

Concluding Remarks in Summing Up

Looking back I realize my inadequacies and shortcomings. It was a taxing enterprise to span the long stretches of thoughts and theories across the centuries, from Plato, through Hume and Kant, and finally reaching art to our own times, talking of Marx, and the problem of interpretation. The very concept of aesthetic judgement had undergone sea-change from one thinker to another, some of engagements were ontological, some epistemic, some definitional.

The problem of definition occupies an important place in Philosophy. One can recall what Ramsey had said that essentially, philosophy is a system of definitions, or only too often a description of how definitions might be given. This has been found no less true in aesthetics. Differences of opinion often turn on the issue of identifying necessary and sufficient conditions for making a judgement, its validity and viability. Hence some attention has been paid to the problem of definition in aesthetics.

There has been issues relating to the question : what is art ? The answers to the question are essentialist or non-essentialist. The essentialist holds on to essentialism, while the non-essentialist is usually indefinibilist. A classical figure in indefinibilist camp was G.E.Moore. He held that since value terms are names of non-natural *simple* qualities, they cannot be defined. This metaphysical thesis or the ontology of *simple* entities may not be entertained by all concerned with aesthetic judgement. A non-essentialist indefinability position has been reinforced by Wittgenstein, and some of his followers. This has opened new possibilities in aesthetic reasoning and new concepts of thinking in matters relating to art has come to light and practice.

Hegel had once remarked that Cartesian dualism has poisoned philosophy for ever, and following Hegel we might say that Plato's polarity of *mimesis* and creativity in the arts had proved and posited a problematic for all subsequent thinkers to encounter and answer. One can view Croce's theory of intuition expression, supplemented by Collingwood, as a mode of answering Plato's strong argument in

favour of mimesis. Of course, Plato had other views of artistic creation than the mimetic one, for example, in the dialogue called *Ion*.

The office of imagination in art creation is an important issue, and it requires to have a philosophy of mind to account for imaginations. Plato's philosophy of mind denigrated imagination only to be reinstated by Croce and Collingwood. Historically both rationalism and empiricism of Locke had inadequate theory of imagination. It was with Hume that imagination gradually was restored to have a cognitive role to place in the experience of causal connections. As an imperative: 'imagine' plays a role significant in arguments. Not only in aesthetics, but also in the area of empirical knowledge imagination came to be assigned a cognitive role of synthesis by Kant in the first *Critique*. The conceptual distance from Kant's assigning the role of pre-cognitively necessary synthesis to imagination determined his definition of the beautiful as the *Idea* of the imagination, and from this, it becomes easier for Coleridge to coin the term "esemplastic" for the faculty. Shelley's statement as regards the office of imagination in his *Defence of Poetry* can also be traced back to Kant. Considered in this perspective, Kant could be put at the fountain head of the Romantic conception of art and aesthetics. The philosophical foundations of the Romantic view of art is to be looked for in Kant's third *Critique*. It is no wonder that Goethe held the third *Critique* in great esteem.

I have tried to show the Kant's linkage with his Scottish predecessors, Shaftesbury and Hutcheson in particular. It is true that Kant developed his concept of Taste on the basis of their views relating to the *public* nature of moral interest, which, in the hands of Kant, became the thesis of *disinterestedness* of aesthetic judgement. Hume's celebrated essay "The Standard of Taste" is a classic of its kind, and bears a road map to Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgement. The discussion of Hume's ideas on aesthetic judgement in relation to that of Kant's is quite infrequent, but within my limited capabilities, I have attempted to point to Hume - Kant linkage in the matter of aesthetic judgement. In point of Kant's analysis is a sort of watershed between the classical and the modern approaches to the problem of aesthetic judgement.

Croce has been the next important thinker with a well-formulated philosophy of mind. Its idea of the spirit (mind) and its activity (pre-conceptual) opens a new window on to art and art activity. This point is often profaned, but Croce's philosophy of mind appears to be singularly important as a rejoinder to Plato's argument for mimesis. Croce comes up with the clear notion of creativity, and along with Collingwood, and we have here a unique view regarding aesthetic creation.

In Schopenhauer we have a development of the Kantian thesis of disinterestedness, and seemed important to take it into account. The circle of literary critics and the post-modernists, the names of Schopenhauer or Nietzsche are familiar, but philosophers in India are hardly aware of the important ideas available with these two thinkers. Of late, the influence of Schopenhauer on Wittgenstein's ideas is recently coming to light, and has also been a significant publication. No discussion of Kant's idea of aesthetic judgement in terms of disinterestedness can be said to be complete without looking into its development and ramification in Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*.

Tolstoy's *What is Art ?* deserves to be heard as challenging the fashionable slogan of *art for the sake of art*. I am happy I could have some attention paid to it. In one way, Tolstoy is related to Plato in so far as he makes the artist responsible to society, and in another way, he opposes the Romantic conception of art, and in particular the art for art's sake conception of art, Tolstoy cuts across the talks of high art and low or pop art, and underscores the place of emotions in art. Tolstoy himself was a supreme artist in novels and shortstories, and yet he chastised such great names as Shakespeare and Beethoven. He revolted against the view of art and the artist as an alienated individual. He wanted art to be related to the people and their universal emotions of joys and sorrows. It was the problem of communication that worried Tolstoy. Art, he argued, must be universally communicable, both horizontally and vertically across space and time. Art should be enjoyable to all, and not to the select few or to a coterie. This entails the idea of social responsibility of the artist and art is rendered as a social phenomenon. Tolstoy is motivated by a humanism, beyond the barriers of sophistication, reification and

artificiality. Great art, for Tolstoy, should be simple and direct as the parables of the Bible. The later ideas of Marxist art highlighting social realism owe a great deal to Tolstoy.

The linguistic turn in Philosophy, in the wake of analysis and Wittgenstein, had given a new impetus to art criticism and the concept of aesthetic judgement gets considerably enlarged. Earlier the aesthetic predicates were few in number, 'beautiful' was almost a paradigm with Kant. Analytical writers pointed to a host of aesthetic predicates, besides 'beautiful', and justification of the judgements took a new turn and novel arguments to come in vogue. Under the influence of Wittgenstein, the *art* instead of *Art*, came to be emphasized. It came to be doubted if one form of aesthetic judgement was available for all forms of art. Generalisability in the matter of the art came to be viewed with scepticism. With the publication of *Aesthetics and Language*, edited by Elton one noticed Passmore's critique of Croce's expression theory, and Wollheim's *Art and its Objects* rendered aesthetic judgement almost indistinguishable from philosophical analysis. In the meantime, Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form* brought music too within the scope of aesthetic judgement. More and more the views of artists and poets came to be given credence and importance than even before. A major poet as T.S.Eliot was a major critic as well, and his ideas of criticism brought changes in literary appreciation almost to the point of a revolution. New critics and philosophers of art as Dickie, Bullough, Danto, and others have brought in novel criteria and arguments in the area of aesthetic judgement and matters relating to art. The concept of 'art-world' and the idea of the institutional theory of art are to challenge the earlier notions of art and aesthetic judgement. Bullough's idea of psychological distance is a novel idea towards appreciating a work of art in a non-practical mode, and could be traced back to Kant's thesis of disinterestedness. The concept has been influential in the area of literary criticism.

The concept of Intentional Fallacy has been another powerful weapon to reclaim the autonomy of the art object from the psychology of the creator.

The art object has its own ontology, and it should stand independent of the intentions of the creator. Later, with the death of the author, all authorial references were dropped from the discourse of criticism, and it was the reader's response that came to occupy the stage. In point of fact, it was T.S.Eliot who distinguished the man who *writes* from the man who *suffers*, and made poetry free of the biography of the poet. It was the readers' response what counted most for the discourse of criticism.

Phenomenology has contributed greatly to aesthetics in recent times, perhaps a little more than analytic philosophy. Roman Ingarden's phenomenological investigations into the nature of the art object have revealed newer dimensions of aesthetic experience. In the case of literary works, Derrida and Roland Barthes have contributed greatly to the problem of interpretation and meaning. Meaning was formerly understood as a semantic function of words and sentences. The correspondance theory of truth had a greater hold in the matter of determining truth and falsity of linguistic usages. The theory of emotive meaning, for a time, offered some respite, and I.A.Richards' analysis helped, to an extent, save literary expressions, such as poetry and novels, from being thrown into the limbo nonsense. With Derrida and deconstruction an entire new approach was inaugurated as regards meaning, and a new aesthetics is on verge of being born.

The relationship of ideology and art came to receive a focus in Marxism. It may have had its antiquity in Plato. But Marxism sought to interpret and understand works of art in terms of social dialectics and historical materialism. Within a short time the thesis gained momentum and critics appeared on the scene with new tools of analysis. The theory underwent several ramifications, both in Russia and Eastern Europe, and creative writers and painters too contributed towards the formulation of the Marxist theory of art and aesthetics. In course of years, the rigidity of its earlier formulation came to be softened, a balanced statement has been available in Eric Newton's works.

But it is a pity that inspite of the fact India has had centuries of art-critical literature, and masterpieces of art belonging to world class have been created, yet its presence is hardly felt in the critical discourse of the West, This is very sad. The critical literature in Sanskrit from Bharat to Jagannath and Visvanath is rich and profound in musings and theories of meaning, suggestion and decoding of symbols. Hardly ever its vigorous presence is felt in writings of thinkers and philosophers of the West. And even if it is there, it is mentioned in a casual and apologetic fashion. Even in our own times, aesthetics writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sri Aurobindo, Hiranna, K.C.Bhattacharyya and a host of others deserve respectful mention in any discussion of art and aesthetics.

Of the earlier writers, Abhinavagupta has received some recognition as a master thinkers, but that too in a limited circle of admirers and thinkers. In the remaining part of this section I would like to say a little about the aesthetic theories of meaning formulated in India. The most influential of the theories have been the following : *utpattivāda*, *anumitivāda* and *abhivyaktivāda* . The theories seek to find the locus of the aesthetic relish. The aesthetic meaning either gets concretised *on the stage* through the actions of the actions of the actors in a drama, or it is inferred by the spectators, or it *felt as a deepening of consciousness* of the portrayed emotions. Oviously the concept of aesthetic judgement undergones a change in the Indian context. It is no longer a matter of ascertaining the meaning of such aesthetic predicates as 'beautiful', etc., rather it relates to the experiential value that results in course of one's encounter with literary works of art. The experiential value consists in a feeling of relish or delight in experiencing the feelings without of course undergoing them at that moment. As K.C.Bhattacharyya has put : a tragedy may be heart-rending, but it does not rend the heart. Aesthetic emotions are felt as unfelt. It will be easy to recall Kant's notion of disinterestedness or better still, Bullough idea of psychical distance. In Kant's it is the predicate of the judgement, reflective and not determinant, that matters. In the case of the Indian theory, If there is any judgement at all, it is a judgement on the quality of the experience. What is common is the non-practical mode of awareness.

In India aesthetic meaning is conceived in terms of *lakṣanā*, *abhidhā* and *vyanjanā*. There is long controversy regarding *vyanjanā* and its admissibility. Nyāya seeks to do away with it, preferring *anumitivāda*. *Vyanjanā* is a genre of meaning beyond the usual and the conventional *abhidha* and *lakṣana*. It is *oblique* or suggested meaning that goes beyond, even transcends, the lexical or the meaning in use. It is said to be soul of poetry, and is looked upon as constituting the excellence of poetical discourse. The distinction between a *statement* and *poetry* is founded upon in the suggestion beyonding the lexical meaning of words and sentences. Ingarden's distinction of the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic may be taken to imply the distinction of meanings instituted by Abhinavagupta. Again, one of the points worthnoting in this context is the suggestion that text is a social production, and therefore its aesthetic excellence can only be ascertained by and amongst the society concerned. The concept of *Sahṛdaya* opens itself up to an understanding. Though the text it is society that incarnates itself. Abhinavagupta highlights also the important point about the nature of psyche involved in literary criticism. And the link is intellectual: it is a *prasthāna*, a systematic endeavour in understanding the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. In our time, K.C.Bhattacharyya's essay "The concept of Rasa" is a remarkable restatement of Abhinavagupta's phenomenological position, and the positing of what Bhattacharyya calls "the heart universal" is the ontology of aesthetic experience. It is a pity that except A.C.Danto, no body appears to have taken into account Bhattacharyya's remarkable achievement in restating Abhinavagupta's position in modern terms.

It is a singular fact that aesthetics and art criticism in India developed in the form of theories of meaning. Aesthetic meaning is a category of meaning, distinguished from both semantic (*abhidhā*) and syntactical (*lakṣanā*) ones. Philosophical school Nyaya, Mimamsa and Vedanta offer their own theories, and the test of a theory lies in providing a coherent account of aesthetic meaning alongside of their epistemological and ontological positions. Even among the literary critics philosophical persuasions have varied. But by far Abhinavagupta, Visvanath and Jagannath have exerted greater influence and more persuasiveness than others.

Just as William Empson's study of ambiguity is a classic of modern critical literature so should be Kuntaka's concept of *Vakrokti* : what Kuntaka means by *Vakrokti* is an unusual statement the type of which is found only in the realm of poetry and rightly calls it the *Jīvita* or the life of poetry as a form of discourse, and it is said to owe its origin to creative imagination or *pratibhā*.

Aesthetic appraisal in India has been essentialistic in the sense that *dhvani*, as explained by Anandavardhana, can not be subsumed under any external categories of language. *Dhvani* is a technical term of criticism, and does not mean echoing sound, though there are fringes of its connotation. It is really illumination in a flash even as *sphota* or revelation of meaning by meaningful sentence-units in Bhartrhari's philosophy of grammar. For Bhartrhari sentence units are revelers or *vyanjaka* of total meaning intended by speaker, both partless and indivisible. So also in poetry and art, *rasa*, the essence of art, is revealed in an instant by the sentence - units or its surface meanings after they have exhausted their referential nature. Beauty in literary composition or *rasa* is illuminatingly revealed in a flash, whether in a syllable or a word or a pronoun or a phrase or a sentence or a whole poem itself. Every analysable linguistic element in poetry is *vyanjaka* or revealer in regard to *rasa*, which is the *vyangya* or revealed *par excellence*. Aesthetic suggestivity partakes of many-sided symbolism.

Following such ideas Rabindranath Tagore distinguished between "truth value" and "taste-value" in aesthetic expression. Truth-value relates to the referentiality of expressions, while "taste-value" is what makes a work of art valuable in itself, or auto-telic, to borrow the term from T.S.Eliot,

Sri Aurobindo's concept of "Future poetry" is an important work as a study of poetry in evolution, its teleology from the point of view of an integral

metaphysics of what is called the "delight of existence" at work in the core of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo relates art to consciousness and its evolution, and in this respect "The Future Poetry" is a work of unique and singular achievement.

It has not been my intention to present a detailed account of the aesthetic theories of India, but to indicate that aesthetic judgement, its problem and ramifications must not be studied in the light of achievements of Western thinkers. There can be illuminations to be had from our end too. At least the mention of the landmarks in the Indian thought on art and aesthetic should remove the misconception that aesthetics is a Western phenomenon, and that we have nothing offer as our own.

I have noted above some of the similarities of visions, with no suggestion towards identity of outlook. I should be borne in mind that art, and in its wake, aesthetics, is decidedly culture specific, and differences can not be wished away in the lure of universal formalism. Plato's view of *mimesis* is certainly not the *anukṛtivāda* that we have in Bharata's *Natyaśāstra*. Kant's idea of disinterestedness pertains to judgements of a sort, called reflective. At this end of the world, it is not the judgement, rather a particular set of feelings, experience of a special kind that is judged as disinterested. Nyāya does not admit disinterestedness in the domain of actions, even the term *niskāma Karma* does not occur in the *Gītā*. But certain imports like *Sādhāraṇīkarana*, subjective universality of Kant, "the heart universal" of K.C.Bhattacharyya, etc. appear to be comparable ideas. Yet the trend of the Western psyche is towards analysis, raising questions as regards necessary and sufficient conditions, and adopting analysis to changing patterns of new experiences of art creations and experiences. The Indian attitude appears to hark back to some unchanging patterns, social mores and age old habitual reactive patterns. The classical theorists of art and aesthetics in India have hardly taken into account change of taste and the times. Only in the recent times poets and artists are breaking

grounds in their creative endeavours, and this call for a new aesthetics, for with the change of taste art creations change, and therefore aesthetic judgements also do not stand still. This perception of difference in the methodology of analysis was need to be spelt at the end of the series of essay chapters on the various issues and dimensions of the problematic of aesthetic judgement.