

**THE AESTHETIC JUDGEMENT :
ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND LIMIT**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
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By -

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This is to certify that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by Smt. Banabani Mukherjee. The content of this thesis did not from a basis of the award of any previous degree to her, or, to the best of knowledge, to anybody else. The thesis is an intensive and critical study on the Aesthetic judgment, which, I believe, bears the marks of originality. I am satisfied with the work done by her and hence, she may be allowed to submit her thesis for the award of the Ph.D. degree of the University of North Bengal.

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Prefatory Note

The thrust of the thesis is to understand what does it mean to say 'judging aesthetically' or what goes by the name of aesthetic judgment. Aesthetic judgment is quite complex a matter, standing intermediate between cognitive judgment *per se* and exclamatory utterances. The cognitive status of the so-called aesthetic judgment has often been called into question, since the predicates used in judging something aesthetically are non-referential or non-descriptive. They may be, to follow the suggestion made by R.M.Hare, commendatory predicates. In that case, aesthetic judgments would involve the problem of meaning and criteria, they will have a sort of descriptive meaning, however secondary they might be. The problematic concerning aesthetic judgment is there, and yet people do go on making such judgments. And hence the need of probing into the concept of aesthetic judgment, what is it ? and why is it there ?

The thesis is a study of the views concerning aesthetic judgment in its historical development from Hume to our own time, and therefore, it is presented in the form of interconnected essays, taking into account the significant thinkers, their views and the concepts they have offered. There are ten chapters in the form of essays, the first three are devoted to understanding the nature of judgment in relation to aesthetic experience. Aesthetic judgment presupposes a unique sort of experience that calls for judgments with a special class or set of predicates. We have opened with Hume and Kant. Kant's account of aesthetic experience in terms of disinterested delight and purposiveness without a purpose is deservedly well-known. But Kant's thesis has had its roots in such Scottish Philosophers as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume in particular. We have tried trace the idea of disinterestedness

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as it developed from Shaftesbury and reached its full classic explication in Kant's third *Critique*.

Kant's thesis developed into Schopenhauer's views about contemplative attitude of the beholder in encountering beauty in art or nature. Aesthetic experience as contemplation has had a long history, and that too of a respectable ancestry. We have put Schopenhauer, immediately after our consideration of Kant's ideas, and shown the linkage.

For Kant, it is the form that delights, and it is the idea of "Significant form" that held its sway in the early decades of the origin of modern art. There are difficulties enshrined in the concept of significant form, but it can not be denied that it has been a very fertile concept, at least in the areas of judging paintings. It is uncertain if it can have any fruitful employment in considering poetry or any literary art for that matter. There is no denying the fact that the idea of *form*, in distinction from *content*, comes up again and again in discussions on art, plastic or non-plastic. There has been Croce's thesis about the identity of form and content.

The chapter -IV: "The Nature of Aesthetic Experience as Contemplation" is directly related to chapter-VI : "Aesthetic Attitude, Experience and Judgment". The concept of *psychical distance* has been influential in circles where phenomenologically oriented approach to aesthetic experience is recommended. Its roots may be found in Kant's norm of disinterestedness, but Bullough strikes a delicate balance between *over distanced* and *under distanced* view of

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the aesthetic object. In many a way psychological distance help us to free ourselves in judging the object from imposing or superimposing practical concerns and pre-conceived ideas on the object of aesthetic apprehension. The concept has been found fertile in our enjoyment of literature and painting, and even films and drama. The attitude of maintaining psychological distance is much like adjusting our mental focus or contemplation to judge the object *aesthetically*. One might recall G.E. Moore's invocation of "appropriate emotions" corresponding to the qualities of the aesthetic object. Moore's contribution to aesthetic is worth considering in itself, and may be looked upon as a contribution to analytic aesthetics. This however is another matter. It appears after all that Aristotle's concept of catharsis (as interpreted by James Joyce in terms of *stasis*), Kant's *disinterestedness*, Bell's idea of *not borrowing anything from life* and achieving *significant meaning*, Schopenhauer's contemplative *will lessness* and Bullough's *psychical distance* are all variations on phenomenologically possible experience, and the ideas or concepts have amongst themselves considerable family resemblance.

With VII : "Aesthetic Qualities" we enter the contemporary debate about the status and value of the aesthetic object. Such objects are valued, and the issue turns on the question, what the aesthetic objects valued for ? We are again reminded of Moore's distinction between *natural* and *non-natural* qualities, brought to focus in aesthetic by Roman Ingarden by distinguishing aesthetic qualities from non-aesthetic ones. Is 'beauty' a quality ? And in answering this question a lot of debate has been carried on. It is true that quite a number of properties have been

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found as candidates for aesthetic appraisal. Philosophers, who are inclined towards linguistic analysis, have favoured, in some way or other, the view that 'beauty' should be dropped from aesthetic discourse. Allied to this contention is the problem of definition of *art*. This is an issue which arose from Wittgenstein's views on meaning in terms of the analogy of *game* and *family resemblance*. While the logic and the point of the views in the debate are philosophically commendable, yet the candidature of "beauty" remains with us.

From Chapters VIII to X we have ventured giving accounts of three contemporary views in aesthetic. Marxism, along with Freud's interpretation of dreams and psycho-analysis, had revolutionary effect in the intellectual climate of the last century. It is not a political or party ideology alone, it has deeper implications for sociology as well. Marxism has inspired the view of social realism in art and aesthetics, and it has been formulated variously both in Russia and Europe. As an ideology, it has inspired poets, in not painters worth reckoning, in many countries. As a world view, Marxism enjoyed great popularity with novelists too. Even the god failed, yet the socio-political dimension of our being remains a reality, and great sophistication has been achieved in the formulation of Marxist aesthetics, and it may also be said that Marxism has been one of inspiring factors in the development of post-colonial approaches and ideas in a global perspective.

Wittgenstein's legacy in theory of meaning has flowered in newer ways in literary criticism. Academic philosopher in the universities of Britain and America has barely suspected that Wittgenstein could come out a prophet in literary

and aesthetic criticism too. The ideas of *criticism* and *interpretation* have been revolutionized, and an altogether new discourse has found itself established. The seminal ideas originated perhaps with Nietzsche, but theorisation took place in France, in the existential mode of thinking by Sartre. But Germany led the way with Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and Habermas.

In contemporary criticism such names have come up as of Frank Kermode, Roland Barthes, and the philosopher, Richard Rorty, Sociological theories like structuralism has a share in arguing differently as regards analysis of literature. There have been reader response theorists, and once again one would be reminded the beholders' response and attitude theories that one had come across in Kant, Schopenhauer and Bullough. But in their case it was the unique experience that was being understood. In the case of post-structuralism it was the text, that was at the centre of focus, and the stability of meaning being questioned.

Chapter -X is devoted to following the train of ideas of the previous chapter. In Deconstruction and Anti-aesthetics we have endeavoured the post-structuralist phenomenon as presented by Jacques Derrida. He questioned both logocentricism and phonocentricism. The ideal of classical Indian aesthetics, *vāgartha pratipatti*, the unity of *vāk* and *artha*, has come to be challenged. Derrida holds that there is no reliable or intimate relationship between words and things or knowledge or reality. Language is not anything stable, and no reading can take us to the meaning, for all meaning is fiction. In language there are only differences

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without positive terms. If Derrida is taken to suggest that everytime we attempt to say something we may be moving towards meaning and reality, but we never reach it. There is no transcendental signifier or reality principle behind any text or word. All our hunt for meaning is only a wild goose chase. All that is obtained is a freeplay.

This is logically and theoretically true. The Buddhist theory of *apoha*, as against the theory of meaning suggested and argued for by Nyāya has something to do with Derrida's contentions. Is Derrida sceptical of his scepticism ? Scepticism is strength, but when it declines into Pyrrhorism, it becomes weakness. We need not only the strength to defer a decision but the strength to make one. It of course remains to be said that the challenging of the truth claims of all modes of discourse is and may be a process of disentangling. In a world of flux, a world of movement, all concepts of truth can only be relative and tentative. When we look at life and art, every moment of our perception of an object or event contains within itself the traces of the past moments and the seeds of the future. Deconstruction encourages interpretative freedom.

We have not tried to institute parallelisms between the Western and the Indian theories of art and poetry. The presuppositions, cultural, social and philosophical ones, are different, though there does obtain significant similarities. But that is another story. We simply indicated the Kindred notions, but have not ventured beyond that.

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It will be seen and noticed that, and it has been the focal point of attention on our part, aesthetic judgment is a complex matter, it is not simply a matter of saying that something is beautiful or ugly, or I like or dislike it. If I could have been able to bring the complexity of the issue in a cogent and inter-connected manner, our attempt would be deemed successful.

My duty will remain incomplete and become permanently in the long-run a matter of in word troubles and pains unless my duty to those hearty and helpful people having a company of toils, hard-labours, patience and perspiration in my journey is recorded.

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Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

The nature, scope and limit of aesthetic judgement are not easy to state. The aesthetic judgement is not a solitary affair. There lies behind it large areas of presuppositions, social, historical and philosophical. Hence it will be convenient to state an overview of the issues that arise in philosophical aesthetics. A question that might occur to anyone who reflects on the arts is how such a thing should be possible at all. Here is something that sets human beings apart from the animal world. And here also is a fit subject for that sense of wonder which Aristotle spoke, as a motive for philosophical enquiry.

The activity of art is much older than philosophical reflection about the arts, and artistic objects and activities can be found in almost every society, including those in which there is no explicit concept of art. But since the beginning of Western Philosophy, the arts have been an important object of philosophical investigation. Both Plato and Aristotle were impressed by the importance of the arts, and their discussions remain as starting points for the philosophy of the arts today. Among other well-known philosophers who wrote about the arts were Aquinas, Kant Schopenhauer and Marx as well as twentieth - century writers such as Collingwood and Wittgenstein.

It is not unusual to begin by defining or trying to define the concept of art. But the quest for definition is not to be regarded as a mere preliminary. The problem of definition is a difficult and central problem in the philosophy of the arts. The concept has had a long and complicated history. There has been much argument about what qualifies an object or a performance must have in order to qualify as art : whether, for example, it must serve a useful purpose in order to do so, and what that purpose might be. The definition of art has often been connected with questions of value, and according to some writers, the question 'what is art ?' and 'what is good art?' are inseparable.

We may mention the main theories relating to the question how art and value are related. They are: (i) art is whatever provides aesthetic experience; (ii)

art is a vehicle for the expressions or communication of feeling; and (iii) works of art are imitations of nature or representations of reality. These theories can be regarded as providing definitions of art as well.

The question has become prominent whether both in aesthetics and elsewhere the quest for definitions is not altogether misguided. Some writers have argued that there is not, and could not be, a definition of art, and that this approach to the concept can only lead to distortions of it. This view has gained prominence since the appearance of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. There is, again, the more recent 'Institutional Theory' put forward by George Dickie. According to this, the traditional approaches and theories are indeed incapable of yielding a definition, but another sort of definition is proposed; roughly, that 'work of art' means whatever has been put forward as such by a suitable person or institution. This has been, and continues to be an influential theory, not only in philosophical discussion but in the art world itself. A notable feature of it is that, unlike more and traditional approaches, it places no qualitative constraints on what is to be counted as art, leaving open the possibility of the most innovative creations to be admitted as work of art.

The question 'what is art' can be understood in ways other than the quest for definition. It may be about intrinsic qualities of art, such as beauty, though the question is not so much about defining art in terms of such qualities, but one might examine the qualities themselves. The most prominent example is that of beauty; for whatever surprises the continuing history of art may have in store for us, it is likely that the traditional association of art with beauty will remain. There is the 'classic' view that beauty is an objective property, consisting in the balance and proportion of parts, and describable, according to some thinkers, in mathematical terms. Opposed to this one, 'subjectivist' views, according to which beauty is or is intended to be identified by, a feeling experienced by the viewer or listener.

In the early years of the twentieth - century 'formalist' critics as Fry and Bell treated *form* as the fundamental quality of art. Frank Sibley, more recently, has

drawn attention to the fact that the vocabulary actually used in discussing works of art is far wider than the traditional 'beauty', 'form' etc. It includes such terms as 'delicate' 'sombre', 'dynamic' and many others. The main questions here are; (i) in what sense, if any, these qualities are objects of perception; and (ii) what the logical relations are between them and the 'supporting' non-aesthetic qualities, such as 'pale-colours', 'curving lines', and so on. Can the former be deduced from the latter ?

The puzzling phenomenon of expressive qualities, such as 'sad' and 'plaintive' are applied to music. If a piece of music is described in these terms, are we to think it is because the composer had these feelings when writing it ?

The question 'what is art' is taken at times as focussing on the mode of existence or ontology of works of art. In this context, it is important to notice distinctions between the arts. The distinction that is important for ontology is that between 'unique' arts such as painting, in which the works are particular physical objects, and arts such as poetry and music, where this is not so. A composition such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony or a Raga can not be identified with a particular object or performance. In what sense does the work 'exist'? Philosophers have found it helpful to speak of such existence in terms of 'type' and 'token'. Such ontological questions are connected with important matters such as the authentic performance of works of music and drama. In the case of such works there are scores or texts. But these are necessarily 'incomplete' leaving room for a variety of possible interpretations, all of which might be claimed as authentic according to various criteria. A *rāga* may be rendered differently by different *gharānas* of Indian music. Can we, people of the present century, experience a work of music or drama in the same way as people of another age, say of the age of Tansen or Kalidas ? If not, what is the point of 'authentic' 'performance'?

The concept of aesthetic experience introduces us to one of the major theories of what the arts are essentially about. What after all, are the arts for ? To the question two main answers may be given, one social and the other personal. The

arts, it may be said, contribute or are capable of contributing, to the welfare of society, and should be promoted for that reason, in so far as they conform to it. But few would claim that social benefit is the main reason or justification for artistic activity. The personal answer on the other hand, will be in terms of an individual's experience - the pleasure, delight, thrills, or whatever, that the experience when we listen to music, read a poem or contemplate a painting. It is clear that such experiences, however described, are prized very highly. For many people they are among the greatest pleasures of life, and much has been written and said about their importance. According to some thinkers aesthetic experience is uniquely marked art and extra-ordinary in its delight. Such remarks do not however, take us very far towards understanding how this kind of experience is uniquely marked art, or how it could serve to provide a theory of the arts in general.

The trouble is that when we think about the experience in question, we find them to be extremely various. This is so for two reasons, the first of which is personal : one person's reaction to a given works of art will be different from that of the other. Even if both are positive, they may describe their experiences in very different ways. This may even be true of the same individual at different times. The second reason is connected with the great variety of what we call 'works of art'? Is it really plausible to think that there is a particular kind of experience, to be called 'aesthetic', that is common to all the different kinds of art? Even within a given *genre*, say the novel, we may be more impressed by the variety of the works and the corresponding readers' reaction, than by anything they have in common. No single account of aesthetic experience seems able to yield a characteristic or group of characteristics that can serve as the basis of a definition of the experience.

Nevertheless a group of philosophers have tried to provide such characterizations, and their attempts are worth reviewing. Schopenhauer described the kind of absorption that we often experience in the contemplation of art, as well as of other aesthetic objects, such as a landscape. He said that we lose ourselves

entirely in this object. We forget our individuality, our will. In Schopenhauer's philosophy the will was a central importance and our 'contemplative' stance towards aesthetic object was to be characterized by a suspension of will.

The word 'contemplation' is different from 'disinterested', which is a negative term, and it plays the central role in Kant's theory. 'To be disinterested' describes the absence of the kind of interest that relates to one's own advantage or disadvantage. It is to be concerned with the object itself, not with how it relates to oneself. According to Kant it is by a feeling of delight that one comes to judge that something is beautiful. But this delight has to be distinguished from two other 'interested' kinds of delight, the first being a merely sensory agreeableness, such as a liking for mangoes, and the second, a delight in something that is recognized as morally good. 'Disinterested' is a negative concept and as such avoids the difficulties of positive characterizations of aesthetic experience. But there is more to Kant's account than the negative point, and attend to than latter.

A streak of formalism is there in Kant. But Clive Bell is commonly, and reasonably classified as a formalist. He can nonetheless be regarded as belonging to the aesthetic experience camp, in view of his appeal to a peculiar aesthetic emotion by means of which the essential quality of works of art, some quality common and peculiar to them all, was to be identified. This quality turns out to be what he called 'significant form'. Finally, Bell might also be classified under expression theories, since he held that what makes form significant is that it conveys an emotion felt by its creator.

Another account of the 'disinterested' kind is that of Edward Bullough's, with his notion of 'physical distance'. Here it is appropriate to make a distinction between an aesthetic *attitude* and an aesthetic *experience*. On this view, what is fundamental is our manner of viewing the object rather than the resulting experience. What is necessary, according to Bullough, is that, in a certain sense, we 'distance' ourselves from it. In a famous illustration he describes a fog at sea, which might well be regarded as terrifying by passengers on a ship; inviting us,

by means of an eloquent description, to see that the same people might be able to view the same fog as an object of great aesthetic enjoyment. This they could do by distancing themselves from the practical implications of the object.

A more recent exponent of aesthetic experience and aesthetic theories has been Monroe Beardsley. He attempts to provide a positive characterization of aesthetic experience, in the form of five criteria, and his modifications of these in response to criticism by George Dickie. Dickie has been a strong critic of this whole approach, describing the aesthetic attitude a myth. He is, one of the chief advocates of the institutional theory. His opposition to such writers as Bullough and Beardsley is not unconnected with this, nor is the fact that Beardsley has been a strong critic of the institutional theory. The point is that according to the Bullough or Beardsley approach, it must be possible to characterize art in terms of an appropriate experience or attitude, however difficult it may be to define these accurately. The point of the institutional theory, by contrast, is that allowance must be made for anything whatever to count as a work of art, provided only that it has been put forward as such by a suitable member of the art world. This presupposes nothing about the intrinsic qualities of the work, or about the experiences or attitudes of those who view or hear it.

The accounts just considered may be described as consumer-oriented. According to them, art is to be viewed from the perspective of a person viewing or hearing the work. One might say that such a theory be called the spectator's response theory. But there are also theories in which the central role is played by the person creating the work, and art is to be defined or characterised by reference to the creator's feelings rather than those of the consumer. This is not to say that the latter are always left out of account. Tolstoy's theory is one of transmission. He regarded art as comparable to language. By words a man transmits his thoughts to others, by art said Tolstoy, he transmits his feelings. The feelings, according to Tolstoy, must be of a certain kind; they must be (a) feelings that the artist himself has lived through, and (b) such as to promote the brotherhood of man; and the work itself must be understandable by simple people, so as to enable it to achieve this end.

The latter requirements take the theory beyond the scope of mere expression or transmission theories, into the realm of issues about the social and moral roles of art. In this respect Tolstoy was an important precursor of Marxist views about the arts. But they also raise questions, of a general kind, about the nature of definitions of art and indeed definitions in general.

The question of definition arises in the case of Collingwood, who stated explicitly that his intention was to define art in a way that harmonizes with common usage. Now according to Collingwood, works of art are expressions of emotion. But is this in accordance with common usage? Perhaps many people would accept this statement as a definition, or partial definition of art. But would their actual usage of the term be in accordance with it? What exactly does the statement mean and what does it entail? Collingwood's account of the matter is rightly regarded as a classic of its kind. But when the implications are followed through, the results may strike us as strange, and far removed from ordinary ideas and common usage.

Collingwood's account differs in interesting ways from that of Tolstoy and other expressionist theories. According to Collingwood, the artist's emotion is of a very special kind; it is not a feeling to which one can give a ready name such as 'sentiment of human brotherhood'. Instead there is a burden of inchoate emotion the nature of which is unclear. Artists are motivated to rid themselves of this burden by making the emotion articulate to themselves, which they can do by creating a work of art suitable to it. These may be plausible ideas, but their implausible consequences may be so brought out as to show that they include the claims that the work of art exist essentially in the mind, and that, in Collingwood's words, 'every utterance and every gesture that each one of us makes is a work of art'.

A constant source of interest are the differences between the arts. A statement or definition that seems plausible for some of the arts may not seem so when we turn to others. In the case of literature, drama and representational

painting, a good deal of explaining can be done by reference to the events narrated, objects described or depicted. These play an important role, at least, in accounting for our interest in the relevant works. But this is not so in the case of music which, with a few exceptions, is non-conceptual and non-representational. Hence the expression theory has been especially prominent in the case of music.

But is music non-representational ? In this how it differs from language ? Some theorists have claimed that music is a kind of language - a language of the emotions. Such a view is explained in Deryck Cooke's *The language of Music*, in which he presents, in great detail, a systematic correlation between emotion and musical patterns. Another account, in which music is compared with language, is that of Susanne Langer. Drawing on ideas and terminology from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, she spoke of musical patterns as sharing formal properties with human feelings of motion and rest. Music according to her, articulates forms which language can't set forth. A general difficulty with such theories concern the question of value. What, we may ask, would be the point of producing musical sounds, and other artistic works, if their only function was to express or symbolize somebody's feeling ? Even if the alleged correspondance between music and feelings were proved this would leave unexplained the value that we place on music, and the delight we experience in our encounters with works of art in general.

Such questions are readily answered if we appeal to intrinsic qualities of art, such as beauty, as opposed to facts about the artists feelings or other facts extrinsic to the work. Such theories of the latter kind could be called heteronomist, because they rely on something *other* than the work; and they are contrasted with Edward Hanslick's ideas in *The Beautiful in Music*. Hanslick rejected all theories of 'language of the emotion's' type, insisting that the value of music is to be found in its purely musical features. He maintained that in so far as a piece of music is representational, this diminishes its beauty. We are not to think of music, as we think of language, in terms of meaning; music pleases for its own sake, like an arabesque, a column or some spontaneous product of nature - a leaf or flower.

Hanslick may be represented as an opponent of the expression theory, but his autonomist stance can be seen in a wider context. In his emphasis on intrinsic properties he shares the purist conception of art maintained by Clive Bell; and his rejection of representationalism in music may be compared with Bell's denigration of representationalism in painting, and his insistence that aesthetic appreciation is of formal properties alone. Such autonomist or purist views are opposed, not only to the expression theory, but to any other views allowing a knowledge of the artist, or the circumstances in which a work was produced, to be relevant to its appreciation.

Of the various theories and ideas that have been held about art, one stands out for its quality, and its prevalence throughout the history of art. This is the idea for which the Greek *mimesis* is often used. According to mimetic views our interest in works of art, and the value we ascribe to them, are due to their ability to represent or imitate reality. Such a view was expressed by Aristotle when he wrote that 'the poet is an imitator', just like a painter or any other image-maker (*Poetics*, 1460 b). The idea that art is essentially mimetic was taken for granted by the Greeks and by many later writers up to the present day. It is also often expressed in ordinary talk about the arts. Thus a portrait may be praised as an excellent likeness or criticized for being not a bit like him; while the representation of offensive material in television drama is sometimes defended on the ground that 'that's how life really is'.

Plato's criticism of art was based on the assumption that art is mimetic. We may draw attention to two main aspects of the mimetic view. The first is that the arts serve to represent things, and the second that they are beneficial by providing knowledge. It would be generally agreed that paintings are, or may be, representational. But how do paintings represent? An answer that suggests itself is that the artist copies what he sees, thereby producing a likeness of the reality. This view has been criticised by Ernst Gombrich as involving 'the myth of the innocent eye'. The trouble is that what the artist sees depends on the cultural and conceptual equipment that he brings with him to the scene, and a similar point may be made

about the viewer. If the way in which a picture represents its object is not that of resemblance, then it must be one of convention. Nelson Goodman holds the conventionalist view. He has claimed that almost any picture may represent almost anything, and that pictorial representation is analogous to verbal description the former being no more dependent on resemblance with the object than the latter. This view of representational art invites comparison with views about non-representational arts such as music, including the idea that music is a language or symbolic system.

The question of truth and knowledge is another issue that is also quite vexing. An extreme view is that aesthetic experience has nothing to do with truth. But if it is accepted that truth has an important role in appreciation of literature, this does not entail that, as Aristotle thought, the latter can teach us anything, for the truths in question may be ones we already know and can then recognize in what we read in a novel. In any case, why should we expect a work of fiction, a product of the imagination to impart knowledge? What, for example, can we expect to learn from a novel by Tagore or Sarat Chandra?

Here it may be useful to distinguish between learning how (how certain motives can produce such and such results), and learning that (that such and such events occur or occurred, etc.). What the novel teaches us is not the obvious fact that, for example, pride can be a force for evil; but how this can happen in a given set of circumstances, what we gain may be a deeper understanding rather than a knowledge of facts previously unknown.

What is the social and moral role of the arts? The arts, according to Plato, belong to a class of luxuries, existing over and above the healthy society, the ideal state. He saw no need for a class of professional imitators in such a society. Such imitators were liable to be harmful because their motivation was of the wrong kind to entertain rather than to instruct. A poet for example, might present gods and heroes in a shameful or ridiculous light for the sake of better entertainment, and

there by set a bad example to the young. Another of Plato's criticism is that the poet may act out, say, a doctor's or a general's role without having a proper knowledge of these activities. These and other arguments of Plato may strike a modern reader as crude, and based on an excessively narrow conception of art. But they are readily applicable to some, at least, of today's art. Thus a modern novelist, or a T.V. script writer of drama may be motivated by a desire to capture an audience, rather than by a scrupulous pursuit of accuracy and truth, or by thoughts about the moral effects of a work. Nevertheless there are weaknesses in Plato's argument. He seems not to allow for the difference between our responses to a representation or imitation which we recognise as such; and the feelings that would be provoked in us by the real thing. Moreover, his arguments are applicable only to certain kinds of art, leaving aside the many artistic creations and activities which have no particular bearing on morals.

Plato's criticism of the arts is connected with his view about knowledge and moral knowledge, in particular. He holds that true knowledge is to be had by communion with eternal, immutable entities, the forms, and that the knowledge (so-called) that we gain through our senses is only of secondary validity. The best example of this is our knowledge of mathematical truths, which might be described as 'eternal' in contrast to empirical facts, knowledge of which may be gained from particular experience of the physical world. But Plato had a similar view about moral knowledge, ascribing the same eternal, non-empirical status to moral truths as to those of mathematics. But, one might argue, it is wrong to deny that we can give instruction in moral matters by empirical means. Experience, both of life and of literature, may not teach us moral truth, but it can enrich and deepen our understanding of moral situations, our sympathy for people different from ourselves.

In Tolstoy too there is the emphasis about the moral and social functions of art. Tolstoy's insistence on moral function is comparable with that of Plato, but he had a different idea about what that function should be. According to Tolstoy the function of true art is to unite people, to promote the brotherhood of man. This led him to stipulate, first, that art must have a wholesome content and, secondly,

that it must be accessible to everyone. We may pose two questions for this conception of art. The first is whether a work of art may not be essentially part of a local tradition, and none the worse than that, the second, whether it is right to evaluate works of art according to the fulfilment of a non-aesthetic purpose. In connection with the first question one may point out that even the stories of the Bible, regarded by Tolstoy as paradigms of good art - would be understood in different ways by people of different cultures and languages.

On the second question, concerning a 'non-aesthetic purpose' of art, we may say that aesthetic and political purpose may pull in opposite directions, with negative consequences for the quality of art. A similar difficulty arises for Marxist views of art.

A notable opponent of instrumentalist views of art was Oscar Wilde. But according to Wilde, the instrumentalist fallacy arises in connection with *mimesis*, the aim of being true to nature or true to life. Wilde denounces those who think that good art results from the mere imitation of reality. His rejection of *mimesis* might be compared with Hanslick's rejection of meanings in the case of music, and his insistence that music pleases for its own sake. These are all ways in which the intrinsic and peculiar qualities of art, and aesthetic experience, are defended against the imposition of extrinsic purpose or values, whatever they might be.

Instrumentalist views such as those of Plato and Tolstoy may be regarded as inadequate and perhaps philistine. But however much we may wish, contrary to them, to stress the intrinsic values of art, question about the effect of art on society can't be set aside. In recent times especially, there has been much concern about the capacity of works of art to give offence and cause harm. According to one authority, pornography is basically rapists' television. Another problem concerns the offence given to religious people by certain portrayals, in works of art. Hussain's painting of Saraswati caused much fury amongst some Hindu political interests.

So far the discussion has been mainly about the effects of art on society and morality. But other questions arise about the role of social force in the evaluation of art. Sociologists might argue that there is a problem about accepted evaluations of art because they are based to a large extent on the judgement of a small class of 'establishment' people, who are clearly unrepresentative of the population at large. This criticism can of course be questioned. On the other hand there are instances where low art and creations of popular culture are appropriated by bourgeois culture. Jazz music is an example. It was originally part of the life of an underprivileged class, but was taken up by the bourgeoisie so as to become part of their artistic culture. In the case of Hindustani music the dialectics between *Desi* and *Marga* modes of music may be taken as an example.

The moral and social effects of art, important as they may be, can not be sufficient for the evaluation of works of art. But how, by what other criteria, are they to be evaluated? Do the main theories of art take us far towards answering these questions? *Mimesis*, if it means a mere copying or imitation of things, leads to the absurd result a painting could be so life-like as to be mistaken for the real thing, and should be valued more highly than painting that are not intended to be mimetic. According to expression theories, the highest praise would go to works that are most effective in expressing their author's feelings. Finally the approach of aesthetic experience, being consumer-oriented, seems more relevant to the value that we place on art, but it tells us little about which, or whose, experiences are to be valued.

But what actually happens when we discuss the quality of a work of art? Such discussions proceed largely by pointing art features *of the work*, aesthetic qualities. A work is praised because it is graceful or witty, or denigrated for being garish or sentimental. But what is the status and validity of such judgements? Are they merely subjective?

The subjectivist view is at odds with the fact that there is such a thing as aesthetic *reasoning*, with reasons being recharged in support of particular

judgements. But what kind of reasoning is here involved? Can we discuss the matter with reference to the traditional dichotomy of deductive and inductive reasoning? Aesthetic reasoning one might say, is not deductive. We do not in a deductive sense 'prove' that a given work is witty or garish. Is there a role for inductive reasoning? One argues that because this painting is by Rembrandt, it is likely to be good; this would be good inductive reasoning. But it would not give us what we want, which is to see for ourselves that the work is good, and *to see for ourselves* that the work is good, and to see for ourselves the aesthetic qualities that make it so.

It is possible to argue as well that aesthetic reasons are of a special kind, conforming neither to deductive nor to inductive models, but that this does not make them subjective. We may compare aesthetic statements with statements of colour ('this light is green') and show what reasons there are for regarding aesthetic statements, as well as those of colour, as objective. The simple dichotomy of objective and subjective remains questionable in aesthetics.

The evaluation of a work of art presupposes that we understand it in some sense, and this in turn may mean that we have interpreted it correctly. The question of correct interpretation has been hotly debated by writers on the arts, especially in connection with literary texts. To understand such a text we must know the language in which it is written; but is this sufficient for understanding it? It is well known that a given text, say a poem or part of a poem, may lend itself to different interpretations. A good deal of critical discussion may be devoted to, not to evaluating the work, but to determining how it is to be understood. But should the question be 'what does it mean?' Or 'what did the author mean?' According to the view of Beardsley and Wimsatt in their famous paper 'The Intentional Fallacy', an author's intention is irrelevant in determining the meaning of his text. The meanings of words are not fixed by individuals, they belong to the words themselves, and knowledge of them is shared by those who speak the language. There is more to knowing the meaning of what someone has written or said than a mere knowledge of the words. We need also to know something of the context in which they are

written or said. This might tell us, for example, that the words were meant ironically and not in their normal sense. The case of *dhvani* in Indian aesthetic comes to mind in this connection. The poet may be consulted, and he might disagree. But does *his* meaning the meaning that matters? Is it the one that matters for us, who read a poem today? According to Beardsley, a line may still be ironic, regardless of the author's intention. The latter being a fact about him, and not about the poem. This claim too is criticizable.

There is more to the 'intentional fallacy' issue than just intention. The arguments of Beardsley and Wimsalt take in all kinds of extraneous material - anything that is not found in the work itself. They are part of that purist stand of thought to which Bell gave expression when he wrote that to appreciate a work of art, we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space; and also part of the argument, for a distinctive 'aesthetic experience', as postulated by Bell, Beardsley and others.

In this debate there are two extreme positions: one is that extraneous knowledge is never relevant to aesthetic appreciations; the other, that it always is. It may be doubted if either position is plausible.

Continental approaches such as structuralism suggest the view that the essential meaning of a work is to be found in the 'deep structure' of a literary work, others have suggested that there may be basic elements which are available for transformation by different authors and in different cultures. This is especially noticeable in folk-tales, where what is essentially the same story appears in many different guises. The French anthropologist Levi-Strauss used this method to analyze primitive myths, claiming that the same structural elements could be discerned in a number of them, in spite of their apparent diversity, and he showed how the relevant 'transformation' could be displayed formally in a diagram with quasi-mathematical precision.

In this approach there is much emphasis on the systematic wholeness of a text. Its components have no value except within the system in question and are interdependent. Hence value was to be regarded as relative to a system. But there is no such thing as *intrinsic* value, which might be ascribed to the work (system) as a whole. Contrary to more traditional views, the task of the critic was not evaluation, but structural analysis. According to Levi-Strauss, such analysis is to be recommended because of its power to reduce messages of a most disheartening complexity to a simple perspicuous pattern.

The value of this reduction of complexity is questioned and criticized by Jacques Derrida. According to him, it is an illusion to regard the elements or words of a text as having stable, determinate meanings. The meaning shift and change in an eternal play of mental associations, leading to the construction of puns and other word play. The constant possibility of shifting illustrates Derrida's point that meaning is never determinate and stable. The choice between *different* meanings is, so to speak, constantly being *deferred*. As regards the question of meaning, Derrida and his followers present the issue in a polarized form. The truth is that while meaning is not always stable, it is not always unstable either. If it were always unstable, must not the meaning of Derrida's text itself be regarded as indeterminate ?

Structuralism and deconstruction are hostile to, or at least silent on, the question of evaluation, unlike more traditional approaches. If we accept that works of art are to be analysed according to their deep structure or, on the other hand, that there are no stable meanings to be found in them, this gives us no guidance on the evaluation of particular works. The Marxist approach is quite the opposite. In it the concern with value is dominant, and the value in question is social and political. It is an approach of the same type as that of Plato and Tolstoy. Tolstoy's requirement, that art must be (a) 'realistic' and (b) accessible to the mass of ordinary people reappears in the writings of Marxists, who hold that art is to be judged and justified for its didactic benefits.

However, this is only one side of Marxist aesthetic, for many different views have been put forward by writers belonging to this tradition. A particularly interesting difference is that between realism and anti-realism. A paradox of socialist realism is its tendency to lead to an art that is conservative and static; for if the appreciation of art is to be easily accessible to the majority of people, then the advantage will be with 'straightforward', rather than innovative, adventurous art. Such art may also be conservative in the sense of being in accordance with traditions existing in pre-revolutionary times. This would make it objectionable according to the Marxist 'reflection theory', where by the art of a given society reflects the nature of that society. From this theory it would follow that the art of a capitalist society, including traditional realistic styles, would be suitable for a capitalist and not a socialist state.

Other Marxist thinkers, however, have opposed realism, maintaining that, in various ways, non-traditional (revolutionary) art is more likely to promote the cause of improvement and education, perhaps by being more likely to make people think. A notable example is Bertolt Brecht, who recommended and practised an 'alienation effect', whereby the audience is actively prevented from treating the drama on the stage as reality, or identifying with the dramatic characters.

Such issues are usually discussed in relation to literature and the visual arts. Are they also applicable to music? The term 'realism' is not readily applicable to music. Therefore we would like to reiterate what we remarked earlier that aesthetic judgement is a complex phenomenon, presupposing quite a number of theories and philosophical persuasions. We may now proceed to state and examine some of the more well known theories of aesthetic judgement in relation to its nature, scope and limit.

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Chapter-II

The Nature of Aesthetic Judgement : Hume and Kant.

Beauty is an aesthetic quality, honoured down the ages. "The chief forms of beauty", wrote Aristotle, "are order and symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in special degree". (Aristotle (a), 1078 b). St. Augustine declared that "beautiful things please by proportion with pairs of equivalent members responding to each other". (Augustine, p 191). Shaftesbury said that "all beauty is truth. True features make the beauty of a face and true proportions the beauty of architecture; as true measures that of harmony and music" (Shaftesbury, p.24).

The analysis of beauty taken note of in the paragraph above have been in terms of objective qualities, such as size, proportion, smoothness and lightness. But it may be thought that the place to look for an analysis of beauty is within ourselves rather than in the objects. This was the view of one of the most important philosophers, David Hume. Hume pointed out that there must be more to the perception of beauty than the perception of particular objective qualities. His main concern was to question the objectivity of beauty. "Euclid has fully explained every quality of the circle, but has not, in any proposition, said a word of its beauty. The reason is evident. Beauty is not a quality of the circle. It lies not in any part of the line. It is only the effect which that figure produces upon a mind, In vain would you look for it in the circle". (Hume (a) p.124). Euclid's business was to describe the qualities of the circle. Why then did he say nothing about that quality which we call its beauty ? Because, according to Hume, there is no such quality. Beauty, he holds, is something that exists in the mind of the observer; it can not properly be ascribed to objects outside the mind. We do of course ascribe beauty to such objects in ordinary language, but according to Hume this is a confusion which is due to the close association between the perception of the object and the feelings it arouses in us. "The mind", he writes, "is not content with merely surveying its objects, as they stand

in themselves; it also feels a sentiment of delight or uneasiness consequently to the survey; and this sentiment determines it to affix the epithet *beautiful* or *deformed* to the objects it surveys (Ibid., p.124).

Hume's account of beauty may be described as "Subjectivist", for according to it beauty is, or is dependent on, a subjective occurrence; a feeling or sentiment within the observer. This view gains support from the widespread disagreement that exists concerning the beauty of particular objects. In the case of objective qualities, such as, would be described by Euclid, any disagreement that occurs can be resolved by examining the object. Thus if one person thinks the object is circular while another takes it to be elliptical, this can be resolved by examining or, if necessary, measuring the object. Again, if there is a disagreement about colours, this can be settled by examining the object more carefully, in a better light, etc. though some disagreement may remain in borderline cases. But this is not the case of beauty. In this case, the object may be displayed to both parties in a good light, its measurements and proportions may be agreed, and so on; and yet one person may describe it as beautiful while the other does not. "One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty To speak the real beauty or real deformity, is as fruitless an enquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter", i.e. what is sweet to one person may be bitter to another. (Hume (b) p.6).

Similarly, if beauty is or depends on a feeling within the observer, then it too will vary according to the disposition of the organs' of the person concerned.

Hume's account of beauty has been compared with the effect that a drug may have on our feelings. If we ascribe, say the quality of pain-killing to a particular drug, then it is understood that this quality exists only in relation to the effect

of that drug on those who take it; and it may well be that it has this quality in relation to some people but not in relation to others. And the same would be true of beauty, if the description of an object as beautiful depended on a feeling or sentiment 'consequent to the survey' of the object in question.

That there is a *connection* between beauty and feeling can hardly be disputed. We speak of the love of the beauty, and of getting pleasure from beautiful things. Listening to a piece of beautiful music or poetry, we may experience feeling of considerable intensity. But according to Hume, beauty and feeling are not merely connected; his view was that *beauty is itself feeling*. This view has the consequence that beauty can't exist in the absence of a suitable observer, with, as Hume put it, "a intelligent mind, susceptible to those finer sensations". Till such a spectator appear, there is nothing but a figure of such particular dimensions and proportion; from his sentiments alone arise its elegance and beauty". (Hume, (c), p.292). In Hume's English, the word 'sentiment' was closer to that 'sensation' than it is today.

A similar view was expressed by the American philosopher, Santayana in *The sense of Beauty*. According to Santayana, There is "a curious but well known psychological phenomenon" whereby we take "an element of sensation" to be "the quality of a thing". Hence "if we say that the other men should see the beauties we see, it is because 'we think those beauties are *in the object* , like the colour, proportion, or size". But this notion he said, "is radically absurd and contradictory. Beauty can not be conceived as an independent existence It exists in perception, and can not exist otherwise. A beauty not perceived is a pleasure not felt, and a contradiction" (Santayana, pp 28-9). Just as it would be" absurd and contradictory" to suppose that pleasure can exist independently of anyone feeling pleased, so it is with beauty, given that beauty is a sensation - a "felt pleasure" and not the "quality of a thing".

These remarks by Hume and Santayana remind us of the saying that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder", which expresses the view that beauty is a subjective quality, depending, as Hume put it, on a "disposition of the organs" of the person concerned, in the same way as the qualities of sweet and bitter. There is a further element, however, in the views expressed by Hume and Santayana. According to them, beauty is not merely a subjective quality, but one that consists in a feeling or sensation. Thus Santayana, having said that beauty does not exist independently but only "in perception", goes on to indicate that beauty is a pleasure that we feel and that it is "an element of sensation"; and Hume speaks similarly of feelings and sensations. The claim that beauty is a feeling seems to be a necessary ingredient of the subjectivist view, for it is hard to conceive what beauty would consist in if it were neither an objective quality nor a feeling. The idea that it is something "in the eye of the beholder" can not be taken literally.

Now the idea that beauty is a feeling may seem plausible because of the undoubted connection between beauty and feeling. It is true that the perception of beauty makes us feel good, the ugliness is depressing and so on. But to speak of beauty itself as a feeling is to go much further, and further away from our normal use of the word. Asked how I feel when in the presence of beautiful or ugly in things or surroundings, I might reply "happy", "thrilled", "delighted", "sad", "disappointed", "disgusted" etc.; but it would make no sense to reply that I feel beautiful or ugly.

Again, if beauty a feeling then to quote Santayana again, it would be "absurd" and "contradictory" to suppose that it might exist independently of being perceived; and a similar view was quoted from Hume. But there is nothing absurd or contradictory in making this supposition.

Suppose we talk, in a discussion about conservation, about the beauty of wild places existing today, which no one has visited. One might be arguing that they should be preserved in spite of this. Now on Hume -Santayana view such statements and discussion must be non-sensical. They would be like talking about a world in which there is pleasure, but no beings capable of feeling pleasure. Such talk would indeed be "absurd and contradictory". But this is not so in the case of beauty.

There is another way, however, of defining beauty by reference to feelings. Beauty, it may be said, is a quality of objects and not itself a feeling, but this quality is identified by the feelings it causes in us. In some passages Hume seems to have maintained this view, "Beauty", he wrote, "is such an order and construction of parts, as is fitted to give a pleasure and satisfaction to the soul beauty is nothing but a form, which produces pleasure, as deformity is a structure of parts, which conveys pain; and the power of producing pain and pleasure make in this manner the essence of beauty and deformity" (Hume (d), p 299). This view does not entail that beauty can not exist in the absence of suitable spectators, for an object might be "fitted to give pleasure", even though it is not actually doing so, because no spectators are present.

A casual treatment of beauty is also to be found in Burke's Enquiry. "By beauty I mean that quality or those qualities in bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it". (Burke, p 91). He goes on to state what these qualities are. But this statement is subsequent to the definition just quoted, for its correctness must depend on whether the qualities mentioned do indeed "cause love, or some passion similar to it". If not, the list of qualities would have to be amended.

More recently a causal view has been maintained by Herbert Read, among others. In *The Meaning of Art*, he remarks that there are "pleasing forms" which "satisfy our sense of beauty", and he regards this as a matter of cause and effect. "Certain arrangements in the proportion of the shape and surface and mass of things result in a pleasurable sensation, whilst the lack of such arrangement leads to indifference or even to positive discomfort and revulsion" (Read, p.18).

The causal approach to aesthetics was rejected by Wittgenstein in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. Wittgenstein uses the word "discomfort" by way of contrast with what he calls "discontent". He held that "discontent" is more characteristic discourse about the arts. By "discomfort" he means, as Read did, sensations resulting from suitable causes, whose occurrence would be a matter of trial and experiment. "Discontent" on the other hand, is not a sensation but an attitude, and in expressing discontent with an aesthetic object one criticizes the object as being "not right" , and does not comment on its power to cause sensations. To make his point, he sometimes draws attention to aesthetic situations of a modest, everyday kind. One might, he says, express 'discontent' with the shape of a door, or approval of a suit which is of "the right length". (Wittgenstein, *Lectures and conversations*, P.5) The expression of discontent, he says, is not "an expression of discomfort *plus* knowing the cause", it is not "as if there were two things going on in my soul - discomfort and knowing the cause" (Ibid, pp 13, 14).

Now on the view taken by Hume, Burke and Read, the description of a thing as beautiful or ugly does amount to a double statement of this kind. In describing a thing as beautiful, one would be saying both that one felt a pleasurable sensation and that this was caused by certain qualities in the object. But according to Wittgenstein, aesthetic descriptions are descriptions of objects themselves and not their causal powers with regard to sensations.

Wittgenstein does not deny the importance of feeling when seeing or hearing works of art. Moreover, "you could play a minuet once and get a lot out of it, and play the minuet another time and getting nothing out of it" (Ibid, p.29). This suggests that hearing the music and responding to it are two separate occurrences, related by way of cause and effect. On this view, our interest in a work of art, and our evaluation of it, would depend on its efficacy in producing certain feelings. There is, Wittgenstein says, "a tendency to talk about 'the effect of a work of art' - feelings, images, etc." so that, if one were asked why one was listening to that minuet, one might be inclined answer 'To get this and that effect'. But he asked, 'does not the minuet itself matter ? - hearing *this* : would another have done as well ?' (Ibid., p 29).

If the model of cause and effect were correct, then the answer to this question should be 'yes'. In that case, the point of listening to a minute would be to get a certain feeling, and then any other piece that produced the same feeling would do just well. The same would be true of a picture or poem, so that "if you gave a person the effects and removed the picture, it would be all right" (Ibid.p.29n). According to Wittgenstein, even where an aesthetic response does involve feelings, it is still wrong to regard the production of feelings as accounting for our interest in aesthetic objects, or as being what we mean when we ascribe aesthetic qualities to them.

A supposed advantage of subjectivist accounts of beauty is that they would accommodate the widespread disagreement that exists in judgements of beauty. According to these accounts, the disagreements would be no more surprising than the fact that what tastes sweet to one person tastes bitter to another, or the fact that what gives a headache to one person does not do so to another. Hume, having described beauty as a "sentiment" (i.e.,sensation) commented that "all sentiment is right, because sentiment has a

reference to nothing beyond itself" (Hume (b), p.6). And he quoted the saying 'it is fruitless to dispute concerning tastes'. One might say that it makes no sense to describe a sensation as either right or wrong. If I get a certain sensation when climbing a high ladder and you do not, we cannot say that one of us must be right and the other wrong.

The fact is, however, that we do 'dispute concerning tastes', and we sometimes claim that others are wrong, or deficient in taste, if their descriptions differ from ours. How could this be so, on Hume's account? In his essay 'Of the Standard of Taste' he tries to explain how there could be such a standard, and what it means to describe some people's taste as superior to that of others. In spite of the subjectivity of sensations, it can also be observed that people's sensations correspond to a large extent; and here lies the key to the problem, as Hume sees it. "The rules of taste are founded on observation of the common sentiments of human nature..... Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they anything but general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages". (Hume (b) pp. 8,7). On this view, to describe an object as beautiful would be to make a general claim about its ability to please, and in this manner some people might be less skilled, or less well informed, than others, "Though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely, the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgement on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty" (Ibid. p.17).

According to Hume, "The rules of art" are like laws of nature, to be discovered by scientific observation, just as scientific observation may lead us to discover a regular connection between, say, a type of diet and a type of disease, so scientific observation can lead us to discover correlations between types of aesthetic objects and "The common sentiments of human nature".

Hume seems to think that such discoveries can be made of "what has been universally found to please in all countries and all ages", and this phrase may strike us immediately as excessive. But let us take his claim to be about rules or laws of a general rather than of a universal kind. On this view, the description of an object as beautiful would be a claim about its ability to please, let us say, most people, most of the time. But is this how the word 'beauty' is used? Someone who described an object as beautiful would not thereby be committed to any such generalization.

In this matter there is a disagreement between Hume and Kant. What distinguishes attributions of beauty, according to Kant, is their normative force, involving claims about what people *ought* to feel rather than general judgements about what they would feel or have felt. Kant contrasts this normative force with expressions of mere personal preference, as when we describe something as "agreeable". When someone says 'chocolates are agreeable', this means no more than 'agreeable to me'; and in this case "the maxim holds good: Everyone has his own taste". (Kant pp 51-2). But to describe a thing as 'beautiful' involves a larger and normative claim: larger because it involves other people, and normative because it says that they *ought* to describe it likewise, even if they do not. If the thing "merely pleases *him*", he must not call it beautiful". Many things may be agreeable and charming to him, no one cares about that. But when he calls something beautiful, he demands the same delight from others. Thus he says: the *thing* is beautiful, and he does not merely count on the agreement of others, because he found them agreeing with him on several occasions in the past, but he *demand*s their agreement. He blames them if they judge differently, and denies that they have taste, while still demanding that they ought to have it. And to this extent one can not say: everyone has his own taste (see Kant, p 52).

Kant's view, like that of Hume, is that ascriptions of beauty involve other people, but where as for Hume they are 'general observations', based on past experience of what has been 'found to please', Kant regards them as normative rather than experiential. It is not that the speaker "counts on the agreement of others" on the basis of past experience, but that "he *demand*s their agreement" and accuses them at fault if they are otherwise.

The normative accounts of beauty was vehemently rejected by Santayana, though he did not mention Kant by name. "It is unmeaning", he declared, "to say that what is beautiful to one man *ought* to be beautiful to another" (Santayana, p. 27) whether it is so will depend "upon similarity of origin, nature, and circumstance among men". If these are the same, "then the same thing will certainly be beautiful to both", but otherwise it will not. In that case, "the form which to one will be entrancing will not be so to another, and he may see no more than "a shapeless aggregate of things, in what to another is a perfect whole" (Ibid.p.27). But beyond these facts of nature we can't go: "it is absurd to say that what is invisible to a given being *ought* to seem beautiful to him".

Santayana seems not to recognize that there is such a thing as *teaching* someone to see a perfect whole, or some other pattern of aesthetic significance, where previously he saw only a shapeless aggregate; and similarly with other aesthetic qualities in the various arts. A perceptive critic may make the invisible visible to us. This is not to say that having seen the aesthetic significance of a work we are bound to agree about its beauty. Whether we do so may indeed depend on our nature and circumstances, as mentioned by Santayana. However, what is at issue is not the existence of such disagreement, but the normative force of what is said when one describes something as beautiful. According to Kant such descriptions are not merely reports of personal liking, nor are they, as Hume would have it, statements about the power of an object to please all or most people. What one is

saying, according to Kant, is that other *ought* to see this beauty, and that they are deficient in taste if they do not. It is this kind of normative claim that Santayana rejects as "unmeaning".

In this matter ordinary usage seems to be on Kant's side. It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that we would accuse a person of lacking taste merely on the basis of one object, as Kant seems to think, though this may depend on the object in question. But we may well do so if the disagreement is sufficiently extensive. This is epically noticeable in the case of negative judgements. Someone who ascribes beauty to objects that we regard as garish, sentimental, or hideous, would be accused of being deficient in taste.

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Chapter-III

'Aesthetic Judgement and Aesthetic Experience'

Kant Again

It may fairly well be maintained that no aesthetic judgement would be possible if there were no such experience called 'aesthetic'. Often aesthetic judgements are summary reports of aesthetic experience of persons who have encountered works of art. But what is an aesthetic experience ?

Traditionally it is maintained that there is an appropriate way of experiencing works of art, and that may be described as aesthetic experience. But the difficulties of justifying and substantiating that responses are many. Descriptions of aesthetic experience is many, and they make diverse claims. So it is pretty difficult, if not impossible, to find any clear defining characteristic of it or any single feature that is shared by all its descriptions. We may note a few of them : Aesthetic experience has been described as an experience that imparts knowledge, as one that does not impart knowledge, as will-less, as disinterested, as active, as passive, as cathartic, as contemplative. It has been declared to be, on the one hand, no essentially unlike other sorts of experiences, and on the other, to be a type of experience that is uniquely different from others.

In this chapter we propose to investigate some of the philosophical issues arising from diverging accounts of aesthetic experience, with special reference to Kant. We shall take into account a range of descriptions of aesthetic experience, the concept of aesthetic attitude. We shall maintain, in the end, that there is a tenable concept of aesthetic experience, that is importantly connected with, although not exclusive to, experience of the arts and that it is a valuable element in human life. We may note, in passing, that art, beauty and the aesthetic may be taken to overlap to some extent or to be importantly connected, though not co-extensive. It is on this account possible to delineate two separable but overlapping areas of enquiry : the philosophy of art, the main focus of which is on the nature of art and its creation, and aesthetics, the main focus of which is on the perception of aesthetic qualities. The notion of beauty seems to provide an overlap between the two.

Let us try to understand the expression 'aesthetic experience'.

One point of agreement concerning aesthetic experience is that it is an experience to be prized very highly. What kind of values are placed on it? Findlay, for example, says that aesthetic experience is a type of experience which is uniquely marked out, extraordinary in its delight, not always nor readily to be had, and that it involves concentration and undistractedness. The general import is that aesthetic experience at its highest and best is arresting, intense and utterly engrossing, and when fully achieved, it seizes one's whole mind or imagination and conveys whatever it does convey so vividly that the result is delight and knowledge.

Although aesthetic experience varies widely, there have been many attempts to identify a characteristic common to all its manifestations. Probably the most widely-affirmed of these attempts are those that maintain that aesthetic experience is essentially contemplative. One strand of contemplation theory can be traced back to Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* (1230b), where he remarks about the contemplative character of the proper perception of dramatic tragedy and of beauty in general. The stillness, or *stasis* of aesthetic pleasure is not the object of moral disapproval in the way the movement to procure what one desires might be.

What exactly is the nature of the contemplation that is characterised by stillness or *stasis*? There is the concept of *Catharsis in Poetics* (1449 b), which evoke pity and fear. Pity and fear are engendered in us as spectators of the tragedy but when those emotions are contained by the structure of the well wrought tragedy, instead of provoking us to movement and action as they normally do in daily life, they are able to be experienced contemplatively; for the sake of knowing what they are like rather than as spurs to action. We are purged of them, it seems, in being able to experience and know them fully. They yield their proper pleasure: the pleasure, according to Aristotle, of an untrammelled knowledge of their natures. The Aristotelian thread of contemplation theory became incorporated into Western Culture and Christian doctrine through Thomas Aquinas. When he came to write about the

experience of art and beauty he developed the kind of distinction Aristotle had made between the *stasis* induced by beauty perceived as beauty and the desiring movement towards the possession of something. The kind of logical distinction between responding to good or desirable things by movement towards them and to beauty by an entranced contemplation has prevailed in much aesthetic theory. It is expressed in a most lively and interesting way in some of the work of James Joyce. I have his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in mind. To quote what Stephen Dedalus says in the novel : "The tragic emotion is static. Or rather the dramatic emotion is. The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ The aesthetic emotion is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing". (P.213). Towards the end of Jean - Paul Sartre's novel *Nausea* (P.248) the main character Roquentin suddenly recognizes listening to his favourite Jazz record that the tune has a life of its own that is inviolable, that the tune *itself* is not something that could be destroyed by smashing records as tearing up music. The tune is not an exciting *thing*, an object at all. It has *being* rather than mere physical existence : "Through layers and layers of experience, it unveils *itself*, slim and firm, and when you try to seize it you meet nothing but existents, you run up against existence devoid of meaning" (Ibid).

We may look more closely at the notion of contemplation. The Aristotelian *stasis* described by Stephen Dedalus is a sustained focusing of attention rather than an inert reception. But some writers have suggested that the first demand any work of art makes on us is surrender. But contemplation maintains a dialogue with what is perceived. It includes that will-less receiving in which a person is entranced, as if experiencing a revelation, as well as a searching attentiveness. It includes thinking *about* something by imagining it as well as apprehending it directly. Schopenhauer writes : "Everyone who reads the poem or contemplates the work of art must of course contribute from his own resources..... [everyone] has to stand before a picture as before a prince, waiting to see whether it will speak and what it will say to him. What we grasp of the work depends on what capacity and culture allow" (Vol.II. p.407).

A feature of aesthetic contemplation seems to require both an involvement with and a detachment from the perceived object. Schopenhauer's view includes not only a detachment but also an involvement that is a near - mystical union with what is known. The kind of impersonal detachment characteristic of aesthetic contemplation is generally known as "disinterestedness". It has probably been the single most important concept in the last three centuries of aesthetic theory. To be disinterested concerning something is not the same as being uninterested in it. 'Disinterestedness, can describe the absence of the kind of interest that relates to one's own advantage or disadvantage, or it can describe an impartial and unbiassed attitude in which one has no personal axe to grind in a matter . It requires us to consider something on its own merits and not in relation to what might accrue from it for ourselves : to be concerned with the object itself rather than with how it relates to oneself. Or it can refer to a concern solely with the look or appearance of something and an absence of any interest in the actual existence of what appears.

The notion of disinterest as an important characteristic of aesthetic consciousness is given explicit and detailed exposition by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*.

In his philosophy as a whole Kant systematically investigates three modes of human consciousness : Knowledge, desire and feeling. For each of these topics he wrote a critique. His *Critique of Pure Reason* examines knowledge, and his *Critique of Practical Reason* morality. The third Critique, the *Critique of Judgement* examines our consciousness of beauty, approaching the matter by means of what Kant calls 'The Judgement of Taste', that the kind of judgement we make when we feel and pronounce that something is beautiful. 'Beautiful', for Kant, is the paradigm predicate of aesthetic judgements.

Kant starts from the fact that we do make judgements such as "This is beautiful" and he investigates their character, logical status and presuppositions. His fundamental question is ! 'How are judgements of taste *possible* ?' In asking this

what he wants to find out is whether such judgements are well grounded : that is, whether we are justified in affirming the kind of things we do affirm in them. If they do turn out to be justified then Kant regards them as "possible" in the sense that the justification *entitles* us to make such judgements.

Kant presents four moments, or aspects of the judgement of taste. He first points out that the judgement that something beautiful arises from "being conscious of this representation with an accompanying sensation of delight" (*Critique of Judgement*, P.43). Simply one feels delight in the apprehension of a perceived appearance and thereby judges it to be beautiful, as for example, when one delights in a view or landscape and exclaims at its beauty. The judgement, according to Kant, is not cognitive, that is, it does not involve knowledge of what is judged. It is based entirely on feeling, which he describes as "a quite separate faculty of discriminating and estimating". Moreover this feeling of delight is a response to the *representation* or perceived appearance, not to some feature that depends on the actual existence of what is represented. If it did depend on the object's existence then our feeling of pleasure, Kant maintains, would not be disinterested. He says: "Everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real existence of the object. Everyone must allow that a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste. One must not be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the thing, but must preserve complete indifference in this respect in order to play the part of judge in matter of taste" (*Ibid*).

To refine and emphasize the point that the judgement that something is beautiful arises from a disinterested pleasure. Kant carefully distinguishes it from two other kinds of delight : delight in what is agreeable and delight in what is good. He claims that both delight in what is agreeable and delight in what is good involve a

desire of some sort towards an object and therefore an interest in it. What is agreeable, he maintains, makes a direct appeal to the senses and so arouses an inclination to possess the agreeable object or to possess something like it. Our pleasure is therefore related in some way to its real existence and so is not disinterested pleasure. We have a comparable interest in the real existence of the good in that we desire the good thing or action to exist. In contrast "The judgement of taste is simply contemplative, i.e. it is a judgement which is indifferent to the existence of an object, and only decides how its character stands with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure" (Ibid, p.48). Kant does not mean by this that someone who judges that, for instance, a particular oriental carpet is beautiful is wholly indifferent to the real existence of the carpet but simply *that in judging its beauty* one's attention is directed to its visual qualities or appearances rather than to the existence of what makes such perceptions possible. The judgement of taste may well be succeeded by an interest in the real existence of the rug and by a desire to possess it but that interest and that desire are not elements in the judgement of taste, the pleasure of which accrues in the contemplation of beauty and is unaffected by the reality or unreality of what it contemplates. All the time, in these carefully made distinctions, Kant is working to provide a precise characterization of the kind of experience that results in a judgement of taste. He regards both the judgement of agreeableness and that of beauty as aesthetic judgements, for both are based on feeling, but maintains that only the judgement of beauty is a judgement of *taste*. Taste is a persons' capacity to judge things by means of a contemplative delight in their beauty; it is the capacity for disinterested aesthetic experience.

In the second moment Kant identifies another distinguishing characteristic of the judgement of taste. One that arises from the fact that the feeling of delight from which the judgement of taste springs is subjective while the form of the judgement, "This is beautiful" is objective. It is objective in that it seems to impute beauty to the object : we do not express the judgement subjectively by saying 'I like it' : instead, Kant says, we "speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a quality of the object" (Ibid, p.51). He points out that in the case of a judgement that something

is agreeable we can allow that there can be a difference of opinion. But Kant has to explain why the judgement of beauty is not like that; why it is grounded in feeling yet it is at the same time is stated in terms that imply some sort of objectivity and that invites the agreement of others.

Kant's justification of these characteristics of aesthetic judgement is a complex one. What he wants to show is that it is possible for aesthetic judgement to be subjective in that it is grounded in feeling, but also objective in that it may legitimately demand the agreement of others. The justification involves reference to a view Kant has already expounded in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. There he argues that we have to assume that human kind in general possesses faculties of imagination and understanding, since it is these faculties that make knowledge and communication possible. Imagination and understanding, he maintains, interact: Imagination unites the sense perceptions that are the raw material of experience and understanding supplies concepts and higher level classification for the resulting syntheses, thereby rendering them objective and shareable, and so able to count as objects of knowledge.

What is important for our context in Kant's thesis that Imagination and Understanding interact. Whereas in the production of knowledge our mental activity is ruled by *definite concepts* and commonly possessed mental structures that furnish conditions for objectivity, in the pure judgements of taste, Kant holds, the Imagination and Understanding engage in an *indefinite*, although harmonious, interaction that is not dependent on a concept. Thus we do not judge that, for example, a rose is beautiful by reference to a definite concept of beauty, but by reference to our feelings concerning it. Accordingly, Kant describes the judgement of taste as a free one; it is free not only from the constraints of desires and novelty but also from constraints that would be imposed on it by a definite concept of beauty. In this kind of free activity the Imagination, he writes, "induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, that is, a concept, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible" (p.176).

Although the imagination's activity in the judgement of taste can not be bounded by a concept, the Understanding does exert an influence on it by requiring that its explorations, although free, are not chaotic or incoherent. The interaction of the two faculties must have a formal structure of the sort it has in the generation of knowledge. Thus Imagination enlivens understanding by stimulating it to a wealth of indefinite thought, while Understanding regulates the Imagination's activity. But although there is this similarity to the kind of interaction that generates knowledge, the result is not knowledge because the judgement of taste depends on feeling rather than concepts. Its free delight is the feeling and percipience of beauty. At the same time, Kant has argued that all rational beings possess formally similar faculties and mental structures and may therefore be supposed capable of such feeling and percipience. From this he is able to conclude that we are justified in claiming the possibility of a shared delight and universal agreement in the judgement of taste. He has a neat way of encapsulating all this. He says, "The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally." (Ibid. p 60)

Now having shown the nature of aesthetic judgement as being indifferent to both existence and concepts, Kant sets out to point to its limit. Why does he regard the judgement of taste as a cognitive one? It is because it does not conform to the standards he has laid down for knowledge in the first *Critique*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*. But his account does allow for the judgement's having what might be described as the *feeling* of knowledge: that vivid sense of a profound understanding or awareness that is characteristic of much aesthetic experiences. In the third moment Kant turns to considering the beauty that is judged in the judgement of taste. He describes the beautiful object as representation as possessing "the form of finality" or in a phrase that has become well-known, as having "purposiveness without purpose" (Ibid, pp 62-3). By this he means that we apprehend the beautiful object *as if* it were something designed for a purpose. It is not that we think of it as actually having a particular purpose that it might be possible to discover, but that it has the *form* of purposiveness. The points Kant is making here is perhaps

best understood by reference to beauties of nature. The forms and patterns of flowers and crystals and of certain natural formations of stones and rocks seem to have the purposiveness he describes, appearing to possess meaning and significance in virtue of their shapes and patterns and the arrangement of their elements, and yet to have no definite or particular meanings.

It is precisely this unfettered form of purposiveness or finality in a representation that quickens the interaction of Imagination and Understanding in a free and pleasurable way. The activity of these two faculties corresponds to the unfettered purposiveness in the perceived form, for they interact in a way that is both law-like and free, just as the representation that quickens their activity is at once both free (in that it fulfils no particular end or purpose) and law-like (in that it has the *appearance* of having been designed for a specific purpose). In the free but law-like interaction of Imagination and Understanding evoked by the representation one experiences the delight that is the judgement of taste.

The fourth moment of Kant's analysis of the judgement of taste takes up and develops something he raised in the second Moment, namely, the claim that the judgement "This is beautiful" implies that "everyone *ought* to give the object in question his approval" (Ibid p.82) and also describes it as beautiful. This may be said to set the scope of aesthetic judgement. What he is pointing out, once again, is that the judgement seems to imply that it is *possible* for us to agree in such judgements and that, ideally, we *ought* to agree in them. But the only basis or justification for assuming all that is by presupposing a "common sense" an ability in everyone to experience pleasure "from the free play of our powers of cognition" (Ibid. p.83), that is, of Imagination and Understanding. Of course, very often and for a variety of reasons we are unable to exercise this ability to the full and so we disagree in our judgements of taste; but the *possibility* of agreement is given a foundation if we presuppose such an ability. It is an "ideal form" which, if or when realized, is an example of how judgements of taste would concur under ideal conditions.

We may now summarize the main points of Kant's account of aesthetic experience which make aesthetic judgements only possible but also sets limits to its scope. Kant approaches the matter by analyzing the kind of judgement we make when we experience beauty and that his chief claim is that it is by a feeling of delight that we come to judge that something is beautiful. This delight has to be distinguished from the delight that is merely a sensory agreeableness, such as a liking for mangoes, and from a delight in something that is recognized as morally good. But these latter kinds of delight are "interested" in that the person who finds mangoes agreeable there to be actual mangoes to eat, and the person who is rational can't, according to Kant, do other than desire the real existence of anything that is morally good. Delight in beauty is free delight not only because it is disinterested but also because one's activity of mind in respect of it is not circumscribed by a definite concept that imposes limits on one's reflections. This does not mean that apprehension of the beautiful is chaotic; for Imagination and Understanding interact in a way that is *formally* similar to the way in which they interact when they work by means of concepts to produce knowledge. They interact as harmoniously as if they are still concept-governed, albeit with a much better scope to these activities than when they are determined by particular concepts.

Accordingly to Kant, beauty in a representation is its formal properties, its appearance of being designed, but no specific purpose. This purposiveness without purpose generates and corresponds to the harmonious, Law-like but unconfined interaction of the cognitive faculties. When we experience beauty we are recognizing and responding to formal qualities.

One great value of Kant's account of the judgement of taste is that it sharpens and organizes our intuitive understanding of what aesthetic experience is like, identifying and analyzing its elements with great precision. Another major value of his account is its placing of the judgement of taste within a larger conception of human capacities and activities. By delineating the wider relationships in which aesthetic sensibility stands to cognition and desire, to reason, sense,

imagination and Understanding, it provides us with an account that is at once exact and comprehensive. We are able to recognize both the particular character of what he calls the faculty of taste and its connection with other faculties. Thus the judgement of taste or aesthetic judgement, is identified as arising from feeling. It is a feeling of pleasure that is distinguishable from pleasurable feelings concerning the agreeable or the good in that it is disinterested; it is disinterested in that it is concerned with the appearance or representation rather than with real existence of what is perceived. The pleasure that arises from the natural quickening of rational and imaginative faculties is subjective and the judgement arising from it is not made by reference to any definite concept of beauty, but at the same time invites the agreement of others.

Kant also encompasses in his account two other features of aesthetic experience. These are, first, the sense of the illimitability of the aesthetic experience, and, second, our intimations of some sort of connection between the beautiful and the morally good. The illimitability, the unfounded proliferation of harmoniously related images and thoughts, has its source and justification for Kant in the imagination's freedom from the restraint of definite concepts. The sense of a connection between the beautiful and the morally good is a more complex matter. We can only no more than indicate the connection Kant expounds. He maintains that full reflection on something that is beautiful can not fail to lead to reflection also on the morally good. This is because, in his view, a beautiful representation, natural or made, is a rendering of moral ideas in terms of sense: The beautiful is the symbol of the morally good. Kant is not wanting to suggest here that experience of beauty are to be sought in order to come to what is morally good, but that if we do attend appropriately to beauty we shall have, at the very least, some intimations of its necessary connections with the morally good. Nor, in speaking of beauty as the symbol of the morally good, is he saying that, for example, a painting of a morally good person such as Socrates symbolizes moral good by depicting a virtuous person. His meaning is more profound than that. It is the *formal* properties of the work, of any beautiful work, be it a depiction of a saint or of a carcass in a slaughter house, that for him

symbolize the morally good ; and there is a formal resemblance, too, between the way in which we judge beauty and the way in which we ascertain what is morally good, for both involve a freedom that is nevertheless law-like, and both have in Kant's view, an ultimate grounding in the faculty of reason.

Kant's account of the disinterestedness of aesthetic pleasure has been criticized for ambiguity. His formulations, it has been said, are not clear enough and Unequivocal and the explications provided by him do not coincide (Mitias, M.H.(ed) *Possibility of the Aesthetic Experience*, Nijhoff publishers, 1986, P.142). This line of criticism has been developed by pointing out that the Kantian notion of disinterested pleasure seems to have at least three basic meanings : first, it can refer to a satisfaction that is independent of whether the object exists or not; second, to a satisfaction that is independent of any desire to possess the object; and third, to a satisfaction that is devoid of personal interest. But it is difficult to see why these three features of aesthetic disinterest should be seen as constituting ambiguity. Why should they not be understood as three different aspects of aesthetic disinterestedness ? One's pleasure in the look or sound of some thing is distinguishable from any interest one may or may not take in its actual existence, from any desire to possess it and form any personal involvement with it. It is surely distinctions such as these that Kant sought to make in order to sharpen understanding of the nature of aesthetic sensibility. His analysis certainly is not immune to criticism, but it does seem to be a mistake to regard its complexity as ambiguity.

It is often remarked that Kant's account works largely within the trilogy of concepts art, beauty and the aesthetic. These are usually loosely defined or understood in terms of each other. For Kant, the judgement of taste is a judgement arising from the feeling of pleasure in the beautiful, and because of the close connections between art and beauty, it is then very easy to assume that the account of what it is to experience beauty is also the account of what it is to experience a work of art. But this identity should not be assumed, and we need to think about the

worth of Kant's account of aesthetic experience separately from the question of its worth as an account of the experience of art, just as we may think of the aesthetic as dealing with concepts other than beauty. Another limitation of Kant's account is that he does not discuss what is involved in judging some thing *not* to be beautiful. We have to infer that an appropriately disinterested contemplation of something lacking the form of purposiveness yields no pleasure and that the object is thereby judged *not* to be beautiful.

In Kant's analysis the main emphasis has been placed on the notion of disinterest, not only because of its importance in his account of aesthetic experience but because of the influence it has exerted on so many subsequent developments in aesthetic and the philosophy of art. From the complexity of Kant's analysis of the judgement of taste has developed the view that to experience something aesthetically is to experience the perceived properties of the object and to do so for the sake of that perception rather than for the sake of any other relation in which one may stand to the object.

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Chapter- IV

The Nature of Aesthetic Experience as Contemplation :

One point of agreement concerning aesthetic experience is that it is an experience to be prized very highly. But no single account of a particular aesthetic experience seems able to yield a characteristic or groups of characteristics that can serve as the basis of a definition of the experience. It seems to have a variety and complexity that defy attempts to state its essential conditions. And this variety is increased and made more complex by the different media in which works of art come to us. Whatever it is we need to look at some accounts of aesthetic experience a little more closely since aesthetic judgement sometimes get coloured by and made by presupposing this or that account or view of aesthetic experience.

Although aesthetic experience varies widely, there have been many attempts to identify a characteristic or characteristic common to all its manifestations. Probably the most widely - affirmed of these attempts are those that maintain that aesthetic experience is essentially contemplative. One strand of contemplation theory can be traced back to Aristotle. In the *Poetics* he maintains that the spectator experiences, or should experience, pleasure in witnessing tragic drama and that there is a pleasure that is proper to it. Proper is that the well-made tragedy engenders in the spectator both the experience and the resolution of the emotions of pity and fear. In the *Eudemian Ethics* he points out that looking and listening are never regarded as intemperate in the way the appetites are or may be, even though looking and listening begin with the senses. If a man, says Aristotle, sees a beautiful statue or horse, or human being, or hears singing only with the wish to see the beautiful and to hear the singers, he would not be thought profligate any more than those who were charmed by the sirens (*Eudemian Ethics*, 1230 b). What Aristotle is trying to bring out in the remark is the contemplative character of the proper perception of dramatic tragedy and of beauty in general. He points out that we do not condemn rapt contemplative attention as profligate in the way in which we condemn strong appetites and desire : The stillness, or *stasis*, of aesthetic pleasure is not the object of moral disapproval in the way that the movement to procure what one desires might be.

What is the exact nature of the contemplation that is characterised by stillness or *stasis*. In the *Poetics* (1449b) Aristotle maintains that a tragedy arouses pity and fear and accomplishes the catharsis of those emotions. The remark is quite enigmatic, and it has been the subject of extensive discussion and interpretation in classical, literary and philosophical writing. The word 'catharsis' has attracted many interpretations. There does seem to be a fairly straight forward understanding of what Aristotle says. Throughout his account his insistence is on the structure and plot of a tragedy being so organised that the whole representation evokes pity and fear in the beholder and in such a way that it imparts its proper pleasure. This proper pleasure is connected with, for Aristotle, with knowledge and also with the human propensity to enjoy representations and imitations. The pleasure from well -wrought tragedy is the pleasure of seeing and knowing what is represented in it. Pity and fear are engendered in us as spectators of the tragedy, but when those emotions are contained by the structure of the well -wrought tragedy, instead of provoking us to movement and action as they normally do in daily life, they are able to be experienced contemplatively; for the sake of knowing what they are like rather than as spurs to action. We are purged of them, it seems in being able to experience and know them fully. They yield their proper pleasure, the pleasure of an untrammelled knowledge of their natures.

The Aristotelian thread of contemplation theory became incorporated into Western Culture, when Thomas Aquinas came to write about the experience of art and beauty he developed the kind of distinction Aristotle had made between the *stasis* induced by beauty, perceived as beauty and the desiring movement towards the possession of something. Thus Aquinas maintained that beauty and goodness in a thing, although fundamentally identical, are logically different. Goodness properly relates to the appetite, while beauty relates to the cognitive faculty. Goodness has the aspect of an end, but beautiful things are those which please when seen. This account shows Aquinas, following Aristotle, not only characterizing aesthetic perception as contemplative but also in regarding it as cognitive. The kind of logical distinction he makes between responding to good or

desirable things by movements towards them and to beauty by an entranced contemplation has prevailed in much aesthetic theory. It is expressed in a most lively and interesting way in some of the work of James Joyce. To this we have already referred.

In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle wrote of people who were charmed by the 'Sirens', those sea creatures whose songs were of such beauty that sailors became transfixed and will-less so that their ships ran on to rocks. This same notion of loss of will as an important characteristic of aesthetic experience is found in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer's view on art and the experience of it are dependent on the structure of his philosophy as a whole and although the details of that structure are complex they derive from a single thought. It is the thought that the world as we understand it in everyday life, with its apparent orderliness, variety, its comprehensibility and manipulability, is fundamentally nothing but one immense blind driving force which Schopenhauer calls *will*. It is important to understand that for Schopenhauer, there are not two separate things, the world *and* will, but that the world *is* will and will *is* the world. However, we may think of the world under two aspects. Under one aspect it may be conceived of as blind, irrational will; under another the same force is experienced as the world of our everyday understanding, a world in space and time, operating under causal laws and explicable to the human mind. Schopenhauer writes of the world as a whole as the objectification of the will; it is will made manifest. And just as we are to think of the world as a whole as the objectification of will as a whole, so we are to think of any human individual body as the objectification of a particular, individual, human will. Everything one does or is all human lives and all the multifarious creatures and things comprised by the world, are particular, objectifications of the universal and perpetual struggle of the will as a whole. The world conceived of as under natural laws and as containing beings capable of autonomy and choice is the world as we represent it to ourselves in virtue of the capacities of mind possessed by human beings; but the world as will, as a blind force without lucidity or reason, is how it also is. If we understand this, Schopenhauer says, we understand the truth of the human situation.

His view of things has Sombre implications. It offers a picture of human life as an inescapable struggle in which all things and all beings are pitted against each other as each is driven to persist in its own willing. Schopenhauer offers the possibility of salvation from our subjection to will. He points out that even though we recognize that this is how things are there is often also a feeling that behind our existence lies something else, that becomes accessible to us only by shaking off the world. This something else is revealed when what he calls 'a denial of the will' takes place. One cannot deliberately rid oneself of will, so its denial can not be brought about by choice; but it occurs as the result either of great suffering or of aesthetic contemplation. It involves a perception of things that is entirely different from the everybody perception of them as in space and time, and as under causal laws, and it yields a knowledge that is quite different from the knowledge acquired by means of that everyday framework of understanding. He writes "let our whole consciousness be filled by the calm contemplation [and] lose ourselves entirely in this object we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, as pure mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it, and thus we are no longer able to separate the perceiver from the perception but the two have become one, since the entire consciousness is filled and occupied by a single image of perception (*The world as will and Representation*, Vol.1, pp '78.179).

The structure and ramification of Schopenhauer's thought are quite different from Aristotle's or Aquinas's. Yet their accounts of the will-less nature of aesthetic perception are strikingly similar in any ways. All three refer in some way to a profoundly attentive contemplation, to the exclusion of everything save the object of that attention, to the vivid presence of what is perceived, to loss of will or desire, to the compelling nature of the experience and to the delight and knowledge attendant upon it. Schopenhauer's claim that the knowledge acquired in aesthetic contemplation is of a special kind is intrinsic to the general structure of his philosophy.

Ordinarily it is as individual willing subjects that we perceive things but in aesthetic contemplation, when the individual will is denied, what is perceived is not a particular object but the Idea of the object.

Plato thinks of the Ideas as non-material, as more real than physical things, and as perfect and unchanging. In Schopenhauer's scheme of things Ideas occupy a place between the will as a whole which is unknowable. In his philosophy, as in Plato's, the Idea consists of all that is essential in the perceived object and nothing that is inessential. In knowing the idea of something what is known is the fundamental structure that makes it the *kind* of thing that it is rather than the particular variations that make it an individual instance of that kind. Schopenhauer maintains that it is possible to become the knower of an Idea only through a loss of one's individuality, by becoming a will-less 'pure subject of knowing'. Just as the particular, contingent variations of an object must fall away to reveal its Idea, so does the individual will of the perceiver give way to a pure knower. Schopenhauer writes of the perceiver as 'pure subject of knowledge', free from individuality and from servitude to the will. The individual, he says, can know only particular things; the person who, in perceiving, becomes the pure subject of knowing knows only Ideas. We have to think of ourselves as somehow outside space and time, as free from our ordinary ways of apprehending things and free as well from any kind of wanting or practical relationship to what we perceive. To see a tree aesthetically is to see it plucked from the stream of the world's course and becomes a representative of the whole, equivalent of the many in space and time. In knowing it as Idea one comes as close as it is possible to get to knowing the will as a whole.

How is the denial of the will necessary for aesthetic contemplation to be brought about? Philosophically speaking, what is required is that will, which is normally dormant, has to give way to knowledge. We need to be well rested and calm so that we can the more easily lose awareness of the self and entertain the consciousness of other things. The denial of will is a denial or loss of one's

individuality and an achievement of pure perceptual contemplation.

It follows from Schopenhauer's account that it is possible for anything to be regarded purely objectively since everything is to some extent or at some level a manifestation of an Idea. It is nevertheless, works of art most readily and most easily effect the nullification of will that is required to bring us to the purely objective viewpoint. Works of art can do this because they emphasize the essential and eliminate the inessential. When something is 'picturesque' or 'poetical' it becomes set apart and is less accessible to the will. The perceiver is then more easily able to contemplate without will. In a sense, the perceiver becomes identified with the thing perceived, and being without will, finds the experience pleasurable.

The person of genius possesses the ability to apprehend Ideas to lose one's individuality, and lets us peer into the world through his eyes. The ability to perceive so well is the inborn gift the genius, and the ability to embody this perception in an artefact that enables us to see what the genius saw is, Schopenhauer says, an acquired technique.

We may not need to accept the metaphysical frame work of Schopenhauer's thought in order to acknowledge what is of value in his account. We can separate much of his characterization of aesthetic experience from the metaphysics on which he grounds it. We can, for example, accept the existence of a sense of restless striving in human life without embracing the belief that the world is ultimately pure will. We can entertain the thought that in aesthetic perception we perceive things in a certain way and acquire knowledge without accepting that what we perceive and know are Platonic Ideas. In particular, we can explore, by means of Schopenhauer's accounts of the enriching and liberating nature of aesthetic experience, the full character of this kind of human experience. Even as we savour his insights, we also recognize that his metaphysical frame work places certain restraints and emphases on his account of aesthetic perception.

We intuitively understand a work of art as a created new object that is valued not because it points us to something beyond or other than itself but because it is meaningful in virtue of its own particularity. This is the kind of logical status Aquinas ascribes to a beautiful object when he speaks of Beauty as separate and distinct. When Sartre's character, Roquentin, in the novel, *Nausea*, recognizes in the song he hears in the cafe, he realizes that it has a being and meaning of its own that are inviolable. Tagore speaks of the figures in his paintings in similar terms. Yet Schopenhauer seems to take a different stand. For him, it is knowledge of Ideas that is of supreme importance and the particular work of art is simply a means to that more important vision. A question that therefore needs to be asked is whether his metaphysical scheme accords too little importance, or the wrong kind of importance to the particular aesthetic object or work of art.

But all that we may readily say in defence of Schopenhauer's account is as follows. In spite of his emphasis on Ideas he does regard the particular object or works as necessary for the perception of the Idea it instantiates. Without matter, Ideas could not become apparent to us, could not be aesthetically perceived. So the work of art or object, can not be seen as something that is dispensable once we get through it and beyond it, so to speak, to the Idea, for the object or work is the Idea made perceivable. It is not merely an instrument that clears the way towards the Idea. It is its inalienable embodiment.

The apparent fusion or union of Idea and object raises two further problems. The first is that how exactly an idea, which is abstract and general, can be exemplified in a particular material object. This has vexed and permeated, irsolovably much of traditional philosophy. But this is certain that Schopenhauer is trying to give an account of an underlying coherent and systematic structure of reality that will be recognized as the ground and justification of our everyday

experience and beliefs. We do often describe aesthetic experience as furnishing us with insights into a deeper and more universal reality, and the notion of plurality of external Ideas, capable of some sort of instantiation in particular things. It should be a deficiency in any such account if it can not make clear the relationships between any of its categories or parts, and Schopenhauer's account is deficient in that he is not, in the end, able to say *how* Ideas be instantiated in particular things: His metaphysical structure, therefore, does not manage to provide the kind of grounds or justification that are needed to support his account of aesthetic experience and of reality in general.

The second, related, difficulty concerning Ideas about how the maker and the percipient of an object or work are able to recognize that they are apprehending an Idea. For if, as Schopenhauer insists, we can not know Ideas independently of their embodiments in particular things, then we have no means of checking a particular perception, putatively of an Idea, against a standard that would confirm or disconfirm the perception. Once again, the metaphysical structure Schopenhauer has created produces problems that cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Yet the notion of Idea is a fruitful one in the context of aesthetic experience. Schopenhauer contrasts Idea with concept, describing the former as resembling a living organism that has generative force, which brings forth that which was not previously put into it. In contrast, concepts, although useful in daily affairs, are "eternally barren and unproductive in art" (Ibid.p.235). The artistic genius, Schopenhauer says, perceives and feels the Idea as something original and generative, apprehending it as something sensuous and richly productive. Here Schopenhauer is using his conception of the Idea to elucidate important characteristics of work of art and of the production and experience of them, and also to distinguish the domain of art as essentially involving perception, feeling and imagination from the domain of reason, reflection and conceptualization. He says that every work of art offers an incomplete and temporary answer to the question :

'What is life'? Each work is 'a fleeting image, not a permanent, universal knowledge and it is so because 'all the arts speak only language of *perception*' (Ibid Vol.II, p.406). Perception gives what is peculiar, it supplies fragmentary examples rather than rules. It is left to philosophy, he says, to provide the concept, a permanent and comprehensive answer to the question 'what is life ?' At the same time he regards philosophy and the arts as fundamentally related in that both seek to answer that question, albeit by different means : art by percepts, philosophy by concepts.

We may now look a little closely at the notion of contemplation. It is arguable that contemplation does not require stillness, it does not imply passivity. Contemplating is something one does rather than something that happens to one. 'Attending to', 'dwelling upon', 'regarding' and 'looking at' are activities often involving great contemplation and intensity. The inward feeling of contemplation can be one of abounding vitality and movement, one seems to be transported into the world of the work and then explore that world. And when this dynamic quality of contemplation is acknowledged, when it is recognized that its inward side is not equivalent of what may outwardly show itself as a fixed gaze or glassy stare, then it is possible to allow that it is not essentially static or passive. The Aristotelian *stasis* described by James Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus, is a sustained focusing of attention rather than an inert reciepience. Contemplation in the context of painting consists of visual exploration, a recognition of shapes and representation and an understanding of their relationships and meanings. The case of listening to a piece of music is analogous. One does not simply led through, or follows through, a temporal sequence of sounds. That is by no means the full story. Knowledge and memory have to be employed actively in order to recognize and connect the heard themes, rhythms and harmonies, and to produce the expectations of their recurrences, developments and resolutions. In dwelling on a poem one generally investigates images and thoughts, moving imaginatively among the poem's pharases and meanings and searching them in ways that deepen and extend perceipience.

Contemplation has both passive and active aspects. It may be said with C.S.Lewis that the first demand any work of art makes on us is surrender. But contemplation maintains a dialogue with what perceived. It includes that will-less receiving in which a person is entranced, as if experiencing a revelation, as well as searching attentiveness. It includes thinking *about* something by imaging it as well as apprehending it directly. I may contemplate the vista that lies before me or the images evoked in the reading of a lyric poem, but recalling them and dwelling on them afterwards are also contemplations of them. The contemplation that is most typical of an aesthetic situation is marked not by empty passivity, but by a *willingness* to dwell on something, to be contained and more within the evocations of *this work*, its forms, qualities and moods. Schopenhauer's will-less perception is not that of a wax-like *tabula-rasa* receiving *impoessing*. The striving will is absent but knowledge is not. He writes, "everyone who reads the poem or contemplates the work of art must of course contribute from his own resources (Everyone) has to stand before a picture as before a prince, waiting to see whether it will speak and what it will say to him. What we grasp of the work depends on what capacity and culture will allow" (Ibid.Vol.II, p.407).

A feature of aesthetic contemplation is that it seems to require both an involvement with and detachment from the perceived object. We have noticed that the completeness and harmony of the well-wrought work of art sets it apart so distinctly that it resists one type of involvement, that in which one might intervene to act upon or within the work in some way, while at the same time creating the conditions for another type, an imaginative participation in the work's character and meaning. Schopenhauer's view is comparable in that it includes not only a detachment but also an involvement that is near-mystical union with what is known.

The kind of impersonal detachment characteristic of aesthetic contemplation is generally known as 'disinterestedness'. It has probably the single most important concept in the last three centuries of aesthetic theory. To be

disinterested concerning something is not the same as being uninterested in it. 'Disinterestedness' can describe the absence of the kind of interest that relates to one's own advantage or disadvantage, or it can describe an impartial and unbiased attitude in which one has no personal axe to grind in a matter. It requires us to consider something on its own merits and not in relation to what might accrue from it for ourselves. To be concerned with the object itself rather than with how it relates to ourselves. Or it can refer to a concern solely with the look or appearance of something and an absence of any interest in the actual existence of what appears. The notion of disinterest as an important characteristic was given explicit and detailed exposition by Kant. We have already considered Kant's investigation of the logical character, logical status and presuppositions of such judgement as 'This is beautiful'. We shall not repeat our account here. But it is worth our while to remember that the judgement of beauty is a judgement of *taste*. Taste is a person's capacity to judge things by means of a contemplative delight in their beauty. It is the capacity for disinterested aesthetic experience.

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Chapter- V

Form and 'Significant Form'

There have been views that aesthetic judgements are concerned with the 'form' of aesthetic object. An aesthetic object is identified in terms of its form, or by virtue of its possessing 'Significant form'. Several views have emphasized the importance of form in aesthetic experience too.

It should be admitted that the concept of form is not one. It has complexities of meaning and thinkers have used the term in different ways or with different emphases. For Aristotle form is the balanced structure that relates to the elements of a whole. For Aquinas, it is something similar, a due proportion, a harmony, wholeness and clarity the perception of which constitutes a revelation of essential meaning. For Schopenhauer, as for Plato, form is the metaphysical structure of reality that is perceivable and also knowable only under certain conditions. With Kant, only form, in the sense of design, can be beautiful. For him, colour is a non formal property and can not be an element of beauty because its appeal is only a sensory one. He allows that a colour may be agreeable and its agreeableness may attract us to the beautiful form, but any pleasure taken in it is distinct from the pleasure taken in the beautiful. Non-formal properties on Kant's account, are therefore not objects of the judgements of taste. He writes to argue that "the *design* is what is beautiful". The beautiful does not gratify in sensation but pleases by its form. That is, for Kant, the fundamental prerequisite for taste. The colour in a painting are part of the charm, they enliven the object for sensation, make it worth looking at, but "beautiful they can not". (Kant, P 67)

Clive Bell's theory concerns itself with the aesthetic enjoyment of form. People are accustomed to judging paintings more by reference to their content and subject matter rather than to their formal aspects. For Bell, the central problem of aesthetics is to discover some quality common and peculiar to all the objects that provoke aesthetic emotion are called works of art. What is the quality shared by all objects that provoke aesthetic emotions? Clive Bell's reply is : Only one answer seems possible - significant form lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of form, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and

combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms I call 'Significant Form'; and 'Significant Form' is the only quality common to all works of visual art" (Ibid, P.23).

When Bell speaks of 'all works of art' he is using the term 'work of art' in an evaluative sense to mean 'good works of art'. Significant form is the essential characteristic of a good work of art. Unlike Kant, Bell does not exclude colour as an element in significant form. He regards the distinction between form and colour as an unreal one, since one can not perceive or conceive line or a colourless space, nor a formless relation of colours. Nor does Bell place much importance on aesthetic experience of nature. 'Beautiful' natural objects do not exhibit significant form, and do not move as aesthetically. Bell's point is, what makes form significant is that it conveys an emotion felt by its creator, whereas beauty conveys no such emotion. Hence 'beautiful' is not the proper predicate of aesthetic judgement.

Aesthetic judgement or emotion, in Bell's view, is a response to form itself, not to the human circumstances or characters or events that form may be used to depict. Bell does not say that realistic representation must necessarily be bad. It may well be significant, but its aesthetic value, in his view, lies in its formal aspects. He cites Sumerian sculpture, Egyptian art, archaic Greek and early Chinese and Japanese works as sharing three characteristics : absence of representation, absence of technical swagger, sublimely impressive form.

Bell's conclusions have important bearing for the nature of aesthetic judgement. To appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs. In making an aesthetic judgement we are shut off from human interests; we are, as it were, "lifted above the stream of life" (Ibid, p.36) This position is reminiscent of Schopenhauer's remark that "aesthetic experience plucks the object of its contemplation from the stream of world's course and holds it isolated before us" (Vol.I,P.185). Bell maintains that significant form, the one essential characteristic of art that induces true aesthetic emotion, is unaffected

by cultural and historical change. This point is concerned with the status of aesthetic judgement. Of course Bell does not believe that the same unchanging forms are universally and perpetually reappearing in art, for the forms of art inexhaustible, but all lead by the same road of aesthetic emotion to the same world of aesthetic ecstasy.

What then we need bring from life in order to appreciate art ? According to Bell, we need bring nothing with us but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three - dimensional space. Does it ring true ? Can Bell be right in regarding the representational aspect of a painting as in no way relevant to an aesthetic perception of it ? It is the mutually enriching union of form and content in a work that seems to be the source of its aesthetic excellence. Is a purely aesthetic contemplation of a work of art psychologically possible ? For Bell, the aesthetic emotions experienced by the perceiver should be evoked by the work's formal elements and not by anything represented or embodied in or by those forms. He might say also that the view that the indissolubility of form and content is aesthetically potent is held by those who lack the capacity to respond to significant form in the required way.

Bell's separation of content from form and his near-exclusive linking of the aesthetic emotion to art bring about a bifurcation between on the one hand, art and aesthetic, and on the other, what he calls 'life'. For him, in experiencing the visual arts aesthetically we turn away from everybody living and enter another world, "a world with an intense and peculiar significance of its own that is unrelated to the significance of life" (Ibid). In this other world, the emotions of life have no place. It is a world with emotions of its own, says Bell. This seems to run counter to the intuition that aesthetic perception and appreciation of painting, and of the arts in general, can be of profound significance in everyday life. Bell does not deny it. He remarks that though art owed to life, life might well owe something to art. Art does affect the lives of men, it moves to ecstasy.

He concedes, too, that art is affected by life. For practical purposes we find useful tables around us, chairs and tables and utensils. The tables tell

us facts that serve practical ends. But of the thing in itself that lurks behind the label nothing is said. Artists, says Bell, are not concerned with labels. They are concerned only with things perceived as themselves. Only when things are *perceived* as ends that they *become* means to aesthetic emotion. Bell's emphasis on the importance of form in aesthetic experience puts him in the mainstream of philosophic thinking. Like others before him, he holds that to perceive the forms of things is to experience the deeper reality of the world. When something is seen stripped of all its associations and all its significance as means, the formal significance is revealed. Bell calls it "the significance of Reality". The artist's emotion is an emotion felt for reality and the work of art is an expression of that *emotion*.

Few have denied the attractiveness, boldness and vitality of Bell's view but numerous charges have been laid against it. One charge often made is that of vicious circularity. Bell first states that art evokes aesthetic emotion. He then says that aesthetic emotion is evoked by significant form. But significant form, we are then told consists of such lines and colours as evoke aesthetic emotions, aesthetic emotion and significant form have been defined in terms of each other instead of independently of each other. What is needed to break this circle is a description of aesthetic emotion that distinguished it from other emotions without reference to significant form.

Another complaint is that Bell's theory is subjective. He says that the starting point of all systems of aesthetic must be the personal experience of a peculiar emotions, and he maintains that an aptitude or gift of aesthetic appreciation is rare and requires constant cultivation and practice : Only those, says Bell, for whom art is a constant source of passionate emotion can possess the data from which profitable theories may be deduced. All these means that it is difficult to disagree effectively with his theory, since any criticism of it can be dismissed or, at the very least, un derined by the response that it must be emanating from someone lacking in the sensitivity required to respond to significant form. At the same time Bell seems to believe, in a some what Kantian mode, that it is part of what it is to be a human being to possess some capacity to respond to significant form. But he makes no

sustained attempt to say how agreement in aesthetic judgement might be possible.

Another criticism levelled against the theory of significant form relates to its fundamental simplicity. Bell assumes that aesthetic experience can be characterised by reference to a single essential quality : significant form. Such a view, as we have already seen, can be challenged. To be fair to Bell, we have to remember that he does not put forward his theory as one that he would want to assert for all the arts. His concern is with the visual arts only. But even there the theory seems to be over - simple in its claim that to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions. What Bell wants to exclude are those irrelevant, associative, extraneous connections that 'life-experience' can lead us to make and that can so disastrously obscure the intrinsic character of the object that is before us. What he did not seem to recognize was that his own superb appreciative capability did not so much exclude representational elements as deploy or assimilate them with complete appropriateness in the service of his aesthetic delight in formal properties. Nor does he fully consider the point that form and content are often fused together, when, for example, the depiction of a tempest is given by means of rough and forceful brush strokes.

Such criticisms of Bell's theory do not mean that the notion of significant form is without value. For anyone struggling to find a way to a certain kind of enjoyment of paintings the doctrine is a supremely illuminating one. The fact is that it stands in need of refinement and correction is as much a merit as a failing since it thereby evokes an immediate critical interest and debate.

Bell separates art and significant form from beauty. He does not define art in terms of the beautiful. Beautiful form is the same as significant form, and it is significant form that is, for him, the essential quality of works of art. It is aesthetic rather than the beautiful that Bell connects with art. He regards aesthetic experience as experience of art, except in the case of the artist who, he says, is capable of experiencing the aesthetic emotion in respect of many things.

References and Notes :

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Roger Fry was a close friend and supporter of Bell. He held that the subject matter of a work of art is always irrelevant.

Chapter- VI

Aesthetic Attitude, Experience and Judgement 'Psychical Distance'

A major question is whether aesthetic experience is to be thought of as depending on certain qualities or features of objects, or on a special attitude towards or way of perceiving things or on some sort of conjunction of the two. Bell's theory of significant form is an example of the view that it is certain qualities of an object that furnish logically necessary conditions of aesthetic experience. Schopenhauer's theory is an example of the view that a certain attitude of will - lessness is its logically necessary condition. These two theories of aesthetic experience, in common with others such as Aristotle's and Kant's, seem to require both a detachment and an involvement : a detachment from practical or utilitarian aspects of the object and, as a result, a contemplative involvement with its essential being.

Reflection on those two features of detachment and involvement suggests that a distinction may be drawn between an aesthetic *attitude* and an aesthetic experience, the aesthetic attitude being a certain kind of stance or approach required as a necessary condition of aesthetic experience. From this we may be tempted to think of the experience as a whole as a temporal, psychological process in which one is first rid of one's individual will and then, in consequence and if all goes well, enjoys an aesthetic experience of some sort. But this can lead to misunderstanding and error. For to think of Schopenhauer's account only as a description of a psychological process is to obscure the philosophical point for which he argues, namely, that denial of the individual will is the logically necessary condition for the impersonal knowledge of Idea, that, for him, characterizes aesthetic experience. Will-lessness is a logically necessary condition of aesthetic experience because it would be logically absurd to attribute impersonal knowledge to a knowing subject who is personal and individual. Loss of will, or self, is therefore the logically necessary condition of Schopenhauerian aesthetic experience.

This does not mean that we have to think of the complete aesthetic experience as a process that conforms to a rigid pattern or rigid procedure.

A theory of the aesthetic attitude that attempts to encompass the variety of aesthetic experience and at the same time to define it exactly is propounded by Edward Bullough. Bullough's views exerted an influence on the philosophy of aesthetic experience. His account depends on what he calls 'psychical distance'. For him aesthetic apperception, appreciation and judgement properly so-called can only be explained by the phenomenon of 'Distance'.

The distance is between the self and its object, or between the self and the sources of those affections. In the case of the fog at sea (which can be strange and terrifying, and nevertheless can be a source of intense relish and enjoyment. The example is Bullough's own). Distance is produced by perceiving the phenomenon without being affected by the personal terror it can occasion. When 'distanced' even if we see the fog as something that causes terror we see the terror as in the fog rather than in ourselves. The distanced view of things is not our normal view of them. Distance works such that it cuts out the practical side of things, and allows elaboration of what is thereby revealed.

It seems to be implicit in Bullough's account that distancing is both a phenomenon one may consciously try to produce in order to achieve an aesthetic experience and also one that may just occur without conscious effort. He regards Distance as an aesthetic principle that enables us to distinguish agreeable pleasures which, he says, are non-distanced, from aesthetically valuable experiences that are impossible without the insertion of Distance. He rejects characterizations of art and our consciousness of it as objective, subjective, realistic, idealistic, sensual, spiritual, individualistic, typical and so on. The conflicts between such descriptions, he says, can only be reconciled by the more fundamental conception of Distance. The notion of Distance, he maintains, provides a criterion of beauty and a distinguishing feature of the artistic temperament as well as being one of the essential characteristics of aesthetic consciousness. It is what makes *aesthetic* contemplation and judgement possible.

Bullough wants to maintain that the relationship in which one stands to the aesthetically perceived object is a personal one, albeit of a peculiar character. Its peculiarity is that its personal character has been filtered, "cleared of the practical, concrete nature of its appeal, withoutlosing its original constitution (Bullough,p.97). He cites our attitude to drama as an example. Enactments in the theatre often appeal to us in the way that people and events in daily life appeal, except that in the theatre we do not respond as we might in daily life, by involving engage ourselves practically or physically in what is taking place before us. This non-participation is often explained by pointing out that we know the drama is 'unreal' and consequently do not intervene in it. But Bullough wants to turn this explanation on its head. It is, not, he says, that knowing the unreal nature of the drama creates the Distance that prevents our intervention in it, but that "Distance by changing our relation to the characters, renders them seemingly fictitious" (Ibid, p.98). His proof of this is that "the same filtration of our sentiments" and the same "unreality" of *actual* men and things occur, when at times, by a sudden change of inward perspective we are overcome by feeling that all the world is a stage.

Bullough also detects a paradox which he calls "the antinomy of Distance". He asks us to agree with him that a work of art makes its strongest appeal when we have sympathies and experience that let us apprehend it fully : when we have what he calls a *concordance* with the work. A man who is deeply jealous in his relationship with his wife might well experience a profound concordance in witnessing a performance of *Othello*. This ought to qualify him to appreciate the play fully. Bullough observes that the concordance required for aesthetic perception should be as complete as is compatible with maintaining Distance; there must be "the utmost decrease of Distance without disappearance" (Ibid.p 100).

Bullough maintains that Distance may be variable in that there may be degrees of it that vary according both to the nature of the object and with the individual's capacity. The individual's capacity may also vary from occasion to occasion. For example, I may be unable to appreciate the collection of Buddhist art

today. Tomorrow, if I see it again, it may be different. I may achieve a suitable distance. This variability of Distance, Bullough argues, allows for variability in aesthetic experience in a way in which concepts such as 'objectivity' and 'detachment', do not. More importantly, he points out, it permits the notion of a particular kind of personal involvement as the hallmark of experiences that are aesthetic experiences. It recognizes, too, that Distance can depend on both the perceiver and the perceived object. 'Under-distancing', when it occurs, is usually and falling in the subject, as in the example of the jealous husband attending a performance of *Othello*. But it can also be occasioned by a failing in the object, by, for example, the kind of repulsive naturalism characteristic nowadays of television serial. Excess of Distance, according to Bullough, is more often the result of some feature or features of the work of art, or can be brought about by the temporal gap that the passing of several centuries produces. Thus it may be that I find the icons difficult to approach or engage with because I can find no concordance of feeling with their solemnity. Time has made their style and mood an alien antiquity for me until I, or they, effect some change in my sensibilities.

A criticism of the theory of psychological distance and of aesthetic attitude theory in general is presented by George Dickie in papers and a book. Dickie's claim is that the notion of an aesthetic attitude is a myth, once useful but now harmful to aesthetic theory. He is critical of Bullough's terminology : of the use of the word 'distance' to name a phenomenon and of the word 'distancing' to describe an action. For everything that is thereby referred to can, he maintains, be accounted for by using the concept of 'attention'. He asks : "Do we in order to appreciate some object, commit a special act of distancing ? Or, if in a given case it is not a question of doing something, are we ever induced into a state of being distanced when faced with a work of art or a nature object ?" (Dickie, 1971, P.50) He says that if the distance - theorist asks : 'But are you not usually oblivious to noises and sights other than those of the play or to the marks on the wall around the painting ?, his answer is 'yes, of course that is how it is, but it simply means that one's attention is focussed" and not that any special action has been performed or that any special psychological state

has been induced, (Dickie, 1964, P.57). Dickie recognizes that aesthetic apprehension can not be characterized nearly by saying that one attended to a play, for the attention might be to the stagecraft manifested in it or to its likelihood of being a financial success; and so he suggests that the kind of attention required is attention *to the action of the play* and that this is a better description of what is going on than saying, as Bullough would say, that one puts the play (or any work of art) out of gear with one's practical interests.

What error does Dickie believe will result from Distance Theory ? He objects to the single notion of Distance to characterize aesthetic experience, to the proliferation of special terms and to the rigid demarcations and categorizations that tend to result from such theorizing. The resulting framework, he maintains, just does not repulsive naturalism of some television soap operas. However the upholders of Distance Theory see it as having far-reaching implizations, not only in taking Distance to be a necessary condition of aesthetic experience but also its being a yard stick for evaluating works of art. This is brought out in an article by Sheila Dawson. (Dawson, 1961). Dawson, an advocate of Distance theory, refers to a part of *Peter Pan* in which peter turns to the members of the audience and asks them to clap their hands in order to save the life of the fairy, Tinkerbell.

She claims that this produces a horrible loss of distance for most children: The magic has gone because distance has been abolished (ibid,p 168). This suggests to Dickie that 'loss of Distance' might be used as a measure of failure of something to be a work of art, and to rebut the idea he points out that *King Lear* and *A Taste of Honey* are plays in which an actor addresses the audience but which are not thereby disvalued. His own view of what is going on is that the author of *Peter Pan* is giving children a momentary chance to become actor in the play and that the children do not suffer loss of distance because they never were in a state of being distanced. Contrary to Dawson, Dickie maintains that *Peter Pan's* request for applause is a dramatic high point to which children respond enthusiastically. (Dickie, 1964, p.57).

We do not have to agree with Dickie's claims here. It may be that children have the imagination or sophistication to participate in that way (i.e. by clapping their hands) and maintain distance. This does not contradict Bullough's own exposition of his theory of psychological distance for he nowhere states that audience participation is incompatible with being distanced.

Dickie concedes that Bullough's theory has some plausibility when it has to do with threatening natural objects. What he is thinking of here is the way in which strange or startling phenomena such as fog at sea or the freakish variations in wind, cloud and light that sometimes precede a violent storm, can bring about a sudden dramatic shift in one's perception of a scene or landscape. But he doubts the efficacy of the theory as it relates to works of art. It is not, he insists, that the jealous husband at the performance of *Othello* has lost or failed to achieve distance but simply that, because it reminds of his own jealousy, he finds it difficult to attend to the action of the play. To a supposed defender of distance theory who wants to argue that a member of the audience who mounted the stage in order to save the heroine is someone suffering from loss of psychological distance, Dickie replies that "a better explanation would be that he has lost his mind and is no longer mindful of the rules and conventions which govern theatre situation" (Dickie, 1971, p 50). He points out that there are similar kinds of conventions for each established art-form and that being distanced certainly can not be characteristic of our approach to all the arts, because some arts, especially dancing and singing, will sometimes draw in the spectator to become a participant in the work. He observes that there are intermediate cases : hissing the villain and cheering the hero in the old-fashioned melodrama situation, applauding during an act because of an especially well-performed piece of acting, and so on, Dickie concludes that "It is not that we are distanced from a work of art, we are barred from the work of art by the rules of the art game" (Dickie, 1962, p 299).

Dickie's criticisms have considerable cogency. They are certainly efficacious in casting doubt on the idea of a special kind of psychological mechanism that comes into play in order to generate aesthetic experience. He also makes a

broader attack on what may be described as *psychologism* in aesthetics.

The psychologism is the tendency to think of the aesthetic attitude wholly in terms of a subjective process occurring in individuals instead of seeing it as a concept that is a part of a philosophical account of what is *meant* for an attitude or an experience to be *aesthetic*. Dickie wants to undermine the view that there is a special and somewhat mysterious mechanism in need of close, introspective examination, an examination which, if successful, would resolve problems about the nature of the aesthetic. He does not want subjective process such as 'distancing' to be seen as the necessary and sufficient condition of aesthetic experience. For if 'distancing' an object becomes the guarantee of aesthetic experience of it, the notion of a specifically aesthetic object falls into abeyance, and aesthetic qualities then depend on the psychological capacities of individuals. Against such subjectivism Dickie wishes to maintain that the close attention we pay to a work of art depends on objective features of the work - its wholeness, clarity and completeness - rather than on the performance of a special act by the perceiver. Here in we get the idea of Dickie's notion of the nature, scope and limit of aesthetic judgement.

Although his criticism reveal inadequancies in Bullough's account of the aesthetic attitude and in subjectivist accounts in general, Dickie does not succeed in convincing us that the notion of Distance is one that should be abandoned. This is partly because Bullough's description of the 'feel' of those experiences we tend to call 'aesthetic' is extremely apt. We easily recognize what he is talking about and are able to acknowledge the considerable metaphorical and explanatory force of the notion of Distance even if we reject it as a complete and definitive account of the nature of aesthetic perception. And it is in just this respect, that is, as an adequate description, that Dickie's own account is unconvincing. The notion of attending to something, although it admits of greater lesser degrees of attention, does not carry within it the rich phenomenological possibilities are that traditionally associated with aesthetic perception. Unlike the concept of

contemplation, it suggests little or nothing of the selfless absorption, the engagement of heart and mind, commonly regarded as characteristic of the aesthetic points of view. It is more redolent of blinkered concentration than of a complex and variable experience of perception. It fails also to exhibit the character of an approach, captured in Keats's notion of Negative Capability, in which one is "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after facts and reason" (Keats, 1954 edn.p 179). In short, although Dickie succeeds in giving warning of a barren kind of psychologism that can result from Distance theory he does not thereby succeed in discrediting the whole account. Bullough's views are consonant with the main stream of intuitive understanding of the character of the aesthetic domain and they embody issues that are still importantly alive in the philosophy of the arts.

An interesting question arising from discussions of the aesthetic attitude concerns the nature of our emotional involvement with works of art. Bullough argues that Distance renders characters fictitious, so that we are not tempted to treat them as real beings, while Dickie maintains that observing theoretical conventions achieves the same result. But this awareness of the 'unreality' of works of art has evoked puzzlement. For how is it that we can be profoundly moved by depicting and representations which we know not to be real ?

A suggestion that is somewhat different from both Bullough's and Dickie's views is that we engage in a "willing suspensions of disbelief" concerning characters and events in books, plays, paintings and so on. We temporarily believe in their real existence and so are able to be moved by them as we would be in reality. But this is not a satisfactory analysis of what takes place. For one thing, if we did sometimes believe that fictional characters were real we would surely, on occasion, find ourselves intervening in the action of plays in the manner suggested by Bullough and we would not react to paintings, statues, novels and poems in what would turn out to be entirely inappropriate ways. For another thing, we would be in a false relationship with these works, since to see them as real rather than as representations would deprive them of their true status as created entities. A work of art is *art*. It employs as Kant pointed out, material that is formed from nature but that is 'worked

up by us into something else, namely, what surpassess nature" (Kant, 1973 edn.p.176). If we suspend our belief that art is what it is then our engagement with art is not rational. It is therefore much more feasible to argue that we need to retain unimpaired the belief in the artifice of what we perceive, along with all our other beliefs concerning life, actions and emotions, if we are to respond to such creations in a rational and intelligible way, it is clear that we are able to understand and feel deeply for characters in a book without knowing whether they are real or fictional, but the capacity to feel for them does not depend on either truly or falsely believing in their actual existence but on understanding the word of the world of the book through its relation to the whole world of our beliefs. I do not have to believe in the actual existence of Romeo and Juliet in order to understand and feel the tragic nature of their deaths, because the meaning and import of what goes on *within* the drama is not affected by its being fictional or unreal.

One further observation is worth noting. If it is puzzling or remarkable that we are able to feel anguish or any other strong emotion in experiencing something we know is not real then it is surely equally puzzling and remarkable that we can feel anguish at, for example, the envisaged or imagined loss of a person we love at a time when that person is safely with us. Indeed, this latter anguish should be seen as somewhat more remarkable and puzzling than the former, since it can occur without the prompting of a depiction or representation. But infact we do not find such imginings problematic except, perhaps, when they are pathological; and then it is the pathologi rather than the ability to imagine that requires explanation. We do usually accept that most human beings possess in varying degrees, the ability to imagine not only circumstances, events and situations which are not factual but also the responses and emotions they invite; just as we accept that they possess abilities to think, reason, remember, conjecture and dream.

From our examination of various accounts of aesthetic experience it is clear that the experience has no single defining features. No single theory seems able to do it justice, partly because the concept is a complex one, and partly because it is a concept with a history, linked to cultural history and to the history of philosophy. There is always a growing edge to the study of aesthetic concepts, yet it is also true that certain themes endure and continue to emerge in one form or another, demanding clarification or reappraisal in the light of new areas in the arts and of changing sensibilities.

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Chapter- VII

Aesthetic Qualities

I. **Beauty and proportion :** What qualities are characteristics of art ? Beauty is probably the first that comes to mind. What is beauty ? The first thing that may strike us here is the enormous variety of beautiful things .Is it likely that they all share some common element or elements in virtue of which they are all beautiful. The difficulty of finding what they have in common is likely to be as great in the case of beauty as in the case of art itself.

There is an ancient view, and one that has persisted through the ages, that beauty consists essentially of such properties as symmetry and proportion. The chief forms of beauty, wrote Aristotle, are order and symmetry and definiteness. St. Augustine declared that beautiful things please by proportion, with pairs of equivalent members responding to each other.

In the seventeenth century the Earl of Shaftesbury declared that all beauty is truth. True features make the beauty of a face, and true proportions the beauty of architecture; as true measures that of harmony and music. These true proportions, he claimed, have natural beauty, which the eye finds as soon as the object is presented to it.

The perception of beauty is reserved for being endowed with higher, rational faculties of the mind, as implied by Aristotle's reference to the mathematical science. These, he held, demonstrate in a special degree the order and symmetry and definiteness which were the main characteristics of beauty. Animals, according to Aristotle, are insensible to the pleasures of harmony or beauty. Shaftesbury too said that animals are incapable of knowing and enjoying beauty, whereas man enjoys it by the help of what is noblest, his mind and reason.

In the eighteenth century Rousseau reported to the regularity conception of beauty when comparing the feelings of primitive man with those of his civilized descendants. Regularity requires forming abstract ideas of proportion and regularity, in which civilized man had the advantage over his savage ancestors.

Edmund Burke came with the distinction between the beautiful and the sublime. This was in effect a challenge. He challenged the place of beauty as the only or most important aesthetic category. Burke contrasted the sublime with beauty in several ways. Sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small. What is important for us is the dethronement of beauty from its prominent position in aesthetics. The assumptions that beauty is a necessary condition of art could now be challenged, and various other qualities put forward by which to judge and appreciate a work of art. By the eighteenth century, it seems, that once the regularity view of beauty is given up, no obvious alternative suggests itself. There was, and perhaps still is, a self-evident quality about the connection of beauty with regularity. The regularity view of survived virtually unquestioned until quite recent times, but once it is surrendered, there is no obvious successor. It now becomes plausible to suppose that beauty exists in an infinite variety of forms and cannot be captured by any overall definition or recipe.

II. Beauty and feeling : The analyses of beauty considered so far have been in terms of objective qualities, such as size, proportion, smoothness and hightness. But it may be thought that the place to look for an analysis of beauty is within ourselves rather than in the objects. This was the view of one of the most important philosophers of the time. Hume pointed out that there must be more to the perception of beauty than the perception of particular objective qualities. The regularity view was still prevalent when he began philosophizing over the concept of beauty, however his main concern was to question the objectivity of beauty. In saying that beauty was no quality of the circle, he intended to say, that it is something that exists in the mind of the observer. Hume's account of beauty may be described as 'subjectivist', for according of is beauty is, or is dependent on, a subjective concurrence, a feeling or sentiment within the observer. That there is a *connection* between beauty and feeling, can hardly be disputed. For Hume, beauty & feeling are not merely connected, his view was that beauty is itself feeling. This view has the consequence that beauty can't exist in the absence of a suitable observer, 'an intelligent mind' as Hume put it. We have given a fuller account of Hume's view about beauty in another chapter. But the point that we would like to make here is that a

similar view was expressed by American Philosopher Santayana in *The Sense of Beauty*. According to Santayana, there is a curious but well known psychological phenomenon where by we take an element of sensation to be the quality of a thing. Hence if we say that other men should see the beauties we see, it is because we think those beauties *are in the object*, like its colour, proportion or size. But this notion, he said, is radically absurd and contradictory. Beauty can not be conceived as an independent existence. It exists in perception. A beauty, Santayana remarks, not perceived is a pleasure not felt, and a contradiction. Just as it would be absurd and contradictory to suppose that pleasure can exist independently of anyone feeling pleasure, so it is with beauty, given that beauty is a sensation, a "felt-pleasure", and not "the quality of a thing".

These remarks by Hume and Santayana remind us of the saying that beauty is in the eye of the beholders, which expresses the view that beauty is a subjective quality. There is a further element in the views expressed by Hume and Santayana. According to them, beauty is not merely a subjective quality, but one that consists in a feeling or sensation. Thus Santayana, having said that beauty does not exist independently but only *in perception*, goes on to indicate that beauty is a pleasure that we feel and that it is an element of sensation. Hume speaks similarly of feelings and sensations. The claim that beauty is a feeling seems to be a necessary ingredient of the subjectivist view, for it is hard to conceive what beauty could consist in if it were neither an objective quality nor a feeling. The idea that it is something "in the eye of the beholder" can not be taken literally.

Now the idea that beauty is a feeling may seem plausible because of the undoubted connection between beauty and feeling. It is true that the perception of beauty makes us feel good, that ugliness is depressing and so on. But to speak of beauty itself as a feeling is to go much further, and further away from our normal use of this word. Asked how I feel when in the presence of beautiful or

ugly things or surroundings, I might reply 'happy', 'thrilled', 'delighted', 'sad', 'disappointed', 'disgusted', etc., but it would make no sense to reply that I feel beautiful or ugly.

Again if beauty were a feeling, then it would be absurd and contradictory to suppose that it might exist independently of being perceived. But there is nothing absurd or contradictory in making this supposition. Can we not speak of the beauty of wild places existing today which no one has ever visited ? One might also argue that they should be preserved in spite of this. Now on the Hume-Santayana view such statements and discussions must be non-sensical. They would be like talking about a world in which there is pleasure, but no beings capable of feeling pleasure. Such talk need not be absurd and contradictory in the case of beauty.

III. Causal theories of beauty : There is another way, however, of defining beauty by reference to feeling. Beauty, it may be said, is a quality of objects and not itself a feeling. But this quality is identified by the feelings it causes in us. Hume in some of his passages in the *Treatise* seems to have maintained this view; "beauty is nothing but a form, which produces pleasure, as deformity is a structure of parts the power of producing pain and pleasure make the essence of beauty and deformity"(p.299). This view does not entail that beauty can not exist in the absence of suitable spectators, for an object might be fitted to give pleasure, even though it is not actually doing so, because no spectators are present.

This causal approach to aesthetics was rejected by Wittgenstein in his *Lectures on Aesthetics*. He distinguished 'discontent' from 'discomfort'. It was, he held, the former which was more characteristic of discourse about the arts. By 'discomfort' he meant, like Read, sensations resulting from suitable causes. 'Discontent' on the otherhand, was not a sensation but an attitude. And in expressing discontent with an aesthetic object one was criticizing the object as being 'not right' , and not

commenting on its power to cause sensations. To make his point he sometimes draw attention to aesthetic situations of a modest, everyday kind. One might, he said, express 'discontent' with the shape of a door, or approval of a suit which is not of 'the right length'. The expression of discontent, he said, is not "an expression of discomfort *plus* knowing the cause. It is not as if there were two things going on in my soul - discomfort and knowing the cause" (pp 13,14)

Now on the view taken by Hume and Read, the description of a thing as beautiful or ugly does amount to a double statement of this kind. In describing a thing as beautiful, one would be saying both that one felt a pleasurable sensation and that this was caused by certain qualities in the object. But according to Wittgenstein, aesthetic descriptions are descriptions of the objects themselves and not of their causal powers with regard to sensations.

Wittgenstein was not denying the importance of feelings when seeing or hearing works of art. Moreover, "you could play a minuet once and get a lot out of it, and play the minuet another time and getting nothing out of it"(Ibid.p.29); and this suggests that hearing the music and responding to it are two separate occurrences, related by way of cause and effect. On this view, our interest in a work of art, and our evaluation of it, would depend on its efficacy in producing certain feelings. There was, Wittgenstein says, 'a tendency to talk about "the effect of a work of art" - feelings, images, etc.', so that if one were asked why one was listening to that minuet, one might be inclined answer : 'To get this and that effect' ; But, he asked, "does not the minuet itself matter ? - hearing this : would another have done as well ?" (Ibid p.29).

If the model of cause and effect were correct, then the answer for this question should be 'Yes'. In that case, the point of listening to a minuet would be to get a certain feeling, and then any other piece that produced the same feeling

would do just well. The same would be true of a picture or poem, so that 'if you gave a person the effects and removed the picture, it will be all right' (Ibid p.29x). But if this were so, would not 'a syringe which produces these effects on you do just as well as the picture' or the minuet ? According to the causal account, the answer should again be 'Yes' . On this view, we might suppose that the shelves of record shops, instead of containing recordings of pieces by Beethoven, Mozart etc. were furnished with a supply of suitable syringes and drugs, classified under composers, names, and equally effective in producing the desired feelings, but at a lower cost.

In some cases, such as that of the door being too low, it is any case implausible to think that the aesthetic response must always involve feelings. But even where aesthetic response does involve feelings, it is still wrong, according to Wittgenstein, to record the production of feelings as accounting for our interest in aesthetic objects, or as being what we mean when we ascribe aesthetic qualities to them.

IV. The normative force of judgements of beauty : As we saw, a supposed advantage of subjectivist accounts of beauty was that they would accommodate the widespread disagreement that exist in judgements of beauty. According to these accounts, the disagreements would be no more surprising than the fact that what tastes sweet to one person tastes bitter to another, or the fact that what gives a headache to one person does not do so to another. Hume, having described beauty as a sentiment, i.e. sensation, commented that all sentiment is right, because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself" (Of the Standard of Taste, p.6); and he quoted the saying that 'it is fruitless to dispute concerning tastes'. One might say that it makes *no sense* to describe a sensation as either right or wrong. If I get a certain sensation when climbing a high ladder and you do not, we can not say that one of us must be right and the other wrong.

The fact is, however, that we do 'dispute concerning tastes' and we sometimes claim that others are wrong, or deficient in taste, if their descriptions differ from ours. How could this be so, on Hume's account ? In his essay, 'Of the standard of Taste' he tried to explain how there could be such a standard, and what it means to describe some people's taste as superior to that of others. In spite of the subjectivity of sensation, it can also be observed that people's sensations correspond to a large extent; and here lay the key to the problem, so Hume saw it. On this view, to describe an object as beautiful would be to make a general claim about its ability to please, and in this matter some people might be less skilled, or less well informed, than others. According to Hume, the rules of art are, like laws of nature, to be discovered by scientific observation. Just as scientific observation may lead us to discover a regular connection between, say, a type of diet and a type of disease, so scientific observation can lead us to discover correlations between types of aesthetic objects and 'the common sentiments of human nature.'

Hume seems to think that such discoveries can be made of 'What has been universally found to please in all countries and all ages' and this phrase may strike us immediately as excessive. But let us take his claim to be about rules or laws of a general rather than of a universal kind. On this view, the description of an object as beautiful would be a claim about its ability to please, let us say, most people most of the time. But is this how the 'beauty' is used ? Someone who described an object as beautiful would not thereby be committed to any such generalisation.

In this matter, there is a disagreement between Hume and Kant. What distinguishes attributions of beauty, according to Kant, is their normative force, involving claims about what people *ought* to feel rather than general judgements about what they would feel or have felt. He first contrasted this normative force with expression of mere personal preference, as when we describe something as 'agreeable' . But to describe a thing as 'beautiful' involves a larger and normative claim : larger because it involves other people, and normative because it says that they *ought* to describe it likewise, even if they do not.

Kant's view, like that of Hume, is that ascription of beauty involve other people. But whereas for Hume they are 'general observations' on past experience of what has been 'found to please'. Kant regards them as normative rather experiential. It is not that the speaker counts on the agreement of others on the basis of past experience, but that he *demand*s their agreement and accuses them being at fault if they think otherwise.

The normative account was vehemently rejected by Santayana (though he did not mention Kant by name). "It is unmeaning", he declared, "to say that what is beautiful to one man *ought* to be beautiful to other" (p.27). Whether it is so will depend upon similarity of origin, nature, and circumstances among men. If these are the same, then the same thing will certainly be beautiful to both, but otherwise it will not. In that case "the form which to one will be entrancing" will not be so to another, and he may see no more than, "a shapeless aggregate of things, in what to another is a perfect whole" (Ibid. p.27). But beyond this facts of nature we can't go : "it is absurd to say that what is invisible to a given being *ought* to seem beautiful to him".

Santayana does not seem to recognize that there is such a thing as *teaching* someone to see a perfect whole or some other pattern of aesthetic significance, where previously he saw only a shapeless aggregate, and similarly with other aesthetic qualities in the various arts. A perceptive critic may make the invisible visible to us. This is not to say that having seen the aesthetic significance of a work we are bound to agree about its beauty. Whether we do so may indeed depend on our nature and circumstances, as mentioned by Santayana. However, what is at issue is not the existence of such disagreement, but the normative force of what is said when one describes something as beautiful. According to Kant, such descriptions are not merely reports of personal liking, nor are they, as Hume would have it, statements about the power of an object to please all or most people. What one is saying, according to Kant, is that other *ought* to see this beauty, and that they are deficient in taste, if they do not. It is this kind of normative claim that Santayana rejects as "unmeaning".

In this matter ordinary usage seems to be on Kant's side. It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that we would accuse a person of lacking taste merely on the basis of one object, as Kant seems to think (though this may depend on the object in question). But we may well do so if the disagreement is sufficiently extensive. This is especially noticeable in the case of negative judgements. Someone who ascribes beauty to objects that we regard as garish, sentimental or hideous, would be accused of being deficient in taste.

V. The decline of beauty : How important is beauty in the conception, practice, and appreciation of art ? That beauty is not a *sufficient* condition for art has always been clear from the recognition of beauty in nature. Here we find many objects of beauty, but they would not be described as art. There are also many artefacts, for example, bridges and buildings, which might be described as beautiful without thereby being regarded as works of art. We may also speak of the beauty of moral qualities and actions, and Shaftesbury and others have done, but again, we would not normally regard these as works of art.

In modern English the word 'beautiful' is used very widely, so that almost any kind of object may be called beautiful by way of praise. At one time it was usual, as Clive Bell reminds us in his *Art* to speak of 'beautiful hunting'. This was one of his reasons for rejecting beauty as the distinguishing feature of art. Collingwood, in his *Principles of Art* drew attention to such expressions as a "beautiful demonstration" in mathematics, " a beautiful stroke" in tennis. Even "a beautiful day", he pointed out, may mean merely one which gives us the kind of weather we need for some purpose or other. He also claimed that if we go back to the Greek, we find that there is no connection at all between beauty and art (p.37). To call a thing beautiful in Greek, he said, is simply to call it admirable or excellent or desirable.

These examples show that beauty can not be regarded as a sufficient condition of art. Can it be regarded as a necessary condition ? Must a work of art have beauty ? This is clearly not so if we allow for the existence of art of poor quality,

where, perhaps, the artist intended to create a beautiful work but produced only an inferior one. So let us put the question differently. Must a work of art be either beautiful, or intended to be so? If we understand 'beautiful' in the broad sense, then the answer may be 'Yes'.

However, 'beautiful' is also used in a narrower, more specific sense, to mean not just good, but good in a particular way. This is borne out by Kant's distinction between 'beautiful' and 'agreeable', between 'beautiful' and 'sublime'. In this sense, the word, it would seem, 'beauty' is *not* a necessary condition of art. Burke held that beauty and sublimity would be *alternative* qualities to which an artist might aspire, and a good work of art might be sublime without being beautiful.

Now it might be said, returning to a broad use of the word 'beautiful' that there are many works of art that could not straightway called 'beautiful' by way of overall praise. This may not seem an appropriate way of describing them. The subject matter and mood of such works as Picasso's *Guernica* would make the description of them as beautiful inappropriate, if not absolutely wrong.

According to Read, there is the tendency to force this one word "beauty" into the service of all the ideals expressed in art. Art is diverse, many of them may be legitimately described as works of art, but there should be no need to stretch the word 'beauty' so as to accommodate them all.

If beauty is not a necessary condition of art, it may still be an important ingredient of art, and the discussion of art. But this too has been disputed. According to Passmore, artists seem to get along quite well without it. It is the metaphysicians who talk of beauty. Wittgenstein claimed that in actual discussions about art the word 'beauty' plays hardly any role at all. The use one tends to use are more akin to

'right' and 'correct' than to 'beautiful'. These remarks have been criticized by Mary Mothersill in her *Beauty Restored*. She concedes, that the term 'beautiful' does not figure in the talk of someone who knows what he is talking about, but claims that when a point about a poem or a musical performance is made, the concept of beauty is in the background. Like knowledge or action, beauty is a standing concept that is taken for granted in critical discussion of the arts, and that it is indispensable.

Now it might be that the concept of beauty is indispensable in this sense. But it would not follow that it is involved in all discussions of the arts, or even that it is the most important ingredient. It might be indispensable in some discussions but not in others. The comparison of the concept of beauty, as Mothersill does, with those of knowledge and action may be questioned. It may be argued that knowledge and action are indispensable to any human language and in this sense, any human society. But is it the same true of the concept of beauty? Could there not be a society with a human language in which there is no such concept? For example, works of art may have been made by prehistoric people even if they had no concept of art.

A number of difficulties await those who try to define beauty, and hence art, in terms of beauty. Does this mean that there is no connection between art and beauty, or that the connection is unimportant? No, people who visit galleries, read poetry and so on, do after all, look for beauty, and may be disappointed if they do not find it, or enough of it. Even if this is not always so, if beauty is a necessary condition of art, the connection may still be important. Again, while it may be true that no satisfactory definition of beauty can be produced, and that people disagree about what things are beautiful, it does not follow that the word is meaningless or that there are no limits to the disagreement. If I am told that a certain object is beautiful, then I shall have a reason for going to see it and will have certain expectations about it.

VI. The Rise of Formalism : One reason for challenging the pre-eminent place of beauty in art was the recognition of other qualities such as the sublime. Another quality, which became prominent in more recent times, was that of form. This has been regarded by some as an alternative to beauty, and by others as being what beauty consists in.

The latter view is comparable with ancient ideas about proportion and symmetry. But the modern formalism was based on personal feelings rather than on any particular type of formal properties. The appropriate forms were those, to quote Read again, "result in pleasurable sensation". This, and not any objective definition, was the criterion of good form. According to Clive Bell, a leading proponent of the new formalism, "the starting - point for all systems of aesthetics must be the personal experience of a particular emotion" and "the objects that provoke this emotion we call works of art" (p.6). The emotion in question is produced, according to Bell, by the perception of a certain kind of form, which he called "Significant form". But this form was itself defined in terms of the relevant emotion. "When I speak of significant form, I mean a combination of lines and colours that moves me aesthetically (Ibid.P.12).

In this respect the new formalism was more akin to the subjectivism of Hume than to older views which were based on objective qualities of form. And as in the case of Hume's subjectivism, questions arise about the status of aesthetic judgement and aesthetic value, about what Hume called "the standard of taste". If the criterion of quality were merely "what moves me aesthetically", then judgements of quality would be purely personal, as when, to take Kant's example again, one person finds canary wine agreeable while another does not.

The main concern of the formalists however, was about the importance of form, in both theory and practice. They insisted on the distinctness and overriding importance of formal qualities and they applied this principle in their critical practice.

The new formalism was connected with a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. Let us take a painting of a beautiful landscape. We may speak of the beauty of the landscape as extrinsic to the painting, contrasting this with the intrinsic beauty or other aesthetic qualities of the painting.

It is indeed, not uncommon to praise a painting for its intrinsic beauty, when the object depicted is not itself particularly beautiful. This contrast can also be made in the case of literary art. The words of a poem refer to events that are distinct from the poem and are in that sense extrinsic to it. But the poem also has intrinsic qualities of form and beauty - its rhythms, choice of words and so on, which belong to the poem and not to anything outside. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic may also be made in connection with certain thoughts and feelings that a work may produce in us. To take an example from architecture. We may find that the Sun Temple at Konarak has a religious or historic atmosphere, and this is part of our experience when we contemplates the building. But it may be argued that these properties of the building are extrinsic in comparison with such intrinsic properties as form and beauty. The latter can be appreciated without any thought or even knowledge of religious or historical associations, while on the other hand, the religious or historical associations that the building conjures up may be had without the building.

Which of the two kinds of qualities is more important, intrinsic or extrinsic ? Which is essential to art ? It may seem as if the answer must be : intrinsic, Here, it may be said, lies the distinctive contribution that art makes to our life. If what we want is to enjoy a beautiful landscape, then the best thing to do is to visit such a landscape, and the enjoyment of a painting of it would be only derivative and secondary. There must be something else, distinct from the beauty of the landscape, for the sake of which we want to see the painting; and this must be its essential quality. Again if we want to reflect on certain thoughts, or hear about certain events, there we can have them told in ordinary language, and there is no need for a work of art to be erected. There must be something special to the work of art, for the sake of which we value it.

The new formalism was expounded mainly in the context of visual art. Music may be regarded from the formalist point of view, as the purest art form, since musical works do not, generally speaking, have any outside reference. A musical work is not 'about' anything, while a poem could be. In the case of literary art there is the problem of meaning. Should the meanings of words be regarded as extrinsic to a work of literary art? It may seem so, for these meanings exist independently of the poem, and it may be thought that the essential qualities of the work are its purely 'musical' ones, the sounds of individual words, and the rhyme, metre, etc. that result from their combination in formal patterns.

Is the distinction between formal and other properties untenable? No, the distinction is not as clear-cut, not as easy to apply, as some advocates of formalism seem to have thought. If some were asked to mention the formal properties of a work, one would give one kind of answer, and asked to mention other properties, a different kind of answer. And the same is true of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic'. The fact that a distinction is not always clear-cut does not entail that it is invalid or unimportant.

A more fundamental accusation that may be made against formalism is to quote Wittgenstein, "The craving for generality," a desire to subsume a large and varied range of things under a single principle. It is a mere prejudice to suppose that aesthetic satisfaction must be attributable to a single kind of quality. While it is true that formal qualities are important, sometimes more important, in the creation and appreciation of a work of art, this does not entail that it must be so in all cases. A rambling, episodic novel may be described correctly as formless, but admired none the less for its other qualities - its beauty or originality of language, insight into human nature, and so on. And a painting, similarly, may be admired for these and other qualities, rather than for any formal merits it may possess.

VII. Aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities : So far our discussion of aesthetic qualities has included beauty, form and the sublime. But our aesthetic vocabulary is much richer than this, encompassing, according to Frank Sibley, an almost endless variety. In his two papers "Aesthetic concepts" and "Aesthetic and non-aesthetic" (published in *Philosophical Review*, p.421) Sibley gives a list of aesthetic concepts. He contrasts them with descriptions of art which he called non-aesthetic. The two kinds of language are to be characterized by what is needed in order to perceive the relevant qualities. Qualities of the non-aesthetic kind, he says, can be pointed out, to anyone with normal eyesight, ears and intelligence, whereas those of the aesthetic kind require the exercise of taste, perceptiveness or sensibility, aesthetic discrimination or appreciation.

In speaking of the perception of aesthetic qualities Sibley means those which are perceived in the sense in which one can perceive or see that the characters in a novel never really come to life, or that a certain episode strikes a false note, what would not be included, however are qualities of an historical or circumstantial kind, such as the originality during, cleverness, etc.

Sibley's argument deals with two main topics : the perception of aesthetic qualities, and the relation between aesthetic and non - aesthetic. Unlike those who regard aesthetic as being mainly about the production of feelings, he holds that aesthetics deals with a kind of perception. People have to see the grace or unity of a work, hear the plaintiveness or frenzy in the music, notice the gaudiness of a colour scheme. Now in order to see and hear these aesthetic qualities, we must be in possession of good eyesight, hearing and so on, just as we must in order to perceive non - aesthetic qualities. But the possession of these faculties is not enough in the case of aesthetic perception. People, normally endowed with senses and understanding may fail to discern the relevant qualities. What they need, in addition, is to exercise taste, sensitivity etc. In this matter critics have a role to play. A major occupation of critics is the task of bringing people to see things for what, aesthetically, they are.

There are, however, relations of dependance between aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities. Any aesthetic character a thing has depended upon the character of its non-aesthetic qualities, and changes in its aesthetic character result from changes in its non-aesthetic qualities.

The dependance of aesthetic on non-aesthetic is not, however, one that can be stated in the form of sufficient conditions. There are no sufficient conditions, no non-aesthetic features such that the presence of some set of them will beyond question justify or warrant the application of an aesthetic term. We cannot, for example, make any general statement of the form "If the vase is pale pink, somewhat curving, highly mottled, and so forth, it will be delicate". Although these features might be mentioned in support of the statement that the vase is delicate, they would not amount to a proof of it; and neither could they serve as a set of sufficient conditions for the delicacy of vases in general.

A given non-aesthetic description may serve two different aesthetic descriptions, one favourable and other non-favourable. A work may be described as general or delicate, because of its 'pale colour, slimness, lightness, lack of angularity', but the same reasons might be given for describing it as 'flaccid', 'washed out', 'lanky' or 'insipid'.

Following Sibley, we may distinguish two senses of 'reason', inferential and explanatory. A reason in the inferential sense is roughly a statement or fact such that, on the basis of knowing *it*, it would be reasonable, right or plausible to infer, suppose or judge that something is the case. But another kind of question would be: Why something is the case? What is wanted this time is an *explanation* of something's being so, and this might require knowledge about the facts behind the object concerned. Reasons in the inferential sense are essentially reasons that the speaker knows. They are used by the speaker to defend or justify what was said, to show that

the belief is reasonable. But this is not true of reasons in the explanatory sense. Such reasons might be put forward by way of hypothesis or speculation, but one is not obliged to do so, or to have any knowledge of them at all.

Sibley appears to suggest that in the case of aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities the relationship is explanatory and not inferential. The non-aesthetic quality or qualities may serve to *explain* the presence of a perceived aesthetic quality, but we can not *infer* that the latter must be present from the fact the former are. And as with other cases of explanation who perceives an aesthetic quality may or may not know an explanation for its presence, in terms of non-aesthetic qualities. Thus a person might notice that something is graceful without yet knowing or being able to specify exactly the reason why. According to Sibley, the discovery of such reasons is one of the central activities of critics : *explanation*. This explanation may be interesting in itself, but it may also bring it about that our appreciation is deepened and enriched and becomes more intelligent in being articulate.

The inferential kind of reason, on the other hand, is not appropriate for aesthetic statements. It is absurd to ask, says Sibley, that such a statement, (involving, as it does, perception) be based upon reasons in the inferential sense. The reason the music is sad at a certain point may truly be that just there it shows and drops into a minor key. But these non-aesthetic facts would be very poor reasons for believing or inferring that the music must be, or even probably is sad. The music might instead be solemn or peaceful, sentimental, or even characterless.

The two aspects of Sibley's argument, concerning the perceptual nature of aesthetic qualities, and the manner of their dependance on non-aesthetic qualities, are connected. It is because we have to see the grace or unity of a work that the existence of such qualities is not to be established by inference. Notwithstanding the dependance of aesthetic or non-aesthetic, the gracefulness

of a vase or the sadness of a piece of music cannot be inferred from their non-aesthetic qualities, but must be perceived directly.

Sibley's insistence on the perception of aesthetic qualities may be contrasted with the theories whereby the presence of such qualities, or our knowledge of them, would depend on feeling. It may seem plausible to regard beauty in this way, because it is readily associated with feelings such as love and delight. But the situation is different when we turn to such qualities as 'vivid', 'delicate', 'dynamic' and so on, for there is little temptation to think that these qualities are to be identified by corresponding feelings, one for each quality. It is, however, largely in terms of such qualities that aesthetic discourse is conducted. Moreover, the description of a thing as beautiful is itself often supported by reference to qualities of this kind.

VIII. Expressive qualities : On the otherhand, there is a type of aesthetic quality where the connection with feelings seems especially strong and direct. A piece of music may be described as sad or cheerful. Is this because it expresses the composer's feelings ? Is it due to feelings produced in the audience ? Again, what if someone speaks of a 'plaintive melody'? This example was introduced by Wittgenstein. Such qualities as 'sad' and 'plaintive', when ascribed to music, such qualities are known as 'expressive', and this reflects a widespread view that music, but also, art in general, serves to express an artist's feelings (the 'expression' theory). But this view is open to serious objections ; and the description of such qualities as 'expressive'.

This implication is challenged by J.O.Urmson in his paper "Representation in Music". Urmson does not deny that some composers have from time to time expressed their sadness in their music, but he questions whether this is what is meant in describing a piece of music as sad. This cannot be so, he argues, for he could himself easily write a piece of music that would recognizably sad without thereby expressing sadness or anything else. Again, sad music is pleasant to listen to, and listening to it may make as happy, but this is not so with normal expressions of sadness.

It is true that music evokes feelings in us, but can it make us feel sad ? Listening to music, sad or otherwise, is something that gives us pleasure, but feeling sad does not normally give us pleasure. Again, if I feel I should be able to say what I feel sad about, but what would this be in the case of music ? Finally this attempt to deal with sad music would not be applicable to plaintive music, for there is no such feeling as 'plaintive'.

These uses of language, both inside and outside aesthetics, are sometimes called 'metaphorical'. But they are not metaphors in the same way that 'the head of the company' is. In such cases we can explain how the metaphor works, by drawing attention to the relevant analogies. We also have the option of saying the same thing non-metaphorically. But this is not so in the other cases. Thus it appears that the problem of 'expressive' qualities is part of a much longer issue in the philosophy of language : whether, or to what extent, our cases of words are applicable. To say this is not, of course, to solve the problem.

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Chapter-VIII

Marxism and Aesthetic Judgement

One of the most influential strains in aesthetic theory during the twentieth century has been that of Marxism. Marxism is the prime example of a politically motivated aesthetic theory. Of all aesthetic theories Marxism is the one most explicitly tied to a political programme. Value is probably the area of greatest contention in Marxist aesthetics. There have been competing schools of Marxist thought, yet there is general agreement that, at some point, the arts must be considered to be subsidiary to politics. No Marxist theorist is likely to deny that the arts are part of a process of ideological struggle. We propose to trace the debate on value in Marxist aesthetics from Marx through to the late twentieth century.

Marxism has followed different lines of development in the twentieth century, but some common features can be identified amongst its many variants, such as the requirement to judge all activities of a society, its artistic activities included, in political perspective. Under such a reading, works of art may further or retard the class struggle, be progressive or regressive in their effect on their evidence. Marxism in its sophisticated forms shows a great interest in determining exactly why given works of art have the effect they do. Underneath it lies the compulsion to situate artworks within a political context. It is worth pointing out that 'Political' is a term with a very wide range of reference to a Marxist, embracing the structure of a social relations as well as politics in its institutional sense.

Arts' value to a Marxist, therefore, is to be politically determined. Both art work and artist are to be analysed according to political criteria, although that leaves considerable room for debate as to the exact value of individual works of art, or artistic styles, within a given society. It is a debate going right back to Marx himself. There is, for example, his famous analysis of the value of Greek art and literature in *Grundrisse*. Marx stresses that Greek art and literature are bound up with certain forms of social development, and speculates as to why it is that they still afford us artistic pleasure and that in a certain respect they count as a norm and as an unattainable model, when the forms of social development in question have long since disappeared. The problem arises because Marx espouses a progressive theory of

social development. He sees mankind as evolving through a series of historical stages from tribalism through feudalism to bourgeois capitalism, and then eventually communism - to become more advanced beings in all sense, including the production of art. Modern art, being the product of mankind's highest stage of social development, ought by rights to exert the greatest effect and to supersede the art of the past, to have the greatest value, as it were.

The answer that Marx put forward in explanation is quite notorious. His notorious 'Childhood of humanity' agreement runs as under, "A man can not become a child again, or he becomes childish. But does he not find joy in the child's naivete, and must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage ? Does not the true character of each epoch come alive in the nature of its children ? Why should not the childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an external charm ? There are merely children and precocious children. Many of the old peoples belong to this category. The Greek were normal children. The charm of their art for us is not in contradiction to the undeveloped stage of society on which it grew. It is the result, rather, with the fact that the unripe social conditions under which it arose, and could alone arise, can never return".

An important principle is established at this point : that works of art do not transmit eternal truths over time. For a Marxist, the Homeric poems do not make any eternally valid statements about the human condition instead, Homeric poems, like any other great works of art, have to be recreated and reappropriated by each generation in terms of the specifics of its own ideological struggle. The main thrust of Marxist aesthetics will be to contextualise art works within that progressively unfolding ideological conflict, in order to determine how the arts are helping to form ideological attitudes.

Politics will therefore be the ultimate determinant of a given work of art's value, but the precise nature of the relationship between the arts and politics remains a matter for dispute. Whether the arts can claim a relative autonomy from

the realm of politics and economics has been debated in Marxist circles of late, and both Marx and Engels had floated such an idea in their writings. Even the notion of a relative autonomy, with its implication that partial escape only can be made from political and economic constraints, gives away the unequal nature of the relationship and directs us back to consideration of the base/super structure model on which so much of Marxist cultural theory depends. Marxism assumes that society consists of an economic base (the production of good by labour) and a superstructure comprising a range of social activities, such as the arts, religion, the law and education. The economic base is held to determine, in some sense, the form that the activities in the superstructure will take : The mode of production in material line determines the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. Here 'political' refers to institutional politics. Thus a society structured on capitalist principles gives rise to an educational system based on competition, and a conception of the arts heavily imbued with the notion of individualism (the heroic author, painter, composer, etc. communicating a personal vision), since competition and individual effort form the cornerstone of *Laissezfaire*, free - market economic theory.

Early Marxist aesthetic theorists saw the relationship between the arts and the economic base as essentially a reflective one, thus the arts reflected the ideology of a society, an ideology determined by economic factors. Reflection theory, for many years one of the major paradigms in Marxist aesthetic, postulated a somewhat passive role for the arts in the ideological process. Plekhanov remarked that the art of a decadent epoch *must* be decadent. This is inevitable; and it would be futile to become indignant about it. More recent theorists, structurelist Marxists such as Louis Althusser for example, have argued for a much more complex relationship between the arts and the economic base, to the extent of claiming a relative autonomy for the arts as a social practice. Nevertheless, the base is invariably the dominant partner in the relationship, and, as with all superstructural phenomena, the arts will be viewed - against an ideological background that is base derived. Engels makes this very plain when he says that political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic etc. development is based on economic

development. But all these, he says further, react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the *cause and alone active*, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is for Engels, rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which *ultimately* always asserts itself. For all that there is interaction, in the final analysis it is the economic base that is considered to hold the key to superstructural development.

The objective of Marxist theory in general is to alter the economic base obtaining in a capitalist society, a base reinforced by a variety of superstructural practices, to one involving less exploitation of the working classes whose labour created that society's wealth. In a capitalist society there is vastly unequal distribution of wealth and profit across the social classes, and Marx's response is to call for a change in ownership of the means of production, leading to the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in which the working class assumes control of a society's industries and institutions. All his writings from *The Communist Manifesto* onwards are directed towards this goal of class struggle against an exploitive socio-economic system. And the arts, if one accepts the idea of their having a relative autonomy, become one more means of contriving to bring this about. Marxist aesthetic presupposes a far reaching and active influence exerted by art on various spheres of material and cultural life, the participation of art in the process of transforming the real world. This would suggest the need for a reassessment of artistic history in terms of the current struggle being waged, and also for a reassessment of the role of the artist in generations to come. Put crudely, artists henceforth will be treated as being either *for or against* the progressive ideology - that of Marxism. The positive side of such an injunction is that it encourages artists to take their socio-political role seriously, and to understand the power, for good or ill, that the arts can have in forming people's ideas and attitudes. The negative side can be seen in the censorship and distortion that resulted in Stalinist Russia from an over-zealous application of class - struggle principles to creativity.

The law of art and the law of politics

There are strong imperatives within Marxism towards censorship of politically suspect material. Marxist aesthetics does not as such entail censorship, and there have been many dissenting voices against it throughout its history, but Marxist politicians are not averse to adopting Plato's solution when it comes to potentially socially subversive poets and artists, and expelling these figures from the commonwealth. Leon Trotsky's assertion that a work of art should, in the first place, be judged by its own law, that is, by the law of art has not always been heeded, and is in contradiction with the views stated above. Indeed, It is not clear that a law of art, if we mean by that a law for constructing value judgements that is independent of political considerations, is even possible under a Marxist scheme. Given the belief that economics 'ultimately' are the determining factor of all superstructural activities, then it would seem that the analysis of the work of art will always be reducible to ideological criteria, to what we might call 'the law of politics'. It is a moot point whether there can be even be a law of art such as Trotsky suggests, except in the rather simplistic sense of checking that formal procedures, say the rules of counterpoint in musical composition have been correctly executed.

Marxism is an aesthetic theory which insists on a didactic role for the arts, and in practice this has most often led to a strong commitment to 'realism' as an artistic style because of its assumed greater power of accessibility to a mass audience. Realism is notoriously a difficult term to define. Does it have any relevance to an art such as music ? Georg Lukács attempted to do just that is conformity with Marxist political imperatives. What realism tends to encourage is a highly partisan form of aesthetics, in the sense that works dubbed non or anti-realist are treated as politically undesirable. In Lukács's case this led to the rejection of modernist literature as inappropriate, indeed inimical, to the cause of socialism. Orthodox Marxist theorists have been prone to dismiss experimental or anti-realist art such as constructivism as anti-socialist in spirit.

Both sides, realist and anti-realist, have a different vision of art's role in society, and some of the major positions in Marxist aesthetics may be examined to see how these differences are manifested. To 'bring art back to the people today' can mean, on the one side of the realist divide, to speak to the people at large in a voice which is both readily understandable and employs the 'correct' political register: "It should be comprehensible to the masses and loved by them" as Lenin puts it. Or, on the other side, to challenge the people, by means of experiment and novelty, to reject traditions and ways of thinking which are held to be outmoded as well as politically suspect. While the two positions have similar underlying objectives, to make art politically relevant and publicly accountable, their methods are radically different and perhaps ultimately incompatible with each other. It is over the question of experimentation, particularly in the case of modernism, where some of the sharpest exchanges in twentieth-century Marxist aesthetics have taken place.

SOCIALIST REALISM

Plekhanov and reflection theory :-

Reflection theory holds that the value of art lies in its being a recorded of social trends. We have only to look at the art of a historical period, according to the Plekhanovite view, to understand what kind of period it is ideologically speaking. Decadent periods produce decadent art and conversely politically progressive periods produce progressive art. It is a measure of the complications involved in this area that progressive, under a Stalinist regime, came to mean stylistically conservative and thematically traditional in the manner of nineteenth century realism, a style which is generally held to reflect the ideals of the socio-economically progressive middle class of the time (and even more insidiously, that any art produced under a regime that met with official approval become, by definition, progressive)

Plekhanov's attack on abstract art provided one of the major sources of Soviet Socialist realistic theory. His critique of Cubism is a case in point. *In Art and social life* he criticized Cubism as belonging to the art for art's sake movement,

and in consequence being tainted by association with a bourgeois ideology which sought to keep art separate from politics. Cubist art represented to Plakhanov a subversion of his belief in the duty of art to reflect accurately social reality. Artistic 'decadence' of this kind mirrored a socio-political decadence, amounting to a celebration of it. Under such a reading abstract art, by its very nature, could not constitute a critique of social evils and become value-loaded in the wrong way : effectively, it was a part of the mechanism whereby bourgeois society kept its politics hidden.

To move away from realism in painting was to move away from the masses and thus to deny art's political value. Formal experimentation of any kind was frowned upon, and the upshot was an art heavily committed to figurative representation and idealized forms. Art became relentlessly upbeat and optimistic in mood, and just as relentlessly propagandistic. The vogue for painting workers engaged in socially progressive labour in Soviet, and subsequently in Chinese communes. Whether this was an accurately reflected social reality was highly debatable. It was, however, how social reality *ought* to be if the political theory involved, Marxism, was accurate in its analysis. The value of the art was to be determined by the extent to which it reflected that politically constructed Marxist reality.

Art as social engineering

In the wake of social realism each writer was called upon to become 'an engineer of human souls', whose task was to depict reality in its revolutionary development. Zhdanov had spelled out what such 'engineering' was to involve. He said that the truthfulness and historical consciousness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remoulding and education of the toiling people in the spirit of socialism. 'Engineer of human souls', 'ideological remoulding and education' : art's didactic role is unmistakably made clear by Zhdanov. This is art reduced to propaganda and artistic value is defined in exclusively political terms. The creative artist under such a scheme is little more than a state

functionary whose capacity for social criticism, which is ironically enough one of art's most revolutionary characteristics, has all but been withdrawn. Post-Zhdanov, the artist must reflect what the political rulers decree that reality to be. There are definite echoes of Platonic aesthetics in this circumscription of the artist's role, and what was to be engineered were not only the 'souls' the workers but the souls of the artist's themselves.

Art as a form of social engineering is a concept of which Plato undoubtedly would have approved, and it is striking how close Zhdanov can be to the Platonic line on aesthetics. In Plato, as in socialist realism, political considerations are always primary and the didactic imperative is the only acceptable one for artistic activity to display. The discussion on dramatic art in *The Republic* (398 A-B) is uncompromising on this score. It is precisely the 'more austere and less attractive' type of writer that Zhdanov wishes to encourage, and, as in Plato's case, those who choose not to conform will be banished from the commonwealth, although in Stalinist Russia the opportunity for self-censorship will first of all be extended to the dissident before the exclusion principle is applied. In Plato too there is a commitment to an idealised reality peopled by larger than life figures. Both poet and prose-writers, says Plato, are guilty of "the most serious misstatements about human life", and this has to be prohibited (392 B). Prohibition means that when a poet refuses to confirm, the state is to control the arts and it will fall to the politicians to set the ground-rules. Zhdanov also speaks in a similar voice. Platonic and socialist realist aesthetics has similar underlying objectives. Plato provides, it has been rightly observed, Leninist dictatorships with a precedent they can not find in Marx and Engels. Each theory fears the affective power of literature, indeed of the arts in general, and it may well be that both of them overrate this power considerably. A direct correlation is assumed between what people see or read and what people believe and then proceed to act upon. Both theories would appear to conceive of reception as a fairly passive process, in which a highly impressionable individual uncritically consumes works of literature and the ideological assumptions encoded within them. The obvious solution is to censor those works deemed to feature socially unacceptable views, and to

substitute for them others containing approved sentiments, the assumption being that the mass audience will just as uncritically absorb the one as the other. The judging process is being dictated by political considerations and scant attention is being paid to any law of art. There is no suggestion that art might entertain, or that pleasure might be taken as a primary criterion of value, in either Plato or socialist realism. Where politics sets the agenda such things can only appear escapist, and escapism can have no part in a social system so heavily committed to didacticism.

Many of the concerns of socialist realism are prefigured in neo-classicism, an aesthetic theory heavily based on the writings of such classical figures as Plato, Aristotle and Horace, and which dominated European aesthetics from the Renaissance through to the latter eighteenth century. Neoclassicism had a similar commitment to didacticism (although its ideological orientation was very different, being more concerned with the promotion of moral virtue than of class consciousness) but it allowed greater scope for pleasure in the reception process. Poets, as the Elizabethan neoclassical theorist and poet Sir Philip Sidney noted, imitate both to delight and teach : and delight to move man to take that goodness in hand, and which without delight they would fly as from a stranger. What is posited in Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* is a working relationship between education and entertainment that is often missing in socialist realism, where delight is in short supply and the bias is rather unrelievedly towards education. What Sidney and Zhdanov agree upon is the objective power of literature, and that affective power's didactic implications.

There are definite echoes of Sidney - style neoclassicism in socialist realism, in that both theories are concerned that the arts should provide appropriate models of behaviour for the audience to imitate or to be inspired by. Ultimately, however, socialist realism is closer to the Platonic tradition given socialist realism's bias towards censorship and the artist's, social role, the question arises as to whether such a limited aesthetic theory can be defended. A defence of a kind can be mounted on the censorship issue. New sociologically-based aesthetic theories would be willing to sanction complete artistic freedom of expression, pornography often provides as

interesting test case for feminists, for example - and in that respect socialist realism differs only in degree. Neither is self-censorship an unknown side-effect of other aesthetic theories : most creative artists in most generations tend to conform to the 'rules'. It is the extent of restriction of subject-matter and formal experimentation that mark socialist realism out for special attention. Politics may be present in many other aesthetic theories, Art with the exception of Plato, none is as explicit about its politically-inspired programme nor about the censorship that backs it up.

Some defense is possible, too, of the socialists realist's conception of 'the artist's social role as 'the engineer of human souls'. Creative artists have traditionally set art to communicate some vision of the world, no matter how obscure and eccentric that vision may be, and their work can have a profound effect on its audience. In that sense most artists are to some extent aspiring to be 'engineers of human souls', and a measure of responsibility must surely be attached to the process. To disclaim any responsibility in such cases would be to deny the affective power of one's art. There are too many extent example of this affective power in action successfully to deny the premise. Dicken's or Saratchandra's novel's drew attention to many of the social evils of the day, and in some cases provoked legislation to correct such evils. To call Dickens or Saratchandra engineers of human souls seems entirely justified under the circumstances. They sought through their novels to arouse the audience's social conscience, and they manifestly succeeded in doing so. What might be objected to at this point is that no one questions that some art is like this, and that it can be admirable; but it seems excessive to demand that *all* art be like this, or to claim that engineering *alone* can explain aesthetic success.

More recently Jean-Paul Sartre put forward a variant of the 'engineer' argument when he called for writers to engage directly with the political issues of the post-war world in his major work of aesthetic theory, *What is Literature?* Sartre said that writing is not living, neither is it running away from life in order to contemplate Platonic essence and the archetype of beauty in a world at rest. It is,

sustained work, professional consciousness, and the sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility requires that an author must write in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody may say that he is innocent of what it's all about. Whether the state is justified in forcing authors to write in this way is another question, and Sartre is by no means calling for official censorship of literature that does not meet his criteria. Sartre was no supporter of Zhdanov or Stalin : in fact many of his plays, which engage with the era's political problems in a confrontational manner, were viciously attacked by pro-Zhdanovite elements in the French-Communist Party. Yet in hindsight his aesthetic arguments have an ironic similarity to Zhdanov's. Sartre was impeccable 'realist' in approach both as theorist and dramatist, and in his later career was fairly openly Marxist too. Where Sartre differs is in objecting to the element of compulsion involved in Zhdanovism, as well as to the notion of political correctness : "The opponent is never answered; he is discredited". Sartre wants the artist to have a significantly greater degree of personal freedom than Zhdanov could countenance, although he is just as insistent as the latter regarding the artist's responsibility to society and equally unwilling to allow the law of art alone to dictate criteria of aesthetic value. Politics intrudes forcefully in both cases. Zhdanov, and Plato before him, effectively demand state-approved propaganda, where as Sartre calls for individually initiated intervention by writers in political debates. The difference is a crucial one and should not be under-estimated, but all parties assume that artists have a socio-political role to fulfil which, given the powerful affective power of art they can not readily ignore. Socialist realism may be to most people as unattractive and often cynical theory, but its starting premises - that art should be didactic, that artists have political responsibilities are neither unreasonable nor indefensible in social or philosophical terms.

Luka'cs and Critical realism

Zhdanovist socialist realism was largely geared to the demands of judging, and directing, the output of currently practising socialist creative artists. Luka'cs's critical realism, on the other hand, is a way of judging the work of non-Marxist writers, both past and present, from a Marxist perspective. Luka'cs is not opposed to

socialist-realism, but he does maintain an attitude of healthy scepticism towards its claims as an aesthetic theory and the Knee-jerk response it can generate from its supporters. If every mediocre product of socialist realism is to be hailed as a masterpiece, confusion will be worse confounded, he said. The reference here is to the Soviet critic's tendency to judge works according to their political correctness rather than their artistic merit.

Luka's thesis in *The Meaning of contemporary Realism* is that twentieth-century bourgeois literature can be broken down into two main styles, modernism and critical realism. Modernism is marked by an obsession with formal experimentation, a concern with technique at the expense of narrative content and an intense subjectivity that pictures human being as essentially isolated and alienated from their fellows. Overall, the modernist presents a very despairing view of the human condition, and seems to see little real opportunity for change. Alienation is generally regarded as part of man's nature by modernists, whereas for the Marxist it is a state induced by socio-political system. It is the work of such author as Franz Khfka, James Joyce and Sammuel Beckett that Luka'cs takes as being representative of the modernist ethic. Critical realism, on the otherhand, is realism marked by linear narrative, credible situations and character based on real life models, literature and transparent writing style, plus what Luka'cs refers to as a sense of 'Critical detachment'. Properly deployed as in the fiction of Thomas Mann, this critical detachment places what is significant, specifically modern experience in a wider context, giving it only the emphasis it deserves as parts of a greater whole. Luka'cs pictures the bourgeois author as being confronted by a clear choice of value systems. It is the dilemma of the choice between an aesthetically appealing and a fruitful critical realism. The value of bourgeois literature is to be determined by its critical realist content; that is, by the extent of critical awarness that it displays of a society's overall mechanisms of operation. Rather like Sartre, Luka'cs demands that the author write in such a way that nobody can be ignorant or inocent of the world. The fictional individual must be presented within a culture context where ideology is visible shaping his or her social being. Since modernism insists that the world is full of isolated, alienated

individuals apparently independent of political processes, then as a style it has to be valued much lower in Luka'cs's aesthetic scheme. What this adverse value judgement results in is a rejection of some of the most highly regarded authors of the twentieth century, and an explicit criticism of the anti-realist tradition of literature.

The realist tradition in Marxist aesthetics, as both Zhdanov and Luka'cs suggest, is essentially back-ward looking in its distrust of experimentation, and authoritarian in operation. It calls for a highly prescriptive aesthetics, almost invariably tending to polarize debates—either Kafka or Mann as well as expecting a high standard of political correctness in works of art. Socialist realist aesthetics in particular involves a tight system of social control in which the artist obeys the instructions of the aesthetic theorist, who in turn obeys the instruction of the political theorist. There is small scope for deviation or artistic innovation in such a system, and the economic base very much drives the superstructure, with artists being placed under an obligation to tailor their works to the demands of that economic base as determined by politicians. Luka'cs is a less dogmatic theorist than Zhdanov, but he is still authoritarian and prescriptive in his method. The modernism/critical realism division acts to close off debate, and is clearly politically motivated in its insistence that authors be condemned for presenting 'false' models of the human condition. Luka'cs is less suspicious than Zhdanov is of formal experimentation. Such an activity challenges the stability of the theorist's culture models, and is less easily turned to polemical account. There is an argument to be made for didacticism in the arts, neoclassicism makes it very successfully on behalf of moral virtues, but ultimately it is very narrow-minded, and perhaps even anti-artistic didacticism that is being called for in socialist realism. Luka'cs's version of social realism is much more self-critical than most, but the theory has in general been an unappealing blend of censorship and authoritarianism.

It may be noted finally that not all Marxist aesthetic theories have taken the realist route towards value, and a counter - tradition can be identified

whose most important contribution have been Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, the Frankfurt School and the structuralist Marxist movement in France. There is an acute sense of scepticism about reflection theory amongst such thinkers, which is neatly summed up in Brecht's remark that if art reflects life it does so with special mirrors. As for Brecht's method, Engelson has glossed : The Play is less a reflection of than a *reflection*, social reality. This is to say, the dramatist does not simply reflect, but decides *what* to reflect and also what *form* the reflection will take. But we shall not enter into these discussions. However although the issue of social control, and how large a part it should play in an aesthetic theory remains alive. It is on that issue that the realist/anti-realist divide in Marxist aesthetics is at its very sharpest.

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Chapter-IX

Criticism, Interpretation and Aesthetic Judgement

What do the critics do ? They may be said to engage in two major activities: : first, they pass judgements on the merits and demerits of works of art and, in the case of music, dance and drama, on performances. Second, they offer interpretations of works of art. The task of judgement involves the critic in identifying the value features of works of art and thereby he draws them to the attention of others. But works of art may be valued for many different reasons, and it is not always obvious that all of these reasons are equally relevant when treating an object as a work of art. Until we know something about what is relevant to the interpretation and judgement of a work of art we are in no position properly to characterize the critic's activities.

The most contentious issue in this context is the relevance to criticism of references to the creator of a work of art, and in particular, the relevance of references to the intention of the artist.

Let us consider the following argument. The job of the critic is to talk about an entity called 'the work itself'. It is about the value features of these works that we wish to know. What ought to be the axiom of relevant criticism is to talk about the work of art. If the critic deviates from this to make some other thing the focus of attention, then what is said is irrelevant to criticism. The first premise of the argument is designed to rid criticism of the need to refer to, or know anything about creators of works of art. The second premise is the claim that the work of art is one thing and its creator is another, separate thing. Work and artist are discrete entities. What can be truly said of a work of art is different from what can be truly said of its creator. What is true of *Mona Lisa* is not true of Leonardo. Hence anything the critic says about the artist is irrelevant to the task of a critic. Neither biography nor history is relevant to criticism. This is a corollary of the conclusion of the argument.

The argument for the exclusion from the activity of criticism of references to and knowledge of artists may now be evaluated. Is the argument valid ? Does the conclusion follow from the premises ? Are the premises true ? The argument,

of course, is valid . But there is something wrong with the second premise, namely, that the artist is distinct from the work she or he produces. The critic may at times use such terms as might create difficulty in eliminating from criticism of knowledge of and references to artists. Suppose a critic says that a work of art is perceptive, what does the word 'perceptive' refer to ? To the work of art or the artist ? There is no ready clear answer to this question. It may seem that the critic is talking about both at once. Or one may suggest that he is referring to a quality displayed by the artist in the work. This will undermine the claim of the second premise. Wimsatt and Beardsley suggested the elimination of reference to artists and came to a position close to the view that we should talk about the work and not the artist and yet conceded that sometimes to talk about the properties of a work is to talk about the features of the artist's mind that are displayed in it.

For the second premise of our argument to be true it *must* be true that for any and every term the critic uses we can ask the question : Is that term being used to refer to the artist or to the work ? There are terms like "perceptive" or "intelligent" etc. that seem to refer to an artist detectably present in the work. In using these terms the critic, though referring to the work, must also be referring to the creator of the work. If these terms are legitimate in criticism, it follows that some kinds of critical comments about a work necessarily involve reference to the creator of the work, and the argument we have considered rests on a false premise and so fails.

There has been the idea of the dramatic *speaker*. Beardsley and Wimsatt have suggested that when a creator produces a work of literature a fictional character is created who speaks the work. This speaker is not to be identified with the author of the work. The claim is that when we are talking about a work of art, the personal quality terms that we use of it refer not to the artist in the work but to a fictional person created by that artist to speak the work. This argument appears to be dubious. For if invoke the notion of a dramatic speaker is a right move, as the use of the term "perceptive" by the critic, are we to say that some fictional dramatic speaker of that work is perceptive? This is often not so. A story or narrative may be

perceptive or intelligent or sensitive, and in so saying do we not talk about the controlling intelligence who, through the works, presents the dramatic speaker? Who is that controlling intelligence if not the author? It is possible to distinguish a speaker *in* the work, say Hamlet, from the speaker *of* the work i.e. Shakespeare. It is true that we cannot always identify the speaker in the work with the author of the work. But that is not to show that we can not identify the speaker of the work with the creator of the work. Can a creator write a work in which he or she pretends to be perceptive or sensitive when he or she is not? If these are qualities of the work they have to be qualities of its *creator* as displayed *there*. Therefore the introduction of the notion of the dramatic speaker does not always allow us to avoid reference to artists by critics. An art work may be an expression of its creator's attitudes, emotions and qualities of mind.

II

We have argued above that there can be talks about a mind or controlling intelligence that can be detected *in* the work characterised by the use of a certain vocabulary. In the European Continental tradition we find a radical approach which raises fundamental questions about coherence of our belief in the authorial voice. Levi-Strauss remarked that the goal of human sciences is not to constitute man but to dissolve him. This has bearing on our argument that in talking about works of art we can talk about the persons who produced them. If, as Levi-Strauss and Foucault have called our traditional beliefs about persons into doubt, then what do we do when we refer to the persons we call 'artists'?

The history of much recent theory of criticism begins as a reaction 'to Descartes. Central of his philosophy is the distinction between two kinds of substances: : the mental and the physical. The body is physical but linked to it is another entity, a mind, the seat of thought, feeling and personality, which is a different sort of thing from the physical body. A part of this view is that physical things get their meaning from the activity of minds. A word is a physical entity, and as such it is dead and devoid of meaning. A word gets its meaning when an individual mind,

a person speaking, attaches a meaning to it, or imposes a meaning to it, by an act of intending that meaning for it . But do we mean by appealing to private acts of intending, or to public structure of language ? For Descartes, it is a consciousness that gives meaning to our world. On the other hand, it is argued that it is the public, meaning - giving structures of the language, the public rules of a language are the source of meaning, including the meaning of the term 'person'. This is a striking line of thought, and has bearing on the issue of judgements on art-works.

It is held that a word gets its meaning from a public structure which is not the possession of any individual speaker. But if all this is so, why do we need reference to individual artists and their intentions in order to discover the meaning of a literary or any other work of art ? All we need to do is bring to a text our knowledge of the structure of rules that gives words their meaning and then read that meaning off from the text. Beardslay says that it is in language that the poem happens, there is no need to draw our attention off to the psychological states of the author. And Sartre has written that words become things themselves, and when a poet joins several of these together the case like that of painters when they assemble their colours on the canvas. Here we have the view that the meaning of a word is what it is regardless of what the author might say about what he or she would have liked to have said, just as the colour of a coloured patch is what it is regardless of what its painter would have liked to have painted. So the argument is : since the public rules of the public language and not individual and private acts of intention, determine the meaning of words, it follows that if we want to know what a text means, we should see what the rules of the language allow it to mean. We do not need reference to the intentions of the artist when our critical task is the interpretation of literary texts. Meaning is a property conferred on words, actions and institutions by the structure of the public language and not by individual acts of willing meaning to words, acts, etc. It follows that the task of determining meaning falls to the reader. Hence the emergence of what are called "reader - response" theories. The reader brings an accumulated body of public understanding to the text and, using that understanding, assigns a meaning to it. On this account reference to intention in the determination of meaning is unnecessary .

III

The structuralist account which allows us to assign a determinate meaning to a text by the use of a structure of meaning - giving rules is somewhat over-optimistic. It holds that the rules can help us when our task is the discovery of the meaning of a text. The use of language is creative and always extends beyond the rules we have mastered for its understanding. A structuralist account seems to take no account of the way in which we can *creatively project* the structures that we have learned. One may have learned the meaning of the term "deep" with respect to ocean, and extends its creativity of feelings. This is something that *persons* do, and so the structuralists attempt to reduce persons to passive reflections of the structures of language overlooks the fact that language requires individual human beings *creatively to operate the structures* of a language. Structuralism can say little about the content or psychological effect of a text.

Even if we accept the view that meaning is assigned to texts by readers, this entails nothing about the eliminability of authorial reference. It is possible to argue that the words of a text are put together by an authorial act which can show us the author's characters and intelligence at work. Even Sartre pointed out that every stage of the production of a work of art the artist is confronted by choices. A work is the result of a set of choices, and from that set of choices there can emerge a strong sense of the mental, emotional and other qualities of character of the artist who made those choices. If we understand that at a certain point in a piece of music a composer could have gone into a minor key for cheap emotional effect, we may praise her or his intelligence and discrimination in resisting that obvious temptation. Sartre saw this clearly. He clearly saw that evidence of authorial choice *could* be read from the work, for the work is a repository that bears the evidence of successive acts of choice. A work of art, he said, "implies the intervention of the author and a transcendent choice". The author can to some extent choose his disguises, as in the case of such great a dramatist as Shakespeare, and in spite of his "negative capability" that Keats had ascribed to him, he can never choose to disappear. So even if the meaning of a text is determined by the reader deploying

the rules of the public language, that meaning, once assigned, may and will reveal the presence of the author in the text, and that in turn will reveal the personal qualities of the author.

IV

The argument against the presence of the author has been that the meaning of a text can not be there as the result of a prior act of willing by the artist in which a personal meaning is willed into the words that we need. But that is compatible with the view that when we assign a determinate meaning to an utterance we can do so because we can detect *in* that text an intention to this rather than that. Ambiguity is present when we can not detect such an intention in an utterance. But we can make our meaning clear because we can make our intentions clear in speaking. Intention can be made manifest in action, including our speech actions. When it is made manifest in our speech actions, then our meaning is made clear. The rules of a public language do not replace our meaning - intentions with other ways of assigning meaning to our utterances. They are, rather, the apparatus which allow us to make our intentions, and so our meanings, clear.

What is striking is that Beardsle, too, is forced to link meaning to intention in the context of interpreting a poem. The structuralists and Beardsle both believe that a work must be able to have a determinate meaning if criticism is to be possible. Determinate meaning is linked to a recognition of intention. The very *possibility* of criticism is linked to the possibility of assigning determinate meaning to text, only so can we test the rightness and wrongness of critical interpretations, the right interpretation being one that accords with the determinate meaning of the work. One of the significant differences between structuralism and post-modernism comes to this : the former appears to accept and the latter to quarry the notion of determinate meaning. And from this follows some of the problems that some have had with the writings of a post-structuralist such as Derrida. One question will be how the determinate thesis that meaning is indeterminate can be expressed, granted that thesis is true. Again, there will be questions, given that texts have no determinate meaning, about what criticism is to be. What might make one piece of criticism more significant than another ?

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Chapter - X

Deconstruction and Anti - Aesthetics.

In 'The Death of the author' Roland Barthes has suggested that 'the Author' is an outmoded concept and that text can operate on their own without reference to authorial objectives and intentions. The argument depends on a conception of self that recalls that of David Hume. One of the consequences of Hume's researches into the nature of causality, during which he famously claimed that there was no necessary connection between causes and effects, was that he was led to deny that there was any such thing as an enduring self. Hume saw individuals as bombarded by an endless stream of sense-impressions from the outside world, and the self accordingly was for him merely a "bundles or collection or different perceptions, which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity". Nothing apparently tied those perspective together such that we could be justified in speaking of a fixed personal identity or a self that endured over time. The picture that emerges from Hume is of an entity caught in the fleeting present and struggling to make sense of it in any wider perceptive. A similar picture emerges from Barthes when he states that linguistically, the author is never more than the instance of writing. This enables him to dismiss the claims of expression theory because it would require a fixed personal identity to do the expressing, and that is precisely what both he and Hume are denying is possible. Authors have no more of a fixed identity over time in Barthes than the self does in Hume.

The 'Death of the author' is also the death of the critic or any one who makes an aesthetic judgement. The social status of the artist has been considerably downgraded by Barthes, and we are at the opposite end of the spectrum from Plato's notion of the artist as an individual dangerous to a well-ordered society. Plato was centrally concerned with the effects of art in his aesthetics, where as structuralism typically avoids this issue; so it is perhaps not surprising to see the contribution of the creative artist being marginalized by Barthes.

Barthes this pushes structuralism to its limits. If we start with self regulating grammars and deep structures, it is quite logical to end up with 'the death of the Author'. From this point of view texts take on a life of their own seemingly independent of human agency. Value becomes equated with function.

As an aesthetic theory structuralism is vulnerable at several points. Structure remains a questionable concept resting on dubious assumptions. To build individual creativity into the reading process, structure continues to have a reality independent of readers. Human discover or appreciate it, not control or direct it. The formalism of the theory must remain a problem in that it leads to a form of criticism which can say very little about the content of works of art, and, by extension, their psychological effect. As Derrida has noted, each individual work is compared to an ideal structure. Essentialism is to the fore, behind each text is supposed to be an essential structure, well or badly realized by the author. Structuralist analysis also blurs the distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic. The evaluative aspect is marginalized. There is often a studied avoidance of psychological and social evaluation in structuralism.

Barthes's work reveals the strengths (University of application, for instance) and weaknesses (the lack of a theory of value) of structuralism. University of application might be regarded as a weakness as well as strength. One largely knows before the event what a structuralist will say. Confronted by any social phenomenon, fashion, advertising, the arts, myths, cultures - the structuralist responds in much the same way. The method becomes highly predictable in its operations, which is one of the starting points for Derrida's critique of structuralism. It classifies rather than interprets or creates. Derrida's work is part of a movement called post-structuralism, reacting against institutional structures and received authority in general.

The initial thrust of Derrida's attack is against philosophical structures, and his researches lead him into the field of aesthetics and criticism. Deconstructionist aesthetics involves the following assumptions :

(i) that text, like language, are marked by instability and indeterminacy of meaning.

(ii) that given such instability and indeterminacy neither philosophy nor criticism can have any special claim to authority as regards textual interpretation.

(iii) that interpretation is a free-ranging activity more a kin to game-playing than analysis.

The point of deconstructionist criticism is to demolish the illusion of stable meaning in texts. There are no pre-existing meanings, structures or essences to be taken into account in Derrida's universe, and there will be no attempt to limit arbitrariness there. He calls for a free play of sign and meaning, unrestricted by any limiting notion of structure. There is pleasure of infinite creation, and creation of this kind is undertaken by the reader. For a post-structuralist, reading becomes performance. How can there be discourse or communication in the absence of order? How can it be maintained?

Rather than stable meanings and the authority of the critic, Derrida offers as undecidability of meaning and critical play with language. His aesthetic theory derives from his critique of metaphysics and what he calls the metaphysics of presence. In the case of such binary oppositions as speech/writing, subject/object, signifier/signified and word/meaning, one side of the opposition is always considered to be subordinate to the other. Derrida claims that speech, for example, is consistently accorded greater status than writing in western philosophical discourse because it is felt to be closer to the original thought in the speaker's mind, and thus less contaminated by mediating, and potentially distorting, literary devices and tricks of writing. Speech is felt to have a sense of immediacy and authenticity that writing lacks. This assumed quality of immediacy is what Derrida defines as the 'metaphysics of presence', and he strenuously opposes it. The point of Derrida's project is to dismantle such oppositions and show that no hierarchy in fact exists; to show that writing is not subordinate to speech, and so on. If there is no interior design of meaning for speech to express then it cannot claim authority over writing. Neither can meaning claim authority over word if it is indeterminate, unstable, and in a permanent state of active interpretation. Meaning is in fact both differed from itself (non-identical to itself) and constantly deferred (never fully present, fixed, or complete). The metaphysics of presence is thus exposed as a myth.

We might define Derrida as anti-metaphysical as well as anti-foundationalist and by traditional standards the propounder of what amounts to an anti-aesthetics. It is in the area of value, particularly aesthetic value that Derrida is at his most radical, as well as most questionable, as a theorist. The value of deconstructing texts, of laying bare their indeterminacy of meaning and lack of truth, structure and essence, is presumably that one is making an individual contribution to the break down of received authority. This is the 'Death of the author' notion extended well beyond Barthes.

Aesthetic value and meaning are no longer seen to be products of the operations of a system, and have become fleeting and unstable phenomena which can never be recaptured or even properly communicated. They must always be considered to be in a process of 'becoming' instead of being directed towards a pre-arranged goal as in the case of structuralists such as Levi-Strauss. In Derrida's scheme of things meaning is endlessly being produced and just as endlessly being erased, so that there is no fixed points of reference for critics to orient themselves by. Value judgements of the traditional kind become impossible under the circumstances and the value of reading is now seen to be located in the active interpretation of the reader. Value has shifted from the system to the reader. If structuralism systematically excludes the human dimension from aesthetic theory, then deconstruction in some sense introduces it, but at the price of individual isolation. 'Active interpretations' by their very nature remain very private things.

One of the implications of Derrida's deconstruction of Western metaphysics is that philosophy can claim no special status towards other disciplines. If, as Derrida argues, philosophy itself can not be grounded, there being no self-evident truths or transcendental signifieds around to perform that service, then it cannot function as a legitimate source of grounding for other activities, such as aesthetic theory or literary criticism, criticism, far from being an applied form of a theory, however loosely formulated, in its turn derived from a philosophical position, can now claim equality with philosophy. Philosophers are just as much caught up in the problems of language as any other writers. They too are essentially engaged in

the business of writing narratives, of persuading by means of literary figures appealing to the emotions, rather than providing by means of rational argument. Christopher Norris has argued to the effect that the task now is to explore the various ways in which philosophy reveals, negotiates or represses its own inescapable predicament as written language. The application of deconstruction takes us further down the road to an anti-aesthetics. If all discourse are merely rhetorical narratives of a greater or lesser degree of plausibility directed at the senses rather than the reason, then aesthetic judgement becomes an increasingly problematical activity. No judgement could be considered to be preferable to another, indeed no grounds would exist by which comparison of judgements could be made.

Deconstruction seems to be calling for a rejection of value judgement, although, there are implicit values. It puts forward a theory of reading in which the value is deemed to lie in 'active interpretation', that is, the rejection of received authority in favour of irreverent game-playing with the text. The value of criticism in the deconstructionist scheme of things is that it upsets the authority of texts, denoustrate both the instability and endless plurality of meaning, possible in a text's 'play of differences' (total apprehension of meaning, in the sense assumed by the 'metaphysics of presence' being considered impersible). The theory - of - value problem in deconstruction is that its values have no foundation, nor according to the theory is such a foundation ever possible. What deconstruction is notably successfully in doing, however, is drawing attention to the hidden commitments (to essentialism and determinism, for example) of other theories.

Anti-Aesthetics might also be the way to define post - modernism. We propose some comments centering round Jean-Francois Lyotard's book *The Postmodern Condition*. Lyotard's work shows a concern similar to that of Derrida in its desire to transcend, or by-Pass, value judgements. All discourses are treated as equal, with no particular claims to precedence. Any discourse is simply a narrative : a sequence of ideas which either plausible or not, congenial or not, but which has no sustainable claims to transcendental authority. The value of a particular narrative, to Lyotard might well lie in its modesty as regards claims to authority. What is not

clear is how, in the absence of workable criteria, we can assess the claims of competing theories.

Lyotard's theory centres on the individual. The individual is dominated by systems and theories, and in the process as having lost any sense of creativity and freedom for manoeuvre. Lyotard wishes to set this embattled individual free from the claim of pre-existing systems of explanation.

As an aesthetic theory post-modernism seeks to effect a complete break with the past. A postmodern artist may rework traditional form, though in a very knowing, often cynical manner. Irony is the staple of post modern creative practice. He has little real feeling for the past or for its system of values. In his world there would appear to be no direct contact with objects, events or other beings, but only with their simulations. Modern culture has become so complex in terms of communication media that it is all but impossible to differentiate between image and reality. In practice, the image has taken over from reality, with the television image becoming more 'real' and more authoritative, than the actual live event. The cinema and TV are now the realities. The medium is the message. What is also entailed is a consistent refusal to judge the artefacts are confronts, there is the argument that we should not discuss their value, but merely experience them. One reaches the outer limits of anti-aesthetics when we are told that judgement is no longer to be attempted.

The rejection, or at least suspicion of value judgement is a common theme running through structuralism, deconstruction and postmodernism. Nevertheless, despite themselves, each one might be said to imply a theory of value of sorts in that they have unacknowledged or otherwise. On the one side, we have determinism and authoritarianism (Structuralism), on the other indeterminism and some form of anarchism (deconstruction and postmodernism). A general trend toward anti-aesthetics can be noted; that is to say, a trend towards a theoretical position with an oppositional stance to the basic assumptions of theoretical aesthetics (that value judgements can be made, that criteria can be established for making those value judgements through the use of philosophical theory). The major

theoretical shift that takes place between structuralism and post modernism is a move from essentialism to anti-essentialism; from a world featuring stable structures to a world of flux and indeterminacy. Where as structuralist aesthetic theory assumes an underlying unity to existence and seeks to denoustrate this at work in texts, deconstructionist aesthetics argues for a lack of unity and sees text as exemplifying this. In critical terms of reference this represents a move from description and classification to anarchic game playing.

The validity of the anti foundationist position in Derrida and Lyotard remains a major question. If meaning is always and necessarily, in the process of being deferred, never fully present to any individual, never totally complete in itself, then deconstructionist writing must be caught in the same kind. If all discourses are merely narrative then equally so is Lyotard's, and much of the authority of his utterance disappears. Part of the problem lies in the desire for universality of application, with regards to meaning, on the anti-foundationist side of the divide. Derrida wants to say more than that in some cases meaning is relative and pheral; he wants to claim that in all cases it is relative and plural, and, indeed, that it can never be reduced to criteria of truth-value. He asks us to choose between all meaning being rigidly fixed, or all meaning being radically unstable. This debate is presented in a polarized form. Most of us would be quite willing to accept that meaning is not always completely stable, the art of poetry largely depends an just such a premise, without thereby feeling this licenses a swift transition to the position of claiming that all meaning at times can only be unstable. How could one possibly prove, or even test , such a proposition ?

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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 actors in a drama, or it is inferred by the spectators, or it *felt as a deepening of consciousness* of the portrayed emotions. Obviously the concept of aesthetic judgement undergoes 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 psychological 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 *lakṣaṇā*, *abhidhā* and *vyanjñā*. There is long controversy regarding *vyanjñā* 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 (*lakṣaṇā*) 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.

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