . . We cannot make the inspiration consecutive" (W, VIII, 258-259). Like the Aeolian harp, wrote Emerson, the mind can remain "dumb" all day, waiting for the spiritus, a wind that does not come; yet at times "it is garrulous and tells all the secrets of the world" (W, VIII, 259).

These flashes of "elemental wisdom" were beyond the conscious control of the artist because they were, quite literally, in-spired, "breathed-in" from beyond. Their source was that "universal soul within or behind" the individual life of man (W, I, 33). One Divine Spirit animated all things: Nature was emanated spirit, the soul of man was an overflowing of the Over-Soul. And, in the artistic process, that Divine Spirit, that Over-Soul, worked its creating powers by flowing through the mind in a fluid influx of inspiration.

The idea that art is a product of inspiration was not new with Emerson; it, like most important ideas, traces back to the Greek philosophers—in this case, Plato. In the Ion Plato said that good poets were "inspired and possessed"; indeed, he went as far as to say "they are simply inspired to utter that to which the Muse impels
them, and that only." Inspiration was a kind of complete possession, for Plato, in which the artist became a mouthpiece for divine wisdom. This view became, in Emerson's theory, merely one aspect of the artistic process: balancing the influx of Spirit into the creating mind was the efflux of imaginative vision which flowed out from the mind to grasp and unify the world into the stuff of art. Like every process--be it the process of Nature or the process of the Soul--the artistic process for Emerson is reciprocal. The inflowing power of inspiration is matched by the outflowing power of creative imagination--the two married in a bilateral transaction.

Emerson captures the process of the imagination when he writes in "The Poet" that "the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze" (W, III, 37). This fluidity of imagination is what Emerson refers to when he writes that the mind, "penetrated with its sentiment or its thought, projects it outward on whatever it beholds" so that "the world is thoroughly anthropomorphized, as if it had passed through the body and mind of man, and taken his mould and form" (W, VIII, 16, 27). Emerson defines the Genius as the man who has "a sensibility to all the impressions of the outer world" but goes on to add that mere sensitiveness is not enough; "It must not only receive all, but it must render all. And the health of man is an equality of inlet and outlet, gathering and giving" (W, X, 78). This concept of

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8Bate, Criticism, p. 43 (My italics).
mind is virtually identical to Wordsworth's, as suggested in "Tintern Abbey" when he wrote "of all the mighty world/ Of eye, and ear,— both what they half create,/ And what perceive." It is this half-creating power of the mind, this giving or outward flow of the mind into nature—the impressing of the world of things with the thoughts of the mind—which constitutes imagination. "The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts" (W, I, 56).

But there is another sense in which the Genius must "render all"; investing the world with imagination is not enough. "To genius must always go two gifts, the thought and the publication" (W, II, 312). And the publication of the thought was for Emerson the highest calling of mankind; as he wrote at the end of "The Preacher": "The open secret of the world is the art of subliming a private soul with inspiration of the great and public and divine Soul from which we live" (W, X, 228). Thus Emerson repudiated the dichotomy of man and the universe; in the creative act the dualism of man and external reality is dissolved in the fluid process of transaction: "a man is the faculty of reporting, and the universe is the possibility of being reported" (W, IV, 251).

The most obvious illustrations of Emerson's theory of expression are his own works--more specifically, his essays. Emerson's original

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career was that of the preacher; he preached for some three years before giving up his Unitarian ministry and launching on a career as a lecturer and writer. But the important point about his total career was that despite the change in direction in 1832 Emerson was always a man speaking to men—first as a preacher, later as a lecturer. His theory of expression therefore hinges largely upon his own experience as a public speaker—upon his own professed purposes, methods, and ultimate aims. As F. O. Matthiessen has rightly indicated, it is with Emerson's understanding of Eloquence that we should begin in understanding Emerson's total idea of expression.10

Platform speaking for Emerson was never a matter of clarifying his own opinions, nor was it merely the attempt to convey a set of ideas or facts to his listeners. No simple idea of "communication" will adequately summarize the constant purpose of his eloquence. Emerson's goal was always a larger one:

This is the secret of eloquence, for it is the end of eloquence in a half-hour's discourse,—perhaps by a few sentences,—to persuade a multitude of persons to renounce their opinions, and change the course of life. They go forth not the men they came in, but shriven, convicted, and converted. (W, X, 268)

Eloquence was, for Emerson, a process of persuasion, of changing people, convincing and converting them to a new way of thinking and living. And this was a dynamic flow of influence from speaker to audience:

10Matthiessen, in his *American Renaissance*, moves from "Eloquence" (pp. 14-23) to "Expression" (pp. 24-29), to Emerson's theory of language (pp. 30-43), only gradually working into a wider treatment of Emerson's thought.
"The orator . . . pours out the abundant streams of his thought . . . conquers his audience by infusing his soul into them" (W, VIII, 111-112). Emerson so perceived the dynamism of this kind of eloquence that he likened it to action. "The orator must ever stand with forward foot, in the attitude of advancing . . . . His speech is not to be distinguished from action. It is the electricity of action. It is action, as the general's word of command or chart of battle is action" (W, VIII, 113). And because the stream of thought poured out by the orator was designed to move men to a new point of view, to unfold for them a new vision of reality, these thoughts had to be dynamic, fluid, and persuasive--and therefore embodied in "a language all glittering and fiery with imagination" (W, VIII, 112).

The natural result of Emerson's theories of imagination and expression was a supporting theory of language. In his first published work, Emerson set forth three principles of language by which it is shown that "nature is the vehicle of thought":

1. Words are signs of natural facts.
2. Particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts.
3. Nature is the symbol of spirit. (W, I, 31)

This theory of language seems simple enough, but this apparent simplicity conceals a dynamic processive understanding of words. Charles Fiedelson, Jr., has pointed out that each statement builds upon, and alters the previous statement; and that by the time we reach the third statement, "natural fact in the sense of his first proposition
no longer exists, the instrumental sign becomes an autonomous symbol, and spirit is simply the meaning of fact as symbol.\footnote{Symbolism and American Literature (University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 132.} In developing the idea that the referents of words are no longer "natural facts" but are instead "spiritual facts," Emerson is moving language away from the area of static, one-for-one allegory and into the area of processive, connotational symbolism. Words are not finite, or limited, or fixed in their meanings, for their meanings range along the spectrum of spirit which is in-finite, unlimited, flowing. Yet the very reason why words can represent "spirit" is that, in the very process of language formation, words emerge \textit{out of spirit} when it is incarnated in the physical flesh of natural fact. Emerson's theory of language, in fact, is closely tied to his processive theory of the emanation of the world out of spirit, so that words are formed when "thought... [is] ejaculated as Logos, or Word" (W, III, 43).

It is in this sense that the poet is a creator—is The Creator—for just as the world is created by the commandments of God ("Let there be light"), by the Word of God which creates the flesh by "becoming it" (John 1:1-14), the world is re-created in the utterance of the poet who is "the sayer, the namer, and represents beauty.... Beauty is the creator of the universe" (W, III, 13). The same emphasis is found in "The American Scholar," when Emerson, speaking of the
"active soul" says that "the soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates" (W, I, 91). Moreover, the "active soul" is not only man as a "poet" or a "scholar," for the Supreme Being puts forth the world through man--"man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite" (W, I, 68). Because of this creative quality of words, because "words are also actions, and actions are a kind of words" (W, III, 14), poetry itself is not a static structure of words with fixed meaning. It is instead a fluid movement of meaning that always leaps beyond the limits of denotation into the flexible realm of connotation. It's meaning is spiritual, and can only be conveyed by symbols, "for all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead" (W, III, 37).

This view of the fluid, processive quality of meaning in poetry was extended by Emerson into the whole of artistic creation. For him, an artistic creation was not a static piece of reality separable from its total context; he refused to see the artistic creation apart from the artist or the artistic process, a "product" divorced from its "producer." Rather, the artistic creation was part of a dynamic process involving a continual activity of the artist through his art. Just as Spirit moves through Nature, just as the Soul moves out in perception through the whole field of perception, so too did the imagination of the artist move through the forms he creates. "Painting," he said "seems to be to the eye what dancing is to the limbs" (W, II, 332). A
work of art could not be judged in isolation; consequently, "the best of beauty is a finer charm than skill in surfaces, in outlines, or rules of art can ever teach, namely a radiation from the work of art, of human character,—a wonderful expression through stone, or canvas, or musical sound, of the deepest and simplest attributes of our nature" (W, II, 334). Just as the Spirit, that "last fact beyond which analysis cannot go," cannot be reduced to tropes or creeds without reduction and loss, so too can the art form never be reduced to a mere "thing," with surfaces, outlines, or definable limits.

"True art is never fixed, but always flowing" (W, II, 340); it is the dancing of the artist's eye, the embodiment of thought in fluid motion, character in action. The artist moves into it, through it, and out of it in a fluid process of spirit and imagination.

It is not surprising to discover that Emerson was critical of those plastic arts which tended to freeze reality into a solid form. His reference point was always the living fluidity of life itself, so that there was "no statue like this living man" (W, II, 333). Consequently, he was critical of painting: "the best pictures are rude draughts of a few of the miraculous dots and lines and dyes which make up the ever-changing 'landscape with figures' amidst which we dwell" (W, II, 332). The "nonsense of oil and easels, of marble and chisels" was "hypocritical rubbish" (W, II, 333); real "art... is impatient of working with lame or tied hands, and of making cripples and monsters,
such as all pictures and statues are" (W, II, 338). Of sculpture he was even more critical, for sculpture lacked the fluidity, the living, dynamic quality which is the beauty of life; hence it was for him "the game of a rude and youthful people, and not the manly labour of a wise and spiritual nation." In this static freezing of the process of the world into solid form, Emerson said, "creation is driven into a corner" (W, II, 339).

For Emerson, mere ornament, superfluous lavish decoration, did not constitute beauty. All art was judged to the degree to which it captured the movement of spirit through matter, the movement of imagination through form. "We ascribe beauty to that which is simple; which has no superfluous parts; which exactly answers its end; which stands related to all things" (W, VI, 274). And in this emphasis on relation, Emerson was coming back again to his basic vision of a universe where reality was found in interaction, where the beautiful was that which was 'alive, moving, reproductive" (W, II, 342). Isolated form and abstracted segments of reality, exalted into a frozen form would never do. "All beauty must be organic" (W, VI, 275); "nothing interests us which is stark or bounded, but only what streams with life. . . . Beauty is the moment of transition, as if the form were just ready to flow into other forms. Any fixedness, heaping, or concentration on one feature,--a long nose, a sharp chin, a hump-back,--is the reverse of the flowing, and therefore deformed" (W, VI, 277).

This was not to say that Emerson rejected the plastic arts
altogether. They were capable of that fluid beauty which is "hovering and evanescent" (W, II, 170). Emerson described just such a beauty in his essay called "Love":

The statue is then beautiful when it begins to be incomprehensible, when it is passing out of criticism and can no longer be defined by compass and measuring-wand, but demands an active imagination to go with it and to say what it is in the act of doing. The god or hero of the sculptor is always represented in a transition from that which is representable to the senses, to that which is not. Then first it ceases to be a stone. (W, II, 171).

Art, properly conceived, is always "in the act of doing," always on the verge of flowing out of itself. Aesthetic appreciation therefore demands a higher awareness than mere sensory exposure; it is not an experience of the Understanding, but of the whole soul. Just as the creative imagination of the artist must move out into the world of brute matter, investing it with spiritual form, transforming it into fluid pattern, so too must the soul apprehending the artistic creation move out into that creation, "going with" it through "active imagination" until it verges on that fluidity which characterizes living reality. The fluid motion of organic art is not artistic form confronting the mind; it is artistic form invested with mind, brought to life by the vital force of imaginative vision. Organic art is imagination objectified, and it elicits imaginative activity from the viewer. It is spirit form-ulated, but only in a fluid formulation, a momentary eddy, always on the point of dissolving form in process.

With the imaginative perception of artistic form, the total
process of art comes full circle—the inspiration of the artist has passed through the artistic creation to be recreated in the mind of the observer. Vivian Hopkins, in her book *Spires of Form: A Study of Emerson's Aesthetic Theory*, has drawn attention to this circular flow of creativity through artist, art, and appreciator. She points out that Emerson's Aesthetic Theory consists of "a cycle of three phases, integrally connected with each other. The first phase is the creative process; the second, the completed work of art; the third, the reception of art by the observer."\(^{12}\) This cycle of creativity is an ongoing process which Emerson images in the spiral:

A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings:

\[(W, I, 8)\]

In the reception of art the original creation of the artist is re-created through imaginative vision and the outflowing movement of the spirit. The embodied spirit of the artistic creation and the active soul of the observer, rise up, meet, and cross in a dual process. Art rouses the soul into life, the eye recreates the matter of art into essential spirit. The aesthetic experience becomes, then, a fusion of the artistic creation with the mind, and hence the meeting place where minds meet in creativity.

Thus, in the cycle of artistic creativity, organic structure in art, and the imaginative recreation that occurs in the reception of art, we see the single fluid movement of artistic creativity. Every phase of the movement is fused through interaction; every process in the cycle is a bilateral transaction. The in-spiring spirit flows into the mind of man and flows out again in imaginative construction: the idea is embodied in form, the word becomes flesh, spirit is manifested in material design. And, in the appreciative moment of artistic experience, that instant when artistic form takes on fluidity before the eyes, the spirit flows out of the art form and illicits a similar action of spirit within the observer. Artist and perceiver are thus linked in a dynamic interchange of fluid spirit passing through the mediating work of art. Creation and recreation work together, subjects and objects marry, matter is married to mind, the seer and the seen become one in the moment of seeing, and all becomes one in the all-dissolving unity of the soul. The process of all things dissolves in a single process, a multi-lateral transaction where all polarities fuse in the web of the One. Perhaps the most perfect expression of this fusion is found in Emerson's poem "Brahma" which celebrates the Hindu Brahman, the One God who is a unity of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer:\(^{13}\):

\(^{13}\)Emerson's "Brahma," as has been pointed out, is mistitled. The persona of the poem is not Brahma, as the title would indicate, but Brahman who is a unity of Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva. See K.R. Chandrasekharan, "Emerson's Brahma: An Indian Interpretation," NEQ, XXXIII (1960), 506-512.
If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanquished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I am the hymn the Brahmin sings.

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.
(W, IX, 170-171)
In the history of ideas Ralph Waldo Emerson must be placed squarely in the Romantic tradition. Along with Kant, the post-Kantian philosophers, and the English Romantics, Emerson waged a war typical of the Romantics: he refused to accept the eighteenth century view of the universe as a static collection of "things," the mind as a "mirror" of reality, and art as "imitation." In rejecting these concepts he was rejecting a way of seeing reality which implied that the universe is finally explainable in theological creeds, mathematical equations, or logical formulations. And in place of this static philosophy Emerson substituted a philosophy of process, a way of seeing man and nature and God in terms of multi-lateral transaction.

Considered from this point of view--the point of view so far adopted in this thesis--Emerson illustrates the nature of the Romantic movement in terms of its rejection of the past. But by now it should be apparent that Emerson also pointed to the future, and to a number of philosophical positions which were only fully articulated in the twentieth century. Although it is not the intention to show that Emerson was a "twentieth-century man" living before his time, the
analogues of his thought in recent decades is instructive, particularly in assessing the main accomplishments of the Romantic period generally. For Emerson and most of the major Romantic philosophers and poets anticipate in their thinking a number of distinctly twentieth-century developments—general relativity, process philosophy, field and systems theory, and—in scientific theory—emergent evolution and biological ecology. By an examination of a number of modern theories, then, in science, philosophy, and psychology, the rest of this thesis will attempt to trace some of the ways in which Emerson is significant for twentieth-century readers.

Emerson's initial reaction against Unitarianism may appear, on first examination, to be of interest only as an isolated event in American literary history. But in recent years a similar reaction has been recorded in the writings of the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. Harry Modean Campbell has called attention to this in his short study of "Emerson and Whitehead,"¹ in which he finds "remarkable similarities between the views of Emerson and those of Whitehead." Campbell does not attempt to prove that Emerson was a major influence on Whitehead, but rather "that Whitehead's total achievement in the philosophy of religion is like that of Emerson—that, religiously, Whitehead may

¹ PMLA, LXXV (1960), 577-582.
he said to be a kind of twentieth-century Emerson,  "

To put it more specifically, just as Emerson was a leader in the religious (romantic-transcendentalist) revolt against the analytical rationalism of the age of "Enlightenment," so Whitehead's ideas on religion (especially in his later books) have become increasingly important in the similar revolt against the 'philosophy of logical analysis' and other philosophies that make ours an 'age of analysis,' the end of which in a new synthesis (a "myth forming at the heart of the world," to quote Louise Bogan) has been predicted by Sorokin, Toynbee, Tillich and other important prophets.  

Ernest Bernbaum, one of the foremost interpreters of the Romantic Movement, has carried through a similar idea in his Guide Through the

2 Ibid., p. 577.

3 Ibid., p. 582. The reference of the "philosophy of logical analysis" is to the logical positivists, discussed in the section of that title in Bertrand Russell's History of Western Philosophy (New York, 1945), pp. 828-836; the "age of analysis" is taken from Morton G. White, ed., The Age of Analysis (Boston, 1955); Louise Bogan's quote is found in Amos N. Wilder, Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition (New York, 1952), p. 258; further references are to Pitirim Sorokin, The Reconstruction of Humanity (Boston, 1948), Arnold J. Toynbee, An Historian's Approach to Religion (New York, 1956), and Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago, 1948). Campbell comments: "This is not to imply that the synthesis proposed by any of these thinkers is like that of Emerson and Whitehead, but they all consider an analytical, 'atomistic' philosophy as an expression of the spiritual chaos of the age" (p. 582, n. 27).
The Romantic ideas of nature, spirit, and artistic creation were generally out of favor after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) when the modern upsurge of mechanistic, positivistic, "atomistic" philosophies began. However, the importance of Romantic ideas has increased in the twentieth century, as Berbaum makes clear:

During the 1920's and even earlier, in physics, zoology, biology, psychology, and other sciences, many phenomena attracted attention that could not be satisfactorily explained on the materialistic hypothesis. The progress of knowledge imperatively called for a radical revision in the philosophy of nature. In works of the highest scientific or philosophical importance--by Lloyd Morgan, A. N. Whitehead, Sir Arthur Eddington, J. D. Haldane, John Oman, Jan Christian Smuts, and many others--there was no longer that contempt for romantic ideas about Nature and Man which has ruled for two generations. Since the rise of Einstein, Rutherford, and Heisenberg, the notion that Science (and Science only) would be able to reduce all nature to the definitely knowable and fully predictable has been abandoned. The new school admits that there are limits to what can be ascertained through scientific methods; and henceforth those other fields of human experience and other methods of inquiry which the Romantics believed in are reassuming their former dignity.

Because Emerson was part of the Romantic reaction against

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Enlightenment philosophy—that view of reality which claimed that nature could be reduced to "the definitely knowable and fully predictable"—his philosophy aimed at something quite different from explanation. Emerson's processive view of reality demanded that he forego all attempts at explanation, for "explanation" quite literally implies a "levelling" (explanare, "to level, flatten, or spread out"). A careful examination of Emerson's philosophy shows that it explains nothing, and consequently avoids the fallacy of explaining away—reducing the spiritual to the physical (materialism) or the physical to the spiritual (idealism). In place of explanation Emerson substituted description, an approach which the modern philosopher Philip Leon has termed "descriptive philosophy." To counter the approach to reality which explains away or reduces, Leon advocates "unprejudiced observation not aiming at anything more than description," rather than the usual explanatory approach which "precludes or annihilates":

And if we make a habit of this patient and submissive waiting upon the revelation of experience instead of rushing in explanatorily where angels fear to tread, we shall find ourselves in an intriguing and exciting universe in which near and far, here and there, the same and the different, the one and the many, the quick and the dead, are antithesis useful, and indeed necessary, for a limited number of purposes, but not absolute, eschatological, like the separation into the sheep and the goats at the end of all things.

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7Ibid., pp. 60-61.
Emerson's repudiation of the explanatory philosophy of the Enlightenment in favour of what Philip Leon calls "descriptive philosophy" is closely related to the theory of general relativity, which postulates that there is no absolute or universal truth which can be summarized in a meaningful proposition. Everything which is so, is so only for a specific observer, or in relation to a specific situation. Since it is quite obviously impossible to speak simultaneously from or for all possible points of view, there is no way of making any finally valid proposition about Reality, Being, or the nature of things. Total reality eludes man's "under-standing" because it is always "standing-under" man. Thus when Emerson attacks the theological tendency to cling to "tropes" rather than "principles" (W, I, 128), or the "linear logic" of the Enlightenment (W, IV, 101); when he insists that "we can never surprise nature in a corner; never find the end of a thread; never tell where to set the first stone" (W, I, 190); he is working in the direction of the modern theory of relativity. Indeed, Emerson's whole corpus of Essays implicitly contains the principle of relativity, apart from his more explicit relativistic statements. Emerson's "philosophy" was such that it could never receive a final, absolute formulation. Consequently, we see him coming again and again at the same fundamental ideas from slightly different points of view, working out his doctrine of the soul "relative" to the Over-Soul, Nature, Eloquence, Art, Inspiration, History, Heroism, and many variations of these themes. This accounts,
on the one hand, for the amazing variety of topics covered by his essays over the years and, on the other hand, the distinct feeling one has that he is merely saying the same thing again with different emphasis. Emerson's "truth" is not to be found in any one essay, but is written between the lines of all of them.

The basic principle of relativity—that nothing is absolute and all is relative—presupposes an understanding of reality as ever-changing, processive, flowing. Absolute truths demand fixed objects, stable "things," definable limits. Final propositions presuppose an isolated reality, a universe which can be partitioned into pieces with no relationships. For Emerson, however, "the universe exists only in transit" (W, XII, 54), "This all-creating nature [is] soft and fluid as a cloud or the air" (W, II, 18), "man is a bundle of relations" (W, II, 39); consequently absolute explanation has to give way to processive description. And this fluid description—with its continually shifting terminology, and ever-changing metaphors—despite the hand-wringing frustration it has given to systematic philosophers, is nevertheless the kind of poetic use of words which is today cropping up in the writings of modern scientists and philosophers. Teilhard de Chardin, for example, the famed discoverer of Peking Man (sinanthropus) in 1929 and one of the foremost exponents of reality as process, writes of the universe in these words:

Considered in its physical, concrete reality, the stuff of the universe cannot divide itself but, as a kind of gigantic 'atom', it forms in its totality . . . the only real indivisible . . . . The cosmos in which man finds himself caught up constitutes, by
reason of the unimpeachable wholeness of its whole, a system, a totum, and a quantum: a system by its plurality, a totum by its unity, a quantum by its energy; all three within a boundless contour. . . . The farther and more deeply we penetrate into matter . . . the more we are confounded by the interdependence of its parts. Each element of the cosmos is positively woven from all the others: from beneath itself by the mysterious phenomenon of 'composition', which makes it subsistent through the apex of an organized whole; and from above through the unities of a higher order which incorporate and dominate it for their own ends. 8

When Emerson wrote that "there is no outside, no inclosing wall, no circumference to us" (W, II, 284), that we can never draw the last circle because "around every circle another can be drawn" (W, II, 281), he was pointing to the same "boundless contour" described by de Chardin—the unbelievable web of relationships which enmeshes every part and particle of the whole.

Emerson's universe was a universe of process: this was the unifying transactional movement which brought every part of the cosmos into relation with the rest. One of the key concepts in his theory was, as we have seen, the idea of evolution. The universe was not a static collection of unchanging "levels" or links in a Chain of Being; it was an aspiration of lower forms toward higher forms, a movement of material nature toward spirit. Yet Emerson wished to say something more about this movement. He wanted to say that in the process of matter evolving toward spirit, spirit was itself operative. And inevitably, this landed him on the main problem of his whole theory: spirit had to be both created and

8The Phenomenon of Man (London: Collins, 1959), pp. 43-44.
creating. Emerson attempted to solve this problem by incorporating the neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation, suggesting that material nature was an "emanation" or expiration of spiritual nature. Yet because of his inherited model of reality, the Great Chain of Being, emanation became a radiation down the Chain, a transaction with the evolutionary movement up. Somehow, the two processes were one; yet Emerson was never able to find the key to their unity. And there the matter stood, in the history of ideas, for a full century.

Darwinian evolution, because it emphasized the movement of physical forms up the scale of being, found no place for the impulse of spirit. Evolution became, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, largely a mechanistic matter, a product of random mutation and natural selection according to the principle of the survival of the fittest.

It was not until the twentieth century that evolutionists moved beyond the materialistic implications of materialistic evolution. In 1907, Henri Bergson published *L'Évolution Créatrice* (Creative-Evolution), finding the impulse of life's movement in the *élan vital* (vital spirit)

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9 There were spiritualized approaches to evolution in the nineteenth century; Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850) is a notable example. Generally speaking, however, scientific theory lagged behind poetic insight.
which moved matter from within. Gradually the emphasis on spirit as the impulse of evolution increased, until Sir Julian Huxley and Teilhard de Chardin extended evolution to cosmism, the evolution of the cosmos. De Chardin summarizes this way of thinking:

It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an 'interior' appears at the heart of beings, as it were seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this 'interior' should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself [i.e., in man], there is necessarily a double aspect to its structure, that is to say in every region of space and time—in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: co-extensive with their Without, there is a Within to things.10

Because man has a spiritual "Within," de Chardin concludes that the whole universe has a similar spiritual "Within." To assume that life has evolved from inert matter is to imply that life and consciousness are nothing but special forms of non-life and unconsciousness—a conclusion that entails a very unscientific leap into the darkness of illogic and absurdity. Thus de Chardin concludes: "In a coherent perspective of the world: life inevitably assumes a 'pre-life' for as far back before it as the eye can see."11

Rather than seeing spirit as a distinct and separated realm of

10 The Phenomenon of Man, p. 56. In his "Introduction" to de Chardin's book Sir Julian Huxley coined his own word for the 'Within' of things: "Comparative study makes it clear that higher animals have minds of a sort, and evolutionary fact and logic demand that minds should have evolved gradually as well as bodies and that accordingly mind-life (or 'mentoid', to employ a barbarous word that I am driven to coin because of its usefulness) properties must be present throughout the universe" (p. 16).

11 Ibid., p. 57.
being which is only an "epiphenomenon," a scum upon the craggy granite of the material universe, spirit is a "Within" of things, all things. In man, that "Within" is visible and manifest; in immaterial nature it is invisible and unmanifest, enfolded in the shrouds of matter. Evolution is, quite literally, a "rolling-outwards" (evolvere, to roll out); the de-velopment of life is an "un-wrapping" (de-veloper, O.Fr., to unwrap), an "emanation" (emanare, to flow out) from within. As long as spirit remained above matter, as a separate link in the chain of being, emanation was bound to appear as opposite to evolution; but once spirit was transfered within, evolution and emanation became one and the same: the slow process by which the universe turns itself inside-out, the implicit becomes manifest, the potential takes on actuality. And this "within" of things--be it Bergson's *élan vital*, de Chardin's "pre-life", or Emerson's "spirit"--is that cause behind the process which is at once created and creating.

Emerson's position in the history of ideas is crucial. Standing between the isolative, static philosophy of *Enlightenment* and the unified, processive approach of modern evolution, he embodies both in the apparent paradox of evolution and emanation within the Chain of Being. He stood at that point when spiritual reality was just about to, or just starting to move within from its place above. There is perhaps no finer example of the total transformation of thought that occurred in the Romantic period than this subtle attempt to reconcile a "modern" understanding with a world-view inherited from the past.
The "all-dissolving unity" in Emerson's philosophy, as we have seen, was the Soul. And, in keeping with his emphasis on process and his repudiation of static conceptions of mind, the Soul was a process—a web of relationship between the mind of man and Universal Mind, the Me and the Not-Me, the seer and the thing seen. Emerson's Soul must be understood as that which arises in transactional process, that which creates the universe by its own activity and is in turn created by it.

At this point in his philosophy, Emerson points directly to the twentieth century. Because the processes of perception and thinking can only be studied as parts of the situations in which they occur, modern psychologists are more and more treating the mind as a series of transactional relationships with its environment. This "transactional" approach was first used by John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, in 1949 to differentiate the processes involved in "knowing" from previous models of mental activity which emphasized interaction or self-action. Both interaction and self-action presuppose a bifurcation of reality into "knower" and "known," "self" and "environment."

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13 It should be noted that the term "transactional" was new with Dewey and Bentley; the approach, however, goes back some fifty years. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), around the turn of the century, developed his "pure" or "transcendental" phenomenology of consciousness by means of correlated studies of the intentional act (*noesis*) and its objective referent (*noema*), thus avoiding factual ingredients of any kind. This approach passed into existentialism via Jean Paul Satre's "essay on
whereas "transaction" dissolves these polarities in process. "Our own procedure is the transactional, in which is asserted the right to see together, extensionally and durationally, much that is talked about conventionally as if it were composed of irreconcilable opposites." Dewey and Bentley object to the separation of the knower from the known, "as if they were the precarious products of a struggle between severed realms of 'being':"

Our position is simply that since man as an organism has evolved among other organisms in an evolution called "natural," we are willing under hypothesis to treat all his behavings, including his most advanced knowings, as activities not of himself alone, nor even as primarily his, but as processes of the full situation of organism-environment; and to take this full situation as one which is before us within the knowings, as well as being the situation in which the knowings themselves arise.15

Emerson's understanding of the soul, then, as the whole mind in transaction with its environment points directly to the modern emphasis on field theory and contextual analysis. No single part of the world-process can be isolated; "knower" and "known" arise and exist only in relationship.

phenomenological ontology" (L'Être et le neant, 1943). Sartre defined existence in terms of Husserl's concept of consciousness rather than by ontological definitions typical of previous philosophies.


15 Ibid., p. 104.
It has already been pointed out; with reference to the Whorfian hypothesis, the relationship between the static world of the Great Chain of Being and the static, permanent qualities of the noun-oriented languages in which this view flourished. The same observation may be made in the field of psychology, since words like "mind" or "imagination" carry with them the static permanence and definable limits of the noun. Harold Kelman, Dean of the American Institute of Psychoanalysis, makes this observation:

Our language structure, subject/predicate in form, dichotomizes and hypostatizes processes. It is noun-oriented and makes propositions about things, among them the static objects into which processes have been made. Other languages, like Burmese, Japanese, and Eskimo, verb-oriented, make propositions about events, or accurately eventing, which minding is. 16

Accordingly, Kelman works out a definition of mind "as verb, in its present participle form, namely as minding"--thus showing that mind is not a "thing" which "does" certain actions, not a "form separate from its "functions." On the contrary, "forming is functioning and functioning is forming." 17 Thus, it becomes apparent that Emerson's processive approach to the soul--as "souling" (?)--although it is shot through with a semi-religious vocabulary verging on mysticism, is not far from the modern idea of "mind as participation," 18 as it has been developed

16 "Toward a Definition of Mind," Theories of the Mind, p. 243.
17 Ibid., p. 244.
by Dewey, Bentley, and others.

The "religious" quality of Emerson's whole philosophy is, however, one of the most paradoxical factors in any final evaluation. At first glance, Emerson appears to have followed a line of pure speculation far removed from concrete reality. Henry David Gray, for example, has commented that "I am not aware that any thinker has actually gone farther with pure philosophic theory than did Emerson in his deepest insights." Yet the end result of his philosophy is not a purely philosophical statement of transcendental reality but, rather, a new statement about the nature of concrete reality. For, ultimately, Emerson's philosophizing was negative, in the sense that he finally showed the impossibility of any rational explanation of the universe along transcendental lines of enquiry. And this in turn led to a further negativity, for Emerson's speculations led him to the point of giving up philosophy for questions of life itself in the concrete world. Spiritual reality simply could not be abstracted from the real world, for "spirit" and "matter" fell together in a dynamic process which was, simply, the world as it is. And, in this process, concrete reality took on a new dimension, a dimension of spirituality.

Modern science has arrived at precisely the same point. Faced with the indescribably beauty of the mathematical universe, the amazing

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dance and tumble of spinning electrons and interacting fields of force,
the modern atomic physicist is faced with a material world which verges
on pure spirit, an immense pattern of "something unknown ... doing we
don't know what." A new concept of concrete reality has emerged
which is perhaps best summed up in the words of Robert Linssen:

> The 'God of Matter' has just taken off his mask of glacial
> immobility, and, behold, is transformed into a prodigiously
> moving, fluid, impalpable energy. His countenance, which
> once appeared sombre and dull, is now lit up with ever more
dazzling clarity. The silent fairyland of light, perpetually
unfolding in the heart of the smallest grain of sand,
far exceeds in splendour the most brilliant display of
fireworks that we could ever hope to see.

> The physicists give us a glimpse of the essence of
matter taking on such a spiritual character that it looks
as though modern physics is irresistibly leading us to the
creation of a **spiritual materialism**.

Perhaps "spiritual materialism" best describes Emerson's universe. For
him, nature is spirit-in-process, a projection outwards of man's own
soul, a distillation of the divine; Man is the spirit incarnated—or

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21 *Living Zen*, trans. Diana Abrahams-Curiel (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1958), p. 70. On one or two occasions Emerson came close to Linssen's "spiritual materialism," when he wrote, for example, that "Chaucer's hard painting and his Canterbury pilgrims satisfies the senses. Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton, in their loftiest ascents, have this national grip and exactitude of mind. This mental materialism makes the value of English transcendental genius" (W, V, 223); and again, "In our definitions we grope after the **spiritual** by describing it as invisible. The true meaning of **spiritual** is **real**; that law which executes itself, which works without means, and which cannot be conceived as not existing" (W, VI, 206).
better, "incarnating"--and the objects of art are spirit captured in material form. Life is judged by its spiritual quality; man is judged by the degree to which the spirit flows through him and in him; and art is judged as perfect when it leaps into the fluid movement of spirit in process.

The study of Emerson as a process philosopher is significant for a number of reasons. While the term "process" has only become philosophically respectable in the twentieth century, the concept itself emerged much earlier, during the later years of the eighteenth century, generally, and in the work of the Romantic writers, specifically. American transcendentalism was part of this movement, and, in the work of Emerson, process emerges as a dominant key to his thought. Indeed, approaching his theories of Nature, the Soul, and Art through the idea of process appears to be much more viable than an approach through either Kantian "idealism" or Swedenborgain "correspondence." Kant and Swedenborg were Emerson's starting points, but ultimately he moved far beyond them.

The change from hypostatic to processive thinking--a change which is only beginning to have its full effect on man's thinking--began more than a century and a half ago. Emerson's importance in the history of ideas is that he worked out perhaps the first comprehensive process philosophy. For over a century he has been dismissed because of his fluid vocabulary, his lack of clear distinctions, his failure to define his terms. Yet because his philosophic basis was process, this
dismissal is an unfair one, for the key feature of process is precisely that: it is fluid; it lacks clear distinctions; there are no terms to define. Process does not lend itself to rational, logical formulation; it is felt, or intuited; it is "seen" and "not seen" at once, and therefore eludes explanation. Thus Emerson's philosophy is descriptive, metaphorical, and poetic, but never rigidly precise.

Emerson's importance lies in his application of process thinking to every facet of life. In a corpus of Essays which are powerful and eloquent, he worked out the place of man in a fluid universe, the function of art in the living situation, the nature of the Soul in active transaction. Ultimately, he worked through philosophy and beyond philosophy, always working out his speculations in terms of practical action in the concrete world. Although his writings dwell, or appear to dwell in a realm of poetry, his interests were those of this world: his family, his books, his friends on both sides of the Atlantic, his lecture tours, his trips abroad, and contemporary literary, political, and economic affairs. Emerson did not want to breed mystics in America: he wanted to create whole men, "finished" men (W, I, 325), "symmetrical men" (W, III, 216). Consequently, his tendency was to reduce religion to ethics, saying that "the progress of religion is steadily to its identity with morals" (W, X, 200), and that "the next

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age will behold God in the ethical laws" (W, X, 214). He continually saw the spiritual working through the material world; thus he could write: "Mankind for the moment seem to be in search of a religion. The Jewish cultus is declining; the Divine, or, as some will say, the truly Human, hovers, now seen, now unseen, before us" (W, XI, 333). And in this transference of the spiritual to a place within the world, to a place within man himself, Emerson exalted humanity in the style of the humanist. As Patrick F. Quinn puts it, "Emerson's hopes for a 'finished man,' for 'spherical people' and 'symmetrical men,' were the hopes of a humanist."

And he went on to add: "There is more than a literary appropriateness to the phrases 'New England Renaissance' and 'American Renaissance.' Just as the Renaissance in Europe involved a reaction against the theological, other-worldly orientation of the Middle Ages in favor of an expansive humanism, so Emerson, the key figure of the American Renaissance, rejected the narrow emphasis of Puritanism and developed his vision of man in his plentitude." Emerson's thought, therefore, is one key to modern humanistic culture, for he successfully fused the human world with the divine world, thus exalting man to a position where he could, like Renaissance man, control his world and build his own destiny.

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