CHAPTER III

‘Truth and beauty together thrive’

THE CONCEPT OF BHUVANA SUNDARA OR COSMIC BEAUTY

‘Beauty’ has been described as all the qualities of a person or thing that delights the senses and pleases the mind of an individual. However, it is beyond description because it depends on the taste of the individual. Moreover it is an abstract word that cannot yield itself for easy definition. The concept of Beauty is in the mind of the individual and hence varies from one person to another; it cannot be termed as universal. It depends on the mind of the seer and is a ‘subjective’ experience.

The present chapter ventures to make a study of the concept of Bhuvana Sundara as delineated by Ramanuja and also investigates how Shakespeare’s works reflect Ramanuja’s views. Ramanuja visualizes the cosmos as Bhuvana Sundara, the Lord Himself. But this unparalleled, indescribable Cosmic Beauty could not be imagined in its totality. Further it reveals itself in various segments, as Natural Beauty, Human Beauty, Structural Beauty, Poetic Beauty and rarely as Divine Beauty. That is why the world finds and enjoys multifarious beautiful things, each surpassing the other in form and structure. Even an ugly thing when portrayed beautifully receives an excellent status and enjoyed. A general preview of the term ‘Beauty’ will be taken up for study.
Beauty has been studied as a subject in different disciplines such as aesthetics, sociology, social psychology, culture and other similar aspects. The experience of Beauty is involved when an entity is in harmony with nature leading to feelings of attraction and emotional well-being. Harmony is agreement in action and feeling, occurring in right proportion and in right rhythm. In general, ‘Beauty’ as a mental component remains soothing, healing, uplifting and inspiring. But sometimes it kindles the sensuality of men and disturbs the harmony of life.

Time naturally effects change in the physical form of the created things. Shakespeare in his Sonnet 65 reveals his angst and fear about the formidable time and rues: “where, alack / Shall Time’s best jewel from Time’s chest lie hid? / . . . Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?” Beauty is characteristic of a person, animal, place or even an idea that provides perceptual experience of pleasure or satisfaction. Though the term ‘ideal Beauty’ is commonly used, it cannot be defined since any ‘ideal Beauty’ described is the description of human beings and so has its limitations. What is deemed as ‘ideal Beauty’ is appreciated, enjoyed, respected and admired by a majority section of the society. As noted above Beauty can well be described under various heads such as ‘Natural Beauty’, ‘Antique Beauty’, ‘Literary Beauty’, ‘Human Beauty – Outer / Inner or Physical / Mental Beauty’, and above all ‘Divine Beauty’. All created objects come under ‘Natural Beauty’. The sun rise seen in the orient, the sunset, the shapes and movement of the clouds, the uninterrupted waves on the sea, the
mind-boggling water-falls, the multi-colored rainbow, the snow-capped mountains, and the dense forest are natural things of perpetual Beauty. The four seasons of the year supply rich feast to the senses. Any astronomical phenomenon is austere and beautiful to watch. ‘Antique Beauty’ refers to man-created structural and architectural forms that have been erected with mathematical precision. Many palaces, tombs, cathedrals, temples, bridges and so on are monuments of Mathematical Beauty that are appreciated for their symmetrical formation. There are innumerable illustrations for this around the world.

‘Literary Beauty’ obviously refers to the Beauty imparted by the literary works by means of form and content. The Beauty of Nature is a permanent resource that conveys several messages to poets. In fact, any form of art-music, poetry, sculptures, and painting must be precise and symmetrical in its execution. Symmetry involves mathematics. The metre, rhythm and the structure in any lyric, poetry or song give a shape to the structure of that work. For instance William Blake’s poem “The Tyger” is considered as a literary illustration for its symmetry. The poet himself expresses his amazement of the creation, tiger and its awesome fearful and beautiful symmetry. He says:

What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful
And what shoulder, and what art,
could twist the sinews of thy heart?
The wildness, power and the terrible Beauty cannot be better expressed. The phrase ‘terrible Beauty’ immediately brings to mind W.B. Yeats’ poem “Easter 1916”. The poet is awe-struck about the martyrdom of the Irish rebels. He celebrates it at the end of the first stanza: “All changed, changed utterly / A terrible beauty is born”. The refrain ‘A terrible beauty is born’ occurs towards the end of second and the last stanzas. The “terrible beauty” refers to the Irish rebels – the attitudinal change of the ordinary individuals into men of sacrifice for noble cause. Richard Kearney, author of *Myth and Terror* asserts that Yeats emphasizes a central theme to the poem, that "beauty is the offspring of terror."

Horrific beauty is the offspring of terror, "born" not once, but something to be perpetually 'reborn' now and in times to come (“Easter 1916”, *The Journal*, www.gmu.edu/ org/ireland32/1916_essay.html). This idea reflects Rudolf Otto’s *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* which will be discussed later.

‘Literary Beauty’ of a created work not only stays with the form and content of the work but also concerns with the meaning of the work and enhances its beauty. Such an evolution directs one to ‘Aesthetics’ a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of Beauty, art, taste and also with the appreciation of Beauty in all its intricate aspects. ‘Aesthetics’ is the study of sensori-emotional values and also a critical reflection of art and culture. The study provides a new perspective of the empirical world. A brief note on ‘Human Beauty’ will be provided before taking up the discussion on ‘Aesthetics’.
Human Beauty includes many physical factors such as health, youthfulness, facial, symmetry, expression and complexion. The concept of Beauty in men is known as ‘bishoren’ in Japan. Such persons have charisma and attract crowds. The characterization of a person as ‘beautiful’, whether on an individual basis or by community consensus, is often based on some combination of inner Beauty which includes factors such as personality, intelligence, grace, politeness, integrity, congruence or agreement, elegance, and qualities like kindness, sensitivity, tenderness or compassion, and creativity. Opposite to these characteristic features is ‘ugliness’ of which it has been said that over two billion people have some form of ugliness syndrome. But, there is a popular theory that states Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. According to this, what some people perceive to be beautiful is ugly to others and vice versa. In fact, in a literary piece, if ‘ugliness’ is described with meaningful combination of words, it is a ‘beautiful’ exposition. A good example for this is the portrayal of Caliban in Shakespeare’s The Tempest.

As noted earlier, a brief survey of ‘Aesthetics’ and ‘Aesthetic experience’ must be discussed. ‘Aesthetics’ is the study of Beauty and taste, whether in the form of the comic, the tragic, or the sublime. The word is derived from the Greek aisthetikos, meaning “of sense perception”. ‘Aesthetics’ has traditionally been part of philosophical pursuits, but it has become a more independent pursuit under Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who saw aesthetics as a unitary and self-sufficient type of human experience. Those studying aesthetics seek to
understand why some things arouse positive reactions whereas others negative ones, and how the aesthetic experiences are created. Here, the field of ‘Aesthetics’ begins to traverse the Philosophy of Mind because it touches on how and why aspects of men’s brain and consciousness operate.

F.E. Sparshott in his scholarly work *The Structure of Aesthetics* (1963) discusses in detail ‘Aesthetics’ and its theories. In Chapter III entitled *Beauty: the Term and its Relations* he tries to explicate the term ‘Beauty’. He observes:

The term “Beauty” itself has at least five different meanings in aesthetics that are quite clearly distinguishable from one another and these different meanings are tied to the context of different particular problems. In the context of a metaphysical consideration of the world’s order, Beauty is equated with its orderliness. In the epistemological context derived from Baumgarten, Beauty is thought of as adequacy to the mind in perception. From the anthropological point of view it may seem to be nothing more than sensual attractiveness. To the legislators of taste it tends to become one aesthetic quality variously differentiated among a number. Those reflecting more generally upon criticism may use it to mean “aesthetic excellence”: that is, as an almost empty term, standing for a problem rather than for its solution. (59)
He further views that “the beautiful is that which arouses admiration irrespective of considerations of utility”. (59) and that which pleases on apprehension. Whatever is excellent is both good or serviceable, and beautiful or admirable. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) offers new usage and employment of the word ‘Aesthetic’ meaning the judgment of taste. For him the “science of Aesthetics would be a deduction of the rules or principles of artistic or natural Beauty from individual taste”. Baumgarten claims that there are three ways to know perfection: “Beauty is the perfect (the absolute) perceived by the senses. Truth is the perfect perceived by reason. The good is the perfect attained by the moral will” (Views on Aesthetics – Aesthetica (1750) www.bookrags.com).

Baumgarten’s ‘Aesthetic Trinity’ then has three realms – Good, Truth and Beauty.

Incidentally, many centuries earlier Ramanuja has conceptualized Baumgarten’s ‘Aesthetic Trinity’, God as Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Visistadvaita looks at the whole world with all its cit and acit as the body of Iswara, hence called ‘Viswam’. When Ramanuja extols the beauty of the Lord, he actually exalts the Beauty of the whole Viswam only and thus substantiates “the realm of Beauty as autonomous as those of Truth and Goodness” (P.N.Srinivasachari 196). It is generally admitted that beauty is more attractive than Truth and Goodness, since it is tangible to optic sense. Visistadvaita gives a unique focus for this factor in the religious principle, especially in adoring the arca forms installed in the temples. It considers Beauty as the essential factor in
the divine plan of soul making. Man has sculpted the *arca* forms of God with the most beautiful imagination. He is able to see the Beauty in many forms – be it children, women, men, animals and birds – because the Lord has vivified the jiva by sowing the seed of His primal beauty that is absolute, in a transcendental charm and has added eternal value into its inner being.

Though Beauty is seen everywhere and in everything, its triumph is the creation of the human form with so much of intricacy. *Visistadvaita* recognizes the relativity of form and matter, from empirical to heavenly bodies which in turn is termed as the absolute beauty transfigured into an enchanting vision. It thereby forms a middle path between the ontological beyond and ethically perfect super-subject bridging the gulf between the finite and infinite - that is, aesthetics that mediates between metaphysics and ethics lying midway between sensuousness and spirituality. Leaning more towards spirituality, Ramanuja views the whole world as God, the greatest divine artist through all His creations or *srsti*. He tries to bring out the forms of beauty from the infinite beauty that has formless form (196). Each self has been described as a note in the musical scale and supposed to mark a rhythm in the beautiful poem of world. P.N.Srinivasachari concludes his chapter on “Brahman as *Bhuvana Sundara*” in his book *The Philosophy of Visistadvaita*:

The philosophy of aesthetics is as valid as metaphysics and ethical thought, for it is the enquiry into the nature of Brahman as the
beautiful and the blissful. As a speculative philosophy, it affords a new insight into the realistic and idealistic aspects of Beauty, and synthesizes its formal and material character. As Visistadvaitic aesthetics, it defines Brahman as *bhuvana sundara* and *Manmatha – manmatha* and identifies cosmic Beauty with the inner Beauty of the self. It then expounds the five beautiful forms of Brahman and the different kinds of *rasas* giving the highest value to *srngararasa* in its spiritualized aspect. Beauty leads to bliss. After controverting the *nirguna* theory, it insists on the aesthetic definition of Brahman as *Bhuvana sundara* and *anandamaya* and concludes that the absolute of metaphysics is the *anandamaya* of the philosophy of art. *Visistadvaita* is thus the only philosophy of religion that recognizes the eternal value of Beauty and defines Brahman as the beautiful and the blissful. (218 – 219)

The wide-range of meanings of the quality ‘Beauty’ indicates that such an aspect could be identified in almost all created things of the universe and becomes visible according to different perceptions. The universal attribute of Beauty, obviously takes a crucial status in the philosophy of Ramanuja as he conceives the Supreme to be the Cosmic Beauty or ‘*Bhuvana Sundara*’.

Ramanuja tirelessly celebrates ‘Divine Beauty’. Of the five forms of *Narayana*, namely, *Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Arca and Antaryami* (*Para* in *Sri
Vaikuntam, vyuga in Thiruparkadal, Vibhava the manifestations of Avatars, Arca the idols installed and worshipped in temples, and Antharyami, the divinity present in an individual) he had been enjoying the immanent divine form of Sri Narayana within himself, which he explicitly portrays in his work Sri Vaikunta Gadyam profoundly eulogising the Beauty of the Lord in his Divine abode Vaikunta. A sample of his exposition suffices to show that the acharya has no deficiency of words and is an excellent poet like Shakespeare, who in vibrant words describes his human imaginary characters such as the Fair Young Man of the Sonnets or Juliet or Cleopatra:

The One, who has the beautiful eyes as if it is just bloomed lotus flower, who has the eye brows like the creeper, who has the most beautiful lower lip, who has the sweet, pleasing smile on His lips, who has soft cheeks, sharp, prominent nose, bright, long, ear studs (kuNdalanGaL) that hang down to the shoulders; who has the neck like the conch, who has the calf muscles (that have been pressed by the dEvis and contain the fallen flowers from dEvis’ heads)- and the Four long hands extending upto the calf muscles; . . . (www.srivaishnava.org )

After this torrent of description, Ramanuja describes the Lord’s ornaments and His Divine weapons borne by Him. His another work Sri Ranga Gadhyam explains how the arca form of Lord Ranganathar has lured him. To Ramanuja,
‘beauty’ signifies only Divine beauty, that made the Alwars celebrate the Lord as the epitome of Beauty. The Alwars had been a source of inspiration to Ramanuja to derive the concept of Bhuvana Sundara. Further, in his Saranagathi Gadhyam he explains that the Lord’s form “is NOT a combination of various particles and matter; . . [it is] a wonder (arputham); which has no beginning and no end; . . blemishless; which is an unparalleled brightness body . . . and remain for ever young”. (www.srivaishnava.org)

The reader is reminded of Shakespeare’s ovation of the Fair young man of sonnets that he is young and handsome always, and Time cannot destroy him. He sings ecstatically: “O! how much more doth beauty beauteous seem / By that sweet ornament which truth doth give. (Sonnet 54) The poet thus bestows divine beauty on the man. The Beauty of the Lord, Ramanuja affirms in Saranagathi Gatyan, is due to His attributes and kalyana gunas. The term ‘Beauty’ is insipid to define its totality but can be ventured to explicate in terms of metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics. Srinivasachari presents a pithy clarification:

The aesthetic philosophy of Visistadvaita transforms the Brahman of metaphysics and the Isvara of ethics into the bhuvana sundara of the Bhagavata. . . . Aesthetics is midway between the finite and the infinite. This truth is beautifully expressed in the triple idea of Brahman possessing swarupa, rupa and guna. His swarupa, as sat, without a second as causa sui, cosmic ground and super-subject,
creates a feeling of remoteness, and his gunas arouse the sense of the Holy and the feeling of reverence. But his rupa or form as bhuvana sundara and Manmatha-manmatha acts as an aesthetic copula between his swarupa and His gunas and brings to light the attributes of intimacy and attractiveness, which are so vital to the mystic consciousness. (201-202)

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna Himself proclaims that He is the manifestation of the Bests in the world, the primeval seed for everything and the essence and soul of everything. He describes His Divine Glories in a brief exposition, by revealing His manifestations as a segment of His splendour. Towards the end He concludes: “yad-yad vibhutimat sattvam srimad urjitam eva ca / tad-tad evavagaccha tvam mama tejomsasambhavam” (X. 41) -- Whatever being there is glorious, prosperous or powerful, that know thou to be a manifestation of a part of My splendour”. (Swami Sivananda, Srimad Bhagavad Gita 403). S. Radhakrishnan explains further: “While all things are supported by God, things of beauty and splendour reveal Him more than others. Every deed of heroism, every life of sacrifice, every work of genius is a revelation of the Divine. The epic moments of a man’s life are inexplicably beyond the mind of man” (268). Srisaila Chakravarti provides various illustrations to enumerate the fact that everything -- matter and souls, gross or subtle -- forms the body of Paramatma or Iswara. He refers to The Brihadaranyaka Upanisad which says: “He who resides in the Earth whose body is the Earth. He who resides in Jiva
... whose body is Jiva” (57). The opening sloka of Vishnu Sahasra Namam, the one thousand names celebrating Lord Vishnu “Viswam Vishnu Vashatkaro” means that the whole viswam or world is Vishnu or it can also be interpreted as Vishnu, the One pervades the whole universe in the past, present and will be pervading the Universe in the future without any beginning or end.

This beauty of the universe with its countless, infinitesimal forms inspires Shakespeare. He readily grasps the varieties and disperses them through his characters, who demonstrate the nuances of the segments according to the context revealing the endless manifold patterns. Such a unique kaleidoscope gets its best display especially in his Sonnets, the three main themes being Time, Beauty and Love. Many of his sonnets describe the Beauty of a youth, a dark lady and other things such as seasons, sun, moon, flowers and so on. Nature images, perhaps, get their vital presentation in his Sonnets in which Time and Beauty are juxtaposed celebrating “Human Beauty”. The poet compares every stage of man to the various seasons. In Sonnet 2 he talks about forty winters besieging a person. He clearly explains in Sonnet 5 how the sweet summer of one’s youthful stage is led to ‘hideous winter’ of old age. The same idea is stressed in Sonnet 7 also when the poet describes the path of the sun from dawn to dusk, explicating the divine aspect of the sun’s ‘sacred majesty’. Shakespeare’s Sonnets commemorate multifarious features of Beauty that confirm its countless manifestations. For instance, though Sonnet 11 is addressed to the fair young man, the content of the Sonnet seems to venerate
Beauty. He says: “Look whom she best endowed, she gave the more; / Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish”.

Great thinkers assert that Beauty is synonymous with Truth. Shakespeare knowing this fact, draws images and metaphors from the cosmic to the empirical levels. Notwithstanding the aesthetic appreciation, these images and metaphors provoke the readers to deep thinking. Caroline Spurgeon explains in detail the varieties of nature images found in Shakespeare’s Plays. To quote her:

Nature – the life of English country-side, the weather and its changes, the seasons, the sky, the sunrise and dawn, the clouds, the rain and wind, sunshine and shadow; the garden, flowers, trees, growth and decay, pruning and grafting, manuring and weeding; the sea and the ships, the river and its banks, weeds and grasses, pools and water, animals, birds and insects, sport and games especially snaring birds, hunting and hawking; these are the things which chiefly occupy him and remain in his mind. (44)

Nature imagery with all its delicacies and subtle shades receive excellent treatment in his History plays also, though it is a common feature in the romantic comedies. For instance, Shakespeare gives different names to the sounds of wind which indicate the prevalent weather conditions.
While he describes the southern wind in *Henry IV Part I* he says:

The southern wind

Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,

And by his hollow whistling in the leaves

Foretells a tempest and blustering day       (V. i. 4-7)

The southern wind reminds the playwright of the war-sounds as it announces the battle of ‘blustering day’. In *Henry VI, Part III*, he describes the ‘raging wind’ which ‘blows up incessant showers’ and the hush of the wind before the rain commences as ‘when the rage allays the rain begins’ (IV.xiv.I5) The poet’s description of mere natural sounds of the wind opens a new dimension in the outlook of the readers about the incidents that follow in the plays. In the same way, the description about the delicate changes of light especially at dawn takes anybody to a magical world of experience. In *The Tempest* Act V, when Prospero’s plan draws to its climax to confront his enemies he draws a magic circle, asks Ariel the good spirit to collect them all and make them enter the circle. When all stand charmed, Prospero begins his speech with the words, “A solemn air” and continues describing the dawn thus: “And as the morning steals upon the night, / Melting the darkness” (V.i.70). Shakespeare also wants his readers to appreciate how Prospero calls the Beauty of ‘heavenly music’ to effect harmony. Caroline Spurgeon asserts that “Prospero abjures his magic and deliberately calls upon the aid of ‘heavenly music’ to resolve the discords, to charm the sense of his hearers and to comfort and restore them to peace and
harmony” (304). Shakespeare seems to say that the solemn, harmonious music resolves inner discord and initiates self-realization.

Shakespeare is not only impressed by the beauty in the changes of day, night and seasons but also by sea, another major image under Nature. His thoughts on sea are always a symbol for men’s emotions and passions. His sea images are related to storms and shipwrecks. To him “man is nature’s fragile vessel . . . in life’s uncertain voyage” (The Life of Timon of Athens, V.i.209-210). Every human being is compared to a frail bark set afloat on the great and stormy ocean of his own passions. This idea is effectively expressed in Romeo and Juliet:

… in one little body
Thou counterfeits a bark, a sea, a wind,
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
Do ebb and flow with tears: the bark thy body is,
Sailing in this salt flood: the winds thy sighs,
Who raging with thy tears and they with them,
Without a sudden calm, will overset
Thy tempest – tossed body (III.v.134 to 141)

The roaring image of sea compared to Juliet’s tears presents the pathetic figure of lovely Juliet, the mental picture painting the myriad images of Beauty in sorrow. The explication at the same time also points to the perennial predicament of
human beings of being tossed in the ebb and flow of life. Caroline Spurgeon adds some more images to Shakespeare’s works on his descriptions about (i) the ebb and flow of tides, (ii) the action of currents, (iii) a tide rushing through a breach and (iv) the infinite size, depth and capacity of the ocean.

While the Beauty in the sky and sea have been described with awe comparing them to the various stages and emotions of human beings thereby advising that man’s life should be in harmony with nature, it is interesting to note that he has not failed to appreciate the other creations of God also. Of the large animal group, an outstanding number of description is about birds the significant attraction being their movement. Caroline Spurgeon details the different movements of birds in England that seem to overtake the descriptions themselves. A sample of her exposition is given though the entire description deserves mention:

Not primarily their song, or their shape, or their colour, or their habits; but their flight, and their swift, accurate, easy movements when free; their fluttering, struggling movements when imprisoned; the soaring of the eagle and of the hawk, the ‘fell swoop’ of the kite, the wild geese flocking together or ‘severed’, . . . the plumed estridges (goshawks) that ‘wing the wind’, . . . the turkey-cock swelling and jetting ‘under his advanced plumes’, . . . the tiny wren fighting the owl to protect her young, . . . the imprisoned bird in a cage or on a silken thread, hopping a little from his lady’s hand, the
cock strutting ‘up and down’, . . . . All these and many more are the quick, graceful, characteristic movements of bird life which attract Shakespeare supremely, which he knows intimately and has registered with loving exactitude. (48)

The different slithering, stuttering movements noted by the critic also point to the nuances of Beauty, indicating that Beauty cannot just stop with mere creation; it renders subtle shades in creations’ dynamism also. This is so because Shakespeare seems to find the essence of life mostly in different types of motion in nature.

Shakespeare consequently extends his optical delight to aural joy, that of music in its multifarious forms, with which he replenishes himself – and thereby the readers -- in many of plays. Music is, undoubtedly, an aspect of Beauty with attributes of calmness and peacefulness. Shakespeare loved music, an art form consisting of sequences of sounds in time, especially the tones of definite pitch organized with melody, harmony, rhythm and according to the timbre. Music is an instrument to reveal divine love or devotion in all religions. In accordance to this, Shakespeare introduces music in his plays to provide serenity and brilliance to his audience. To keep alive the atmosphere of sophisticated and delicious comedy packed with emotions and romance, he complements music to add extra dimension to the play. A few illustrations may be noted.
Constant presence of music is scattered throughout the play *The Merchant of Venice*. When Bassanio is about to make his choice Portia declares: “Let music shall sound as he doth make choice / Then if he lose, he makes a swan like end, / Fading in music” (III.ii.45). Portia is confident that Bassanio would be “summoned to marriage by the direct sounds in break of the day” and this shows the exercise of the power of music in one’s mood. In the exquisite scene at the end, when Lorenzo and Jessica are waiting for the return of their mistress along with Lancelot, the clown, “The sounds of music” again “creep in our ears” (V.i.61) as he orders the musicians “to draw her home with music” (V.i.74). Music in this play is associated with the tenderness and feminine beauty, and also indicates that by its strength it renders sustenance to one’s self. Shakespeare points out the subtle beauty of the solemn music and relates it to the sacred bond that perpetuates life.

Music occurs in varieties throughout the play *Twelfth Night* by directing itself to the gentle love moods. In the opening scene itself Duke Orsino waxes in eloquence and declares that he needs music to smoothen his lovelorn heart.

If Music be the food of love, play on.

Give me excess of it, that surfeiting

The appetite may sicken and so die. (I.i.1-3)

If music could satisfy his craving for Olivia’s love, then he wants that to be played. But he fears that overindulging of it might lead him to a fall, just as
overeating leads one to trouble. The sound image -- breathing upon a bank of violets, stealing the odour from them and giving it to others -- is poetical. Caroline Spurgeon beautifully explains the imagery: “The images reflect subtly and accurately the rather peculiar mixture of tones in the play, music, romance, sadness and beauty interwoven with wit, broad comedy, and quick-moving snapping dialogue” (268).

The aesthetics of Music takes a further dimension in the play as the playwright creates musically talented clowns. Feste, one of the members of Olivia’s household is the wittiest of all the characters of the play. He takes the role one step ahead as he composes and performs thematically significant songs: “He weaves into his music the primary theme of the play, love, and in so doing posits music as a secondary theme. By play’s end, song and love are thematically and theatrically intertwined, entirely as a result of Feste’s insistence on commingling the two”. (“Contagious Breath: Love and Song in Twelfth Night”. http://www.scribd.com/doc/2269026, November 1992). In the same way, Maryam Iqbal in her article “Music in Twelfth Night” (http://bookstove.com/classics/music-in-twelfth-night, May 20, 2009) discusses music taking up an eminent part in the thematic structure of the play and illustrates the clown’s song at the request of Duke Orsino in Act II, Scene 4 that begins with the words,

Come away, come away death,

And in sad cypress let me be laid:
Fly away, fly away breath,
I am slain by a fair cruel maid:    (II.iv.53-56)

This sad song depicts love as suffering and is very important for understanding the main theme of love in the play – so observes the critic. The song, however, “is concerned about the crises that love has created in the play. It reports about the suffering and the death wish of the lovers who are unable to get the love of their beloved”. Perhaps, this is the ‘ugly’ aspect of music, a feature which never one thinks of.

While discussing this play under the caption “Season and Mask in Twelfth Night” in Chapter 4 of his book *Shakespeare and the Nature of time*, Frederick Turner forwards a salient observation that “one of the most effective ways that society has found to harmonize itself and its members with the rhythms of time is the seasonal ritual” (51) and Shakespeare opts some of the mechanisms of such a ritual in the play by including members like Feste, Clown, Sir Toby and others to highlight the ritual and holiday mood with their songs and revelry. Turner’s words must be mentioned:

In order for holiday foolery to be successful, it must be accepted in its own spirit and affirmed by all the members of the community. . . . The Fool is closely connected with the Holiday. Whereas the Holiday is the periodical inoculation of society with what lies beyond and beneath it, the Fool is the constant reminder to society
of these areas of experience. Those figures who live on the edge of society are very important to it. . . . These figures represent common humanity and act as the *fines* of the society; and they point beyond society to the values and forces that society cannot comfortably contain, but without which it is lifeless. (54-55)

Turner’s reflection at once indicates that these constituents of common humanity are not only aspects of Beauty who splash beauty with their artistry but also the preservers of time, its age-old convictions and values. Shakespeare thus seems to adhere to the *Visistadvaitic* concepts of *kala* and *bhuvana sundara*. He has not introduced song, music, dance and foolery just for the sake of merriment alone to render a romantic comedy play successful in the theatre.

Similarly, it looks as though music is carrying forward the entire play, *The Tempest* with its various musical manifestations not only engulfs the dramatic personae but also titillates the audience. Against the backdrop of the roaring sea, Ariel, Prospero’s spirit-servant is ever ready with tunes to play lullaby to Miranda, to lure Ferdinand, to erect magical scenes and convert the island into a theatre and compose jingles to charm all the ship–wrecked men. This mesmerizing play becomes more charming because of the single spirit which can be likened to Shakespeare’s musical spirit that resonates throughout. Incidentally, no act in this play is without the mention of music. William Hazlitt in his monumental work *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays* (1817) makes a wonderful
remark: “Prospero's enchanted island seems to have risen up out of the sea; the airy music, the tempest-tossed vessel, the turbulent waves, all have the effect of the landscape background of some fine picture. Shakespeare's pencil is (to use an allusion of his own) 'like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in'.” (116)

Caliban’s characterization is one of his masterpieces. Ugliness cannot be more beautifully portrayed. To quote Hazlitt again:

But in itself it is one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakespeare's characters, whose deformity whether of body or mind is redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it. It is the essence of grossness, but there is not a particle of vulgarity in it. Shakespeare has described the brutal mind of Caliban in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted uncontrolled, uncouth and wild, uncramped by any of the meannesses of custom. It is 'of the earth, earthy'. It seems almost to have been dug out of the ground, with a soul instinctively superadded to it answering to its wants and origin.

(118)

The great Master correctly points to the fact that Caliban is created right from the elements and has not learnt the commonplace affectation and sophistication.

Juxtaposed with Ariel, the airy nothing who has been given a local habitation and a name and who conducts his spiriting job gently with music,
Caliban’s figure “acquires a classical dignity in the comparison” (117). His is a poetical character and so fittingly catches the rhythm of music. As he conducts Stephano and Trinculo to Prospero’s cell, Caliban reveals his superiority of natural capacity over greater knowledge and greater folly; when Ariel frightens them with his music, Caliban encourages them with superb poetry of the senses:

Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,
That if I then had waked after long sleep,
Would make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me: when I wak'd
I cried to dream again. (III. i.118-126)

Ariel’s songs are class of their kind as they fill the entire play with soft notes. Hazlitt excellently comments:

“Shakespeare has, as it were by design, drawn off from Caliban the elements of whatever is ethereal and refined, to compound them in the unearthly mould of Ariel. Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual,
the gross and delicate. Ariel is imaginary power, the swiftness of thought personified” (121).

Ariel as a segment of *Bhuvana Sundara* obviously composes other-worldly tunes. For instance, the invisible Ariel draws Ferdinand with a welcome song, “Come unto these yellow sands, / And then take hands” that puzzles him whether the music is from air or earth. It is immediately followed by a more meaningful, penetrating song:

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Full fathom Eve thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change,
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell--
Hark! I now I hear them, ding-dong bell. (I.ii.460-468)
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The song rejuvenates the sodden spirit of Ferdinand who remarks: “The ditty does remember my drown'd father. / This is no mortal business, nor no sound / That the earth owns: I hear it now above me” (I.ii.469-471). This is no ordinary music. This belongs to the category of “unheard melodies” of Keats, the cosmic music that can be heard privately by an individual in his/ her soul. This is the Music of Beauty.
John P. Cutts in his article “Music and Supernatural in ‘The Tempest’: A Study in Interpretation” in the journal *Music and Letters* (Vol.XXXIX, Issue 4, pp.347-58) comments:

The music of spheres is not referred to specifically as such in ‘The Tempest’, but the whole play is conceived as taking part on an island that resounds continually to music in the air, which is, I believe, equivalent to music of the spheres. The island governed by the benevolent power of Prospero is in itself a type of the golden-age island, where no ill is ultimately allowed, where strife and friction are allayed and everything is to be wrapped in a serene air of celestial harmony. . . . By music’s power [Prospero] is able to resolve his problems one by one and harmony is restored. (347. http://ml.oxfordjournals.org/content/XXXIX/4/347.extract)

The critic views that Shakespeare seems to affirm that music will absolve all errors. Shakespeare as a theatre-person certainly knows the merit of music as stage-manager, but the way he incorporates it becomes connotative with deeper meaning.

Subsequently, the discussion must take up ‘Human Beauty’, deemed as two kinds, the physical or outward and the mental or inner beauties. The former is based on the structure of the various parts of the body, with certain persons gifted with the proportionate assembly of those parts. Though this form attracts
the onlooker, nevertheless it cannot be denied that many are still remembered for their Beauty of heart and soul. Such people endowed with inner Beauty will always perceive the world around them as beautiful. In other words, Beauty of the outer form is appreciated along with noble qualities of a person. The typical illustration is Miranda in *The Tempest*.

Like Miranda, Viola in *Twelfth Night* could also identify the inner beauty of a person. After the ship wreck, Viola is left with no other option than to go to Illyria and be there for sometime. She thinks that her brother Sebastian is lost in the sea. The captain of the ship helps Viola to get settled temporarily in Illyria as a page under the Duke Orsino. While thanking the captain, she says:

> There is a fair behavior in thee captain,
> And though that nature with a beauteous wall
> Doth oft close in pollution, yet of thee,
> I will believe thou hast a mind that suits
> With this thy fair and outward character         (I.ii.49-53)

Viola is moved by the noble character of the captain who possesses both the inner and outer Beauty to help a stranded girl. A handsome person often is corrupted inwardly. But, here is a man who readily comes forward to protect her. In the same play Antonio mistakes the disguised Viola for Sebastian, her twin brother and accuses her of taking away his purse. She refuses any knowledge about the purse given to her. Antonio laments to the First Officer: “None can be
called deformed but the unkind, / Virtue is Beauty” (III.iv. 289-290). He rues that virtue cannot be deformed and that he has been deceived by a fair outward appearance. He does not know that he has been really misled by the disguise.

However, all these delineations become diminutive before Antony and Cleopatra. Shakespeare’s portrayal of the protagonists of his play *Antony and Cleopatra* is an ingenuity of a totally different kind, his artistic skill perhaps reaching its zenith. Cleopatra’s depiction of grace and beauty is of infinite variety; Antony surpasses any kind of description, declares his Cleopatra:

\[ \ldots \text{nature wants stuff} \]
\[ \text{To vie strange forms with fancy, yet to imagine} \]
\[ \text{An Antony were nature’s piece, ‘gainst fancy,} \]
\[ \text{Condemning shadows quite. (V. ii.117-120)} \]

Interestingly, Shakespeare devises his cynic character Enobarbus, one of Antony’s men, talk in best poetry the exuberance of Cleopatra’s beauty. Enobarbus’ picturing makes Agrippa and Maecenas of the opposite wing stand awe-struck with mouth wide open, just as the readers are surprised at the poetic-magic that provokes them to have a visual feast. He describes Cleopatra’s first meeting with Antony, the pageant she conducted with her retinue when “she purs’d up his heart upon the river of Cydnus” (II.ii.219-220), as she presented herself as the dignified empress of the surrounding.
For her own person,

It beggar'd all description: she did lie

In her pavilion--cloth-of-gold of tissue——

O'er-picturing that Venus where we see

The fancy outwork nature

(II. ii.229-233)

The copious, unparalleled outpouring of Enobarbus in about fifty lines rounds off

with the oft-quoted verse:

Age cannot wither her

Her infinite variety: other women cloy

The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry

Where most she satisfies.

(II.ii.271)

M.R. Ridley in his Arden edition of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1968) has included

the scholarly ‘Introduction’ of R.H. Case in his edition published in 1906, which

offers a detailed character-study of the puzzling protagonists. Of Cleopatra he

observes:

Cleopatra is the greatest of the enchantresses. She has wit, grace, humour; the intoxication of sex breathes from her; she unites the passion of a great temperament with the fathomless coquetry of a courtesan of genius. . . . It is this magnificence which invests Cleopatra’s criminality with a kind of sublimity, so vast is the scale of her being, and so tremendous the force of her passions. . . . She is infinitely varied, but not in the least complex. . . . Perhaps in the
end the best description of her is Enobarbus’ simple ‘a wondrous piece of work’. (xlv-xlvi)

If Cleopatra outworks nature, Antony is nature’s piece against fancy. Antony’s colossal figure has been variously described such as “triple pillar of the world” (I.i.112), the “demi Atlas of this earth” (I.v.28) and so on. Shakespeare relentlessly provides cosmic epithets and metaphors to explicate the vastness of this universe of Antony and Cleopatra. He sees Antony with all magnificence and grandeur of the Cosmic Beauty that has been befittingly pictured in Cleopatra’s words. The lyrical elegy of Cleopatra is replete with passion as she gives vent to her feelings to Dolabella, a follower of Octavius Caesar. The majesty of Antony and the equally magnificent poetic gush of Cleopatra make the man dumb – struck:

His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course,
And lighted the little O, the earth. (V.ii. 96-98)

This stream of celebration is almost incantatory that reverberates in the Hindu mind, of Purusasukta, the hymn in the Rigveda, dedicated to Purusha, the Cosmic Being, described as a primeval gigantic person from whose body the world is created. The hymn says that the Moon is born from his mind, the Sun from his eyes. Shakespeare converts Antony the ordinary mortal as a Cosmic Person, THE MAN and thus confers an incomparable, immortal status that could
not be attained by any other created being. It is his Cleopatra who gives him that unrivaled standing. She begins her chant by saying that his face covers the heavens, the eyes – The Sun and the Moon -- for ever rolling, carrying their course and of performing their duty, to be vigilant and light the earth. Antony the light and life of the earth, seems to be discharging the duties of the Hindu God. This colossal figure naturally has to stand firmly on the shores of the oceans that flow between his legs with his raised arm protecting the world like a crest. “His legs bestrid the ocean: his rear'd arm / Crested the world” (V.ii.100-101). His voice to friends is just the opposite to his voice that shook the ‘orb’ and it is a ‘rattling thunder’ to others. All these descriptions show only the majestic way of delivering Antony’s extraordinary cosmic beauty. In her lyrical elegy she further explicates his scale of bounty: “There was no winter in’t.: an autumn it was / That grew the more by reaping” (V.ii.105-106). The perennial seasons, in comparison to him, become mere adjectives to express his magnificence. His livery is studded with crowns and crownets and as he walked “realms and islands were / As plates dropp’d from his pocket”. (V.ii.109-110)

Apart from Cleopatra, other characters too associate him with other-worldly images. To Enobarbus, he is ‘a mine of Beauty’, Alexas, describes him that he is “Like to the time o’th’year between the extremes / Of hot and cold” (I.v.59). Even Lepidus, one of the Triumvirs, though dissatisfied with Antony
comments that “his faults in him seem as the spot of heaven” (I.iv.12). When Antony dies Octavius Caesar, his opponent declares:

... The round world

Should have shook lions into civil streets

And citizens to their dens. The death of Antony

Is not a single doom: In the name lay

A moiety of the world (V.i.18-22)

Similarly, this prosaic, matter-of-fact warrior becomes poetic and gentle as he is drawn to the beauty of dead Cleopatra:

. . . but she looks like sleep,

As she would catch another Antony

In her strong toil of grace. . . . (V.ii.395-397)

She shall be buried by her Antony.

No grave upon the earth shall clip in it

A pair so famous. (V.ii.469-471)

The elevation of Antony as the Cosmic Man and the unsurpassable depiction of Cleopatra as mortal Beauty are the supreme illustrations of Human/Divine Beauty. At this juncture, it is imperative to record what G. Wilson Knight has said in his article “The Transcendental Humanism of Antony and Cleopatra”, included in his book The Imperial Theme (1963):

Anthony and Cleopatra discloses a vision rather ‘universalistic’: nature itself is here transfigured, and our view is directed not to the
material alone, nor to the earth alone, but rather to the universal elements of earth, water, air, fire, and music, and beyond these to the all-transcending visionary humanism which endows man with a supernatural glory. (200)

The critic continues to say that the vision presented is “eminently life-vision and a love-vision: and our love-theme ranges from purely sensuous delights to the rarefied heights . . . of intense spiritual contemplation. But, throughout, all is subdued to a single rare poetic quality of an especial kind” (200). He thus points to the ‘literary beauty’ of the work also.

The ‘Transcendental Humanism’ receives a further dimension in terms of Indian Philosophy. In her unpublished article entitled “Antony and Cleopatra from the point of view of the Sankhya Philosophy” presented in the Fifth World Shakespeare Congress, August 1991 held in Tokyo, Padma Srinivasan ventures “to show that both Antony and Cleopatra represent the two sankhyan ontological factors, Purusha and Prakrti, the male and female principles of the universe, and also to elaborate and establish that Wilson Knight’s theory of ‘Transcendental Humanism’ is nothing but the reflection of the sankhyan mode”. The scholar finally notes that “the dramatist gets the archetypal vision of prakrti in Cleopatra, who has been accused of by many, as a sorceress, magician, witch, coquette and so on. She has to be so because prakrti is so”. Prakrti has to unite with Purusha to carry on the cosmic evolution. Cleopatra’s call in Act V scene 2, “Husband, I
come” by becoming fire and air leaving the baser elements to earth signifies this union of the prime evolutes of Beauty generating infinite variety. Cleopatra’s visualizing the sublime cosmic form of Antony means this fusion only as she prepares herself to create a “new heaven and new earth” (I. i. 17).

Cosmic Beauty, then, is sublimity, a mystery. In Aesthetics, the ‘sublime’—from the Latin sublimis meaning “sloping up to the lintel, uplifted, high, lofty, elevated, exalted”—is the quality of greatness or vast magnitude, whether it is physical, intellectual, metaphysical, aesthetic, spiritual or artistic. The term points to an incomparable greatness and is beyond all possibility of calculation, measurement or imitation (www.freedictionary.com). In literary criticism, ‘sublime’ indicates grandeur of thought, emotion, spirit and the power to provoke ‘ecstasy’ that characterize great literature. Sublimity is associated with terror provoked by whatever is enormous, powerful, obscure and astonishing. Professor Michelis views: “the sublime is dynamic, the beautiful static. Beauty delights us; Sublimity amazes us” (qtd by Sparshott 77). John Dennis (1657-1734), British dramatist and critic, has talked in detail about ‘Sublime’. In his work The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry: A Critical Discourse in two parts (1701), he observes that the ‘sublime’ is great thoughts which move the soul from its ordinary situation by its natural enthusiasm. “The ideas which produce Terror are necessarily accompanied with Admiration . . . with surprise . . . with Astonishment . . . and as Terror is perhaps the violent test of all passions, it consequently makes an impression which we
cannot resist, and which is hardly to be defaced: and no passion is attended with greater Joy that Enthusiastic Terror” (qtd by Sparshott 79). Dennis also refers to the Greek author Longinus’ famous work The Sublime (1998) and says that he has not directly said what the sublime is.

Yet in the first six or seven chapters of his book, he takes a great deal of pains to set before us the effects which it produces in the minds of men; as for example, that it causes in them admiration and surprise; a noble pride, and a noble vigour, an invincible force, transporting the soul from its ordinary situation, and a transport, and a fulness of joy mingled with astonishment. (Andrew Ashfield, and Peter De Bolla, ed. The Sublime: a Reader in British eighteenth-century Aesthetic Theory (1998) 34)

According to Dennis the ‘Enthusiastic Passion’ in poetry makes the reader feel the ‘Sublime’.

Subsequently, Dennis’ “Enthusastic Terror” reminds one of what Rudolf Otto (1869-1937), an eminent German Lutheran theologian and scholar of comparative religion observes in his classic work The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational factor in the Idea of the Divine and its relation to the Rational (1923). He defines the concept of the holy as ‘numinous’, meaning that the reality of holiness includes more ineffable attributes -- the holy minus its moral factor is the ‘numinous’, a mystery. Otto denotes it by the Latin phrase mysterium tremendum et fascinans — it is mysterious (mysterium) that is both
terrifying (tremendum) and fascinating (fascinans) at the same time, the mystery that is both awe-inspiring and fascinating. He views that this overwhelming feeling creates ‘creature-consciousness’ or creature feeling “the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures” (The Idea of the Holy, 10). The experience of the “trembling” is the quintessential religious experience, comprising the three elements of mystery, awe, and fascination (or attraction) so intimately related as to form an irreducible synthetic whole. The paradoxical tension between the fear inspired by the otherworldly Sacred and the simultaneous irresistible attraction it exerts, is the very essence of religious consciousness. The ‘numinous’ then is sublime and mysterious. Dolabella, perhaps, must have had a similar experience when Cleopatra pictures her numinous Cosmic Man, her Bhuvana Sundara.

Obviously, Ramanuja’s Saranagati Gadyam tries to exemplify the meaning of ‘sublimity’ in different terms since the Lord, Bhuvana Sundara surpasses all explication and stands supreme. Shakespeare also attempts exposition of Cosmic Man and seems to emphasize that any person can reach sublimity with austere inner beauty. If Ramanuja perceives Him as the Bhuvana Sundara, the Cosmic Beauty embracing all cit and acit in Him, Shakespeare looks at the whole world as beauty, thereby confirming that the concept of Bhuvana Sundara is appropriate in his line of thinking also. Ability to envisage the vision of the cosmic form requires as Dennis observes, the ‘Enthusiastic
Passion’, a numinous consciousness to create the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. One has to admit that man’s vocabulary is inadequate to define it; it can only be experienced.

The minuscule ingredients of the *cit* and *acit*, perhaps, get attracted and fused together to generate the awe-inspiring, fascinating experience. The release of such a power or consciousness is yet another factor to ponder about, the investigation of which will be taken up in the next chapter, ‘The Concept of *dharmabhuta jnana* or Attributive Consciousness’.